

# Salish Sea Island Tides

Giving The Coast A Community Voice For 26 Years



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Photo: Sylvia Gray

**Standing up for water.** On January 6, Shawnigan Residents Association invited media and politicians to view the toxic landfill site permitted in Shawnigan Lake's watershed. See story, left.

## Revised coal shipping plan approved

Patrick Brown

Port Metro Vancouver has approved a revised shipping plan that would see deep-sea vessels loaded at the Fraser Surrey Docks. It replaces a previous plan that saw coal loaded into barges to be towed to Texada Island. The coal would then have been loaded into deepsea vessels at a Lafarge facility on Texada.

The new plan involves the same amount of coal—four million tons a year. But instead of 640 barges, some 80 Panamax-size ships will be loaded each year. However, a longer ship loader will be required, and extensive dredging would be necessary so that there is room in the river to turn the ships around. The ships are 225 metres in length.

It is also possible that the plan anticipates the construction of a new ten-lane highway bridge over the river, replacing the existing Massey Tunnel, which limits the draft of ships in the river.

Fraser Surrey Docks are 'evaluating timing' of the development because of a slump in thermal coal prices which might make the operation uneconomic. Critics have also suggested that the dredging of a large turning basin would have to be continuous because of silting. The ecology of the river, which hosts large salmon runs and many other aquatic creatures, would also be affected.

Current international negotiations on climate change may make thermal coal obsolete. But Port Metro Vancouver says it isn't responsible for evaluating the environmental effects of burning the coal, only of shipping it.

The permit requires that construction must be started within one year, and completed within four years. ☞

## Sea Lice reported out of control

Salmon farms are supposed to treat fish for sea lice when levels rise to an average of three lice per fish. However, Living Oceans Society says that some farms were reporting levels of over 20 lice per fish during the outward migration of this year's juvenile wild salmon. Apparently, the traditional treatments with SLICE and hydrogen peroxide are no longer effective in controlling lice outbreaks.

According to Living Oceans, Marine Harvest markets its Marsh Bay product as sustainably farmed salmon, despite an uncontrolled infestation of sea lice (23.77 sea lice per salmon in April 2015).

Current Norwegian research is focusing on the use of 'cocktails' of new drugs for lice control, but it appears that these treatments are toxic to shrimp and prawns.

In BC, government is reported to have approved a second open net-pen farm in Clio Channel, in an active shrimp and prawn trawling area. Local fishermen objected, but to no avail. ☞

## Groundtruthing from the air

After weeks of observing and documenting at the South Island Aggregates (SIA) site, located in the Shawnigan Lake Designated Community Watershed, citizens of Shawnigan decided to show to BC and Canada what is happening in their community.

Sponsored by the Save Shawnigan Water Community Action Group, West Coast Helicopter provided flights throughout the day on January 6 to politicians and media so that they could see from above the impact of the SIA site, as well as its proximity to both Shawnigan Lake and Sooke Lake, which together are drinking water sources for hundreds of thousands of people.

Among others, NDP Leader John Horgan and BC Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver took flights, as well as Victoria City Councillor Jeremy Loveday, and three councillors from Port Moody. Esquimalt Councillor Olga Liberchuk commented, 'The penny dropped for me. This is about our water too—Sooke Lake is just as close to this site as Shawnigan Lake.' Ardent supporter of Shawnigan Lake, children's performer Raffi led a sing-along of 'Beautiful Shawnigan Lake'.

Shawnigan residents say they have been steadfast in their opposition to the contaminated landfill at the SIA site, which has a permit from the BC Ministry of Environment to accept 100,000 tonnes of contaminated soil per year for fifty years. The site is also an active quarry, they say, and has a permit from Ministry of Energy and Mines to continue blasting at the site where the dumping is happening. Currently, the site is operated by South Island Resource Management (SIRM)/Allterra Construction.

Shawnigan Residents Association says that incidents of non-compliance include a significant water breach from the site on November 13, discharge of water that does not meet Drinking Water and Aquatic Life Water Guidelines, and considerable airshed pollution over a period of several weeks from cement and fly ash dust being blasted into the contaminated soil at the site. Dust suppression is a requirement of the dumping permit issued by Ministry of Environment.

Shawnigan Lake CVRD Director Sonia Furstenuau explains the growing frustration in the community, 'Environment Minister Polak claims that the Ministry requires strict adherence to the permit conditions at the SIA site. Yet, over the last several weeks, Ministry staff have been provided with video and photo evidence of billowing clouds of cement and fly ash floating hundreds of meters from the site, and the ministry takes no action. Either her staff are not reporting to her what's happening at this site, or she is choosing not to act. Either way, contaminates from that dust are getting into our watershed.'

The media and politician fly-over event was coordinated by dozens of volunteers from the Shawnigan community, including Netta Douglas, who has been hearing from people across the country, 'As we've become more vocal and our voices are heard, communities across Canada are sharing their stories with us about water safety and quality issues, and sharing with us their frustration with all levels of government on this issue. As Canadians, we need to recognize the absolute value of drinking water for our communities, and ensure that all levels of government are acting to protect water for all future generations.'

Shawnigan Lake community is calling on the Ministry of Environment 'to do the right thing and suspend all activities at the SIA/SIRM site immediately'. Protection of drinking water needs to be the highest priority of the BC government, residents say.

More info: see Readers Letters, page 2, [www.thesra.ca](http://www.thesra.ca), [www.soniafurstenuau.ca](http://www.soniafurstenuau.ca), 250-812-6136. ☞

## Duffy confirms Saanich—Gulf Islands robocalls - Patrick Brown

Senator Mike Duffy, testifying at his criminal trial in Ottawa on December 10, confirmed a rumour that the federal Conservative Party had used robocalls to help former cabinet minister Gary Lunn get re-elected in the 2008 federal election.

In testimony Duffy said: 'He'd [Lunn] had a close call during the previous [2008] election and it was only through the divine intervention of [late campaign manager] Doug Finley's black ops group at Conservative headquarters that he managed to get himself re-elected'.

In 2008, Duffy was criss-crossing the country, appearing at Conservative rallies to assist local candidates to get elected. He says he met Lunn and David Angus, a lobbyist for Molson

Canada, in June 2008, prior to his trip to the west coast. Lunn was concerned about the coming election, where he faced strong opposition from Liberal candidate Briony Penn, and wanted Duffy to appear at the Saanich Fair. In the end, Duffy never appeared at the fair.

As the 2008 election approached, although NDP candidate Julian West withdrew late from the race, his name remained on the ballot slips, which Elections Canada couldn't reprint. Duffy said that the Conservatives, working from their own database, used robocalls to misdirect NDP voters to split the vote and allow Lunn to win. The robocalls indicated that they came from a local NDP official.

Subsequently, 3,667 votes were cast for Julian West. The margin between Gary Lunn and Briony Penn was 2,621 votes.

Duffy said that Lunn knew nothing about it, except that 'they phoned him afterwards saying: 'You're welcome, Gary.'

He said, 'What?', 'We got you in.'

Lunn has denied any knowledge of the meeting, or who made the phone calls.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May defeated Lunn in the 2011 election. She commented she would like the RCMP and Elections Canada to take a new look at the 2008 election. ☞

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## Readers' Letters

### Ferries To 'Thrive' Island Economies

The following letter was sent to Saanich-Gulf Islands MP Elizabeth May.

Dear MP May,

I loved your latest MP Newsletter about small business—it got my juices flowing and bells ringing in my head.

In the Southern Gulf Islands, the transportation part involves future ferry schedules for our new ferries coming before too long. The latest proposed schedule is much improved by largely reverting to the current one, except that Saturna businesses still won't have time to do all their business chores in town and get back on any day—that's a travesty.

Also, Pender, the Route N°5 commutable island—where people working at Capital Region SMEs can import earned dollars to the island-economy—needs an earlier commuter boat which connects seamlessly to bus transit. It would bring more families to live here because of the island's already excellent school and community infrastructure and its affordable housing stock—ideal for raising children.

The past schedule pattern matters and one size does not fit all. I imagine that Mayne Island and Galiano Island have specific needs which could be addressed—those BC Ferries computer programs could be put to exquisitely good use, not to mention the good heads in our ferry committees.

