

Gulf Islands Island Tides

Regional News ~ Linking the Salish Sea Archipelago

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Photo: Derek Holzapfel

Beneath the waves inspiration for a Hallowe'en costume? A jellyfish (*Aequorea spp.*) is about to be impaled on a Giant Red Sea Urchin.

Galiano OCP changes open new possibilities

Art Moses

After an exhaustive process, including strong community support at a public hearing last month, Galiano Island's Local Trust Committee has given third reading to an extensive package of amendments to the Island's Official Community Plan. The package has been approved by the Islands Trust Executive Committee and sent to the Minister of Community, Sport and Culture for approval.

The amendments give a strong boost to efforts to create more affordable housing to keep and attract young families on the island. They also promote more food and agricultural production and other economic activity.

At the same time, when signed by the minister, the OCP amendments will provide more protection to Galiano's sensitive island ecosystems and water supply and will comply with provincial requirements to protect riparian areas through development permits.

The Process

Contained in a total of 14 bylaws, the amendments include the rezoning of a Forest-zoned lot to six, 5-acre residential housing sites plus a land donation to BC Parks. They are the culmination of an almost two-and-a-half-year review of the existing OCP by scores of Galiano Islanders, with the support and involvement of Island Trustees Louise Decario and Sandy Pottle.

'The review was thoroughly comprehensive,' says Mike Hoebel, who chaired the Steering Committee for the review. 'From the outset the trustees, with the support of Trust staff, established numerous advisory committees to work on the key issues. Anyone who wanted to join a committee was welcomed. Once the minister has signed off on the amendments, it will be up

to the trustees, working with the community, to ensure that the potential provided by these amendments is realized.'

Decario and Pottle have announced they are seeking re-election on November 19.

The OCP advisory committees, which met regularly throughout the review process, included groups on affordable housing, agriculture and food security, community economic development, water, transportation, ecosystem protection, and forest policy.

New Opportunities

Once approved by the minister, the amended OCP will add a new land-use designation for community housing intended for affordable, rental and special needs housing. The provision will allow the LTC to consider applications for rezoning to a higher density than currently permitted. The amendment also enables the LTC to consider amending zoning to allow secondary dwellings for affordable housing in residential zones. The LTC will also be allowed to consider amending zoning to create a new zone for a manufactured-home park.

Already, one group, spearheaded by long-time Galiano resident and business owner Tom Hennessey, has secured an option on a site, and is working on a rezoning application for an affordable housing project, with density equal to that of the adjacent Page Drive seniors' residence.

Under agriculture land use policies, the amendments stipulate that floor area of accessory buildings will ensure that the needs of farm operations are met.

The new OCP will enable the LTC to amend the Land

GALIANO OCP, please turn to page 2

Cooking the books

Patrick Brown

BC's provincial debt, shown on the books as \$53.4 billion, is actually \$80.2 billion more than that, says Provincial Auditor John Doyle, and that should have been shown as debt. The figures came to light as he gave a 'qualified' review of the province's financial statements for 2010/11 in his annual report, issued at the end of September.

Said Doyle, 'During the last 15 years, this office has issued qualified audit reports on the province's financial statements 12 times. For a government that strives for transparency and accountability, this is unacceptable.'

The additional \$80.2 billion reflects 'contractual obligations' incurred by the government and its crown corporations, mainly from 'public/private partnerships' (P3s) and BCHydro's long-term contracts to 'take or pay' for electricity generated by Independent Power Producers.

Finance Minister Falcon dismissed the auditor's criticisms, characterizing them as a 'somewhat esoteric debate on accounting principles' and pointing out that debt rating agencies continued to give a high rating to provincial bonds.

AUDIT, please turn to page 3

Shaking up BC

If we do get the 'Big One', what will you do? Thousands of earthquakes occur in BC every year and the threat of a large one occurring here is very real.

To practice your earthquake and emergency coping skills, take part in the *Great British Columbia Shakeout Drill* on Thursday, October 20 at 10:20am. 'Drop, Cover and Hold On' as you would to protect yourself in the event of an actual earthquake.

The first *BC Shakeout* was on January 26, marking the anniversary of the 9.0 magnitude earthquake that rocked the Cascadia subduction zone 311 years ago. This October, Guam, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon and Yukon will also hold drills.

SHAKEOUT, please turn to page 6



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● Parksville—Heritage Centre Mall

● Courtenay—Southgate Centre, Cliffe Avenue

● Port Alberni—Shoppers Drugmart Plaza, 10th Avenue

● Campbell River—Willow Point Village



Island Tides AT POINT ATKINSON OCTOBER–NOVEMBER

Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.	Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.
19 WE	0331	4.6	1.4	27 TH	0559	15.1	4.6
	1126	14.1	4.3		1122	9.5	2.9
	1741	10.8	3.3		1642	15.1	4.6
	2102	11.5	3.5		2348	1.3	0.4
20 TH	0429	5.2	1.6	28 FR	0654	15.4	4.7
	1218	14.1	4.3		1214	10.2	3.1
	1851	10.2	3.1		1722	14.8	4.5
	2238	11.2	3.4				
21 FR	0535	5.6	1.7	29 SA	0033	1.0	0.3
	1304	14.4	4.4		0750	15.7	4.8
	1939	9.2	2.8		1310	10.5	3.2
					1805	14.4	4.4
22 SA	0021	11.2	3.4	30 SU	0119	1.3	0.4
	0643	6.2	1.9		0846	15.7	4.8
	1344	14.4	4.4		1413	10.8	3.3
	2021	7.9	2.4		1851	13.5	4.1
23 SU	0151	11.8	3.6	31 MO	0207	2.3	0.7
	0749	6.6	2.0		0943	15.4	4.7
	1420	14.8	4.5		1528	10.8	3.3
	2100	6.2	1.9		1944	12.5	3.8
24 MO	0303	12.8	3.9	1 TU	0258	3.3	1.0
	0847	7.2	2.2		1038	15.4	4.7
	1454	14.8	4.5		1653	10.2	3.1
	2141	4.6	1.4		2050	11.5	3.5
25 TU	0405	13.8	4.2	2 WE	0353	4.6	1.4
	0941	7.9	2.4		1132	15.1	4.6
	1529	15.1	4.6		1813	9.5	2.9
	2222	3.0	0.9		2221	10.8	3.3
26 WE	0503	14.4	4.4	3 TH	0452	5.9	1.8
	1032	8.9	2.7		1221	14.8	4.5
	1605	15.1	4.6		1916	8.5	2.6
	2304	2.0	0.6				

