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Gulf Islands' **Island Tides** A 'Snapshot' of the Southern Gulf — Every Second Thursday

Volume 15 Number 2

Tsawwassen to Vancouver Island & On-line

Jan 30—Feb 12, 2003

**Attractions &
 Accommodation**
 Vancouver Island &
 The Gulf Islands, Page 8

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Photo: John Wiznuk

While the rest of Canada is in the deep freeze, the Gulf Islands blossom.

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GSX Hearing begins Feb 24

After several months' delay waiting for the completion of consultations with local First Nations, the National Energy Board/ Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency hearings on the proposed Georgia Strait Crossing (GSX) gas pipeline are to resume on Monday, February 24th, 2003 at 10am. The Hearings will be held at the Mary Windspear Centre (Sanscha) on Beacon Avenue in Sidney.

The Panel acknowledges that consultation with the Sencot'en Alliance has not taken place, but this will not delay the hearing. However, the Panel says, 'The Panel advises Parties that it will ask to hear from the Applicant (GSX PL Ltd., owned by BC Hydro and Williams Pipelines), First Nations intervenors and the Crown about the status of consultations before the end of the oral portion of the proceeding. Further, the Panel advises that if it is not satisfied at the conclusion of the evidentiary phase of the hearing that meaningful consultations have been carried out, it does not intend to proceed to its final deliberations in respect of this application.'

Review Panel Will Give Greater Consideration to Alternatives

As a result of a motion brought last fall, the GSX Concerned Citizens Committee persuaded the Joint Review Panel that there was reasonable doubt about the legal validity of the Panel's reasons that it gave to justify refusing to order GSX PL Ltd. to respond to various questions on alternatives to GSX and greenhouse gas emissions assessments associated with GSX.

The Panel no longer claims it would be constitutionally 'inappropriate' to look at energy alternatives, i.e. it would not constitute an unjustifiable infringement of provincial jurisdiction.

The Panel will now consider the existing sub-sea cables under the NEB Act and under the CEA Act. It will accept evidence on coalbed methane or other gas resources that might compete with GSX. It will also consider further information on the environmental effects of emissions

Whale-watching regs consultation on Saturna, Feb 8 ~ Susie Washington-Smyth

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is proposing to amend the existing Marine Mammal Regulations (MMR) in order to better protect marine mammals. As part of the regulatory amendment process, the Department is conducting a consultation to receive public input.

DFO has consulted the ferry schedule and set a Saturday meeting on Saturna to enable Southern Gulf Island residents from the Penders, Mayne and Galiano to participate.

Dr. David Bain, a whale researcher from the University of Washington, who is a specialist in acoustic impacts on the southern resident population of orcas, also has extensive documentation on the effects of whale-watching and other activities on the resident population. He is planning to attend the meeting on Saturna to present his recommendations on how to reduce impacts on marine mammals.

Why Amend the MMR?

Marine mammal viewing is an increasingly popular activity. In the Southern Gulf Islands, with the sheer numbers of well-meaning enthusiasts and commercial whale-watching boats, it is possible that marine mammals are disturbed by keeping them away from their preferred habitats or interfering with their important normal daily activities such as nursing and feeding.

The existing Marine Mammal Regulations prohibit the disturbance of marine mammals (whales, seals and sea otters). However, they are considered too general and they do not inform the public about unacceptable actions. In addition any infractions of the existing regulations cannot be enforced.

In the short term, DFO and US agencies

have developed international guidelines for watching whales, dolphins and porpoises. These were designed for the commercial whale-watching industry, and compliance with the Marine Mammal Monitoring Guidelines has had some success.

Our Whales Endangered

In November 2001, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) designated that the southern resident population of orcas as 'Endangered.' Several associated killer whale populations have been listed as 'Threatened.' A recovery plan for the Southern Residents has yet to be developed although many factors contributing to the decline have been identified.

DFO invited Dr. Jon Lien, a whale researcher from Memorial University in Newfoundland, to prepare a report that reviews the effects of whale-watching activities on the important normal activities of marine mammals. View Dr. Lien's report at www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/259973.pdf

GSX Effects

The proposed Georgia Strait Crossing Pipeline (GSX-PL) hearing is scheduled to begin on February 24 (see article this page.). The GSX Marine Coalition (Saturna Community Club, Pender Islands Conservancy Association, Salt Spring Island Conservancy, Saanich Inlet Protection Society, Georgia Strait Alliance and Canadian Parks and Wilderness Association, BC Chapter) has filed evidence demonstrating that noise from the pipeline during construction and during operation will have significant negative effects on marine mammals in the Boundary Pass area. /

Special Report on BC Ferries Restructuring (with commentary) ~ Patrick Brown

Full Speed Ahead, and Damn the Accountability!

BC Ferries' new organizational structure is designed so that the provincial government can maintain control of the ferry service while avoiding responsibility for it.

The structure, described in the Year End Edition of *Island Tides*, would replace the present Crown Corporation with 'BC Ferries Services,' a private corporation owned by the provincial government, and whose voting shares would be held by a BC Ferries Authority (said to be patterned after the Vancouver Airport Authority). The provincial government would own the terminals directly, and lease them to BCFS.

BCFS would operate the ferry services and the terminals under a sixty-year contract with the provincial government, and would receive an annual 'service fee' (subsidy) from the provincial government. The contract would be supervised by an as yet undefined regulatory body, who would ensure that services were maintained, police the contract, and represent the public interest.

The new organization, which starts on April Fool's Day, will seem logical only to people who understand the byzantine Tsawwassen-Gulf Islands fare structure. In contrast, the previous organization seems simply elegant.

Debt Structure Lessons from Enron

The major objective of establishing a private company appears to be shifting the burden of financing an anticipated \$2 billion in capital costs for new ships and terminal construction away from the provincial government. To quote the government, 'the Authority structure protects BC taxpayers from further financial risk and debt burden.'

This structure bears a similarity to the one used by Enron to remove debt from its books. In the end, however, the government, like Enron, is responsible for the debt because it owns BCFS, is its financial backer, and appoints its Directors.

FERRIES, please turn to page 2

GSX, please turn to page 7

Ferries Report from page 1

But BCFS will no longer be able to rely on a formal government guarantee for its debt, and will thus pay an effective interest rate of at least one percent more than it would were its debt guaranteed—as it was under the previous Crown Corporation.

As a private company, however, BCFS might well have greater flexibility in developing innovative financing arrangements, including capital leases, financial partnerships, and the full and fascinating range of debt and investment instruments (income trusts?) available to Canadian private companies—in fact anything but shares.

The existing assets of the Corporation, formerly owned by the Corporation, will be represented by the value of 75,000 preferred, non-voting shares, along with an unspecified amount of interest-bearing debt, all now owned by the government. (*Why 75,000 is not explained.*)

The Previous Financial Structure

The government has made much of 'removing political interference' from the operations of BC Ferries. 'More than \$1 billion of taxpayers' money has been wasted in the past decade alone, including \$454 million for fast ferries,' they say. *The other half billion was, of course, subsidies for operations; ferry users might not have said it was wasted.*

For several years in the '90s, the government did not fund adequate subsidies, and so BC Ferries borrowed the difference each year. This is what led to the last financial crisis for BC Ferries. The previous financial restructuring was the result of extensive professional analysis by ferry stakeholder volunteers. It transferred the accumulated debt (including the fast ferry

costs) to the government, and committed the government to a designated fixed percentage of the provincial motor fuel tax receipts as a continuing subsidy (currently about \$75 million per year).