Each island's distance from major ports is significant in what particular economy is possible now and into the future. I think the BC Ferries team is working hard but, for a start, they need \$\$ to do a really visionary paradigm of what the future could look like.

One of the places you can help is in lobbying the federal government for funding for ferries (see also MLA Gary Holman's comments in the December 10 edition of *Island Tides*, page 4). Some federal funding might lead to pressure on the provincial government, to correct an egregious wrong which majorly affects the economy of an area that is an incubator for the best in Canadian thought and culture.

Southern Gulf Islands vital, intricate, 5-island, mini ferry system is a gem. To be treasured; not stripped.

IMO, we need a bigger minor routes budget, not necessarily to keep fares down but to provide improved service giving each island exactly what it needs. Inspired scheduling could allow each island to thrive. With more funding, scheduling would not be a race to provide the least service possible but a thoughtful process to 'thrive' the islands.

This requires somewhat more than a couple of multiple-choice surveys of riders. It requires thinking about possibilities on a grand scale; having a sense of where our economies are headed, or could be directed. This requires funding. More support, attention to, and acknowledgement of our ferry advisory committees would be a good way to start research.

I shall be so sad to see the *Queen of Nanaimo* go, she has been carrying me here and there for thirty years. However, we may have a great opportunity in front of us with the two smaller vessels, instead of one, let's not lose it in underfunding the programming.

BTW, here's a piece of scheduling that works. In our blustery, climate-change weather, the high school's inter-island watertaxi has been cancelled seven days already. Rather than miss school, youngsters from Pender take the ferry to Swartz Bay, transfer to the Route N°4 ferry to Fulford, and catch the SSI Transit bus to high school in Ganges. They arrive only an hour late.

Now if Pender had a good commuter-time ferry, say 3/4 hour earlier, voilà, they would get to school on time. That's the kind of creativity we need.

Christa Grace-Warrick, Publisher & Owner, *Island Tides*

### Radon Needs Another Warning

Dear Editor:

I'd like to comment on your recent news brief regarding radon gas. First of all, it's worth noting that Canada's standard of 200 becquerels per cubic meter is considerably higher than the EU standard of 100 bq/m3. More importantly, your readers should use some caution in dealing with radon testing and mitigation vendors.

We perhaps had a higher awareness of this issue having moved some time ago from the east coast, where radon (or at least, the awareness of it) seem to be more prevalent. When we decided to test out own home we bought 90-day test kits from two different companies, as well as a permanent meter of our own. We installed all three of these in the same location in our home as described in the instructions for each. After the 90-day period we sent in the two kit samples for analysis. One of the kits, as well as our permanent meter, reported radon levels in the range of 35 bq/m3—well below either the Canadian or EU standard. The other test, however, reported a level of 1330 bq/m3. When we contacted that vendor, a Vancouver-based company, to question these results, they failed to even reply to us. In investigating them further we found that they provide both testing and mitigation, which would seem to be a conflict of interest.

We subsequently contacted and reported our concerns to the Canadian Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (CARST, [www.carst.ca](http://www.carst.ca)), of which the vendor was a member. CARST informed us that they had no real regulation of or involvement with their members, and they did nothing to address the issue.

We have continued to operate our permanent meter, which consistently reports results in the range of 35 bq/m3. We are convinced that the vendor who reported the higher levels was scamming us in hopes that we would undertake expensive radon mitigation repairs with them. Your readers should be aware of these issues and use some caution when investigating possible radon issues. I would recommend either purchasing a permanent meter (a few hundred dollars), or at least having test kits from multiple vendors to compare results.

Ram Sudama, Denman Island

### Factor of 10

Dear Editor:

Hats off to my friend, Margaretha Nordine, for realizing that a figure I quoted in the 'Climate Justice Meeting on Salt Spring' article in the last issue of *Island Tides* was wrong. I stated that the B-52 Stratocruiser burns 500 gallons of fuel per minute. I'm quite sure the real figure is more like 50 gallons per minute, still an outrageous amount. I'm happy to report that that error did not come from either of our great speakers, Tamara Lorincz or Lynne Quarmby, but from an article on the Truthout website. Also, after I contacted Truthout, they fixed the error in the original article by former professor H. Patricia Hynes, an article I recommend for anyone concerned about the environmental and health impacts of militarism.

Jan Slakov, Salt Spring Island

### It's B.A.D. Season Again!

Dear Editor:

B.A.D. or 'Blast a Duck' season (a more accurate term than 'Duck Hunting') is upon us once again. Waking up to shotgun blasts at 7:30 in the morning (when it is still dark outside) is extremely disturbing, especially to my dog. He will not leave the house until the barrage stops.

After a recent barrage, I found what was left of a duck near death in between two logs and hoped I had helped by finding him a more comfortable place to die. I'm sure there are many more that are left to suffer. What I find most disturbing is why a person would find it enjoyable to blast small birds apart?

Having lived in the Baynes Sound area for over 40 years, I have seen the slow, steady decline of resident and transient waterfowl and am concerned about their survival. They have been increasingly stressed by loss of foraging areas now that a huge percentage of clam beaches are being netted over by the shellfish industry. The loss of foraging grounds will increase exponentially when geoduck cultivation turns all our sandy beaches into industrial sites.

Attacking these ducks in the few areas they have left to forage is a recipe for species disaster. We are all responsible for the well being of our world, even those who choose to hunt. When the waterfowl are all gone, what will they shoot then?

Edi Johnston, Denman Island

### Community Drinking Water

Dear Editor:

I feel like I am living in a real life drama (horror) movie or part of a tragic novel. It is a story about the will of a local community being ignored. A story filled with regular people: doctors, teachers, musicians, young mothers, grandparents, fighting the fight of their lives; a fight to save the basic human right of clean water.

This is a story filled with permit noncompliance, conflict of interest, and alleged perjury, fraud, and bribery; a story filled with court battles where a small town of 12,000 people have to raise \$1 million in order to be heard in court.

A story where the Ministry of the Environment, which has been acting like the Misery of the Environment, is supporting big business only; in a place where regular citizens are arrested by SWAT teams for standing up for their rights.

A story where a site on top of a watershed, in an earthquake zone, will be filled with dioxins, PCBs, Furans, and more horrifying toxins.

A story in which the only science listened to by the MOE is that of so-called 'independent scientists' hired by the corporations, who happen to have a 50% ownership of the profits from the dump—which is part of the next court case—not the tens of others who have grave concerns about the site.

And yet, I am glad I am a part of the strong community of Shawnigan which has been brought together by this cry for clean water. My hope is that story will end up as a story of triumph and not one of tragedy. To this end, there was a media event on January 6 (see story, page 1).

Marnie Hare, Shawnigan Lake

Dear Editor:

A climate change agreement and a couple of weeks in Paris is lovely but all of that is only concerned with one third of the problem—air pollution. We are also fouling up our land and our waters at the same rate, and on the same scale.

Our BC Government is encouraging in every way the trucking of 75 tandem truck and trailer loads of toxic soil per day from a barge in Nanaimo Harbour to a dumpsite in the Shawnigan Lake watershed. This is scheduled to go on for 50 years!

The first rains in November breached the site's water retention and the MOE's own test results show elevated levels of sodium, chloride, and sulphur in the creek below the site. That wasn't even a significant rain, and it has breached several times since then. This and other items clearly contravene the (SIRM) permit.

LETTERS, please turn to page 7

# Winter Comfort – Brian Crumblehulme

In cold weather, comfort usually implies being warm, dry and well fed. Secondary comforts often consist of good company or a good book by the fire, and for the past eight hundred years or so, that good book was a religious text or a manual of domestic science.

In contemporary terms, this might translate into an hour in the hot tub with very select company, a glass of wine, and your cell-phone. Today, in lieu of books, we Google our questions and place our confidence in the World Wide Web.

Some of the earliest examples of writing in China, Persia and classical Greece include instructions for making wine, keeping bees and recipes of favourite foods. In other words, these books of domesticity have been written and collected as an expression of comfort and shared domestic wisdom.

