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Robert Bateman wins enviro award

The Skies Above Canada Foundation announced this year's Environmental Leadership Award winners on March 6 at a gala evening co-hosted by the Burns Bog Conservation Society in Tsawwassen. Robert Bateman, Salt Spring resident and world-acclaimed wildlife artist and visionary, was the keynote speaker and an award winner.

Every year the Skies Above Canada Foundation honours individuals, organizations and businesses whose environmental practices protect earth's atmosphere, achieving real progress towards climate change reductions.

'Just last week, the Pentagon identified climate change as the number one security threat to the world, even outranking global terrorism,' said Skies Above Chair, Bruce Torrie. 'And Reuters reported that 'the world's second-largest reinsurer, Swiss Re, warned that the costs of natural disasters, aggravated by global warming, threatened to spiral out of control, forcing the human race into a catastrophe of its own making.

'While inaction by governments and industry is 'business as usual,' said Torrie, 'we are pleased to honour those who are making a difference—a difference in the practices of their businesses.'

This year's Environmental Leadership Award winners include: Mount Washington Alpine Resort and its President Peter Gibson, for their wholehearted practice of ecotourism, including many initiatives to minimize environmental impacts, its six-figure donation of land to the Marmot Recovery Foundation, and its active involvement and generous grants for trail building, bridge work and camp sites at Strathcona Provincial Park.

SED Technologies, represented by Directors Blair Weston and Gary ENVIRO AWARDS, please turn to page 7



Photo: Paul Hucheson

Gravel day at Browning Harbour, Pender Island. A fleet of trucks carry the aggregate to Glen Grimmer's yard in the dawn to dusk event.

Trust takes action on Kommas Bluffs

The Islands Trust is working to bring about the remediation and replanting of a destabilized portion of the Kommas Bluff on Denman Island. In September 2003, the Islands Trust filed a legal claim against Francis Dean Ellis, the owner of two properties north of Fillongley Park, seeking an injunction to restrain the owner from altering land and cutting or removing trees in a 50-metre wide buffer along the edge of the Bluff on the two properties and on the Bluff face.

The Statement of Claim alleges that Mr. Ellis has breached the *Local Government Act*, and the Official Community Plan's Kommas Bluff Development Permit Area, and development permits registered on the properties. The Islands Trust's Claim also seeks an order 'requiring the Defendant to restore the lands to their condition prior to the Defendant's breach.'

On October 10, 2003, the Trust obtained a promise under oath from Mr. Ellis to replant the buffer and not to remove additional trees, pending a final resolution of the Islands Trust's application for a permanent injunction and remediation order. The TRUST, please turn to page 6

Salt Spring Dollars take a jump ~ Gillian Allan

The use of Salt Spring's local currency, Salt Spring Dollars (\$\$ Dollars), has steadily increased since January, when the Island's four largest merchants—Thrifty Foods, Ganges Village Market, Mouat's and Pharmasave—began keeping a portion of their float in \$\$ Dollars and offering them as change.

Another reason for the increased use of \$\$ Dollars may be that they no longer have an expiry date. At the AGM last October, the Salt Spring Island Monetary Foundation (SSIMF)—a non-profit organization that manages \$\$ Dollars—decided to remove the expiry date.

Now over 200 local merchants and service providers on Salt Spring accept \$\$ Dollars at par with the Canadian dollar. \$\$ Dollars function as legal gift certificate that can be traded for Canadian money at the two local banks and the credit union. Eric Booth, who sits on the SSIMF board says, 'As far as we know, we are the first alternative, local currency that is fully backed by either a national currency, gold and/or assets.'

Real Benefits for Salt Spring

And now the real magic of \$\$ Dollars are showing. Last month the SSIMF was able to give its first interest-free community loan—\$10,000 for the Community Housing and Land Trust Society. As long as the SSIMF has enough money in the bank for day-to-day exchanges, they can lend the remainder to local groups for local projects.

Booth explains how \$\$ Dollars provide benefits for the community, '...when we lend a local group \$10,000, the loan, being an asset, still backs the \$10,000 that is being used out in the community. Eventually the loan will be repaid, and the \$10,000 will be available for another use.

In this way, as the amount of \$\$ Dollars in circulation grows, more will be available to be invested in the community. Similarly to the Canadian dollar, as long as there is always enough Canadian cash on deposit in our trust accounts at the three financial institutions to

DOLLARS, please turn to page 7



It's Spring! Island girls, Jesse Guy from Saturna and Phoebe Trueit from Galiano, get some lamb lovin'.

National Energy Board turns down Sumas II

'Today we celebrate!' exclaimed Adriane Carr, BC Green Party leader, upon hearing that on March 5 the National Energy Board (NEB) denied the application of Sumas Energy 2, Inc to build a transmission line into Canada. The decision effectively shelves a proposal to build an air-polluting natural gas-fired electric generating facility on the US side of the Fraser Valley.

Sumas Energy 2 made application in 1999 to the NEB to transmit power into Canada from the proposed power plant which is close to Abbotsford. The region's air-shed already suffers from excessive air pollution that prevailing wind patterns and surrounding mountains funnel up the valley from Vancouver and Puget Sound.

The NEB's 175-page report evaluates the pros and cons of the transmission line. The Board found that the burdens associated with the power plant and related power line through Abbotsford would be 'many and real, and that these would be borne almost entirely by local communities, whereas the benefits would be negligible.

Carr praised the tremendous efforts made by so many local people over the past five years that brought about this 'triumph of democracy. Without this intense level of

broad public opposition, I'm sure the outcome would have been different,' commented Carr.

Premier Gordon Campbell called the decision a major victory for residents of the Fraser Valley that will help protect air quality. Taxpayers, the government says, have invested a total of \$1 million to stop the power project.

Over the years, the province's efforts have included obtaining intervenor status in review hearings by both the National Energy Board and Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, filing appeals with US Environmental Protection Agency and direct lobbying of Washington Governor Gary Locke.

'This victory is because of the great team effort of citizens, mayors, local officials, MPs and MLAs,' said John van Dongen, MLA for Abbotsford-Clayburn.

'It's great the NEB recognized BC's argument that this proposal wasn't in the interest of Canadians, and that we have better options for the electricity we all need,' said Barry Penner, MLA for Chilliwack-Kent. 'We'll keep working with all our community partners to defeat this project once and for all.' (See related letter, page 4.)

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Island Tides

AT FULFORD HARBOUR
MARCH

Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.	Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.
09	0635	10.8	3.3	17	0350	10.8	3.3
TU	1250	4.6	1.4	WE	0930	8.5	2.6
MA	1910	9.2	2.8	WE	1245	9.2	2.8
				ME	2025	2.3	0.7
10	0030	5.6	1.7	18	0425	10.8	3.3
WE	0655	10.8	3.3	TH	1000	7.9	2.4
ME	1335	3.6	1.1	TH	1415	9.2	2.8
	2025	9.2	2.8	JE	2115	2.6	0.8
11	0110	6.9	2.1	19	0450	10.8	3.3
TH	0715	10.8	3.3	FR	1030	7.2	2.2
JE	1425	2.6	0.8	FR	1530	9.2	2.8
	2155	9.2	2.8	VE	2200	3.0	0.9
12	0200	8.2	2.5	20	0515	10.5	3.2
FR	0735	10.5	3.2	SA	1105	76.2	1.9
VE	1515	2.3	0.7	SA	1635	9.2	2.8
	2340	9.8	3.0	SA	2240	3.9	1.2
13	0310	9.2	2.8	21	0535	10.5	3.2
SA	0800	10.5	3.2	SU	1135	5.2	1.6
SA	1615	2.0	0.6	SU	1735	9.2	2.8
				DI	2315	4.9	1.5
14	0110	10.2	3.1	22	0550	10.5	3.2
SU	0505	9.8	3.0	MO	1210	4.6	1.4
DI	0825	9.8	3.0	MO	1835	9.2	2.8
	1715	2.0	0.6	LU	2355	5.9	1.8
15	0220	10.8	3.3	23	0610	10.2	3.1
MO	0800	9.5	2.9	TU	1245	3.9	1.2
LU	0915	9.5	2.9	TU	1935	9.2	2.8
	1825	2.0	0.6	MA			
16	0310	10.8	3.3	24	0035	6.9	2.1
TU	0855	9.2	2.8	WE	0625	10.2	3.1
MA	1105	9.2	2.8	WE	1320	3.3	1.0
	1930	2.0	0.6	ME	2040	9.5	2.9

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School District going back to Island communities

School District #64 plans a second round of community consultation in the week of March 29 to present the results of last November's cost-saving consultations. Following those meetings, the Futures 64 Task Force sorted ideas for balancing SD#64's budget into four categories and now it will present this proposed structure for further research to Island communities before making recommendations to the school district trustees.