This provided a fresh financial start to the Corporation, along with a guaranteed, and reasonably predictable, subsidy. The subsidy was justified by recognition that the ferries are an integral and essential part of the provincial highway system.

The Latest Financial Structure

The new structure appears to have abandoned that commitment in favour of a quasi-private sector model: another kind of 'fresh financial start.'

The new company, BCFS, will be bound to carry out the terms of a 'Service Contract' with the government, under which the government will pay BCFS an 'annual service fee' or subsidy, which will be determined each year as part of the provincial budgeting process. No more designated percentage of the motor fuel tax; the subsidy will be set each year by cabinet at a level to 'require productivity gains.' So much for independence from government.

So far, there is no financial plan. May we presume that there will be one before the legislation is passed this spring? Ferry users need to be assured that the government's plans are, in fact, realistic and that BCFS will have sufficient revenue to cover its expenses and carry its debt. (And, by the way, pay GST.)

Transparency: You Can See Right Through It

Mind you, the public may never know. As a private corporation, BCFS has no requirements for disclosure. Despite being owned by the government and thus the public, it is also apparently out of reach of the provincial auditor.

New financial arrangements, subcontracts, etc could be made with minimal public disclosure. It seems likely that BCFS would not be subject to Access to Information legislation, and with no publicly held shares, there would be no awkward shareholder enquiries at annual general meetings.

As a Crown Corporation, BC Ferries has never been exactly transparent, but it has published extensive financial and operating statements. The new structure, a closely held private company with no public voting shareholders, accomplishes a level of secrecy and obfuscation previously sought only by those with a deliberate intention to conceal.

This is a characteristic common to all privatizations of government operations. Transparency, and thus accountability, is sacrificed to 'commercial confidentiality.'

Who is Accountable for What?

Accountability for the service and financial performance of BCFS is assumed through the Service Contract with the government, the setting of the annual service fee, and the supervision of the contract by the 'independent Regulator.'

This terminology suggests that the Regulator is similar to the BC Utilities Commission, that on-again, off-again body which is supposed to regulate utility rates, taking into account the consumers and a 'reasonable' rate of return for the company.

The ferries Regulator has not been defined as to authority, responsibility, or membership. But it, too, is a creature of the provincial government.

Under the new structure, it is most difficult to see who exactly is responsible for what. BCFS is clearly accountable to the government, but how will it be accountable to its users? Under the previous stakeholder representation structure, there was at least a provision for regular contact and discussion on service levels, schedules, and fares. Under the new structure, will these items have to be the subject of legal interventions in formal hearings of the Regulator?

Fares Fixed, But May Vary

As a Crown Corporation, accountability for BC Ferries' performance in the past obviously belonged, ultimately, to the

provincial government. For many years, this meant that all major decisions (and many minor ones) on fares, routes, capital projects, etc. were cabinet decisions. While this reportedly resulted in lengthy cabinet meetings, it did at least provide a court of last resort for ferry services—one with political accountability.

Well, no more cabinet wrangles, except, of course, for determining the annual 'service fee.' The government has already set caps on ferry fare increases for the next five years, and presumably will continue to do so. It has also set different increase levels for the main routes as opposed to all the others. This is, says the minister, 'aimed at phasing out the historical problem of cross-subsidization.'

We would remind the minister that her 'historical problem' is the basic financial principle of an integrated service. The reason that increases on the main routes have to be limited is just plain old customer resistance to higher fares. On the minor routes, the customers don't have the choice.

Note that the caps are on the 'average' fare. This would presumably allow BCFS itself to set the actual fares to be charged for overheights, peaks, weekends, low season, commercial, non-commercial, and commuter fares, provided that the 'average' increase meets the targets set by the government.

Finance Minister Collins said in December that fare increases 'will benefit commercial users.' Of course, if fares for commercial users rise at less than the average, fares for non-commercial users may rise at more than the average. (*By the way, will we have to pay GST on fares?*)

The government has also assured ferry users of the continuation of the present level of service for a five year period. The Contract may be reopened, however, if demand falls too low, if the service fee or the fares increase too much, or if 'alternative access is provided' (*bridges? other ferries? swimming lessons?*).

Sort of Privatization

The Board of the Authority will consist of four Directors representing coastal communities, two representing the

government, one representing unionized BCFS workers, and two appointed by the Authority itself from the 'community at large.' It would appear to be accountable to no one, until one considers who will appoint the Directors. It looks as if the Board of the Authority will also act as the Board of BCFS (who will, of course, be accountable to the Board of the Authority), and will presumably appoint the executives of BCFS (the latest CEO of BC Ferries, Bob Lingwood, departed recently, and no replacement is in sight).

Technically, the Authority holds all 100 of the common voting shares of BCFS. The provincial government's 75,000 shares are not votable, but current BCFC board chair David Emerson indicated in December that they become votable if the Board is

considering an offer to purchase BCFS.

At present, however, this seems unlikely. What is more likely is that other private corporations may attempt to compete with BCFS on its more profitable routes. The provincial government has retained ownership of the ferry terminals, and will lease them to BC Ferries. This would presumably make it possible for private competitors to contract to use the terminals.

The provincial government says that the new regime 'will allow new service providers to offer competitive services, where appropriate and approved by BCFS.'

Huh? If BCFS was already providing an adequate service, why would it approve the entry of a competitor? Would a competitor also get a Service Contract (subsidy) from the government? How would BCFS charge a competitor for use of a terminal?

Terminals for Shopaholics

Speaking of terminals, it is here that the government sees new opportunities for making money. But Transportation Minister Judith Reid seems to have overlooked the fact that the expansion of the Vancouver Airport into a deluxe shopping centre was financed by a 'temporary' \$10 tax on each passenger. Does she envision a similar charge for ferry passengers?

After you've paid the fare for vehicle, father, mother, and two kids to travel from Swartz Bay to Tsawwassen, are you really going to spend enough money while you are waiting for the ferry to justify a merchant staffing a store or restaurant for two complete shifts year round?

In fact, the terminals are empty for half the time. It's more likely that terminals will only attract fast food, seasonal crafts, and similar operations—as they do now. Of course, if you are going to sell booze or run a casino, that's another thing.

Understanding it All

It's difficult to interpret the language used by the government to describe these new arrangements. There are few details. This may represent their inability to communicate simple concepts, an intention to hide structures that might attract public criticism, or simply confusion and indecision as to how this will all work. /

Island Tides

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY

Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.	Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.		
28	0355	10.5	3.2	5	0045	3.3	1.0		
	TU	0715	9.8		3.0	WE	0820	11.2	3.4
	MA	1145	10.8		3.3	WE	1435	6.9	2.1
		2005	1.3		0.4	ME	1905	8.2	2.5
29	0445	11.2	3.4	6	0120	4.6	1.4		
	WE	0855	10.2		3.1	TH	0840	10.8	3.3
		1235	10.8		3.3	TH	1520	6.2	1.9
		2050	1.0		0.3	JE	2020	7.9	2.4
30	0525	11.5	3.5	7	0150	5.6	1.7		
	TH	1005	9.8		3.0	FR	0955	10.8	3.3
	TH	1330	10.5		3.2	FR	1605	5.6	1.7
	JE	2135	1.0		0.3	VE	2205	7.9	2.4
31	0600	11.5	3.5	8	0220	6.9	2.1		
	FR	1055	9.8		3.0	SA	0915	10.5	3.2
	FR	1425	10.5		3.2	SA	1645	4.9	1.5
	VE	2220	1.0		0.3	SA			
1	0635	11.5	3.5	9	0025	8.2	2.5		
	SA	1135	9.2		2.8	SU	0250	7.9	2.4
	SA	1520	10.2		3.1	SU	0930	10.2	3.1
	SA	2300	1.3		0.4	DI	1730	4.3	1.3
2	0705	11.5	3.5	10	0950	10.2	3.1		
	SU	1220	8.9		2.7	MO	1820	3.6	1.1
	SU	1620	9.8		3.0	LU			
	DI	2335	1.6		0.5				
3	0735	11.5	3.5	11	0350	9.8	3.0		
	MO	1305	8.2		2.5	TU	0600	9.5	2.9
	MO	1505	9.5		2.9	TU	1015	9.8	3.0
	LU	1705	9.5		2.9	MA	1905	3.0	0.9
4	0010	2.3	0.7	12	0420	10.2	3.1		
	TU	0800	11.2		3.4	WE	0845	9.8	3.0
	TU	1350	7.5		2.3	WE	1050	9.8	3.0
	MA	1800	8.9		2.7	ME	1950	2.3	0.7

