

Gulf Islands' Island Tides

Every Second Thursday and at www.islandtides.com

Volume 15 Number 14

Tsawwassen to Vancouver Island & On-line

July 17, 2003

Attractions & Accommodation

Vancouver Island & The Gulf Islands, Back Page

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement N° 40020421



Photo: Salt Spring Historical Archives

Salt Spring Island's community photo archive goes on-line. Viewers can help identify photos as well as enjoy a fascinating browse. This one from the Bond Collection is entitled 'Milking the Cows' (see story this page for more).

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Saturna rec centre receives million dollar grant

Steven Tait

After ten years of local planning, fund raising and lobbying, the Saturna Recreation Centre Society has finally got its wish. They have been granted two-thirds of the funding to build a new Recreation and Cultural Centre. On June 27, 2003 the Canada / British Columbia Infrastructure Program awarded Saturna Island \$1 million towards the completion of the new centre.

The grant is designed to aid the daily needs of the community which 'will be better served in terms of civic and recreational programs' says Minister of Environment David Anderson. 'Children and youth, especially, will benefit from the increased educational and recreational services,' Anderson added.

The Saturna Island Lions Club initiated the project when they realized the need for a gymnasium for school children. Eventually land was found and donated by the Money family and F. Williams Logging Co. with the Saturna Island Lions paying for subdivision costs. As the project developed, the Lions identified the need for a society to be formed to cover broader community input.

Don Piper, President of the Saturna Recreation Centre Society, is elated and feels rewarded after years of hard work lobbying to get the funding, 'We're now required to produce the balance of the funding, our one-third. The community has pledged most of this but we still need more to complete the project. I'm pleased that since this announcement many people within the community have expressed their support and have come forth with additional donations.'

The new facility won't replace the Community Hall close to the Lyall Harbour ferry dock. The hall, built in 1933, holds up to one hundred people and its lot size limits expansion.

The rec centre site is close to the Saturna General Store and the Recycling Depot. The new centre will

REC CENTRE, please turn to page 3

New tenders to compete with GSX/VIGP

Patrick Brown

At the conclusion of the BC Utilities Commission hearings in Nanaimo on July 3, BC Hydro proposed to call for firm tenders for alternative ways to provide for Vancouver Island's future electricity needs.

The tender call would cover a variety of proposals which have been put forward during the hearings. The alternatives include a Terasen (formerly BC Gas) proposal to increase the flow of the existing gas pipeline to Vancouver Island, generation proposals from NorskeCanada (pulp mill co-generation, 300MW or more), Green Island (Gold River power generation, 105MW), and Hillsborough/ Quinsam (coal-fired power).

BC Hydro's CEO Larry Bell made it clear that Hydro would prefer that, while the BCUC approval of the Georgia Strait/Vancouver Island gas pipeline proposal may be conditional upon BC Hydro carrying out the request for tenders for alternatives, BC Hydro opposes having the Utilities Commission make the final decision. (Hydro does, after all, have the final responsibility for ensuring electrical supply to Vancouver Island.)

Judging Competing Bids

There was considerable discussion on how BC Hydro would evaluate the competing tenders. It proposes that it will be done on the basis of the present value of incremental costs, though this methodology was questioned by the Commission. Some potential bidders questioned how this would work and were skeptical whether the bidding process would be fair. An independent evaluator will work with Hydro to monitor the process.

Hydro has made it clear that if none of the bids were satisfactory, it would revert to the Georgia Strait/Vancouver Island gas pipeline.

Greenhouse Gas Costs

Intervenors at the BCUC hearings also raised questions about Hydro's treatment of greenhouse gas (GHG) liabilities in the financial evaluation. Hydro has recently announced a change in policy whereby they

expect to generate their own GHG credits from PowerSmart and Green Energy initiatives rather than purchasing GHG offset credits on the open market.

Time is Critical

Hydro emphasized any alternative to VIGP would have to meet strict requirements for delivery date, reliability, and cost. But Hydro has not made it clear whether the 265MW VIGP Duke Point plant would be run fulltime as a base load or part time as a peak load plant. Hydro still anticipates a power shortage on Vancouver Island by 2007, though their peak consumption estimates have been revised downward. Coincidentally, 2007 is when the existing undersea transmission line will be derated to zero (not shut down, just derated).

Hydro also anticipates constructing a new 230MW power line from the Mainland, but does not expect this to be operational before 2010.

Initial information on the Call for Tenders will be available in September, but Hydro says a decision must be made early in 2004, which is the latest date that a turbine can be ordered to ensure that the VIGP is operational by 2007. Hydro's contract with Williams Pipelines for the GSX runs out in March 2004.

Cost of Terasen's Proposal

In view of major disagreements between Terasen and Hydro on the cost of Terasen's pipeline upgrade, BCUC has instructed both companies to work together to ensure that figures used for gas delivery costs could reliably be used by both VIGP and other bidders, some of whom are relying on Terasen to deliver gas to them.

Wrapping it Up

The BCUC chair, in wrapping up the hearings, made a point of quoting Hydro CEO Larry Bell, 'The application before you represents an important juncture in consideration of energy

ISLAND ENERGY, please turn to page 2

Building virtual bridges to the past

Gail Neumann

The Salt Spring Historical Archives is providing new opportunities for Islanders to discover their history. Thousands of pictures from several archival collections are now available online at saltspringarchives.com. The website, developed and built over the past two years, includes pioneer family collections and local historical documents.

Archivist Mary Davidson and a team of dedicated volunteers amassed the collections over the years and housed them in an acid free, protected environment, in the basement of the library.

Two years ago Frank Neumann offered his services to the archives and trained the volunteers in computer use. A web designer and developer by trade (and former Saturna resident), Neumann began to build a website to put the photographic collection online. The website is still in progress and according to Neumann it won't be done until history is finished.

Even though the website allows Islanders to view the photographic collections without setting foot in the archives, visitors can still come by the tiny office at 129 McPhillips Avenue. It's open on Thursday mornings from 10-11:30am for those who prefer to see the original photographs.

Some photographs in the online collections include people and places that have not yet been identified. The public is invited to peruse those pictures and provide any known details.

Although space is limited, the archivists encourage people with collections of historical photographs to bring them to the archives. The photographs can be donated outright for preservation or loaned to the archives for digital reproduction. The copies will become part of the collection and may be displayed on the website or made available to researchers of Island history.

Neumann would eventually like to include collections from the Southern Gulf Islands on the website. For more information call Mary Davidson at 250-653-4357. Frank Neumann can be contacted at saturnagraphics.com.

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Floating music school - Richard Moses

It's a bit too early for me, but I must admit it is quite beautiful at Salt Spring Island's Long Harbour Ferry Terminal at 6:15 in the morning; the sun sparkles on the water, birds swoop and plunge, and there is that marvelous feeling in the air that always seems to accompany the departure of a ship.

Sure enough, here he comes, my reason for being here: laden down with trumpet case slung over a shoulder, in one hand a big bag full of music stands, and in the other a sizeable suitcase loaded with music, he is Mitch Howard, man of limitless energy, unbounded imagination, and a bottomless well of ideas. We board together, heading down the ramp, then up the stairs and up more stairs to the topmost lounge on the good ship *Queen of Nanaimo* where he begins moving chairs and assembling stands for the band.

