

Shawnigan Focus

Volume Eight- Issue Two

February 2017

A Non-Profit Community Publication

WE STAYED STRONG, SHAWNIGAN!



Photo by Laura Colpitts

Sonia Furstenu,
CVRD Area Director

What a week it's been

On the morning of January 24th, many of us gathered in the village – as we have so many times over the last year - to await yet another court decision.

The last three times we gathered have been devastating, as the BC Court of Appeal undid the BC Supreme Court decision that ruled the Cobble Hill Holdings (CHH) site was not permitted under the CVRD's zoning bylaws. In April and May, the Court of Appeal allowed the company to continue importing contaminated soil, despite the injunction that had been put in place by Justice Mackenzie. And in November, the Court of Appeal overturned Mackenzie's decision, delivering yet another blow to our community.

We were understandably nervous Tuesday morning – anxious that we would be facing another disappointment, that we would be having to rally ourselves for yet another round in a fight that has seemed so monumentally unfair.

And so, when the decision arrived and it was a positive one – setting aside the Environmental Appeal Board's decision and reinstating the stay on the permit – we were elated. It had been ten months since our last victory, and we finally had something to celebrate. The victory was made so much sweeter by the judge's emphasis

on how CHH and Marty Block had misled the Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Appeal Board about the relationship between CHH and Active Earth – confirming what we have been saying for years.

Then, three days later, a second victory. At 5 pm on Friday afternoon, the Minister of Environment released a letter stating that “permit 105809 ... is suspended effective immediately” and she stated that CHH must provide the following within 15 days:

- ★ An updated cost estimate for closure that is prepared and signed by a qualified professional and is fully consistent with the attached Landfill Criteria for Municipal Solid Waste
- ★ Security, in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit, consistent with the requirements of section 8.6 of the 2016 Criteria
- ★ A draft non-contact and contact water management review report (or reports) that corrects all the deficiencies identified in the attached Ministry Review dated January 19, 2017

And while we're not finished yet – the permit still needs to be revoked and the soil needs to be removed – we have made two very giant strides towards the end of this nightmare.

We all can celebrate these victories – which have been hard

won – and at the same time step back and consider the incredible list of injustices that we have borne as a community.

A Community Ignored

From the very beginning, the Shawnigan community has been abundantly and consistently clear: we did not accept the risk that this landfill posed to our watershed.

The Shawnigan Residents Association hired independent scientists to assess the proposal, the site, and the engineering – and their opinions were clear: this was an unsuitable location and the landfill would pose a threat to our water quality.

The community began its efforts to engage with the provincial government right from the outset – hundreds voiced their concerns at the Public Meeting in July 2012, and hundreds more wrote letters once the draft permit was issued. After the EAB decision, 15,000 signatures were collected, hundreds more letters were written, and rallies and protests began.

The opposition to the permits was overwhelming and the support was non-existent, but that in no way swayed the provincial government. All our pleas, our evidence, our research, and our efforts were dismissed, and over and over again Minister Polak talked about her “technical expert staff” and the “independent qualified professionals” who were assuring her that everything was fine.

I approached Minister Terry Lake, who signed the original permit, at a conference in Kamloops in early 2015. “You people,” he said to me with contempt. “You people don't understand that the process will protect you.”

A Broken Process

But the process didn't protect us - it endangered us. The process was weighted against us, against independent scientific evidence, and against common sense. The process seemed to have a pre-determined outcome (otherwise known as “getting to yes”) and it seemed that the pre-determined outcome controlled the process.

Consider what was lacking from the process – including the Environmental Appeal Board hearings.

Landfill siting study? Nope.

Independent environmental assessment? Nope.

Consideration of scientific evidence that conflicted with that of the engineers hired by the company? Nope.

Consideration of the previous actions of the proponents, including non-compliance with their Mines permit? Nope.

Consideration of the experience of the proponents or their engineers with designing, engineering, and managing a contaminated landfill site? Nope.

Consideration of the opposition of the CVRD, VIHA, Co-

wichan Tribes, the Shawnigan community, the CRD, and the City of Victoria? Nope.

And worst of all, when it was revealed over 18 months ago that Active Earth, the engineers who assessed the site and designed the landfill were in a 50-50 profit-sharing deal with CHH, the Ministry of Environment did nothing, and allowed soil to continue to be imported to the site.

Their excuse? “The matter is before the courts.” The result of their inaction is a giant pile of contaminated soil in our watershed that is already leaching heavy metals into the environment.

Court Battles

The CVRD and the SRA filed applications in the BC Supreme Court. Both won their cases. The CVRD's win was overturned by the BC Court of Appeal; the CVRD Board decided to appeal its case to the Supreme Court of Canada. It will be at least a few months before we will know if the SCC will hear the case.

The ruling delivered on January 25th by Justice Sewell, which set aside the Environmental Appeal Board's decision and reinstated the stay on the site (thus preventing any contaminated soil being brought it) was a scathing indictment of the CHH owners. Justice Sewell pointed out again and again that Marty Block and CHH “misled” the Ministry of

Article continued on page two...

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Article continued from page one...

Environment and the Environ-
mental Appeal Board (EAB)
about the relationship between
CHH and Active Earth. Justice
Sewell also ruled that the EAB
“appears to have applied dif-
ferent standards” for the SRA
than it did for MoE staff, and
that it “did not act fairly in the
manner in which it received
opinion evidence.”