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January, and I hear birds in the early morning—sounds promising to me! Another sound that brings me delight and relief is that the creek that flows beside our home is flowing, rattling noisily along. Around here, we are low on water by all the indicators of every other year that I have lived here.

Snowdrops are up and flowering and stripey crocus leaves are forming clumps. Jacques Campbell had a surprise, three sets of healthy lamb twins. Something about a group of sheep getting out and a ram—only a very short time were they together!

The Christmas season unfolded with goodness and celebration. The Candlelight Dinner was scrumptious and festive, the kids were wonderfully entertaining at the Christmas Concert and Santa came! We had a Christmas Eve service at Saint Christopher's and the New Year was celebrated in fine form with a big community dance at the Community Hall. Saturna is a lively place to spend the holiday season!

John Money Roasted

Cunliffe Barnett, Rick Tipple, Don Piper and Ilio Bertolami organized a 'Roast' on January 11 in honour of John Money who served for 18 years a Saturna Trustee. Many people, including all of John's children, came to share praise for John as a Saturna Islander and neighbour. John admitted he had plenty of apprehension about such an occasion as a roast, but he rose to the occasion.

Susie Washington Smyth gave John a beautiful felt hat to honour his sometimes overlooked and not readily apparent green outlook on the environment and dubbed him the Jolly Green Giant. John Gaines, who grew up with John, commended his great aim and solid throwing arm that tended to level the age difference between him and rest of the gang. Darrell Jones commended John for leaving his mark in life, especially on the tree trunks where he is backhoeing a site. Margaret Fry had a hilarious, pithy, well-delivered commentary on John leading her son astray when he went over to the Money's to stay for the weekend. Long time neighbour, Auntie Lil Cunningham spoke to his generosity as a neighbour. Dian Johnstone divulged remarkable personal facts about John that only his own community would appreciate knowing! Daughter Desiree Money made a speech at the end commending her father for the values she feels he lives by and has shared with his children. John credits his family for his inspiration and backbone

Concert

The Saturna Arts and Concert Society presented their second concert of the season, the Joe Sealy Duo. Joe Sealy played great jazz on the just tuned piano with Paul Novotny accompanying him on the bass. Both played with no written music for the almost 2 hour concert. Two or three of the songs were introduced as works in progress and Joe Sealy shared where and why he had written several of the compositions as did Mr. Novotny for his. To me, this gave added meaning to the terms 'live music' and 'improvisational.' The two musicians played marvelously together. The pieces

were all jazz and were different one from another. It was easy to pick out your favourites. It was a good evening. Jazz is not my favourite music but I was well entertained and learned a lot. Thanks also to the BC Arts Council.

Poetry Book Launch

Long-time, intermittent Islander, Ellen McGinn had a book launch and book signing of her new book of poetry, *Up Dark Horse Road* on January 24. The Café was standing room only—Ellen has read her poetry at the last few Talent Show evenings to great appreciation.

Ellen writes about the common things in life, with common words. The twist, the fun part of her poetry, is the juxtaposition of images and the roll and ebb of her phrases. It is enlivening to see the common world in unusual ways and always curious to see your own particular and familiar part of the world appear in a work of art. Islander Karen Muntean did the handsome cover of this, Ellen's first, book of poetry. It was the Café's first book launch! Congratulations, Ellen.

APC Meeting

The Advisory Planning Commission met on January 27. Sitting on the new Commission will be John Money, Harvey Janszen, Karen Muntean, Don Piper, Val McMillian, Louise Perimaki and Jon Guy. One of the first topics of discussion was Community Amenity Density Reserve policy.

Lyll Creek Park Purchase Successful!

The Saturna Parks and Recreation Commission would like to thank everyone who supported the purchase of Lot #3 on Lyll Creek. The purchase has gone through and the Close family will be leaving at the end of January. We would like to thank the Closes and their real estate agent for their tolerance and patience while the Commission went through the bureaucratic channels in order to make the purchase and giving us time to raise some money within the Community. The people of Saturna now have an enchanting park.

In the next month or so the Commission members will be familiarizing themselves with the property and the house on the property.

Helping Winter Along

Other Parks & Rec activities include a new series of Paul White's jazz lectures (first one, 'The Jazz Singers,' is on February 21), a lecture on solitary and pollinating bees (in March) with Gord Hutchinson, wood turning with Al Farrow (limit of 6 people) and a hike with Ishbel Elliot on the last weekend in February. Gord Kristjanson will be starting a spring music program for the children, (the fall program was very successful).

Jane Dixon-Warren coordinates the lectures and talks for the Commission and is always looking for new ideas. If you have skills or knowledge to share or know someone who does, please give Jane a call. /

Chan's new play opens in Nanaimo

Marty Chan, author of a new Canadian play that opens at the Port Theatre on February 19, is no stranger to anyone who has taken courses with the Victoria School of Writing, where he teaches screenwriting.

Chan's play *Best Left Buried* is about the aftermath of a fire in the 1960s which burned Nanaimo's Chinatown to the ground. Following the fire, a seventy-year old Chinese bachelor and an angry miner's son clash over what they discover in the ashes. These men will go to any lengths to conceal their secret, leaving the audience guessing about the outcome right up to the curtain.

People of Chinese ancestry and culture have been a vibrant part of Vancouver Island culture for more than a century. *Best Left Buried*, part fiction and part history, is a thought-provoking exploration of tensions between the Chinese community and the European mainstream during the sixties. (For more info on the showtimes see advertisement on page 8). /



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MAYNE ISLAND Minute Taker Required

The Islands Trust is seeking an additional Minute Taker for the Mayne Island Local Trust Committee. The successful candidate would preferably be a resident of the island and will be responsible for taking minutes at Local Trust Committee meetings, public information meetings and public hearings. Duties also include posting and delivery of public hearing notices.

Applicants should be able to either scribe short-hand, speed-write or type a minimum of 60 w.p.m.; have access to and have good working knowledge of IBM computers and Microsoft Word 97; you must have good verbal and written communication skills.

The hourly rate is: \$16.02. Please contact Kathy Jones or the Islands Trust office at (250) 405-5163 for further information. A copy of your resume should be faxed to (250) 405-5155 (Attention: Kathy Jones, Planning Clerk), by **Friday, February 14, 2003**



GALIANO ISLAND LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE

Visit our web site at: www.islandstrust.bc.ca

E-mail: linda.adams@islandstrust.bc.ca (Trust Area Programs/Marine Stewardship Site Initiative)

NATIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION AREA PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

The Galiano Island Marine Stewardship Advisory Committee is sponsoring a public information meeting about Parks Canada's proposed National Marine Conservation Area for the Strait of Georgia. The meeting will be held:

DATE: **Tuesday, February 4, 2003**
TIME: **7:00 – 10:00 p.m.**
LOCATION: **South Galiano Hall**

Bill Henwood of Parks Canada will make a presentation about the proposed Conservation Area and will be available to answer questions from the audience.

