

# Island <sup>Reprint</sup> Tides

Visit [www.islandtides.com](http://www.islandtides.com) for more interesting articles on other BC, national & international topics

Reprint from Volume 17 Number 21

November 3, 2005

## *Editorial: Living Up To Paradise*

As many of you have noticed (thanks for the accolades), this fall we have written a number of articles about the Islands Trust and governance in the run-up to this month's Local Government Elections.

Going back to the heart of the matter seemed important to us, as it obviously is to many people, the recent Roots Forum on Salt Spring demonstrated that.

There are so many newcomers to the Islands and often no-one has told them how special this place is politically. Even if we have lived here for a long time we may take for granted this astonishing place which we call home. Of course we can all see how special it is physically—how could one miss it? But this specialness is backed by a governance system without which, I am convinced, the Gulf Islands would not still look and function as they do.

These days we find ourselves in a spiral of development in which the bottom line is making money. Property prices have reached astronomic levels—the sort that create dollars signs in almost everybody's eyes. This has a destabilizing effect on our communities.

But let us not forget that on the Islands there are other fundamentals which create the things we all treasure: the natural world, helping each other, raising families in a humanistic way, having the peace of mind to pursue our passions, participating in island projects, participating in island governance, and being able to 'step back in time' while keeping all our mod cons. Let us simply be thankful for our monetary good fortune, not be transfixed by it, and take pleasure in our other multiple bottom lines. We must endeavour to ensure that this matrix in which we live will continue to allow the

fundamentals of our time-honoured island way-of-life.

Let us be glad we are as we are. Let's look for half-full rather than half-empty (myself, I would say our cup runneth over). Let's not import the values of other places until we have thoroughly examined them for merit and how they will enable us to preserve all that we already have.

Our governance is inspiring. We have such power to effect community good. We have a Trust that gives us the go-ahead to keep all the good things we have. Between the thirteen Trust Area Islands we have an infrastructure for dialogue and critical mass that makes governments sit up and take notice. In the south we are backed by a national park reserve. Our regional district directors have a lot of power; they often represent relatively few constituents on powerful boards of directors. How lucky we are to have such a voice—but only if we use it.

This requires some effort from us to participate in community, to identify and rise above petty concerns, to have forbearance, to examine the other person's point of view, to think deeply about actions and consequences, to imagine into the future, sometimes to make hard decisions.

We often fail to use the gifts we have been given to full effect. Let us do so; we can always go for a walk on the beach after the tiring work of participating and paying attention.

The next in our series on the fundamentals is Patrick Brown's article on the precautionary principle (page 3). It seems to me that the precautionary principle manifests on the Islands as one aspect of the 'Slow Islands Movement'—slow change. (Another aspect is simply enjoying slowness). Enjoy a good read! CG-W ☺

© Island Tides Publishing Ltd. This article may be reproduced with the following attribution, in its entirety, and notification to Island Tides Publishing Ltd.

*'This article was published (November 3 2005) in 'Island Tides', an independent, regional newspaper distributing across the Southern Strait of Georgia from Tsawwassen to Victoria to Nanaimo.'*

Island Tides, Box 55, Pender Island, BC, Canada. Phone: 250-629-3660. Fax: 250-629-3838.  
Email: [islandtides@islandtides.com](mailto:islandtides@islandtides.com). Website: <http://www.islandtides.com>