The district's Futures 64 Task Force was formed to deal with the projected effects of declining enrollment. SD#64 is an expensive district to administer. Location of schools on five Gulf Islands results in complications in creating maximally economic student-teacher ratios. Operating water taxis as well as buses further complicates logistics. In the last decade SD#64 has been innovative in dealing with increasingly tight educational funding.

Capitalizing on the Islands' security and beauty and Canadian education standards, it has attracted private students, largely from Asia. Several boom years in enrollment, as young families moved to the Islands, helped, too. However the number of children enrolled has now taken a downturn, which the school district predicts will continue for the foreseeable future. Indeed the continuing steep climb in home and rental prices, and ensuing use of homes for vacation rentals, indicate that it will be increasingly hard for young families to settle or remain on the Islands.

Current projections for September 2004 is a decline of 50 students. In September 2005, there is a predicted further decline of 40 students. The financial impact from this as well as increased staffing costs and inflationary pressures is projected to be \$350,000 in 2004-05 and an additional \$250,000 in 2005-06. Added to this pending deficit are the changes to the Ministry of Education's funding allocation system which are projected to result in a further \$600,000 loss in 2005-06 for a potential total shortfall of 1.2 million dollars.

Four Areas of Action

New Programs—offering the Partnership Program electronically, virtual classrooms, and splitting secondary attendance between Salt Spring and the Southern Gulf Islands.

Re-organization—four day instructional week and to

SCHOOL, turn to page 3

Lessons from the Hutton Report - Patrick Brown

Dr. David Kelly, a British authority on Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), committed suicide on July 17, 2003 after being named as the source of a BBC television report made by Andrew Gilligan. Dr Kelly was a distinguished scientist, the world's foremost authority on anthrax and his death was a great loss to the world.

Gilligan's report suggested that UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's government knew, before its September 24, 2002 publication, that a dossier intended to justify British participation in the invasion of Iraq contained a significant claim that was untrue. Gilligan claimed that the dossier had been 'sexed up' by the government.

The intention of the dossier, of course, had been to present the government's case for war to the British public in such a way that it could not be filtered by the media. In May 2003, after the war, Gilligan's report raised questions as to the truth of the dossier and severely damaged the government's credibility.

The claim was that Iraq could deploy chemical and biological WMDs with a 45 minute lead time. The claim has since been proven incorrect.

Hutton Disappoints the Public

Lord Brian Hutton, the sixth-ranked of twelve Law Lords in the UK House, was appointed by the Blair government to investigate the circumstances of Kelly's death. He accepted terms of reference that did not permit him to examine the truth of the dossier's claim.

In his report, dated January 28, 2004, Lord Hutton concluded that Gilligan had manufactured the report that suggested the claim was not true and had attributed it to an anonymous source, later identified as Kelly. He also concluded that the BBC had failed to confirm the truth of Gilligan's report either before or after it was broadcast.

He ruled that in identifying Kelly and exposing him to two parliamentary committees and to the press, the government had followed acceptable procedures.

In summary, he said the BBC acted improperly, the government acted properly, nobody would have thought Kelly would commit suicide, and Tony Blair could reasonably assume at the time that the claim was correct.

There has been much discussion of whether it was proper to rely on a single source. In the Hutton report, the government was excused for it; Gilligan and the BBC were pilloried for it.

But the interesting thing is the public reaction. It has been to demand greater moral clarity from both the government and the media, an equivalence that Hutton, in his defense of the establishment, failed to recognize.

The public now requires clarity, responsibility, and ethical behaviour from the media (whose continued existence sometimes depends on being clear) and from the government (whose continued existence may sometimes depend on not being clear).

A Curious Parallel

The situation in the Hutton enquiry turned, to a considerable extent, on a curious parallel. Proper journalistic practice has traditionally required double-sourcing—that is, information to be published should be checked with two independent sources. (This is not always easy.)

Gilligan reported on the early morning of May 29, that his anonymous source had indicated to him that he, and possibly members of the intelligence services, doubted the accuracy of a government claim that Iraq had the capability of launching missiles containing chemical or biological agents within 45 minutes of the order being given.

Although, subsequently, Kelly had gone to his superiors and stated the possibility that he was the source of the report, he refuted that he was author of the 'sexing up' claim and it has never been confirmed that Kelly had, in fact, expressed that opinion. At the enquiry, Gilligan was unable to prove that he had.

This is a classic single-source situation. The BBC has ample editorial checks in place to ensure that single-source reports are confirmed, or at least that their sources were identified. But Gilligan had referred to a 'knowledgeable', source and the broadcast was made without confirmation or further attribution.

The 45 Minute Claim

The government's 45 minute claim was in fact also based on one specific piece of intelligence—the remarks of a defecting Iraqi officer. Thus it, too, was single-sourced. The intelligence services, too, would like to have confirmed or attributed the information, but they could not.

But the 45 minute claim, which may well have referred to only one type of weapon of limited capability, was conflated to a more general threat, and became the key item in the dossier compiled by the British intelligence services to justify Blair's decision to go to war. According to the intelligence services, it was received late in the compilation process, and was thus added to the dossier close to its final publication.

Gilligan clearly suspected that the late addition of this new information to the dossier was in response to a requirement that

HUTTON REPORT, turn to page 5

'Both Sides Now' - a feature presenting press releases as received

BC now has lowest child labour standards in North America

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Recent changes to the province's *Employment Standards Act* mean BC is now the most child labour-friendly jurisdiction in North America. The just released 'Who's Looking Out for Our Kids? Deregulating Child Labour Law in British Columbia' examines the changes, and concludes that they leave children at serious risk of harm and exploitation.

Employers were previously required to obtain a permit from the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour, as well as permission from parents and school authorities, to employ a child between the ages of 12 and 14. The new rules allow children to work with only the consent of one parent or guardian, and do not include any prohibited occupations or activities (such as using power tools or other heavy machinery, or selling door-to-door). The new regulations also allow children to be employed for up to four hours on a school day to a maximum of 20 hours per week.

Graeme Moore, co-author of the report, was employed for 21 years with the Employment Standards Branch of the BC Ministry of Skills Development and Labour. He says the government's new rules move BC away from proactive child protection. 'With the exception of child actors, there is no longer any requirement to inform government of a child's employment, or for proposed work situations to be evaluated,' says Moore. 'The system is now entirely complaint-driven.'

Moore notes that, contrary to initial government claims, under the old system child work permits were routinely turned down due to safety concerns, or granted only after employers and/or parents had agreed to certain conditions.

Helesia Luke co-authored the report with Moore. She says

the provincial government's rationale for deregulating the system is seriously flawed. 'The government has justified eliminating the permit system by saying that businesses were not obtaining child employment permits anyway. Removing laws to accommodate those who break them is not the way to ensure the safety of children.'

'By sending young people into the workforce without adequate regulations, we are putting the future of our province at risk,' says Luke. 'Child employment is moving from being an opportunity to learn or earn pocket money to becoming a source of cheap labour.'

Moore points out that a child can now be required to work up to 20 hours per week. 'Given that young people are already in school for 30 hours, this would mean a 50-hour work week—before time for homework, socializing, or any extracurricular activities. That's more than most adults face.'

Flawed report on child labour best left for fiction, says business group

Coalition of BC Businesses

The Coalition of BC Businesses today reacted to misinformation presented in a questionable study on child labour released by the left-wing Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

'The report—Who's looking out for our kids?—is an ideologically-driven report with no basis in reality,' said Philip Hochstein, Chair of the Coalition of BC Businesses. 'The report is seriously flawed with misinformation and half-truths.'

The CCPA portrays British Columbia as a child exploitation centre fit for a Dickens novel.

'It is truly remarkable that the CCPA would suggest that BC's child labour standards are lower than those in Mexico,' said Hochstein. 'Beating up on BC with outrageous statements and targeting parents as unfit guardians of their own children speaks volumes of this group's attitude that 'government knows best'.'

The report has an anti-work ethic bias that is attempting to drive out the entrepreneurial spirit of children at an early age.