These court challenges have
been enormously costly. The
CVRD case is paid for by
residents of the Cowichan Val-
ley (we did receive \$10,000 from
Union of BC Municipalities,
and we have applied for addi-
tional funding from them). The
SRA, under the leadership of
Calvin Cook, has been dogged-
ly fundraising for years to cover
its legal fees, and the lawyers
who fought the case – Sean
Hern and Robert Anderson –
have been significant contribu-
tors themselves.

The travesty is that these cases
should never have been neces-
sary. The BC Liberal govern-
ment should have respected the
CVRD’s zoning bylaw, and not
allowed the landfill based on the
fact that it was not a permitted
activity according to our zoning.

And the Ministry of Envi-
ronment should have heeded
the warnings of independent
scientists who provided convinc-
ing evidence that the location
was wholly unsuitable for a
contaminated landfill. What
those experts said would hap-
pen – that contaminants would



leach out of the site and enter
our environment – has been
happening for the last several
months.

Had the government acted
to protect our water and our
community, we would not have
had to spend nearly \$2 million
fighting them. This is a nearly
unfathomable injustice, and I
strongly urge the government to
consider how they will remedy
this, and compensate the people
of Shawnigan.

Standing Up, Standing To- gether, Standing Strong

But there has been a silver
lining. We have come to be a
deeply connected, caring, and
united community, and we have
learned how to work together.
And for this I am truly grateful.

We have been steadfast for
years, our determination never
wavered – even in some of the
toughest moments. And we
have helped each other through
these incredibly challenging
years by being kind, caring,
and compassionate. And we
never gave up hope that we
would succeed – because we
knew all along that we were

on the side of truth.

Thank you to all who have
helped in all aspects this effort.
So much has gone into it over
the last four and a half years:
the fundraisers, the petition
with 15,000 signatures, the early
morning protests, the endless
meetings, the daily monitor-
ing of the site, the tweets,
the posts, helicopter day, the
support of the local schools,
the photos, the drone shots, the
demonstrations, the rallies at the
legislature, the support from our
MLAs and MPs, the letters, the
articles, the endless research, the
song-writing, the video-making,
the coffee and cookie deliver-
ies, and them many, many hugs
when we really needed them.
Most of all the commitment to
work together as a community
- we have shown what can be
accomplished when we decide
to stand together. It has been
an epic effort by the Shawnigan
community, and we should all
be proud of what we’ve accom-
plished together.

*I’ve never doubted for a moment that
we would win this fight. And now,
we’re nearly there.*

Stay strong, Shawnigan.

Shawnigan Residents Association: Justice Sewell Judgement

The decision of Mr. Justice
Sewell of the British Co-
lumbia Supreme Court was
released on January 24, set-
ting aside the decision of the
Environmental Appeal Board
(the “Board”) and reinstating
the stay of the permit that
allows Cobble Hill Holdings
(CHH) to operate a con-
taminated soil landfill in the
Shawnigan Lake watershed.
See paragraph 199 below:

*[199] As the Decision has been
set aside, the stay of the Permit
previously issued by the Board is
reinstated until further order of the
Board, but nothing in this decision
affects the power of the Board to
set aside the stay on application of
any party before it.*

The Court has held that
the evidence provided to the
Board by CHH was false
and misleading in respect of
the financial arrangement
between CHH and its engi-
neers Active Earth Engineer-
ing Ltd., and that the Board

should reconsider its decision
in light of new evidence on
that subject. The Court also
found that CHH filed mis-
leading evidence before the
Court in the judicial review.
See paragraph 179 below:

*[179] I also find that CHH
filed misleading evidence in this
Court.*

In addition, the Court held
that the Board did not fairly
apply its rules of expert evi-
dence resulting in a hearing
that was procedurally unfair
to the SRA. The Court has
directed the Board reconsider
the expert evidence tendered
at the Board’s hearing in light
of the Court’s findings in that
regard. See paragraph 110
below:

*[110] Accordingly, I find that
the Board did not act fairly with
respect to the expert evidence which
was before it. The appeal before
the Board was essentially a contest
among experts over the safety and
engineering of the project. The*



*rules with respect to the admissi-
bility of and procedures for tender-
ing that evidence were therefore of
central importance to the conduct
of the appeal. I conclude that the
decision of the Board must be set
aside on that ground.*

Justice Sewell’s full ruling
can be read at: [https://sonia-
furstenau.ca/2017/01/24/
bc-supreme-court-judicial-
review/](https://sonia-furstenau.ca/2017/01/24/bc-supreme-court-judicial-review/)

*“This is a huge win for the
community”, said SRA President
Calvin Cook. “We commenced
this judicial review process with*

*the conviction that the Board
process had not been a fair one and
when the evidence of the ownership
interest of the engineers surfaced,
we said that the Board had been
misled. Today, the Court agreed.”*

Mr. Cook stated further,
“The case is not over, but this is a
huge step forward for the commu-
nity and we will continue to oppose
this project every step of the way
as we firmly maintain this project
is inappropriate and dangerous for
our community and its drinking
water.”

Media Contact: Calvin Cook
250-208-2749

The Shawnigan Residents
Association is not a publicly
funded agency. Our non-
profit organization depends on
contributions from the com-
munity to continue the fight to
#SaveShawniganWater. Please
consider making an online con-
tribution to our Legal Action
Fund at: [http://www.thesra.ca/
take-action/contribute-online](http://www.thesra.ca/take-action/contribute-online)
, or by sending a cheque to:

*The Shawnigan Residents
Association: PO Box 443,
Shawnigan Lake, BC, V0R2W0*
Thank you for your continued
support!

