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July 1–July 14, 2004

Attractions &
Accommodation

Vancouver Island &
The Gulf Islands, Page 12

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Photo: Christa Grace-Warrick

Welcome Bay, beach rambles in tiny, shady coves are a summer delight.

Pender at a crossroads—is the island on the road to urbanization?

Urbanization is a big issue on Pender Island these days. A proposed high-density housing development at the Driftwood Centre shopping mall has residents nervous about the precedent it sets for future land development. The proposed development (Bylaw 141) received First Reading from Pender's Local Trust Committee (LTC) on May 27. The bylaw will have a Public Hearing on July 17 at noon in the Community Hall. This will be the last moment at which the public will have an opportunity to be heard on the proposal to develop 36 units of strata title, high-density housing alongside the mall.

The plan is to use a piece of undeveloped land zoned Commercial 2 (visitor accommodation), combine it with a Rural parcel (also undeveloped) and convert both into a new high-density zone called Rural Comprehensive 2 (RC2).

The hook for this particular increase in overall density, and for the creation of a new high-density zone at the Driftwood Centre, is that nine of the units will be earmarked for purchase by people over 60, as specified in a Housing Agreement. Some residents have been critical of this as a community amenity, saying that the benefit is too little and too uncertain to justify opening the Pandora's box of high density housing. They also question whether this particular development is the kind of supported-living amenity that Island seniors need or want.

As late as the June 24 LTC meeting, adjustments to this Housing Agreement were presented and accepted. The new Agreement (Bylaw 163) will be presented at an information

meeting immediately before the Public Hearing for Bylaw 141.

Misgivings About Precedents

As early as January 2003, Greg Nichols spoke for a group of Pender residents (Margaret Adamson, Terry Chantler, Peter Easthope, John Eckfeldt, Michael Sketch, Jill Taylor and Judy Walker) about the proposal.

In his presentation to the Local Trust Committee, Nichols said 'The Driftwood proposal purports to provide some community benefits in exchange for higher density development. In our view, these benefits are not proven and the application should be denied. If indeed further high density housing zones are to be considered at all, suitable policies that provide a rationale for this type of development should be established in the Official Community Plan (OCP).'

Putting the Cart Before the Horse

Nichols continued, 'In view of the long-term significance of these policies, they should be determined only as part of a broad and comprehensive review of the OCP, which is now overdue. This review should involve long-range planning with full public involvement.'

'In the meantime, a precedent for any number of similar rezoning applications should not be considered. Such significant changes should not be achieved by piecemeal amendments to either the OCP or the Land Use

HIGH DENSITY, please turn to page 2

Tax exemption offered to Island property owners in 2005

At its quarterly meeting held on Saturna Island in June, the Islands Trust Council took the next step towards launching its unique tax exemption program in the Capital Regional District. Under the program, the Islands Trust Council can issue partial property tax exemption certificates to property owners who have placed a permanent conservation covenant on their property to protect its natural values.

'We know there is a lot of interest out there and we are very pleased to be able to offer this program to property owners in the CRD,' said David Essig, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. 'Application forms will be available in early 2005 and our staff will hold information sessions on the Islands. This program offers a strong incentive to the many Islanders who want to protect natural areas on their land.'

The Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program was originally conceived by Trustee Kim

TAX EXEMPTION, please turn to page 3

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Campfire ban in effect—no fireworks July 1

The Coastal Fire Centre is reminding the public that fireworks cannot be used when an open burning ban, restricting the use of open fire for cooking, warmth and ceremonial purposes, is in effect. As of midnight Thursday June 24, 2004 campfires have been banned for the entire region covered by the Coastal Fire Centre.

This region covers all the area west of the height of land on the Coast Mountain range from the US/Canada border at Manning Park to Tweedsmuir Park in the north, the lower mainland, the Sunshine Coast, all of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.

The campfire ban will remain in effect until there is a significant change in weather conditions. The BC Forest Service will notify the public before lifting the ban.

Fires contained in stoves using gas, propane or briquettes are still permitted. Extreme caution should be used with these units.

On Sunday, June 27 there were 448 wildfires burning in BC.

For more information about wildfire activity, open burning bans and restrictions, and details on how to FireSmart your home, visit www.for.gov.bc.ca/protect.



Sorry, Island Tides was being printed on Election Day so, this edition, we are as in the dark as this Mayne Island voter!



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Island Tides

AT FULFORD HARBOUR

JUNE/JULY

Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.	Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.
29	0010	10.8	3.3	07	0345	7.2	2.2
	0805	1.3	0.4		0720	8.2	2.5
	TU 1635	9.8	3.0		WE 1410	3.0	0.9
	MA 1935	9.2	2.8		ME 2200	11.2	3.4
30	0040	10.8	3.3	08	0445	6.2	1.9
	0845	0.3	0.1		0905	7.2	2.2
	WE 1725	10.5	3.2		TH 1455	4.6	1.4
	ME 2050	9.8	3.0		JE 2225	10.8	3.3
01	0120	11.2	3.4	09	0540	5.2	1.6
	0930	-0.3	-0.1		1115	7.2	2.2
	TH 1815	11.2	3.4		FR 1540	5.9	1.8
	JE 2155	10.2	3.1		VE 2250	10.5	3.2
02	0205	11.2	3.4	10	0625	4.3	1.3
	1020	-0.7	-0.2		1335	7.9	2.4
	FR 1900	11.5	3.5		SA 1635	7.5	2.3
	VE 2305	10.2	3.1		SA 2310	10.2	3.1
03	0300	11.2	3.4	11	0705	3.3	1.0
	1110	-0.7	-0.2		1520	8.9	2.7
	SA 1940	11.5	3.5		SU 1800	8.5	2.6
	SA				DI 2330	10.2	3.1
04	0010	9.8	3.0	12	0740	2.6	0.8
	0400	10.5	3.2		1625	9.5	2.9
	SU 1155	-0.3	-0.1		MO 1935	9.2	2.8
	DI 2020	11.5	3.5		LU 2355	9.8	3.0
05	0120	9.2	2.8	13	0815	2.3	0.7
	0455	10.2	3.1		1710	10.2	3.1
	MO 1245	0.7	0.2		TU 2120	9.5	2.9
	LU 2055	11.5	3.5				
06	0235	8.5	2.6	14	0025	9.8	3.0
	0600	9.2	2.8		0855	2.0	0.6
	TU 1330	1.6	0.5		WE 1745	10.5	3.2
	MA 2130	11.2	3.4		ME 2230	9.5	2.9

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JOHN STANLY TAYLOR

1924–2004

Born September 30, 1924 in Oakville, Ontario, John passed away peacefully in Victoria General Hospital in February 2004, with family and friends at his side. He will be lovingly remembered and missed by his dear wife Marjorie, his brothers Warren (Mary), Ross (Yvonne), Frank (Sandra) all in Ontario; his sister-in-law Marjory in Burnaby; his nephews and nieces Pat (Gary), Nicole (Shawn), Melanie, Michelle, Donna (Michael), Nancy (Kevin), Brenda (Ted), Shawn (Opa), Heidi (Dennis), Holly (Trevor), Sheila, their children; and so, so many dear friends. He was pre-deceased by his brother-in-law Reginald.

John lived much of his early life with his three brothers in Hamilton. In 1942 he met his sweetheart and wife to be, Marjorie. In 1943, at age 18, he joined the army, and on February 9, 1944 he married Marjorie just two weeks before he was off to the war in Europe. Later in 1944, Marjorie moved to Burnaby with her Mom and Dad.

At war's end in 1945, John returned to his Marjorie in Burnaby where he started a life-long career with Otis Elevators. He loved his work there and especially the people he worked with. In 1959, Marjorie and John discovered their paradise on earth, a waterfront lot on Gossip Island. They soon bought the lot and have been building and improving a beautiful summer home there ever since. A few years after John's retirement from Otis in 1982, John and Marjorie sold their Bainbridge home in Burnaby and purchased a mobile home in Ladysmith. Their plan was to spend at least six months of the year at Gossip Island with their new family of friends and the rest of the year at Ladysmith or travelling and visiting with other friends and relatives. They have been doing this now for the past 16 years.

John will be especially remembered for his big smile, his incredible sense of humour, his hard work ethic, his zest for living, his compassion for all those he met, and his incredible hard-nosed opinions on all life's processes.

Celebrating 50 protected Island places

Over the last fourteen years, Islanders have given generously of their time, land and money to help the Islands Trust Fund protect the Gulf Islands. Thanks to their dedication and support, the Islands Trust Fund is currently celebrating its 50th protected property. The 50 Protected Places of the Islands Trust Fund together total 600 hectares (approximately 1,500 acres) and are worth more than \$10 million.

'We are delighted to celebrate our 50 Protected Places, and the people who helped protect them,' says Louise Bell, Chairperson of the Trust Fund Board. 'Each place has its own unique story, but all are important to biodiversity on the Islands.'

The Islands Trust Area is a beautiful, fragile region under ever-increasing pressure from development. To save the places that give the Islands their charm and contribute to their biological richness, Islanders have donated 37 conservation covenants and 13 properties, since 1990, to the Islands Trust Fund. These 50 protected places are found on Bowen, Denman, Gabriola, Galiano, Lasqueti, Mayne, North Pender, South Pender, South Winchelsea, Salt Spring, Retreat, Saturna, and Sidney Islands.

'I was very pleased to protect my property from future logging by donating a conservation covenant to the Islands Trust Fund. Knowing that the land I love will be protected forever gives me comfort and a sense of hope. There are so many people working to protect the Gulf Islands. I think it is important to celebrate our progress and show that by working together we are making a difference,' commented Nancy Braithwaite of Salt Spring Island.

The Islands Trust Fund is using this milestone as an opportunity to reflect and plan for the future. Progress is being made in the Islands Trust Area but there are still 69 animals and plants, and nine plant communities, that are considered endangered, threatened or vulnerable. Habitat protection is key to their survival. The Islands Trust Fund is developing a Regional Conservation Plan and continuing to support partner organizations who are working to preserve the natural wonders on Canada's Gulf Islands. For more information: www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca

Pender's drumming up a piping hot band

The Pender Highlanders Pipe Band competed with 11 bands from the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island in the 2004 Legion Highland Gathering, held in Whiterock on June 20.

The Pender band earned a 4th place award in the grade 4 band competition. Pender's drum corps each earned 4th

place awards: Best snare drum—Tony Merry, Jessica Willow and Alan MacBean; Best tenor drum section—Dave Sanders and Tom Kieffer; Best bass drummer—Gerry Woods.

The event was topped off by the Pender Highlanders' participation in the Massed Band (200 pipes and drums) performance.