'The CCPA is trying to stop children from learning business skills by throwing up bureaucratic roadblocks and red tape for the simplest of jobs, such as selling lemon aide and delivering newspapers,' said Hochstein. /



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For amphibians and forest moss carpets, can life be better? Damp human beings are observing that each day is exponentially longer, five days out of seven there is a good, soaking rain filling Saturna's rocks, crevices and aquifers. Wildlife is very visible in this season as all of the beasties are calling attention to themselves as the most worthy mates with the best colors, or sounds, or behaviors—always entertaining!

Money's pasture pond is getting a good frog chorus going in the early evening, rough-skinned newts are crossing the roads from one drainage ditch to the other, with luck, to lay eggs on the other side, the avian bird chorus is loud and early every morning and Easter vacation plans are coalescing for human beings. Life is good!

We found a dead mink under our lilac tree on the path leading up to the house. There it was, and in beautiful shape. I wonder what the story was. I have seen several mink out of the corner of my eye, especially at Saturna Beach, but I've never seen one close up before. They are tiny, like a malnourished cat, it must take hundreds to make up a coat. Its fur was a rich chestnut gleam, tail as long as its body, and big canines that extended beyond its lips, defiantly not a seed eater. Minks are members of the weasel family, just like our river otters. The mink population is starting to expand since there are no longer people running trap lines on Saturna. Minks were raised commercially on Tumbo Island for a period of time.

Rick and Darrell Jones reported a huge 60-70lb river otter washed up on their beach from the Fraser River current. Apparently the Fraser's river otters are much better fed than our smaller ocean-living river otters. Eight bald eagles were feeding on the carcass at one time.

Dinner With Geese

About two weeks ago, Eunice and Rennie Weatherell were happy to see 'their' two Canada geese back for spring and summer. The pair has come back to Boot Cove since 1986, originally with a third goose. These geese are at least 18 years old!

Rennie feeds them twice a day, Eunice calls 'Come on! Come on!' from the house porch and they come on the fly from wherever they are in the Cove. Rennie and Eunice used to live in a small cabin on the property and the door had a set of chimes, which signalled the geese for feeding time. The geese are very protective of their fine food source and chase other geese from the nearby beach and dock.

Soon, only one goose will come to dine as the other is sitting on the eggs. The geese nest somewhere at the foot of Boot Cove Bluffs. Later, the pair bring over their goslings, six to eight of them, who disappear as time passes, falling prey to otters, ravens, and eagles.

Rennie and Eunice and neighbour, Nevar Makofka, delight in the company and beauty of their wild neighbours. The bond with the geese allows the Weatherells a close-up view of the needs, adaptations, and learned behaviours of these wild creatures.

Community Club Quarterly Meeting

On March 1, the fourth quarterly meeting of the Saturna Community Club was held, after a pot luck dinner, in the Community Hall. It was a meeting with a wide range of subjects that, with appropriate deliberation, moved right along. We agreed to give the Church \$1,000 to finish the new access to the library.

Salt Spring Transition House

Nancy Boyse from the Salt Spring Transition House gave a presentation at the Community Club meeting. The comfy four-bedroom house on Salt Spring serves women and children seeking safety from violence and abuse. Women have access through a free phone line to well-trained counsellors and psychologists;

the call will not show up on a phone bill. From the Southern Gulf Islands, women can receive prompt, free transportation through several possible providers to the Salt Spring Transition House.

The purpose of Nancy's presentation, which she will be making on each of the Southern Gulf Islands, is to publicize the service and to identify obstacles to getting assistance. Confidentiality is a huge issue in small rural communities, one of which all the people who work on this project are aware.

The occupancy rate of the Transition House was 70% over the year, up quite a bit from the previous year. About 10% of guests come from Galiano, Mayne and Saturna. Transition Houses are assured provincial funding for this next year, Women's Centres will lose their funding as of March 31.

Emergency Preparedness Program

Barbara Grasswick has agreed to take on the community task of organizing Emergency Social Services. She has will organize Saturna's neighbourhood coordinators and is looking for more. She has already had four days of intensive training and will be taking more. She acknowledges a steep learning curve!

The provincial emergency preparedness video that Barbara showed at the Community Club meeting stressed the value of preparedness in the face of natural disasters. The main function of the Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program is to prepare communities to be able to provide food, clothing, and shelter when there is an emergency or disaster and to follow that up with community provisions as necessary.

Barbara recommends being prepared to care for oneself and family for a week, without outside assistance if necessary. She also suggests reading the three pamphlets, which the disaster coordination group mailed out at Christmas time, which outline procedures and make suggestions as to how to collect your provisions. Community Club members expressed gratitude that Barbara has taken on this task.

(More Community Club news next edition.)

Incident Command System Course

On February 22, the Community Hall was bustling with our firefighters, ambulance crew, emergency preparedness volunteers and one of Parks Canada's wardens, who were attending an Incident Command course created by the Justice Institute of BC. This course gives participants an understanding of how a large-scale response to an emergency incident is organized and managed. Ian Elliot, from Pender Island, was the volunteer instructor.

Shrove Tuesday Breakfast

St. Christophers church organized a Shrove Tuesday Breakfast with pancakes and sausages to raise money for the new walkway entrance. About 20 people came to a lovely breakfast, prepared by Pam Brown and other church members. There were potted snowdrops from Lorraine Campbell's garden and tablecloths—the whole nine yards. People loved the food and dredged up memories of what the term 'Shrove' might mean.

Shrovetide are the three days of confession of sins before Lent, the Christian time of fasting and penitence which begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts till Easter. Typically the Tuesday is a last day of revelry such as Mardi Gras, Fasching and—trust the Brits to be restrained—Pancake Day. It's a last chance to stuff yourself with all the food and drink you are going to have to do without. We ate well and will have to research appropriate festivities if the church is going to make this an annual event. ✓

Godiva rides again on Mayne Island

Ed Pedersen

Briony Penn, famous for her Godiva ride in downtown Vancouver a few years ago in support of fundraising for Save Salt Spring (from massive logging), is actually a serious biologist, writer, and broadcaster. She will be the featured speaker at the Friends of Mount Parke (FOMP) Annual General Meeting, and will give members some idea of what may be at stake biologically on Mayne Island's highest peak. The meeting is set for Saturday, March 20 at 1:30pm in the Agricultural Hall.

In addition, members will hear from representatives of The Land Conservancy of

BC, who have been representing FOMP in the negotiations for the purchase of the Glen Echo property. This property includes the very peak of Mount Parke, and the hope is to add this peak area to the existing Mount Parke Regional Park. Representatives of CRD Parks department, which is participating in the purchase of this land, will attend and explain their participation in the project. The meeting is open to anyone with questions about the project. Members will also have a chance to elect additional officers to the board of the society. ✓

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Galiano Island: 10 acres, many types of trees, close to marine park & beach access. \$193,000

Salt Spring Island: Vacant commercial parcel, development permit in place, building plans available, located in Upper Ganges. See Li!

Mayne Island: 0.29 acre lot, motivated seller, excellent investment! \$99,800

Galiano Island: 9.95 acres, some oceanviews, old orchard, lovely land. \$207,800

Galiano Island: Oceanview 40 acres, 16 lot subdivision, S/SW exposures, road developed, test wells done. See Li!

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SCHOOL from page 2

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Confessions of an Avid Food Gardener ~ Derek Masselink

Derek Masselink who now farms on North Pender Island previously gardened at the UBC Farm, what follows is a heart-warming talk about food-growing for a family. Derek has just been appointed to the North Pender Advisory Planning Commission. He gave a talk on local food to the Pender Farmers Institute on March 6.

We used to live on the UBC Farm, which we often bragged with some irony is the last remaining farm in the city. The quest for higher education brought us to that place, situated at the western edge of the city of Vancouver a mere 100 metres from Georgia Strait. UBC Farm is a hidden agrarian jewel surrounded by the protective second growth forests of Pacific Spirit Park, which in turn is surrounded by the suburban neighbourhoods of Point Grey and Dunbar.

When we first came to the farm our very first act—before we had even moved one box—was to get permission to put in a vegetable garden. At that time we had gone one full growing season without and we ached to get back to the practice of cultivation and the enjoyment of local produce. Permission granted we started with a conservative plot measuring 20' x 30'. Sod was turned. Manure, gathered from behind the livestock barns, was worked in and seeds were planted. It was the end of May. But even with a late start and an usually cold spring, by mid-summer we were enjoying the vegetables of our labour. Our early success encouraged us to expand the garden the following year so that we had three times the area. Each year, inspired by the previous year's successes we expanded the garden. It eventually covered a quarter of an acre.

