

# Salish Sea Island Tides

Giving The Coast A Community Voice For 27 Years



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Photo: Toby Snelgrove, SNELGROVEimages.com

Sea lions on the rocks of East Point, Saturna Island.

## Electric vehicle cross-Canada roadtrip

In a historic first for electric vehicles, a Saanich couple have set out on an across-Canada roadtrip in a 100% electric car pulling a camping trailer.

By itself, the car, a Tesla Model X, has a range of 400km. While pulling the trailer, its range will be reduced to 220km. Rolf Oetter and Silke Sommerfeld, with their dog Kyle, will be driving close to 10,000km during their three-month trip from Victoria to St John's, Newfoundland. A journey of that distance, pulling a camper, has never been attempted in an electric vehicle before.

The trailer has also been installed with 800 watts of solar panels and 5 kilowatt/hours of lithium ion batteries. Generated electricity will power the trailer when the available outlets are being used to charge the electric car.

The Saanich couple say they have always wanted to travel across Canada, but once they had made the switch to an electric car they couldn't imagine driving a fuel-powered motorhome across the country.

'We hope to inspire others to switch to renewable energy and electric cars,' said Sommerfeld. 'We want to show that long-distance travel in an electric car, and even camping with an electric car, is not only doable, it's mega-fun!'

Oetter and Sommerfeld are hoping to raise awareness of sustainable energy. Whenever possible, they will be attending local events during their journey to share stories of their trip.

'We believe the adoption of electric cars and solar panels is one piece of the puzzle for a sustainable future,' said Oetter. 'I'm a father and I care about my daughter's future. That's why we're doing this.'

Oetter and Sommerfeld's journey began on June 11. Follow their progress at [www.teslaxcanada.com](http://www.teslaxcanada.com).

## News Digest

### Updating the Fisheries Act

A group of 56 organizations and 13 individuals, including West Coast Environmental Law, the BC Wildlife Federation, the Council of Canadians and the David Suzuki Foundation, have signed a letter asking The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, to update the *Fisheries Act*. The letter asks for previous habitat protections to be reinstated and the Ministry to improve monitoring and enforcement of all provisions. The letter also asks the government to include in the *Fisheries Act* protection for recognized treaty and aboriginal rights. The letter also endorses 'modern safeguards' for sustainable fisheries, such as incorporating sustainability principles; science-based decision making; protection of environmental flows; consideration of cumulative effects; and delegation of monitoring powers to indigenous communities.

### BC Falls Behind on Climate Action

A report by the Pembina Institute has found that BC lags behind other provinces on climate action. BC's carbon emissions are increasing and are projected to continue growing. According to the Canadian Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project Team, if nothing changes in BC's climate change policies, the province's emissions will rise 39% above their 2014 level by 2030. BC's emissions in 2014 were 63 million tonnes. The province's emission targets aim to reduce emissions to 44 million tonnes by 2020, but today that seems unlikely to happen.

In other provinces, the reverse is expected. Alberta's emissions are expected to decline 26% over the same period, and it is estimated that Ontario's emissions will be reduced 22%. Quebec should see reductions of 23%.

### Orca Sanctuary Considered on BC Coast

A US whale protection organization is looking to build a whale sanctuary for orcas that are rescued or retired from aquariums, and they are considering locating it on the BC coast. The non-profit Whale Sanctuary Project would turn a natural location, such as a cove or inlet, into a protected space for the rescued whales to live out the rest of their lives. The opening of the cove would be netted off to prevent the whales from heading into the wild, where they would not be able to care for themselves.

The group has estimated the cost of the project at \$20 million, and the organization president, Lori Marino, is hoping to have the sanctuary up and running in three to five years. Locations under consideration include the BC coast off the Mainland, sites on

Vancouver Island and Puget Sound, and locations on the east coast of North America.

### Renewable Energy in Nunavut

A study by the Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Energy on behalf of the World Wildlife Fund of Canada has found that within 13 of Nunavut's most economically promising communities, five have a strong business case for investment in renewable energies. Currently, the primary energy source for the Arctic communities in Nunavut is diesel fuel, which has a high logistical and financial cost, and a high environmental risk.

The study states that investment in solar and wind would benefit the five communities listed—Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, Arviat, Baker Lake and the Hamlet of Sanikiluaq. Renewable energy investments would be made back through reduced diesel fuel costs. Of the five communities, the Hamlet of Sanikiluaq was found to have the maximum energy savings (45%), which would lead to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of 53%.

WWF-Canada will be consulting with the listed communities in September of this year to discuss renewable energy potential.

### Edmonton Installs Solar Benches

The City of Edmonton has installed two benches that come equipped with solar-powered charging centers for phones and other gadgets. The benches, known as Soofa benches, are free to use and have USB ports to charge phones from sunlight. They also have a basic battery system that allows them to keep functioning even at night from energy stored during the day. Soofa benches were first launched in Boston and can now be found in 12 US states and in five other countries. Edmonton is the first Canadian city to embrace the technology.

### Federal Government Invests in BC Transit

The federal government has pledged \$460 million in funding to support public transit infrastructure projects in British Columbia. The money will go towards upgrades and renovations to existing infrastructure, and the construction of new bus lanes and other transit projects. Of the \$460 million, \$370 million is designated for the area of Metro Vancouver. The province and local municipalities have also pledged money towards transit in the province, bringing the total investment up to \$934 million.

BC was the first province to sign transit agreements with the federal government.



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● Nanaimo - South Parkway Plaza

● Parksville - Heritage Centre Mall

● Port Alberni - Shoppers Drug Mart Plaza, 10th Ave

● Campbell River - The Village, Willow Point

● Powell River - Pacific Point Market



## Editorial: On Turning Seventy-Three

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**Q:** Belated Happy Birthday, Christa! After a more than quarter-century stint in creating and running *Island Tides*, what are your thoughts?

I have to say I feel more passionately involved in the world than ever, both on an every day level and in global structures. Back in my 20s, when I was a grade school teacher in Ontario, I remember thinking that what I wished for was an overview of the planet (it was soon after the first moonwalk).

And I still want that—whenever I get an insight, a connection, it gives me great pleasure. And I love the way I can think about things now—I just wish I had more time to do so. I have enough experience to take shortcuts in thinking, to grasp things fast. I take no credit for it, it's just genetics—a gift. I think it's what you do with the gifts you are given that counts—and I've lots more to do yet. I am so not done yet.

Dave Lindquist, who did hand paste-up for us in *Island Tides'* early days, used to say that no day is wasted in which there is a good conversation. I think no day is wasted in which there is a good think.

Actually, having a conversation with me is a bit like being interviewed. I try to do the small talk, the generalities thing but I want to know how, why, when... I don't know if I brought that to journalism or whether journalism brought that to me. And I want to use what I find out—so if this happened like this, what could happen next? How exactly do we do it?