HIGH DENSITY from page 1

Bylaw in response to the requirements of specific developments.

'In the proposed RC2 zoning the precedent of high density subdivision of Rural land as stipulated in Bylaw 141 is neither supported by explicit OCP policies nor has it had the benefit of comprehensive public scrutiny and comment.

'Let's be quite clear about this. Once the precedent has been established, it would be very difficult for our Trustees to resist pressure for similar rezonings. Our Rural lands could disappear, subdivision by subdivision.'

Bona Fide Seniors' Housing

This year an Official Community Plan Review has been getting underway. Groups such as the Pender Women's Institute have been researching the kind of seniors housing needed on the Island. However the Driftwood Village proposal has continued to receive consideration by the Local Trust Committee.

At the January 2003 meeting, commenting on the nine potential seniors' units being offered, Judy Walker noted 'There is a difference between 'market demand' and 'community need and benefit' when considering a change in land use. Although there have been people to step forward and say they would like to buy a house in the subdivision, the need for increased density of 36 houses for a benefit of 9 seniors' houses is not a clear benefit to the community. Simply restructuring the sale and occupation of residential units by age does not constitute seniors' housing and conveys no significant benefit to the Pender community. Bona fide seniors' housing has access to, or provision for care, living supports, accommodation designs and

other specialized amenities.'

Whistler-style Village Area?

Walker spoke about the impact of the Driftwood Village proposal: 'Bylaw 141 must not be considered in isolation from the surrounding lands. The neighbourhood immediate around the Driftwood Centre is primarily agricultural and rural, some rural residential. However, the almost adjacent Port Browning Marina has a commercial zoning density of 39 units. Further along Bedwell Harbour Road, Pender Inn has a commercial zoning density of 46. If the Driftwood development is approved, there could be 121 high-density units of one description or another in the Island's central neighbourhood.' The current OCP specifically states that an urban-style centre is not desired on the Island.

Tourist Accommodation Needed

Talking of the existing tourist accommodation potential on part of the site, Walker commented, 'There is a significant difference between the intermittent occupation of 27 tourist accommodation units and the full-time occupation of a residential complex of 36 units with regards to traffic, water consumption, sewage disposal, noise and light pollution, and the disposal of waste. It is also of concern that as the population of the Island increases, there will be a need for tourist accommodation in addition to that offered by B&Bs. It is folly to yield existing C2 zoning and later to be faced with rezoning another parcel to C2.'

Time Is Short

Residents wishing to know more before the day of decision on July 17 can talk to Pender Island Trustees Wayne Wright 629-2004 and Em Round 629-3408, and to Gary Steeves 629-3595, spokesperson of the committee of concerned citizens who have been following the development plans since their inception. Letters regarding the proposal must be received by the Islands Trust prior to the closing of the Public Hearing.

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PENDER ISLAND EMERGENCY SIREN TEST

ON THURSDAY, JULY 8 at 6:30PM there will be a TEST of the emergency sirens in North Pender Island Magic Lake Estates and at South Pender Island firehall.

The Magic Lakes siren will sound first for 20 seconds, then a 10 second delay, followed by the South Pender siren. The sirens will run at full volume to determine how well they can be heard throughout the islands.

This is a TEST only. Future tests will not last as long or be as loud as this first test. In future the sirens will be tested at 6:30PM on the first Thursday of the month from May to September.

PENDER ISLANDS RESIDENTS:
 SEE THE EMERGENCY EVACUATION MAP INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE FOR INSTRUCTIONS

The recent 25¢-per-litre increase in the price of gasoline resulted in a furor from Joe and Joanne Public. That psychological \$1 a litre benchmark was nearly breached. Gasoline prices in Canada have risen 30% in the past year. Largely as a result, inflation (the consumer price index) has increased 2.5% over the year. The Canadian public drew their line in the sand. Both main contenders for the Prime Minister's office immediately issued calming statements, saying they would deal strongly with the crisis.

It is the same south of the border. Bush and Kerry, who last month faced off over the air waves on high gasoline prices, both preach the need for 'energy independence.' And by their recent speeches, it's obvious that both assume the right of Americans to cheap gas. 'With gasoline prices at \$2 per gallon, it's time to allow some drilling,' says Rep. Joe Barton, a Texas Republican. And while Senate Democrats oppose the Republican energy bill, some of them are urging Bush to tap the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which was set up after the 1973 energy crisis, even though few economists think that step would significantly reduce gasoline prices. Other senators push legislation that would penalize 'the OPEC oil-producing cartel,' the usual scapegoat of American politicians.

The media have been full of the crisis. But there are a few things that Joe and Joanne don't realize.

Bar the Middle East petroleum principalities, we have the cheapest gas in the world. For example, Americans are still paying half or less at the pump of what drivers in most other countries pay, with foreign costs ranging up to \$6 per gallon in Britain (for a 20% larger gallon).

The fact is, American gas prices haven't reached record highs. Americans are paying no more for gas than they used to. The US national average of about \$2 per gallon is slightly less than the average price of \$2.07, in today's dollars, going back to 1919. Drivers in 1922 paid the equivalent of almost \$2.85 a gallon. In 1981, gasoline sold for nearly \$2.87, the highest inflation-adjusted price ever.

And there are hidden costs that people don't know about. Larry Goulder, a Stanford University professor, says the true costs of the US's driving-dominated culture are hidden. Americans pay much more for gasoline than the price they see at the pump. Among the hidden costs he cites are military expenses of protecting Persian Gulf and other oil supplies; health care expenses to treat asthma, cancer and other diseases tied to auto emissions; and expenses to prevent or repair related environmental damage.

In any case, experts say the recent spike has

a range of causes that are mostly beyond the control of our governments—escalating demand in India and China, for example. The rest of the world is catching up to our gas habit.

And despite huge subsidies from our governments and their valiant attempts to obtain the last easily extractable oil reserves, by invading Iraq, for example, and by turning a blind eye to aboriginal persecutions in South America, the market will have to respond eventually. Oil is a non renewable—which means finite—resource. As a result, this year's prediction is that we are only four (count 'em, four) years away from Peak Oil.

So if Jo and Joanne knew some of the intricacies of the true and fair price of gas, they would gladly pay even a few quarters more for gas—right? Wrong. Paul Martin a year ago bravely floated the idea of increasing the gas tax. He got his answer—political suicide.

Richard Heinberg, in *The Party's Over*, his 2003 book about the depletion of world oil reserves, said that politicians seeking public office in the United States can't disclose the true cost of gasoline because Americans wouldn't accept it.

'I don't think any candidate can tell the truth,' he said. 'It's terrible, but the American people have come to think of cheap energy as their birthright. And woe to the messenger who tells them otherwise.'

As well as sitting on the cusp of Peak Oil right now, we are also close to the start of the 'limits to growth' crash. If we don't get serious about bringing renewable energy sources on line fast, our fossil fuel-based economy has to crash. If we act now the transition may not be too painful.

'Unless you admit that gasoline prices have to go up—and go up a lot—the free-market system is not going to encourage the development of renewable energy,' said Julian Darley, founder of the Vancouver-based Post Carbon Institute.

Can Joe and Joanne bring themselves to admit the cost of gas is actually twice as much as the price at the pumps? That they are, in fact, already paying double what they pay at the gas station?

There is no sustainability substitute to paying more now for gas. Yes, it's that simple. Can Joe and Joanne see their way to investing in a sustainable economy for the future by paying more for gas now?

If we don't agree to pay the full price of gasoline, and allow prices to increase with the market, and agree to an increase in gas tax to pay for renewable energy infrastructure, the future is grim indeed for Joe and Joanne's kids.

Perhaps we can learn from this crisis that isn't. It's all up to Joe and Joanne.

Teachers can talk about impact of cuts

An arbitrator's ruling has upheld teachers' right to inform parents and the public about the impact of provincial government cuts and policy changes on students' learning conditions.

In the fall of 2002, teachers around the province handed out cards to show parents the changes in their local schools after the BC government eliminated class-size limits from the collective agreement. Some school administrators and board staff told teachers they were not allowed to share that information during parent-teacher interviews, nor could they post such data on school bulletin boards.

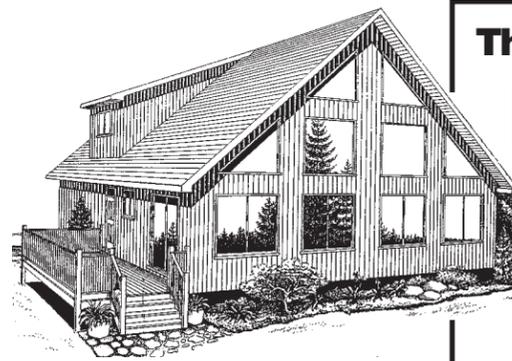
The BC Teachers Federation filed a provincial grievance in November 2002, and the ruling was rendered May 7. Arbitrator Don Munroe ruled that school boards had violated teachers' right to free expression under *The*

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and that such interference was not justified in a free and democratic society.

In his ruling, Munroe noted that posting flyers on bulletin boards or handing out cards in parent-teacher interviews 'would in no way interfere with the effective and efficient operation of a school; and neither would it result in loss of instructional time or other educational disturbance.'

Munroe also ruled that, although teachers owe the common law duty of fidelity to their employers, they do not owe a duty of fidelity to the provincial government.

'In the wake of this significant decision, I expect the employer and the government will be less likely to attempt to silence the voices of teachers and their union on educational matters,' said BCTF President Neil Worboys.



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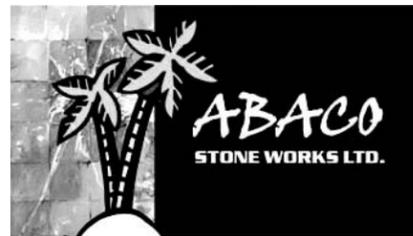


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TAX EXEMPTION from page 1

Benson of Keats Island, now a Vice Chair of the Islands Trust Executive Committee. The Islands Trust launched the program as a pilot in the Gambier Island area two years ago after the province enacted the necessary legislation. Where a property owner has registered a conservation covenant against their title to protect a natural area, the Islands Trust can give them a certificate that will reduce their property taxes on the protected portion by 65%. The covenant must be held by the Islands Trust and meet its minimum standards to qualify. To continue to qualify for the tax exemption, the property owner must provide for annual monitoring to ensure the land remains protected as agreed.

'We are planning to begin in 2004 by offering the program to those in the CRD who have already placed strong conservation covenants with the Islands Trust Fund Board,'

said Essig. 'We feel that since they have already protected their land without financial incentives, they should be the first to benefit from this new program. We are also hoping to work in partnership with Island conservancies and local land trusts that are interested in the program. Many of them are excited about the program and want to be a part of it.'