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO SEND US LETTERS... EDITOR@SHAWNIGANFOCUS.CA

The Focus will publish your thoughts on Shawnigan issues: bouquets you would like to offer to special people; things that strike you as funny; challenges you want our civic leaders to consider; and/or ideas that would better our community. Letters to the Editor must be accompanied by the author's full name, address and phone number, but the contact information, other than the name, will not be published. Letters should be limited to 300 words and we reserve the right to edit for brevity or to refuse inappropriate or abusive language. Letters should attack issues - not individuals or groups.

Letter from the Editor

Re: BC Supreme Court Judgement on SIA/CHH Permit Process

Justice Sewell identified alarming and serious misconduct by the company applying for the permit (Cobble Hill Holdings) and their consulting engineers (Active Earth).

The Province also bears large responsibility for this fiasco. Environment Minister Mary Polak has stated repeatedly that decisions are based on science and that the public can have complete faith in the Professional Reliance model that the government process depends on. The Shawnigan situation makes it clear that the process is broken.

Last May the Auditor General released a report which bluntly stated: "We found almost every one of our expectations for a robust compliance and enforcement program within the Ministry of Energy and Mines and the Ministry of Environment were not met."

This government has had ample time and opportunity to take corrective action but has failed to do so. When Imperial Metals Corporation, owner of the Mount Polley mine, is making six figure donations to the Liberal Party, it is easy to speculate why compliance and enforcement are so lax.

Dave Hutchinson, Co-Editor

I love your new name!

I loved Chrissy and Banjo's article in January's issue of the Shawnigan Focus. I drive by your farm several times a week and love to see what Banjo and your goats are up to. I remember when Banjo first moved there and noticed how content he was. When I saw the goats join him I knew he was even happier. We live on the west side of Shawnigan Lake and raise Black Welsh

Mountain sheep, chickens and New Zealand rabbits. We get some flak about how we raise our rabbits, but when I explain that our rabbits are for consumption and not pets, it sometimes works...but not all the time. It is interesting, this lack of knowledge folks have on raising farm animals. With so much information on the Web now, some folks should Google before speaking. All the best with your farm...love your new name...lol

~R. Power

I am voting for Sonia Furstenau, I am voting Green.

I used to believe, like most people, that the government and its agencies served and protected "all" of its citizens. Under the reign of Christy Clark and the B.C. Liberals, I have been disabused of this notion. To realize that I must fight my own government for the right to clean drinking water is a hard lesson. Economic development means nothing if you cannot drink the water or breathe the air...ask the people of China.

There are economically sustainable ways to maintain and grow our economy that do not involve destroying the planet. This is fundamental to the Green Party platform, the "only" party that has openly declared opposition to the Bamberton Steelhead LNG plant and the site C dam. Our present government's short-sighted sell outs to international corporate interests.

Sonia is a proven leader. She has inspired people of all political stripes and social strata in our community and further afield, to become informed and stand up for their right to an environmentally sustainable life. She successfully turned the people of Shawnigan Lake into a community of activists, galvanized to protect our watershed.

Her public voice is always about issues - never about herself. She has earned our confidence and everybody who has stood with her will attest to her laser focus on attending to what is directly in front of her, without deflecting or sidestepping what would defeat a lesser person.

Concerned people throughout B.C. look to our community and the unfolding battle to protect our water, understanding full well that their water could be threatened by the same misguided policies of the current governments, both provincially and federally.

As the CVRD director of the largest unincorporated area in B.C., Sonia has worked tirelessly for Shawnigan Lake, both as an inspirational and fearless leader in the fight to protect our watershed, but also in her diligent and pragmatic attention to the more mundane, but equally important responsibilities of being a regional director, responsible for all things that fall under her mandate, from budgets to development permits. To this end she has, among other successes, campaigned to have the citizens of Shawnigan Lake buy, with funds raised by citizens, a mountain.

The iconic Mt. Baldy is now public parkland to be enjoyed in perpetuity by residents and visitors alike.

I have learned, over the past four years, while joining the fight to protect Shawnigan Lake from becoming a dumping ground for toxic waste, that democracy only works if the right people are in power and the citizenry are actively engaged. Sonia is acutely aware that she cannot govern alone and it is essential that democracy is participatory. To this end she has galvanized a veritable army of informed people, citizen scientists, and

grandmothers passionately protecting their grandchildren's future, to assist her in serving this community.

We know that Sonia will work to ensure the preservation of our environment and the values that put people ahead of money.

I refuse to vote out of fear. If you want change, you must vote for change - the future of our grandchildren depends upon it.

Sonia Furstenau is intelligent, articulate, inspirational, and fearless in standing up for the people she presently represents, and I have complete confidence that she would do the same for the people of this province.

I am voting for the best candidate. We need Sonia's voice to speak truth to power in our provincial legislature.

~Sally Davies

RE: "Leave Ass Alone Acres"

Dear Editor,

I read your January 2017 issue, and was greatly amused by the article written by Chrissy & Banjo.

There are many who must vigorously, always force all others to believe they are the final arbiter of correctness, regardless their personal idiosyncrasy. Chrissy's portrayal of that person made me laugh as I've met her doppelganger.

A good friend of mine had a free-range cat which adopted her family, and was subsequently kidnapped by the doppelganger ... "See, your cat likes me best. ... "You're not properly caring for this cat". Apparently, the yutz could not properly care for the cat either, as a couple years later, she dumped it at the SPCA, pregnant and malnourished.

My friend had several times called the SPCA, lodged a

complaint this person had stolen her cat, and was told. .. "no tattoo, not your cat"... She paid high fees to get her now tattooed cat out of jail.

Again, the cat was kidnapped, but the kidnapper refused to relinquish, and my friend gave up. That person was simply too self-righteous to do battle with, and really, it's a cat, and there are many stray cats if one really wishes to take on the obligations.