The band? On an early morning BC Ferry boat? Yes, indeed, but first we have to pick up the musicians. Ten or so will come aboard when we stop at Pender Island, four or five more at Mayne, and another ten or so from Galiano—including three oboists! Up to twenty-seven players have been known to appear, but the numbers vary from week to week.

These are school district middle school students, and this is their school music program. They will assemble and rehearse all the way over to Tsawwassen terminal and back disembarking in reverse order. Most of them never played an instrument until eight weeks ago when the program began.

The idea had been afoot for at least two years, the Middle Years Task Force on Salt Spring Island was concerned that the small K-8 elementary schools on the other Islands had few musical opportunities. Salt Spring teacher Keiko Taylor came up with the notion of actually teaching on the ferry. BC Ferries' Stephen Nussbaum was eager to cooperate, offering free passage for the students, and even storage space on the ship. Then, along came Howard. Already the bandmaster at Salt Spring Island Middle School, he found himself with a weekly spare day when the Korean students he'd been shepherding, ended their stay. Perfect! In no time students on the islands were renting trumpets, clarinets, flutes, saxophones—and oboes, and the band was born.

We are approaching Otter Bay on Pender Island now, and Mitch must descend to the car deck so the students can actually see him before boarding. We search the cluster of walk-ons, but find only Callum toting a large tenor sax case. The others, we are told, have gone off on a swimming/bowling field trip. Never mind. Up we go. Callum unpacks the sax and places his music folder on a stand, then, according to custom, heads off to find breakfast—it is still only 7:10!

As we near Village Bay terminal, Callum reappears and starts noodling as Mitch disappears to greet the 'Mayners.' Soon enough, here they come, excited and chatting away: an alto sax and two trumpets. (Sometimes a few Saturna Islanders arrive on Mayne the night before and sleep-over in order to catch this unique ferry.) They unpack quickly, tootle a bit, and even before the ship pulls away, Mitch has them starting on a new piece: 'Here's the Flintstones.'

'Let's just try the first note,' he suggests, but before they can begin, the ship's whistle sounds. 'OK,' he says, 'here we go' and, picking up his own trumpet, he blows harmony with the whistle. Now the young quartet studies the music, and on the downbeat, sounds the first note of the Flintstone's theme: it bears a remarkable resemblance to the ship's whistle!

Galiano is just across the channel and Mitch disappears and appears again, this time with a sextet of young ladies—a flute, a clarinet, another trumpet, and—TA DA!—the three oboists.

'Why the oboe?' I ask Mitch later, recalling that this is a notoriously difficult instrument to master.

'Well,' says he, 'when I went over to their school to announce this program, I mentioned that what was really needed in bands were oboes and bassoons, so I guess the three pals just decided to tackle it.'

Now we have a band! Ten lively and eager young musicians. They begin to warm up: scales, tonguing, quarter notes, triplets making a good sound together. Mitch's constant praise flows over them: 'Great!...Well done!...I can hear you over there!' They bask and smile.

A few regular passengers also occupy this lounge now, and they seem quite content to stay right where they are.

He tunes these musical tyros. 'Yes!', says Mitch to one of the oboe players, 'and it's almost the same note!'

Now the group pulls out *O Canada*. And off they go. The sound is brutally joyful. The wrong notes and the out-of-tune-

ness and the strange rhythms are not important right now. It is the fact that they are actually playing musical instruments, playing in a band! We all struggle some more with the national anthem. The oboists, Emily, Emily, and Laura, fiddle with their reeds and make wondrous reedy sounds.

Tsawwassen is nigh and this means it's break time. Away they all fly and the conductor collapses into a chair. 'I love this,' he says, before heading off for some coffee.

It is an especially busy day for the ferry and there is a 45 minute delay in loading the vehicles for the return trip. No matter! All the more time to practice. As the band reassembles, it's time for *The Flintstones*, again and it goes quite well. It actually goes amazingly well considering the mere two months of experience most of these youngsters have. Mitch looks at a trumpet player, 'Hey, great: I almost heard you!'

As the ship backs out of Tsawwassen, the juddering of the engine gives a wonderful vibrato to the whole ensemble. The lounge now has several dozen passengers, none of whom was prepared for this impromptu 'concert.' One woman, looking just a bit frazzled as she begins to relax in a chair, catches my eye: 'Are they going to play all the way across?' 'I think so,' I reply. I look around a bit later and she is gone. Nobody else says a word, and after a rousing rendering (some spoilsports might say 'rending') of 'Fidgets,' the band's favorite tune, there is applause from the patient passengers on this musical ferry.

(The next day, in downtown Ganges, I happen to bump into the 'frazzled' woman, who explains that she was having a trying day, and apologizes for not staying to listen to the budding band. We have a good chuckle.)

At Galiano's Sturdies Bay, 60% of the band departs, and Mitch decides to call it a day. 'See you next week!' he calls. At Village Bay we bid farewell to our alto sax man and to two earnest trumpeters. Callum is still noodling on his tenor sax as we near his home port on Pender. And then it was just Mitch, folding music stands, sorting and stashing music and getting ready for Long Harbour.

At almost 2pm we pull in; he's been up since 5:30, will do it all again next week, and the next. Truly a labour of love, not something just anybody would take on. What a very special group of young people, and what a great gift from Mitch, from Keiko Taylor, and School District #64—and from the oft-maligned Ferry Folks.

There is a real possibility, what with school cutbacks, that this remarkable program will be unable to continue next year. What a loss! True, these blossoming students have already been given a start, but what a shame it would be to break this great circle of learning. /

Island Tides							
AT FULFORD HARBOUR							
JULY							
Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.	Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.
15	0000	9.5	2.9	23	0655	3.6	1.1
	TU 0345	10.2	3.1		WE 1555	8.9	2.7
	MA 1140	0.3	0.1		ME 1755	8.9	2.7
	1955	11.2	3.4		2310	9.8	3.0
16	0100	8.9	2.7	24	0730	3.0	0.9
	WE 0440	9.8	3.0		TH 1640	9.5	2.9
	MA 1220	1.0	0.3		JE 1945	9.5	2.9
	2030	11.2	3.4		2340	9.8	3.0
17	0205	8.2	2.5	25	0810	2.3	0.7
	TH 0535	9.2	2.8		FR 0715	10.2	3.1
	JE 1300	2.0	0.6		VE 2120	9.5	2.9
	2100	11.2	3.4				
18	0305	7.5	2.3	26	0015	9.8	3.0
	FR 0635	8.2	2.5		SA 0850	2.0	0.6
	SA 1340	3.0	0.9		SA 1745	10.5	3.2
	2125	10.8	3.3		2215	9.5	2.9
19	0400	6.9	2.1	27	0105	9.8	3.0
	SA 0800	7.5	2.3		SU 0925	1.6	0.5
	SA 1415	4.3	1.3		DI 1815	10.5	3.2
	2150	10.5	3.2		2250	9.5	2.9
20	0450	5.9	1.8	28	0150	9.8	3.0
	SU 0950	7.2	2.2		MO 1005	1.3	0.4
	DI 1450	5.6	1.7		LU 1845	10.8	3.3
	2210	10.5	3.2		2315	9.5	2.9
21	0535	4.9	1.5	29	0240	10.2	3.1
	MO 1205	7.2	2.2		TU 1045	1.0	0.3
	LU 1530	6.9	2.1		MA 1910	10.8	3.3
	2230	10.2	3.1		2345	9.2	2.8
22	0620	4.3	1.3	30	0330	10.2	3.1
	TU 1435	8.2	2.5		WE 1120	1.0	0.3
	MA 1625	7.9	2.4		ME 1930	10.8	0.3
	2250	9.8	3.0				

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Whoops!