In our garden we grew all manner of temperate edible flowers, vegetables and finally fruit-bearing trees and shrubs. After 3-1/2 years we sat down and made a list of what we grew and it approached 90 different types of crops and 150 varieties.

We grew approximately 40% of what we consumed. And while this is substantial by North American standards it could be significantly improved if we had been able to grow more carbohydrates (potatoes)—and were able to efficiently thresh the 200 lbs of grain we did grow. Each year we challenge ourselves

to produce more at home—more in quantity, quality and variety—directly out of our garden, in the hopes of achieving a more self-sufficient state.

Why, you might ask, did we take on this Herculean task when there is good, abundant, varied, inexpensive food available at the local grocer? Why the heck would we choose to engage in an activity that is so time consuming? Good question. This is something that we repeatedly ask ourselves especially when engaged in menial tasks like hand-turning a large sections of the garden, hand-harvesting spelt, shelling dried beans or processing 200 lbs. of ripe tomatoes—tasks which seem to arise just when our lives are at their most hectic.

As you all well know garden tasks are constant.

They do not wait for you to have available time. When these tasks involve food, the situation—at least for me—seems to be that much more pressing. Food gardening requires a considerable amount of time, time that most folks just don't seem to

have enough of these days. But when one starts to consider the benefits that food gardening provides, the expenditure seems to

become less important. Time spent engaged in caring for one's own needs in a time when society generally passes off the responsibility on others is time, I believe, well spent.

The Politics of Gardening

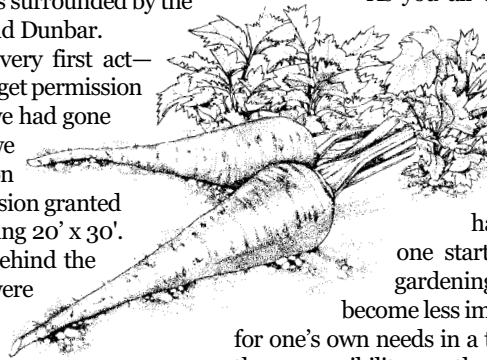
The knowledge of the growing inadequacy of our current food system is so worrisome. The following facts indicate that all is not well with our food system:

- On average, food travels 2,000 km before it reaches our plates and in the process has passed through at least 6 different hands;

- Globally the number of overfed (800 million - 1.1 billion) now equals the number of underfed;

- Corporations either directly or indirectly now control 80% of the food that is grown on arable land around the world—of which the 10 largest hold a majority of this control, and thus

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ISLAND TIDES PUBLISHING Ltd
Box 55, Pender Island B.C. V0N 2M0
Publisher & Editor: Christa Grace-Warrick
Contributors: Patrick Brown, Gillian Allan, John Erwin Peter D. Carter, Ed Pedersen, Zorah Starr, Priscilla Ewbank, Derek O'Keefe, Derek Masselink
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Deadline: Wednesday between publications
Off-Islands Canadian Subscriptions \$37.45
Voluntary Mail & Box Pick-up Subscriptions \$21.40

Readers' Letters

Government As Market

Dear Editor:

I think we should be grateful to our government in this province. Its continuing actions to sell, privatize, and give away the capital generated by the people of BC may be the answer to our main problem.

Apathy. An apathy shameful to the family and community that seems unable to protect the future. The future of ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren.

Somehow, for everyone's sake, we have to say 'Stop!'

Schools, highways, hospitals, all the infrastructure of our society, that includes the ferries; these assets are ours and constitute the lifelines to our ability to live on this coast. Without our control of these assets, through good government, our whole economy is in peril.

In the early fifties the Savoie family built the *Hornby Island-V*, a two-car ferry that was subsidized by government. The department responsible was the Ministry of Highways, recognizing the service as an extension of the highways system of British Columbia. The tariff, 50¢ for a car and driver, 10¢ per passenger.

The government of the late 1950s, recognizing the need to assume responsibility for the coastal transportation on the waters between Vancouver Island and the Mainland, bought the Horseshoe Bay/Departure Bay run from the American owner Black Ball ferries (\$5. car and driver). In so much, that acknowledged the extension of the highway link with ferry travel.

Since that date the relationship between the provincial government and the Crown corporation of BC ferries has resulted in a division of ethical and financial responsibility that has resulted in somewhat of a quagmire.

The only truism is that we, the people, paid for and own the ferry system, and it is not any government's right or ability to sell, lease, or privatize it. The true financial budget of the province or any other democratic state cannot stand on that premise.

In the case of our own Island's financial budget, look at the factor of ferry costs outside our personal fare structure. Everything would be affected by private ownership's right to set the fare rate into free fall. Emergencies, that includes ambulance, hydro, police, telephone, all services from concrete to freight, fuel to groceries. The whole of the tourist industry.

Any severe erosion of these factors would erode the economic viability of our Island. The impact on people's income would result in an exodus mostly of those who supply the maintenance work force on the Island. Land values would fall, and consequently the tax base, which incidentally this year will be the highest ever. Obviously the loss of income for the ferry owners would result in a diminished service and higher fares.

Growth and the health of any economy is not money, profit or loss, but a sharing of the growth, health, and education of its people. Truly a priceless resource and responsibility.

John Fletcher, Hornby Island

Vulture Unions

Dear Editor:

Even though I now live behind the 'tweed curtain' in Oak Bay it is always good to pick up a copy of the *Island Tides* to keep up with news in the Southern Gulf, especially Saturna Island.

Your coverage of ferry matters is always comprehensive so you will understand why I was puzzled when the February 2003 announcement that our ferries were to be privatized as well as fragmented received such little coverage and public reaction.

The recent dispute with the ferry workers has happily brought the whole plan to fundamentally change the ferry system into sharp relief. The story about developments at Deas Dock (Jan 29-Feb 11th issue) shows how the unraveling of the old BC Ferry Corporation is proceeding. In it you quote Jackie Miller BCFMWU president referencing a Labour Board decision and it would be helpful to have had a citation.

Bargaining unit determination at BC ferries is something I predict we will see more of. The reason is that licensed marine officers already have a union that has a proven track record of protecting their interests called the Canadian Merchant Service Guild. Many of the ships officers sailing the ferries already wish this union to represent them as the unpleasant consequences of this government's misguided ferry policy takes its toll on the employees.

As the Hospital Employees Union has found out there are also unscrupulous unions in the wings ready to grab the employees of privatized operations. 'Vulture' unions willing to sign agreements with employers for substantially inferior wages and working conditions.

So it looks very much as though the ferries as well as the critical service that they provide are in for some pretty rough sailing.

John Fryer, Victoria

'Babes in the Woods' Travel Far

Dear Editor:

I am writing to you and Patrick Brown to thank you very much for the article you published in July 2002 ('Babes in the Woods'). What an incredible article—I have just received it from a friend.

Many of us in the Fraser Valley have been fighting the

proposed SE2 plant in Sumas (Washington) and the 230,000V I.P.L. that would run through our city for four-and-a-half years. Also, that the NEB can expropriate Canadian land for a US corporation to reap profits at the expense of our health and safety is appalling.

The Eastern press has all but ignored our requests for coverage, letters and emails go unanswered—its very difficult to get our concerns heard.

At present we are waiting for the National Energy Board to rule on the I.P.L. under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

We have decided to fight on—this is our home and we will not go away.

E. Gray, Abbotsford

Ed's Note: Right at press time the news came that the intrepid fighters of Abbotsford have been supported by the NEB, see article, page 1.

Bombay—In Other Words, Mumbai

Dear Editor:

The column on the World Social Forum in the February 26 issue of *Island Tides* was very interesting. Some of your readers might be interested to learn a little more about the columnist, Paul Caspersz. Paul is a Sri Lankan Jesuit who in 1972 helped organize Satyodaya (Satya=truth, Udaya=dawn in the Sinhala language).

The group was trying to understand the roots of the Sri Lankan youth insurrection of 1971 but was soon diverted into a relief program for the Tamil plantation workers who had been driven off the estates by Sinhalese thugs after land reform in 1972. Capitalist imperialism was judged to have played a causal role in both the poor, rural youth insurrection of 1971 and the inter-ethnic violence following the nationalization of the foreign owned tea estates.