Eight years later, the kidnapper again took the cat to the SPCA, with teeth destroyed by rot, complaining my friend abused her cat. ... And the well-meaning but seriously misled and supercilious SPCA officer threatened my friend with criminal charges for animal abuse.

The story amused me as, I have a young lab who loves absolutely everyone and gets great joy from meeting strangers, children and wandering animals, her tail and tongue wagging.

The first, second and third times my dog met this unctuous kidnapper, she stood in front of my friend and I, and set to barking aggressively, postured to protect us from what I would later learn was a dark and evil aura. I have never seen her act this way with anyone before nor since.

Chrissy and Banjo might get a really friendly dog to see and protect you from evil know-it-ails. Just maybe, Banjo could tolerate a pre-scient puppy-friend.

I was surprised Banjo's hair is hollow and that he gets cold easily if wet. Many wild animals also have hollow hair and spend time in the rain and blizzards, hollow hair helping to insulate them.

I wish your both a long, happy life on your "private" lands, and freedom from those mentally-malnourished, unwelcome and evil spirits.

Shawnigan Weather January 2017

Stats courtesy of UVic Weather Network ~ compiled by Grant Treloar

	January	Cigarmaker's Bay		Discovery School		Museum		Elford Road	
	Normal	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016
Average High	6.3	3.5	5.7	4.3	6.5	4.7	6.6	4.3	6.5
Average Low	0.5	-2.1	1.3	-2.4	0.8	-2.2	1.4	-2.3	0.8
Extreme High	15	8.4	11.1	8.4	11.1	9.4	11.3	9.0	11.5
Extreme Low	-21.1	-8.1	-4.7	-9.2	-6	-8.3	-5.2	-8.5	-5.5
Precipitation	215.3	92.1	240.3	94.8	241.6	79.8	215.3	86.8	241.0
Days w precip	19	13	21	12	21	12	21	8	20
Year Precip	215.3	92.1	240.3	92.1	241.6	79.8	215.3	86.8	241.0
Precip since Oct 1	743.4	845.9	774.2	820.3	889.4	744.1	769.1	818.7	845.6
(up to Jan 28 th) Rank since 1914: 20 th coldest, 15 th driest									
Lake Temperature: Jan 1st: 2° Jan 8th: 0° (2cm ice) Jan 15th: 0° (8 cm ice) Jan 22nd: 1° (1cm ice) Jan 29th: 2°									
Lake Level Change: Jan 1 st : -2.5cm Jan 8 th : -24cm Jan 15 th : +22cm Jan 22 nd : +28cm Jan 29 th : -15cm									

Shawnigan Moment



Dave showing off his skating skills. Photo by Janet Neilsen

Welcome home, Constable Wes Richens



Oriana Parker
South Cowichan Community Policing

Constable Wes Richens has been with the Shawnigan Lake RCMP Detachment for four months. The Detachment is proud to welcome him into the force especially since he was born and raised right here on the island, in Cowichan Bay. Community policing takes on a special meaning for Cst. Richens as he serves a community that includes family members, close friends, colleagues and a large network of people who have known him over the years. Deeply rooted in the South Cowichan Valley, he attended Queen of Angels Elementary School and graduated from Cowichan Secondary High School. His experience first as a member of the Canadian Military Reserves, Scottish Reserves, and then as a volunteer firefighter in Cowichan Bay and an Auxiliary RCMP Constable in Duncan has cemented long and lasting relationships with citizens throughout the Cowichan Valley. His commitment to serve and protect then does not just come from his

badge but right from his heart.

The SCCP is proud to be working with Cst. Richens as he undertakes his CAPRA (Clients/ Acquire & Analyze/Partnerships/Response/Access) project. His experience as a firefighter and as an Auxiliary constable brought to the forefront the need for visible house numbers. Emergency response crews need to find addresses as quickly as possible. If the numbers on your home are not easily read, then valuable time is wasted searching for you rather than caring for you, especially where every second counts. Everyone benefits from visible house numbers. Available for purchase from SCCP office in Mill Bay Centre are high visibility, reflective house signs. Excellent quality aluminum signs made locally in Shawnigan Lake with a cost price of \$45 for the sign and \$30 for the post.

If you are interested in purchasing, please call our office at 250-929-7222. There is usually a 2-5 day waiting period before you can pick them up.



Proposed Elsie Miles Shelter

The rendering (left) is the concept for a multipurpose timber-frame shelter proposed for Elsie Miles Park. Local timberframe designer, Andrew Preston, based the concept of historic buildings of Shawnigan Lake. A committee of community members is working to have this built in 2017 to celebrate Canada's 150th.

There will be many opportunities for the community to get involved. Donations of time and/or material will be greatly appreciated. More details to come. *What do you think? Email editor@shawniganfocus.ca*

Respectful Use of the Lake

**March 6th at 7PM
at the Shawnigan
Lake Community
Centre**

Meeting for Public Comments, Questions and Concerns

At the 7 PM March 6th Director's meeting, there will be an opportunity for you to discuss and have input on Shawnigan Lake Surface Use issues.

The focus will be on respectful use of the lake by all recreational users, including powered and non-powered watercraft, swimmers, lakefront owners, visitors, etc. and to use this discussion and feedback to share with the CVRD and Ministry of Transport.

There will be a panel discussion/presentation from the Ski Club (VASC), a Wake/Surf Representative, Shawnigan Waterwatch Group, Waterbasin Society, Shawnigan Residents' Association, RCMP, and Shawnigan Parks Commission.