Islands Trust Fund staff will contact existing covenantees that they believe would qualify for the program to determine if they are interested in the new Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program covenant. Information sessions for the general public are expected to begin early in 2005. Those interested can find out more about the Gambier Island pilot program on the Islands Trust website at www.islandstrust.bc.ca under Stewardship Programs/Natural Area Protection.

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How High Can You Jump? ~ Stephen Lewis, UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS

The G8 Summit finished yesterday. It finished with a flourish about the HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries) Initiative on debt reduction. The decision was to more fully implement HIPC, and to extend it for another two years. There was much self-congratulation amongst G8 members.

As it happens, the decision can now be put to an immediate test; a test of integrity, a test of the ringing G8 rhetoric. On June 14, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) board is met to consider the case of Zambia. Zambia is in desperate straits, and it all revolves around the IMF and HIPC.

I shall try to put the situation as simply as possible. But remember: everything has to be measured against the backdrop of a country where HIV/AIDS has taken, and continues to take, a terrible toll.

In April of this year, the Government of Zambia negotiated its 2004-2007 Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) with the IMF. This was meant to be the programme to run the country financially for three years. But it had a particular premise on which everything was based: if Zambia could meet the conditions imposed by the IMF, then Zambia would achieve the requirements for HIPC eligibility by December 31st,

2004, thus reducing foreign debt service substantially, and freeing up significant resources for the new budget. Essentially, Zambia had to produce good economic performance for six months and the IMF would verify that the 'HIPC completion point' had been reached. The entire programme (PRGF) depends on meeting the HIPC targets.

It is impossible to overstate how hard Zambia has been trying to comply with IMF requirements, including the imposition of a suffocating cap on wages. The Government truly thought it was meeting those six-month conditions by the agreed deadline, when the IMF suddenly informed Zambia that it wouldn't be possible to resolve things by the end of 2004; the evaluation of Zambia's performance would have to extend into the first quarter of 2005. For the Government, that would be a disaster. The entire country is wholly fixated on 2004; for the sake of a month (or two) a kingdom is lost.

As a result, something unprecedented has happened. The Minister of Finance and National Planning, The Honourable Ng'andu P. Magande, has issued a two page document outlining the issues, acknowledging the overwhelming crisis that the Government faces, and appealing to the diplomatic and multilateral communities to intervene with the IMF to get it to behave in a different manner.

The economy of Zambia is in crisis. The Government has frozen wages in the public sector, and raised taxes. Incomes are so low that people are barely surviving. The imposed macroeconomic policy means that the Ministry of Health can hire no more staff, and fully 20% of the municipal districts have no doctors and no nurses. It is estimated that there is a shortfall of 10,000 teachers, and there are 9,000 newly-trained teachers who cannot be hired. Average pupil-teacher ratio is approaching 56:1—fatally wounding the quality of education. The damage to the social sectors is staggering.

Why do I choose to issue this statement? Because at the heart

of everything lies HIV/AIDS. The pandemic is methodically and destructively eating away at the capacity and infrastructure of Zambian society. It cannot be allowed to continue. The government urgently wants to confront the pandemic, but it cannot do so with its financial policy and planning in a straitjacket. The Board of the IMF must come to realize that rigid macroeconomic conditionality is putting Zambia at risk. Observers within the country worry about the potential for social unrest.

Even the Minister of Finance signals the government's acute anxiety when he says: "The Government of the Republic of Zambia has asked the people of Zambia to see the year 2004 as a period of sacrifice so as to reach the HIPC completion point by December 2004. Thus, Government has taken difficult and unpopular decisions. If the prospect of Zambia attaining the HIPC completion point is made impossible at next Monday's IMF Board meeting, then the credibility of, and public support for, the Government's programme with the IMF will be severely eroded."

I have argued before in cases involving the IMF, and I argue again, that it has failed to grasp the demonic force of the human

At the heart of everything lies HIV/AIDS'

and economic carnage caused by HIV and AIDS. The

poorest sectors of society—the extended families, the women, the children, the orphans—they have all made incredible sacrifices to keep life going in Zambia in the face of wrenching austerity. I appeal to the IMF Board to introduce the tiny quotient of flexibility being requested by the government of Zambia. To do otherwise is to give continued momentum to the pandemic.

There's a bitter irony here. The former government of Zambia often flouted every injunction of the international community. The present government, and the people of Zambia, are falling over backwards, in the face of incomparable odds, to comply with the demands of the international community. I have visited Zambia four times in the last eighteen months; I've met with many segments of society in various parts of the country, with my colleagues in the UN family, and with the president and members of his cabinet. This is a government doing everything in its power to restore economic growth and social equity. For heaven's sake, give Zambia some breathing room.

Ed's Note: At the June 14 meeting, the IMF approved a US\$320 million balance of payments support to help Zambia meet its budget deficit for the next three years. This aid comes under the IMF's PRGF programme and ends a 2-year hiatus between the IMF and Zambia over implementation of economic reforms. The reports that IslandTides staff researched do not outline the implications of this decision. It is known that foreign donors contribute at least 50% of Zambia's annual budget and the lack of an agreement with the IMF had jeopardised this financial aid.

Responding to Zambia's expectation to reach the so-called HIPC completion point, or the date the debt write-off (approximately US\$3.8 billion) becomes effective, by December 31, 2004, IMF representative Joseph Kakoza said, 'HIPC completion point needs six months of good performance from the date there is a new PRGF. It is therefore not possible to have the HIPC completion point in December because data for December will only be available in the first quarter of next year.'

Readers' Letters

Limit Rezoning for Higher Density Housing

Dear Editor:

The North Pender Island Trust Committee will be holding a public information and Hearing meeting on July 17, concerning draft Bylaw 141. The subject of that bylaw is the proposed housing development near the Driftwood Centre and would, if passed, allow for the rezoning from C2 (Commercial 2) and R (Rural) to RC2 (Rural Comprehensive 2), which is not consistent with the Official Community Plan.

We discovered Pender's beautiful rural environment and its friendly, community-minded people while sailing and have owned rural property in the Hope Bay area since 1983. Three years ago we retired and became permanent residents. Our financial and emotional investments here have been considerable. Many future newcomers will pay much more than we did for the privilege of living on Pender Island. We are in favour of efforts to limit rezoning for higher density housing to ensure that the environment we love does not disappear with one piece of rural property at a time being carved up in smaller pieces.

The foresight of conservation-minded Penderites has contributed to the creation of many parks, including the new Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. Do we have the infrastructure in place to accommodate increased tourism as well as population growth? Land use and rezoning are a continuing issue on the Penders and must be addressed as soon as possible, but through revision of the Official Community Plan

rather than via piecemeal changes to the Land Use Bylaw.

Pender residents, please join us and other concerned citizens at the Information and Public Hearing meetings, July 17.

Robert and Fran Rose, North Pender Island

Property Tax Windfall—Where Did It Go?

Dear Editor:

We applaud the *Island Tides* staff for timely articles, excellent research, and high quality writing—and also applaud readers for their thoughtful letters.

During the last two years we have seen a huge increase in the values of property in our part of the world, with a corresponding increase in property taxes. This particular rise in property tax revenues could not have been reliably predicted, and so it could not have been included as income in ministerial budgets. It would therefore appear to be a windfall of free money for our government to use as it sees fit. Intuitively, the amount of extra monies collected would seem to be large—a lot more than we will save by closing schools for one day a week, for example.

We would appreciate reportage and/or letters from anyone with knowledge of the facts and numbers involved, along with ideas about where this windfall went. We hope this is not another one of those unaccountably-disappeared-into-the-general-fund stories that we will be expected to swallow while our services and infrastructure continue to deteriorate, and while our young people's dreams of affordable housing continue to fade.

Ron Sturm, Salt Spring Island

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- amuse you?
- give you a warm, fuzzy feeling?
- make you a good contact?
- find you an opportunity?
- inspire you to take action?
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Satire ~ Patrick Brown

Breakfast of Champions

Governments throughout the world have recently expressed their concern over outbreaks in North America of Bovine Spongiform Electability, popularly known as Mad Politicians' Disease (MPD). A single case of this, first noted in British Columbia in the late eighties, appears to have spread throughout the continent. Borders have been closed to the export of Canadian politicians, but this does not appear to have halted a parallel epidemic in the United States.

Since neither country appears to have adequate testing for the disease, many more cases may exist. It is possible that the US epidemic originated entirely in the United States, but this cannot be confirmed because there has been no scientific tracking of individual cases.

Some have said that the disease may have been spread by television. This has not been completely confirmed, since there has been suspicion for some time that one of the major means of transmission has been politicians eating the ground-up remains of other politicians for breakfast, a process known as elections. This would explain the reported existence of Mad Politicians before the age of mass media.

The United States responded to initial case reports by blaming Canada, closing the border to Canadian politicians over thirty months of age. This appears to have little effect, however, and the pattern of recent cases in the US suggests s that the disease may have hereditary roots. A recent case was detected when the politician involved, whose father went to war in Iraq, repeated the experience ten years later.

Canada admits to insufficient testing, pleading that it is too expensive to test every politician. This is complicated by the fact that politicians occur in large numbers at many levels of government, and that health care is a provincial responsibility.

In the US, however, a similar situation is compounded by the American habit of electing not only legislators, but also judges, sheriffs, and dogcatchers. Some of these may have caught the disease from close contact with constituents.

MPD may manifest itself through a wide variety of physical and psychological symptoms. Deafness to public opinion, combined with an acute sensitivity to the sound and smell of money, blindness to the perfectly obvious, and excessive hair growth (particularly under TV lights) are early indications. These are followed by an inability to communicate clearly in any common language, then megalomania, hubris, and extreme vanity.

Later stages of the disease are characterized by an inability to resign and preoccupation with legacies.

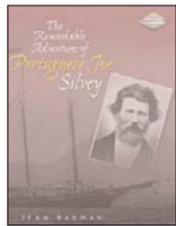
Post-Political Testing

Unfortunately, definitive testing can only be carried out after the politician has died, preferably of natural causes. The brain and spinal cord of the deceased politician are analyzed for the existence of prions, small proteins that only occur in infected politicians. These prions are, in fact, microscopic pieces of ideas that have been destroyed by too little debate. Unfortunately, there are few available samples, since many politicians, when dissected, turn out to be lacking either brains or backbones.

After testing, the remainder of the political carcass is then hustled off to the nearest press gallery, where it is pressed into a unique kind of breakfast food known as Revenge, best eaten cold. It is then distributed to up-and-coming politicians to increase their ambition. There is, of course, no testing of either the politicians or their breakfast food, just in case anything should be discovered.