**Q:** And what could happen next?

Oh, in my immediate plans, I'm still looking for the person who wants to carry *Island Tides* on, who sees the strength and potential it has as independent media, as a social enterprise, as a catalyst for democracy. Not to mention, it's a fun business; you have readers, advertising businesses, subcontractors—people from all over the coast and BC, across the nation and across the world to relate to. New operators could take the fruit of all this work and add their own dreams to expand its role.

They might be anywhere in Canada—or the world—or they might be next door. I'm now getting impatient but it's a bit like finding a needle in a haystack, so if any readers could spread the word, it would be great.

I would get on with things I have been wanting to do for years; new owners would walk into a ready-made, amazing life on the coast.

**Q:** What would you do next?

Apart from spending lots of time with my two island grandsons, I'd be all over the coast talking to people, giving talks, making news videos for my embryonic *Island TidesTV* (readers should check it out on Youtube), writing a book or two for sure, creating a blog, checking out the places in the world where people are walking boldly into our fantastic low-carbon future; probably helping something extraordinary happen here, or somewhere else.

A dream I have is to make really good stuff for children: movies, games, apps, books—most of what we have is so unenlightened. Not to mention, I'd give my house a spring clean, fix stuff, make stuff, swim, plant a big garden, learn more about soil, take up painting and drawing, listen to music—which has become a complete non-part of my life. Just listen more, smell more, feel more... for me painting would be about seeing deeply—not producing stuff to sell, rather, about making everyday life more intense. I've just this week had a cataract operation and the colours I now see again are amazing me.

**Q:** You've lived on the islands for 30 years. What keeps you here?

My favourite thing about the world is serendipity—no wonder that I chose to live on the islands—serendipity's prevalent here.

I fell in love with the word when I first heard it. It's defined as an unsought, unintended, and/or unexpected but fortunate discovery and/or learning experience that happens by accident. Another definition is 'a combination of events which are not individually beneficial, but occurring together produce a good or wonderful outcome'.

I love the wonder and awe of it. I have come to think that serendipity is partly a matter of how one pays attention and sees connections. On the islands, it gives a lift to almost every day.

The islands are full of richness, which has increased over the last three decades. I love our archipelago; the combination of islands in their Salish Sea is a source of great happiness.

Oh, there's so much more I could say, I just need to get on with writing those books.

Oh, BTW, have you looked at all the islands-centric ads in this vibrant issue? All are relevant to our islands way-of-life and to the way 'our' culture changes and develops. ☺

## Readers' Letters

### Play Safe this Summer

Dear Editor:

As a member of The War Amps Child Amputee Program (CHAMP) and a safety ambassador for the PLAYSAFE program, I have met kids who have lost limbs in accidents that could have been prevented. With the weather warming up, it's a good time to teach kids about the dangers that can come with summer, such as lawnmowers, boat motors and playing around water areas.

I want to spread The War Amps PLAYSAFE message because these accidents can be avoided with attention to our surroundings. I would encourage parents to take their kids on a 'safety walk' and point out the dangers in their area.

It only takes a split second for an accident to happen, so let's all PLAYSAFE!

Kate Bagshaw, 16, White Rock

### Preserve and Protect

Dear Editor:

Since the late '80s the world has been dealing with a whole series of free trade and investor-state agreements. By now the underlying pattern is clear—these amount to an alphabet soup of corporate coups against democratic sovereignty.

This is very clear with the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), which Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz sees as possibly the worst trade-deal ever negotiated. He said 'It used to be the basic principle was polluters pay. If you damaged the environment, then you have to pay. Now if you pass a regulation that restricts ability to pollute or does something about climate change, you could be sued and could pay billions of dollars.'

The federal government has set a deadline of June 30 for people to comment on whether or not Canada should ratify the TPP. (Email comments to: ciit-tp-pp@parl.gc.ca.)

The Gulf Islands Alliance (GIA) board sees the TPP as a potential serious threat to the Islands Trust's ability to 'preserve and protect' our beautiful, precious part of the world. We are asking our elected representatives to speak up on our behalf.

Nanaimo already passed a resolution to 'express its opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement and [to] communicate this to Prime Minister Trudeau, Cabinet Ministers and every Member of Parliament'.

What about your group or local government? GIA is happy to provide information and assistance. Please contact info@gulfislandsalliance.ca or call 250.537.5251 to get in touch.

Jan Slakov, Salt Spring Island

### A Forgotten Promise

Dear Editor:

Last month, Marie-Claude Bibeau, the Canadian minister of international development, was interviewed for the television program *Les Coulisses du Pouvoir*. I congratulate her for promising to raise Canada's official development assistance (ODA), to centre it towards the poorest countries and to diversify support for women and girls in the Global South.

Minister Bibeau was asked if she intended to raise ODA to the level of 0.7% of Canada's GDP, in accordance to the commitment taken at the UN almost 50-years-ago. An interesting fact is that in 2005 this commitment was restated in Parliament. Canada's ODA currently represents 0.28% of our GDP.

During the interview, Minister Bibeau said that Canada never made such a promise. This contradicts an official government document.

On October 24, 1970, Canada did indeed vote for a UN resolution on this topic. It's called 'Resolution 2626 of the 25th session'. Moreover, this initiative originated from Lester B Pearson, a previous Liberal Prime Minister. Of course, this commitment was made a long time ago, but it's still relevant today because the proper means must be invested to reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

How can we fulfill this promise without increasing public debt or augmenting the burden on Canadian tax payers? The answer: by fighting tax havens and putting a tax on financial transactions.

Will we some day adopt efficient measures to redistribute wealth? For this to happen, our governments must stop acting as lackeys for the rich and powerful.

Jean-Sébastien Bourret, Montreal

### Environmental Hypocrisy

Dear Editor:

As a lifetimer environmentalist, did anyone else not see the glaring Monty Pythonesque paradox in the cover photo of *Island Tides* (June 2, 2016) of the kayak flotilla rallying to stop the Kinder Morgan pipeline terminal?

All of the several dozen protesters are either in, holding, or wearing petroleum-based products! And of course the campaign sub-text to stopping pipelines is simply shifting instead the transport of oil products by the far riskier, more accident-prone railroad system through Lower Mainland neighbourhoods.

Let's all please stop, think and focus more on the longer game.

We all want to see a post-oil world as soon as possible, but shutting down Canada's oil industry and all the tax revenues and economic benefits (and our 2% contribution to all global GHG emissions) is simply click-and-like, feel-good environmentalism. Global oil keeps pumping elsewhere and we simply hand the revenue to enlightened, environmental, and human-rights respecting states like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar and Russia.

Of course we need to get emissions down. We need to transition from oil as quickly as we can. But oil is still going to be part of our economy and lifestyles for a quite a while yet. Let's still get the benefits from it because no matter what, from smartphone to cupboard, we all have oil on our hands.

In the meantime, let's do five things as activists with our

remaining lifespans and spare-time:

- 1) keep working at reducing our own personal carbon footprints;
- 2) buy stock in companies that are building hydro, wind and solar energy tech and infrastructure both domestically, and in the United States, India and China;
- 3) get involved in grassroots groups doing good work on human-rights, environmental protection and education in developing countries;
- 4) lobby our governments hard for more and larger marine protected areas and wilderness preserves; and,
- 5) be an activist for strong environmental, emissions, and safety regulations for shipping oil out of the busy Port of Vancouver.