Paul was one of over a thousand Jesuits attending the World Social Forum in Mumbai, formerly Bombay.

Barrie Morrison, Pender Island

Pender Fire Departments Amalgamated

Dear Editor:

Just a note to advise you that the Amalgamation resolution passed with a 93% majority at the North Pender Island Fire Protection Society AGM on 21 Feb 2004. The South Pender resolution was passed in August.

When the paperwork is done in about ten days, a new Society will be created known as the Pender Islands Fire Protection Society. There will be one fire department with three firehalls under the command of our new Chief Patrick Downey. The single fire department will respond to calls anywhere on North and South Pender Islands.

Dave Wightman, Pender Island ✓

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Todd Butler Stirs up Pender - Zorah Staar

Al right, so the Pender audience, busy chuckling at Todd Butler's February 20 show, did act a bit stunned when he suddenly asked us to name the #1 issue in Canada today. As he alleged, some of us may be overly preoccupied with various features of our natural environment, whether floral ('Gee, the crocuses are coming up!') or herbal ('Gee, the BC Bud is coming along nicely!'). But (to defend our Island honour), it's hard to get too upset about politics when there are so many things to be grateful for here.

Much better (sometimes) just to laugh at federal and provincial political insanities, of which Todd Butler gave a hysterical review. He's a multi-talented musical and comical CBC veteran, who plays multi-style guitar at the speed of light and rattles off topical parodies almost as quickly. A short snapper example—the power chords of 'My Sharona' rocking into an ode to the departure of 'Moe Sihota' or 'Here's a song for Toronto!' leading into an inspiring (if you're from there) excerpt from 'We are the world!'

While we're talking about inspiration, I don't really believe that Gordon Campbell has ever sung, 'Did I ever tell you you're my hero?' to Ralph Klein, but it was sure fun to hear how it might sound if he did. Or to hear our recently departed and now much venerated 'Sultan of Shawinigan' singing, 'I'm like a God now—there's no smell to my farts!' As I told Butler after the show, he's so funny that it's easy to forget (even after he's just played an incredible Dire Straits guitar solo) just how good a musician he is. It takes many, many years of practice to play guitar as apparently effortlessly as Butler does, and especially to make a single acoustic guitar sound like various multi-track radio hits from the last forty years of pop, rock, blues, swing, and more.

In the second half, the music got even hotter when Butler was joined by Dobro star Doug Cox (mostly on bass), and Spirit of the West drummer Vince Ditrich. And the political commentary was pretty toasty throughout, for example when one of Butler's songs ('Globalization Blues') talked about 'putting all our Canadian bacon into the American pie' and compared the wolves and the sheep of our corporate world. But Butler didn't ask you to agree with him about any of this. He was busy just having fun, filling the Pender school auditorium with 'the kind of stuff he used to get the strap for.'

There was some pure music and some pure feeling in the evening as well, in the form of three amazing instrumentals where Doug Cox added his lap steel Dobro. The third of these was a gorgeously jazzy but very poignant 'If you were here'—a song dedicated to the daughters of Butler and Cox. Who says clowns can't make you cry too?

But watch out—in a second they can go back to the racy stuff, for example a bit where Butler compared playing lead guitar rifts to making love (illustrated by a facial parody of James T. Kirk having a special moment), or a fill-in-the-blanks US presidential parody beginning with 'All around the white house, Monica chased the _____.'

Though he may have stirred up a bit of controversy, Butler certainly got most of his Pender Island audience laughing their heads off. Many thanks to him, to his band, and to the Gulf Islands Concert Series for bringing the laughs our way! ✂

'What's On?' Vancouver Island & The Gulf Islands

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

Sat, March 13 till Sun, March 21
Spring Break Fun Swims—join in the 'out of this world wacky water fun' at Saanich Commonwealth Place; daily themes; special games and activities, waves, waterslide, pirate ship, toddler pool, whirlpool, family changerooms, steam, sauna, length swimming • 4636 Elk Lake Drive (right off Pat Bay at Royal Oak exit) • Daily, 10am-noon, 1-5pm, 1-4pm (Sat & Sun), 6:30-8:30pm • Info: 24-hour Swim Info-line, 250-727-7108 • IN VICTORIA

Wednesday, March 17
Special St. Patrick's Day Dinner & Dance—with Juno Award nominees 'The Undertaking Daddies from the Yukon,' featuring country, bluegrass, blues • Grand Central Emporium • Come for dinner, music starts at 8pm • \$5 cover at door • Tables can be reserved, call 539-9885 • ON GALIANO ISLAND

Friday, March 19
Moir Fortepiano Duo—two 18th century keyboards (fortepiano) played in concert by husband and wife team, Ronald and Ruth Moir, musicians from the Prairies and the world; lively commentary combined with music from classical masters • Community Hall • 7:30pm • Tickets: Galiano Island Books or at the door • Info: 250-539-3323 • ON GALIANO ISLAND

Fri & Sat, March 19 & 20
Jambanja Marimba, Mbira & Dance Ensemble—celebrate Spring Equinox at this show for all ages; special guest Taiya, freespirit, bellydancer, firefingers and sword dance • **FRI:** Mahon Hall, Salt Spring Island, 8pm; **SAT:** South Galiano Hall, 8pm • Tickets \$12 at the door, \$10 in advance at Acoustic Planet (Salt Spring) or by calling 250-539-9866 (Galiano) • Info: jambanja@canada.com • ON SALT SPRING & GALIANO ISLANDS

Fri, Sat & Sun, March 19, 20 & 21
Rock & Gem Show 2004—a learning experience for the whole family, gem cutters at work, gold panning, rock polishing, silversmithing, opal cutting, retail dealers from Alberta, BC & USA, Kiddies Korner • Leonardo da Vinci Centre, 195 Bay Street • **FRI:** 1-9pm, **SAT:** 10am-6pm, **SUN:** 10am-5pm • Tickets: adults \$4, seniors/students \$3, family (4) \$8 • Info: www.islandnet.com/~vlms • IN VICTORIA

Saturday, March 20
Noam Chomsky Speaks at Peace Rally—Global Day of Action on one-year anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, say no to war and occupation, yes to peace and justice • Gather at Peace Flame Park (south end of Burrard Bridge), Rally at Sunset Beach (Beach Avenue at Bute) • Meet at 11am • Info: www.stopwar.ca, contact@stopwar.ca or 604-737-1229 • IN VANCOUVER

Saturday, March 20
Introduction to Organic Farming—presentation by Samuel Godfrey, Tina Baynes (Islands Organic Producers Association) and Dan Jason (Salt Spring Seeds) on: how to start an organic farm, requirements for certification, why be certified, saving seeds and more; complementary lunch • Salt Spring Farmer's Institute • 10am-3pm • Free • Info or to RSVP: 250-537-4219, cedproject@saltspring.com • ON SALT SPRING ISLAND

Saturday, March 20
Crimson Coast Dance Presents This Body of Knowledge—with Allison Crowe, Sylvain Brochu, Holly Bright, Joe Laughlin, Anne Troake; post-show reception, 24-Carrot Catering, live music, Celebrate Health, Celebrate Life: AMP art exhibition; part of revenue to Canadian Cancer Society • Port Theatre • 7:30pm • Tickets: 250-754-8550, \$25 (show only)/\$40 (includes post-show reception) • Info: dance@crimsoncoast.org, 250-716-3230, www.crimsoncoastdance.org • IN NANAIMO

Sunday, March 21
Something to Dance About Workshop—in association with This Body of Knowledge; dance classes and dance/ music video screening; 20% of revenue to Cancer Society • 595 Townsite Road (at Millstone) • 11am-3:30pm various classes, 4:30-5:30pm video • Tickets: \$10/class CCDS members, \$12 non-members, \$5 donation for video • Info: dance@crimsoncoast.org, 250-716-3230, www.crimsoncoastdance.org • IN NANAIMO

Fri, Sat & Sun, March 26, 27 & 28
Gulf Islands Concerts—The Burney Ensemble • PENDER: Fri, Pender School, 7:30pm • SATURNA: Sat, Community Hall, 8pm • MAYNE, Sun, Church of St. Mary Magdalene, 2:30pm • Info: (tickets may be available) Pender, Jean Bradley 629-3360; Mayne, Caterina Geuer 539-3508; Saturna, Elizabeth McColl 539-5514 • ON PENDER, MAYNE & SATURNA ISLANDS

HUTTON REPORT from page 2

the dossier be more convincing to the public. He suspected, but could not prove, that the Prime Minister's Director of Communications, Alastair Campbell, was responsible for the inclusion of this claim in the dossier. Testimony at the Hutton enquiry, however, indicated that it had been included with the approval of the Joint Intelligence Committee, the senior body dealing with intelligence from all sources.