Comments, questions, concerns and feedback from the residents of Shawnigan will be welcomed.

If you cannot attend the meeting, please forward any comments or questions to furstenau@cvrd.bc.ca.

Shawnigan Moment

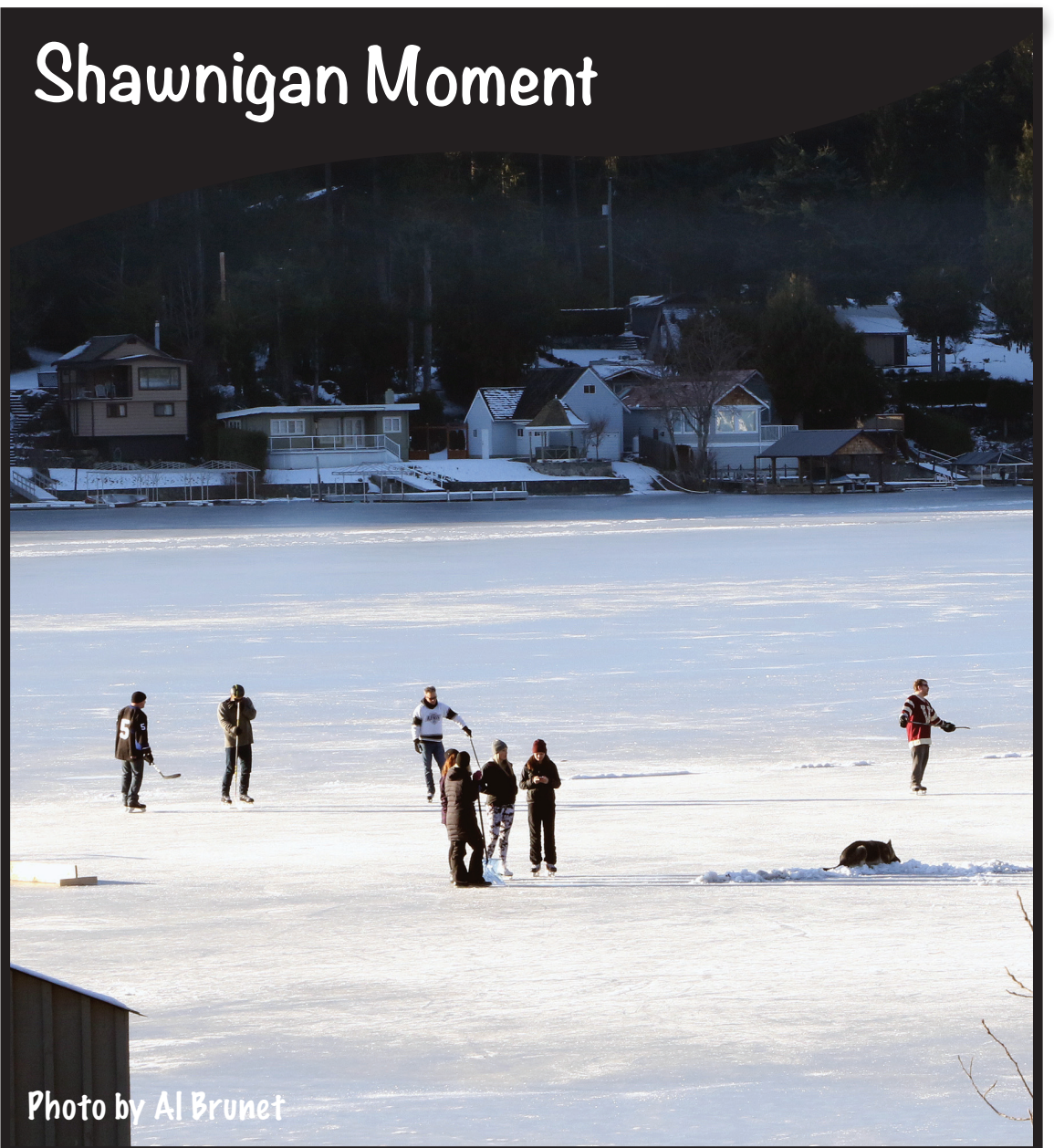


Photo by Al Brunet

Confessions of a School Bus “Spy-Mom”

Suzanne Tedrick
Shawnigan Resident

I have to admit: I’ve become one of those moms. By that I mean that I have to pry myself out of bed in the morning, foam a cappuccino, put a pot of oatmeal on the stove as I tie back my hair with one hand, and pull my boots on with the other. Then, still blurry eyed, with messy hair and no lipstick, I stumble down the stairs with my boys, and skate across the black ice, out to the main street. We wait for the school bus.

“Why?”, you might ask, “do you wait with your kids at the bus stop?” and “Are you still in your jammies?”

I do it because of the school bus “passers” and the “speeders”. I do it because I spent my entire career working as an emergency nurse. I’ve seen things that no one should have to see. This insane “mommy thing” takes over, and before I know it, I’m standing in a slushy ditch: clipboard in one hand, and camera phone in the other, to stealthily catch the perpetrator. And, this trench coat mamma thing has caught on. Just last week some school children were saved, because bystanders jumped

in front of a moving car and diverted it.

On a serious note: what would YOU do if you saw someone running a red light while children are crossing the street? Because, a school bus that has on its flashing RED lights, is essentially a mobile intersection for children. Amber flashing lights mean SLOW DOWN, the bus is about to stop (it doesn’t mean speed up to Mach 3 and pass). Flashing red lights mean you MUST stop, from all directions of travel (Red Lights Flashing Mean NO Passing).