Ken Gurr, Gabriola Island

### School Dresscode Language

Dear Editor:

I have very strong feelings about adults in authority continuing to perpetuate a culture in which girls are taught that their bodies are shameful and they must somehow figure out how to fix sexual feelings for men and boys when we should be teaching kids about consent.

School dresscodes with language like 'distraction-free environment' and rules about length of shorts and whatnot, as well as the way that some teachers enforce dresscodes, add to this culture.

As Rebecca Solnit writes '...training begins early. Girls in middle and high school are told their forms and garments cause male behaviour. Who is responsible for the behaviour of boys in these narratives about spaghetti straps and leggings? Girls.' (Parents of boys, this language is also deeply insulting to our young men.)

School District #61 trustee Jordan Watters is bringing forth a motion to update school dresscodes so they don't end up being so discriminatory towards girls.

Tasha Diamant, Victoria

### TransMountain-X Capacity 45% Higher Than Declared

The following letter was sent to Catherine McKenna, Federal Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Dear Minister:

The Mayne Island Conservancy Society (MICS) wishes to congratulate your government for its stated commitment to restoring integrity and credibility to the National Energy Board's environmental review process for energy development proposals.

In the spirit of your commitment, we wish to bring to your attention a concern with the approval process for upgrades to existing energy development projects. We are particularly concerned about the implications for the Northern Gateway

LETTERS, please turn to next page



Photo: Lorie J Brown

A bald eagle flies with breakfast in its talons.

## Feed-in tariffs help renewable energy grow

David Suzuki

In the early 1990s, Germany launched Energiewende, or 'energy turning point', a program 'to combat climate change, avoid nuclear risks, improve energy security, and guarantee competitiveness and growth.' Renewable energy grew from 4% in 1990 to more than 27% in 2014, including a significant increase in citizen-owned power projects, according to energy thinktank Agora Energiewende.

Germany's greenhouse gas emissions dropped by 27% during that time. Its goal is to reduce emissions 40% from 1990 levels by 2020 and more than 80% by 2050. Polls show that 90% of Germans like the program—even though it means paying higher rates for electricity.

There's good reason for this widespread support. The primary technologies of wind and solar have become cost-competitive with conventional energy sources. Variable renewable sources and 'flexibility options' for conventional and renewable power generation are making baseload power obsolete—which means the system is geared to wind and solar rather than nuclear or coal. It's one of the most reliable energy systems in the world. And it has created jobs and revenue.

Energiewende hasn't solved all of Germany's emissions and energy issues. Electricity rates are among Europe's highest, although they're expected to come down as more renewable energy becomes available, and efficient usage means 'actual costs to households are comparable to countries with lower prices but higher consumption levels.' The country still gets more energy from coal than renewables, transportation and heating consume significant energy from conventional sources, and heavy industry makes Germany one of Western Europe's

'... efficient usage means actual costs to households are comparable to countries with lower prices but higher consumption levels.'

highest emitters. Opposition from power utilities and coal companies, with consequent government compromises, has also slowed progress. But a range of initiatives and tools has put Germany on track to meeting its long-term climate commitments.

### Feed-in Tariff

One tool Germany used to achieve its rapid progress was a feed-in tariff, which guarantees renewable energy producers—individuals, businesses, community organizations and power companies—access to the grid and payment from power utilities for energy they put into the system. At first, the tariff wasn't enough to cover costs, but in year 2000 Germany introduced a law that guaranteed feed-in tariffs for 20-years at prices high enough for producers to profit. As renewable energy costs drop and more is brought into the system, tariffs go down.

Feed-in tariffs are in place in Ontario, and in many countries worldwide. The Pembina Institute notes they're effective for several reasons. They 'reward actual production' rather than just installation, they minimize development investment risks and 'facilitate access to financing', and they encourage small, medium and large producers and 'community and local ownership and engagement, minimizing opposition to projects.'

They also 'encourage renewable power producers to use the most efficient technology, driving down costs by fostering industrial competition,' and while they cause short-term electricity price hikes, those stabilize over time as costs and risks of conventional power generation and volatile fossil fuel markets are reduced. Income paid through tariffs 'more than offsets any electricity price increases' for those who generate

FEED-IN TARIFF, please turn to page 7

## LETTERS from previous page

Project and the Trans-Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project, both of which introduce risks for the waters and shorelines of Canada's west coast.

MICS is registered with the NEB as a commenter on the Trans-Mountain proposal, and we submitted our official comment opposing the proposal in July of 2015. We accepted in good faith the proposed volume expansion of 540,000 barrels per day and the resulting shipping increase from roughly one Aframax-class per month, to roughly one per day (round-trip numbers are double). This was the risk we assessed and found unacceptable, given the catastrophic consequences of a spill in the enclosed waters between Vancouver Port and the open Pacific.

We have subsequently learned that the design capacity of the new 'twinning' pipeline is actually about 780,000 barrels per day, or about 45% greater than proposed. We have also learned that, following the recent approval of the original proposal, Section 58 exemptions permit a subsequent proposal to expand shipped volume to the maximum design capacity with a much more limited environmental review that could completely exclude consideration of the increased shipping risk.

It is clear that companies who design pipeline projects base their business cases on infrastructure carrying capacity in the expectation of utilizing that capacity in future—there is no other reason to build it. We understand that this is a perfectly legal approach under the provisions of the *National Energy Board Act*. However it is also clear that the general public and most of those who take the time, in good faith, to assess projects base their assessments on the lower shipping volumes projected in the proposals. We assert that this lack of transparency of a proponent's real intentions results in an artificially lowered risk assessment by the public.

We believe that the integrity of the much-maligned environmental review process of the National Energy Board, and the credibility of your government's stated intention to restore that integrity, both depend on closing the Section 58 loophole. Therefore we request that:

♦ Your government amend the *National Energy Board Act*

to ensure that all energy development proposals, whether new projects or expansions of existing projects, be subjected to full environmental reviews; and

♦ Until such time that the *Act* is so amended, that Cabinet exercise its right to refuse any expansion proposals that the National Energy Board approves without full environmental review.

Malcolm Inglis and Helen O'Brian, Mayne Island

### Save Desolation Sound

Dear Editor:

Once again, Lehigh Hanson Company has snuck under the radar to propose to—and work with—the BCLiberal government to get a licence to begin construction of a vast quarry in the south mouth of Homfray Channel, Desolation Sound. The only notice seems to have been in the *Powell River Business Gazette*.

They would first log 2,000 hectares of trees and then open the mine above Lloyd Creek Bay to extract what appears to be glacial deposit gravel. The bay faces out into Desolation Sound and the noise from the rock running down from the mountain area and being loaded to the transport ships and barges will be intense and extend out across to Mink, Martin, Kinghorne and east Cortes Islands. The gravel will be taken out of the country.