Certainly the impact of such a specific claim, with such broad and threatening implications, was not lost on Mr Blair and his advisers. It seems now that the value to the argument for war of that specific claim overrode the professional caution that they would normally have applied to an unconfirmed claim made by an enemy informant.

Hutton's Uneven Conclusions

So an interesting parallel can be drawn between the treatments of these two conflicting pieces of information, both single-sourced and unconfirmable. This is where the Hutton enquiry was less than even-handed.

Hutton found that the government was perfectly justified in using the 45 minute claim to make the case for war, pointing out that the claim had received the blessing of senior intelligence people. It was never clear whether Blair actually understood how unreliable it might be, what its source was, or the limited application of the claim. It appears, the fact, that he was willing to take it at face value or that the way it was passed through the intelligence 'filter', conflated, and presented to him may have been influenced by its clearly vital importance to the strength of his case.

Blair's Responsibility

My judgement is that because the 45 minute claim was so obviously critical to his presentation to the British public, Blair's clear responsibility was to closely question the information and its source to make absolutely certain that it justified the emphasis it would receive. (It was taken to imply that Saddam Hussein threatened British bases—in the same way that US Secretary of State Colin Powell presented misleading slides to the UN to imply that Saddam threatened the United States.)

Hutton, however, did not raise the question of the Prime

Minister's ultimate responsibility for the 45 minute claim, but implied that Blair had every reason to believe it was credible.

Identifying a Scapegoat

As for the government's action after Gilligan's report that the intelligence services had some doubts about the 45 minute claim, Hutton found nothing wrong. He appears to accept that the government found it necessary to identify Dr. Kelly as Gilligan's source, as the best way of discrediting the story. He did not question the government's strange way of doing this without appearing to do it: providing clues to Dr. Kelly's identity to the media, inviting them to guess who it was, and then confirming the name when they finally got it right (in one case, after twenty tries!).

Hutton did not question the government decision to commit Kelly to testifying before two parliamentary committees on the same day (July 16, 2003), not to mention his exposure to the world's media. Hutton did not apportion any blame for Kelly's suicide, saying that nobody could have anticipated that he would kill himself.

In short, Hutton found the government decision, to identify a scapegoat and permit him to be hounded to death, to be a perfectly legitimate strategy.

Legitimate, I suppose, for a beleaguered government.

The Public Reaction

Hindsight has proven the government to have been wrong and Gilligan right. Hutton, unfortunately, took the opposite view of their actions.

The public quickly labelled the Hutton report a 'whitewash' of the government. The essential question—whether Blair knew, or

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HUTTON REPORT, turn to page 6

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 DEALER INQUIRIES WELCOME

Food scores highest for fossil fuel 'content'

Energetic Salt Springers have compiled a 'purchased energy' audit for the Island. To their surprise food came out top of the list of gigajoules purchased each year. The fossil fuel content of conventional food purchases on the Island was estimated at 0.56 million GJ. Researcher Elizabeth White of the Earth Festival Society who worked on the audit explains, 'We knew food was going to be a big item, but we did not know how big. Fossil fuel is used at every stage of production, for tilling, for fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, for harvesting, processing, packaging and transportation.'

The Baseline Energy Report indicates Salt Spring's total annual energy purchase was 1.6 million GJ. The second highest score was electricity—0.37 million GJ and third was gasoline—0.36 million GJ.

The draft report is a first step in an energy-conserving strategy for the Island. The Earth Festival Society had the help of \$2,000 in grants from the Islands Trust and CRD Director Gary Holman and contributions from a host of community groups, individuals and Van City Credit Union.

Andrew Pape-Salmon and Matt Horne, professional engineers and specialists in energy conservation and community energy planning are volunteering their time as technical experts.

Pape-Salmon was the expert associated with the recent Bowen Island Community Energy Plan which is currently underway.

The Baseline Report was presented at the Islands Trust Town Hall meeting in Ganges on January 31.

Benefits of Cost Savings

Excluding the food component, the cost of energy of Salt's Spring's purchased energy is \$17.4 million a year, most of which leaves the community. If energy use is reduced by just 10%, the savings would represent \$1.74 million

which could, for example, provide 58 Islanders with \$30,000 / year jobs, says the Society.

Energy Out

The average Salt Springer is responsible for 11.2 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) per year, with food and gasoline contributing the lion's share at just over 4 tonnes each, followed by firewood and BC Ferries, at just over 1 tonne each.

Electricity has the lowest GHG emission factor because 90% of BC's electricity is still generated from hydro, although increasing amounts are now coming from thermal generating stations.

Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) are the chief culprit in global warming and are calculated by multiplying energy consumption by the GHG emission factor for each fuel.

Not included in the report's energy or GHG calculations were any estimates of Islanders' air travel.

The next step is to use the baseline information to help develop some made-on-Salt Spring strategies for energy-use reductions. These strategies will include the EnerGuide for Houses homeowner incentive program, already available on Salt Spring, and the federal One Tonne Challenge.

May Brainstormer

About fifty interested people will gather for half a day on May 8 to brain-storm solutions for the various sectors: food, transportation and housing. Salt Spring's energy strategy will emerge from this session.

For more information contact project coordinator Marion Pape 250-537-4567, or Elizabeth White 250-537-2616. The twenty page draft SSI report is available online at the Islands Trust website: www.islandstrust.bc.ca, in the stewardship programs/energy planning section. /

HUTTON REPORT from page 5

even suspected, that the 45 minute claim was not true—was of course excluded from Hutton's terms of reference, and he did not comment on it.

But it's clear from public reaction that the public expected both the media and the government to demonstrate higher levels of integrity. In a world where the government 'spins' its pronouncements, and the press is inclined not to separate its opinions from reported facts, this is a predictable reaction.

The rule on double-sourcing could quite properly apply to both the government and the media, and not only where the intelligence services are concerned.

Both government and the media are fully entitled to express their opinions, but it is important to identify them clearly as such, and separate them clearly from confirmable facts.

Both the government and the media may publicize the opinions of others, but must properly include both their source and their context.

The media may report facts that support their opinions; they also have a moral obligation to report those that do not. Governments should do the same; this would go far to convince the public that all factors have been considered before a decision is made.

The public trust in the information which is presented to it by the government was clearly damaged by Blair's (and, for that matter, President Bush's) justification for the Iraq war. The public trust was further damaged by the Hutton report.

Once damaged, it will surely be remarkably hard to rebuild. /

TRUST from page 1

Islands Trust has also filed a Certificate of Pending Litigation preventing the sale of the properties until the court action is resolved, or the Certificate is removed by court order.

Tom Babb, a Denman Island Trustee stated, 'I appreciate the Trust's and local residents' efforts, to try to mitigate the damage and to prevent any further violations.'

Since filing the Claim, the Islands Trust has been working independently and with the owner to develop requirements for the remediation of the properties. It has also been

pursuing its legal rights to enforcement in the courts in consultation with independent geotechnical experts, and liaising with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in the wake of failures on the Bluff face. While the court process requires time, particularly where environmental and geotechnical expertise is required, the Islands Trust says that it is determined to be thorough, and to explore every option it has to achieve the best result for the restoration of the Bluff and the surrounding environment. /

Fraser Institute Advocates No More Protection for Children's Health - Dr. Peter Carter

Do Canadians know how to safeguard their children from environmental contaminants? The Fraser Institute doesn't seem to think parents need any help from the government. Their recent publication, 'The Reality of Children's Risk in Canada' (December 2003), authored by their chief scientist, Dr. Kenneth Green, argues against any extension of federal regulations to protect the health of children in Canada from environmental toxins and pollution. The report comes in response to Environment Canada's finding that 89% of Canadians believe their children's health is being affected by environmental threats.

The Fraser Institute describes itself as an 'independent public policy organization that focuses on the role that competitive markets play in providing for the economic and social well-being of all Canadians.' But its report on children's health and the environment is at odds with the opinion of medical organizations and environmental health experts in Canada, Europe, and the US.