Analysts are now on the alert for paranoia resulting from the fear of future outbreaks. Paranoia, they say, may be the new version of MPD.

Friday & Saturday, July 2 & 3



Book Reading & Signing, *The Remarkable Adventures of Portuguese Joe Silvey*—discover one of BC's most colourful pioneers, join author, celebrated BC historian Jean Barman, in the area inhabited by Portuguese Joe in late 1800s • GALIANO: Fri, 7pm, Galiano Island Books; READ: Sat, 1pm, Bradshaw's deck • Free, everyone welcome • Info: www.harbourpublishing.com • ON GALIANO & READ ISLANDS

Saturdays, July 3 to October 9

Mayne Island Farmers Market—fresh from the garden organic produce and plants; organic eggs, chicken, beef; goats' milk and cheese; tuna and salmon, flowers, yarn, bread, candy, baking, art, crafts, cards; musicians, food and more—join us for lunch from the BBQ • On the grounds of the Agricultural Hall in Miners Bay • 10am-1pm • Agricultural vendors from other islands welcome, phone Joanie to book a table: 250-539-9925 • ON MAYNE ISLAND

Saturday & Sunday, July 3 & 4

Taking Flight Art Show and Exhibition—new works by Celeste Varley, painter; Lyle Hamer, metal sculptor; Derek Holzapfel, photographer/videographer; Don Goedbloed, print maker, and Stan Oglov, stone & wood sculptor • Anglican Church Hall • Sat: 10-4; Sun: 12-4 • ON PENDER ISLAND

Thursdays, July 8 to Aug 26

Summer Reading Program at the Pender Library—theme this year is 'Anything Can Happen—When You Read!'—small children should bring an adult lap to sit on • Pender Library • 2-3pm • Info: Merry Hallor 250-629-2034 • ON PENDER ISLAND

Saturday, July 10

St. Mary Magdalene Annual Church Fair—a traditional Church Fair since 1989, complete with childrens' games, prizes, silent auction, homemade pies & cakes, plant sale & entertainment • St. Mary Magdalene Church Grounds, Miners Bay • 10:30am-3pm • Admission free • Info: Pat Gasston 250-539-5519 • ON MAYNE ISLAND



Mayne Island

Fri to Sun, July 16 to 18

Rammed Earth Introductory Course—fun, hands-on, information-packed weekend with rammed earth builder Meror Krayenhoff • 7pm Friday to 1pm Sunday • Cost: \$270, online registration available • Info: Terra Firma Builders at 250-537-9355, office@sirewall.com or www.sirewall.com • ON SALT SPRING ISLAND

Saturday, July 17

St. Peter's 71st Annual Garden Party—attic treasure stall, bake table, gardening, book table, old fashioned children's games, including hat making (creations will be paraded at the 'Mad Hatter Parade'), music, and more • 4703 Canal Road • 1pm-4pm, parade 2:30pm • Admission \$5 adults, children 1\$, under 5 free • Info: Carol Meek 250-629-6810 • ON PENDER ISLAND

Thurs to Sun, July 22 to 25

Natural Fibre Festival—Great workshops, fashion show, displays, quilt show, events, rare breeds in the barn, kids workshops, demos, competitions, vendors • Farmers Institute Grounds /Artspring/Various Galleries • Admission to Farmers Institute grounds: \$5/two-day pass (Saturday/Sunday); children under 12 free; Tickets for fashion show and gallery reception (Sat pm): \$15, ArtSpring Box Office • Info: www.fibrefestival.com or 250-537-1346 • ON SALT SPRING ISLAND



Thursday, July 29

Rae Spoon & Po' Girl Concert—a sweet summer evening of new-skool cowboy folk, beguiling grooves, soulful roots, grit and spirit • South End Community Hall • Doors 8pm, Show 9pm • Tickets available at the door • Info: 250-539-9918 • ON GALIANO ISLAND

Thurs to Mon, July 29 to August 2

Sheila Jordan is Shirley Valentine—Come and drink a glass of wine with Shirley in a country where the grape is grown; wooden bench seating (cushions recommended!), dress for the weather • Morning Bay Farm (vineyard), 6621 Harbour Hills Drive • 7:30pm • Tickets: \$15 at Talisman and That Little Coffee Place • ON PENDER ISLAND



Saturday, August 14



Galiano Wine Festival 2004—taste wines from around the world, plus a special focus this year on local wines and cheeses; raffle for fine wines, silent auction; plan your trip now—the ferries are loaded on Wine Festival day • Lions Park, Burrill

Road • 1-4pm • Tickets, \$30, Ken Smith at 250-539-3506 or islandtime@gulfislands.com • Info: www.galianoisland.com • ON GALIANO ISLAND

LET VISITORS & LOCALS KNOW ABOUT YOUR EVENT

Tour de Farce ~ Dan Mooney and Claire Heffernan

Of course there will be plenty of scoffers who insist that there are already too many bloody tours on the island and indubitably there are getting to be a fair number: the house tour, the garden tour, the studio tour, the barn tour, the orchard tour, the farm tour, the pub crawl tour and the latest, the clear cut tour, to mention the most popular money makers.

But have you noticed that after taking some of these tours one is left feeling, how shall I put this, somewhat deflated, inadequate, even a tad dissatisfied with one's lot in life? Take the house tour, for example. After endless hours of parading sheep-like through gazillions of immaculately carpeted square footage, of vaulted ceilings and split level elegance, of timber framed cathedral-like monstrosities that require a trail guide to find your way through, of jacuzzied and hot-tubbed decadence, of award-winning designs and gargantuan budgets, you have to return home to be confronted with your own modest, amateurish efforts at nest building. One would be less than human if (s)he did not experience a twinge or two of envy.

The garden tour can also give rise to this inner malaise: after a day spent shuffling over immaculately manicured lawns, past acres of rhodies and irises, lavender and petunias (not to mention five varieties of bamboo), you come home where your own horticultural efforts consist of five rows of plebian potatoes and three of beans, which up until then had seemed entirely adequate, perhaps even a tad overdone. This can impact negatively on the self-esteem.

Ditto the studio tour. After watching creative geniuses at work all day you return *chez vous* where your own artistic efforts—a macramé lampshade, a tie dyed T-shirt and a huge god's eye all dating from the early '70s and once displayed so proudly, now seem puerile and embarrassing and you are left feeling like an untalented clod.

Clearly what is urgently required is a tour that is guaranteed to leave you feeling good about yourself, a tour that is life-

affirming and ego-building, a tour that will make you feel content, self-satisfied and even (dare I say it) just a teensy bit smug, a tour that really delivers!

And so without further preamble we are announcing (wait for the drum roll) the 2004 First Annual Trailer Tour. Ta da! We can already hear the cries of outrage and the barrage of questions such as 'Why would anyone of sound mind sign up for such a tour?' We have of course anticipated this negative reaction and have prepared a list, a lengthy list I might add, of interesting and exciting things to see and do on this tour, which should help overcome some if not all of your reservations.

First of all you will be entering a totally alien world, a world few suspect even exists on these Islands and fewer still have actually seen first hand. It will be like a visit to a foreign country without even leaving home, more of a cultural exchange really than an actual tour, not unlike a third world experience.

One of the fascinating things the sharp-eyed observer may pick up on is the world's longest extension cord, over 1,000 feet, in continuous daily use since the early '80s, so long in fact that the alder trees supporting it have grown completely over the wire—a rather nice touch we think, which, along with all the flat tires gives just that subtle hint of permanence and stability so often sadly lacking in this transitory lifestyle.

Another must see is the three-time winner of the Red Green award for frivolous waste of duct tape. You will see an entire roof covered with nothing but overlapping layers in several attractive

TOUR, please turn to page 8

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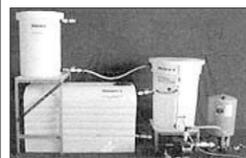
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Hand cranking your film soul ~ Rick Tipple

A group of enterprising young men shot a film on Saturna Island last year. *Desolation: a Comedy* was screened on Tuesday, June 15 in honour of the Islands Trust Council's quarterly meeting beginning the following day. Screenings for other Islands are planned.

I recently interviewed the filmmakers: director and co-author Max Kaiser, producer James Pidgeon, and producer and co-author Matthew Ross.

Desolation: a Comedy was made by Rocket Soul Productions, started in 1999 by Matthew and James. Primarily, it produces narrative films of various lengths. *Desolation* is the company's first feature length film.

Max is the owner of Hand Crank Films. He has been working in the video, film, web-design, and marketing fields since graduating from Yale College in 1994. Prior to relocating to Bellingham in 2000, Max worked in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Memphis.

Since opening up shop in December 2001, Hand Crank has produced commercials for the Bellingham, Seattle and Chicago markets. Of these, five were awarded the prestigious Telly awards for excellence in cable broadcasting (2002 and 2004). The commercials range from financial institutions targeting retirement and accounting customers to all-natural pet food stores targeting—well, pets.

I posed the following questions to the collaborators.

What is the theme of the film?

A girl in a small island community, getting ready to move on to a bigger life, discovers the importance of her community, and herself as well, and saves her island from outside forces.

The film is subtitled 'a comedy'. Do you mean that in the traditional sense of 'all's well that ends well' or in the modern sense of being humorous?

Both. In the Shakespearian sense, the conflicts are all resolved. But it is not a 'serious' film; it can be quite silly and lighthearted and not entirely in 'good taste.'

Summer Solstice Flower Circle returns ~ Robin Ridington

On summer solstice, the longest day of 2004, Salt spring artist Diana Lynn Thompson invited Islanders and visitors to join her at the Peace Park in Ganges, 'in the rich tradition of Flower Carpets and Flower Festivals found throughout the world.' She describes the Salt spring Flower Circle as 'a community celebration,' in which 'everyone brings flowers and adds them to a design drawn on the grass, creating a tapestry of live flowers that is gorgeous to behold.' Her project was supported by the Gulf Islands Community Arts Council and the BC Arts Council.

Diana and the Salt Spring community created a mandala, using flowers from their gardens, empty lots, or wherever they might find them blossoming, without doing harm. Flowers, like a great concert, a fine wine or a lovingly prepared meal, are both ephemeral and timeless. Flowers, like the sun's point of turning from one



season to another, are also sure to return in their given seasons. As the solstice day came and went, Diana's flower circle mandala encouraged participants to celebrate the sun's yearly cycle. This year, Diana drew a slightly smaller mandala on the grass than she had done in previous years. The result was a mandala more heavily patterned, more densely packed with blossoms clustered in toned circles within circles; blue cornflowers dominated one cluster, the pinks of fuschia and roses bloomed in another; creamy morning glory and ocean spray blended in between.