Speaking in contemporary terms, food writer Bee Wilson says, ‘cookbooks show us at our most defenseless because they expose the things we believe we lack... soup that will fill us without making us fat; dinners that cook in no time.’

On the larger domestic front, this observation is true also for gardening, home repairs, illness and celebrations: possessing the book or smartphone provides a sense of security and access to a commonwealth of knowledge. If you don’t believe me, try reading the English language editions of the 24,000 new cookbooks still published each year, not including the zillion on-line recipes.

Barbara Wheaton is an 84-year-old archivist specializing in cookbooks. In twenty-five years of research, Wheaton has collected 130,000 recipe books and fragments into her Kitchen Database which she describes as ‘a cross between a Swiss Army knife and piano’.

This is mission impossible, how can anyone ever hope to collect all the books, pamphlets and fragments in every language, especially when so many of those ephemeral fragments and word-of-mouth gems are long gone? The work is not in vain of course, because of what it reveals about our ever-changing culture.

Virtually all the early writers were men copying their lifelong secrets for growing winter vegetables, preserving meat or creating spectacular banquet dishes. Women writers came on to the scene in the 17th century and, until recently, their contribution was almost entirely domestic and economic: how to feed a family in winter, cure a toothache, or the best way to mend a coat.

A scan of the Kitchen Database also confirms how domestic life reflects the larger reality of the culture. Ancient writers commented on improving crop yield or making better wine. Classical writers during and after the great empires, when international trade was underway, assumed the cook had access to spices, and almost all old-world recipes make extensive use of herbs and imported spices. Early colonial new-world cooking, is by contrast, puritanical, devoid of spices and quite dull, often lean in winter and spring, and plentiful in the fall.

Comfort food is frequently described as simple, home-style, one that induces a feeling of satisfaction, often creamy and starchy. Comfort can also be derived by reading about good food, or to be really minimalist, simply by having a collection of food books regardless of whether you follow the recipes. By extension then, books and favourite websites that support our concepts of the good life, are comforting by the very fact that we place them on the shelf or take time to scan them. We know they are there if ever we feel the need.

A friend of mine who hails from the Philippines told me that her favorite comfort food was always ‘typhoon food’, chocolate rice pudding with dried salted anchovies. I asked if she had ever experienced a damaging typhoon. ‘No,’ she replies, ‘but it’s good to celebrate that’.

In Oriental cuisines, rice as comfort food features large even in regions where it is not grown. Originally from India, rice lends itself to being transported and became a status symbol in Persia during the Mogul empire when it was introduced throughout the middle east. ‘Butter rice’ is the basis of many celebration dinners: high quality rice is washed several times, before soaking overnight. The rice is washed again and cooked in salted water for ten minutes until just cooked. Then it is drained and a fairly large quantity of butter is stirred in. Meat or vegetable stock is added and the whole is slow cooked for an hour. Saffron or orange peel is frequently added after which, this chelow, as it is called, can be eaten as is, or used to make more elaborate layered dishes of pilau or polow. Thus the number of recipes on how to make the best chelow are legion.

In 1393 a businessman in Paris wrote a treatise that has come down to us as *A Medieval Home Companion*, containing everything you needed to know to live comfortably at that city. The unnamed author begins with a Prologue to His Wife, followed by

details on deportment, chastity, a gardening calendar, hiring servants, making wine, selecting the best eels, a method to keep soup from burning, and many pages of recipes.

Two hundred years later in 1617, Gervase Markham published his best seller *The English Housewife*, a compendium of domestic wisdom along the same lines as the *Medieval Home Companion*. Published at a time of greatly increased literacy, Markham’s book is quite a tome, commenting extensively on health and diet, he goes into raptures over the virtues of oats and oatmeal. Written by men, both books were explicitly directed at women who managed large households.

After this, the floodgates were open and domestic self-help books were published in increasing frequency by both men and women. Tens of thousands of these ready reference books were carefully housed on kitchen and parlour shelves for ready access in time of need, planning a meal, or buying a horse.

In the late 17th Century, an anonymous female writer describes her favourite fireside supper. To make an omelette: ‘take four eggs, the white of two beaten up, some parsley and lemon thyme chopped fine, as much as will fill a tablespoon, a little pepper, salt and nutmeg, these ingredients mix all together with a teacup full of good cream, then fried with butter on a slow fire like a pancake. Serve it up with some clear gravy.’ With a glass of strong ale it just about covers all the major food categories.

Amelia Symmons published the first known *American Cookery* in 1796. In addition to many well established British dishes, Symmons was the first to include instructions ‘to dress a turtle’ and to make ‘a nice Indian Pudding’ with cornmeal, milk and seven eggs. All the comforts of home, plus a few you never thought you needed.

Mrs Isabella Beeton published her hugely successful book of household management in 1861, directing it to ‘The Mistress’ of the house, she opens with a Victorian salvo: ‘as with the Commander of an army, or the leader of an enterprise, so it is with the Mistress of a house.’

The Englishman’s castle now belonged to his wife. Beeton minimized her comments on the building of the house and enlarged all the

Cookbooks on the shelf are reassuring, like jars of preserves.

—Bee Wilson

sections pertaining to the kitchen, parlor, dining and living quarters. *Household Management* is meant to be an educationer section on Fishes begins with seven pages of fine print describing the biology and ecology of the world of fish including locomotion, diet, skeleton, respiration and so on: everything a young Victorian wife never dreamed of. Ever practical, Isabella introduced a recipe for rabbit pie with the eminently sensible, ‘first catch your rabbit’.


Possibly taking this as a challenge, Professor John H Walsh, FRCS published his *Manual of Domestic Economy* (twelve years later and only a few years after Isabella Beeton had died in childbirth, aged 29). Walsh re-establishes the necessity of ‘procurement of a house,’ along with an exegesis on bricks and mortar, heating and ventilation, artificial lighting, fire prevention, gardening, furniture, etc & etc.

His section on food supplies looks as though he borrowed heavily from Gervase Markham 256 years earlier with another lyrical dissertation on oatmeal. Then with manly assertion, he moves onto other material possessions including a twenty-page chapter on the engineering of carriages including something called a Collinge’s Axle that facilitates a high speed without the danger of falling off.

Among his recipes, JH Walsh Esq. includes one of his favourites, called simply, ‘Delicious Breakfast Rolls’: Into one pound of flour rub one ounce of butter, one teaspoon of sugar, a tablespoon of yeast and a little salt. Mix this with a pint of fresh warm milk into a light paste. Let this stand for one hour until well risen then make into small rolls. Adding an egg or two improves the mixture and if you reserve a little of the egg white, you can use it to baste the top of the buns before baking.

In reality, this is a very ordinary bun. What made it special and comforting for Walsh was most probably having one made by a family servant, fresh and hot by the fire on a cold and frosty morning.

With such a wealth of information, who would ever want to leave home? ☞



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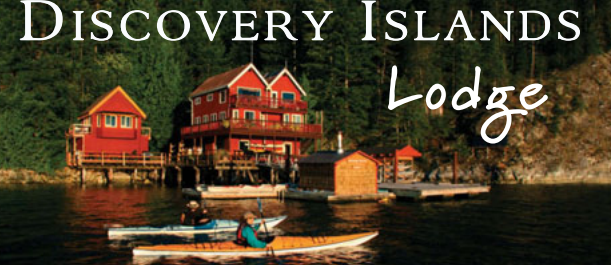
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# Shake Up call

Following a magnitude 4.9 earthquake felt throughout Southern Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland, many British Columbians are talking about what to do to be more prepared in the event of a bigger earthquake.

The earthquake occurred at 11:39pm on Tuesday, December 29. No damage or injuries were reported. Two of Vancouver's SkyTrain lines were shut down briefly, just to check for damage. The earthquake's epicentre was approximately 50 kilometres below the waters on the west side of Sidney Island, just off the Saanich Peninsula.

BC is considered a high-risk earthquake zone. Emergency Management BC urges British Columbians to build an emergency kit to help them cope after catastrophic events, including earthquakes. You should prepare to be on your own for a minimum of 72 hours by developing a household plan, putting together an emergency kit and connecting with your neighbours. By planning and preparing ahead and practicing drills, you and your family will know what to do before, during and after an earthquake.