Lehigh Hanson is owned by Heidelberg Cement of Germany with head offices in Texas. They are a huge, powerful company known to have supported the BCLiberal party. Locally they own the Sechelt Quarry and one on Texada Island.

We are trying to rally support to block the construction of a huge quarry in this magnificent wilderness area and save our common land from corporate destruction. I am very familiar with this area since I have lived, worked and travelled through it for 45 years. The 'Other Directions' section in my book, *Clam Gardens: Aboriginal Mariculture On Canada's West Coast*, details food structures two miles south from Lloyd Creek and Bay in Prideaux Haven Marine Park. Lloyd Creek Bay also contains clam gardens which I will check next low tide.

Please check out the Save Desolation Sound website: [www.savedesolationsound.com](http://www.savedesolationsound.com).

Judith M Williams, Cortes Island ☺

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## Norway bans deforestation

Norway made history in late May when it became the first country to ban deforestation. Any product that contributes to deforestation will no longer be used in the Scandinavian country. Additionally, any company that practices deforestation will no longer be awarded any government contracts.

'This is an important victory in the fight to protect the rainforest,' said Nils Hermann Ranum, head of policy and campaign at Rainforest Foundation Norway, which has lobbied for this policy for years. 'Over the last few years, a number of companies have committed to cease the procurement of goods that can be linked to destruction of the rainforest. Until now, this has not been matched by similar commitments from governments. Thus, it is highly positive that the Norwegian state is now following suit and making the same demands when it comes to public procurements.'

At the 2015 New York UN Climate Summit, Norway joined Germany and the UK in a pledge to 'promote national commitments that encourage deforestation-free supply chains'. Banning deforestation completely was the country's next step.

Unsustainably produced palm oil, soy, beef and timber will no longer be used within Norway. According to Climate Action, the production of these products in Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Indonesia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea—countries with high levels of deforestation—contributed to 40% of the global deforestation between 2000 and 2011.

### Norway's Past Action

Norway has been a leader in reducing deforestation for years. In 2008, they made an agreement with Brazil—home of 60% of the Amazon rainforest—to reduce clear-cutting within the South American country. Norway gave Brazil \$1 billion in exchange for a reduction in logging. Since then, Brazil's deforestation has decreased by 75%. According to *National Geographic*, that deal saved 33,000 square miles of rainforest from clear cutting and kept 3.2 billion tonnes of CO2 out of the atmosphere—which is three times bigger of an effect than taking all the cars of US roads for a year.

In 2011, Norway committed \$250 million towards protecting Guyana's rainforests from logging, which was given to the country over a four-year period.

And in 2014, Norway made an agreement with Liberia. Norway will provide the West African country with \$150 million in aid by 2020 and in exchange, the country will stop logging their forests and place at least 30% under protected area status by 2020. The Liberia forests are home to the last populations of western chimpanzees, forest elephants and leopards. ☺

**Moon Dates**  
 New: July 4  
 Full: July 19

## Green Convention in Victoria - Adam Olsen

With just 339 days until the next provincial general election, the British Columbia Green Party held their convention at the University of Victoria. In the past few years the provincial Greens have switched gears. No longer satisfied with running candidates just to raise important and often forgotten issues, the focus of the 2016 convention was on organizing to win.

About 250 Greens from across the province gathered in the capital to celebrate the successes in the legislature of their lone MLA and to gear up to elect a caucus of Green MLA's in 2017.

The convention speakers all had the same basic message—Greens have proven they have an important voice in the political discourse in BC. I had the honour of sharing stories of working closely with Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver over the past three years and how he has demonstrated a new kind of opposition, one focused on getting things done in spite of being a party of one.

Weaver described working in a legislative environment dominated by two political parties who, he said, have a deeply dysfunctional relationship. He committed to leading the Greens in a new direction. Instead of playing politics, Greens will work with all the MLA's dedicated to solving real problems.

Saanich-Gulf Islands MP and Leader of the Green Party of Canada, Elizabeth May, was the Saturday luncheon speaker. She highlighted the leadership role the Greens played as interveners and full participants in the National Energy Board's Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion hearings.

She noted that Andrew Weaver has been the most effective opposition critic of the expansion of the liquefied natural gas industry. He has challenged the BC government's assertion that fracked LNG is a better transition fuel than coal, and he has

**The Day After the Day After**  
*The following poem was written after the shootings at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando. It was read during a Salt Spring Island Vigil honouring the victims.*

Now I see. The light as well as the dark.  
 Pulse. The impulse to come together to mourn and celebrate.  
 Latin night at Pulse, the Gay nightclub that now will be remembered.  
 The tragedy—another mass killing—this, the largest counted dead.  
 A man firing guns onto the dance floor. People celebrating during Gay Pride month. Another senseless, heinous, hateful act.

When you phoned and offered a gathering of a queer circle  
 I instantly knew I'd come.

And now I realize the power of the circle even more than before.  
 As we passed the sacred stone around in a heart circle,  
 we spoke and we listened and the circle, as it does its magic,  
 connected us to one another.

This is the power of our presence. This is how we can act in  
 our efforts to essentially try to make meaning out of this event,  
 the extinguishing of lives with so much living to look forward to.

Now I see, again and again, the principle of surrender, letting go,  
 releasing, not personalizing, of bringing who we are together,  
 to share the tragedies and highs, but especially the lows,  
 the collective terrors, the mourning.

It's like coming out all over again. Not keeping it inside but  
 coming to understand better and being ourselves,  
 in our complexities and as yet unvalidated desires.  
 We come out, come to ourselves, come together and each time,  
 each moment, our reach becomes wider and our breaths deepen,  
 we trust ourselves and one another and the world brightens  
 despite all the darkness and pain, like a salve for our sorrows,  
 our fears, our anger.  
 We queers and others transform hatred and bigotry and violence into  
 heart opening and knowing we're in this together.

Wendy Judith Cutler

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## Hospital help trip to Ghana - Peter Easthope

On May 25, a seven-person team left Vancouver on a one-month medical mission—destination: Ghana, western Africa.

After 15 hours airborne with a 6-hour stop in Amsterdam, they landed at Kotoki Airport, Accra at 6:30pm, after equatorial sunset. By 8pm, customs and immigration were cleared and luggage, including 14 large cases, had been collected.

Met by Samuel Ampem-Asare, Dr Adekwei and Dr Afua Hesse the team was driven to the Hesse's guest house.

Supper and sleep were welcome to the southwestern-BC team, which was comprised of president of Compassionate Resource Warehouse (CRW) Dell Wergeland, RN; president of Korle-Bu Neuroscience Foundation (KGNF) Marj Ratel, RN; Denise Stone, RN; Jocelyne Lapointe, MD; Karen Currie, RN; Danny Moe; and Pender Islands' Peter Easthope.

The next day the team toured the recently opened private medical school, the Accra College of Medicine, built by the Hesses. It has 14 students in their first year.