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Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.	Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.
19 WE	0252	3.0	0.9	27 TH	0553	10.8	3.3
	1131	10.5	3.2		1031	8.2	2.5
					1548	11.2	3.4
					2259	0.7	0.2
20 TH	0349	3.6	1.1	28 FR	0651	11.2	3.4
	1215	10.5	3.2		1127	8.5	2.6
	1858	7.9	2.4		1624	10.8	3.3
	2121	8.2	2.5		2345	0.7	0.2
21 FR	0453	3.9	1.2	29 SA	0748	11.5	3.5
	1253	10.5	3.2		1231	8.9	2.7
	1924	7.2	2.2		1703	10.5	3.2
	2324	7.9	2.4				
22 SA	0559	4.3	1.3	30 SU	0033	0.7	0.2
	1325	10.5	3.2		0846	11.5	3.5
	1953	6.2	1.9		1347	9.2	2.8
					1746	10.2	3.1
23 SU	0110	8.2	2.5	31 MO	0122	1.3	0.4
	0701	4.9	1.5		0942	11.5	3.5
	1353	10.5	3.2		1518	8.9	2.7
	2024	4.9	1.5		1834	9.5	2.9
24 MO	0237	8.9	2.7	1 TU	0214	2.0	0.6
	0756	5.6	1.7		1035	11.5	3.5
	1420	10.5	3.2		1653	8.2	2.5
	2059	3.6	1.1		1934	8.5	2.6
25 TU	0349	9.5	2.9	2 WE	0308	3.0	0.9
	0848	6.6	2.0		1124	11.2	3.4
	1446	10.8	3.3		1812	7.5	2.3
	2136	2.3	0.7		2104	7.9	2.4
26 WE	0453	10.2	3.1	3 TH	0406	3.9	1.2
	0939	7.2	2.2		1207	10.8	3.3
	1515	10.8	3.3		1906	6.6	2.0
	2217	1.3	0.4		2315	7.5	2.3

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Special Report by Patrick Brown

The 21st Century Revolution

By the time you read this, 'Occupy Wall Street', a non-violent public protest action centred in Zuccotti Park, two blocks from Wall Street in New York, will have existed for over four weeks. It targets economic inequality, corruption and injustice in the United States. The US financial industry is a direct object of grievance; its centre, Wall Street, serves as a fitting symbol of the nation's corrupt corporate and political power structures. Given the current US economic and political paralysis, Occupy Wall Street has the potential to become an influential force for change.

One Percent 'Greedy Bastards'

The inspiration for this protest apparently found its expression in the Vancouver magazine *Adbusters*, whose April 21 call for a new 'Revolution in America' identified 'the opulent one percent' of Americans as a 'cabal of greedy bastards' who have 'turned America, the pioneer of modern democracy, into a corporatocracy where a handful of nonhuman megacorps own our government, political parties, courts, schools and media.'

Adbusters refers to the US Supreme Court decision on Citizens United, which 'told us who runs the nation by granting corporations the freedom to donate unlimited amounts of money to political candidates.'

In addition to controlling government, the 'one percent' control 40% of US wealth.

Occupy Wall Street identifies with the remaining 99% of the citizenry. This includes the entire middle class and the poor. In a country rife with unemployment, personal debt and foreclosures, this resonates strongly throughout the nation.

The Occupation of Zuccotti Park

Since September 17, Zuccotti Park has been occupied by a core group of some 200 people, young and old, sleeping in the open (tents are banned by city authorities), with task forces in charge of food, security, first aid, sanitation, legal help and Internet access. There's a generator supplying power for laptops and charging cellphones. Decisions are made by consensus at twice-daily general meetings. A daily publication, *The Occupied Wall Street Journal*, is produced. Donations of food, clothing, medical supplies and cash are dropped off by supporters or arrive via UPS.

The park occupation serves as a centre for demonstrations and marches, organized through social media; on October 1, a march over the Brooklyn Bridge resulted in some 700 arrests by the police. No charges were laid and all were eventually released. A police pepper-spraying of a number of women was widely seen on YouTube, and roundly condemned; since that time there have been few incidents of police violence. A march to Washington Square on October 8 was watched by hundreds of police, but without arrests. New York Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said, 'We are accommodating peaceful protest.'

Starting a New Style of Revolution?

'Popular revolution remains the only reasonably viable tactic remaining,' said *Adbusters*, despairing at the apparent futility of a wide variety of citizens' protest actions so far. But this is not the 18th century; how to create a popular revolution?

Today, there are many examples, with varying degrees of success: the Arab spring, the 'colour' revolutions of eastern Europe, the indigenous uprisings of Bolivia, the economic

demonstrations in Indonesia, the Spanish 'indignants', the overthrow of dictators in Libya and Yemen. Many of the lessons they teach are difficult to apply in western countries; but the imaginative use of cellphones, Internet, and social media is increasingly common.

Another lesson is not so obvious. It is the immense value of persistence, of a commitment to the long term. Popular protest in 'advanced' nations usually expresses itself in discrete events—marches, demonstrations, dramatic creations intended to attract the attention of the media and, by extension, the centres of political power.

But such events are transitory, so politicians can often successfully wait them out in the knowledge that the media has a short attention span and the issues raised will go away. Leaders of demonstrations can be co-opted or bought off; problems can be negotiated away, denied, or lied about. This is how our political systems deal with many issues of the day.

Attacking Fundamental Problems

But fundamental problems of social and economic injustice, and corporate and government corruption cannot be solved through the system; they are, after all, themselves diseases of the system. They have developed over a long period of time; it follows that they will not be

There's something happening here,
What it is ain't exactly clear...
I think it's time we stop, children, what's that sound
Everybody look what's going down...
—Buffalo Springfield, 1967

cured through a series of disconnected media events. And the media are, after all, an integral part of the political power structure (think Rupert Murdoch).

It follows, then, that the public organism needed to influence the fundamental changes must be long-lived and persistent, and capable of effective communication outside the established media.

Hence Occupy Wall Street—an independent social organism attacking a very broad range of fundamental issues, with no hierarchical structure, enormous strength in the use of communications technology, and no end date or time limit.

Is this the foundation of a 21st century American Revolution? It's probably too early to tell. But this organism has already established itself as a force to be taken seriously, and one capable of spreading throughout the US.

(Canada's political system is different, but problems with 'corporatocracy' resonate here, too.)

Echoes In The Park

The New York Police have not allowed the use of any PA equipment, so Occupy Wall Street has made do with a repeater system—each speaker's phrases are repeated by the audience until everyone has understood; this is known as 'the human microphone'. On October 6, author Naomi Klein spoke to the crowd; here are a few of the things she said: '...it seems as if there aren't any more rich countries. Just a whole lot of rich people. People who got rich looting the public wealth and exhausting natural resources around the world.'

'What climate change means is that we have to do this on a deadline. This time our movement cannot get distracted, divided, burned out or swept away by events. This time we have to succeed. And I'm not talking about regulating the banks and increasing taxes on the rich, though that's important.'

'I am talking about changing the underlying values that govern our society. That is hard to fit into a single media-

OCCUPY, please turn to page 7

GALIANO OCP from page 1

Use Bylaw to permit community gardens and farmers markets in all appropriate zones, and may permit agri-tourist accommodation at the same density as B&Bs.

