

Gulf Islands' Island Tides

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Nov 6—Nov 19, 2003

Attractions & Accommodation

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Photo: Christa Grace-Warrick

A sunken sailboat, discovered Thursday morning during the windstorm, prompted many maritime visitors to Hope Bay, Pender Island. The Coast Guard hovercraft Siyay, from the Coast Guard Station, Sea Island, brought divers to look for possible occupants. Coast Guard cutter Skua from Ganges and Coast Guard Auxiliary RHIs combed the water. Two Navy vessels happened to be in Plumper Sound on training exercises at the time of the incident. Divers found that the sailboat, which had fetched up against the end of the wharfhead, was dragging a mooring chain. It is thought that it broke loose from a mooring buoy and drifted, and that there was no-one on board.

Special Report by Patrick Brown 'Privatized' BC Ferries goes political

So soon after its conversion to a government-owned private corporation, BC Ferry Services Inc. has shown it cannot resist political tactics as it enters into negotiations with its unionized employees.

On October 21, the Corporation issued a press release which quoted Ferries' CEO David L. Hahn: 'We know what our customers want, and to deliver on those expectations, we need a more reasonable contract.'

The press release cited a recent public opinion poll which asked 700 people across British Columbia about their opinion of BC Ferries service, fares, performance, and the need to rebuild the fleet.

These questions were the usual ones asked in BC Ferries' periodic passenger surveys.

But the press release mentions, as a sort of afterthought: 'In addition, the survey asked several questions about the current union agreement.' Never before has the general public been asked their opinion of the BC Ferries' union agreement.

It is unusual, if not unprecedented, for any organization to ask the public to judge a union agreement about which they know little or nothing. It seems unprofessional and unethical. In fact, it's silly.

The polling organization weighted the numbers by region across British Columbia, leading to results which are said to be the opinions of British Columbians, rather than the opinions of ferry customers.

It looks as if the purpose of the entire survey was to gather ammunition for use in contract negotiations, and that the questions

on service levels, etc were merely included to provide a respectable cover for the real point of the exercise.

The design and conduct of the poll, the interpretation of its results, and the resultant press release, are clearly designed to encourage province-wide political support for the company's upcoming bargaining stance.

75% Have No Opinion on Contract

So the 700 respondents must have disappointed the pollsters. Fully 75% of them, when asked, could offer no opinion on the 'general terms and conditions' of the contract. This is not surprising, since the contract—a pocket-size book of substantial thickness—is neither widely read, nor has it been described in the media. It was sensible of respondents to refuse to answer the question.

Of those who did venture an opinion, 10% said they thought the terms were 'fair and reasonable', 11% said they thought the terms favoured the union, and the remaining 3% said they thought the terms favoured BC Ferries.

Since the present contract is the cumulative result of many collective bargaining sessions over the years, one might reasonably assume that it doesn't actually favour either side, but represents a series of trade-offs.

And since the overall margin of error (which depends on the sample size compared to the total population being sampled) was quoted by the polling company as plus or minus 4%, this meant that between 6 and 14% said 'fair and reasonable,' between 7 and 15%

FERRIES, turn to page 2

Opposition to third reading of aquaculture bill

Bill 48, The Agriculture Food and Fisheries Statutes Amendment Act received Third Reading in the BC Legislature, on October 21.

NDP opposition leader Joy MacPhail considers that, 'The Campbell government has forced legislation through the Legislature that gives it the power to overturn municipal by-laws restricting the location of fish farms. NDP Newswire states that Bill 48 gives Victoria unprecedented powers, allowing the government to disregard the wishes of local communities.'

'This bill strips communities of their ability to plan for their future, making a mockery of Gordon Campbell's promise to empower municipalities,' said MacPhail. 'Now, even if a local government says 'no' to a fish farm, Gordon Campbell has given himself

BILL 48, turn to page 2

December 1 is World AIDS Day

Plans are underway to raise awareness and celebrate contributions of Gulf Islanders helping in the AIDS global health crisis. Organizers, The Southern Gulf HIV/AIDS Support Group, quote the newly beatified Mother Theresa, 'We cannot always do great things, but we can do small things with great love.'

The response of some Gulf Islanders has been to do something specific—working with one village or one grass roots organization to help alleviate some of the daily struggles of those affected by the disease.

Projects that will be spotlighted on World Aids Day at Ganges high school include Michael Nicholas

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Be intrepid and apply

Intrepid Theatre, producer of the Victoria Fringe Festival and the UNO Festival has announced 2004 festival dates and the release of applications to performing artists.

The seventh annual Uno Festival of Solo Performance, dedicated to one-person theatre, will return June 9-20. A juried event featuring solo work from both seasoned performers and emerging artists, Uno has quickly built a reputation as a notable North American theatrical showcase. Interested artists must submit documentation (a videotape if possible) of their previously performed solo show.

The Victoria Fringe Theatre Festival will celebrate its eighteenth anniversary next year, running from August 26 to September 6. Part of a circuit of summer fringe festivals across Canada, the Victoria Fringe attracted an audience of approximately 15,000 last year.

Great Deal!

Thirty-two international performing companies will be accepted into the Victoria Fringe on an un-juried, first-received/first-accepted basis, beginning 10am on January 9. For an application fee of \$450, applicants receive six scheduled performances in a fully-outfitted venue, promotion, the services of a professional technician, complete box office services, access to billeting services, and 100% of their box office receipts.

New Play Contest

Intrepid Theatre also announced Petri Dish—a new play contest. Intrepid is accepting scripts and proposals until December 31. The winner of the juried competition will receive a \$300 prize, a free 6-performance spot at the Victoria Fringe Festival, and administrative and promotional support for the project from Intrepid Theatre Company.

The competition is open to writers, theatre companies, and performing artists of all disciplines, who are permanent residents of Vancouver

CONTEST, turn to page 6

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Axworthy talks about his new book

Canada's former Minister of Affairs and Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Lloyd Axworthy—one of Canada's most eloquent statesman and political thinkers—will speak at The Port Theatre on November 24. His new book, *Navigating The New World: Canada's Global Future*, charts how we can become active citizens in the demanding world of the 21st Century, to make it safer, more sustainable and humane.

Axworthy delivers recommendations that are both practical and radical, ranging from a call for Canadian independence from the US to an insistence on environmental as well as political security—from rules to govern intervention when nations oppress their own citizens, to codes of conduct on arms control and war crimes. He lays out just why Canada has the skills to lead the world into a less nightmarish 21st Century, making the world safer and more just.