In our July 3 GS-X pipeline story, we referred to Norske Skog. The correct company name is NorskeCanada, and they operate three paper mills at Crofton, Port Alberni, and Elk Falls on Vancouver Island. They also operate pulp mills at Crofton and Elk Falls, as well as a paper mill at Powell River on the mainland. Please see their advertisement on page 8 for free mill tours.

ISLAND ENERGY, from page 1

supply, not only on Vancouver Island but also for future energy policy and planning for British Columbia until 2025 or thereabouts.'

Which Penguin Goes First?

Other approval bodies are still considering the GSX/VIGP proposal.

The NEB/CEAA Joint Review Commission has now ruled on a motion by GSXCCC (Concerned Citizen's Coalition) to reopen their hearings to consider the Terasen alternative to the GSX. They have denied the application on the basis that the Terasen proposal is at too early a stage. The Terasen evidence, they said does not appear to have, 'the potential to have an impact on the ultimate decision of the Panel.' Their decision is expected in the fall.

The provincial Environmental Assessment Office, also reviewing VIGP, has announced that it will not publish its conclusions until two weeks after the BCUC decision. The Washington State Department of Ecology has still not announced whether it will hold hearings. It seems no-one wants to be first to rule on this controversial proposal! /

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Who Pays the Price of Iraq? -Patrick Brown

The original US proposal to take control of Iraq is carefully laid out in a document entitled *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces, and Resources for a New Century*, published in September 2000, by a think tank entitled the 'Project for a New American Century.' The task, it says, 'is to preserve an international security environment conducive to American interests and ideals'.

The PNAC's 'Founding Statement of Principles' says, 'it is important to shape circumstances before crises emerge, and to meet threats before they become dire.' Thus, preemptive war.

With some of the other more marketable excuses fading into fickle history, it's clear that US Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz was quite accurate when asked recently why the US had chosen Iraq for a demonstration area for its new highly mobile and technological form of warfare. He suggested that what was unique about Iraq is that it was 'on a sea of oil'.

But in the UK, Tony Blair was still defending the 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' rationale. So Wolfowitz hastened to clarify his remarks, saying that because Saddam had large oil revenues, 'the US had no economic options by means of which to achieve its objectives,' and so had to resort to the military. This clarification was erased a couple of days later when somebody pointed out that this implied the US had resorted to war as a means of advancing its economic interests. Imagine!

Now that L. Paul Bremer has had a few weeks to settle into his post as the successor to General Jay Garner as the successor to Saddam Hussein at the head of the Iraqi government, it's time to take a preliminary look at who pays for this Great American Adventure.

Identifiable Costs

The costs of the initial military attack on Iraq have now been estimated at \$60 billion (all dollars in this article are US). This for a war which President Bush declared over at the beginning of May. These costs were paid mainly by the US government, with some participation by members of the 'Coalition of the Willing.'

Unfortunately, the US has been unable to withdraw military forces since then, as the task has evolved into one of a military occupation of a not entirely friendly country. The US appeared from the beginning ill-prepared to take on this task. So the monthly cost of occupation is not terribly different from the monthly cost of war.

The Iraqi people, of course, shoulder the greatest costs. But the costs of rebuilding Iraq's physical (electrical grid, water systems, hospitals, schools, etc.) and governmental (only the oil ministry was spared) infrastructure could be \$100 billion or more - nobody knows for sure.

All of this infrastructure will be paid for by US taxpayers (no, not the rich ones) and has plunged the US federal budget deep into the red for many years to come. Iraq is going to be a very expensive colony to maintain, and all these costs add to

the US balance of payments deficit.

But then there's the oil. Mr. Bush has frequently promised that the oil revenues will be used 'for the benefit of the Iraqi people,' and then presented contracts for rebuilding Iraq to well-connected US firms. In other words, revenues from Iraqi oil would be used to rebuild the country, saving money for the US government while ensuring that the US economy benefits.

Since Iraqi oil is still not flowing at anything like prewar levels, we don't know how much of a benefit this will be.

Pricing Iraqi Oil

In a previous article, I suggested that one of the reasons the US wished to attack Iraq is that the Saddam government had priced its oil in Euros, rather than dollars, and was attempting to convince fellow OPEC members to do the same. Some readers felt this wasn't enough reason for an invasion.

Well, the US now has complete control of whatever oil Iraq produces, and the Iraqi seat at OPEC is vacant and may well remain that way. And Iraqi oil is once again priced in dollars.

Devaluation

Those dollars, however, are severely devalued. Nations no longer control the value of their currency. Well over 90% of foreign exchange transactions are not connected directly with trade, but are speculative. So perceptions have a significant effect on currency values. President Bush says he's in favour of a 'strong' dollar, but in fact all he can do is talk; it's apparent that many people don't believe him. The increasing US budget deficit, and the increasing US balance of payments deficit (\$3.5 trillion) speak louder and more clearly than he does.

As the war developed, the US dollar has become devalued against the Euro by at least 20%. The Euro was worth \$0.88 at the beginning of 2002. As I write, the Euro trades around \$1.13, and it has been as high as \$1.19. Here lies a great cost of the war, and in fact the greatest cost of US policy.

The dollar has, since soon after the Second World War, been the world's only reserve currency, the 'safe haven' to which investors and speculators alike fled in times of economic uncertainty. The Euro has only been in existence since the beginning of 2000. It has now become a credible alternative 'safe haven,' backed by a growing group of economically robust European nations.

The devaluation of the dollar means that the US balance of deficit payments has been reduced by 20%. However, that debt was represented by loans, investments in the US by foreigners, or dollars in circulation outside the US and it will be paid off in devalued dollars. This seriously damages all the world's economies, including Europe and East Asia.

But finally, who shoulders the greatest loss? Americans, of course; the value of all their assets has been reduced by 20%. Who could have imagined that free-market capitalism could punish the actions of the US government in such a devastating fashion? /

Salt Spring Conservancy announces Martin Williams land purchase

The Salt Spring Island Conservancy announces the completion of a 20 ha (50 acre) purchase of land from Martin Williams of Salt Spring Island. It was subdivided for the purpose of this purchase from a 64 ha (159 acre) parcel of land owned by Martin Williams who, 'wanted it left in its natural state.' As part of the purchase agreement, Mr. Williams dedicated a right of way across the remainder of his parcel and his separate residential lot to allow permanent access to the trail network from Toynbee Rd. The landowner originally approached the Islands Trust Fund Board in 1990 with an offer to sell this land but the Board was not able to conclude a satisfactory agreement at that time. The purchase which was made possible by the contributions of off- and on-Island groups and individual.