With regard to water supplies, the OCP amendments add new policies to identify aquifers and water recharge areas and recommend standards through professional analysis to ensure development minimizes impacts on potable water sustainability. New developments will be required to provide cisterns in critical groundwater areas. Other conservation and protection provisions encourage shared, as opposed to individual, docks. A new First Nations Cultural and Archaeological policy calls on the LTC to avoid approving development applications that would result in disturbance to archaeological sites.

Forest Lands and the PMFL Act

At their last meeting, the Local Trust Committee continued the effort, which received intensive attention during the OCP review, to move toward a solution to the long-standing issue of residential use on Forest-zoned lands which were formerly owned as a commercial tree farm by MacMillan Bloedel. These lands now comprise about 40% of the Island.

Because Galiano's bylaws pre-date the *Provincial Managed Forest Act*, Galiano's current OCP and Land Use Bylaw provide local control over development through site-by-site rezoning

requirements on these Forest-zoned lands. Section 21 of the *PMFL Act*, which currently does not affect these pre-existing bylaws, prohibits local government from introducing bylaws restricting 'forest management activities' including the building of houses, worker accommodation, roads and bridges.

As a result of the recent OCP review, Galiano's LTC was prepared to expand the zoning on Forest land to permit an accessory dwelling on lots greater than 50 acres with conditions, without the need for site-by-site rezoning. However, throughout the OCP review process numerous community-based committees recommended that trustees not proceed with Forest policy changes before the provincial government exempted the Galiano Local Trust Area from the *PMFL Act*, Section 21.

Therefore the OCP amendments do not include Forest policy changes. The trustees have begun meeting provincial officials and the minister to press for Section 21 exemption.

Meanwhile, Trustees Decario and Pottle have asked trust staff for a report on whether they could proceed with Forest policy changes affecting only those Forest lands that are at least 50 acres in size and do not have managed forest status under the *PMFL Act*. The staff report, which indicates the approach is feasible, was slated to be on the agenda for the Local Trust Committee meeting on October 17. ☺

Saturna Notes — PRISCILLA EWBANK

Thanks to long sunny days, the garden is brilliant with pink, yellow and gold—Japanese maples, dahlias, nasturtiums and much more.

When you get this weather, the Thanksgiving holiday is blue skies and badminton tournaments instead of being confined in the house thinking up entertainments for cranky, unexercised kids while wet dogs crowd at the door amidst gumboots, soaked runners and dripping raincoats.

We had a crowd over with babies and youngsters and ate breakfast with the kitchen door open to the garden. We went on long walks up along Brown Ridge, and had badminton tournaments to determine who were the dishwashers.

Two traditional Thanksgiving tasks are harvesting and setting the garden up for winter. The little kids helped pick up and box the Gravenstein and King apples and the Comice pears, while the more spry were up the ladders and climbing the trees.

The dogs joyously patrolled the banana boxes to fend off the kamikaze raids mounted by the sheep who had faint hopes of jamming their heads into a box of just-picked apples! A couple of bright red King apples were left at the top of the two King trees for the pileated woodpeckers who swoop up to them and peck big holes. The woodpeckers eat the apple meat—and the wasps that are attracted to the apple juice and flesh.

Later we spread bright-yellow, sweet-smelling straw all over the freshly weeded bare places in the garden anticipating suppressing the spring riot of weeds that leap to life. Oh, let Spring come quick!

Ferry Commissioner Meeting

Saturna's meeting on October 1 with BC Ferry Commissioner Gordon Macatee was well-attended with over 80 people, 15 or so who spoke. It was the last of his series of meetings with Islanders in the Salish Sea. Saturna Islander Brian Hollingshead, chair of the Southern Gulf Island Ferry Advisory Committee, introduced Mr Macatee, who by his manner and what he says, generates confidence that he has come to our communities to really listen. He said that at each public hearing he always hears something new and he appreciates the similarity of issues from community to community, each with its own local reality that deepens his understanding of the picture overall.

Amanda Pearson, who lives on Saturna and works on Mayne, said that it costs more to travel inter-island than to Victoria, this weakens our inter-island connectedness. Tourist Association President Joe Harris, said that B&B profits are easy to chart and they are down 30-35%, substantiated by Ian Gaines who read the profits from year to year for Four Winds



Photo: Toby Snelgrove

B&B. John Gaines, long-time local businessman, talked about high commercial fares and how he strategizes to make every trip count and makes less of them. Saturna Community Club stressed the wellbeing and the good of the community and how they disintegrate thread-by-thread as various livelihoods fall away.

The Property Owners Association showed the amount of money the BC Liberals are willing to pay for other recent transportation upgrades and starts, the folly of BC Ferry Services' forays into the tourist marketing world and lack of user-pay schemes for any other transportation system.

I spoke about the dollars and cents decline of the two businesses, the General Store and the Lighthouse Pub, of which my partner and I are a part. The value to the community of the summer tourists spending their off-Island cash is immense. It supports Island businesses so they can remain open throughout the year for locals.

Several people declared the recent \$900,000 refit of the *Mayne Queen*, stripping her of her social function to rebrand her in BC Ferries' corporate image, to be a flagrant misuse of taxpayer money. Many people stated that they want core ferry service—dependable and

safe—not 'World Class'.

It was gratifying to have the opportunity to be heard by someone who obviously cares and understands what is meant by consulting and has the power to state a case to the BC Liberal government.

Alma de España In Concert

Saturna Arts and Concerts presented Alma de España, the first concert of this season. Three women—all dancers and one a singer, La Cantadora—and the male guitarist kept the stage full of power and drama.

Repeatedly, the women returned to the stage with new, dazzling costumes. The dances are full of movement and color as the shawl fringes fly, the song ebbs and flows, skirts twirl and fall, hands clap and bright-hued heels hit the floor in intricate rhythms. The women's arms and hands are expressive—lilting and inviting, strong and vigorous as the dancers act out the old gypsy songs for the singer.

From Victoria, the three women and the guitarist travel to the ancient heart of flamenco, Jerez in Spain, to attend performances and study. They return with new skills, elaborate costumes and divine shoes! For the audience it was magical to be transported to a whole world of sound, colour and energy that we seldom see.

AUDIT from page 1

Port Mann Bridge Financing

Doyle's severest criticism of the province's accounting was reserved for the treatment of the \$3.3 billion P3 contract covering the new Port Mann bridge and associated changes to Highway N°1. This expenditure is shown as 'self-supporting', since it is planned that all costs will be covered, over the life of the bridge, by tolls collected from users.

However, the auditor points out that until the bridge is in use all construction and financing costs are paid by the province from current working capital and borrowings. It may also reflect his doubt that toll revenue will, in fact, be sufficient to cover annual payments to the contracting and financing entity plus operating costs. The recently completed Golden Ears Bridge from Langley to Maple Ridge, also built under a P3, does not appear to be yielding sufficient toll revenue to cover its 'contractual obligations'.