Lloyd Axworthy's political career spans 27 years, including many as an MP and minister of such portfolios as Immigration,

Transport, Human Resources Development and Foreign Affairs. A former professor at the University of Winnipeg, he is a member of the Order of Manitoba. Currently he is Director and CEO of the Liu Institute for Global Studies at UBC and international advisor to Fraser Milner Casgrain.

Winner of numerous awards, the citation at his Humanitarian Award 2000 stated, 'Mr. Axworthy has redefined diplomacy. He has shaped a global society where the safety of the individual is at the center of international priorities.' Mr. Axworthy and his wife, Denise, live on Vancouver Island.

The evening with Lloyd Axworthy is a fundraiser for the The Port Theatre's world premiere of *The Concubine's Children* by Denise Chong. The evening which will include a question and answer period and book signing. Call 250-754-8550 for tickets.

Ed's Note: we will be publishing a review of Lloyd Axworthy's book in the next edition of 'Island Tides.'

Island Tides

AT FULFORD HARBOUR
NOVEMBER

Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.	Day	Time	Ht./ft.	Ht./m.
04	0120	7.9	2.4	12	0005	2.0	0.6
	0700	4.9	1.5		0845	11.2	3.4
	TU 1415	10.8	3.3		WE 1415	9.5	2.9
MA 2100	5.6	1.7	ME 1615	9.5	2.9		
05	0245	8.2	2.5	13	0040	2.0	0.6
	0755	5.6	1.7		0935	11.2	3.4
	WE 1440	10.5	3.2		TH		
ME 2125	4.6	1.4	JE				
06	0355	8.9	2.7	14	0115	2.0	0.6
	0845	6.6	2.0		1020	11.2	3.4
	TH 1500	10.2	3.1		FR		
JE 2145	3.9	1.2	VE				
07	0450	9.5	2.9	15	0200	2.6	0.8
	0935	7.2	2.2		1105	11.2	3.4
	FR 1515	10.2	3.1		SA		
VE 2205	3.3	1.0	SA				
08	0540	9.8	3.0	16	0250	3.0	0.9
	1020	7.9	2.4		1145	11.2	3.4
	SA 1530	10.2	3.1		SU		
SA 2235	2.6	0.8	DI				
09	0625	10.5	3.2	17	0345	3.6	1.1
	1110	8.5	2.6		1220	11.2	3.4
	SU 1545	9.8	3.0		MO 2005	7.5	2.3
DI 2305	2.3	0.7	LU 2115	7.5	2.3		
10	0715	10.8	3.3	18	0445	4.3	1.3
	1200	8.9	2.7		1250	11.2	3.4
	MO 1600	9.8	3.0		TU 1955	6.6	2.0
LU 2335	2.0	0.6	MA				
11	0800	10.8	3.3	19	0000	7.5	2.3
	1255	9.5	2.9		0550	4.9	1.5
	TU 1615	9.8	3.0		WE 1315	10.8	3.3
MA			ME 2010	5.6	1.7		

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BILL 48 from page 1

the power to overturn that decision.'

MacPhail noted that the BC Liberals are ignoring a Union of BC Municipalities resolution that passed unanimously in September calling on Gordon Campbell to withdraw this bill.

'It is outrageous that the provincial government has passed Bill 48, which allows cabinet ministers to override local government decisions that restrict fish farming in their communities,' the Georgia Strait Alliance said today.

'Over 600 of our members sent letters to the BC government opposing this move, and we know many other people spoke up as well,' said Suzanne Connell, Georgia Strait Alliance's aquaculture coordinator.

'In addition, the Union of BC Municipalities expressed unanimous support for a resolution calling on the province to withdraw Bill 48,' she added. 'By passing this Bill in the face of such clear opposition, the provincial government has effectively thumbed its nose at the public and at local governments.'

Bill 48 allows the province to designate coastal waters as farming areas where the *Right to Farm Act* will apply. 'The bottom line,' says Connell, 'is that this Bill gives the

aquaculture industry protection against local bylaws and nuisance suits, and removes the right of local governments to restrict fish farming practices they consider inappropriate.'

The Georgia Strait Alliance is a marine conservation organization that works to protect and restore Georgia Strait and its adjoining waters. The group is a member of the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR), a coalition of conservation and First Nations groups working to reform the salmon farming industry.

In an email, Islands Trust Planner Linda Adams noted, 'Once Royal Assent is received, the province will have the ability to designate 'farming areas' along the shoreline for the purposes of the *Right to Farm Act*. Please note that even after Royal Assent, nothing changes (in the Islands Trust Area) in regards to zoning of foreshore areas. Changes to local government jurisdiction and zoning along the foreshore would only occur if the province chooses to designate all or part of crown foreshore as a 'farming area' for the purposes of this Bill. We (Islands Trust) understand this would not proceed without consultation.'

FERRIES from page 1

said the contract favoured the union, and between 0 and 7% said the terms favoured BC Ferries. Hardly a conclusive result.

To quote the pollsters' report: 'Most British Columbians do not hold any views on the current contract between BCF and its unionized workers.'

A closely related question asked respondents how the corporation treats its employees. The pollsters: 'Views are largely unformed...' 52% had no opinion. Of the less than half who had views, 65% said 'excellent.'

Push-Polling

Despite the disappointing response to their preliminary questions, the pollsters went on to ask specific questions on particular aspects of the contract. In this, they used a technique known as 'push-polling', widely used in US political polls. This means that the respondent is presented with selected facts, generally without explanation or context, and then asked their opinion. Often, the question suggests the 'right' answer.

These questions were asked of all the respondents, despite the fact that 75% of them had already stated they had no opinion (and probably no knowledge) of the contract.

'One Minute of Overtime'

Probably the most heavily slanted question was Q.12e: 'Currently, one minute of overtime entitles a unionized ferry worker to one hour of regular pay.' Do you consider this to be: Too much (74% did); Fair and reasonable (20% did); Not enough (2%); with 3% saying they didn't know.

The question was not explained to respondents. It contains two issues: the first is that most union contracts, and most responsible employers, establish a minimum period of overtime which an employee can be asked to work. In this case it would appear to be half an hour. The second issue is that BC Ferries employees are paid double time for all overtime.

Half an hour at double time equals one hour of regular pay. So the example given is technically correct, obviously extreme,

and hardly typical. It would appear to have been expressed this way in order to elicit a negative response.

Many Causes for Overtime

Mr. Hahn: 'The fact is, our company and our customers cannot afford the current contract with its \$9 million in annual overtime costs and its rigid operating rules. In fact, it is a contract that provides no incentive to be on time.'