Diana Lynn Thompson calls her current projects 'ephemeral art.' Like Navajo sand paintings, well dressing, rangoli and inforata, her work locates human life within a larger spiritual and natural cosmos. Last summer, she created patterned fields of shells and stones on beaches in Vancouver, Victoria and the Gulf Islands. She raked sand into patterns like those in Japanese

zen gardens. She studied tide tables in order to give herself time (from two to twelve hours) and beach space to complete her constructions. At the beginning of each day's work, she picked up all the garbage on the beach, 'a gesture of trying to clean up the beach that's completely impermanent, because the next day there's lots of garbage on the beach again.' She inhabits a place where art and science meet the housework of Sisyphus. Her patient and persistent attention to detail in the world of nature creates art on a scale larger than any canvas. She called last summer's project, 'Gesture.' In one of the many notices she placed in the classified sections of community papers, she wrote:

You know, the wild beach around the corner.
Three curved, blue tendrils.

Mussel shells flowering in the sand.

Diana's work is a gesture that invites others to share in her vision. She says that her arrangements remind people, 'This is life. Right now. Look at it!'

Like her other recent work, the Flower Circle is a shared act of creation. Several years ago, Diana had a show at the

Surrey Art Gallery called 'Hundreds and Thousands.' For an entire summer, she numbered the leaves of five trees in Bear Lake Nature Park. At the end of the season, she pinned these shimmering singularities, each a distinct and numbered entity, to the gallery's wall. Then, she invited visitors to create their own arrangements of natural objects collected from beneath the trees. People assembled their creations in small white bowls, the kind used in Dim Sum presentations. True to her conservation ethic, Diana saved these bowls, and now uses them in each summer's Salt spring Solstice Flower Circle. As the seasons turn and return, so do Diana's small bowls, ready each year to contain the flower arrangements of those who join her at Solstice time. In Diana's words, 'Life just keeps going on. Love keeps bubbling up. Everything just keeps flowing.'

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Saturna Notes ~ Priscilla Ewbank

My goodness, that was a hot spell of days! What an inauguration for summer solstice. The dog went on permanent pant, every time I turned around some plant, bush or tree in the ground or in a pot needed watering, and everyone faded into the cool if they could between 12pm and 3pm or so. Great weather to dry everything—sheets, firewood, paint, drywall and hay!

Driving home through the Saanich Peninsula on Monday, the scent of fresh-cut grass blew on the hot wind. I had forgotten about that farming ritual at this time of year. Here, at home, the Campbells were doing exactly the same thing on their farm with lots of help from community members. The sheep and cows will dine this winter!

For the first time that I can remember Saturna Island has Stage 1 water restrictions on the CRD-operated Lyall Harbour and Boot Cove service area. An informative notice is available outlining the need for conservation at this time, giving some guidelines as to responsible use, and asking for cooperation.

Water Resources Meeting

Saturna Groundwater Protection Committee sponsored a presentation by Dr Diana Allen of Simon Fraser University, Brian Hollingshead, our Island Trustee, and John Wiznuk.

Dr Allen heads the department of Earth Sciences at Simon Fraser University and has been researching groundwater on Saturna and in the Gulf Islands. She has been monitoring 120 wells on Saturna Island and Hornby to determine how our groundwater evolves. This research has a purpose, to create sound groundwater

management policies and regulations for this precious and finite resource. The Gulf Islands have been identified as a 'fragile water resource area.'

At the meeting Dr Allen categorically laid to rest the theory that our water magically comes underground from Mount Baker! Our groundwater recharges by infiltration from the rainwater that falls on the Island. All of the mineral content that shows up in our individual wells is leached from the rocks that are around our wells.

Fractures are the key to our water collection and contamination. Dr. Allen and her students studied the Sparks well at East Point and pin-pointed the fracture that brings sea water into the well and plotted the rise and fall with the tide. Wells show evidence of connection through fractures. If you are looking for where to dig a well, look for lots of fractures these are key to water movement.

The provincial health and environment ministries are considering new regulations for well registration; to ensure that wells are built to optimal health and environmental standards and to gain as much information as possible about their performance.

Brian Hollingshead from the Islands Trust presented a water conservation poster that had been developed to educate people. John Wiznuk talked about small water systems and new government regulations that govern their use. The evening was very interesting and informative. Diana Allen and two students worked on Saturna for the following two days collecting data.

Talent Show

Last Saturday, the Saturna Arts and Concerts Society hosted their fundraiser talent show! It was marvelous! The large audience was in fine fettle and ready to be entertained. MC Pat McCallum, in black dress pants, white coat and white scarf, took to the center of the stage and the night unrolled. Pat was fast and hilarious, the jokes arising from the evening we were sharing. Young Caleb Walker served Pat huge martinis at appropriate intervals. So there they were—the carpenter, the store manager, the professor, and the cook manager transformed from their everyday professional lives, performing in front of us, sharing their passions. I loved it all and so did the other people in the audience, who whistled and stamped and cheered. Brianne Jones, now in high school, said 'This is my 6th talent night' and then fired off a song, a capella, by Radio Heads. The evening was delightful, entertaining, and very local—we have a lot of talented people we can be proud of.

Summer Events and Schedules Begin

Saturna's summer outdoor market starts July 3rd. From 10am to 2pm every Saturday, it will be held at an exciting new location—the grassy point at the Saturna General Store! Come and enjoy fabulous food, awesome art, beautiful baubles, praiseworthy produce, and much more. For information about the market or to set up a table call Jody at 539-3357.




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Salt Spring Island: 12+ acres of beautiful forest, sunny home with appealing features, terrific barn / studio, next to park & trails, B&B option. \$998,000



Salt Spring Island: Oceanview, 3+ acres, renovated home, SW exposures, tennis court, Churchill area, comm. water. \$995,000



Salt Spring Island: High quality 3 bed / 2.5 bath home, wood floors, wood fireplace, cosy library/den, carport, forested yet sunny, tranquillity awaits you. \$573,000



Salt Spring Island: Lakefront with SW/W exposures, dock, 3 bed home with guest suite potential, workshop space, orchard, very pretty property. \$655,000



Salt Spring Island: Restored character home, 3 bed / 2 bath, studio space, workshop, beautiful English Country gardens, some oceanviews, sep. home office, comm. water: Charming! \$630,000



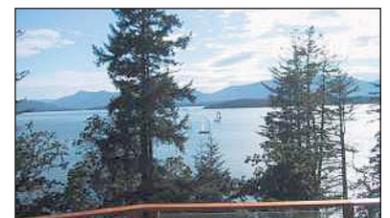
Salt Spring Island: Custom sunny home is casually elegant with country flair, unique finishes, 2 bed / 3.5 bath, 3.33 acres of beautiful forest with some meadow areas, sep. guest cottage. Private! \$1,200,000



Salt Spring Island: 2 beds, 2 baths, woodstove, lovely & sunny deck, potential workshop or home office, daisy meadow, excellent island getaway. \$410,000



Salt Spring Island: Sunny 5+ acres, custom home, sep. guest cottage, terrific barn, close to Fulford Village & ferry. \$879,000



Salt Spring Island: Oceanfront, level bench area near sea, 4.4 acres, S/SW exposures, pretty 3 bed home, gazebo, zoned for sep. cottage & studio. \$1,600,000



Salt Spring Island: Oceanview, sunny 9 acres, about ten minutes to Ganges, very private, exceptional choice for the homebuilder. \$599,000



Salt Spring Island: 18.36 acres, forest with trails, meadows, terrific barn, sep workshop with heavy duty wiring, view of ocean available, close to lake. \$755,000



Salt Spring Island: Oceanview, Channel Ridge mint condition home, comes fully furnished by designer, 3 beds, 2.5 baths, S/SW/W exposures. \$799,000



Salt Spring Island: Oceanfront with year round dock, 3 beds, 2 baths, renovated kitchen, located in the Scott Point area. \$980,000



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Revelation: Christianity Not to be Viewed Historically

Tom Harpur, author of *The Pagan Christ: Recovering the Lost Light*, is regarded as one of the foremost Canadian commentators on religion. He is also an Anglican priest and a university professor on the New Testament. So a book with this title written by this particular author is of some significance.

The book is written as personal religious revelation from the author's studies of comparative religion. Harper's intent is to help put Christianity back on a religious course that it lost when it took 'a tragically wrong course at the end of the third and beginning of the fourth century.' Why is this important? Harper thinks that much of the value of Christianity for spiritual development is lost in looking at it from a historical rather than a mythological perspective. The Gospels, he concludes, are supposed to teach truths not through their historical content but through allegory and symbolism. He also explains that the Old Testament is not historical and so needs to be viewed from a similar symbolic perspective. He thinks that the literalism (he avoids using the word 'fundamentalism') insisted on by the institutionalized Christian church from the third century on is one cause of a long history of bloody persecution and war, though he does not dwell on this sad history. 'We will never have peace on earth as long as literalism controls religions,' he says.

This mistaken way of understanding the Gospels 'has contributed in large measure to our present environmental crisis,' according to Harpur. But he does not go into this, past the mentioning of it. Harper's interest lies in the development of the human soul and the assurance of an afterlife.

This is not a book that is critical of Christianity as a religion nor questioning of its place in the world. Harper is without question a committed Christian. He even goes to great pains not to offend his fellow Christians, tactfully listing all his conclusions on page 26.

His personal revelation is that Christ is an archetype that had recurred with other names in other places long before he appeared in Galilee. He lists over 20 previous world saviours with matching narratives. Harpur's enthusiasm for a newfound Christianity, at once more believable and more inspiring, comes clearly across his pages.

This read leads to some real surprises about who Jesus was. Like his name. And the night of his Passion, so literally portrayed by the Mel Gibson movie. Harpur will no doubt be writing more on the magnitude of his discoveries, because there is much more to be learned from the symbolic significance of the pagan mythologies he describes. (Pagan, by the way, comes from the Latin for country dweller, as Harpur explains.)

The book is very well balanced in showing that each example of historical unauthenticity is more than compensated for in mythological significance. Harpur convincingly explains the pagans who accepted the Jesus Christos did so because they knew him already. As the church stamped out all other (pagan) religions, Christians came to know him less. The historical Jesus is less authentic than the Christ living in sacred time and sacred place, as the neopagans of today would put it.