BCHydro's Debt Obligations

Auditor Doyle noted that while a large part of the \$30 billion increase in 'contractual obligations' since 2007 resulted from undertakings by BCHydro to pay for electricity generated by Independent Power Producers up to 40 years into the future, few details of these contracts had been disclosed to the public.

The Finance Ministry's reply was, once again, dismissive. 'Too much detail can obscure the informative value of the financial statements,' it said.

Doyle also criticized BCHydro's use of 'regulatory accounts' used to defer current expenses without recognizing them as current costs; these are shown as assets on BCHydro's books, with the rationalization that BCHydro can pay for them from future rates. In 2010, they totaled \$1.7 billion.

Not Permitted By GAAP

Doyle comments that this type of accounting is not permitted by Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). When the provincial government amended the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act (BTAA)*, 'the amendments set the stage for the BC government to depart from reporting its financial statements under Canadian GAAP,' Doyle explains. 'Recently,' he continued, 'government took the next step by amending the *BTAA* to change its future definition of GAAP for BCHydro's rate regulated balances, which are very significant.'

In fact, additions to these deferral accounts changed BCHydro's current losses into reported profits; see *Island Tides'* September 2, 2010 reprint at www.islandtides.com/assets/reprint/bcgov_20100902c.pdf.

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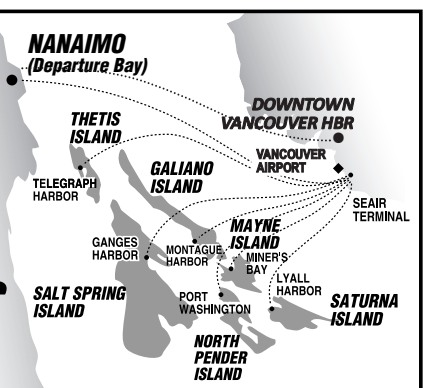
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OTTAWA REPORT BY ELIZABETH MAY

Mystery of the Muzzled Scientists

In reading this heading, 'The mystery of the muzzled scientists,' I wonder how many readers would be put in mind of the game Clue—'Colonel Mustard in the library with a wrench'.

My mind tends to run in the direction of the absurd, particularly when I am dealing with surrealistic political nonsense. Many would not call this a mystery at all. It is abundantly clear that the Harper government is refusing to allow media interviews with scientists working in the Government of Canada. The mystery is twofold: why? And on whose orders?

It started years ago, when John Baird, now Minister of Foreign Affairs, was Minister of Environment. That was the first time a directive came down from the Minister's office to say that no Environment Canada personnel could speak to the media without the minister's permission. I remember it well, as friends in the department told me the weather service folks in Toronto didn't know what to do about an approaching blizzard. Were they allowed to use the storm warning system, or did they need Baird's permission?

The muzzling of government scientists now extends to communication with Members of Parliament. I asked a colleague in DFO a fairly innocuous question by email a few months ago. The reply explained that, now that I was an MP, he would need permission to respond. He promised to let me know when he had the 'all clear.' I imagine I will never hear from him again.

The mystery is now the muzzling of scientists whose work has already been published in peer reviewed journals. In July, DFO scientist, Dr Kristi Miller, whose work on viruses linked to fish farms affecting salmon had been published in the internationally prestigious journal Science, was barred from speaking to reporters. Science had sent a note promoting interviews with Dr Miller to 7,400 reporters worldwide, without imagining her own government would issue a gag order. Later at the Cohen Commission, she testified that she did not know when the ban, imposed by the Privy Council Office, would be lifted.

Since the House began sitting in September, several issues have come up about journalistic access to government scientists. Once again, the most bizarre bans relate to research that has already been published. On October 2, the online version of Nature, an internationally respected peer-reviewed journal, published the work of multiple researchers from around the world, with the disturbing news that an ozone hole had opened up above the Arctic for the first time. Back in the 1980s, the world mobilized to phase out ozone-depleting substances when an ozone hole began appearing seasonally, and growing, over the Antarctic, but this report was of the first ever Arctic hole in the ozone layer. One of the lead authors, Dr David Tarasick, works at Environment Canada. Numerous journalists, including Bob McDonald, host of CBC's *Quirks and Quarks*, attempted to arrange an interview with Dr Tarasick. Margaret Munro at Postmedia sent me a copy of the email she received from the communications branch at Environment Canada: 'An

interview cannot be arranged.'

In the House of Commons, in response to questions from the NDP, the Liberals and me, Environment Minister Peter Kent first tried to create the impression that there were scheduling difficulties arranging interviews. He insisted, 'We are not muzzling scientists.' Then he implied that only 'responsible' journalists would be able to ask Dr Tarasick about his research. On October 7, with Peter Kent absent, newly-elected MP and Parliamentary Secretary to the Environment Minister, Michelle Rempel, tried a new approach (or more likely read a new reply prepared by PMO), to the effect that scientists do not speak to the media because it is the Minister who speaks for the government. (Full disclosure, I like Michelle. She is a

'...the most bizarre bans relate to research that has already been published.'

perfectly lovely young woman. No guile, no nastiness, but like everyone else in her caucus, she follows orders.)

I am struggling with maintaining respectful discourse in the face of answers that are patently false. Here is how I phrased my question after the Parliamentary Secretary replied identically to the

NDP and Liberal critics with the boiler plate about how the minister speaks for the government.

'Mr Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment in an effort to continue to try to unravel the muzzling of government scientists. I accept that the minister would never knowingly mislead this House, but his answers do not accord with the facts. I have an email here to a 'responsible' journalist with Postmedia in which it states that 'an interview cannot be granted' with the scientist in question.

'I would urge the parliamentary secretary not to tell us that the minister speaks for all scientists. The reality is that, if the minister is not muzzling these scientists, and I accept that he is not, will he investigate who in the Government of Canada is muzzling these scientists?'

It is increasingly occurring to me that all the muzzling orders are coming from higher up. We know Dr Miller's gag order emanated from the Privy Council Office. The email to reporters regarding the published work on ozone came from civil servants within Environment Canada—not the Minister's office. While the minister certainly should know scientists are being muzzled, perhaps he dwells in a land of willful blindness, allowing future 'plausible deniability.'

If I am to treat Peter Kent as truthful, then clearly someone else is gagging scientists. Back to the game of Clue—he doesn't have one. Just for laughs, I will set out Michelle Rempel's reply. Some seasoned journalists told me afterwards that it was the worst answer in QP they had ever heard: 'Mr Speaker, I know the minister has addressed this issue on numerous occasions. However, before I answer the question, I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague at Finance on Canada's new job numbers. The global recovery remains fragile but this government is working hard right now to get Parliament to implement the next phase of our action plan.

'I encourage my colleague across the aisle to vote in support of our budget measures, which include funding for climate change adaptation. And, ministers do speak for the government.'