All members of the public are invited to attend.

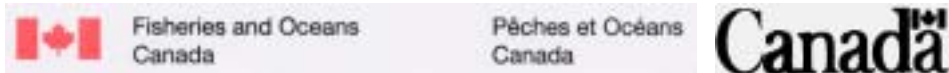
THE MARINE MAMMAL PROGRAM AT FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA

is consulting the public, First Nations, and industry groups on proposed amendments to the Marine Mammal Viewing Regulations. Members of the community are invited to a meeting to discuss Marine Mammal Regulations and their views on the proposed amendments.

Saturna Island
Saturna Community Hall
Saturday, February 8, 2003
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Contact: Ed Lochbaum
Marine Mammal Program
Phone: 250-756-7288

Residents of the Gulf Islands are welcome to attend and share their input. Information on the proposed amendments and the community meetings can be found on our Consultations web site at: <http://www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/consultations/marinemammals/default.htm> or call the representative listed above.



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War—An Unnecessary Evil ~ Peter Carter

President Bush of the United States has made it aggressively clear that the US armed forces will invade Iraq whatever the UN findings and decision may be. Published reports indicate that President Bush plans to order an invasion of Iraq in mid-February. Russia has said this month that the US plan is to invade Iraq in mid-February. John McCallum, Canada's Defense Minister, told a recent meeting in his constituency that the US was planning to attack Iraq in February or March. The Pentagon has said that by mid-February the US will have 150,000 troops in place. The United Kingdom's government has already sent one quarter of its army to the region. Australia has troops on the way. Canada has a naval group in the region.

This is the situation:

- Because France and Germany are opposing a war, NATO will not approve of an invasion.
- None of the nations neighbouring Iraq, except Israel, want an invasion. Led by Turkey, these countries are planning to convene a conference to avoid war. A statement by all of Iraq's Arab neighbours this week warns of chaos in the entire region caused by refugees and post war stresses.
- The UN inspectors have found no evidence that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction. The inspectors are asking for an extension to continue their inspections.
- Iraq has never invaded the US and does not have the capability to assault the territorial integrity of the US. (In addition, there is no evidence of Iraq's involvement in the '9-11' terrorist act on the US.)
- The UN security council does not have the support from enough member nations to recommend an invasion. The ramifications of undermining the UN would be an escalation of lawlessness within and among nations, including increased terrorism.

Invasion Would be Illegal and Would Constitute a Crime against Humanity

- Such an invasion as planned by the US would be in contravention of international law under the UN Charter and UN resolution 1441.
- The high altitude bombing used by the US in recent wars is a strategy that inevitably incurs considerable loss of civilian life, termed 'collateral damage' by the Pentagon. Killing of noncombatants is a breach of the Geneva Convention.

• Depleted Uranium (DU) shells are now a routine weapon used by the US military, incurring civilian deaths long after a war. When DU-tipped shells explode, the pyrophoric DU burns and produces tiny radioactive, highly-carcinogenic particles of less than 5 microns. As well as being inhaled into the lungs these particles get blown tens of miles and can contaminate water, soil and even food. Depleted uranium in the soil has a half life of 4.5 billion years. It transforms land into a radioactive desert—a permanent source of disease and death.

• The use of depleted uranium munitions (already used in the last war Gulf War) is a breach of the Geneva Convention, which stipulates that theatres of war are not to be left contaminated after the conflict has ceased.

• Bush has announced that he does not rule out a full-scale nuclear weapons first strike against any nation he deems to be a threat to the US. The US maintains an arsenal of 10,600 nuclear warheads and bombs and a nuclear weapons program that costs \$35 billion a year.

War On Children

• A UN report of December 2002 predicted that a US-Iraq war could leave 500,000 casualties, create 900,000 refugees and displace 2 million people from their homes.

• 50% of Iraq's current population are under 20 years of age.
 • As confirmed by several medical teams who have visited Iraq since the 1991 war, the incidence of childhood cancer in Basrah has gone up 6 to 12 times. Because of the UN sanctions against Iraq, there is no treatment available for these children. The incidence of genetic malformations has doubled.

• Iraq's public health is in a state of crisis due to years of sanctions following the 1991 war. Under the influence of the US and the UK representation on the UN sanctions committee, the death rate of children in Iraq has doubled.

Even with conservative assumptions, the total of excess deaths in the population under the age of five exceeds 400,000 since the 1991 war.

Let Bush Know

President Bush wants to know how people feel about his war. You can email him at President@whitehouse.gov. He has also opened an opinion line, so you can phone 1-202-456-1111 from 9am-5pm Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. A machine will detain you for only a moment and then a pleasant live operator will thank you for saying 'I oppose' or 'I approve.' ✍

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Readers' Letters

Cummins Spot On

Dear Editor:

I travel back and forth to Vancouver for my art and always enjoy your paper. The recent article by Patrick Cummins on Iraq, *Oil-backdrop to the looming war* was particularly good. I have been to Iraq three times now in the past few years. I have attended many public lectures on the subject by people from the United Nations, UNICEF, and various organizations who have done independent surveys on the ground in Iraq and Mr. Cummins article included most of the important issues.

The one thing I would like to add is that international law has to be respected by everyone. It can't be ignored simply because other countries do not respect these rules. Otherwise we have anarchy. I don't think any of us want that for our children.

The international community should be the ones to decide if a change in leadership is necessary in another country. It should not be bulldozed through by one or two countries with special interests in developing the rich oil fields for themselves.

PS: I have been to Iraq several times as I mentioned. The first time was in 1999. I went with a humanitarian group taking medical supplies to the hospitals in Baghdad. The second time was in the spring of this year. I was invited by the minister of culture in Iraq to take some of my paintings to an international art fair in Baghdad, (Art for Mankind 2002).

The third time was this fall 2002. The Iraqi art community agreed to cast my 24ft bronze sculpture for my 'Peace Sanctuary' in British Columbia. It consists of three pieces. The total shapes represent the family. It will weigh over ten tons and will be shipped back to Canada when it is finished. (Two more months approx.).

The National Film Board of Canada is completing a documentary on my peace project and it is entitled *Baghdad to Peace Country*. It will be screened this February I'm told.

For more information on my work in Iraq, please take a look at my web site. coastnet.com/dhouston/

Deryk Houston, Victoria

Setting Her Straight

The following letter was sent to the 'National Post' by the Islands Trust on December 23 in response to an article written by Elizabeth Nickson of Salt Spring Island that was published in the 'National Post' on November 30, 2002

Dear Editor (National Post):

My colleagues on the Islands Trust Council, who are the locally elected land use officials for all of BC's southern coastal islands, have asked me to write in response to the November 30 article by Elizabeth Nickson about Galiano Island. We are concerned that unfair allegations, inconsistencies and errors in the article leave your readers with inaccurate impressions of the Galiano Island community and the actions of its elected public officials.