The site is adjacent to 163 acres of crown land plus 56 acres of land owned by the Islands Trust Fund. This land purchase protects open Douglas fir/arbutus forest on the south-facing ridge of Mount Erskine, including part of the popular Jack Fisher Trail with its magical fairy doors and panoramic views. The land contains mature fir groves, rare plant communities, upland bog vegetation, sensitive wildlife habitat as well as dramatic rocky outcrops and viewpoints. These natural features are symbolic of the southern Gulf Islands.

The property will be held and managed by the Salt Spring Island Conservancy which was formed in 1994 to help the community preserve natural habitats on Salt Spring Island. A conservation covenant, held by the Islands Trust Fund and the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee is registered on the title. /

REC CENTRE from page 1

have the capacity to hold up to two hundred and fifty guests. There will be meeting rooms, a lounge and a gymnasium. The gymnasium will be the only covered play area for school children on the island. There will also be a kitchen for fund-raising events and the facility will also act as the disaster relief centre. It will have geo-thermal heating to significantly reduce costs—a major concern in a small community.

It will also be home to a new medical clinic. The current clinic is in a building shared with the local fire department where access is difficult for seniors.

The society will need to continue looking for donations to complete the project. Receipts for income tax purposes will be issued and cheques can be made to the Saturna Recreation Centre Society, PO Box 171, Saturna Island V0N 2Y0. /

Oil is a key world issue. We have been publishing articles about it since the Afghan war. We are now gathering them in an archive on our website www.islandtides.com A new series on oil will begin in upcoming issues. If you are a ferry reader, you can download the complete current edition from the website.


Peninsula home care growing

Peninsula Community Services has delivered home support to the Southern Gulf Islands this year following the transfer of the contract for services from Salt Spring. The peninsula agency has been delivering services to total of 400 clients on the Islands and the Saanich Peninsula.

On July 1, a further extension of its jurisdiction was made into Saanich East and West, an area bordered by Shelbourne, Hillside and the Gorge. This time the additional number of clients was substantial. 'Our goal was a smooth transition for 700 in-coming home support clients,' said Isobel Mackenzie, Executive Director of Peninsula Community Services (PCS).

The non-profit, community-based agency's staff has risen from 200 to about 400 people. PCS expects to deliver about 240,000 hours of home support service over the coming year. Provision of home support ensures that people who need some assistance to continue living independently, comfortably and safely in their homes, can do so. /

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CROFTON

TWO RAVENS GALLERY, Joan Street, 2 blocks from ferry. Chris Johnson (aka Ice Bear, muralist, painter and sculptor—www.icebearstudio.com), Ric Poll and Ed Peekeekoot, plus Cowichan region guest artists. Contemporary native (Woodlands) art, modern and realistic paintings and sculpture, hand-crafted gifts and furniture. HOURS: generally Tues-Sat, Noon-4, or by appointment. 250-246-5356.

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ISLAND TIDES PUBLISHING Ltd
 Box 55, Pender Island B.C. V0N 2M0
 Publisher & Editor: Christa Grace-Warrick
 Contributors: Patrick Brown, Gail Neumann, Priscilla Ewbank
 Steven Tait, Richard Moses, Gill Browne, Ross McKinnon
 Telephone: 250-629-3660 Fax: 250-629-3838
 Deadline: Wednesday between publications
 Email: islandtides@gulfislands.com
 Off-Islands Canadian Subscriptions \$37.45
 Voluntary On-Islands Subscriptions \$21.40

Readers' Letters

More Mosquito Tips

Dear Editor:

One summer when vacationing for a week with a friend who eats raw garlic daily, I had some each day also. Mosquitoes hovered around me but did not land, though normally they find me inviting. A thought just occurred to me—would garlic juice rubbed on the skin be effective also?

Sheila Weaver, Gambier Island

Thank You, Galiano

Dear Editor:

My husband broke his leg at Bell House Park on June 20th, and I would like to thank the fire fighters and ambulance attendants who spent 1.5 hours stabilizing him and lifting him up a fairly steep slope. I would also like to thank Collette, the nurse on Galiano who met us at the Health Care Centre and administered medication to make him feel much more comfortable. She also took the time to follow up to ensure Rob got the full medical care he needed.

Michelle Tothill, Duncan

Beach Access

Dear Editor:

On South Pender Island there is a beautiful beach reaching from Brooks Point to the Higgs Road. Over the years, from time to time, owners of the property on the east side of Higgs Road have tried to prevent public access to the beach. It is hard to understand why. It so happens that few people use the beach anyway and it is never overcrowded.

There was once a path through the woods, before Higgs Road was built. It headed from Gowland Point Road to the sea and the few small buildings along the shore. It was a delightful walk. And when Higgs Road was built it became a very pleasant country road with a marvelous view at the end and access to the beach—an example of the old way of the islands.

But efforts were made to seal off private property and prevent public access to the beach. The legality of this has often been questioned and is still very much in doubt. It has been understood that beaches are public and that access to them is assured by the government. This is not the case in the Higgs Road area.

I think the people of North Pender should be concerned. You

Readers should treat the following information with caution, skepticism, rank disbelief, or at least a grain of salt.

Definitely Not The Ferries!

The Spinnaker Pole

Patrick Brown



In the early days of sailing, all boats carried on deck a long pole to push the boat off the mud when it went aground. This happened often, because there were few charts and they hadn't learned to predict the complex dance of the god Tide. As boats became bigger, these poles necessarily became longer. They were known to most sailors as 'pushing-off poles'. The exercise of 'pushing-off' became a traditional part of boating, with its own customs and sea-shanties, generally unsuitable for publication here.

In the early part of the last century, there came to be constructed a large racing yacht, named *Sphinx*, which had a very deep keel, and which consequently became stuck in the mud somewhat more frequently than other vessels. In order to overcome this handicap, *Sphinx's* Owner concluded that the way to beat all the other large racing yachts was to fly a larger jib than any of his rivals had hitherto contemplated. So he consulted his Sailmaker, who operated out of a small blacksmith's shop on the Isle of Wight, on the south coast of England. (This was because he was, in fact, a blacksmith who made sails when he ran out of horses to shoe.)

'Sailmaker,' he said, 'Make me a jib that will float like a butterfly, and sting like a bee. I want it to fill the sky, block out the sun, and leave that tea-granny Lipton in its shadow.'

The Sailmaker blanched (remember he was a blacksmith), and touched his forelock. 'But Sir,' he replied, 'my tiny shop is not large enough to make such a sail. I need more space.'

'No problem, Sailmaker,' said *Sphinx's* Owner, 'I will find you such a space.' Pulling a carrier pigeon from his pocket, he dialed rapidly and, within minutes, had concluded a deal to purchase a neighbouring castle with a large parking lot.

'It should be large enough,' he told the Sailmaker, 'It encompasseth a full acre.' For further clarification, he added, 'It's bloody big.'

The Sailmaker touched his forelock again and went to work on what was to be the largest jib ever seen. In the pouring rain by day, and with hundreds of flickering candles by night, he cut and sewed, sewed and cut. Crowds gathered, lost interest, and went away.

Finally the day came when the new sail was to be set on the *Sphinx*. Twenty crew members sweated and cursed to hoist the sail to the masthead as the yacht slowly drifted out into the

Solent. The Sailmaker and the Owner watched anxiously from the foredeck as the enormous sail slowly filled with air and lifted like a cloud into the sky.