Why is the Harper government forbidding scientists to talk to the media about work in the public domain? Because they can, and because they worry some scientist some day may express an opinion that puts the government in a bad light.

Who is doing it? My theory is that muzzling scientists and many other aspects of what would have been ministerial decision-making have been hijacked to top-down control. The chain of decision-making? PMO to PCO to direct orders to Deputy Ministers, leaving the political minister as a public relations spokesperson. I will continue to dig to test this theory as its implications are serious. ☞



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PENDER ISLAND: Tues, Nov 15, 10:00am-2:00pm
 Community Hall, 4418 Bedwell Hbr Rd

SALT SPRING ISLAND: Tues, Nov 1 & 29, 10:30am-3:00pm
 Community Gospel Church, 147 Vesuvius Bay Rd

SATURNA ISLAND: Wed, Nov 9, 11:00am-3:00pm
 Saturna Recreation Centre Lounge, 104 Harris Rd

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Bringing back the salmon



VOLUNTEERS MONITORING FLOW IN NILE CREEK

Tales of salmon so abundant in BC rivers that you could walk across their backs are long over. In fact, once replete with salmon, some rivers in BC saw no fish returning this year. But thanks to the decades-long efforts by a Vancouver Island-based society, there's at least one river where the death knell has been silenced, and the river once again runs with pink salmon and cutthroat trout.

'I've seen it happen—things were dead, the fish were gone...but there's been a change,' recounts Carolyn Graeme, owner of Shady Shores Beach Resort in Bowser. 'I tell people you can now fish from your doorstep because you literally can. You can strap on your hip waders, walk out into the ocean and start fly fishing—the fish are back.'

It wasn't a freak act of nature or magic that has seen Nile Creek start to approach the kind of productivity it once enjoyed. Through donated money and the Nile Creek Enhancement Society's (NCES) hard work, a group of dedicated volunteers brought life back to what once was dead.

'We knew that to be successful we'd have to work from mountain to ocean to restore habitat at every stop,' explains NCES president Ken Kirkby. 'We had to undo what our species had managed to destroy if we were ever to see fish return.'

Kirkby says that Nile Creek was originally referred to as the Pink River for the record numbers of pink salmon that returned to it every year. It originates 18km north of Qualicum Beach on Vancouver Island and empties out into Qualicum Bay near Bowser. Uncommonly cold and clean water, unlike any place on Vancouver Island, led to pink salmon returns the highest ever recorded. In the 1990s, that number had been decimated.

The group was originally told restoration

couldn't be done. It would mean recreating spawning conditions of a changed river and replanting shorelines with eelgrass and kelp forests that had disappeared in the local marine waters—it couldn't be done.

'Some of the provincial and federal people who work in the field do great work; if I could give them sainthoods I would,' says Kirkby. 'Now, together we have a project that nine different countries have sent representatives to, so they can adopt this model where they live.'

In more than 15 years, volunteers have restored the river ecosystem, together with some 'skillful advice', and \$600,000 in privately-raised funding. They began by working with Quinsam River Hatchery in Campbell River to get pink salmon eggs for the Nile Creek hatchery. The hatched salmon fry swim down Nile Creek in the spring. Last year, over 124,000 pink salmon returned to spawn.

The food produced by the carcasses of the spawned salmon have created the fertile ground for returning cutthroat trout that rely on that food source to thrive through winter. That has also brought back something that had nearly become extinct as well: fishers and new business.

'In late summer and early fall, you can see people in hip-waders fly fishing in the shallows and the mouth of the river. They come from all over the world, and you haven't seen that in decades,' says Kirby. 'Those fishers bring business to this area in a positive way instead of taking from it.'

'We have a motto in the NCES—that no endeavour, large or small, can thrive in the long run without a community, and building a community is the responsibility of everyone. We have really formed a community here.'

The NCES has plans for the restoration of six more rivers on Vancouver Island. ☺

The BC Leg — CLAIRE TREVENA, MLA NORTH ISLAND

From June 2010 to June 2011 we sat for only 24 days, so being back in Victoria, fulfilling our roles as legislators and as official opposition, is very healthy.

The Legislature resumed sitting on October 3 with a great deal of pomp and ceremony and very little substance. The session started with an unnecessary throne speech. This is usually given after an election or, in BC, just before the budget each February to talk about the government's agenda over the coming year. Obviously neither has happened; the Premier decided not to call an election and the budget won't be tabled until the spring.

Still, she chose to have a throne speech, complete with parades, military salutes, and the Lieutenant Governor attending. The speech he read, on behalf of the government, was insubstantial. There was a new public holiday and rehashed commitments which have been made in previous months. There was nothing to address the needs of many people in the province, whether in tackling poverty or putting forward a substantive jobs plan that actually creates work in BC.

In my response to the throne speech, I raised my concerns about the 'Families First' mantra the government has adopted. Unless it is willing to tackle real problems in communities across BC—problems of child care, housing, inequality and ending the HST quickly—it will be doing little to really help families. As well as concerns for North Island communities, I was also able to talk about concerns which have come to light as shadow for the Minister of Children and Family Development.

I also commented on the complete lack of focus on the Vancouver Island economy in the premier's jobs plan; in particular the fact that most of that insubstantial document addresses raw materials exports rather than using our resources in our communities. That continual focus of shipping of logs out of our communities has to be changed.

Forestry came up in one of our early question periods as well as in one of the early bills the government has tabled. Again the government looks ready to sell off our assets, both the logs, and according to the new bill,

more of the land base.

The government introduced a bill to prohibit mining and oil and gas extraction in the Flathead Valley; I spoke in support of that but questioned why the government hadn't gone further and started examining whether it should become a park.

We have also been challenging the government on its record with some of the most vulnerable—the adults who are developmentally disabled and receive assistance through Community Living BC (CLBC). Once again the government failed to say it would stop the closure of group homes. These homes are like families for so many people, and now they literally have nowhere to go. It was telling that the minister responsible said she has met with CLBC just once since taking over the ministry.

The government is also being questioned on its lack of commitment to the judiciary and the fact that criminal cases are being thrown out because there are simply not enough judges in the province. Asked about the cost of the premier's dangerous demand that cameras be put in courtrooms for the trials of the Stanley Cup rioters, she completely refused to answer.

I say that this is a dangerous move for a couple of reasons. One is that the executive—the premier's office—should not get involved directly with the judiciary. We have three pillars in our government system in BC and Canada: the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary. This is fundamental to our rule of law and an individual premier should not interfere with the judiciary.

Secondly, the announcement stinks of a public shaming. When people break the law, we have a system which deals with them. We do not need to go back to the days of the stocks or the pillory and display people in public.