Ms Nickson seems determined to make the case that the situation on Galiano is part of a continental pattern whereby 'environmentalists' are conspiring to reconfigure traditional 'country life.' In her attempt to make Galiano fit this theory, she ignores facts, takes statements out of context and gets the situation almost exactly backwards. In the case of Galiano Island, here are the significant points that we believe deserve correction:

Residents and property owners on Galiano Island elect local citizens to serve on the Local Trust Committee to make land use decisions on their behalf and to develop their community's regulatory bylaws. These decisions are not made by the Islands Trust Council, the Sierra Legal Defense Fund or any other unelected body. Galiano Islanders have upheld the underlying principles of their land use bylaws at the polling station for the past three local elections, most recently on November 16, 2002. While it may fit Ms Nickson's theory to imply that outside environmentalists have somehow taken the process away from the island's rural residents, it is simply wrong.

Ms Nickson quotes others who say that Galiano Island is somehow unique by not permitting residential use on all lands. However, a review of zoning bylaws in almost any jurisdiction in Canada will show parcels of commercial and industrial land that are not zoned for residential use. Those who purchased forestry land on Galiano Island bought raw land that MacMillan Bloedel had held for years as a commercial tree farm, rather than for residential settlement. In fact, the initial

purchasers were required to sign releases stating that they were aware of this. While some who later purchased this land may have made other assumptions or hoped for a change, no residential 'rights' were 'taken' from these purchasers.

Contrary to Ms Nickson's article, Galiano Islanders have supported land use decisions that they believe will protect their island's forestry resource, while sustaining the social, environmental and economic values of the local community. The right of Galiano Islanders to make their own land use decisions is fundamental to BC law and consistent with provincial land use legislation across Canada. In fact, the highest court in British Columbia has upheld the bylaws that Galiano Islanders have developed to achieve their goals.

Through their Local Trust Committee, Galiano Islanders have also worked to accommodate residential use on forestland. They have developed several rezoning options for forest lot owners who wish to pursue such changes. However, the community must also provide for orderly development of their entire island. This has been particularly difficult for a small rural community with a large area of traditional forestry land and no residential infrastructure. To address these needs, the Galiano Island community uses the land use planning tools that are consistent with those in place in local communities throughout Canada.

Like most of the islands off BC's southern coast, Galiano Island has experienced intense pressure for human settlement in its natural areas and resource lands. In 1974, British Columbia recognized these pressures and created the Islands Trust. It is a federation of autonomous local governments with a provincial mandate to preserve and protect BC's coastal islands not only for residents but also for the entire province. It focuses on both the natural environment and on the unique amenities of the islands including their traditional lifestyles and livelihoods.

We believe that all who have been involved in land use issues on Galiano Island agree that these have been difficult; we also hold that there may now be an opportunity to streamline processes and to accommodate other points of view in the community. The island's newly elected representatives have indicated they wish to find solutions that will address these

LETTERS continued next column

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Overheard at the Coffee Counter ~ Peter Easthope

Pender Islanders' next community debate is about a proposed 36-unit housing development on 15 acres next door to the shopping mall.

Eavesdropping revealed the following debate-opener...

Reggie Resident: I am 72. When the first batch of these Driftwood Village housing units is available I should sell the cottage in Magic Lake and buy there. I've heard the price will be discounted 5% for seniors.

Olive Octogenarian: Being near the Driftwood will be handy if you give up the car. Would you want the 'seniors' housing designation' registered on the title?

Reggie: Seniors' housing designation? What is that?

Olive: If you get the 5% discount on the price, a designation will be registered on the land title. That might not be so good if you or your children eventually want to sell the property.

Reggie: Really!? Well the seniors discount might not be good for me but 'seniors housing' certainly is! With the units close together, I don't want to be listening to youngsters parties every weekend.

Olive: Seniors housing? Only some of the lots are restricted to seniors. You could find yourself between two noisy weekenders.

Reggie: Hmm... Did you see the concept drawing? What



do you think of the overall layout?

Olive: The density is high compared to the rest of the island. It doesn't fit with the OCP in my opinion.

Reggie: Maybe not, but why is that so important?

Olive: What is the point of having an OCP if the bylaws don't abide by it? Will trustees be deciding on a density for every and every multi-residence property?

Reggie: Well, I've never read the OCP and don't own a large parcel so it doesn't really matter to me.

Olive: Another aspect that bothers me is the 'density transfer' idea. There's no plan to buy and preserve an undeveloped property in exchange for this high density development. The 'density transfer' here I would just call a rezoning.

Reggie: Isn't there an offer of a right-of-way to access the public land to the west of the Driftwood Centre? That will be a real boon ten years from now when the National Park attracts flocks of visitors.

Olive: But, Reggie, the Ministry of Highways already has a right-of-way on the other side of the Driftwood Centre. The Parks Commission is already

working on its development. If you bought in the Village would you want a second public access threading through the development?

LETTERS from previous column

concerns, while upholding the community's broader goals. We support the community in these efforts and believe they are best assisted by accurate reporting, rather than by the half-truths, unsupported allegations and outright misinformation contained in Ms. Nickson's article.

David Essig, Chair, Islands Trust Council

Dear Editor:

Elizabeth Nickson ('No Man's Land' in the *National Post*, November 30, 2002) claims to uncover the dark side of the Gulf Islands. She points to Galiano Island, most especially, to expose the triumph of collective rights over the rights of individual property owners.

Chairperson David Essig (letter, December 23, 2002) most eloquently and accurately sets Ms. Nickson straight on the facts.

As Essig explains, the distinctive Object of the Islands Trust requires local communities to preserve and protect for the benefit of residents and the people of British Columbia. No question, it's a weighty responsibility for islanders to look out for the collective provincial interest. But precedent-setting court decisions have made it clear that there's still plenty of room for the healthy exercise of private property rights.

Everyone who lived on Galiano thirty years ago played a part in adopting our Official Community Plan. The Preamble cautions: 'As the present generation inherited these islands in a relatively preserved state so this Plan attempts to perpetuate this state and preserve the unique environment for future generations.' The OCP seeks to benefit those who will come after us.

For those arriving on Galiano more recently, the OCP and the Islands Trust Act have been the law. The choice has been obvious: do I buy into the preserve and protect ethic, or do I go elsewhere to avoid the Islands Trust 'burden'?

Coming to live on an island in the Islands Trust Area is a serious decision. Even so, thousands of islanders have happily chosen this special duty, grateful for their conservation-minded predecessors and conscious of what they owe to the generations who may expect to enjoy this fragile place in the future.

As for Elizabeth Nickson and her sympathizers? Where some people may be deterred by her 'dark side' of unambiguous collective rights, the bright flip-side of carrying out a public trust may inspire many more.

Carolyn Canfield, Galiano Island

Open Letter to Premier Campbell

Dear Premier Gordon Campbell:

Re: Your 'personal,' not 'public' indiscretion, and wanting our compassion!

On Friday afternoon my daughter and I were leaving Mount Washington and almost immediately heard your story on the news. Within minutes, on the same road, we encountered a

Counter Attack Road Block, always a welcome scene wherever there's a suspicion of drinking and driving. I recalled then what your government did within months of taking office: photo radar was cancelled and less money was available for Counter Attack thus making our roads less safe.

Our oldest daughter, by the way, is a 42 year old woman, once a very productive worker in our school system, working with teens at risk and the special needs kids, but she was diagnosed with MS last year and is now on Disability! Yes, Disability. Then I remembered the incredible stress your government has imposed on the disabled community in British Columbia with those diabolical new assessment forms, and the resultant fallout on the community. Just in case you or Mr. Coell aren't aware, stress plays havoc with the disabled, usually resulting in magnification of their symptoms. Stress, less money for everyday needs... we know one young single mom with MS who can't even afford vitamin supplements!