## Emergency Supply Kit

A basic emergency supply kit should include a first aid kit and medications, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio for updates, a whistle to signal for help, a three-day supply, at least, of non-perishable food items, four litres of water per person per day for at least three days (for drinking and sanitation), some cash in small bills, personal sanitation supplies (garbage bags, moist towelettes, toilet paper etc.), and seasonal clothing.

Consider building a grab-and-go bag for quick evacuations. And don't count on being home when there's an emergency. To prepare for these possibilities, create grab-and-go bags for your home, your work and vehicles. Learn more:

- PreparedBC: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/preparedbc>;
- Basic emergency kit supplies: <http://bit.ly/1JTPKOy>;
- Household preparedness and neighbourhood preparedness guides: <http://bit.ly/1OHIM6P>;
- Emergency Info BC: <http://ow.ly/WCDbj>; and on Twitter: @EmergencyInfo BC and @PreparedBC.

# Saturna Notes - Priscilla Ewbank

What a busy Holiday Season! I always think—with *Island Tides* on publishing break for a couple of weeks and the weather being dark and rainy—that we will rest and contemplate the season of lights and the turn of the year. I think this every year. I never do it.

Working together, all the birds in the Gulf Islands need to be counted for the annual Christmas Bird Count, all the kids have their splendid plays to be attended, the Santa Ship comes (or rather doesn't this year, due to stormy weather), and every small accretion of Islanders has a festivity to which all are welcomed. Every community building hosts an affair: the General Store has a Christmas Eve open house with egg nog and sweets, the Church has Christmas Eve Service, the Community Hall has the Candlelight Dinner, and the Rec Centre lights up their Christmas tree.

On Christmas Day itself, best friends and family settle in or call each other. Suddenly, it's New Years Eve with parties and dinners everywhere, hugs all around. Then, you're writing 2016 on every bit of paper and your BC Property Tax Assessment arrives!

Now, all ages of kids are back into the swing of schedules and school lives at Strong Start, Saturna Elementary, and Saturna Ecological Education Centres.

## An Eye-Opening, Snowy Road Trip

I have concluded that we south coastal drivers have no excuse to collide or entangle our vehicles. On Boxing Day, my youngest daughter and I drove to Kelowna to spend the week with our eldest daughter and her family. By chance, we picked the day that a snowstorm arrived to drive over the Coquihalla.

I have noticed the presence of flashing hazard lights in my car, wondered about what was meant by all-wheel drive, the difference between snow tires and all-season tires. On summer trips, I idly read the signs on the spectacularly scenic mountain road to Merritt that say 'chain up' area.

One drive over the normally 3-lane Coquihalla in snowstorm conditions—3/4's of a lane open, in a convoy of slow-moving, well-spaced, deliberate drivers, following the one white line that

## Gordon Leslie Greer 1934-2015



Gordon Leslie Greer, 81, of Comox, British Columbia passed away peacefully at home on December 2nd 2015, surrounded by his loving family after bravely fighting a long battle with cancer.

Gordon was born in Waterford Ireland to William and Elisabeth Greer. He began his working life as an apprentice for the Waterford flour mills before being promoted to a management position. After leaving Ireland, Gordon worked as a navigator in the Canadian Air Force 407 squadron, retiring in 1977.

Always looking for new opportunities, Gordon started his own business Gordon Greer Ltd, Desolation Sound Yacht Charters which he ran successfully for many years. After selling his business Gordon enjoyed sailing with his wife Margie in Desolation Sound. Gordon's other passions were hunting and horseracing. Semi-retired Gordon also spent many wonderful summers on Hornby Island with family and close friends.

Gordon is survived by his loving wife Margie; three children, Michele, Jacqueline and Darcy; seven grandchildren Tyler, Ashely, Hilary and Lucas McLoughlin, Miranda, Hannah and Bryson Kent; his brother Billy Greer in London; cousins, nieces, nephews and other relatives around the world.

A private family service was held for Gordon in Comox. When you think of Gordon please raise a glass to the good life he lived and take a moment to think of all the good memories you shared. A wonderful man, he will be greatly missed, dearly loved and always in our hearts.

the snowplows were keeping visible—educated me real fast to the difference between summer driving and snow conditions.

So much for those signs that arose out of the nearly white-out road conditions saying, 120km/hr limit, or, an oft-repeated sign at higher elevations, 'Don't pass on the right side of the snow plow.'

I had always wondered why people crashed, car-after-car, in snow conditions—now I know. With keen driving, a good responsive car and the luck of beginners we came to rest gently on a cement snow-buffered barrier right before the Kelowna bridge, after dodging three stopped cars.

Our Kelowna daughter, who works for ICBC, says often drivers don't know who rear-ended who, and who hit who, while they are fighting to keep control of their car and also, possibly, aiding injured people.

Besides ranching, orchards, and shopping malls, an economic mainstay of Merritt and Kelowna must be tow trucking—we had seen six cars partially buried in the centre median snow during our three-hour journey.

Coming home was a piece of cake, though -14°C on the Pennask summit. No falling snow, cautious driving, only one car spun into the ditch at Merritt, and no snow south of Hope.

Besides our family visit which was delightful and snow-encased, what an adventure we two coastal, non-skiers encountered and survived!

Bravo and congratulations to all those upper elevations, northern and east-of-Hope, Canadian winter drivers!

## New Year

2016 is our new year as we head towards the equinox and new days together. We have lost some wonderful, valuable community-minded islanders last year and we forge on, richer and more capable for their contribution to our lives. Each of us know more, have more to give, and more skills to craft powerful lives for ourselves this year. We are fortunate to live in a civil society with strong social ties and natural wealth to share. Let's see what we can make for ourselves and our island lives this year. Life is good! ☺

## Moon Dates

Full: January 23  
New: February 8



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Photo: Bob Estey

A New Year's Day tradition in glorious weather, on Brown Ridge, Saturna Island

# ROUND THE ISLANDS

## Unist'ot'en Camp Life in Winter

Dave Ages & Virginia Monk

The Camp is deep in the throes of winter. But with the Healing Centre (complete with its new high-efficiency wood stove) and the Bunk House, there is plenty of cozy shelter for everyone. While the winter snows bring a temporary halt to pipeline company incursions, there is still plenty to do—trap lines to maintain, firewood to chop, equipment to fix, food to prepare, and so on.

Phase 2 of the Healing Centre construction starts in May. This will be the heart of the building with reception area, furnace room, bathrooms (yes- flush toilets), a meeting room and a greenhouse. All hands, experienced or not, are welcome. But trades skills (particularly carpentry and plumbing) are much appreciated. To join the crew, you must first apply to come up to the Camp. To apply (or for more information about Unist'ot'en Camp and other actions around BC) go to: [unistotensolidarity.com](http://unistotensolidarity.com).

Fundraising for Healing Centre construction is ongoing. Contributions can be made online through the above website.

Watch for news of a major musical solidarity event in Vancouver around the beginning of April.

## Penders' Refugee Family

The spirit of giving year-round giving is alive and well on Pender Island. Through Pender residents' generosity, the Refugee Project has raised \$85,000 to resettle a family.

'I never envisaged this amount of support, when I called the first meeting in September,' said Andrea Spalding. 'It speaks so well of our island communities that people are so engaged. To have everything in place in three months is incredible.'

A house has been found, and many talented Penderites have offered donations of both time and services. ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers, both Arabic and Farsi speakers, dental care, and psychological care are all ready and waiting within our community. Not to mention, garbage collection for the house, and a multitude of volunteers offering to shepherd the new family through the day-to-day intricacies of island life.

December was packed with fundraising events. There is an Afternoon Tea, with an art auction of over 50 works donated by Pender Artists, and a talk by CBC foreign correspondent Patrick Brown, 'No Direction Home – The Refugee Crisis.'

Both the Epicenter Family Cooperative (at the Choral Society concert) and Solstice Theatre donated proceeds from the performances' intermission refreshments. Island children are helping; Epicenter youngsters made and sold Christmas cards; Spring Leaves' home-schoolers went carolling, and the Children's Choir sang for donations at the Driftwood Centre.