October is Foster Parent Appreciation Month, and as the critic for this sphere, I wrote an open letter to foster parents. They do a most extraordinary job, working with sometimes very difficult children and youth, but creating a stable foundation for them and so for all our futures. We should acknowledge and respect their dedicated work. ☺

Reader's Letters

We Don't Own the Salmon

Dear Editor:

I am a fervent supporter of Alexandra Morton's objective, which I understand to be the protection of wild salmon from the threats posed by farmed salmon in the Salish Sea. I have, however, been alarmed to see her and many of her supporters, including *Island Tides* [September 22–October 5, 2011], using the slogan 'save our wild salmon'. It seems to me that wild salmon, by definition, are not 'ours'. They are wild and it is precisely because they are wild that they are worthy of protection. Ironically, 'our' salmon are actually those enclosed in fish farms and don't require 'saving.'

Graham Brazier, Denman Island

Response to Gary Marty

Dear Editor:

In response to the provincial salmon farm vet, Dr Gary Marty:

First I want to thank him. Prior to Dr Marty's record-keeping, the fish farm health records were a mess.

However, do farm and wild salmon have brain tumours as a result of the fish farm disease Salmon Leukemia? This is an extremely important question regarding salmon farms, the Fraser sockeye and potentially human health. We deserve straight forward answers.

Marty implied DFO scientist Dr Miller hit salmon over the heads with a bonker, damaging the brains and then sent them for analysis. Attached is Cohen Inquiry Exhibit #1522. Last line, page 5, 'Importantly, however, these fish have not been killed with a blow to the head, and care had been taken in the handling of these fish to minimize damage to the brain.' (Dr Miller, Head of Molecular Genetics Section, DFO May 19, 2011). Dr Marty, you are wrong and your comments are damaging to the career of a colleague.

Dr Marty suggests he does not see the diagnostic lesions for Salmon Leukemia in farm salmon. However, the scientific paper, 'Descriptive epidemiology of marine anemia in pen-reared salmon in southern BC' (*Canadian Vet Journal*, July

1996), co-authored by Dr Kent, ex-DFO, describes 'hyperplasia of the interstitial cells of the caudal kidney' as a symptom that can be used to help diagnose 'Marine Anemia' (which is what fish farmers call Salmon Leukemia). In his own reports Dr Marty writes: 'Interstitial (hematopoietic) cell hyperplasia (kidney)...In Chinook salmon, this lesion is often associated with the clinical diagnosis of 'Marine anemia'. I do not see how he can argue otherwise.

The exotic virus Infectious Salmon Anemia was difficult to diagnose when it first arrived in Chile from Norway. The farm fish did not seem sick and nothing was done to stop it. Eventually it mutated to a virulent form, swept the coast and killed 70% of the salmon farms. Chile does not have naturally occurring wild salmon. Dr Marty is frequently reporting two lesions in BC farm salmon that he calls 'Classic' signs/lesions associated Infectious Salmon Anemia (attached, 'Abbreviations tab' SSC and HEM). When I graph these two symptoms they rise and fall, suggesting they are potentially caused by the same thing. ISA virus is highly capable of mutating like all flu viruses, which is why a different vaccine is needed each year. The tests for ISA have to be adapted to detect each mutation. There were no records that DFO did this, nor that it did the testing required to designate a site as ISA virus-free (ie 60 fish from each farm as per DFO's own Manual of Compliance).

I am not naïve. I have watched all the players in this fish farm performance for 20 years. I would like to remind government and industry that Infectious Salmon Anemia is traceable to source, so if it is here we can trace it to the source. If there are brain tumours found in wild and farm salmon, I am afraid we will look to you, Dr Marty, to explain.

Let's all hope that I am wrong on both accounts. The media is not allowed to ask Dr Miller any questions, so, Dr Marty, call her and ask her about your theory on the attached growths in the brains of wild salmon. You should have done this when those samples first came your way instead of making assumptions that she was careless.

I am preparing a booklet for the public, because the lawyer for Canada suppressed my report on what I learned reading hundreds of DFO emails, memos, powerpoints and briefings.

Alexandra Morton, Echo Bay

Galiano in Need of a Doctor

This letter was sent to the Minister of Health on October 10.

Dear Minister:

I am writing about a crisis situation developing on Galiano Island, where my wife and I are long-term residents. The community lost its resident family physician in June 2010. Since then the Galiano Health Care Society has been working with the Vancouver Island Health Authority to find a replacement physician, but so far without success. You will appreciate the anxiety this situation causes for our community.

Up to now we have received support from your ministry's Rural General Practitioner Locum Program to bring temporary physician services to the island while we search for a new resident physician. Now we have been informed by your ministry that this support will be cut in half immediately, and will cease at the end of March 2012.

I understand that the Rural GP Locum Program was not designed to address situations like we have on Galiano. Nevertheless it has been our lifeline. With the withdrawal of this support the islanders who most require ongoing medical care by a physician, such as our senior citizens, will have to consider leaving their island homes and moving elsewhere. The lack of emergency medical care is extremely serious, especially given the large number of visitors to the island. The impact on the whole community, including local businesses, will be severe.

This is obviously an unacceptable situation. I call on you to take immediate steps to reinstate the full locum coverage for Galiano until we are able to recruit a permanent full-time physician.

Michael Hoebel, Galiano Island

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Friday & Monday, October 21 & 24

Ferry Advisory Committee Meetings—public welcome, please direct questions or concerns you wish to raise with the committee or BC Ferries to the chair of the Ferry Advisory Committee in advance • **Oct 21:** 10:30am-1:15pm, Denman Seniors Hall, 1111 Northwest Rd, Denman Island, *Chair Tony Law*; **Oct 24:** 9:30am-1pm, Mary Winspear Centre, 2243 Beacon Ave, Sidney, *SGL Chair Brian Hollingshead*; **Oct 24:** 5-8:30pm, Lions Centre, 103 Bonnet Ave, Salt Spring Island, *Chair Harold Swierenga* • Info: www.bcferries.com, Darin Guenette, 1-877-978-2385, darin.guenette@bcferries.com • IN DENMAN, SIDNEY & SALT SPRING

Friday, October 21

Pender Film Group—Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows, Part 2 • Community Hall • 7:30pm • ON PENDER ISLAND

Friday–Sunday, October 28–30

Enchanted Halloween—family-friendly Halloween wonderland with costumed performers, lanterns, carved pumpkins, live music, trick-or-treat trail, haunted miniature train rides, crafts, caramel apples; fundraiser for Intrepid Theatre, producers of Victoria Fringe Festival • Heritage Acres, 7321 Lochside Drive • **Oct 28 & 29:** 5–9pm; **Oct 30:** 12–5pm • \$15/\$10, \$40/family • Info: www.ticketrocket.org, 250-383-2663 • IN CENTRAL SAANICH



Saturday, October 29

Dance on Mayne Presents—Halloween Contra Dance, live music by Sybaritic String Band with special guest caller Marlin Prowell, come in costume • Mayne School • 7:30pm • Adults \$15, kids \$10 • Info: Dieter 250-539-2205, Ken.Brock@shaw.ca • ON MAYNE ISLAND