Harpur misses out other possible attractions to Christianity before the Roman emperor Constantine started the chain of events that resulted in Christianity switching from the oppressed religion to the official religion of the oppressive Empire. We know that early Christianity had a simple but strict moral code, which might have been missing from some other religions of the Empire. Christianity was strictly pacifist—a religion of peace. Everyone shared. Everyone was equal. This could have had great appeal to people living in an unstable, continually warring Empire. We also know that many pagan philosophers

had long despaired of the people's literal belief in their very human deities. But Christianity's greatest attraction may well have been the treatment of the sick. Christians set up the precursors to hospitals and public medical care, so much in need that some of their centres for treatment of the sick came to be small towns.

Harpur repeatedly prepares his readers for surprises. But one surprise is that he only came to this academic revelation in the past few years. It seems the Christian places of learning continue with success to hide what Harpur now realizes is closer to the truth of the matter.

Harpur presents us with three unsung heroes of the Christos archetype (Godfrey Higgins, Gerald Massey, Alvin Boyd Kuhn). I liked their short biographies at the end of the book. But there have been others of some note. Joseph Campbell's studies of comparative religion were widely read. His popular lectures showed how all religions are recurring mythological themes. Fortunately, Campbell did much to restore 'myth' to its former sacred meaning, rather than meaning a big lie.

In 1900, Paul Carus wrote *The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. In this massive work he convincingly presents Christianity and all religion as being expressed in symbol and allegory, with a surprising unity of meaning. Like Harpur, Carus was also clearly a committed Christian and hoped to save Christianity from its dangerous fundamentalism.

I have a 1911 copy of John Robertson's 1903 classic, *Pagan Christs: Studies in Comparative Hierology*. This major academic work (still in print) by the much published British freethinker comes to the same conclusion: Christ is not historical. He is cosmic religious mythology and can be found in just about every time and place.

By concentrating on the mythologies of ancient Egypt and not going all round the world in search of pagan Christs as these scholars did, Harpur makes a shorter, more accessible account. But his book needs more than one reading to plumb the depths of the author's appreciation of the New Testament and spirituality. He also offers some gems of language:

'Things are not true because they are in the Bible, they were put in the Bible because they were spiritually true.'

Christos is 'the divine soul of every human.'

'Nature is the materialization of God's thoughts.'

The Passion is 'the vindication of the innocent righteous one.'

PAGAN CHRIST, please turn to page 10

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Filippo Gambetta	Thurs. 29 / Lions Hall

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TOUR from page 5

colours. In a private interview with the proud owner/builder, he confided his strategy to me: a new layer of tape every fall just before the heavy rains hit will keep you dry most days during the winter. If it's a particularly wet one he has a fail-safe, fool-proof back-up system—the largest collection of plastic pails, pots, wash basins and dog bowls outside of Mainland China.

Those with a scientific bent will discover at least 13 distinct varieties of mould and fungus, all potentially lethal, some never before seen in the western hemisphere and a few never seen anywhere before. There are great opportunities for close observation (some might say too close) of all manner of wildlife including mudwasps, mice, carpenter ants, wood lice, spiders, bats, swallows and starlings. Inventor types will marvel at Rube Goldberg-inspired water systems involving raised, rusting rain barrels, miles of plastic pipe, complex valves and gauges from recycling centres and garage sales (which work passably well at least several months a year).

You will learn at least 101 uses for weather-beaten orange tarps, short lengths of rusting chicken wire, half-rotten sheets of quarter inch plywood and discarded wooden pallets. And the interiors are just as colourful and inventive: unique furnishings, found only in Salvation Army thrift stores, abound. Some rooms even have 'mix-and-match wall-to-wall'—carpet samples cunningly held in place with duct tape, no two adjacent samples the same colour.

Low maintenance plumbing is the key word here: just hand pump your water from the nearest creek, spring or dug-out and strain the results. What could be simpler or less wasteful? You will be overwhelmed by living areas so confined that even the rats are stoop shouldered. I could go on but space and time require that I wrap this up with a few words about tour etiquette, some 'do's' and 'don'ts' for those intrepid souls who sign up.

Remember, these are simple folk looking for

a simpler way of life most of whom are located well off the beaten path at the end of long, rough, dangerous driveways. So just park your car and hike the last few miles. Naturally we cannot be held responsible for any acts of vandalism the sight of your \$50,000 SUV or Mercedes coupe might provoke from sullen, resentful teens (you know how prickly and unpredictable these vicious little visigoths can be on occasion).

Be sure to wear your tour ticket in a prominent visible position (on your Tilly hat perhaps) to avoid being mistaken for a building inspector (or a bill collector, a parole officer, a park ranger, a truant officer, a repo lawyer, a bailiff, an immigration official, a child welfare worker, a Fuller Brush salesman, an irate landlord, a Jehovah's Witness or just another damn nosey tourist) and the ugly consequences that might ensue.

Wear running shoes and carry a stout cudgel in case one of the many mastiffs snaps a lead chain. And just to be on the safe side, tie something white to the end of the cudgel and waive it vigorously when you approach. Wear ear protection unless you don't mind the sound of baying hounds, diesel generators, hyperactive children, etc. Don't bother to bring a lunch. These people are generous to a fault and will offer you a trailer special—fried Spam and cheese whiz on a two-day-old bagel with bread and butter pickles and a large Mason jar full of Kool-Aid.

If all this seems like just too much hassle you could always take a hint from close friends who are quite prepared to pay not to take the tour—a bit like the hospital's Phantom Ball fundraiser. The proceeds are earmarked for an as yet undisclosed but highly worthwhile project, we understand.

We did volunteer our own trailer for the tour but it didn't make the judge's short list (our extension cord is only 950 feet). Perhaps next year....

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Four Passions of Mae - Peter Carter

'Pull up a chair, get comfortable and rest here a moment, on the porch. Try out a new tuning or wander the organic garden while I go and get us some refreshments. When I come back we can catch up on what's going on in the world and share our adventures.'

—from the official Mae Moore web site

So when I heard that Mae had appeared at the Victoria Earth Day concert that's just what I did—except that the first appointment didn't work because I couldn't find her. I should have guessed—she was in the garden!

I discovered she is not just a pretty voice. Intelligent and articulate, her view stretches from her garden to embrace the concerns and the joys of our world.

To say Mae was disappointed at the poor turnout for the Victoria Earth Day gala event and walk is an understatement. She had jumped at the invitation as an opportunity for raising awareness about Earth Day, which Mae clearly believes matters. But ... 'I just wondered where everyone was,' she says—as if to challenge the absent supporters. 'We are beyond a crisis point for the planet in many regards. We have so much work left to do—so much to share. There were lots of shoppers to see but few walkers. Support from merchants was noticeable by its absence.'

Mae remembers well the first Earth Day in 1970, which was a North American event. There was a spirit in the '70s that was enthusiastic for environmental support and excited at things like alternate energy. Now that we know we have to make changes it seems interest is waning. We are in an environmental malaise. She finds it hard to understand why. Where are all the people?

In Ontario, back in the '70s, Mae remembers the public environmental concern that stimulated government support and many local environment groups. People were excited to learn about environmentally-friendly life styles—things like solar and wind power.

How has it come that we have fallen into this great void of apathy? Strong words, but she can't understand it. How much damage have we done in the 30-plus years since the first Earth Day? Strong question, and yet we don't do anything that really makes a difference. Mae is reluctant to judge but she thinks that individuals must demand more of themselves and of the corporations and governments.

The high point for her Earth Day was spotting Canada's own all-electric car on the ferry. Manufactured in Kelowna, it's called the Dynasty, zero emissions, four seats and five doors, and does 50 km on a battery charge. It even looks cute. What's more, the nearest dealer is Arbutus Repair & Communications owned by Louis Vallée on Mayne Island. It's perfect for the Islands, says Mae. She noticed it parked behind one of those 'gi-normous' SUVs. What with global warming and air pollution she finds it's hard to believe SUVs are allowed to be on the road. In fact it's the Dynasty that isn't allowed on the highway—too slow, I guess.

Enough on Earth Day (I could forgive our readers for being more interested in Mae). So I challenged Mae to share her top three passions—excluding Lester Quitzau, her partner, that is. I will never forget Mae's Pender Island concert when she shared that new passion with us—talk about radiant!



Mae Moore and Lester Quitzau on Pender Island

Mae's three passions? Music, art, and gardening.

She started with organic gardening. The importance of the escalating multinational control over the food we eat, including genetically engineered crops. Again she commented on our apparent lack of personal responsibility and connection to the natural environment around us—in terms of too few people trying to grow their own food. However she finds great pleasure in finding herself living on organic garden row, Port Washington Road, Pender Island.

She recalls recently, while recording in Victoria with Lester, going to a nearby supermarket for some fruit and vegetables to eat. Only to leave empty-handed except for a bottle of water. There was no organic. All the food came from distant corners of the world but every item of each kind looked identical. Which to Mae was not appetizing.

Intuitively she is concerned that this is not the most healthy food for people to be eating (the science backs her up). She is also concerned about big chemical companies taking over control of

world food production, like rice and wheat, through GE technology, patents. Their claim that they are doing it to feed the world's poor is just a crock of ... malarkey, she says. She has just read an incredible book her daughter gave her, called *Hope's Edge* written by Francis Moore Lappé, who wrote the best seller *Diet for a Small Planet* in the '70s. Lappé and her daughter travelled around the world interviewing farmers struggling to keep their traditional agriculture. It was an inspiring read for Mae.

Mae has been gardening organically for 30 years—she learned it from her mother. Mae became vegetarian at the age of 15, which she sees as a natural match with organic gardening. Gardening is a creative process to Mae. A garden is functional art. Her favourite kind of art is functional art. What's functional art?—an everyday object we use, like a beautiful chair. Looking around her house I saw immediately what she meant. As she shows people round her house, Mae is sharing her art. Life as art.

Next passion (not in any particular order)? Music.

To Mae, music is a great inspiration for people and has great healing power. One of the greatest joys that she has experienced in her career is when someone comes up to tell her that one of her songs helped them through a very difficult time. Music has a wonderful way of connecting people, connecting ideas, and breaking down barriers.

Mae was influenced by music from an early age. Her father was a professional jazz musician, and Mae grew up listening to his jazz and classical records. Her sister played piano. Her brother played trumpet. They never all played together but making music was part of family life.

Her mother sang. Mae's mother died when she was 17, which was when Mae turned to song writing as an outlet for her grief. Very shy as a teenager, she found songwriting a way to communicate with people. Performing her music completely cured her shyness long ago—obviously! But it took many years. Mae never planned on a career in music. Never considered being famous. She was content to do many different jobs to allow her to share her music with people—sales, factory work, farm work.