The fine for illegally passing a school bus is a measly \$368 plus three demerit points (I say measly, because in other provinces it is upwards of \$1000). And, \$368 is nothing compared to the lifelong trauma one will feel if one accidentally strikes a child with a car. Think about that.

I don’t say this as a finger pointer, because we all make mistakes. However, as a former paramedic and ER nurse, I must say, that this school bus passing thing is simply a symptom of a systemic disease: a cancer called Impatience. We are not only putting others’ lives



Photo by Paul Tedrick

at risk when we hurry, but we are killing ourselves with this stress. When I was a commuter, I always wanted to get that bumper sticker that said, “Trauma Nurse: Pass me now, see you later”.

We have a very special community out here; incredibly special. But, what’s with all the tailgating (a.k.a. bully-

ing)? Our kids aren’t allowed to bully, but adults are? I was pondering what kind of job could possibly be so important that one has to speed on dark, icy backroads to get to. I couldn’t think of a single thing.

I think it’s time that we, as parents, grandparents, neighbours, and fellow commuters, stand up together, and not

tolerate this dangerous driving and bullying behavior any longer. Buy a dash-cam, or keep a sharpie handy. Record the make, colour, license plate and report it to the RCMP. Slow down and enjoy the drive. Oh, and meet me at the bus stop. I won’t have lipstick on either.

One by one, we will create community.

Reflectors – Safer Roads Start With Me!



Oriana Parker
Writer for SCCP

The South Cowichan Community Policing office, together with the input from Shawnigan Lake residents, is embarking on a safety campaign aimed

at pedestrians, and more specifically, children and young adults. Reflectors worn on outdoor clothing are an important safety accessory. They are extremely efficient in reflecting light from vehicle headlights and making the presence of pedestrians known to drivers. In countries like Finland, where their effectiveness in preventing accidents has been proven, reflectors are mandatory during the dark winter months and when stepping out in the evening. In the South Cowichan Valley, during late fall and winter, our children leave in darkness and return home in darkness. A lack of streetlights and sidewalks make their commute very dangerous. In the pitch dark, a vehicle driver sees a pedestrian at less than 50 metres. If pedestrians are dressed in dark clothing then it’s

almost impossible to see them until they’re practically next to the vehicle.

However, if the same pedestrian was wearing a reflector it would allow the driver to see them at a distance of 350 meters. That could be the distance between life and death. In a new ICBC survey, 76 per cent of drivers and 83 per cent of pedestrians stated they’re concerned about hitting a pedestrian or being hit by a driver in an intersection. On average, 75 per cent of crashes with pedestrians still occur at intersections in B.C.

The SCCP would like to see our children and community members wrapped in safety by seeing pedestrians adopt a relative inexpensive way to be safe on our streets - reflectors. Safer Roads Start with Me!

With that end in mind, we have purchased star shaped reflectors that can be clipped onto a backpack or purse, or the zipper of a jacket or coat, and various lengths of slap bands that can be worn around the wrist or on the arm or bottom of the leg. These are suitable for running, cycling, walking, skating, skiing, skateboarding – any activity day or night. These reflectors would make excellent gifts in a child’s loot bag or given out at Family Day or other Events.

These are now available at our office in the Mill Bay Centre. Telephone 250-929-7222.

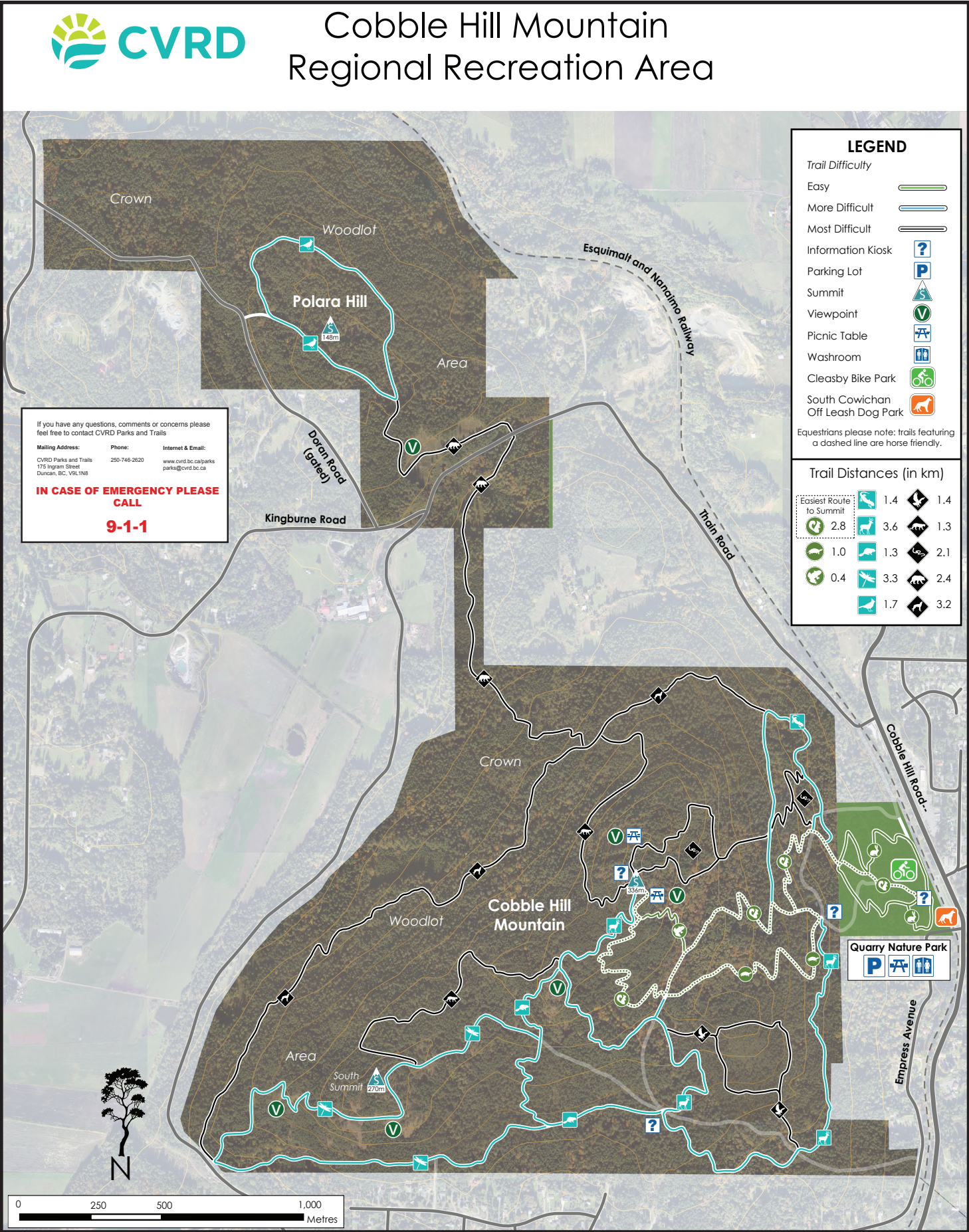
The cost is by donation. Look for posters, banners and other media advertising the importance of our campaign towards Safer Roads Start With Me!