Friday to Sunday, November 4 to 6

22nd Annual Nanaimo Professional Craft Fair—something for everyone, hourly door prizes, and grand prize of a Nintendo Wii entertainment system, wheelchair accessible, refreshments available • Beban Park Social Centre, 2300 Bowen Rd • **FRI:** 12-8pm; **SAT:** 10am-5pm; **SUN:** 10am-4pm • Admission \$4 (unlimited re-entry) • Info: 250-390-3995, lindaknecht@shaw.ca • IN NANAIMO



Saturday, November 5

Mae Moore In Concert—complex folk pop-jazz songs, presented by the Mayne Island Music Society • Ag Hall • 8pm • Tickets: \$15 @ Home Hardware, Happy Tides and at the door • Info: www.mayneislandmusic.ca • ON MAYNE ISLAND

Saturday & Sunday, November 5 & 6

3rd Annual Intuitive Arts Festival—two-day celebration of metaphysics, holistic health, alternative medicine, and spirituality; workshops, health professionals, healing sessions, psychic readings and more • James Bay Community School Centre, 140 Oswego Street • 12-5pm • Tickets \$10 @ the door • Info: www.redgatehealingstudio.com, 778-433-7334, intuitive.arts.festival@gmail.com • IN VICTORIA



Saturday, October 22

Benefit for Somalia—West African dance workshop with N'Nato Camara 11am, \$22; Alpha Yaya Diallo concert 7:30pm, \$25 • Community Hall • ON PENDER ISLAND



Sunday, November 13

Planet Remarkable: Amazing Life in a Hostile Universe—multimedia presentation by Bob McDonald, science author and host of CBC's *Quirks and Quarks*; proceeds benefit Salt Spring Island Conservancy • ArtSpring Theatre • Silent auction 2pm, presentation 3pm • Tickets \$25 @ ArtSpring • ON SALT SPRING ISLAND



Round the Islands

Sara Miles & Co.

Gabriola Clinic Gaining Ground

The Gabriola Health Care Society reports that construction on the Island's new clinic building is progressing well. With an average of ten people working on

Photo: Harvey Graham



FAST FRAMING!

the site every day, the past couple of months have been very productive. The society hopes to have the roof on in November.

Much of the backfill is in place after Tim Mitchell spent many hours manning the compactor. Framing of the second floor has commenced thanks to a great number of people. Dan Windecker completed the well; Ross Pitt and John Pierce installed the pump and Well Watcher, donated by John Nicholas. Peter Spoke lent a hand by finishing the concrete floors that were placed in the stairwells.

Konrad Mauch, Ron Slade and YB put the underground conduits in place for the electrical and communications supply. Tony Adamson and Mike Wolloschen prepared the large beams that support part of the upper floor and, with assistance from Gordon McDonald and his excavator, they are now up and in place. The GHCS wants to thank Pat Smith, in particular, for the lunches he provided on site to a very appreciative crew. Nothing like a warm bowl of great soup on a blustery day.

It is a joyful project, with a constant banter all around the site as jokes are told and retold, advice is sought, nails hammered, beams lifted, and an honest effort is offered by everyone.

SHAKEOUT from page 1

Managing Emergencies

The first principle of emergency management in BC is that it is up to the individual to know how to protect themselves and their family. Then, police, fire and ambulance crews are first on site, with municipalities activating their emergency plans.

Each household should have three days of supplies to get through the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

Tsunamis & Risk Areas

There are three main types of tsunami that threaten the BC coast. The arrival time and impacts of each would vary considerably.

A Pacific-wide tsunami would take six to eighteen hours to arrive on our coast, depending on its place of origin. The area from the BC-Alaska border south to Port Renfrew, Vancouver Island would be most at-risk in this case.

A regional tsunami would most likely generate near Alaska. It could take less than one hour to reach the BC coast, but might take up to five hours. The 4.1-metre waves that hit Port Alberni in 1964 were from a regional tsunami.

The exposed west coast of Vancouver Island would be most affected by a local tsunami generated by earthquake activity off the BC coast or in inner waters. In that instance, the tsunami travel time would be too short to provide warnings for closest areas. According to Emergency ManagementBC, anyone on the coast who feels strong shaking from an earthquake for more than one minute should immediately move to high ground.

For more information, see www.shakeoutbc.ca and www.pep.bc.ca

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Photo: Harry Burton



ROVING FROG REPORTER STILL ON THE ROSE BEAT

Denman-Hornby Ferry Upgrades

From October 23-November 7, BC Ferries' docks at Gravelly Bay on Denman Island East and Shingle Spit on Hornby Island will be temporarily closed while the marine structures are replaced.

During this time, there will be a water taxi service running on the regular ferry schedule for foot passengers, with an extra morning sailing leaving Hornby Island at 6:45am and Denman East at 7am.

There will be a tug and barge service three times a week for commercial vehicles, who must reserve their sailing in advance by calling 1-888-223-3779.

The \$18.5 million project includes the replacement of the wingwalls, ramps, abutments, aprons and towers at both terminals. Service between Buckley Bay on Vancouver Island and the west terminal on Denman Island will continue to operate as regularly scheduled during this time.

Texada's Future ~ Sandy McCormick

Texada Islanders are discussing their economic future in October with a series of open houses to consider future economic development opportunities. Texada's population is dropping and many local residents are concerned that if something doesn't happen to reverse the trend, services and local businesses may close down.

Preliminary discussions took place a few months ago in conjunction with the Powell River Economic Development Society, whose staff prepared a draft report regarding the island's economic future and opportunities.

This report is being reviewed at the open houses, with a final report with recommendations to be produced after public input is received. Areas under consideration include recreation and tourism, mining, agriculture, forestry and the green economy.

Texada, the largest island by area in the Salish Sea, has less than 1,000 residents.

Pender Fire Rescue: 2 Honoured



Pender Island Fire Rescue Chief Charlie Boyte was named 'Canada's Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year' by the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs. On October 4, Association President Rob Simonds praised Boyte's strong commitment to training that has resulted in all responding firefighters at PIFR being certified at levels often associated with full-time fire departments.

Simonds also noted that 'Chief Boyte's innovative job sharing program has seen the recruitment of dozens of Pender Island citizens as non-firefighter volunteers.' The result has been a dramatic increase in community support and a 30% reduction in suppression firefighters' time in performing non-responder duties.

Chief Boyte said, 'I have been given a great opportunity to nurture a culture in the fire service that honours service to people as we safeguard our communities. There is a lot of work to do across this nation to insure our families and communities are secure. This is especially true in rural areas where countless committed fire chiefs are struggling to maintain high standards with stretched resources.'

PIFR also announced that Deputy Chief Mike Dine has received the BC Lieutenant Governor's Public Safety Award which acknowledges 'those who are dedicated to making our province a safer place to work, live and play.'

Good News for Island Radio

In early October, the CRTC notified Cortes Island Radio that it now has 18 months to fulfill its broadcasting application.