Is Mr. Hahn accusing the employees of making the ships late deliberately so they can collect overtime? What evidence does he have? Such a public accusation would not seem to be a positive step towards good labour relations during contract negotiations.

During the mid-nineties, a number of stakeholder groups worked very hard on scheduling and the problem of on-time performance. They discovered that there are many reasons, besides weather, why a ship may be late, often related to loading and unloading (awkward vehicles, extra heavy loads in summer, etc) What rules here is safety, which BC Ferries puts first.

There are also many reasons why overtime may be incurred. While round trip times on many routes fit neatly into the length of the regular time day, some routes do not. Schedules are, of course, designed to get employees back to their home ports in order to finish their shifts on time, but in some cases this is difficult to do. So even the slightest delay can result in the now infamous 'one minute of overtime.'

Most ships in the fleet can't go any faster (and anyway, we can't have the *Queen of Nanaimo* steaming down Long Harbour at full speed), and of course they can't leave port early.

Finally, as a condition of the recent turnover to the 'privatized' operating company, schedules are currently frozen.


More Questions on Contract Provisions

The question about overtime is asked again (Q.12a). 'All overtime is at double time. Do you consider this: Too high (60%); Fair and reasonable (35%); Too low (1%); Don't know (4%).'

Respondents are also asked specifically about starting wage rates, ranging from \$19-\$21 per hour (Q.12b). 'Do you consider this: Too high (55%); Fair and reasonable (42%); Too low (1%); Don't know (3%).'


FERRIES, turn to page 7

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When I left to spend a week in California with my two sisters it was late summer, upon my return it is fall. The moss was right back to emerald green, lush and deeply cushioned as if the warmest, longest summer on record had never occurred. Maple leaves and their helicopter seedpods are flying everywhere.

Lots of funguses, mushrooms, puffballs, stone crusts and those hard-to-identify plant/animal combos are leaping into fruition. They add a wonderful color and variety to fall and good eating. Shaggy manes are numerous this year and are great sautéed in butter (as a non-mushroom eater once commented to me, 'So, what doesn't taste good sautéed in butter?') and served up with omelets and meats.

I find it shocking to hear on the news that some places I even know will have highs of -10° in the next day or so. Yikes! Time to move the summer crowd of plants to safety and find my warm woolies supply!

My transition from 90°F high desert to 70°F coastal Douglas fir was short and interesting. In the air, just 15 minutes away from Los Angeles airport, I counted four forest fires, pumping arid smoke down river courses and collecting in valleys. Coming into Vancouver airport I could see the Fraser Valley was mud with high bank rivers. The Fraser River ran rich sediment clouds way out into Georgia Strait. What a contrast it seemed!

My life encompasses both ends of this continuum ecological richness. By the time I was five and had left Westwood Village, California (where UCLA is located) and moved to a farm in Bonita, California my legs were brown from sun. I knew lots about honney toads, alligator lizards, jumping cactus, deep desert sand dust, rattle snakes, skunks, and fires. One of my first memories is of being in the Bonita General Store, rejoicing in my double-stick, lime green Popsicle, slowly starting to open it—listening to the nice sound of my mother and Rita talking in the heat.

Suddenly, I was half the way out the swing doors which closed on my popsicle and broke it! It was a long way home, up the Sweetwater River Valley before I got clear that there was a brush fire burning and coming towards our house and we were in a hurry to see what was happening.

In California, right now, the huge 'Cedar' fire started in the tiny town of Julian where I first saw snow when my father and I drove up 'into the mountains' to cut down our own Christmas tree.

I feel sad that a land under so much development pressure is losing much of its remaining wildlife integrity. And now my life is focused here in the pacific southwest of Canada, most northern range of many of the native species that I grew to know and love as a child.

Road Trip

My sisters and I spent most of our time out of doors in the high desert where one of my sisters lives. We took a road trip north up the slow coastal road that ultimately leads right here! We had agreed to stop wherever we

wanted. We saw a full range of natural history museums, from the glass-case kind with a big Mojave green rattler; to a barred owl recovering from a broken wing and an enthusiastic Park Ranger, 'No we don't ever see Horny Toads here anymore (we did find a baby and I held it!); to a fancy, self-activated, self-instructing museum overlooking the Morro Bay Estuary.

I am politically a Canadian and I am a westcoast citizen along with those five nine-foot long Pacific White-sided dolphins fishing and leaping out of the ocean behind the wave line surging around Morro Bay rock, the alligator lizards on every sun-blackened fence rail, the Red Tailed hawks and all of the other denizens.

Our poor southern neighbors have no banana slugs, plenty of poison oak in the mile upon mile of rolling hills, and no Saturatus, our very own Saturna Island mouse.

It was a great trip and I learned lots about the ecological cycles by contrast. And we three sisters had a great, and a close time.

And Christmas is Coming!

Our Saturna artistic community has planned two markets for us in November at the community hall. There is always a wide array of gifts to choose from, crafts, fine arts, baking, cards, sewing, jams. Mei-Man Lambert will be running the kitchen to fortify and inspire you while you shop! At the November 29 Christmas Craft Market tickets for the December Candlelight Dinner will go on sale. First come, first served!

Billy Hilly Concert

Last Saturday night the first concert of the Saturna Arts and Concerts Society featuring the Bill Hilly Band took place. The five 'Bills' hit the stage running, playing full-out for almost two hours to a packed, cheering community hall. Guitar, mandolin, accordion, bass, fiddle, spoons, piano and whoops and hollers were all part of the acoustic music that ranged from Latin American, deep south spirituals, central European, blues/jazz and more sources I don't recognize.

Several of the 'Bills' had their parents in the audience which made the performance that much more special. The band was highly complimentary of the acoustics and the ambiance of our community hall. Since they have been touring for almost three years non-stop they probably have developed a keen sense of what works. The band had a good time and the ticket count was the highest ever for a Saturna Arts and Concert Society presentation. January 27 is the next concert.

And don't forget to check the Island's bulletin boards and 'What's On?' (page 5) for other upcoming community events.

Appreciation Dinner

The Saturna Womens Club hosted the Saturna Firefighters and First Responders and their dates with a wonderful dinner at the Community Hall. The Hall was decorated beautifully and the meal was superb.

The Womens Club President Donna Digance, welcomed the 50-plus guests and briefly thanked emergency workers and their

SATURNA, turn to page 7

Carr deplors Krawczyk sentence

'Only in BC do great-grandmothers end up in jail for trying to protect public forests,' says Green Party Leader Adriane Carr who deplors the sentence handed down by BC Supreme Court Justice Harvey to 75-year-old environmental activist Betty Krawczyk on October 14. 'Six months more in jail on top of the four and a half months she had already served does not fit the crime. It's way too harsh,' says Carr.