Pender's family (just announced to have four young children) has no idea how many people are rooting for them, said Spalding. She smiled, 'It's a heartwarming modern story of offering sanctuary to a family fleeing persecution.'

## Novel Contest Finalists Chosen

Salt Spring's Mother Tongue Publishing has announced the three finalists from the 56 entries in its third Great BC Novel Contest:

*Atomic Road* by Grant Buday, a novel laced with irony and wit, is set on the road from New York to Saskatchewan at the

height of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Clement Greenberg, art critic, is on a mission to murder his rival Harold Rosenberg. Accompanied by the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser and hampered by Jean Claude Piche, a contract killer, all three are derailed by arch patriot Swen, a man with plans of his own.

## Innocence

An infant washed up from the sea,  
From untold terror millions flee.  
What evil spawned this tidal wave?  
From hate and greed can man be saved?  
As tempests sweep the global village  
The innocent are raped and pillaged.  
This tiny body in the sand  
Touched hearts and souls in every land.  
The world wept and shouted shame!  
And asked what culprit can we blame.  
Are we all guilty of this crime?  
This horror happened in our time.  
If we are keepers of the peace,  
Then we must make the violence cease.  
We share one world with many creeds.  
Our Gods will judge us by our deeds.

Ann McLean

The collaborative novel and conceptually intriguing *The Arioso Game* by Linda Rogers and Ben Murray, is a poetic love story between Frank and Wisdom. Told through alternating points of view, poems, prose and illustrations. Thoroughly original, *The Arioso Game* deftly questions fidelity, reality and the assumptions of fiction itself.

*The Causes* by Cathy Stonehouse is a novel set in the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas War and experienced through the lives of two young soldiers from opposing sides. Their meeting is apocalyptic and political with haunting implications that resonate through both of their lives. The prose in this manuscript is elegant, making the ordinary mysterious, and the implausible real.

## Queen of Burnaby Out of Action Till January 31

*Queen of Burnaby* will temporarily be removed from service on the Comox-Powell River route to repair a propeller hub. During this period, *MV Island Sky* will operate on a modified schedule, providing service between Comox, Texada Island and Powell River, while the *North Island Princess* operates on the Saltery Bay-Earls Cove route on a modified schedule. For schedule information consult BC Ferries website: [www.bcferrries.com](http://www.bcferrries.com).



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Barb MacPherson, Coordinator for Pender's Santa Sac Christmas Hamper Program, receives a cheque from Lions' Mark Slater and Janie McAulay. The Pender Islands Lions Club, through community support, was proud to be able to contribute to a fine Christmas tradition.

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# COP21's dust settled, time for action in Canada - Elizabeth May, MP

In the election campaign the Trudeau Liberals' climate platform lacked any commitment to specific targets and lacked any climate plan. They pledged to end all fossil fuel subsidies and to put a price on carbon as well as promising to dispatch newly elected Prime Minister Trudeau to the climate negotiations in Paris (COP21) and to convene the provinces and territories and develop a climate plan within 90 days of the end of COP21. If we take the promise literally, with COP concluding December 12, 2015, the new climate targets should be ready by March 12, 2016.

The clock is also ticking for Canada's role at a major event being held at the United Nations on Earth Day 2016. On April 22 at the UN headquarters in New York, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon will once again welcome world leaders to an official signing ceremony for the Paris Agreement.

This is the perfect opportunity for Prime Minister Trudeau to table Canada's targets. As things stand, our 'intended nationally determined contributions' (or INDCs as they are called in UN-lingo) are the same as those tabled last May by the previous government. I pushed hard for those targets to be jettisoned before COP21, but even most environmental groups gave Trudeau time and did not push for better targets then.

Canada's INDC—30% below 2005 levels by 2030—is the weakest in the G-7. Newly minted Minister for Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna described the existing INDC as the 'floor'. I described it as somewhere in the basement.

The collectivity of INDCs tabled with the UN secretariat on climate change falls far short of what is required to meet the goals agreed to in Paris. That bears repeating: the nations of the world gathered at COP21 agreed to ambitious emissions reductions roughly double the level to which they have currently committed.

To avoid an average global temperature increase of 1.5°C requires that GHG levels stop rising and start falling as soon as possible, as well as virtual decarbonization of the world's economy by 2050.

We may get good news soon. Globally, 2014 growth in GHG emissions nearly stalled; there was only a slight growth in emissions, well below that associated with the level of global economic growth in 2014. There is much speculation that 2015 could prove to be the first year in which GHG levels did not grow at all.

2014 was also the first year in which total investments in renewable energy outpaced investments in fossil fuels. If 2015 holds to that investor preference, we may be on track to meet the first goal—peaking global GHG emissions as soon as possible while poised to move off fossil fuels altogether.

## Canada's Task, Federally & Provincially

For Canada, the task is immediate—every single province and territory needs to redouble efforts and the federal government needs to virtually start from scratch. While Alberta's change of heart and new climate plan is positive news, it cannot be acceptable

in 2015 to have a carbon reduction plan that increases GHG emissions from the oil sands from 70MT to 100MT. While a cap on any industrial sector is a major leap forward, a huge increase in GHG emissions from the oil sands is simply not on.

It is likely that the market and less oil extraction will make that upper limit unreachable, in any event. In other words, the market may reduce expansion in the oil sands well below 100 MT. But it should not be part of a climate plan.

Meanwhile, Alberta's commitment to shut down its coal-fired power plants is set to 2030. It should be possible to reach that target much earlier, as long as federal infrastructure funds support an improved east-west electricity grid.

British Columbia can of course do far more. The carbon tax has worked well, but it is time to raise it, as was the original plan. The commitment to fracking and LNG needs to be shelved, and we need to invest in renewables beyond hydro. Solar photovoltaic and wind power as well as geothermal and tidal should be ramped up.

It is the federal level of government that has a virtually empty tool box. The previous government cancelled existing climate plans back in 2006. There is a strong argument to be made that, at a minimum, Canada's target be accelerated to 2025. That would place our plan on the same base-year and deadline as that of the United States. With frequent reviews of targets and progress, and the first ones set for 2018 for those with targets at 2025, it makes sense for Canada and the US to be in sync.

From my research, the best roadmap to moving rapidly off fossil fuels is found in a report called 'Pathways to Deep Decarbonization'. The report by independent experts was prepared for Sustainable Development Solutions Network. It confirms that the fastest, deep cuts can be made in fuel-switching to get fossil fuels out of electricity generation (a change required in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Atlantic provinces). As well, the report identifies the wasteful use of energy embedded in our buildings and transportation (also a key component of the Green Party platform) as a strategic place for quick results. The electrification of transit is also highlighted.

For Trudeau, there is no shortage of smart policy ideas that can be deployed federally—improving the national building code to high energy efficiency, boosting efficiency of appliances in federal regs, restoring ecoEnergy housing grants and rebates for hybrid and electric car purchases, while deploying the Liberals' promised billions in infrastructure to put a high priority on investments that also reduce GHG—like fast and convenient public transit.

I will also be pressing for the new government to take up the key missing piece from the Paris Agreement—emissions from international aviation and shipping. These are currently outside of any agreement, but they are a huge 6% of total global emissions.

Canada could re-emerge as a leader: if we adopt aggressive targets at home while proposing creative approaches—like a global tax on aviation and shipping fuel—at the G-7 countries' May meeting, hosted by Japan. ☞

# Seabirds going the way of the dodo? - Julie Johnston

I'm no spring chicken, so I've got enough decades in my back pocket to have observed a thing or two about the world. And one of the more alarming things I've witnessed in recent years is a decline in seagull populations.

At first, it wasn't anything that many others would notice. I remember a marine naturalist pooh-pooing my fears a few years ago, insisting the seagulls were just off for the summer, tending their clutches, as usual. But I'm a 'sky-aware' sort of person, and what I was perceiving—a stillness where once clamoured hundreds of circling or bobbing gulls—was an actual plunge in population levels.