In the afternoon, they visited the Tetteh Quarshie Memorial Hospital, situated in Mampong, northeast of Accra. Quarshie was a Ghanain who introduced cocoa cultivation to Ghana in 1873. The hospital has 78 adult beds, 36 pediatric beds and 400 staff. In early May of 2016 the hospital had received a 40-foot shipping container from CRW and KBNF, to assist in establishing the first palliative care and pain management unit in Ghana.

The following morning, the KBNF directors prepared for visits to Sierra Leone and Liberia. Most of the Saturday afternoon was spent at the Accra National Cultural Center perusing craft products and haggling with vendors.

On Sunday, tickets were bought for the 10am bus to Techiman, northwest of Accra. The bus was Korean-built, air-conditioned and comfortable except for the absence of a toilet. After about 6 hours on the road the driver conceded to a pee-break at a truckstop. The facility was a concrete-lined gutter with a concrete wall for privacy.

About 6pm, the bus pulled into the central market in Techiman. Soon the team settled into spacious apartments on the top floor of Mount Olives Hospital, a few kilometers west of the city-centre.

The hospital was built and is owned by Dr Gladstone Kessie. Staff includes four licenced nurses, twenty-one health care assistants, two resident physicians, a pharmacist, seven pharmacy assistants, six security officers, eight claims clerks, an accountant and four receptionists. The hospital has 22 pediatric beds and 48 adult beds. There are two operating rooms, a delivery room and physiotherapy rooms. Some expenses are paid by the government; others by the patients.

On Monday morning our bags of gear were unpacked, we met various staff members and became oriented. The nurses began their work of surveying procedures, mentoring and teaching. I was assigned a room to use as workshop.

In early 2015, a shipping container with items ranging from sewing notions to a neurosurgical microscope had been unpacked into vacant apartments adjacent to our quarters. Much of my work was to find clinical equipment and attempt to put it to use; parts had to be found and assembled.

Typically, the Ghanaian electrical system is similar to the British system. Power is supplied at 220V and a transformer is needed for the majority of North American equipment. Oxygen supply can also present incompatibilities between the European and North American connections.

Although Mount Olives performs urgent surgeries and emergencies 24/7, most scheduled surgeries are on a Friday. On June 3 a caesarian section was scheduled. The OR nurse approached Karen Currie at a nursing station.

OR Nurse: Ms Karen we are doing a c-section. Want to come? KC: Sure! (thinking she will observe). They dash to the operating room. Karen scrubs and gowns.

OR Nurse: Come around here. (Karen is assisting!) The surgeon cuts the dermis and Karen installs the first retractor. More cuts and retractions. Finally, the surgeon breaks the amniotic sack. Karen presses downward and out comes the baby. Karen holds him on Mom's belly while the surgeon delivers the placenta. Karen passes baby to the OR nurse and helps the surgeon with suturing.

Another busy morning at Mount Olives! ☺



Photo: Derek Holzapfel

A rare 'double blossom' foxglove flower.

## What's On?

VANCOUVER ISLAND & ALL THE GULF ISLANDS

### Saturdays till Thanksgiving

**Pender Farmers Institute Saturday Market**—Fresh, local produce, baked goods, local art, artisan works and demonstrations, culinary delights, buskers; bring your friends and family, enjoy coffee and a snack, you never know what you'll find or who you'll meet • Community Hall • 9:30am-1pm • Info: www.pifi.ca • **PENDER**

### Friday, July 1 to Thursday, Aug 4

**Red Tree Gallery Art Show**—'Beside the Salish Sea', silk fusion paintings by Kathleen Lightman and the whimsical & witty folk art sculptures of Guest Artist, MD Hennessy • Opening Reception on Saturday, July 2 • Hope Bay Centre • Tue - Sun, 10am - 4pm • Info: 250.629.6800, redtreegallery.ca • **PENDER**

### July 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 26, 30 and August 7

**Cari Burdett - Chanteuse, on tour!**—VIMA award winning vocalist, with Adrian Dolan & Richard Moody, present an eclectic fusion of art song, opera, jazz, gypsy, folk and world music • **WED, JULY 6:** Butchart Gardens • **THURS, JULY 7:** Hope Bay Studio, Pender Island • **SAT & SUN, JUL 9 & 10:** Sooke • **MON, JUL 11:** Ganges, Salt Spring Island • **TUES & SAT, JULY 26 & 30:** Duncan • **SUN, AUG 7:** Salt Spring Garlic Fest • Ticket info: cariburdett.com/calendar • **VICTORIA, PENDER, SOOKE, SALT SPRING, DUNCAN**

### Thursday to Sunday, July 7 to 10

**2016 InFrinGinG Dance Festival**—Free and ticketed shows from exceptionally talented performers from across Canada; presented alongside Save On Foods DragonBoat Festival; produced by Crimson Coast Dance Society • Info and tickets: www.crimsoncoastdance.org • **NANAIMO**



### Friday & Saturday, July 8 & 9

**4th Annual Hope Bay Boat Days**—Wooden boat & music festival; boat swap meet; kids boat building; rowing races; live music: Fans & Motor Supply Co, King Ox, Whitebird, Pender Battle of the Bands Winners & more! • 25% off advance tickets, online at www.hopebayboatdays.com • **PENDER**

### Saturday, July 9

**St Mary Magdalene Church Mayne Island Fair**—L'Atelier Lavende; silent auction; bake table; Parish meat pies; buy the book; kids games, prizes; face painting; horse shoes; plants; bottle booth; music; treasures from the attic; Lions hamburgers & hot dogs; all welcome • Open from 10am to 3pm • Info: www.stmaryonmayne.ca, 250.539.5519 or 250.539.5832 • **MAYNE**

### Thursday to Sunday, July 14-17

**2016 Denman Island Readers and Writers Festival**—This year's line up: Barbara Adler, Michael Christie, Bruce Cockburn, Charles Demers, J.B. MacKinnon, Cecily Nicholson, Bev Sellers, Miriam Toews, John Vaillant • Denman Village • Info: 250.335.0043, denmanwritersfestival@gmail.com • Website: www.denmanislandwritersfestival.com • **DENMAN**



### Friday to Sunday, July 15 to 17

**Wild Bush Graffiti**—Art exhibit by Jan Albertin, paintings, Ani Feuermann, photographs and Stan Oglv, sculptures; all welcome • Sea Star Winery, 6621 Harbour Hill Drive • Opening: July 15th, 4-8pm • **PENDER**

Next Deadline: July 6

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### Saturday and Sunday, July 16 & 17

**Texada Island Sandcastle Weekend**—Family fun and entertainment • **SAT:** parade, skimboarding, bedraces, kids play area, bingo, vendors and artisans, beer garden and food • **SAT EVENING:** lip sync contest, moonbags, laser light show, at Shelter Pt Park • **SUN:** pancake breakfast; sandcastle construction at Gillies Bay with peoples choice judging and cash prizes • Info: texada.org/events/texada-island-sandcastle-weekend-2016/ • **TEXADA**