Did you know?

that the world time zones were invented by a Canadian? Sir Sandford Fleming became interested in developing a universal system of time, while he was working as Chief Engineer of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Canada adopted Standard Time in 1883. Canada has six time zones.

Hands on in Mother Nature’s classroom



Alana Baker, Librarian, Frances Kelsey Secondary

What do you remember from school? Chances are good that you remember the classes where you were doing anything EXCEPT sitting in a desk, and you were probably sitting there gazing out a window wishing you were “out there” instead of “in here.” If you are a student at Frances Kelsey this second semester, you have the opportunity to be “out there” and actively involved in learning about our spectacular west coast rainforest.

An innovative new course called “Streams and Trails” is being piloted in partnership with the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) and the Malahat Nation. Sixty students have the opportunity to gain course credit by being involved in building new trails on Polara Hill in the Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area. Three teachers, Jeremy Hart, Brad Niessen, and Rick Groicher, have all collaborated to build a curriculum in which students gain credit for a combination of Environmental Studies 11 and Geography 12, or Communications 11/12 and Earth Science 11. Students will learn about the local ecosystem, native and invasive plant identification and management, the elements and principles of trail design, and the use of handheld tools and electronic GPS devices, all while actively working on the ongoing CVRD initiative to develop new recreation trails in the area. Don’t you wish you were back in school now?

Each morning we are born again.
What we do today is what matters most.
~Buddha

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Area B - Shawnigan Lake Parks Commission

The first Shawnigan Parks Commission meeting of 2017 took place on Thursday, January 19th with lots of healthy discussions but no formal motions. A passionate team of volunteers is working diligently on revitalizing Elsie Miles Park.

Renderings for a new exposed wood beam pavilion are in the works and initial feedback is very positive.

Rumour has it that additional funding (\$20,000+/-) from an outside source (donor) would be most welcome and help keep the

scope of the project within reach as well as on budget.

Please connect with Area Director Sonia Furstenuau for further details. The next Parks Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 16th at 7pm in the Shawnigan Lake Community Centre.

The agenda will be focused around the Trails Committee and upcoming goals for 2017. Members of the public are more than welcome to attend.

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Take A Hike!

Robin Massey
Shawnigan Focus

Chances are you know Cobble Hill Mountain. Over the years many have travelled its network of trails frequently and know them well.

Polara Hill, otherwise known as Crown Woodlot 0022, is the road less travelled I believe. Surely it's been around forever but more or less reserved for those who knew how to find it. With the emergence of a new map board at Cobble Hill, it is now clearly marked for exploration.

One could certainly start their adventure from the map board for an extra long hike or gain access from the Thain Road trailhead. For a Thain start, head North on Cobble Hill Road, turn left on to Thain, follow for 8ish minutes, passing Leaside Rd on the right and shortly after a yellow No Parking diamond marks the trailhead. Be pre-advised that parking can be limited and complicated if you have more than one vehicle in your party. Park at strategic angles along the roadside and as the signs state, you really should not park there to avoid an unintended lengthy walk home.

Do not be alarmed by the Most Difficult / Bear Trail sign, it is an incline for only about 10 minutes followed by easy breezy gallivanting. At the top of the climb take a peek at the beautiful viewpoint. A few more minutes of trail navigating leads you to a divide in the trail, right winds you back down to the start and the left past the tree marked by a pileated woodpecker will lead you to the

Stellar's Jay Trail. Once you see the indicative bird sign on your right dip onto that trail, say hi to the magical tree and follow the very lovely rolly polly path.

Further on the trail will branch off again (blue flagtape), take a jaunt up to the right for 10 minutes and right before the trail merges into a logging road have a little rest in the meadow to the right. If it's Springtime you may even be rewarded with sights and smells of abundant wild flowers. From there, I believe, you can follow the logging road that eventually links up to Doran and Thain roads. However, please bring a map as so many links and trails can get you turned around and possibly lost.