The Fraser Institute's report mistakenly concludes that children's environmental health is already extensively regulated in Canada and more regulation would be of no benefit. In fact, unlike the US, Canada does not have a general policy to treat children as a special, vulnerable population with respect to harmful products, toxic substances and pollutants. Neither the Canadian *Environmental Protection Act* nor the Health Protection Branch of Health Canada have any legislated provisions on children's environmental health. And when industries file toxicity profiles of the chemicals they produce, they consistently record 'insufficient data' for effects on children.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a designated Office of Children's Health Protection dealing with children's environmental health issues. (yosemite.epa.gov/ochp/ochpweb.nsf/homepage) And in May 2003, the European Union released its draft new chemicals legislation, which will soon require that all chemicals in commercial circulation receive basic testing, and that those that are known or probable carcinogens, mutagens, or reproductive toxicants be used only when there are no safer economically and technically feasible alternatives.

Fraser Institute Denies Children Are Vulnerable

With the exception of lead and mercury, The Fraser Institute denies that chemical pollutants have been shown to cause public health problems in children or adults. They say the evidence suggests children are not at particular risk from environmental factors and that the evidence does not support the idea that children are generally more sensitive to carcinogens. You don't have to be a health expert to know this is not true, and as if contradicting their own statements, they report in a positive light that levels of six air pollutants, plus lead and benzene, are lower than they were 20 years ago, as are the levels of PCBs and DDT in breast milk. As if we should be satisfied that the air we breathe may be less bad than it was.

The Fraser Institute fails to mention that it was legislation (coming after decades of public concern and medical recommendations, met by resistance from polluting corporations) that resulted in the much-belated regulation of these toxins.

In 1924, there was a public outcry against the addition of lead to gasoline and public health physicians called for a ban of the new leaded gasoline. It took another 60 years of pressure from physicians groups, with evidence

on lead poisoning of children, for a US EPA ban to be effective. Persistent organochlorine toxic pesticides were banned by international treaty in 2000, 40 years after Rachel Carson's warning in the the book, *Silent Spring*, and after 70 years of their commercial use.

Lead, benzene, DDT derivatives, and PCBs still pose an environmental threat to children's health. Following all the delaying tactics to forestall regulation of toxins and pollutants, childhood cancer rates in the US have increased 20% over 25 years, and the rate increase continues. Cancer is now the disease that causes the most deaths of children in North America and Western Europe.

An EPA working group of experts determined that infants up to age two are, on average, ten times more vulnerable to carcinogenic chemicals than adults, and for some cancer-causing agents, they are up to 65 times more vulnerable. Children 2 to 15 years are more vulnerable by a factor of three. Another 2003 report, 'Toxic Chemicals and Childhood Cancer: A Review of the Evidence' (from the University of Massachusetts Lowell), examined over 100 medical studies and concluded: 'Epidemiological studies have consistently found an increased likelihood of certain types of childhood cancer following parental and childhood exposure to pesticides and solvents. Studies indicate that parental exposure to certain petroleum-based chemicals and parental and childhood exposure to combustion by-products, such as dioxins and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, may increase the likelihood of childhood leukemia and brain and central nervous system cancers.'

After stating several times in their report that environmental chemical pollutants do not pose a hazard to children's health, The Fraser Institute records in other sections that it is an extremely complex task to prove that a particular chemical pollutant harms the health of children and states that much of the data is just not available. The latter is true.

Precautionary Principle of 'Dubious Value'

Exposure of the child *in utero*, one likely key to children's cancer, has barely been researched. This is exactly why precautionary action needs to be taken when available evidence is strongly suggestive. The Fraser Institute says that the precautionary principle is of dubious value. Yet it is in just this mix of situations that the precautionary principle applies. One thing is certain—by its very nature, cancer prevention is impossible without precaution. And exposure to environmental pollutants that are established carcinogens cannot be prevented without government regulation.

In making their case against regulation, The Fraser Institute appears to have misrepresented the situation on children's health and environmental pollution. Our children now start life exposed to toxic chemicals in contaminated amniotic fluid, to be born into a world in which breast milk is contaminated, to live in a world in which their air and water are contaminated with multiple toxic chemicals.

The Fraser Institute's final recommendation? Leave children's environmental health up to the purchasing choices of parents! But how can parents choose if there are no toxicity regulations that ensure safety for children? And how can they choose the air their children breathe? To protect our children's health from toxic effects of chemicals, the Canadian government needs to follow the example of the European Union and the US EPA, and not be misled by the irresponsible advice of the Fraser Institute. /

Thrift store scholarship early this year


Once again Pender Island Community Services Society, operator of the popular Nu-To-Yu store, is offering post-secondary scholarships.

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Noam Chomsky to speak at Vancouver rally

-Derrick O'Keefe
 The US occupying forces have imposed on Iraq an economic program that no sovereign country would ever accept: it virtually guarantees that the Iraqi economy will be taken over by Western (mostly US) multinational corporations and banks.

—Noam Chomsky, January 2, 2004, interview at Znet (zmag.org).

March 20 will be a major international day of action to mark one year since the beginning of the Iraq invasion. Noam Chomsky, the 75-year old American linguist and writer, will be among the speakers at a Sunset Beach anti-war rally in Vancouver on Saturday, March 20. The veteran academic/activist will be in the city for a gala fundraiser celebrating Burnaby MP Svend Robinson's 25 years in parliament. The gala at the Orpheum, is already sold-out.

For decades, beginning with his commitment to the struggle to end the US war in Vietnam, Chomsky has poured countless hours and the full force of his intellect into exposing the foreign policy of his country's government. He resisted the pressure to support the war in Afghanistan after 9-11, which turned several foreign policy critics into apologists for the Pentagon.

The rally (see 'What's On?' page 5) is organized by StopWar.ca, a broad-based coalition that came together in the fall of 2002 to protest the US drive to war with Iraq. /

GARDENING from page 4

control much of the food we eat on a daily basis, with annual retail sales of \$2 trillion;

- The average North American city only has approximately 3 days of food on hand at any one time to support its population in times of crises;

- Less than 3% of the Canadian population is now engaged in the task of growing food and they are growing older—the average age of our farmers is 55; and

- 15% of our population is described as food insecure.

In addition to using petro-chemical to make fertilizer, we quite clearly rely on an efficient and unperturbed system of transport, largely powered by cheap fossil fuel to deliver our daily bread. It is only this availability of cheap fossil fuel coupled with a stable international socio-political environment that supports our seemingly secure, efficient society.

People are becoming more and more aware of these facts and gaining an understanding of the degree of global conflict required to secure a stable supply of fossil fuel. Couple this with the fact that there is a finite amount of oil in the world and the precariousness of our present food system is obvious.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States galvanized many of us involved in the growing discussion of food, sustainable agriculture, food security and community-based food systems. Reaffirming the need to promote and support the development of food production, procurement and provision systems that are more ecologically and socially sustainable—systems that serve the local community, address and meet local needs, that aren't reliant on polluting, climate-changing fossil fuel, that don't degrade nature, and that improve our health and well-being.

Birth of A Gardener

Prior to becoming an avid food gardener, when I shopped I did so with a clear conscience. As long as I bought whole wheat bread and brown rice and packed my groceries away in cloth bags I remained happy and carefree, safe in the knowledge that I was doing my part for my health and the environment.

This state of bliss was short-lived, succumbing to the seemingly endless onslaught of facts and figures documenting the damaging effects of our meat on health and the environment followed by umpteen warnings about climate change, effects of pesticide residues and now more recently, genetically modified organisms. I was gradually becoming aware that my shopping decisions were not only killing me but they were being implicated in the death of rural and subsistence communities around the world.

Guilt is not a feeling that I like to cultivate and being the hands-on type I needed to find something effective I could do that might counter my effects on the planet. I needed to engage in an activity that could alleviate environmental guilt, was good for my health and the environment and most importantly was enjoyable. My wife and I eventually decided to take up food gardening, a pastime that promised reduced guilt, good feelings, full stomachs and a reduced impact on the environment. This decision has changed our lives. What started as a tiny balcony garden 10 years ago has blossomed into a personal, and now professional, passion for growing food close to home.

As many of you know growing even a small amount of your own food can be extremely liberating and educational. The idea that you can produce some of what you eat is immensely empowering. When you have a garden, you no longer have to drive to the grocery store to buy carrots and beans because they grow just outside your backdoor. The simple act of gardening introduces you to what good, fresh food tastes and looks like. You come to know what can be grown and when it can be eaten. You may be surprised by the joy the harvest brings when it is shared with family and friends. Over time you may even begin to learn the art of 'putting food by'—the skills of food storage and preservation. These are important moments because unwittingly you have created the beginnings of a small ecological food system, one that is localized, doesn't depend on large inputs of energy or nutrients, and supports and responds to the needs of your family and friends. Your garden has become a personal food system—an essential first step in the development of a larger community-based food system.