On BC Day, we had a 'Day of Mourning' on Salt Spring Island where the various groups who have been battered by your policies read their statements in our beautiful downtown park. The disabled community asked us to read their statement as they were extremely nervous about 'fallout' if they happened to be reported! Should this be happening in British Columbia?

This brought to mind the other painful policies your government has forced on British Columbians, seniors being shuffled from residence to residence (and the consequent deaths), teachers having to deal with the largest class sizes in many years, schools and hospitals being closed, the rural communities being decimated by cuts in almost every area.

On another personal level, our youngest daughter has worked in daycare for the last ten years, and almost full time! Since daycare subsidies have been cut there is only sporadic work for many workers, and the need for E.I. This should never have happened in an area where the need is so great. Women have taken the brunt of your unthinking, uncaring cuts, haven't they?

And now the latest news from the office of Scrooge and his

LETTERS, please turn to page 6

Reggie: Maybe not. Water supply is something I should know more about before investing. What do you know about that, Olive.

Olive: Nothing very definite. I am not aware of a pump test ever being done on a well in that area. With these dry summers and the increasing demand in that valley I wouldn't be sure of the water supply without better proof than I've seen.

Reggie: You're not giving me much encouragement, Olive! Salt Spring has similar developments. Aren't they a fair success?

Olive: In a sense. But keep in mind that you will be hearing vehicles and activity from morning to night. It will be more like Sydney and less like Pender Island. Is that really what you want?

Reggie: One factor that does appeal to me is that the development proposes to eliminate the Commercial (C2) zone in the property. At least that means there will never be tourist accommodations here.

Olive: Yes, that should help keep the neighbourhood a little more quiet for old-timers. Of course small business people see the tourists as spenders—the more the better.

Reggie: Olive, am I correct in assuming that you are against this development?

Olive: 'Fraid so, Reggie, but don't let me discourage you from buying there if it's given approval.

Reggie: Thanks, Olive—I'll give this some more thought.

On Thursday, January 30, 10 am at St Peter's Anglican Church Hall there will be a Local Trust Committee Meeting. At this meeting the decision as to whether to proceed with consideration of the development will be made (First Reading).

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Friday, February 21

Deadline for taking out membership in the Progressive Conservative Party to be able to vote for David Orchard as party leader on March 8 at Saanich Fairgrounds • Membership \$10 • Signing up is very simple with a free call to David Orchard's campaign headquarters 1-877-WE STAND • IN SAANICH—GULF ISLANDS RIDING

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friends... it's sad enough to be on welfare these days, but now they've been hit with a double whammy. If they happen to have worked hard enough over the years and now own a home, your caring government plans to put a lien on their property after six months of collecting welfare! Can you imagine what this will be doing to our resource-based communities who are already suffering? What a short-sighted move!

If as you say, you want to 'lead by example,' we want you to set an example by resigning. And while you're at it, would you please take your cabinet with you... we doubt any of them will experience an epiphany and become 'caring' individuals either. Gary Collins, one of the worst finance ministers in BC's history, Christy Clark, with her one-woman attack on our school system and the teachers, Murray Coell, once a social worker whose background isn't reflected in his brutal decisions.

But all of it goes right back to you... your cuts to taxes, and now no money for the simple things that make life special to people. Very few we know benefitted by your tax cuts, but most of the people we know have suffered in many different ways from your other cuts.

Compassion Premier? We think not! Please leave.

John and Rosemary Baxter, Salt Spring Is

Open Letter to Gary Lunn M.P.

Dear MP Lunn:
In your year-end 'report,'...you refer to Canada's Health Care system as 'aging' and 'overburdened.'

I find it interesting that just a few years ago, our system was held as an example, as something to emulate. Now, about a decade later, it is 'just not worth saving'?

If I had interests in a takeover of Canada's system, I might exercise my Considerable Influence to persuade politicians in the '51st State' to create 'a problem,' through shortfalls or fiscal restraint.

Then I would use the mainstream

television & print media, and individuals like yourself, to create a reaction, a 'something-must-be-done' sentiment among the people, countless stories about the human costs of the failing, aging, overburdened health care system. This would in turn open the door for the third step, 'the solution,' corporate privatization of Canada's health care system.

Then through NAFTA's chapter 11 (the Santa Clause), I would sue the Canadian Government and the public health care system for unfair competition, picking up billions in 'easy money' on the way to creating a 'leveled' playing field at Canadian taxpayers' expense. (Then, just like lower and middle class Americans, Canadians facing prolonged hospitalization or expensive procedures could face personal bankruptcy during convalescence.)

I can see, after reading your report, that we are in the reaction stage. No doubt after reading the figures touted in your 'report,' more will follow. Your reports should tell us how far down the privatization path the public mind has traveled.

Rod McGuckin, Salt Spring Island

Look Where?

Dear Editor:

The declaration by Canadian Alliance M.P. Gary Lunn 'Everywhere I look I see more uncertainty regarding the science used by the pro-Kyoto forces' ('Lunn Votes 'No' to Kyoto,' *Island Tides*, December 19), begs a couple of questions.

First and foremost where did he look? Only a dinosaur with the head of an ostrich (in the sand) could be unaware that the vast majority of scientists believe global-warming /pollution is a very real problem and that ratification of the Kyoto Accord is a first and necessary step to dealing with the problem. Mr Lunn should know that there are over 14,000 websites that mention the influential Union of Concerned Scientists who believe global warming is a real man-made problem; most Nobel prize-winning scientists are

members of UCS.

Another question Mr. Lunn should answer is, how much money has been donated to the C.A. party from the petroleum industry? Also, instead of raising alarm bells about how much Kyoto is going to cost the economy, why doesn't Mr. Lunn talk about how many billions of dollars it costs to clean up after oil spills and other environmental problems, most notably air pollution, caused by his petroleum industry friends? And why doesn't he factor in the huge economic and environmental benefits that renewable energy projects and research will engender and how these benefits will be accelerated by ratification and implementation of the Kyoto Accord.

Happy New Year through a healthy environment.

Mark Fornataro, Victoria

Helping the Research

Dear Editor:

Now that Canada has ratified the Kyoto Accord one can hope that Mr. Lunn and his friends in the Alliance party will contribute positively to the development of the plan whose absence they have been criticizing.

Moving on to his other expressed interests: 'smog, water quality, airborne particulates,' one may also hope that Mr. Lunn will consider consulting atmospheric scientists and other experts rather than, or at least in addition to, economic advocates of polluting the environment. He might then learn that atmospheric and climate models, based on the laws of physics and chemistry, are much less uncertain than economic models, which depend on assumptions about human behaviour.

Obviously, the only reasonable thing to do for someone in the responsible position of environment critic of the Official Opposition is to learn more about environmental issues. A visit to the Institute of Ocean Sciences, in Mr. Lunn's own riding, would be a good place to start. The School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, a short drive away at the University of Victoria, hosts some of Canada's most reputed environment scientists, who would also surely welcome his visit. As one of Mr Lunn's constituents, I would be pleased to arrange introductions if he so wished.

Paul H. LeBlond, Galiano Island

Letter from Gary Lunn, MP

Dear Editor:

The Prime Minister has now signed Kyoto into law, but lack of clarity from the government on the issue has only deepened.

Every Canadian wants to be assured that the environment will be protected—but this is not a debate between those who support the environment and those who don't. It is a debate between those who believe they have all the answers and those who are demanding to hear some of them. To date, these answers are as elusive as ever.