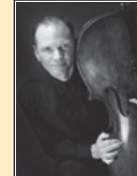
### Saturday & Sunday, July 16 & 17

**20th Annual 'Art Off the Fence'**—Informal outdoor art show & sale; featuring the work of Peggy Bagshaw, Carol Davidson, Frank Ducote, Diane Kremmer, Diane MacDonald, Susan Taylor, Keith Berringer, Jude Farmer, Daniel Feuermann, David Fox & Lorraine Thomson; Painting, drawing, mixed media, folk art, photography, and sculpture in wood & cloth; Live music and food kiosk • Church of the Good Shepherd (just past Poets Cove) • 11am-4pm • Info: 250.629.6241 • **SOUTH PENDER**



### Tuesday to Sunday, July 19-24

**QI Chamber Music Festival**—**JULY 19, TUES:** Evening with Artistic Director, TBA; **JULY 20, WED:** United Church, 7pm, \$20; **JULY 21, THURS:** Family Event, Quadra Community Centre, 10:30am, \$20 family; **JULY 22, FRI:** SouthEnd Winery, 7pm, \$45; **JULY 23, SAT:** Stone House, 7pm, \$20; **JULY 24, SUN:** Quadra Community Centre, 11am, \$35 • Tickets Tidemark Theatre: 250.287.7465, www.quadrafestival.com • **QUADRA**



### Wednesday to Sunday, July 27 to 31

**Texada Aviation Week**—**WED, JULY 27 to SAT, JULY 30:** AeroSpace Camp: aerospace science fun, flight simulator, rockets; youth 10 to 16 years; 9:30am to 2:30pm daily; registration: \$140; room for only 21 more • **SAT, JULY 30:** Fly-in Fling, burgers and dance; Royal Canadian Legion; doors: 4:30pm • **SUN, JULY 31:** Fly-In and Car & Bike Show; Fraser Blues formation flying demonstration team, contests, RCAF display, entertainment; breakfast: 9:00am; BBQ: 12:00pm; free admission • Info: www.texada.org, 604.223.2588 • **TEXADA**



### Friday-Monday, July 29-August 1

**34th annual Filberg Festival**—Celebrating the best of arts, crafts & music from across Canada, 130+ juried arts & crafts, fundraiser for the Filberg Heritage Lodge & Park • 61 Filberg Road • Festival tickets \$15 daily, 12 and under free, advance tickets \$13 daily or \$45 for four day festival pass • Alex Cuba concert \$39; tickets available online or at Thrifty Foods • Info: www.filbergfestival.com, 250.941.0727 • **COMOX**



### Saturday, August 6

**24th Annual Galiano Wine and Beer Festival**—Wines, beers and ciders from near and far, souvenir wine and beer glasses, live music, silent auction, local art, fabulous finger food; new this year: pop-up wine and beer shop on site; a Health Centre fundraiser • Walking distance from ferry • 1-4 pm • Pre-event pancake breakfast: 9am-12pm • Tickets: \$45 at galianowinefestival@gmail.com • Adults only • Info: www.galianowinefestival.com • **GALIANO**

### Saturday, August 13 & Sunday, August 14

**Texada Artists Studio Tour**—20+ artists exhibiting in 14 studios; meet them and see their work in painting, stitchery and fabric arts, stained and fused glass, beading, wood carving, graphic design, pottery, jewellery and beach glass • 10am-4pm • Free admission (BBQ lunch available) • Register online for a driver-escort and walk on the ferry from Powell River • Info: www.texadaart.com, 604.486.0334 • **TEXADA**

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## Green burial the new trend

Frants Attorp

You've spent your life going green: reducing consumption, recycling waste, and buying local as much as possible. But what about after you die? Chances are you do not want your remains to be pumped full of toxic formaldehyde, nor to be buried in a casket made of exotic hardwood and lined with satin and polyester. You may not even want to be cremated using large amounts of energy.

Folks on Denman Island have mulled over this question for a long time. They researched, consulted with the community, and filled out forms. Finally, last year, they accomplished something extraordinary by opening Canada's first ever exclusively green cemetery.

It's a first because it's a cemetery where green is the only option. The Denman Island Natural Burial Cemetery is a one hectare piece of land that was previously clearcut but now will be restored. The covenanted land, gifted by the Denman Conservancy Association, is situated across the road from Denman Island's original cemetery, which is nearing capacity.

The aim of a green burial is to return human remains to the Earth with as little impact on the environment as possible. Embalming is not allowed and any clothing on a body that is being buried must be made entirely of biodegradable material such as wool, cotton or linen. Even zippers and plastic buttons are on the taboo list.

The container that is chosen must also be totally biodegradable and have no metal parts. Coffins are typically made of cardboard, wicker or untreated wood.

There is no concrete vault, no tombstone and only minimal landscaping. The grave site is planted with native vegetation and then nature is allowed to take its course. Visiting gravesites is discouraged as that would disturb the vegetation and prevent natural regeneration of the forest. As an alternative, there is a designated gathering space where people can look out upon the forest and remember their loved ones. A small bronze commemorative plaque affixed to a semi-circular memorial structure is optional.

Despite its high standards, the cemetery

stops short of requiring the removal of artificial joints, pacemakers, dental fillings and similar embedded foreign materials. To promote natural decomposition, coffins are buried at a depth of just four feet.

The Denman Island Memorial Society, which established the cemetery, struggled with the cremation issue as that process requires large amounts of energy, usually natural gas, and is therefore not technically green. After much deliberation and consultation, it was decided that because cremation is so popular in BC (about 80%), ashes would, as a compromise, be accepted for burial or scattering, but that the greener option would be encouraged. Restrictions on the transportation of human remains from far-off places also influenced the decision.

Not everyone can be buried at Denman's green cemetery. The site is designated for only Denman Island residents and landowners, past and present, and members of their immediate families.

Louise Bell, chair of the Board of Directors, says there have been four green burials at the cemetery so far, and that numerous requests have been received from people on Vancouver Island. 'We have limited space—room for only about 1000—and that's why we've had to set up eligibility criteria,' she explains. 'It's really hard to say no.'

Bell indicates her group is willing to share knowledge with people in other communities about the work required to establish a green cemetery. Inquiries have already been received from residents on Hornby and Thetis.

Denman is not the only cemetery that offers green burials. The Royal Oak Burial Park and Crematorium in Victoria, in addition to its conventional services, has been offering green burials since 2008.

Executive Director Stephen Olson says there have been about 145 such burials since the service was first introduced, and that demand is growing. 'This is not a fad,' he says. 'It's definitely a trend.'

The burial park currently has one acre of

GREEN BURIAL, please turn to next page



Islands Trust

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# Environmental Assessments Gone Wrong - Elizabeth May

As a result of the omnibus budget bill, C-38, of spring 2012, Canadian environmental assessment has been converted from a predictable, professional process to a dog's breakfast of wildly disparate review standards. Projects caught in the pre-2012 thorough review process under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* get one standard of review. Those under the new CEAA2012 created by C-38 can be directed to a number of different pathways—none of them adequate.