Betty Krawczyk, who describes herself as a 'political prisoner,' has been protesting both the cutting of the ancient forest in the Upper Walbran Valley on Vancouver Island and the government's Working Forest legislation

which would open up for industrial use all remaining public forests outside of existing parks in BC.

Ms. Krawczyk was arrested on May 8, 2003 after refusing to move off a public logging road in the Walbran Valley, contrary to the terms of a court order made in a civil lawsuit brought by a Weyerhaeuser sub-contractor.

In British Columbia, political demonstrators are usually dealt with under an Attorney General policy that encourages companies to seek civil injunctions that can then be escalated into contempt proceedings. In these types of proceedings, the safeguards

SENTENCE, turn to page 7

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"We, David Gregory Harmon, Isabel Anita Harmon and David Garrett Harmon Blake of RR1, Site 14, Comp 31, Mayne Island BC V0N 2J0 intend on making an application pursuant to Section 30(1) of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* to exclude from the **Agricultural Land Reserve** the following property which is legally described as, Lot 1, Section 3, Mayne Island Cowichan District, Plan VIP61730, and located at 630 Tinker Road.

Any person wishing to express at interest in the application may do so by forwarding their comments in writing to, Islands Trust, Mayne Island Local Trust Committee, 1627 Fort Street, 2nd floor, Victoria, BC V8R 1H8, by November 6, 2003."

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Wildflowers ~ Brenan Simpson *Sweet Briar and Snow Berries*

Although we can easily bring colour into our gardens in winter by planting such imported shrubs and trees as the very late flowering winter jasmine or the early-flowering witch hazel, to name but two, there are virtually none of our native wild flowers in bloom at this time of year. Low temperatures have killed the annuals and sent the perennials into a state of dormancy.

Even if any of them were to flower, there would be no pollinating insects around to make it worth the plants' effort. But lack of flowers does not mean lack of colour in our wildflower community, for many of our shrubs not only produced flowers last summer to attract insects but they then went on to produce brightly coloured fruit and berries to attract birds. The birds, in turn, spread the seeds around in their droppings, all neatly coated in organic fertilizer, ready to sprout in spring.

The two most obvious fruits and berries at this time of year on the Gulf Islands are Rosehips and Snowberries, which line miles of our roadsides. Those who know Shakespeare's *Midsummer Nights Dream* undoubtedly recall the speech 'I know a bank where the wild thyme grows....' also on that bank grew 'Eglantine' or *Rosa eglanteria*, the sweet briar. 'Madame Eglantyne' was the name of Chaucer's Prioress in 'The Canterbury Tales', and *Rosa eglanteria*, with its clear pink flowers and bright hips grows freely on all of our islands. It is easily recognizable in Spring and Summer, particularly after

rain, by the sweet apple-like scent of its leaves. Chaucer and Shakespeare must have recognized it in exactly the same way—that's something to think about when you walk by the rose and smell what they smelled.

Although the Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*) is probably just as old, if not even older, it is a North American native and was not known to Europeans until it was found in the Pacific Northwest by the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804-1806.

US President Thomas Jefferson referred to it in a letter dated December 8, 1813, saying 'We call it the snow-berry bush, no botanical name being yet given to it.' Again, it is easily recognizable in winter by its large white berries on leafless stems.

Even though Mr. Lewis and Captain Clark received no recognition in the eventual naming of the Snowberry, whose botanical name is merely a description of the plant ('clusters of

white berries'), they are remembered in two other plants which still grow wild in this general area and whose hybridized cousins appear in many gardens—the 'Lewisia' and the 'Clarkia'.

islandtides.com This article was first published in *Island Tides* on February 1, 1990. The series is now becoming an on-line PDF archive at www.islandtides.com. The first articles in the archives are now online and more will be posted with each issue of the paper.

Brenan's wildflower articles are also published as a book 'Flowers at My Feet: Western Wildflowers in Legend, Literature and Lore.' ✍



Snowberry

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Editorial

Good news for readers who are asking us how they can get reprints of past articles, our 'Black Gold' archive is growing on www.islandtides.com. We will be broadening the perspective of the series with articles on the significance of oil in agriculture. Our aim is to gain an understanding of how deeply embedded oil culture is in our lives.

We are aiming to create a new archive every issue. This issue a very old friend makes a reappearance. Brenan Simpson's well-loved 'Wildflower' column is now starting to be available on-line. As an introduction, Brenan's article (this page) on rosehips and snowberries—the red and the white of the season. This article was first printed on February 1, 1990.

Articles on islandtides.com are mounted in PDF format as Island Tides reprints. All reprints can be downloaded and printed or sent on as a PDF attachment to friends.

Island Tides most recent three issues can now be read or downloaded on-line, too. This gives you a chance to go back and re-read the details again or once again to tell friend to find an article on-line. We are doing our best to make the website accessible to folks using older computers and browsers—however there are limits to what we can do. Let us know of your experiences.

We are absolutely swamped with great news material—far more than we can publish in print. Twenty-five new stories to edit this Halloween night, not to mention eleven waiting to be published—and another twenty already shunted to Nov 20 and beyond.

www.islandtides.com gives us a new opportunity to publish some of this material. This edition *Island Tides* is publishing on-line a very interesting account of a month in Palestine. Gabriola Raging Granny has been sending back reports of her experience working with the International Womens Peace Service. It is an moving and astonishing record—thank you Jean—please read it.

Keep visiting www.islandtides.com as we are continually developing the website and may well have incorporated your suggestions.

G-G-W

'Conservation Conversations'

Dear Editor:

Thank you for your coverage of the recent Conservation Conversations on Pender Island. By way of clarification, the financial support for these learning events was provided by the CRD and the Islands Trust only. The time and energy to organize this series was provided by several community volunteers. Special thanks are due to Sara Stein, who initiated the planning.

Julie Johnston, Pender Island

Understanding Mass Media

Dear Editor:

It was a great pleasure to listen to Patrick Brown at the Peace Works! festival on Salt Spring last Saturday. His message was about understanding the mass media.

He spoke of the importance of trying to recognize the difference between reporting (factual) and opinion—particularly as so many of the daily newspapers now scarcely make any distinction between the two. The problem of media chains that dominate a region, as is the case in BC with all the major dailies owned by CanWest, was highlighted.

Patrick cautioned that the same criteria we use for judging the reliability of 'news' in the dailies and on television and radio must be applied to news on the Internet.

His highlighting of the problems of media 'convergence' and the muting of other voices was appreciated by his enthusiastic audience. Thank you, Patrick.