'It's a bit baggy,' said the Owner. The Sailmaker was full of excuses. 'The parking lot wasn't level, it rained a lot, and we ran out of candles towards the end,' he whined.

'Well, at least it's bloody big,' said the Owner. 'It encompasseth a full acre,' agreed the Sailmaker, returning to his feet and momentarily overcoming a bad lisp he had had since childhood. 'It'll be *Sphinx's* acre,' said the Owner. (The name was subsequently misspelled by an American and became spinnaker, the term that is still used today.) *Sphinx* gathered speed and started to move swiftly towards the mudbank on the opposite shore.

'Ready about!' shouted the Owner. But by the time the message had been passed all the way down the boat to the helmsman, it was too late (experienced sailors will realize that this was the wrong command anyway). *Sphinx* came to a sudden stop, stuck on the mudbank. The ballooning jib collapsed over the boat, enveloping twenty sweating crew members, the Owner, and the Sailmaker in canvas.

Conversation among the crew was, fortunately, muffled by the gigantic sail. Eventually, the strains of a pushing-off shanty arose from the shrouded shapes on the foredeck, and the end of the pushing-off pole tented the sail. *Sphinx* slid off the mudbank.

Raised to catch the wind by the pushing-off pole, the huge sail once more rose into the sky, and *Sphinx* gathered speed towards the opposite shore. The crew, fast learners all, used one end of the pole to push the yacht off the mud, and the other end to pole out the spinnaker.

Ever since then, spinnaker poles have been used to push yachts off when they run aground. And sometimes to fly spinnakers. /

used to be able to drive down the Higgs Road and use the beaches. Not now! You will be confronted by a new, ugly, prison-like fence and a big 'No Trespassing' sign.

As an old, old resident, I feel quite sad about this. And I hope that something will be done about it. The present fence is an affront to common decency and a desecration of the landscape.

John Smith, South Pender Island

Emergency Housing in Sidney:

Dear Editor:

Thanks to those who have sent donations we have been able to keep a room open in our Sidney House for Gulf Islanders to overnight when necessary. The Victoria Human Exchange Society (VHES) now has a direct line for calls which will help in an emergency and also stranded Islanders. To inquire about staying overnight please phone: 250-656-6242 and ask for Cheryl.

This will be more satisfactory because people often have to page from a pay phone; return calls cannot be made to pay phones. For all other inquiries or donations please still use the pager: 1-800-691-9366.

Patricia Fitzgerald, Mayne Island

Duped Again

Dear Editor:

While Bush blames the CIA and Condoleezza Rice says the intelligence information on the Iraq uranium purchase threat was correct, it has been forgotten that back in March the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, demonstrated that UK and US intelligence authorities relied on forged documents to support assertions that Iraq was trying to buy uranium in Africa. And that El Baradei's report to the UN prior to the invasion of Iraq had practically excluded the possibility of Iraq having any nuclear weapons capacity.

Rice is right that the Bush administration's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) case was larger than nukes. In fact the supposed Iraq anthrax WMD came down to be the pivotal case for the pre-emptive invasion of Iraq.

The vial of anthrax was the star of the Powell UN

performance. But no one anywhere has ever been able to make an anthrax weapon of mass destruction. The US and UK are the experts on attempts over decades to weaponize anthrax. And US and UK intelligence knew that the only anthrax that Iraq could have had was liquid anthrax. Liquid anthrax can not be made into any kind of effective weapon, let alone a WMD.

The US population has been thoroughly duped by the Bush war team.

Peter D. Carter, Pender Island

Ed's Note: Visit www.islandtides.com to look at the 'Peace Pages' to review what got said in February.

Logger's Lament

Dear Editor:

Have you ever wondered how coastal communities are making out with American ownership of the Tree Farm Licenses that are the bread and butter for BC towns?

Weyerhaeuser continues to run an ad campaign that claims 'At Weyerhaeuser, The future is growing.' Well the trees may be growing, and Weyerhaeuser may be growing, and its pockets might be growing, but in my opinion, the community I live in, Port Alberni is not. Neither is the logging camp I work in, Sproat Lake Division. As a matter of fact, we are the Great Shrinking City of Port Alberni, like many small towns on the BC Coast! I am one of many laid-off loggers from the Greatest Shrinking Logging camp in the Valley.

In December 2002, after making a whopping \$5million profit for that year, we were laid-off—we thought due to snow. In the New Year, Weyerhaeuser went back to work at Sproat with less than the 160-man crew. They brought in contractors to replace us, and said they were in negotiations with a group called New Co to operate the Division. We were told this was more efficient and it was needed, although it was against the contract we have.

Our camp is an IWA-Canada union camp, and has a contract with Weyerhaeuser to perform the work in this division. If Weyerhaeuser breaks our agreement we have the right to take it to grievance, then to arbitration. This takes months, sometimes years, while we do what? Wait on unemployment benefits for

LETTERS, continued in next column

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Bard in the yard ~ Patrick Brown

It's couple of weeks ago now—so if you missed it, you are out of luck—but I must praise Pender Solstice Theatre's recent production of *Twelfth Night*. Praise not only for a thoroughly entertaining evening of Shakespeare and song, but also for the superb arrangements and organization that characterized its presentation in Peter Kappel's backyard.

First of all, the play. It was clear and easy to follow (not always true with Shakespeare's convoluted plots). The characters were clearly drawn and even more broadly played. The audience, some seated in chairs close to the stage, and others on a steep bank in front of Peter's house, could see all the action and hear the dialogue clearly. This sounds elementary, but



Dress rehearsal in the yard.

Photo: Peter Kappel

is sometimes hard to accomplish outdoors, with no sound system, and somewhat primitive evening lighting. Only once did a distant airplane disturb the South Pender evening.

And it was funny; the cast clearly intended to amuse, and they did, with Bronwen Merle's sure direction.

The play was mainly presented on the grass, with a quite elaborate set built as a backdrop to the action. Behind this was a large tent for the cast. In fact, the players used much of Peter's back garden as stage, with the occasional exit taking the form of a headlong run into the woods (never to be seen again?)

The costumes were well done, the swordfighting well rehearsed with no apparent injuries, and the music, songs and dances (Zorah Starr and others) enriched the play considerably. It was a great evening.

But the arrangements! First of all, it's the first play I've ever been to where patrons were sprayed with mosquito repellent at the ticket booth. Either it worked or there weren't many mosquitoes; I only saw one.

But this was after reading signs with quotations from the play all the way down Canal Road, and following the directions of a well-organized parking crew. When we arrived, we were led down a winding woodland trail—'Welcome to Illyria', it said—past clearings with refreshment bars and toilet facilities (complete with handwipes and garbage can), to Peter's capacious backyard.

The weather was, of course, ideal, with a slight cooling off later in the evening—but most had brought blankets. The Cantati di Gumbot—an ad hoc madrigal group—entertained before the performance.