The basics are often ignored. The vast majority of projects that used to be reviewed no longer get any review at all. Many of these are projects of the Government of Canada. Strangely, the mining industry has seen its required reviews increase. Many industry representatives preferred the previous EA, pre C-38. The process was predictable and to the extent that there was any federal-provincial overlap, that had been sorted out before C-38 wrecked everything.

I have heard representatives of government as well as journalists ascribe one set of expectations to projects caught in a vastly different web. Political interference has muddled the standards of environmental review. It is my hope that this primer is of use to people as a reference tool to understand where projects are stuck and why—as well as to appreciate why we must return to the pre-C-38 version of environmental review as soon as possible. Unfortunately, the process announced on June 20 by six federal ministers will result in a process to make recommendations by January 2017. Every day the C38 version of CEAA is in place, more serious errors will happen and more projects will receive no review at all.

## First Example: Site C

Site C had an excellent environmental review under pre-2012 CEAA. It went to a joint federal-provincial review. The panel was chaired by highly respected former federal deputy minister Harry Swain. The panel found that the project would create economic problems for BC. The panel found there was no demand for the energy and that BC Hydro had failed in its mandated direction to explore geothermal. It established as fact that the project would cause permanent environmental damage that cannot be mitigated. It found as fact that it would cause permanent loss of treaty rights to Treaty 8 First Nations.

Problem: The Conservative Cabinet made a determination that the economic importance of the project outweighed the damage it would do. There was no evidence from the panel report to justify this conclusion. Now the media reports that Minister McKenna does not want to revisit the Environmental Assessment, but no one is asking for her to do so. Neither is anyone asking the new government to violate their principle that no project has to start over.

The Royal Society of Canada, our premiere scientific academy, has described the Site C joint panel review report as the strongest and most negative review ever to be ignored by government. The vast numbers of experts, First Nations and environmental groups want the Liberal Cabinet to reverse the ideological pronouncement of the previous Cabinet. Royal Society scientists and lawyers say this is a bellwether for the Trudeau administration. 'The honour of the Crown is at stake.'

## Second Example: Woodfibre LNG

Woodfibre LNG received its approval from the federal government earlier this year. Minister McKenna signed off on the environmental assessment saying it had gone through a robust, science and evidence based process.

Problem: Woodfibre went through a doubly-degraded environmental assessment. Its review commenced after the passage of C-38 and the establishment of a weak federal process under CEAA2012. It was further weakened as the previous federal government agreed to have the review substituted by the BC process and run by the government of BC. For context, recall that the proposed Taseko Fish Lake Mine was rejected (twice) by the pre-2012 CEAA federal process (rejected by both Environment Ministers Jim Prentice and Leona Aglukqak) but approved by the BC EA.

## Third Example: Donkin Coal mine

The proposal to build a new underground, sub-sea coal mine off Donkin Cape Breton went through an environmental review under the pre-2012 CEAA process. Former Environment Minister Peter Kent signed off on the environmental assessment.

Problem: Political interference in the review led to the exclusion of GHG emissions as a problem for the mine. There was a condition that a GHG management plan be developed before the mine can proceed.

## Fourth Example: Kinder Morgan Pipeline

The Kinder Morgan review was conducted under the post C-38 CEAA. It is the first major project with a review conducted solely by the National Energy Board. (Enbridge Northern Gateway was in process when CEAA2012 came into effect, so a joint review was struck between the NEB and CEAA).

In this disastrous review the violations of rights of procedural fairness were legion. The hearings were closed. The intervenors restricted to those 'directly affected' as required under C-38. The NEB refused to exclude evidence proven to have been falsified. The scope of review was narrow. And the procedure excluded any testing of the evidence. The NEB ruled that oral cross-examination would take too long. So written interrogatories and

an entirely paper process replaced normal evidentiary process—as it had always been on regulatory issues before the NEB and as it had always been under environmental reviews before the NEB got into the act. The paper exchange meant that those contracted by Kinder Morgan to prepare evidence never had to answer questions.

Problem: Having campaigned in the 2015 election that no project could be approved based on this broken process, the Liberal government has added an interim process of further review. This process is to increase the project's review by adding consultation with First Nations and a broader view of environmental impacts, to include climate change. It is unclear how those who were excluded or whose rights were violated under the NEB process will be engaged in the additional 'interim' process.

## Fifth Example: Old Harry

This proposal for a deep water oil well in the Gulf of St. Lawrence doesn't fall under the NEB or CEAA for review. Due to C-38, its environmental assessment is under the Canada-Newfoundland Labrador Off-shore Petroleum Board (CNLOPB). The Gulf of St. Lawrence is an extremely biologically productive area—virtually an inland sea. It is surrounded by five provinces. Due to its counter-clockwise tides, if an accident occurred in the Gulf the oil would be moved with the tides to the south coast of the Gaspé, the west coast on New Brunswick, all coasts of the Magdalens and Prince Edward Island, the north coast and Northumberland Strait of Nova Scotia and the west coast of Newfoundland. Currently, there are no fossil fuel production facilities in the Gulf.

Problem: Former environment minister Peter Kent promised a comprehensive EA of the whole notion of developing the Gulf of St. Lawrence for oil and gas. That review never happened. The proponent Corridor Resources has been granted three extensions over the last four years on its licence to explore the Old Harry site. CNLOPB has waived the required \$1 million fee, four years in a row. The CNLOPB has a legislated mandate to promote oil and gas. Due to C-38 it is also supposed to conduct a neutral EA. It has not yet started its review.

## Sixth Example: Darlington

The proposal by Ontario Power Generation to rebuild the four aging reactors at Darlington is being assessed for environmental impact by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

Problem: Like the NEB and CNLOPB, the CNSC has never conducted environmental assessments before. This is a new process created due to C38. The intervenors are having the same difficulties as pipeline intervenors in getting access to experts and participating in the process.

## GREEN BURIAL from previous page

woodland set aside for green burials. Although that space is filling up fast, there is room for expansion. 'We knew there was an interest in the community but were surprised at how quickly the idea has taken hold,' says Olson. 'The whole concept resonates with people who have lived their lives being environmentally aware.'

Olson agrees that cremation is not environmentally friendly as each requires the equivalent of about 400 litres of gasoline, enough to drive some vehicles across Canada. He adds, however, that when a person's entire life is considered, the carbon footprint is relatively small. Those who choose cremation can have their ashes scattered in a forested area adjacent to where the full-body burials take place.

Olson says the green burial movement gained a foothold in Great Britain in the mid to late '90s. 'People realized cremations were contributing to climate change,' he says. 'They wanted to reduce their carbon footprint and help preserve land from development.' Today, a full 12% of all dispositions in the UK are by green burial.

Olson says a number of small cemeteries on the Gulf Islands offer some form of green burial by avoiding embalming and using simple caskets. However, there are only a handful of cemeteries in all of Canada where burial grounds are allowed to return to their natural state.