An *Island Tides* reader who recently came upon four dead seagulls on a Saturna beach asked what we know about the scarcity of seagulls, wondering what the killer is and who's investigating.

Louise Blight, a conservation biologist at UBC's Centre for Applied Conservation Research, has been wondering the same things. Blight is the lead author of a study that has documented a calamitous drop of almost 60% in Salish Sea glaucous-winged seagulls, the most common species here.

Her team found that seagull populations increased rapidly from a low count in the early 1900s to the 1980s. That's because the 1916 US-Canada *Migratory Birds Convention Act* put a halt to the collecting of gull eggs (folks along the coast used to supply gold miners arriving in Victoria with seagull eggs) and the hunting of the birds. Then came DDT in the 1940s, which slashed populations of bald eagles, the main predator of sea gulls.

Seagull populations peaked in the mid 1980s, a date that correlates with the recovery of bald eagle populations, before beginning to decline again. But, say the UBC researchers, the decline also reflects changes in the quality and availability of marine food. For example, feather samples collected since 1860 have shown a gradual reduction of fish in the gulls' diet.

If seagulls—'the ultimate generalist' according to Blight—are not finding enough to eat, they 'may be telling us there have been some fairly profound changes to local marine ecosystems.'

The normal diet of seagulls—the diet that helps them breed successfully—is shellfish and small fish such as herring (which has decreased in the Georgia Strait) and oolichan (now an endangered species). So gulls have had to turn to

terrestrial foods such as earthworms and garbage (which itself is becoming less available to them as humans deal with their trash more effectively). The research also suggests that food shortages might be leading to cannibalism in some bird colonies.

Peter Arcese, a study co-author who holds the Forest Renewal BC Chair in Conservation Biology in UBC's Faculty of Forestry, explains that the reduction in marine food abundance and quality is partly to blame for calamitous declines in two other bird species in the region; marbled murrelet and western grebe populations have both plummeted by 90%.

Researchers in the UK and New Zealand are also concerned about drops in coastal seagull populations (while urban seagulls are causing more and more problems). UBC's Sea Around Us project has compiled information on more than 500 seabird populations around the world, finding that monitored seabird populations have plunged 70% since the 1950s.


Michelle Paleczny, a master's student with the project, lists the causes: overfishing of the fish that seabirds rely on for food, birds getting tangled and caught in fishing gear, plastic and oil pollution, introduction of non-native predators to seabird colonies, destruction and changes to seabird habitat, and environmental and ecological changes caused by climate change.

When asked what someone living along the coast could do to help the seagulls, Arcese made three suggestions. First, we can lobby governments to stop the 'overharvesting' of forage fish. Next, we can help maintain the natural ecosystems of seagulls by supporting conservation trusts that are setting aside 'substantial habitat in places the gulls can use it.' Finally, we can work to restore the ability of ecosystems to produce the food that gulls require. 'For seabirds of several kinds,' Arcese said, 'that means high quality feeding and breeding habitat.'

David Kirby, an American journalist who wrote *Death at Seaworld*, wonders if seagulls are 'the canaries in the coal mine of the fragile Pacific Northwest.' Their drop, he says, indicates 'a marine ecosystem in crisis,' one that is impacting other marine creatures, including fish-eating orca whales.

I don't know if seagulls are our canaries, but their 'song' has gone quiet. I, for one, miss the raucous racket that was once the soundscape of our coast. ☞

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## Seedy Saturdays' new twists

Seedy Saturday seed exchanges are a February fixture on the coast. And, on Galiano something else has been germinating the last few months. The Seed Library of Galiano (SLOG) starts up this spring. As you know spring starts early on the coast, so on Saturdays, beginning February 6, SLOG will be open from 12-2pm at the Galiano Community Library.

The purpose of the seed library is to loan locally-adapted seeds to community members who wish to grow their own food. Members will save the seed of the best plants and, at the end of the growing season, borrowers will 'return' seed to the library inventory. Thanks to a generous gift from Dan Jason of Salt Spring's Radicle Seed Library, Galiano received a base inventory of seeds to begin.

On Galiano, SLOG encourages everyone, novice to expert, to save seed! Novice seedsavers get support throughout the seed-saving process. A primary objective of seed libraries is to increase islands' food

sustainability. With the challenges experienced by desertification in California and extreme weather around the world, the cost of food is going up. Climate change will increasingly affect the predictability and price of our food supply. Island communities obtain a high percentage of food brought from off-island, and are also vulnerable to ferry service disruptions due to extreme weather events. Having your own veggies on hand makes all kind of sense.

Why save seed? Global seed supply is increasingly controlled by multinationals with no local agenda, and, we are losing diversity in our seed stock. We need to identify, cultivate and save the seeds of crops that flourish in our conditions. Ultimately, there is no food security without seed security.

Salt Spring's Seedy Saturday has changed too. It's now a seedy weekend from February 12-15, with all kinds of activities, films, workshops—watch for advertising. Look for events in other communities. ☞

**Jane Rodney (née Garner) 1940–2015**

Jane passed away peacefully on Monday, December 14, 2015 at the Saanich Peninsula Hospital in Sidney, BC. Jane was predeceased by her parents Ted and Josephine Garner, and husband Michael Rodney.

Jane is survived by her brother David Garner (Marjorie), nephews Geoffery, Stephen and Owen Garner, stepdaughters Patricia Rodney (John), Jody Langlois (Marc), Jennifer Todesco (Jay) and their children.

A private celebration of Jane’s life will follow at a later date.

If friends desire, a donation to a dog rescue charity of their choice may be made in Jane’s name.

Please forward condolences through First Memorial Funeral Services, Victoria: [www.dignitymemorial.ca](http://www.dignitymemorial.ca).

**Coaching – Doug Livingston,**

**Director of Instruction SD N°64, Gulf Islands**

You may ask, why does coaching matter in the context of learning in our schools? Coaching supports individuals in focusing and changing their own behaviors, which itself has value. Coaching skills, modelled by adults, are exactly the skills that students can use to solve their own issues and problems. Perhaps most importantly, when adults become less prescriptive in their attitudes students have the opportunity to feel more in charge of their learning (and their lives).

Fundamentally coaching is a focused conversation designed to support and clarify choices and to move action forward. A coaching conversation can be identified as being based on respect, openness, deep listening, thoughtful questioning and confidentiality. What a great conversation to take part in!

When you are a part of a coaching conversation you are not trying to fix anyone else’s problems. As the ‘coach’ you are listening deeply, asking open-ended questions and moving the conversation to action; as the person being coached you are benefitting from the reflective thinking that questions can provoke, hopefully gaining insight into your own motivations, and preparing for action based on a plan of your own making.

In SD N°64 we have been consciously creating a coaching culture since 2009. Visit: [sd64.bc.ca/district/district-initiatives](http://sd64.bc.ca/district/district-initiatives) for an overview of our district’s coaching initiative. Questions? Contact Linda Underwood at [lunderwood@sd64.bc.ca](mailto:lunderwood@sd64.bc.ca).

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**Islands Trust adopts its Strategic Plan**

Islands Trust Council adopted an updated Strategic Plan for the 2014–2018 Term at its meeting on December 8-10 in Victoria. The plan sets out current priorities to pursue the Islands Trust’s objectives as described in its Policy Statement. It results from a complete review and much public input in 2015. The following is a brief summary; a more detailed listing, with specific tasks, evaluation criteria, and responsibilities can be found on the Islands Trust website.

**Goal A:** To foster preservation and protection of the Trust Area’s ecosystems. Focusing on:

- encouraging voluntary stewardship, expanding NAPTEP;
- protecting high biodiversity areas;
- protecting coastal shorelines with land use planning tools;
- advocating for appropriate oil spill planning and response;
- management of abandoned and derelict vessels; and
- reducing the impacts of shellfish aquaculture practices and industrial marine activities.

**Goal B:** To ensure that human activity and the scale, rate and type of development in the Trust Area are compatible with maintenance of the integrity of trust area ecosystems. Focus:

- reducing community ecological footprints;
- supporting efficient and sustainable transportation systems;

**LETTERS from page 2**

The ministry ‘for’ the environment under Mary Polaks’ leadership talks about science but ignores the evidence gathered by their own people, and the dumping continues.