Most Kyoto supporters (including the Environment Minister) draw their conclusions from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Summary for Policymakers (most recently released in 2001). These summaries conveniently gloss over the full report, which readily admits there are many unknown factors that could significantly affect its conclusions. What's more, the even more seriously flawed 1995 Summary served as the foundation of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, not later versions.

Dr. Madhav Khandekar (former research scientist with Environment Canada and PhD, Meteorology) recently revealed that over the past thirty years, 'extreme' weather has been on a steady decline. He wrote: 'Hundreds of climate scientists in Canada and around the world are now beginning to question the validity of projections made with today's insufficiently verified climate models.'

Dr. Pat Michaels, Professor of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia wrote: 'The Canadian government and pro-Kyoto supporters believe that there is widespread agreement on the science of Kyoto and that Canada should just move on with ratifying the Accord. Nothing could be farther from the truth.'

On November 25, 2002, 27 climate specialists sent a letter to the Prime Minister, calling on the government to delay ratification. In the words of these specialists, 'Delaying ratification for a short period so as to allow proper scientific consultations to take place will do absolutely no damage to Canada or the environment and is unquestionably the prudent and responsible course of action at this time.' The group included both presenters and reviewers of the 2001 IPCC report.

The truth is that there are many scientists on both sides of the debate, and even more in the middle. No amount of wishing can make it otherwise. Shouldn't we have addressed these uncertainties before ratification?

Under the terms of Kyoto, Russia will gain

LETTERS, please turn to page 7

NOTICE OF MEETING

Southern Gulf Islands Ferry Advisory Committee

January 30, 2003

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Mary Winspear Centre, Sanscha Hall-Sidney

Meeting Room 4

The *Southern Gulf Islands Ferry Advisory Committee* is holding a meeting as noted above. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

The *Southern Gulf Islands Ferry Advisory Committee* is appointed by local governments to advise BC Ferries on local ferry issues. The committee also advises the Corporation periodically on broader policy and service issues.

The purpose of this meeting is to present the results of the Government's Core Services Review of BC Ferries followed by a question and answer period.

The following persons may be contacted as members of your ferry advisory committee:

Saturna Island	Brian Hollingshead	250-539-5191
Pender Island	Dave Dryer	250-629-3353
Mayne Island	Donna Branston	250-539-3622
Galiano Island	David Hutton	250-539-5779
Salt Spring Island	Gerard Farry	250-537-4931

For more information, contact one of the committee members (above) or Stephen Nussbaum, Regional Communications Coordinator at 250-655-6187 or by email at stephen.nussbaum@bcferries.com.



NOTICE OF MEETING

Salt Spring Island Ferry Advisory Committee

January 29, 2003

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Harbour House Hotel, The Blue Room

The *Salt Spring Island Ferry Advisory Committee* is holding a meeting as noted above. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

The *Salt Spring Island Ferry Advisory Committee* is appointed by local governments to advise BC Ferries on local ferry issues. The committee also advises the Corporation periodically on broader policy and service issues.

The purpose of this meeting is to present the results of the Government's Core Services Review of BC Ferries followed by a question and answer period.

The following persons may be contacted as members of your ferry advisory committee:

Chairperson	Darlene Hewitt	250-537-1518
Committee Member	Lee Middleton	250-653-9883

For more information, contact one of the committee members (above) or Stephen Nussbaum, Regional Communications Coordinator at 250-655-6187 or by email at stephen.nussbaum@bcferries.com.



GSX from page 1

from the proposed Duke Point plant. But it will not consider evidence on other alternatives including wind, tidal, and demand-side management.

BCUC Application for VIGP on Hold, Says Hydro

About the same time as this announcement was made, BC Hydro announced that their parallel application to the BC Utilities Commission for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for their proposed Vancouver Island Generation Project (VIGP) was to be put 'on hold.' The requirement for a CPCN was referenced in the provincial government's new Energy Plan, with BC Hydro working towards a January 15 application date.

Over the past few months, BC Hydro has placed a renewed emphasis on the 'PowerSmart' program to reduce electricity consumption on Vancouver Island. In particular, it has been talking with its industrial customers (who presently use large amounts of power at a price that is substantially less than that paid by residential customers). These customers, particularly pulp mills, now see an opportunity to generate their own power at a cost less than what BC Hydro might charge them in the future, and in some cases even sell new power back to BC Hydro. This means that Vancouver Island's power requirements from BC Hydro might be considerably reduced.

Hence the delay in the BCUC application. 'This delay is required to allow assessment of some opportunities involving customer generation that have recently been brought to BC Hydro's attention,' said BC Hydro's Senior Vice-president, Distribution, Bev Van Ruyven. 'We seek proposals from our customers every six weeks on a competitive basis. These opportunities are similar to the one announced today with Weyerhaeuser in Kamloops, which will provide BC Hydro with 155 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of electricity at the low cost of 1.5 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh).'

So Do We Need GSX?

The NEB/CEAA Review Panel, aware that the major argument for the GSX was to provide natural gas for proposed VIGP generating plants, asked BC Hydro whether they still wished to go ahead with the hearings. B.C. Hydro has spent about \$62 million so far on the Duke Point project. Some of that money went toward the purchase of two power-generating turbines.

BC Hydro replied that it was still ready to go ahead with the hearings. 'Nothing has changed in terms of the purpose, justification

for, and the markets to be served by, the GSX Canada Pipeline. There is accordingly no reason for the Panel to postpone the hearing of the GSX PL application. Indeed, as explained in the BC Hydro letter, it is critical to ensuring reliable electricity supply to Vancouver Island that the hearing proceed, as scheduled, on February 24, 2003.'

GSX and VIGP not on Hold, says Hydro

The BC Hydro letter says: 'BC Hydro remains committed to serving the load requirements of Vancouver Island with natural gas from the proposed GSX pipeline and with electricity from the proposed VIGP. ...the change in the January 15 date for completion of our application [to the BCUC] ... was considered necessary to evaluate a proposal by Norske Canada to provide electricity directly and through conservation. While this evaluation is continuing, BC Hydro nevertheless will file the CPCN application for VIGP ... in a matter of weeks to ensure the reliable supply to Vancouver Island in a timely fashion. VIGP is not being put on hold.'

Hydro continues: '...The regulatory process for both GSX and VIGP are on the scheduling 'critical path'... the earliest achievable in-service dates for GSX is October 2005 and VIGP is spring/summer 2006. BC Hydro believes that adherence to these dates is critical, given past delays and the supply concerns noted above. Any further delay in the GSX regulatory process could compromise the ability of BC Hydro to reliably meet its load requirements on Vancouver Island.'

Meanwhile, Provincial Environmental Assessment Goes Ahead

The implementation of the new provincial Environmental Assessment Act has resulted in a new process for environmental review of the VIGP.

Anne Currie, officer in charge of this assessment, says she expects the EAO (herself) to refer her report to the Minister (Joyce Murray) on April 17. There are no formal opportunities for public input. However, Ms. Currie is having closed meetings with various parties, like local/regional governmental bodies and Environment Canada.

That report will summarize technical analysis of the project and say what the public input to date has been. This referral could perhaps include recommendations to the Minister: to approve, reject OR refer for more scrutiny.

As we said before, stay tuned. ✓

New firetruck arrives

North Pender Island Fire Department's long-awaited fast response vehicle arrived on January 26. Manufactured by Pro-Fire, a BC company, the truck is custom-designed for the Island's needs. A committee of firefighters, fire officers and the fire chief spent months working on the design. They studied available technology and visited other fire departments that have similar vehicles.