At \$4,630, a green burial costs more than a simple cremation but less than a conventional burial. Olson points out, however, that cost is rarely the determining factor. 'Nobody has decided against a green burial because of cost. A green burial is always chosen because that is what is meaningful to people.'

Olson sees the green burial trend taking off as people become more aware of the issues involved and the options available. 'It's a generational thing. Younger people who are in tune with environmental issues will demand a green service for themselves and their loved ones.'

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## FEED-IN TARIFF from page 3

renewable energy. And if the full environmental and health damages of fossil fuels are considered, renewables are an even better bargain.

Many jurisdictions with feed-in tariffs have become leading exporters of renewable energy technology, creating local jobs and strengthening economies—with little or no government spending. Feed-in tariffs vary in rates and designs according to what types and scales of technologies governments want to encourage and where they want them located, which means they must be carefully designed.

Massive centralized power sources are not efficient and are quickly becoming outdated. Some power is lost when it has to be transmitted over long distances, and large

sources usually keep operating even when power isn't required. Using smart grids and distributed renewable energy with demand-management systems allows energy to be dispatched where and when it's needed, most often over shorter distances, and a variety of power sources makes them more reliable, as large-scale power outages are less frequent.

Burning finite fuels in huge plants to generate electricity is no way to power the future. Feed-in tariffs are an effective way for governments to encourage a shift.

David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation. Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation Senior Editor Ian Hanington.

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Photo: Nicholas Croft

Pender bird photos taken by eight-year-old birder Nicholas Croft. Left: A savannah sparrow. Above: A white crowned sparrow.

## AROUND THE ISLANDS

### Thetis Islands's Fairyflipper Forest Fundraising

An anonymous donor has announced they will match funds up to \$40,000 for the protection of the Fairyflipper Forest on Thetis Island. So far, roughly \$23,000 has been raised and will be matched.

This new fundraising push is part of a three-year campaign by the Islands Trust Fund, the Thetis Island Nature Conservancy and the Cowichan Community Land Trust. The goal is the purchase and protection of Fairyflipper Forest, named for the fairy-slipper orchids that are common in the area in spring. A total of \$560,000 is needed to purchase and protect 16 hectares of imperilled Coastal Douglas-fir forest in a community watershed that provides essential habitat for several species of concern. Once protected, Fairyflipper Forest will become the first publicly accessible nature reserve on Thetis Island.

The June 2014 agreement to purchase Fairyflipper Forest set fundraising goals for the end of year-one and year-two of the campaign. In year-one, over 100 islanders pledged more than a third of the purchase price.

### CRD Awards Affordable Housing Grants

The Capital Regional District Board has approved three Regional Housing Trust Fund (RHFF) grants totalling \$1,029,300 to assist the Victoria Native Friendship Centre Society, the Greater Victoria Housing Society and the Greater Victoria Rental Development Society. The grants will go towards the development of new supportive and affordable rental housing in the region.

The Victoria Native Friendship Centre

Society is developing 41 units of supportive housing for low income families. The project has an estimated total capital cost of \$5 million. This new grant will be worth \$30,000, which will be added to the \$600,000 that was previously approved for the project.

The already existing Greater Victoria Housing Society affordable rental apartment will be redeveloped as 53 units of affordable housing targeted towards sheltering low income seniors and families with children. The grant this project received has a value of \$450,500.

The Greater Victoria Rental Development Society is developing 56 units of affordable rental housing as workforce housing to help address a shortage of lower priced rental housing for low to moderate income workers in the area. The project's total capital cost is roughly \$17 million. The received grant is \$548,800.

### Gulf Islands School District Learning Innovation, K-12

-Doug Livingston, Director of Instruction Teachers in southern Gulf Islands' schools participated in the BC K-12 Innovation Partnership this year. The focus of the project is to increase student ownership of learning by shifting the ways in which we communicate with students and parents.

In November of this school year, teachers in the district had the opportunity to attend a series of workshops where they explored ways of connecting with students and their parents about each child's learning. Together, it was decided to further develop how we use student-led conferences, pedagogical narratives (learning stories), and e-portfolios during our second term reporting. Approximately half of

## New program boosts funding for conservation

The Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF) has announced a new funding program to help NGOs cover the costs of looking after BC's conservation lands. The HCTF Land Stewardship Fund will provide approximately \$125,000 a year for activities that improve habitat on conservation properties owned and managed by NGOs.

There are more than 100,000 hectares of NGO-owned conservation lands in British Columbia, encompassing a wide range of habitat types. The properties are found in every region of the province, but tend to be concentrated in biodiversity 'hotspots', such as the South Okanagan, Lower Mainland and Gulf Islands. In these areas, the purchase of private land has become an important—but expensive—tool for protecting key habitats from human development.

Laura Matthias, land manager and biologist with the Salt Spring Island Conservancy, says the new granting program is a wonderful new initiative that will help fill a strong need for resources to maintain or rehabilitate lands that were purchased or donated for their conservation values. 'It's a big undertaking to raise the money required to purchase these properties, and we're very grateful to the many individuals and organizations that help make it possible,' explains Matthias. 'What is often forgotten is that the need for funding doesn't stop with the signing of the land transfer agreement. The lands typically require ongoing management—such as invasive plant removal or habitat restoration—to maintain or enhance their values for wildlife over time.'

The Land Stewardship program was made possible by an endowment provided by the Province of British Columbia. Organizations interested in applying for a Land Stewardship Grant can visit HCTF's website at [www.hctf.ca](http://www.hctf.ca) for information on how to apply.

the elementary teachers in the district participated in this project. In addition, at the secondary level, one grade-less course—Robotics—was offered to students in grade 9-12 this year as part of the Innovation Partnership.

Interviews with over one hundred primary students revealed that students involved in the project were more able to talk about their own learning. For example, in response to 'What helps you learn?', students not involved with the project responded with 'listening' or 'paying attention'. Whereas those involved in the project had deeper, more reflective answers such as 'setting goals' or 'self-assessing my work'.

In the Robotics class at the secondary school, not having grades has created a culture where it is okay to make mistakes and learn from them. Students aren't talking about their grade or final mark. Instead they're talking about what they've learned, how they were able to figure out a solution, and what they want to learn next.

'Research from John Hattie and others tells us that when students are involved directly in assessing their work and planning what's next, they are more highly engaged in their learning,' said Lisa Halstead, Superintendent of Schools for the Gulf Islands. She continued by saying that 'our goal is to expand our repertoire of assessment strategies in ways that support high quality learning for all of our students. We're pleased that our experiences this year with the K-12 Innovation Partnership reflect what we know from the research.'

Parents, students and teachers indicated in a recent survey that verbal feedback had the most powerful and positive impact in helping learners—be they adults or students—to understand what they are learning. The survey of over 650 individuals included over 100 parents and was completed in early May 2016. While there was some agreement about the positive effect of verbal feedback and reflection, there was much less agreement about the value of grades and performance scales, and their impact on student learning.

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