At the end, following curtain calls (no curtains), the cast (sixteen of them!) were on hand with flashlights to assist the audience back up the now dark woodland trail, out of Illyria, to the road. This gave us all a chance to discuss the performance with them—a thoughtful touch indeed. ✓

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Fri/Sats, July 19, 25, 26

'Night Out on Galiano'—Trinco Arts summer season of movies and plays Galiano-style • **SAT 19th:** *Grease* starring Travolta/Newton-John, 8:30pm, \$7 • **FRI 25th:** *Trio for Three Actors*, live comedy, 9pm • **SAT 26th:** *What The Butler Saw*, live comedy, 9pm (August listings next time) • Go Galiano bus from Montague Marina and Park • Info: David Clothier 539-3428 • ON GALIANO ISLAND

Saturday & Sunday, July 19 & 20

'Art Off The Fence'—7th annual outdoor art show and sale featuring the work of Joy McAughtrie, Wendy Munroe, M. Isabel Roberts, Susan Taylor and Frank Ducote with guest artists Diane Kremmer, Gillian Peterson and Linda Wolfe; live music by Patrick Smith, Jennifer West & friends; percentage of sales to Community Kids Band and the Art Off the Fence Student Bursary • Whalepointe B & B, 9929 Southlands Drive • 11am–4pm • Info: Susan Taylor 250-629-6661 • ON SOUTH PENDER ISLAND

Sunday, July 20

The Real Food Faire—wear a funky farm hat and find out about pesticide-free, locally grown, natural foods in season—pesto taste-off, berry dessert, food samples, numerous vendors, info tables, talk to experts, children's play area, twooney auction, music • Fragrant Fulford Hall (also talk by panel of experts previous evening, 7pm) • 10am–4pm • Info: Michelle Grant, 250-537-9634; or Ellie Parks, 250-653-9612 • ON SALT SPRING ISLAND

Saturday & Sunday, July 26 & 27

Art on the Deck—new work by Marta Beranek, Carol Christie, Megan Fisher, Joanna Rogers, Lillian Tetreau, Christel Tompa, Keith Valentine and Peter Valentine—eight artists, eight media: collage, fiber art, painting, and more; enjoy a glass of wine while you peruse the art and admire the view • 11am–4pm daily • 2621 Spyglass Road, Magic Lake • Info: 250-629-3468 • ON PENDER ISLAND

Saturday & Sunday, August 2 & 3

Salt Spring's 4th Annual Garlic Festival—camping, live music, crafts and garlic everything—fun for all! • Leisure Lane Farm, Ganges • 10am–5pm • Adults \$4, children free • Info or to book campsite: 250-537-1219, vendors enquires welcome • ON SALT SPRING ISLAND

Fri, August 1 till Sat, Aug 9

Hornby Festival Nineteenth Season—line-up includes: *The Arbutus Chamber Ensemble*, *Pirate Jenny Trio*; *Mum's the Word*; *Borealis String Quartet*; *Arthur Rowe* piano recital; *Joe Trio*; *SWARM*, percussion instruments made from recycled materials; *Bara-rumba* from Cuba; *Rumba Calzada*; *Hans Staymer Swing Band*; *Alpha Yaya Diallo* • Events at the Hornby Community Hall, under the stars, at a seaside farm, at the school • Tickets: general \$16, seniors \$14, children \$6 (matinées \$12, \$9 & \$4), box office 250-335-2734 (cards accepted) • Info: www.hornbyfestival.bc.ca • ON HORNBY ISLAND

Saturday & Sunday, Aug 2 & 3

Pender Islands Art Society Annual Art Show & Sale—Refreshments, door prize, Peoples's Choice Awards • St Peter's Parish Hall • Saturday 10am–5pm, Sunday 1–4pm • Adult admission \$2, children 50¢ • Info: Barbara Carter 250-629-6014 • ON PENDER ISLAND

Sunday & Monday, August 3 & 4

Saturna Artists 3rd Annual Studio Tour and Sale—a wonderful opportunity to meet and talk with island artists informally in their studios—work will be available for sale directly from the artists and you're sure to find something you'll love, event is sponsored by the Trincomali Arts Council and the Saturna Arts and Concert Society • Maps available at both stores and Island galleries, (look for the blue balloons) • 11am–4pm • Info: Anne Popperwell 250-539-2779, www.saturnatourism.com • ON SATURNA ISLAND

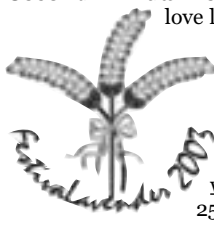
Saturday, August 9

Penducky Derby Rides Again!—Pender Lions 'Between the Islands' fundraiser—if your Ducky wins you will win \$1,000 (lots of other prizes, too), games, entertainment, food—and fun! • Mortimer Spit, ducky race through the channel under the bridge • 11am • Have you got your tickets, yet?—\$5 each from all Pender Lions and Silk 'n' Petals • ON PENDER ISLAND



Sunday, August 10

Second Annual Festival Lavender at Valhalla Gardens—love lavender?—join us to shop for a huge variety of lavender products grown and made on Mayne; taste what is cooking on the bbq, savour other sweet lavender treats, and enjoy and learn from demonstrations throughout the day! • 411 Village Bay Road • 11–4pm • Admission: \$5 • Info: www.lavenderscenterprises.com, Elaine 250-539-5698 • ON MAYNE ISLAND



Saturday, August 16

The Eleventh Galiano Wine Festival—over sixty wines will be offered for tasting, food, music, flowers, and the opportunity to win door prizes, a silent auction and raffle prizes • Galiano Lions Park • 1 pm–4pm • Tickets \$30, Visa & MasterCard accepted • Tickets & info: Don Gain 250-530-2239 or Bill Foster 250-539-2611 • ON GALIANO ISLAND



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LETTERS from page 4

the courts to decide if we are in the right or not.

Now 6 months later, our camp has been reduced to 10 employees, with many contractors still working in our camp. We now have 83 Grievances lodged, our medical benefits will be cut off this month, and in another year we will no longer have recall rights. This from a company that says the future is growing—not from where I stand its not, it's shrinking.

Weyerhaeuser, has no production, not one log sent to the mills right now from Sproat Lake Division. No dollars being made, and no stumpage being paid to the province for the tree farm license. We have stood by while Weyerhaeuser has decimated our crew, at the best time of the year to log while we are still laid off. The contractor, who Weyerhaeuser has been negotiating with to take over our camp, so I'm told by our union rep, says they are ready to log. We are more than ready to log.

Weyerhaeuser is sitting on its Tree Farm License, not logging, or making any use of our crown forest that we British Columbians, so trustingly handed over to this Wonderful, Global, Advancing, Company. It doesn't make money or sense.

I read something that reminded me of this plan Weyerhaeuser has, 'The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing'—Edmund Burke. That's why I am writing to all the people of BC. You have a right to expect money to go to your government for Weyerhaeuser's right to hold this Tree Farm License, so your government can pay for services we all need and want. At the same time, we expect the company to honour its contract with the IWA-C.

Please take the time to talk with your government representatives, municipal, regional, provincial, and federal, and especially talk to anyone that works for Weyerhaeuser. Ask these people how this can be happening. How can a company come over our border, take over a Canadian company, and then choose not to work it, or pay fees for the TFL it has contract for? How can they take over a profitable logging camp and run it into the ground? How can they hold a license and contract out the logging to another company? How can they continue to claim, 'At Weyerhaeuser the Future is Growing'—when it's not?