Derek Masselink's inspiring thoughts about gardening continue in our next edition.

DOLLARS from page 1

meet day-to-day exchanges, we can use the a portion of the balance for local projects.'

When the Chamber of Commerce or stores that trade the dollars to the public get low, they exchange Canadian dollars for more \$\$ Dollars. About \$\$80,000 are in circulation and as demand increases, so does the number of \$\$ Dollars in circulation.

The most revolutionary thing about \$\$ Dollars is their investment potential for Salt Spring's community development. Additionally, because they can only be traded on-Island, they also ensure that local businesses have support.

Going Local Makes a Difference

According to Jim Scott, an Island advocate for community economic development (community-directed development that considers both social and economic factors to foster social, ecological and cultural well-being), \$\$ Dollars are a powerful support tool. Quoting the *Business Alliance for Local Living Economies*, he points out that 80% of the money spent at a local business will stay in the community as compared with only 15–40% for franchised and other non-locally owned enterprises.

Another benefit Scott says is that when residents shop at home, they get to know each other better. He quotes Sean Markey at Simon Fraser University, 'if businesses are locally owned, there's an assumption that the people who own those businesses will be more concerned with the health and vitality of the community because they are part of it. It adds a social accountability component as well. Social bonds bring



responsibilities and obligations. Local economies make economic activities accountable to the community and those who live there.'

Scott continues to work on getting more and more businesses to accept \$\$ Dollars. Booth says that the loan for community housing will not be the last loan the IMF gives to the community.

Salt Spring has a wonderful tool with the \$\$ Dollar. What will be it's next leap forward?

For information on the history of \$\$ Dollars, visit www.saltspringdollars.com. /

Why \$\$ Dollars Work

Money has two basic functions: it acts as a standard of value and a medium of exchange. \$\$ Dollars offer both:

- Each bill is first purchased with the equivalent value of Canadian Dollars, then acts as a legal gift certificate, recognized by Revenue Canada. There is no barter involved, there is no tax problem because they are convertible 1:1 for Canadian Dollars. As a medium of exchange they function just as the national currency—an exchange of a trusted piece of paper. Regardless of the goods or the service, (on Salt Spring Island) there is no difference.

- \$\$ Dollars are tied to the Canadian Dollar so there is no confusion regarding a standard of value. If a vest that used to cost Can\$75 goes up in price to Can\$90, the same vest will increase in price from \$\$75 to \$\$90. They are seamless as a recognized standard of value.

ENVIRO AWARDS from page 1

Sawyer, for their innovative introduction of LED lighting, its wind power services, and other energy-saving systems, that help Canadians save energy and reduce climate change impacts. SED has offices in Nelson and in Sidney.

Freybe's Gourmet Foods of Abbotsford is receiving an award for the innovative industrial design they have used for their large

production facility. The facility includes, for example, a large roof-top pond, which gradually releases rainwater into a neighbouring salmon stream, rather than flooding the local environment. As well, Henning Freybe's company uses outstanding environmental practices in the production of all its food products. /

CN's Track Record: No Reason to Celebrate the BC Rail Deal - John Irwin

Last year's tragic case of a bridge failure near McBride, and the loss of railway employees' lives, raises some important questions about the corporation taking over BC Rail, and whether the privatization deal is really in our best economic interests.

National's (CN) track record has not been that impressive. The bridge failure resulted in a letter from the federal Transportation Safety Board to the Minister of Transport and CN noting that the company had identified defective parts of the bridge near McBride years earlier, but failed to complete the necessary repairs. A group of former railway lawyers has since requested an inquiry into railway safety in Canada. In a deregulated and privatized environment, monitoring of track and infrastructure maintenance has largely been left to companies like CN.

When CN was privatized in 1995 the federal government provided \$900 million in relief for debt that was incurred to pay for much-needed improvements, such as double-tracking to improve traffic flow. CN recently pulled up sections of this double-track for use in its US rail operations. The company is also having difficulties with safety, and much of its highly touted profitability comes from 'savings' made at the expense of infrastructure maintenance. Today's CN is a monopolistic corporation whose first priority is not the interests and safety of Canadians (over 70% of the company is American-owned).

While the privatization of BC Rail doesn't include the sale of the right-of-way, it does clear the way for a trail of lost jobs, lost profits, and lost future opportunity. BC Rail is estimated to be worth close to \$2 billion, according to the government's own internal documents. CN paid \$1 billion for a ninety-nine year lease of the rail line, access to the BC Rail Pension Plan surplus, and the engines and rail cars. One quarter of this cost (\$250 million) is for an \$800 million tax credit accumulated by BC Rail that could be applied to future profits.

As a Crown corporation, BC Rail provides approximately 1,600 jobs for British Columbians. The closure of its North Vancouver headquarters, and other switching yard and maintenance facilities, will result in the loss of more than 700 jobs. The timing couldn't be worse—BC communities are already suffering from job losses as a result of layoffs in industries such as forestry and from cuts to government services.

The privatization of BC Rail will also reduce employment and economic spin-offs for local communities. These spin-offs help to strengthen and maintain a strong provincial economy. Decently paying employment in smaller municipalities supports employment and investment in other services.

BC Rail is a profitable enterprise. In 2002, it earned \$76.8 million in profits. It is expected to make roughly \$80 million in 2003, and has forecasts of up to \$120 million in net income over the next three years. BC Rail made a profit in 19 out of the last 22 years (the 3 years that were not profitable were years when there was a write-down of the debt incurred to build the Tumbler Ridge branch line). These profits will no longer be reinvested in BC, but will be paid out to CN's shareholders.

It is sadly ironic that talk of a new rail link to Alaska, tied to the construction of a natural gas pipeline from Alaska and territories in the Canadian north, came up after the sale of BC Rail is nearly completed. The southern terminus of the Alaska railway is likely to be located in Prince George. BC Rail and the provincial treasury will lose out on this future opportunity.

The privatization of BC Rail to one of two major competing railways in Canada also reduces competition. It increases CN's considerable monopoly over transportation in western Canada and its market power over rail operations in North America. It also leaves Prince George in a situation where rail customers now only have one choice for shipping their goods. The anti-competitive effects of the privatization deal may lead to its downfall—the Competition Bureau will make a decision later this spring. Only a successful challenge of the sale at the Canada Competition Bureau will stop this poorly thought out deal.

What the Competition Bureau won't consider, unfortunately, is the negative economic impact on the province's interior and northern regions. BC Rail was a successful, government-led exercise in province building, and it still could be. This deal isn't worth a one-time cash grab for a provincial government that is desperate for revenues.

John Irwin is a researcher with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' BC Office. He spent many years as a railway worker in his younger years. www.policyalternatives.ca



Florence and Dave Davidson's cutting the cake at the Pender Museum signing. Photo: Christa Grace-Warrick

Finding and losing home

Two Island museums are in a state of change. Pender Islands' Museum Society has secured a home at last with the signing of a license of occupation for the Robert Roe House—a heritage building sited at Roesland, part of the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. A dream of many years is realized for devoted workers like Elizabeth and Peter Campbell! Florence and Dave Davidson former owners of Roesland cut the cake at the signing ceremony.

On Galiano the museum has lost its home. For three years was located in a tiny, character home on Porlier Pass Road, which was previously home to the Galiano Conservancy until it moved into a building at Sturdies Bay. Now the owner needs to move back into the house. The beautiful displays have been dismantled this month—back to garages and basements, the same place that most of Pender's collection has been for umpteens years.

However, another generous Galianoite has donated a property to the Museum Society but rezoning, fundraising and building is expected to take two to three years. In the meantime the museum needs a temporary home and Society members are hoping that typical Island generosity will come through so enthusiastic museum workers will not lose momentum.

Meanwhile on Pender, even prior to the February 22 official signing with Parks Canada, renovation work to save Roe House has been in progress for a year. It now sits on a firm and dry foundation and can provide storage for records and artifacts but it will be a while before its doors will be open to visitors.

Both museum societies need all the help that Islanders can give to keep the heritage and culture of the islands alive; one of the best gifts we can give newcomers and youngsters. /



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