MAE, please turn to page 10

SATURNA from page 6

The Saturna Recycling Centre is now open its summer hours. Besides Wednesdays and Saturdays, add Sundays from 1:30pm to 3:30pm to make recycling even easier. Alas, the Free Store is not open for browsing on Sunday.

Walking on Water?

The June 13th Taylor Point Paddle and Walk, sponsored by Parks and Recreation, was a huge success. About 40 people rowed the *Saturnita* (our Spanish replica long boat), kayaked, and walked to Taylor Point and enjoyed a lovely picnic.

Trust Council on Saturna

On June 8, 9 and 10, the Islands Trust Council held their quarterly meeting on Saturna. Kicking off the meetings was a showing of *Desolation: A Comedy*, a shot on Saturna film about Island life (see article on page 6 for more information).

The first day the Trust met with San Juan County Commissioners on items of common interest: affordable housing, tourism, groundwater protection, etc. This was an interesting discussion. The San Juans are almost the fastest growing population area in the US and local governments have had to be creative, and reflective, about what this population explosion means to their resource base, the land, and their

communities. The three commissioners had three different takes on the situation and different ideas on what the problem was and what could be done.

The commonality of our lives becomes apparent when you hear the trustees from the different Islands speak and, of course, it is informative to hear your local trustees be a part of the discussion.

School Celebration—Summer is Here!

Friday June 25 was Celebration Day for our school kids. Nicholas Range, Giovanna Davies, Jasmine Lambert, Allison Gaines, Zander Cozine, Kaleb Walker, Arielle Middleditch, and Ruth and Anya Bruhn went to picnic, play games and have a good time at Gaines' beach. The kids and their friends celebrated their scholarly accomplishments, the end of school for the year, and the beginning of summer!

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Leave your dog at home

With the rising summer temperatures, the BC SPCA is urging the public to protect their pets against the dangers of heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

Many well-meaning guardians leave their dogs unattended in parked cars while they run errands. The temperature, even in the shade with windows partly open, can rapidly (in just minutes) reach a level that will seriously harm or even kill a pet. Dogs have no sweat glands, so they cool themselves by panting and by releasing heat through their paws. On summer days the hot air and upholstery can make it impossible for pets to cool themselves. Dogs can withstand high temperatures for only a very short time, usually just 10 minutes, before suffering irreparable brain damage or death.

Pet guardians should be alert to heatstroke symptoms: exaggerated panting (or the sudden stopping of panting), rapid or erratic pulse, salivation, anxious or staring expression, weakness and muscle tremors, lack of coordination, convulsions or vomiting, and collapse.

If your dog shows symptoms of heatstroke, do the following: Move the animal to a cool, shady place. Wet the dog with cool water. Fan vigorously to promote evaporation (this will cool the blood, which reduces the animal's core temperature). Do not apply ice, (this will constrict the blood flow and inhibit cooling). Allow the dog to drink some cool water (or to lick ice cream if no water is available). Take the dog to a veterinarian as soon as possible for further treatment.

If you're used to letting your dog accompany you on errands, you might feel guilty leaving it behind on hot summer days. But your dog will be much happier—and safer—at home, with shade and plenty of fresh, cool water.

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SATURNA FILM from page 6

In theatre, comedy is very much a matter of timing. How do you accomplish that in film, where it is not filmed sequentially?

It is mainly a matter of careful planning; first with us and then with the actors who make it work. All this happens before the first camera begins to roll. A good example of this is the policeman, who became far funnier than we ever imagined. Editing can tweak the humour, but only a little.

Is this the same film as was shown on Saturna earlier, or have you been working on it?

Essentially, yes. All we are doing now is having the film 'colour-corrected,' bit by bit as we can afford it. It's a very expensive process for us.

I understand that even though you're Americans, this is essentially a Canadian film. Is that right?

Yes. The wealth of acting talent in Vancouver is amazing. We had an off-shore cameraman, but everyone else, except for us, was Canadian. We're all the same anyway, despite what someone in the White House may think.

When will it be shown on the other islands?

It was shown on Mayne on June 11 as a test run, and it will be shown on the bulk of the other Islands later in August. We knew it would do well on Saturna. You guys would have to come just to see yourselves and your beautiful island on film.

Where will it go after it has been shown about

the Islands?

That depends upon the reaction on the other Islands. We want to learn as much as we can by following it all the way from conception to distribution.

Where do the three of you intend to go from here?

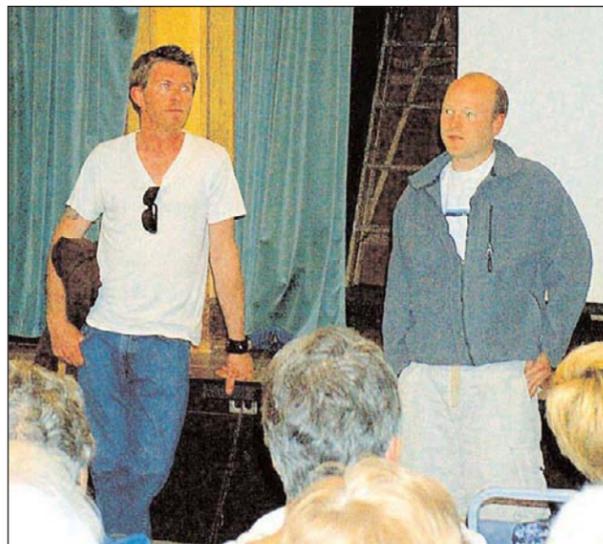
Other than Max getting married, we hope to make enough on *Desolation* to satisfy our investors so we can make more films. We don't have to make a lot of money.

What have you learned or how have you changed by making the film?

We have gone full circle and now know a lot about the whole process. It's been great; we really enjoyed it. We all have day jobs, so most of it was done weekends and evenings, but it was worth it.

And a postscript from Max:

'One thing I think we failed to mention in our previous discussions was how truly wonderful the Saturna Islanders were and continue to be in helping to shepherd this production. At every step of the way people were open-minded and fun with a great sense of humour, and a great help to us. From Neal's exceptional performance, to Jess Guy's farewell gourmet dinner for the whole cast and crew, or John opening up the store for us at 5am, Ilio letting us use



his place for days on end, Derm messing up his garage for us to make it look authentic, Jean (is that her name?) turning off the generator for sound reasons at 10 at night (which caused even greater problems later, as we all know), Rebecca and the Saturna Vineyard allowing us to turn it into 'the pub,' the Pages letting us duke it out in their pool, the Pipers for not being upset when they got home and there were five people living in their house, quietly having breakfast. Everyone turning a blind eye at how some of our lead Vancouver actors drove, the Barrows letting us turn their garage into a jail—the list goes on and on. It meant the world to us, thanks!—Max.'

PAGAN CHRIST from page 8

And in the chapter entitled *The Only Way Ahead: 'God has called us to full responsibility of our own evolution, our own actions.'*

The book leads to 'the lost light' of its subtitle. Harpur references the 1999 UK bestseller by Freke and Gandy (*The Jesus Mysteries: Was the Original Jesus a Pagan God?*) in his explanation that the pagan mysteries that include the Christos were spiritual journeys of rebirth and enlightenment.

Harpur reminds us of the irony of Constantine the Great (the founder of the real Christianity of history) calling 318 bishops to Nicea in 325 BCE, to have them reveal the true word of God by a vote—after which the Christian church destroyed other sources of opinion and knowledge. Among those Constantine later murdered were two sons, his wife and his brother-in-law, in the most revolting ways. He only took Christian baptism on his death bed so as to ensure his forgiveness.

This use of Christ by man has survived to the present day. Mel Gibson's movie *The Passion of Christ* portrays Christ as a real man who died for our sins. As the fans of the Gibson epic attested to, it is Jesus's death rather than his life that assures their forgiveness as Christians. Christ as perpetual global scapegoat. (Harpur admits to rushing his book to coincide with the movie's opening.)

Harpur refers to the Book of Revelations as the big example of understanding archetypal Christian images. Here I have to question his judgment of the profundities of religious symbolism. Like Paul, John of Patmos pretends personal knowledge of Jesus through channeling. But I can in no way reconcile the Prince of Peace in the Gospels with

the Avenger Punisher Terminator of the unknown John's ghastly garbled dream. Perhaps the danger of religion is that one man's myth is another's craziness. I gather that Revelations escaped being tossed out with all the other gospel rejects by a very tight vote.

Nevertheless, Harpur intends a great service with this book. Looking at the Old Testament in this light, the Christians, Jews and Arabs have no conflict—in their religion at least. They will have to admit to less lofty motives for their neverending killing of each other in the name of their same god. In this light of the New Testament, Christ is pagan and good pagans can be Christian. If that is too much to swallow, how about this surprise from St. Augustine, echoed by Church historian Eusebius (c. 260-340): 'The religion published by Jesus Christ to all nations is neither new nor strange ... our manner of life and the principles of our religion have not been lately devised by us, but were instituted and observed from the beginning of the world, by good men, accepted by God.'

Like Carus over a century ago, Harpur presents a solid reason not to give up on religion, even though the unenlightened do terrible things in its name. *The Pagan Christ* offers the Gospels as an end to the Christian division of the world into good Christians and bad pagans—and even the glimmer of a possibility of a return to the 'deep connection between spiritual values and the natural world.' That would indeed be good news—our world certainly needs saving.

The Pagan Christ: Recovering the Lost Light. Tom Harpur. 2004. Thomas Allen Publishers, Toronto.

MAE from page 9

Music now brings her a gift—the joy of creating and connecting with people.

When asked about big business using people's favourite music to connect with product, Mae's reaction is immediate—appalled! Absolutely appalled. When she heard that the Stan Rogers Folk Fest this year is the Exxon Mobil folk fest it was like a knife in her heart. Mae thinks that having every institution and event go by the name of some big corporation, is unnecessary and detracts from local creativity and local community identity. When she signed her big record contract (and got famous) she stipulated in the contract that none of her songs was to be used to sell tobacco or alcohol. Livelihood as social responsibility.

Passion 3 (besides Lester, Mae reminded me)? Art.

I had already seen some of Mae's paintings on my tour of her home. Some of Pender and some of Prince Edward Island. Art and music, to Mae, are closely tied. Art stimulates people to think, to open their mind. Mae's was opened particularly by a large First Nations artwork. It inspired her to see art as a way of telling another part of our whole truth. She applauds people who go out of their way to express their creativity, especially art on the fringe. Art is more than just pretty picture. She is now working on a landscape piece that looks pretty but up close there is a clear cut. I could see Mae sees our Earth like that.

As a child Mae was encouraged by her family. She was very lucky—she had a wonderful childhood. (Although that didn't stop her going off the rails as a teenager.) And she remembers well one teacher who encouraged her art. Her family was very supportive of her going to art school after high school.