Truck 19 has a Ford, F-550 super-duty chassis, an optional four-wheel-drive and is powered by a 7.3 liter diesel turbo-charged engine. The truck options were specified with the island roads, driveways and extreme road conditions in mind.

Also specified was a four-door crewcab so that a complete firefighting crew can be carried on the 'first in' vehicle. Truck 19 is a multi-task unit. It is equipped to fight fire, and will carry a range of rescue tools including

rope rescue, as well as emergency medical first responder gear.

The firefighting system is Pneumax compressed-air foam, the very latest in fire suppression technology. It operates with Class-A foam concentrate, which when mixed with water provides a superior extinguishing agent. The system pumps 250 gallons of water per minute with a compressed air flow of 120 cubic feet per minute. Not only does this foam system give superior fire suppression, it also uses water more efficiently—a big bonus in areas where fire hydrants do not exist. ✓

The Islands' Bulletin Board

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MEETINGS

School District #64 (Gulf Islands). A regular meeting of the Board of School Trustees will be held at Pender Island School on Wednesday, February 12th commencing at 1 p.m. Public Welcome!

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LETTERS from page 6

credit for the closure of factories that have already closed. The European Union is treated as one entity, jointly benefiting from the closure of outdated East German plants that ceased production post-1990. When the Minister of the Environment states that no one is being asked to make a sacrifice, he should say no one except Canadians.

The Liberals point to the importance of tough emissions standards, such as those currently enforced in California. However, the United States (including California) did not sign Kyoto, and has no intention of doing so. Canada's investment in clean technologies and emissions standards has exactly zero relevance to Kyoto. Just like California, we can invest in these things without signing treaties that put us at a disadvantage with our trading partners.

The Liberals voted in favour of an Alliance motion that there be a detailed plan, including costs, prior to ratification. Instead, we received a little green book that is heavy on pie charts, but light on details. Even this book falls 60 megatonnes short of the 240 required under the Protocol. To make up this shortfall there is a wish list that includes such vagaries as 'innovation in all sectors,' 'technology initiatives', and the 'actions of individual Canadians'—each of which is carefully couched with terms like 'could result' and 'could reduce.' When it comes to stopping global warming, we are told that we can't be too careful. When it comes to an actual plan, it

seems wishful thinking is perfectly acceptable.

Lost amid all this obfuscation is any meaningful discussion of many environmental problems Canada must address (most recently pointed out in the Audit from the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development). Even if we met all our targets, Kyoto is about carbon dioxide emissions, not pollution. It does not address harmful airborne particulates. It does not safeguard water quality. It will not reduce acid rain or smog. This is where our efforts should be focused.

If Canadians are confused about Kyoto it is hardly surprising, but don't expect the Liberals to explain the details; polling has shown that support for the Accord goes down as knowledge about it goes up. Despite all of this, the government is determined to press forward. It is eerily reminiscent of the \$1 billion gun registration scandal. Six years later our streets are not any safer. Kyoto will cost between \$15-40 billion. So far there is a lot of hot air, but in 2010 there won't be any less smog hanging over Toronto—or the House of Commons as a result.

Gary Lunn, MP Saanich-Gulf Islands.

Ed's Note: This paper is a first! I have produced it while suffering from pneumonia. Please forgive any typos and please note it may be necessary to cancel our Feb 13 edition while I regain my health-CG-W. ✓

Learn more about marine conservation areas, Feb 4

In October last year, the Prime Minister announced that a National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) would be located in the Southern Gulf Islands. A feasibility study for the proposed NMCA in the Strait of Georgia is expected this spring.

In the meantime, the Galiano Island Marine Stewardship Advisory Committee is sponsoring a public information meeting so that Islanders can learn more about MCAs. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 4th, from 7-10pm at the South Galiano Hall. Bill Henwood of Parks Canada will present information and answer questions from the audience.

NMCAs are established to show how protection and conservation practices can be harmonized with resource use in marine ecosystems. They are managed for sustainable use, with different types of management in different zones. NMCAs are protected from such activities as ocean dumping, undersea mining, and oil and gas exploration and development. Fishing activities are permitted, but are managed to ensure conservation of the area's ecosystem. ✓

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Jazz Mastery from Sealy and Novotny ~ Zorah Staar

There's an amazing jazz-buddhist book by Kenny Werner that defines 'mastery' as 'the effortless execution of music,' almost as if 'the music plays itself while the musician observes.' Joe Sealy and Paul Novotny showed Penderites what mastery is all about at their January 20 Gulf Islands Concert Series performance.

Joe Sealy and Paul Novotny have been making music together for more than 21 years, and the graceful groove of this longtime connection was apparent from their first notes, starting the show with a jaunty version of 'Alone Together.' Sealy is a Montreal-born pianist, actor, composer and more, known for his Juno-award-winning 'Africville Suite,' which is a tribute to the early black community of Halifax. Novotny has been a bass player, composer, producer and educator for over 25 years, and both musicians have played with some jazz and pop greats.

The second piece of the show was a 'Winter Waltz' that Sealy said might fit their snowy Toronto home more than our Gulf Islands mildness. With steadily descending bass notes but the piano ice-skating on top, the piece was like some kind of beautifully stubborn protest, admitting the melancholy nature of bitter cold but determined to be happy anyway. Or maybe I'm just projecting, still recovering from having been originally raised (and frequently frozen) in Manitoba.


Then came 'Duke's in Town,' which is from the 'Africville Suite' and was written in homage to Duke Ellington. The piece brilliantly combined Sealy's intensely rhythmic 'we're at the club now!' piano,


Novotny's high speed walking bass line (with a bass solo showing tremendous dexterity and style), and wild 'Take the A Train' references. Sealy then melted some hearts by playing an exquisitely simple version of 'Someone to Watch Over Me,' with his piano somehow soaring above all that longing and a very poignant bass solo from Novotny.

The evening also showcased Novotny as a gifted composer, for example with his somberly whimsical 'Five Turtles.' This piece was inspired by seeing 5 little turtles stuck on a log, reaching their tiny heads and feet towards the sun, and felt like a kind of groovy existential comment (life is hard, but we're reachin' anyway?), with some extremely original bass work. The first half ended with Sealy's 'Transcontinental Soul,' his wildly beautiful piano power chords crashing over the opposing rhythms of Novotny's furiously soulful bass.

The mastery continued in the second half, including a raunchy 'Mustang Sealy' composition by both players, and a gorgeously expansive piece by Sealy called 'Inverness.' A newer piece with a 'desert feeling' (called 'The Dunes') was particularly intriguing, with its exotic combination of what felt like Moorish, gypsy, raga and/or Cuban rhythms and tones. The show ended with the final piece from the 'Africville Suite,' an insistently affirming and uplifting 'Song of Hope' carried along on a soulful, swinging groove. If you want to hear more of Sealy and Novotny, look for their new 'Blue Jade' CD, which I would highly recommend! ✓

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Warning: Contains coarse language and mature subject matter.


Actual Photo of the 1960 Nanaimo Chinatown Fire. Courtesy of the Nanaimo District Museum

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New Trust executive elected

The newly-elected Islands Trust Council elected a new Executive Committee at its inaugural meeting, held in Victoria on December 6. Council members re-elected David Essig of Thetis Island as Chair, while Kim Benson of Keats Island was returned to one of the three Vice-Chair positions. They will be joined on the Executive Committee by new Vice-Chairs Gisele Rudischer of Gabriola Island and Wayne Wright of North Pender Island.

The Islands Trust Executive Committee oversees the day to day business of the Islands Trust between the quarterly meetings of the entire Trust Council. ✓