Irene Wright, Salt Spring Island

Sad History

Dear Editor:

When I received my copy of the October 22-November 5 issue, I immediately recognized the location of the photo on the front page as the same one used to illustrate 'Paradise Lost' in the section on Mayne Island in the guidebook *Southern Gulf Islands of British Columbia* (Altitude Publishing Canada Ltd of Vancouver).

The commentary in the guidebook retold the story of Japanese-Canadian farmers on Mayne who were arrested with their farms and other property confiscated, following Pearl Harbour in 1941. Some neighbours looked after their greenhouses and properties in the expectation of their owners'

return; that is until such caretaking activities were made illegal and the confiscated property sold.

It seems the ghosts of that sad history still hover over those now subdividing this land steeped in tragedy.

Sheryl Taylor-Munro, Salt Spring Island

Social Crisis

Dear Editor:

In light of the fact that the Premier of the Province is demanding that Mayor Larry Campbell should be enforcing Vancouver city bylaws to deal with the problem of homeless people camping in the parks, it is incumbent upon him to consider the lawfulness of his governments own policies. If, as the Premier believes, the resolution to homelessness is simply a matter of legal remedy, then why is he not applying the same remedy to his own government's policies and actions which are causing and exacerbating hunger, poverty and homelessness in the province? Surely the Premier should follow his own advice.

At the very least he should be asking his government's ministries to comply with international human rights legislation, ratified by Canada as early as 1976, which obliges states to 'recognise the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family including food, clothing, housing and necessary social services.' Indeed it is the case that the current Liberal Government's cutbacks to social assistance, the new regulations setting two year time limits for the receipt of financial assistance, and the inadequacy of benefits are all unlawful in that they are contrary to the provincial (and federal) government's obligation to 'respect, protect and fulfill' the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living including the right to food.

Recent reports and media discussion have amply demonstrated the existence of a growing social crisis both within Vancouver and across the province. The point is that these are not issues which can easily be addressed by municipal governments nor, given their limited resources, by charitable foodbanks, church missions or emergency shelters. This is especially so when senior levels of government are acting contrary to their international legal obligations.

The Premier should be looking beyond the parameters of

LETTERS, continued in next column

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Fri to Sun, Now till Nov 30

Galiano Museum exhibit: Pacific Coast Militia Rangers—their role as Home Guard during WWII and attacks of Japanese incendiary balloons (plus talk Wed, Nov 19, 'Canadian Rangers, then and today,' Paul LeBlond and Captain Jim Miller, Galiano Rod & Gun Club, 6:15pm), Exhibit sponsored by Victoria Foundation • Galiano Museum, 1122 Porlier Pass Rd • 1-4pm • Info: leblond@gulfislands.com, 250-539-2310 • ON GALIANO ISLAND



Saturday, November 8

27th Annual Mayne Island Christmas Craft Fair—early holiday shopping opportunity to shop-till-you-drop for extraordinary gifts created by Mayne Island Artists and Crafters; Christmas decorations and baking, greeting cards, jewelry, clothing, art, glass, toys, pottery, carvings and more!; enjoy holiday goodies or lunch too • 10am-4 pm • Mayne Island Elementary School Gym, 535 Fernhill Road • Info: Joanie at 250-539-9925 • ON MAYNE ISLAND

Saturday, November 8

Martial Arts/Performance/Dance Workshop taught by Battery Opera—not a dance class, but equally as painful! presented in conjunction with Spektator production (also November 8); no experience necessary • Mid-Island School of Dance, 595 Townsite Road • 10am-noon • \$12 (\$10 for Crimson Coast Dance Society members) • Info: 250-716-3230 • IN NANAIMO



Saturday, November 8

Lorraine Foster's tribute to Vera Lynn and songs of the War Years—Vancouver jazz and big band vocalist, accompanied by pianist Peter Dent, elegant oceanfront setting with winter fare of Chef Simon James McNeil • Atrevida Restaurant at the Galiano Inn and spa • 6pm • show complimentary with dinner • Info: 1-877-530-3939, www.galianoinn.com • ON GALIANO ISLAND



Sat, Nov 8 till Tues, Nov 11

Remembrance Day Weekend Fun Swims—enjoy Saanich Commonwealth Place's wavepool, waterslide, pirate ship, toddler pool, swirlpool, steamroom, sauna and length swimming • Schedule: Saturday 1-4pm, 6:30-8:30pm; Sunday 10am-noon, 1-4pm, 6:30-8:30pm; Monday 6am-3pm, 7-8:30pm; Tuesday 10am-noon, 1-4pm • 4636 Elk Lake Drive (right off Pat Bay Hwy at Royal Oak Exit) • Info: 24-hour swim info-line 250-727-7108 • IN VICTORIA

Tuesday, November 11

Pender Lions Remembrance Day Pancake Breakfast—finish breakfast with plenty of time to make it to the Royal Canadian Legion for the 11am service the Cenotaph • Memories Restaurant • 8-10am • Admission: Adults \$5, Children (12& Under) \$2.50 • ON PENDER ISLAND

Fri, Nov 14 till New Years Eve

Comox Valley 29th Annual Christmas Craft Fair—original design, handmade works in pottery, jewellery, wood, glass, fabric, and much more • Comox Valley Art Gallery, 367 Fourth Street, Courtenay • Gala Opening November 14, 7-9pm, hours in **November:** Tues-Sat 10am-5pm, in **December:** daily 10am-5pm, except Sunday 11am-4pm • Admission free, 20% discount on purchases at Gala Opening • Info: 250-338-6211, www.mars.ark.com/~cvag • IN COURTENAY, VANCOUVER ISLAND

Saturday, November 15

3rd Annual Galiano Mushroom Festival—study, taste and celebrate Galiano's mushroom bounty with an expert micologist • South End Community Hall • 11am-3pm—bring mushrooms to the hall for identification, displays, mushroom refreshments and snacks • Community Hall • 11-2:30pm, 3pm mushroom walk—Admission by donation • Info: Julia Greenlaw • 250-539-5964 • ON GALIANO ISLAND

Sunday, Nov 16 and Sat, Nov 29

Saturna Christmas Market—original and delicious gifts: cards, jams, knitted goods, artwork, sheepskins, sewn creations, baking and more • Community Hall (close to ferry) • 10-2pm • Info: Lindy, 250-539-3471 • ON SATURNA ISLAND