At the time of writing, Gabriola Island Radio was still waiting for their verdict.

Islands' Bulletin Board

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OCCUPY from page 2

friendly demand, and it's also hard to figure out how to do it. But it is no less urgent for being difficult. Let's treat this beautiful movement as if it is most important thing in the world. Because it is. It really is.'

Another speaker, Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz said: 'Our financial markets have an important role to play. They're supposed to allocate capital, manage risks. But they misallocated capital, and they created risk. We are bearing the cost of their misdeeds. There's a system where we've socialized losses and privatized gains. That's not capitalism; that's not a market economy. That's a distorted economy, and if we continue with that, we won't succeed in growing, and we won't succeed in creating a just society.'

And Harvard Law School Professor Lawrence Lessig comments: 'The arrest of hundreds of tired and unwashed kids, denied the freedom of a bullhorn, and the right to protest on public streets, may well be the first real green-shoots of this, the American spring. And if nurtured right, it could well begin real change.'

The Media and the Politicians

For the first week or so of the occupation, there was virtually no media coverage. It appeared that an apparent camp-out in a New York City park provided no 'hooks' for a reluctant media to report on. There were no clear demands, no obvious leaders. The *Guardian* and the *New York Times* were first to pick up the story, but it took the abortive march over the Brooklyn

Bridge to attract any attention. Even then, media were cautious and dismissive. At first, politicians reacted with similar caution.

President Obama said, 'I think it expresses the frustrations the American people feel, that we had the biggest financial crisis since the Great Depression, huge collateral damage all throughout the country...and yet you're still seeing some of the same folks who acted irresponsibly trying to fight efforts to crack down on the abusive practices that got us into this in the first place...'

Rahm Emanuel, formerly Chief of Staff to President Obama and now Mayor of Chicago, clearly identified the Occupy message as one of frustration with the US political system, and warned his fellow politicians that they had better take notice.

But then there was Herman Cain, candidate for the Republican presidential nomination: 'To protest Wall Street and the bankers is basically saying you're anti-capitalism.'

And New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg accused the protestors of attempting to 'take the jobs away from people working in this city', a remark explained by *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman (another Nobel Prize-winning economist): '...wealthy Americans who benefit hugely from a system rigged in their favor react with hysteria to anyone who points out just how rigged the system is.'

A Movement Unclassified

Occupy Wall Street is a new kind of political animal. It does not fit into the neat classifications which the media and politicians are accustomed to using to either pigeonhole or dismiss citizen

groups. Besides their opposition to the status quo, what do the protestors have in common? Naomi Klein said that what matters is courage, a moral compass and 'how we treat each other'.

The Occupy movement is not a left-wing version of the Tea Party. And the fear that has characterized US political dialogue since 9/11, and even before, is not apparent at Zuccotti Park. But Occupy Wall Street is now attracting significant political attention. Why?

- it appears to tap a deep well of discontent and frustration among Americans of all ages, education levels and occupations;
- it already demonstrated its ability to spread rapidly across the US, with groups in some 50 cities and in Canada so far Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Victoria;
- it will probably persist throughout, and possibly beyond, the 2012 Presidential and Congressional election campaign period;
- it speaks to fundamental issues of economic policy and government, and a wide range of grievances; its goals, not easily defined, question the financial/political axis of US and world power; and
- to quote Krugman again: 'Wall Street's Masters of the Universe realize, deep down, how morally indefensible their position is.'

The US is in trouble, Americans know it, and they have little faith in the ability of their government to rescue the nation. Maybe it's an appropriate time to start a revolution. ☞

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The Unique Islands Trust

The social and economic context for the origins of the Islands Trust in 1974 was somewhat like, and somewhat unlike, the present time.

It was a time of rapid development, a time of fear for the future of the islands, a time when the destruction of an islands paradise seemed all too real a possibility, like today. It was also a time, unlike today, when environmental concerns were something new in public discourse; a time before mass tourism and the consumption of rural land for conspicuous private pleasures had exploded. A time when the islands in the Salish Sea had no government institution mandated to protect them or to think about them holistically.

In the 1960s, pressures on rural lands in BC for suburban expansion and uses other than agriculture were mounting, particularly in the areas adjacent to the major urban centres. Outside urban centres, there were no rules for the subdivision of land: large forested acreages, farms, view sites and shorelines could be carved up into city-sized lots with no thought for the community or environmental implications—and they were.

The expansion of BCFerries' services, beginning in 1963, put



Photo: Terrill Welch

the Islands firmly into the path of metropolitan growth. Mudge Island, off Gabriola, was totally subdivided into 185 lots. Magic Lake Estates on North Pender became the largest subdivision in the newly-formed Capital Regional District with over 1,200 lots. Other subdivisions on Mayne and Salt Spring threatened their rural and largely undeveloped 'green' character. Equally alarming was a University of British Columbia study that predicted rapid, intensive private development on the islands.

In 1965, the BC government began to establish regional districts. However, no single district had an overview of, or responsibility for, the islands as such, and land speculation continued unabated. To buy time, the provincial government imposed the famous 10-acre freeze on the islands in 1969. A

Select Standing Committee of the Legislature was eventually established to investigate the situation and make proposals for the future.

What the committee proposed was radical and creative. It proposed an Islands Trust that would separate land-use planning from regional districts and coordinate development management on the major Gulf Islands under a special 'preserve and protect' mandate.

The *Islands Trust Act* was given final approval on June 5, 1974. It comprised 26 representatives elected from 13 islands (as today) but also three 'general trustees' appointed by government to represent the people of BC. The general trustees were given oversight authority, which sparked much criticism. Later, the general trustees were elected from among all trustees.

In July 1989, a new *Islands Trust Act* was passed that included a mandatory Trust Policy Statement, establishment of the Trust Fund Board, a Trust Council, an Executive Committee and Local Trust Committees to include the two locally-elected trustees plus one member of the Executive Committee.

The 'object' or mandate of the trust, as articulated in the current version of the *Act*, is to:

'...preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of BC.'

The need for the Islands Trust is as relevant today as it was in 1974. Even more so, given the extent of real estate development and speculation that prompted its formation. Surrounded by large and expanding urban centres in Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo and Seattle, the Gulf Islands are now at greater risk of disturbance and damage to the natural environment from land development and over-use by residents and visitors.

The *Islands Trust Act*, and the institution which it established, represents a promise made by the provincial government to Islanders and to the people of BC generally, that the islands would be protected for all time from over-development and inappropriate development. The initiative was astonishing for its courage, imagination and foresight. There are no other local or regional decision-making bodies like it elsewhere in Canada or, it appears, in North America. Whatever its flaws, it remains alone in our country as a government charged with stewardship of a particular environment and the preservation of a special, rural quality of life.

In the view of many, it is doing a remarkable job. With continued support and stronger authority, it can become a model for preserving and protecting the health and wellbeing of the earth on which we all depend.

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