Brent Browning, Port Alberni ✓

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A Clean, Sustainable Alternative

Saturna Notes - Priscilla Ewbank

We have had some gorgeous stretches of clear blue days. These days are the antidotes to short grey days and the long nights of winter. I see a fine blackberry crop coming on. Outside the kitchen is a native bitter cherry that is alive with robins busily rooting in the foliage for the lustrous pink cherries! In the jungly area of the garden, raspberries are ripening. So far, the robins and other berry-picker birds have been thwarted by my inadvertent camouflage technique—not me though! Berries out-of-the-hand and summer is a combination that delights the soul.

I have never seen so many alligator lizards and swallow tail butterflies. Twice, I have seen what I call 'sea snakes' along the East Point tide pools. Because it has been so lovely and sunny, I have taken more time to be at the ocean's cool edge, even though, it seems, I am permanently attached to the water-emitting end of a garden hose this summer. This is definitely a high scoring tomato year—the plants are visibly growing each day and are a full-on vibrant green.

Haying Time

The Campbells are all done haying. They got 800 bales from Winter Cove and 1,800 from the home farm. They finished off right about Lamb BBQ time. Family, friends and community members get together to make this big effort a success, especially Rick Jones and Ian Middleditch. I saw some of Campbell's guests get off of the noon boat and they were haying within the hour! How's that for the farm experience?

Lamb BBQ a Wonderful Success

We held the Saturna Lamb BBQ in fine style, with wonderful guests and the best of weather. Our coffers are full for running the community hall and contributing to other community needs. The last Spanish rice pan is washed and put away and the ball field and

environs are back in good shape And now onto summer!

While it is a huge community effort, it is very satisfying to work together so hard and so well for our mutual benefit. This year the new docking floats worked well, the sound stage was even better, the nail-driving contest's log was back in operation, BC ferries kindly put on a sailing that took guests from Saturna to Vancouver in the late afternoon, new steps in the beer garden were terrific and a newly-constructed walk-in cooler kept the beer and soft drinks super-cold.

All of the above improvements were added to our old standbys: the beauty of the Island, the Coconut Shy, the wonderfully sharp knives provided for the 20 lamb carvers, the incredibly tasty, locally-grown lamb, and the fun of a family picnic. A fine way to celebrate the day we commemorate being Canadians!

We couldn't have asked for more. Well, maybe that next year the tent pieces for the 18 tents get put back in the right bags, and that we get three 'new' 45-gallon food-friendly drums for Spanish rice cooking, and aprons for the gaps between the new docking floats!

Thanks to everyone for their time, effort and goodwill.

BC Ferries Presents Cheque to Fire Department

At the 'official' *Oh, Canada* singing and thanking part of the Saturna Lamb BBQ, David Hahn, the new president of BC Ferries, presented a cheque for \$5,000 to a surprised firechief, Terry Danyliw. This donation to the Saturna Fire Department was given to honour their excellent work in putting out the fire on the Saturna wharf on June 5. The fire originated under the ferry waiting room and also destroyed the ferry office.

It was wonderful to have our fire department recognized for their excellent efforts in containing the fire and keeping it

from spreading to the gas storage tanks, the ferry ramp and the store and pub.

BC Ferries has been very prompt and very helpful—immediately getting the ferry service restored and providing porta-potties until the sewage system is repaired and a waiting room built. BC Ferries also took the lead in a joint effort with the Department of Fisheries to build a ramp over the burnt dock, providing access to the floats for the school kids, recreational boats, float planes, water taxis and all the other uses an Island has for its wharf.

Mr Hahn was interested in talking to the public at the Lamb BBQ and made his way around to meet and consider the opinions and experiences of many Islanders.

Parks Canada at BBQ

Parks Canada had a big booth at the BBQ and lots of personnel to answer questions about how far along the Park is officially and how the new park and its marine component will effect our Island. Parks has been working hand in hand with many Saturna interest groups through the Island Parks Liaison committee. All this effort is standing us in good stead in terms of mutual benefit and good communication.

Comparative Religion

There is a fascinating course in Comparative Religion this summer, which is being taught by summer resident Reverend Dick Walenta. Dick has had many parishes in Hawaii and teaches religion at the University of Hawaii, Windward campus. He also occasionally leads the worship services at Saturna's Saint Christopher's Church. He is a humorous and knowledgeable teacher who interacts well with his students. See the bulletin boards for upcoming classes.

Commemorating Rod Fraser

A celebration of Rod Fraser's life was held in the Community Hall on Saturday, July 5. The Community Hall was full of friends and family who gathered to honor Rod. Islander and son-in-law, Don Piper, read a commemoration of Rod's life, which written by Don's wife Lynne, Rod and Jacqueline's daughter. Often, when people move here, as Rod and Jacqueline did in 1990, you don't hear what they did in the life they left behind. It was wonderful to hear of Rod's life, told in detail through the eyes of a loving, and beloved, daughter.

Rod was Scottish—well, we all knew that! He was born in Scotland in 1924, and immigrated with his parents and his large family of siblings. Growing up in the depression years, he quit school in grade eight to

work and help the family. He logged many places in British Columbia, especially in the lower mainland. He went off to war in the Royal Canadian Air Force and came home in 1945 to marry his sweetheart, Jacqueline. They settled in Ruskin and raised their family (four kids in all!). Rod worked hard at his trade as a faller and on the family farm with its huge garden, orchard and livestock.

Rod had a love of things Scottish and became involved with Scottish Highland Dancing with long time friends Gertie and Bill. Rod played the bagpipes and had all the traditional dress. He was an active man, mechanically inclined, who loved chainsaws and the tools of his trade as a faller. Slowly, as the logging profession became more steady and reliable, the family's fortunes grew and Rod and Jacqueline's son was the first Fraser to get a college degree.

Leaving the family farm and moving to Saturna in 1990, close to Lynne and Don Piper, he remained actively 'retired' and ran Barry Crook's sawmill, briefly stopping when an accident caused him to lose much of one hand.

The Fraser clan is large; Grandpa Rod delighted in his nieces and nephews and 12 grandchildren—they were a joy in his life. Rod was fiercely loyal to his family. Straightforward, black is black, white is white, with an honourable code of ethics, he obviously lived a good life and helped create loving, capable children.

Ian Middleditch, Island logger, read a poem called 40 Years a Faller and spoke of his regard for Rod as a man and as a fellow logger. Rod's neighbor, Dee Wardell, accomplished Celtic harpist, played a piece for Rod and shared some experiences of Rod as a neighbour to 'new' Islanders from California.

The Saturna Women's Club provided a marvelous tea for the guests and family and the hall was beautifully decorated with huge

bouquets of flowers from Carol Money's garden.

My strongest memory of Rod is of him playing the bagpipes in August in full Scottish regalia at the Island's Celebration of the creation of East Point Lighthouse Park. It was hot, the grass was gold and burned dry. He stood still and played while the bagpipe notes floated off into the blue, blue sky and then into the running tides of the Strait of Georgia and on to Mount Baker in the distance. Truly a fitting memory of a man who came as a child to Canada and made a good life for himself and his family. /



Island Tides still in the mail

A threatened postal workers strike is not expected to affect mailbox delivery of *Island Tides* on Salt Spring, Pender, Galiano, Mayne and Saturna. Postal workers on these Islands are either contractors or belong to a separate union of rural postmasters. As our newspaper is delivered to each of the post offices, it will not pass through any sites picketed by Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW). In the event of a change in the situation, your *Island Tides* can be picked-up from boxes on each Island.