Never mind that the enormous carbon footprint of the trucking, taking contaminated soil from one place and putting it in a clean watershed, is compounding the problem by three.

Premier Clark probably didn’t mention this while she was in Paris.

Guy Walker, Shawnigan Lake

**Rights To Water**

*The following letter was sent to BC Premier, the Honourable Christy Clark.*

Dear Premier Clark:

On July 28, 2010 the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution #64/292 which is titled The Human Right To Water And Sanitation. In point #1, this resolution states that the UN ‘...recognizes the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights;’

**Vital new dilbit evidence inadmissible, says NEB**  
**Karen G Wristen & Paul C Paquet**

The National Energy Board’s (NEB) ongoing assessment of the Trans Mountain Expansion Pipeline has again demonstrated why the tight timelines imposed by the former Harper government’s restrictive amendments work to defeat the kind of rigorous scientific assessment that the public is led to expect and undeniably deserves.

In a December 17 ruling, the Review Board refused to admit into evidence a formative review by the US National Academy of Sciences commissioned by Congress to assess the potential environmental consequences of spills of diluted bitumen(dilbit). The NEB observed that the proponent (Kinder Morgan) would be unduly prejudiced by admitting the evidence late in the hearing process and refused to extend its timelines to incorporate this new and highly relevant information.

Notably, however, failure to evaluate existing evidence can result in unnecessary harm. The NEB ruling does not address how denying admission of this new evidence might compromise its own assessment and recommendations.

The National Academy paper, published on December 8, addresses ‘whether the transport of diluted bitumen in pipelines has potential environmental consequences that are sufficiently different from those of commonly transported crude oils to warrant changes in regulations governing spill response planning, preparedness, and cleanup’. The answer is an unequivocal ‘yes’.

Dilbit is inclined to submerge quite soon after a spill on water and can sink to the bottom even if the oil is less dense than water. Tracking, confining and cleaning up dilbit is an unresolved problem that current technology does not address effectively. Moreover, regulatory processes have failed to come to grips with these concerns.

By contrast, Trans Mountain’s application asserts that ‘Dilbits...[and other Group 3 hydrocarbons] have been transported throughout the world and the general behaviour of these oils are quite comparable with respect to fate and weathering, and spill countermeasures (Vol. 7, p 7-50)’.

Describing the results of its laboratory analysis, the company ‘claimed that dilbit proved ‘no different than what might be expected of other conventional heavy crudes when exposed to similar conditions’ (Vol. 7, p. 7-56)’.

Importantly, these assertions and claims are largely contradicted by the findings of the far more authoritative National Academy report.

The National Academy report makes seven detailed recommendations to US regulators for changes to spill preparedness and response planning, to address specifically ‘capabilities for detection, containment, and recovery of submerged and sunken oil’.

and

- protecting water quality and quality.

**Goal C:** To sustain island character and healthy communities. Focusing on:

- enhancing, protecting and restoring community character, socio-economic diversity and economic sustainability, using land use planning tools;
- working with other agencies to promote economic sustainability and facilitate exploration of intra and inter island transportation routes; and
- investigating whether relocation of some or all of the Islands Trust Victoria Head Office might better serve the interests of Trust Area constituents.

**Goal D:** The Islands Trust will provide effective, efficient and collaborative governance by:

- strengthening relationships with First Nations;
- improving co-operation and integration with other levels of government;
- improving community and agency understanding and support of the Islands Trust; and
- improving community engagement and participation in Islands Trust work.

Does our provincial government and MoE recognize this human right? Does this right apply to the residents of Shawnigan Lake?

Brian Costello, Shawnigan Lake

**Penelakut Not Kuper**

Dear Editor:

CPAW’s ‘Home of the Orcas’ centrefold in *Island Tides*’ November 26 edition was a nice idea but I would like to draw your attention to one item that should be changed on the map.

The island directly south of Thetis is Penelakut Island. The centrefold has it mislabelled with the name it had from colonial times, Kuper Island. At a time where we should be looking towards reconciliation it is insensitive to use the name Kuper and not the correct name Penelakut which has been the official name of this island for the past five years.

Larry Blackman, Salt Spring Island

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The report goes on to observe: ‘Although many differences between diluted bitumen and commonly transported crudes are well established, there remain areas of uncertainty that hamper effective spill response planning and response to spills. These uncertainties span a range of issues, including diluted bitumen’s behaviour in the environment under different conditions, its detection when submerged or sunken, and the best response strategies for mitigating the impacts of submerged and sunken oil.’

**Study Speaks Directly to Key issues**

The National Academy’s paper is the most comprehensive and rigorous expert review on these matters that has ever been undertaken, and directly speaks to the key issues that the NEB is mandated to address.

The committee that prepared the paper included Canadian and US experts in a broad range of sciences, as well as in pipeline operations and spill response. Its conclusions and recommendations are at odds with the information presented by Trans Mountain. Specifically, the report emphasizes that there is currently no reliable way to clean-up a spill of diluted bitumen, no certainty about the harm that a spill will do, or how to mitigate that harm.

The NEB’s decision to omit this critically relevant information from consideration exemplifies the flawed review process, as does their basis for refusal: choosing expediency over the rights, needs, and safety of the public. Assessing projects of the magnitude of Trans Mountain, particularly ones that involve novel substances about which little is known, demands time and care.

The timelines imposed on the NEB review have obstructed a thorough, careful examination of the issues. Accordingly, this most recent ruling has resulted in highly relevant evidence being excluded. The NEB observed that in its role as a regulator of the expanded pipeline, it could consider the National Academy’s work later on. By that time, however, Kinder Morgan might already be pumping a supertanker-load of dilbit every day, with no reliable plan or equipment in place that can deal effectively with a spill.

*Karen Wristen is Executive Director of Living Oceans Society. Dr Paul Paquet is senior scientist for Raincoast Conservation Foundation.*

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News Roundup

Ferry Workers Ink 5-Year Deal

On December 18, BC Ferry & Marine Workers’ Union members ratified a new five-year deal with BC Ferry Services Inc with an overwhelming 88% ‘Yes’ vote.

Graeme Johnston, Provincial President is very pleased by the results and says that it is a validation of free collective bargaining and that gains can be made at the bargaining table. ‘This is an historic vote. For only the fourth time in our union’s history has an agreement been reached without the intervention of a third party and before the expiration date of the contract,’ Johnston said.

BC Ferry & Marine Workers’ Union (BCFMWU) is the largest marine union in Canada, representing over 3,600 members from across 35 vessels, 47 ports of call, and numerous other job sites. BCFMWU membership includes a diverse group of trades, ships officers, commercial services drivers, and both ship and shore workers.

Shawnigan Lake Residents Oppose Malahat LNG Proposal

Shawnigan Lake residents, already organized to defend their drinking water, are also getting together to fight a proposed floating LNG plant moored at the Bamberton Lands on Saanich Inlet. A Town Hall meeting at Shawnigan Lake Community Centre attracted over 100 residents to discuss the plan of Steelhead LNG and the Malahat First Nation.

Steelhead have found space for a Community Relations office in Mill Bay and have joined the local Chamber of Commerce.

The citizen meeting was organized by Chris Clay, owner of Warmland Medicinal Cannabis Centre in Mill Bay.

Duke Point Double Protest

On December 21, citizens held a double protest at Duke Point. Supporters gathered for Walbran Valley ancient forests preservation and Shawnigan Lake water rights.

Why Duke Point? Organizers say that Nanaimo’s Duke Point is the port of entry for barged off-island contaminated soils bound for a dump site which residents believe threatens their water supply (see story, page 1). It is also the location from which Teal Jones booms and barges ancient forest logs from the slopes of the Central Walbran Valley and elsewhere on Vancouver Island, to its mill in Surrey.

Port Renfrew CoC Calls For Protection of Central Walbran

Conservationists were delighted in mid-December when Port Renfrew Chamber of Commerce, representing 73 businesses in the

region, issued a statement to the provincial government requesting that it protect the Central Walbran Valley from old-growth logging.