Saturday, November 22

Let's Dance—come early and bring a date, Gays and Lesbians on Salt Spring Island (GLOSSI) sponsor a fall dance with the fun, eclectic music mix of special guest DJ from Victoria; light refreshments, cash bar (beer and wine) and soft drinks • Lyons Club Hall, 103 Bonnet Avenue • 7:30pm • Tickets: \$10/door • ON SALT SPRING ISLAND

Saturday, November 29

Ivonne Hernandez Concert—2001 North American and 3-time BC Fiddling Champ performing tunes from her recent CD as well as Scottish, old-time, bluegrass and Cajun tunes; accompanying Ivonne is noted Victoria guitarist, Jeremy Walsh • Pender Island Community Hall • 8:00pm • Tickets: \$15 at local outlets • Info: 604-264-6190, www.ivonnehernandez.com • ON PENDER ISLAND



Saturday, November 29

Pender talk of the Gulf Islands' Speaker Series—find out about conservation of rare or 'at risk' species; Chris Junck on the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team; Blair Hammond, Habitat Protection Biologist from Environment Canada, on the Ecological Gifts Program; Rundi Kopping, from Parks Canada, on the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve • Community Hall • 1:30pm-4pm • Info: Isabelle Morris, 250-391-9457 • ON PENDER ISLAND

Saturday, December 6

Saturna talk of the Gulf Islands' Speaker Series—find out about conservation of rare or 'at risk' species; Harvey Janszen, Botanist, on Saturna Island Ecosystems; Pippa Shepherd, from Parks Canada, on Canada's new Species at Risk Act; Rundi Kopping, from Parks Canada, on the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve • Community Hall • 1:00pm-3:30pm • Info: Isabelle Morris, 250-391-9457 • ON SATURNA ISLAND

Canadians helping out

November 6 is the date of a very special occasion or rather occasions, it is the third Night of a Thousand Dinners. In acronym talk—N1KD! Developed by The Canadian Landmine Foundation, in three short years the special evening has grown to a national fundraiser event.

Today there are between 45 to 50 million landmines in the ground in at least 70 countries. Every year, those landmines maim or kill approximately 15,000 men, women and children. Those who survive endure a lifetime of physical, psychological and economic hardship. Landmines don't just injure and kill. They also isolate communities, preventing access to clean water, medical facilities and farmland. Survivors face a lifetime of economic hardships, debilitating physical and emotional injuries, and even possible expulsion from their community. These hardships perpetuate the cycle of poverty and dependency and prevent the survivors from leading productive lives.

Sir Paul McCartney and his wife Heather Mills McCartney who have been working to support the plight of those affected by landmines launched this year's campaign at a gala dinner in Los Angeles on September 23.

The key to the success of Night of a Thousand Dinners is its simplicity. Friends invite friends, family, neighbours over for dinner. Instead of, or as well as, the customary bottle of wine or dessert, guests offer donations that go towards clearing minefields. The Canadian Landmine Foundation supplies hosts with resource kits to ensure their dinners will be informative and enjoyable.

Though it may be too late for this November 6, there is nothing to say you can't host your event later. A dinner party pooper? You can eat KD and contribute through the Virtual Dinner Party, if you like! Visit www.1000dinners.com to find out more and see pictures of the Singing Senators et al. /

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LETTERS from previous page

party politics and appoint an all party assembly to address British Columbia's social crisis within the context of international law and human rights. Indeed the Federal Government, which for the past twenty years has looked the other way as income inequality and social deprivation have grown in BC (and across the country) should also be invited to participate in this debate, and the search for equitable and lawful solutions.

Graham Riches, School of Social Work & Family Studies, UBC

Fish Farms

Dear Editor:

The following is a letter I sent to John van Dongen Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries regarding Bill 48 which by now has passed third reading. I urge other readers to voice their concerns to the Minister if they want local Zoning and Landuse Regulations to be honoured by our provincial government.

Dear Minister van Dongen:

I question your motivation to impose aquaculture on the residents of coastal communities in BC as has already happened on Salt Spring Island with Sablefin Hatchery. This industry has been pushed through by the Provincial Government even though the community at large and our Local Trust Committee have said NO THANKS! Now you want to insure that you can impose aquaculture on all communities if you so desire through the passing of Bill 48.

Have you read *Fishy Business* by Dale Marshall (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives) or *Net Cage Aquaculture* by Professor Neil Frazer? You must not have or you would know that the farming of carnivorous fish in open net cage farms is not environmentally sound and economically it makes no sense due to its negative impact on the wildfishery, sportfishery, tourism and other connected industries. I strongly urge you to withdraw Bill 48.

Sharon Bywater, Salt Spring Island /

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On Thursday October 23, I got to meet the 'Bills,' all five members of the Bill Hilly Band, on their first concert in their 'official tour' of the Gulf Islands. They had a packed Pender school gym (the most concert series subscriptions ever, I heard) hollering and hooting for most of the night with their lively music. A mix of traditional bluegrass tunes, hints of jazz, old rearranged European folk music and funky rewrites of classical tunes filled the room—except the acoustics were not great in the gym, which the band noticed and commented on after the show.

All the band members really knew how to play and their music was really tight and strong but it was their delivery—their obvious joy in what they were doing and their ability to interact with their audience—that made the show. The Bills fascinated their audience by telling stories and jokes. They dedicated a song to Gordon Campbell titled 'Are you listening?' and sang a sad tale of famous Victoria architect Francis Rattenbury.

The mandolin player, Marc Atkinson, fascinated the young children, who were dancing madly in the front of the gym near the stage. He played 'Go, go, stop' with them, getting them to dance and then stop when he stopped strumming his mandolin. My stepdaughter has taken up getting her dad to do this at home now!

This talented group of five young musicians (one still in his

teens!) are a fun lot—'Bill Mando' (Marc Atkinson) in a fancy striped black and red jacket; the 'Reverend Bill Bass' (Glen Manders) in a brown pinstripe suit; 'Bill Violin' (Jeremy Penner) in an Edmonton fire department shirt; towing a piano and accordion wearing a flowered 70's shirt, 'Bill Fiddle' 3 Adrian Dolan; and last but not least, ring leader 'Bill Guitar' (Chris Frye) in his customary bowler.

I must say that during the second set, I was jealous of the children, who so freely danced and interacted with the band. Adults were dancing off to the side and at the back during the first half of the show but were asked to stay in their seats during the intermission (a sore disappointment for many, especially since the Pender Post article on the band said to 'bring your dancing shoes!'). Unfortunate to keep in ones seat during such a lively display of energy and music.