Now she sees herself as a beginner with lots to learn. Which is OK by Mae as she likes a balanced life with her three (that is four) passions. Anyhow she still has some shyness—about showing her art.

Her shyness when younger, however, did not stop her getting arrested for protesting nuclear weapons back in Ontario. Imagine—getting arrested for not wanting to risk a nuclear holocaust!

Then she survived a serious car accident and had an out of body experience. Between that and the shock of turning forty she is no longer worried about what people think of her. She is secure knowing the people who love her. Love is very real in her life. Many different kinds of love. Like the love of finding her daughter who she gave up for adoption. That is a love she used to dream of every day, and she is so grateful for it. She is also grateful for the love of a man who accepts her just for who she is—warts and all. The love of her sister, who has been a constant in her life, always there, always very grounding. I got the impression this special love was the well spring of her love and concern for the world. Love for life.

Then the phone rang. Her reply to the caller was a heartfelt 'And I love you too.' Ah, the fourth (or is it first) passion. But then to quote another song bird—a thrill's a thrill.

Time for me to finish my tea, pack up and go, love being a perfect place to finish this interview with Mae Moore, and thinking maybe it's too little art not too much science that is the problem. If we could see our home and garden, the Earth and all of life more as great art, perhaps not so many people would miss the show.

That's Pender Island's Mae Moore. Much more than a pretty voice.

When I got home my friends from Hawaii had called—to tell me of the fabulous celebrations for Earth Day there. I made a note to tell Mae.

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Canada's songbirds in trouble ~ Canadian Wildlife Federation

In Canada, we are lucky to have such a wide variety of songbirds to admire. Their beautiful colours delight our eyes throughout all four seasons and we welcome them to our bird feeders during the colder months. Every spring, Canada's migratory songbirds come back home from more tropical climes. They regale us with their symphony of songs while they breed, nest and raise their young. But scientists have found that songbird populations are decreasing at an alarming rate and this is cause for concern.

What is a songbird, exactly?

Most of the birds you see around your house are songbirds. Songbirds belong to a large group called 'passerines', which means 'perching birds.' Slightly more than 4,000 species of birds belong to this group throughout the world. They include sparrows, wrens, thrushes, finches, warblers, grosbeaks, jays, swallows, buntings, shrikes, tanagers, and even crows and ravens. Most Canadian songbirds migrate south to avoid the winter months, but there are some who stick around and visit our backyard feeders like the cheerful chickadee.

In Canada, the number of songbirds is estimated to be in the billions, but the populations of some species are 10 to 20% of what they once were.

Why should we care?

Birds are an integral part of our natural ecosystems. They help keep insect populations in check, they pollinate plants and disperse seeds. Birds are also very important to us because of their delightful songs and amusing antics. Bird-watching activities contribute millions of dollars to the Canadian economy. Songbirds are sometimes our first introduction to wildlife and they are considered by many to be an essential part of any wilderness experience.

Songbirds need your help for the following reasons.

Habitat loss

Habitat loss is the main reason songbird populations are declining. The boreal forest is shrinking and many songbirds depend on it as a critical breeding area. Other ecosystems that birds depend on are also disappearing, such as wetlands. But the destruction of critical habitat is not restricted to Canada. Songbird populations are also threatened by the destruction of their wintering habitats in Central and South America, as new hotels and resorts are built and land is cleared for agriculture.

Cowbird Parasitism

Cowbirds are the parasites of the bird world. Common in open areas like farmlands, these brown nondescript birds lay their eggs in the nests of other songbirds. The host birds often unknowingly end up raising the cowbird chick along with their own. This can diminish the number of their own young raised. Cowbird chicks tend to hatch earlier than their host's and grow faster and bigger. The 'foster parents' will then feed the cowbird chick the majority of the food and give them more care

Sometimes the cowbird chick even pushes out the young of the parent birds! Cowbirds were once only found in the North American prairie region, but with the spread of agriculture they have expanded their range to Eastern regions as well. Although songbirds themselves, cowbirds are responsible for the widespread decline of many other types of songbirds.

West Nile Virus

Our daily newspapers are full of headlines on the perils of West Nile virus to humans. But this unfortunate mosquito-borne disease is also a danger to songbirds. Although more studies must be conducted to find out to what extent the disease is affecting wild bird populations overall, important declines in the number of chickadees and members of the crow family are thought to be related to West Nile. At the Metro Toronto zoo, five endangered loggerhead shrikes died due to the disease in 2002 and the disease has been found in 110 wild bird species.

Cats

Who would have thought that this beloved household pet would be responsible for the decline of many birds in Canada, particularly songbirds? Scientists have estimated that more than 100 million songbirds are killed in North America each year. Free roaming cats are responsible for the near extinction of the prothonotary warbler, a bird once common to southeastern North America.

Invasive species

Invasive species are a threat for many reasons. Invasive plants, like purple loosestrife and common reed (both plants introduced from Europe that often completely overtake wetlands), are destroying the habitat of many songbirds like marsh wrens and a number of warblers. House sparrows and starlings, both invasive from Europe, out compete native birds for nesting sites and food.

Buildings

In Canada alone, millions of songbirds die each year by colliding into high-rise office or apartment buildings, especially during migration. Many of our cities were built in areas that birds have used as migratory corridors for years. Songbirds usually migrate at night and are attracted to the lights left on in buildings.

Windows

Windows can be deadly for songbirds. They see reflections of familiar things like trees and clouds in the glass and do not realize that windows are hard and dangerous surfaces. Small birds that collide into windows fall to the ground often unnoticed. Many birds recover from such trauma, but up to one million birds die from colliding with windows each year.

Pesticides

Rachel Carson, in her book *Silent Spring*, warned of the devastating effects of pesticide spraying on birds and other animals. After the books publication in 1962, the insecticide

DDT was banned in North America. Many species of birds have since recovered, but it is still used in some of the southern countries where our songbirds spend the winter. Other pesticides, such as those used in agricultural production, can also be harmful to songbirds. Pesticides can also cause problems by reducing the number of insects or plants that songbirds eat as well as nesting sites and habitat cover essential to their survival.

Climate Change

Many of the changes that ornithologists expect to see in birds as a result of climate change are quite subtle. Birds use temperature as a cue to begin nesting. If it gets warmer, birds build their nests and lay their eggs earlier. Most songbirds feed their young with protein-rich insects. If chicks hatch at a time when insects are not abundant, their chances of survival are greatly reduced.

When these perils are combined with the normal rigours of everyday bird life, such as migration, occasional food shortages, predators, and disease, it's a wonder that there are songbirds left!

Things You Can Do to Help Songbirds

Make your own backyard attractive to birds by planting a variety of native plants that provide food and cover. Provide water by adding a birdbath or digging a pond.

Put up a nesting box and place bird feeders and nectar feeders at proper distances from windows or in places where birds cannot be ambushed by predators. Use appropriate seed and other foods.

Turn off the lights in your office at the end of the workday and insist that your colleagues do so as well. Pull down the blinds at night if you live in an apartment to prevent migrating songbirds from colliding into your building.

Keep your cats indoors! Not only will you be saving songbirds, you will be protecting your cat from cars, disease and even predation from owls, foxes and fishers!

Hang lengths of ribbon, silver paper or other material outside the window so they will flutter in the wind to prevent birds from colliding with the windows of your home.

Buy organic shade-grown coffee from plantations that provide perfect habitat for our migratory songbirds to spend the winter and support many other types of wildlife in tropical countries.

Get involved in local bird conservation activities. There are many organizations that rely on the participation of people like you.

Take steps to minimize the effects of climate change such as taking public transportation or riding your bicycle.

Learn to identify the common birds of your neighbourhood and teach young people the value of birds and other wildlife.

For more information visit www.cwf-fcf.org

More wildfire stories

John Wiznuk

The summer of 2003 saw thousands of wildfires in BC, twenty-three of which got completely out of control, resulting in massive damage.

The first book out about the catastrophe in the BC Interior was *Firestorm, The Summer BC Burned*, a collection of text and photos from daily and weekly papers of the communities affected by the fires (which I reviewed in *Island Tides*). Now in bookstores is *Wildfire*, which uses text and photos originally published in the *Province* and *Vancouver Sun* newspapers.

As in *Firestorm*, it is the full-page colour photographs that give the emotional punch to *Wildfire*. Scenes that could never be described adequately by words: smoke billowing over a mountain; flames raging through timberlands; the desolation of burned homes, businesses and forests; the fatigue on the faces of firefighters; and the disbelief and despair of those who lost their possessions. Photojournalists Nick Procajlo, of the *Province* and Ian Smith, of the *Vancouver Sun*, covered the fires and they choose the images.

In *Wildfire*, the publisher of Pacific Newspaper Group sets the scene for last summer; a combination of environmental conditions that included the third successive dry winter, record high temperatures, and low summer rainfall. These weather factors combined with masses of accumulated dry fuel close to our proliferating settled areas. (BC's forestry practice has been to suppress all fires and not to practise controlled burns of forestlands.) The fuel load and weather were a deadly mix that created near perfect conditions for havoc.

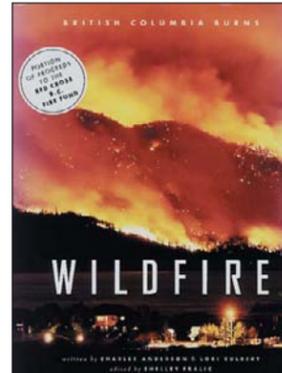
Wildfire tells the story of last summer by provincial region: North Thompson, Okanagan, and Kootenay Districts—the regions of the Kamloops, Kelowna and Cranbrook fires. A map of each region locates the individual fires, a useful aid for those of us not familiar with the interior of the province. In the case of the Okanagan Mountain Park Fire, which burned into the city of Kelowna, the map shows the huge footprint of the area scorched by the blaze.

Already it seems like a long time ago. This is both a curse and a blessing. The ability to put things behind us and carry on with life is a useful human trait but as the summer of 2004 arrives we are already hearing about forest fires (see front page).

Besides being a chronicle of the heroism and the horror, *Wildfire* has things to teach. There are lessons to be learned. To paraphrase HG Wells, those who cannot learn the lessons of history are doomed to make the same mistakes over again. Enjoy this book as an exciting read and consider how the story might apply to you and your home.

Another important document, the long-awaited Filmon Report on the response to the fires of 2003, is also now available at www.firestorm.gov.bc.ca.

'Wildfire,' Charles Anderson and Lori Culbert, Greystone Books. 'Firestorm, The Summer BC Burned,' McClelland and Stewart.



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