Island Tide's seventy free-boxes from Tsawwassen to Departure Bay, Nanaimo will also be unaffected. In the event of a strike, the 48,000 member CUPW and Canada Post have agreed to deliver government pension and social assistance cheques. /

Air ambulance service from Victoria to be discontinued

Islands' health care agencies have been advised that as of October the helicopter ambulance service out of Victoria will be discontinued. After that date helicopter evacuation will only be available from Vancouver. Patients needing air evacuation will be transported to a Lower Mainland hospital.

Reaction is strong from Islanders and medical personnel who find the change unacceptable. Bert Jervis, chair of the Pender Island Health Care Society, says that the extra time required for transfer could mean the difference between life and death and points out that relatives will find it difficult to visit the patient in a Lower Mainland hospital. A joint strategy is required to deal with the situation, says Jervis and urges concerned parties on all Islands to contact PIHCS executive Robert Dill (629-3326) on or after July 23. Watch for more reports in upcoming editions. /

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Letter from China

Ross McKinnon

It's surprising how little things can make such a difference when you are far away from home. The foreign teachers seem to be always searching out things from home. Some of us search in vain for newspapers, but in most cases it's food. While Chinese food is very good, and I ate it quite a bit in Canada, it begins to pale without an alternate choice of some taste of familiar food.

To that end we often ride on a bus to the Holiday Inn in Sanya (3 hours), or the Crowne Plaza in Haikou (5 hours away) and feast on western food. The ribs at the Crowne Plaza would put some that I have had in BC to shame. The trouble is that it's so far away, and so expensive. Of course we get care packages from home with Shake and Bake, spaghetti sauce, and microwave popcorn, but these are saved for a special treat.

Now that has changed today with my first delivery from Haikou of Western food—real western food. Heinz baked beans, sirloin steak, olive oil, and even real yoghurt. I found out at my last trip for food in Haikou that there was a Chinese guy who was educated in the West, who obviously knows there is a demand for these types of food. He delivers all over the island the kind of food and the cuts of meat that he knows Westerners like to eat. All it took was an e-mail and a phone call and Heaven was at my door. It was quick too as he had a truck coming through the island that day so it was one-day service. It will make life infinitely easier now and means that a little bit of home is available here in Wuzhishan.

I went to the market today and was watching all the live animals there for sale. Lots of ducks, for the people on Hainan love to eat duck, and prepare them in many different ways, sheep, goats, chickens, and dogs, that I'm sure were not being sold as pets. I did not see any civet cats there, whose recent claim to fame was as the incubator for SARS, but they are on the menu at the classiest restaurant in town. There were whole carcasses of beef and buff hung there, waiting for you to tell the farmer what particular piece of the animal you would like him to hack off, and of course much pork, which seems to be the national meat of China. As we are inland there is not much fish, and what we do have is mostly dried and very pungent.

The vegetables are another thing. If you were to classify vegetables by their shape China would win hands down for variety as there are vegetables of every shape and colour. Some look like dried hair, some are very round and many-hued, and some are so strange looking I would not even hazard a guess whether they were melon or pepper. The Li women from the hill tribes come to the market with items they have grown on their rocky patches of soil in the hills. It is lichee nut season here now so everyone has them for sale. There are the usual potatoes and tomatoes that we see, however they came from the ground close to here this morning. I never see much left over at the end of the day, so the vendors know how to estimate the size of the crowd.

Now that my western food longing has a solution it will make the choices much more bearable. MacDonald's and KFC have hit almost everywhere in China by now, but there are still only two outlets at either end of the island of Hainan, and I'm not up to facing a 5-hour bus trip for a big Mac and Fries no matter how much I miss them.

There is not much more new here. The students are still in quarantine despite all the rumours that it would be lifted momentarily, and an increasing number are over the wall and away to town for some entertainment.

School is winding down for our 2-month break in the summer, and I will be headed around China and Thailand. When I tell my students this they all sigh and say they wish they could travel more, especially to other countries. Most of them will be spending their second summer here without going home as for many it is a five-day train ride to see their parents. I promised them many pictures when I come back so they can travel vicariously. ✎

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We would love to hear from Islanders who have taken advantage of this steal of a deal. If you are sitting on a big ferry as you read this—come visit what you are looking at out of the window. One warning, you may never want to leave! ✎

AIDS in Africa

Tinovimba—We Have Hope

Gill Browne

In January 2002, we decided to start building a hospice. Not a big one. It consisted of two little one-bedroom cottages with their own kitchens and bathrooms—a place to give peace to the terminally ill who were homeless and dying.

I was not sure of the extent to which HIV had affected our remote area of Zimbabwe as people have always looked after the sick with great love and devotion. However, recently the situation has become different. The elderly in communal areas (kumusha) increasingly have to bear the brunt of extra children and sickly relatives, but without the means to do so.

Many families on the tea plantation where I live have a father suffering at home, with only his children to care for him. The father refuses to go to his family home because he knows that his parents will eventually have to care for his wife and children when he dies. Out of principle, he is not ready to be dependent on them.

It is taboo to discuss death prior to it occurring, least of all with the patient himself. This limits the individual's and the family's ability to make plans and decisions for the orphans left behind. With this in mind, I requested the permission of the local headman to build a hospice.

As soon as construction was finished, patients started to arrive. One of the first was Thulani and her mother, Mai Thulani. Thulani had been travelling all over the country with her 27-year-old mother for four years. She was 11 when we first met. Her mother was in the last stages of life, and AIDS had caused her to become confused, which made caring for her difficult.

Thulani and her mother had come to our area because they hoped that a distant relative living in a neighbouring village would be able to support them. However, Thulani's mother immediately offended many people in the village by announcing to all that she was a witch! Dementia is not considered an illness in Zimbabwe. Superstitions run deep in the culture. The community was afraid to accept them, and any assistance that they might have received disappeared.

On arrival, Thulani and her mother were introduced to Angela Tinovimba Mabukucha. Angela is one of our counsellors, who is living positively with HIV/AIDS. She is a teacher at a nearby school and has been open about her status for the past six years. Knowing that a pregnancy could complicate her health, she had made the decision not to have children and has never married.

During one of their first meetings, Angela took Thulani out to the garden to sit on the grass. They discussed her many worries. Thulani wrote in Shona (the local language) 'I am afraid that my mother is not going to get better. I have not been able to go to school, and do not know how I will be able to look after us both.' Soon after, Thulani was sent to the local village school. Her delight in wearing a new uniform, which we had bought for her, was infectious. The school's headmaster was supportive, ensuring that Mai Thulani's condition did not prevent Thulani from leading a normal school life.

One evening, Mai Thulani died peacefully in her sleep. With Thulani by her side, she was comforted in the knowledge that Angela had offered to adopt and take care of her daughter.

The funeral was simple. Most of the village came out of respect for a little girl who had been forced to grow up too quickly. By the next morning, Thulani was in her new house with Angela, her new uniform hanging in her closet. She continues to grow and learn, and talks often of her mother. We have decided to name our hospice Tinovimba after Angela because of her remarkable contribution. In Shona, Tinovimba means 'we have hope.' ✎

Gill Browne is a community development worker who lives on a tea plantation in Zimbabwe, close to the Mozambican border.

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