I spoke with Chris after the show and he mentioned that this is the first time the band has performed on all the Southern Gulf Islands (they'd never played Saturna, Galiano or Pender). They say they've noticed that every Island has its own character—don't we know it! They're planning on playing on the Islands again sometime—if you missed it the first time 'round, make sure to see them if they return. In the meantime, if you'd like to see pictures and learn more about the band, you can listen to their two CDs or find more details about the band at www.thebillhillyband.com. /

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Ice bound forests revealed by retreating glaciers

According to researchers at UVic's tree ring laboratory, glaciers in BC's Coast Mountains are retreating at rates of between 25 and 50 metres per year and, in the process, are exposing buried forests that, until now, have been entombed below the ice for 2,000 to 5,000 years. These sub-fossil forests, including trees, soil, cones and other organic material, contain a wealth of scientific data on glacier responses to climate change rarely available to Canadian scientists.

'We're using trees to tell glacier stories and the glaciers are really emphasizing that some kind of threshold climate change has taken place within the last century,' says Dr. Dan Smith, founder of UVic's tree ring lab and chair of the geography department. 'Whether it's global warming or changes in precipitation, our research at several glacier sites within the Coast Mountains is telling us this hasn't happened in the past 5,000 years.'

Using dendrochronology, the science of dating events and climate change by studying tree rings, Smith and graduate students Sandy Allen and Sarah Laxton travelled to Todd glacier near Stewart this summer to collect samples that they will use to eventually create a 3,000-year tree ring chronology. This annual record of tree growth will enable researchers to track climate and glacial mass balance changes in the Coast Mountains more precisely than ever before. /

CONTEST from page 1

Island or the Gulf Islands. Projects must not have been previously produced, and should have a running time of 60 minutes or less. Jurors will consider both scripted plays and non-text based work. Projects will be adjudicated on two primary criteria: artistic potential, and ability of the applicant to carry out the project.

There is no application form. Proposals may take any form, but must include a cover letter with contact information, and one-page synopsis of the project. Applicants are encouraged to include support materials, including: script, writing sample, or outline; production timeline; working budget; artistic resumes of proposed collaborators; and information or media clippings regarding previous work. More info: www.intrepidtheatre.com or 250-383-2663. /

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Islanders concerned about environmental impact of cruise ships

Islanders on both sides of the Canada-US Border expressed concern about the impact of the burgeoning cruise ship industry on the marine ecosystem when the San Juan County Commissioners met with the Islands Trust Council on North Pender Island this past summer.

'A report from the Oceans Blue Foundation indicates that the number of cruise ships going into Seattle has grown from six in 1999 to 100 this year,' said David Essig, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. 'These are like floating towns and they produce everything from raw sewage to photo processing chemicals and dry cleaning fluids. At this point, Canada is only developing voluntary environmental guidelines for the operation of cruise ships. We don't believe this is good enough.'

The *Norwegian Sun* discharged approximately 40 tons of raw human sewage into the Strait of Juan de Fuca in May and is under investigation. This has heightened the concerns of island communities that are closely linked to the marine waters.

Essig wrote to Transport Canada to comment on Canada's draft guidelines. The Islands Trust's comments on the guidelines are available on the Islands Trust website at <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/>

FERRIES from page 2

The press release interpreted this as 'more than half', but don't forget the plus or minus 4%. (And what do you think the public would say if they were asked about the wage rates of your boss, you, or Mr. Hahn?)

Q. 12c stated that all on-board employees are unionized, including the Chief Steward and the Chief Engineer (why are these two positions, in particular, mentioned?). 37% of respondents considered this 'appropriate', while 49%, according to the pollsters' report, said that 'some of the office managers should be non-union' (this is confusing; the office managers are not on board, so that would appear to be a different issue) and 13% didn't know.

Q.12d asked: 'Currently, job promotions are based primarily on length of service, not on merit. Do you believe this is: Fair and reasonable (15%); Merit should also be considered (78%); Don't know (7%). Without detailed knowledge of the contract, respondents have no way of judging what is stated (what does 'primarily' mean?).

Contract Covers Many Employees and Jobs

All these questions were asked of respondents who probably knew little about the contract, which covers over 3,000 employees, on the ships, at the terminals, and in the office. The ships vary from the superferries to small vessels doing short back-and-forth runs between the Islands, and longer runs on the north coast and to the Queen Charlottes. Much of the work is shift work. All ship crew must qualify for Transport Canada Safety Certificates (so that in case of emergency they can 'tell you exactly what to do') and must often study for years to obtain additional qualifications for promotion.

From the company's point of view, employees must be reliable, because no ship can leave port until it has the Transport Canada mandated number of crew on board. BC Ferries must have a stable labour force of experienced employees.

So like any labour contract covering a large group of employees, there are many interlocking factors, and affecting one will have repercussions for all the others.

But Let's Change It Somehow

Despite this, the survey asked respondents one final multiple-choice question, also an example of push-polling.

Q.13 asked: which provisions of the contract would the respondent like to have changed?

- Workers are paid one hour of pay for one or more minutes of overtime (27%)
- Hourly rate for entry level jobs (13%)
- Promotions based on length of service not merit (13%)
- Overtime paid at double time (11%)
- All on-board ferry employees unionized (5%)
- All of the above (7%)
- None of the above (14%)
- Don't know (10%)

These add up to 100%, so it would appear that only one choice was permitted. (Even though, the question about the overtime rate was asked earlier.)

And a Couple of Other Questions

Predictably, 86% of respondents believed it was important to upgrade the fleet. Once again, Mr. Hahn linked this directly to the labour contract: 'On time performance, reasonable fares, and building new ships are all tied to securing a new, more flexible contract that helps us put our financial house in order over the long term.'

And only 76% believed that BC Ferries was safe, much lower than usual. The pollsters thought that this was related to recent reports that passenger evacuation chutes were unsuitable for older people, the handicapped, babies and young children, and so the numbers of these on board should be limited.

As a final note, there was also an interesting question on the transformation of BC Ferries. Many people seemed to be unaware that it was no longer a Crown Corporation. Maybe they haven't noticed any difference.

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 Fernwood School, Salt Spring Island on Wednesday, November 12 commencing at 1 p.m. Public Welcome!

islandtides.com

SATURNA from page 3

partners for the hours and hours of volunteer time they put into creating a fire department and ambulance service for the Island. The dinner created an opportunity for members to talk and laugh and visit and not have to fold hoses, debrief or do dishes or paperwork after the 'fun'. Wonderful idea from the Womens Club and a much-appreciated gesture of thanks. The Womens Club also held a tea for friends and acquaintances of Mary Copeland, more next time.