Port Renfrew, formerly a logging town, has been transformed in recent years into a big tree tourism destination. Hundreds of thousands of tourists have come from around the world in recent years to visit some of Canada’s largest trees in the nearby Avatar Grove and the Central Walbran Valley.

Big tree attractions include: the Red Creek Fir, the world’s largest Douglas-fir tree; Big Lonely Doug, Canada’s second-largest Douglas-fir; San Juan Spruce, until recently when its top broke off in a storm, Canada’s largest Sitka spruce tree; and Harris Creek Spruce, one of the largest Sitka spruce trees in Canada.

Logging Company Gets Renewed Injunction

Meanwhile, logging company Teal Jones obtained a new injunction against logging protesters in the Walbran Valley in a BC Supreme Court hearing. The injunction came into effect January 5 and expires on March 31.

The Wilderness Committee is concerned that the court order’s terms are too broad and will discourage lawful public activities. The injunction now includes 50-metre zones limiting public access around logging, equipment and work crews. The Wilderness Committee thinks that this is will discourage the public from witnessing and photographing big-tree logging.

Torrance Coste, Vancouver Island Campaigner for the Wilderness Committee says, ‘This injunction might scare people away from going to the Walbran Valley to see the ancient forest, and it could chill public discussion about the logging and civil disobedience that has occurred in the area.’

‘We’ll continue to monitor the Valley,’ Coste added, ‘take photographs and bring people in to see this world-class ecosystem up close. Teal Jones’ own lawyers told the court there is nothing wrong with citizens being in the Walbran in accordance with the injunction, so we encourage people to get up there, conduct themselves lawfully and witness what’s happening.’

For more information on how to visit the Walbran: Torrance Coste: 250-516-9900, [torrance@wildernesscommittee.org](mailto:torrance@wildernesscommittee.org).

Weaver Now Leads BC Greens

The BC Green Party has appointed Andrew Weaver as its leader; there were no other candidates for the job. Weaver is the only



Photo:TJ Watt

Getting the scope of a giant. A tourist tries to capture the majesty of a Central Walbran ancient tree.

Green Party MLA in the BC legislature. Interim Leader Adam Olsen is now Deputy Leader.

El Niño May Be Past Its Peak

High ocean surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific, characteristic of the current strong El Niño climate event, appear to be moderating slightly, according to the Australian Bureau of Meteorology. However, they are still at ‘strong El Niño levels’.

Computer climate models suggest that the 2015–2016 El Niño will decline during the coming months, to be followed by either a return to neutral conditions or a cooling La Niña event.

The current El Niño event has been described as one of the top three of the last 50 years, and has been blamed for weather disturbances around the world.

Site C Started; Cost Escalation Predicted

Despite outstanding First Nations lawsuits, the BC government has started land clearing and roadbuilding for the massive Site C dam on the Peace River. Aerial photographs of the project show clearcut logging of large areas and the environmental destruction of the site and surrounding area. A site has also been cleared for a massive ‘man camp’ indicating that rather than using local labour, the project will employ workers imported from elsewhere. In view of massive layoffs in Alberta, this is a likely source.

The cost of the project was said to be \$7.9 billion in mid-October; the Minister of Energy attested that the cost estimate had been confirmed as ‘reliable by top international experts’. In December, Premier Christy Clark said the cost would be \$8.5 billion. The project was approved days later at \$8.775 billion.

An Oxford University study said that costs are underestimated in almost all public works projects, by an average of 28%. It commented that initial underestimation leads to a falsely high cost-benefit calculation for the project. This assists in its approval, despite the fact that the project may turn out to be uneconomic, or the money could have been better used elsewhere.

Alberta’s Climate Policy Goes Very Easy On Tar Sands

Alberta’s Premier Rachel Notley’s new GHG 2030 target restricts tar sands developments to those already operating and under construction. Notley’s tar sands target is for 3 million barrels per day/100 megatons of GHG. Currently, tar sands production of 2.2 million barrels per day (mbpd) results in 70 megatons of GHG per year. Alberta’s total 2030 target is for 273 megatons (MT).

Canada’s current Paris INDC for 2030 is for 523 MT (30% below 2005 levels). That target may well be for too large a share of the global target needed to meet the COP21 objective of restricting temperature rise to 1.5°C.

The Alberta target, announced November 22nd just ahead of COP21, appears to have been the result of secret negotiations involving major environmental organizations (ForestEthics, Greenpeace, Equiterre) and major tar sands corporations (Canadian Natural Resources, Suncor, Shell Canada,

Cenovus). Other environmental organizations, First Nations, other tar sands corporations and the public have complained that they were left out of the negotiations.

The deal does not appear to ‘leave it in the ground’. However, in the face of falling crude oil prices, the industry has cancelled projects valued at \$1.3 billion in the past year. Some \$6 billion in future projects have permits, but most of these would likely not go ahead.

The deal also caps Alberta’s other emission sources, besides the tar sands, most notably a phase-out of all emissions from coal-powered electricity generation by 2030. It imposes at \$20 per tonne economy wide carbon price starting January 2017, rising to \$30 in January 2018.

Notley said that the \$3 billion annual revenue expected will be ‘revenue neutral’. This does not appear to mean it will be returned to taxpayers (as in BC) but that it will be spent in Alberta by the government.

Alternate Port Sites Proposed

Quoting the proponents’ own risk analyses indicating a 10% chance of major marine spills in 50 years of future operation, the Concerned Professional Engineers organization proposes that the National Energy Board should consider alternative port sites for the Northern Gateway and Trans Mountain crude oil (dilbit) pipelines. This association of experienced engineers notes that little is known about the behaviour of bitumen when spilled in salt water, and that provisions for funding of spill cleanup are ‘woefully inadequate’.

With these facts in mind, they propose that the NEB should examine the possibility of moving the Northern Gateway terminal from Kitimat to Prince Rupert or Port Simpson. The Trans Mountain terminal, they recommend, should be moved from Westridge, on Burrard Inlet, to Roberts Bank.

They are concerned that the NEB’s evaluation procedure does not appear to allow consideration of such alternatives. They have written to Prime Minister Trudeau suggesting that the NEB process might be changed to include this.

Carbon Capture Project In Trouble

Saskatchewan’s Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) facility is not reaching its targeted performance. The plant near Estevan, on which Saskatchewan’s GHG emissions strategy depends to a large extent, is intended to capture carbon emissions and pump them underground to aid in ‘enhanced recovery’—getting more oil out of an old oil field.

However, it has so far only reached 40% of its planned capacity; it should be at 80% at this point. It is still not commercially operational. Oilfield operator Cenovus have so far fined SaskPower \$12 million for non-performance, and a dispute resolution process is underway.


The plant was designed by SNC-Lavalin and has been described as having ‘serious design issues’. The federal government contributed \$200 million to its cost, and has also contributed \$156 million to two similar Alberta projects. ☞

# What's On?

**Wednesday, Thursday & Friday, January 13, 14, & 15**  
**Elizabeth May, MP Townhall Meetings** — PENDER: Wednesday, January 13, 5:30–7pm, Community Hall; MAYNE: Thursday, January, 14, 6–7:30pm, Community Centre; SATURNA: Friday, January 15, 6–7:30pm, Community Hall • PENDER, MAYNE, SATURNA

**Now till Sunday, January 31**  
**Salt Spring Photography Club's ArtSpring Lobby Show**—it's the time of year when we need to brighten our lives with splashes of light and colour. This show will definitely help. Please enjoy the works of dozens of SSI photographers • ArtSpring Lobby, 100 Jackson Ave, Ganges • Info: [www.ssphotog.ca](http://www.ssphotog.ca) • SALT SPRING

**Tuesday, February 9**  
**Live Your Best Life Using Law of Attraction**—join Michael Losier, bestselling author of *Law of Attraction* and former radio host on Oprah & Friends™; this training workshop uses techniques including NLP to make Law of Attraction work in your life. • Hotel Grand Pacific • Register at [lawofattractionvictoria.com](http://lawofattractionvictoria.com) • [info@geoffgossion.com](mailto:info@geoffgossion.com) • VICTORIA



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