Kayak Presentation a Success

The Small Boat Club's presentation of Visions of the Wild was a wonderful success. About 50 people came to the Community Hall to watch this multimedia event narrated by Maria Coffee and Dag Goering. Maria and Dag did all the photography and created the presentation. The first presentation recorded their circumnavigation of Vancouver Island by kayak, starting and ending at their home on Protection Island. The second presentation recorded their trip down the Ganges River. Many people commented on the quality of sound, music, narration and excellent photography.

SENTENCE from page 3

of the Criminal Code, such as statutory sentencing guidelines, do not apply.

BC Green party comments that according to Cameron Ward, Ms. Krawczyk's lawyer, several judges of the British Columbia Supreme Court and Court of Appeal have criticized this policy for its 'officially induced abuse of process,' but the criticism has not yet been heeded.

It's time the government moves to make this sort of protest a summary offense with reasonable sentences that fit the nature of the crime. It's also time the government listens to what Ms.

AIDS from page 1

and friends and their efforts to plant gardens in a collection of shelters on the outskirts of Nairobi. Gary McNutt and friends are working in areas of health and education with a south African group called S.O.L.I.D. Peter Bardon and Peggy Frank and friends are raising funds needed to bring water and electricity to widows, orphans and war-ravaged families in the Village of Hope, Rwanda. This project was recommended by Stephen Lewis. The Garden Club is raising money to buy seeds and fertilizers for Aids widows and orphans in Malawi.

The focus of the day, say planners, will be education, local entertainment and fundraising. Events include an AIDS walk. Another aspect of the plans requires quite a bit of community participation. Throughout the world 7,000 people die of AIDS daily. Gary McNutt suggested that 7,000 small crosses be placed in Peace Park. Billets will need to be found for off-Island participants.

If you know of other AIDS focussed projects that would like to be included, for information or to become involved call Peter Bardon at 537-5553.

Krawczyk and thousands of other British Columbians have to say about the need to protect more old-growth forests and to withdraw the proposed Working Forest legislation,' concludes Carr.

Western Canada Wilderness Committee (WC²) comments that 'by the time she finishes her jail term in April, 2004, in total she will have spent 11 months in prison for protesting the provincial government's Working Forest proposal. WC² says that details on how Krawczyk can be contacted will be posted on www.wildernesscommittee.org.

Trust CEO moves on

Gordon McIntosh, Executive Director of the Islands Trust, will leave the Trust early January.

'Gordon ... has been an integral part of the Islands Trust for more than a decade. For our Trustees, he has provided insights and guidance to all of us ... especially as we have sought to make our institutional culture more positive and compassionate. For our staff, he has led the way, bringing these new cultural values to the frontlines and ensuring that this new vision of the Islands Trust is manifest in the way we do business,' said David Essig, Chair of the Trust.

McIntosh has held the senior position since 1991. He oversaw the organization's transition as it grew from a branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs into a federation of local

governments responsible for the land use planning and conservation of BC's coastal islands. During McIntosh's tenure, communities in the Islands Trust modernized their Official Community Plans and land use bylaws to manage growth pressures.

McIntosh also provided valuable senior staff liaison for the Islands Trust in the creation of the Southern Gulf Islands National Park Reserve and in the successful development of a tax exemption program for the protection of natural areas. Recently McIntosh has helped set the course for the Trust's review of its governance structure.

McIntosh plans to teach at universities, conduct executive development and provide organizational consultation. He also plans to complete his Doctorate in Public Administration at the University of Victoria. ✍

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Samhain—Celtic New Year - Peter D. Carter

While Hallowe'en is enjoyed by most as a good excuse for reveling in outrageous costumes, carving pumpkins, and indulging in candy, for many it has become a significant spiritual event under its old Celtic name, Samhain.

Encouraged that they don't now risk being burned at the stake or given jail terms, these people follow a European-derived pagan renaissance called neopaganism. It is rumoured that Gulf Islanders are among their number. Not surprising as pagan means 'peasant' or 'person of the country.' Paganism was the spiritual expression of forest and country living, reflecting the human bond with the whole of nature.

Samhain (pronounced soween) is the most important Celtic (now neopagan) spiritual festival. It translates as summer's end or, more accurately, summer's concealment. A Gaelic meaning is to quieten down. Samhain, the dark time, marked the end of one year and the start of the new year—the Celtic equivalent of New Year's Eve.

The Pagan year was a cycle. Life was seen as circular, not linear. The people believed in turning the wheel of the year by participating in seasonal rituals that reflected the changes in nature. They divided the year into two, four and eight: Samhain and Beltaine (the two main festivals), the four solstices and equinoxes, plus additional harvest and planting festivals. By this means, Pagan people ensured they were an integral and active part of nature.

The living body of a Celtic tribe included both ancestors and successors. At Samhain, those who had died that year were remembered and the ancestors were honoured. The living invited the spirits of their deceased relatives and friends to blend with their own. This prepared the way for future generations.

All the village's fires were extinguished on this night and a sacred fire was lit for the new year—the bone fire. The people took torches from this fire to kindle their hearthfire and to light the lanterns that were left to guide in the dead. Hunting, agricultural and household implements, as well as ritual implements (they

were often the same), were purified in the fire and consecrated to the goddess.

Pagans believed that at certain times and places, like Samhain, they could see and connect with the future (clairvoyance). At this juncture between the years, normal time and space were suspended. The veil between the worlds of the living and the dead and between humans and other spiritual beings, was at its thinnest. The dead could readily visit the living and be communicated with. The spirits of other species and mythic beings, some of which could be dangerous if disrespected, were close.

Samhain was the time of bringing in the last crops, gathering nuts, making apple cider and slaughtering animals who would not make it through the winter. It also involved the very important saving of the seed corn, for sowing the following year. A thanksgiving for these bounties of the Nature Goddess was made. Mythologically, at Samhain the goddess goes underground and leaves the next part of the year to her god consort.

Samhain was a time for getting rid of the unwanted attachments of the past year and making fresh plans and wishes for the new year. This was done in ritual by burning representations of the past in the fire—personal transformation. Votive offerings asking for future blessings were cast into lakes and rivers.

This time between the years was considered a time of chaos and people dressed up as different ages and characters, acted absurdly, and played tricks.

These days the meaning of the festival is left up to participants—a fun time, and maybe much more.' ✍

WHOOOPS!

Pre-Hallowe'en typo gremlins got into our last issue! Two sentences in *White Poppies, Too?* should have read: 'This tradition has been kept alive by others and is growing now, as people find it an opportunity to add an additional meaning to our November 11 Remembrance Day. This means no disrespect to the symbolism of the red poppy, instead for some it deepens the meaning of the day.'

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