Otherwise head back to the blue tape and this time go right, up a teensy hill, make a quick stop on the left to peek at a little oasis embraced by the eroded earth above it. Return back to the path continue up around over the oasis for the correct direction of your vehicle.

Continue along right past the vintage appliances until you reach another Stellar sign. Go left and proceed until you reach another Stellar sign. Congrats as you now have successfully looped back to where you started. Keep going until back at the pecked out tree and either go straight through for something different or right for the way you came. Have fun out there!

<http://www.cvr.bc.ca/DocumentCenter/View/77187>



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Winter Solstice Spiral - 2016



**Jennie Stevens
Linda O'Connor**
Shawnigan Focus

The rain held off on the evening of Dec 18th as a gathering of 30 joined to celebrate with Shawnigan's 1st Winter Solstice Walk.

In a candlelit procession from the village down to Elsie Miles Park, singing songs to celebrate the returning light of the new season, the enthu-

siastic group of all ages made their way carefully down the cleared path through the ice and snow. Rounding the corner of the museum, small candles led the way and welcomed all to a bright candlelit Spiral, created that morning with the spontaneous help of some preschoolers who earnestly helped to drag large green boughs across the field to be carefully laid in preparation for the evening's event.

Those who felt inspired took turns walking the Spiral path as the singing continued, some perhaps reflecting on the year past, or perhaps setting intentions for the year ahead. The Spiral looked so beautiful, green against the white snow, candles glowing, and there was a lovely sense of appreciation and connection in the group.

The evening continued with a Circle hosted in the ArtHouse, where beautiful warm red fabrics and pillows had been set, ready for quiet conversation and meditation focused on gratitude, and honouring the light we all bring to our community.

Throughout history people all over the world have observed Winter Solstice with traditions celebrating the

rebirth of sunlight after the darkest days. The term solstice means "sun stands still". During the Winter and Summer solstices, the sun appears to hold its position before continuing its journey across the sky. We know, however, it is the Earth actually rotating on its tilted axis as it circles the Sun each year. For half of each year the North Pole is tilted toward the sun, the other half, the South Pole does the same. This phenomenon creates our changing seasons, as the hemisphere facing the sun receives longer and more powerful exposure to sunlight.

The Labyrinth and Spiral are ancient symbols, the Spiral being fundamental in all of Nature. It is symbolic of the Cycle of the Seasons, the Cycle of the Sun and Earth, the Cycle of Nature's renewal

each year, The Labyrinth's meandering, and yet purposeful path has long been associated with walking meditations, ancient pilgrimages and spiritual contemplation. Labyrinths are becoming part of communities everywhere, as people discover their own reason's for taking the opportunity to "journey to one's center and back", refreshed and with clarity and insight.

One of the exciting new additions to Elsie Miles Community Park in the near future will be a permanent Labyrinth.

We hope it will become one of the many things that will draw the community together to share the Village green space that is evolving with many wonderful plans soon coming to fruition.



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Photo by Larva Colpitts

Book Review

Marcy Green
Shawnigan Focus

Open Heart, Open Mind

by Clara Hughes
Published by Simon and Schuster
Copyright 2015 by Clara Hughes

It could be said that Clara Hughes is one of Canada’s sweethearts. That big, open grin, her amazing Olympic achievement of medalling in both the Summer and Winter games, plus her humanitarian projects, all give her the aura of a superstar.

In this memoir we read about Clara, the woman, throwing herself into sport to escape her demons of an abusive, alcoholic father and a troubled childhood. It’s amazing how close she came to being a young delinquent and that only the serendipity of seeing a speed skater on TV changed her focus and

her life. “I can do that,” she thought.

Her first training and entry into the competitive arena was with cycling, where she found an Eastern Bloc coach who was brutal in his approach. While she began to rack up wins, she was emotionally torn down and criticized. After success in this sport and many bruising injuries, she finally tried speed skating, where her endurance from her first sport served her well. Not surprisingly, she began winning medals in this sport, as well, albeit with a more supportive coach.

Eventually she decided to go back to cycling and then finished up with speed skating at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, winning a bronze medal. This made her, with six Olympic medals in both sports, Canada’s top Olympic athlete. This formidable feat earned her the honour of being the Canadian

teams’ flag bearer in Vancouver, a huge honour.

Hughes tells a fascinating story of the ups and downs of being an elite athlete, “in the bubble” focused only on technique and winning times. She describes a life of constantly nursing injuries, dealing with the euphoria of winning and the terrible disappointment of losing. Depression was a companion who appeared at even her most triumphant times, causing her to struggle with self-image, weight issues, addiction to alcohol and moments of rage. Behind the smile was enormous pain, both the body pain of the athlete pushing for more, and the emotional pain of the human, still struggling for self acceptance.

Woven into her sports story is the sweet thread of finding a most unusual man, an adventurer and world traveler who was able to introduce

her to the wilderness and join her for gruelling but healing cycling, camping and hiking trips. She eventually married this man and cites his love and acceptance of her as being her bedrock as her life played out in the international stage.

Another event changed Clara’s life: seeing a video of Olympian Johann Koss advocating for his humanitarian group, Right to Play. After donating her prize money to this endeavour, she joined the group, visiting impoverished countries in Africa and seeing firsthand the impact of sports on improving children’s lives. She remains an enthusiastic supporter and maintains that her life was changed as deeply as were the lives of the children. The healing had begun.

Encouraged by team psychologists, Hughes finally found counsellors who helped her to begin dealing with her unhappy childhood and

the mental health issues she had struggled with all of her life. As she was open and honest about her struggles, she became a most powerful spokesperson for mental health. She remains a trusted one to this day and is currently involved in the initiative, “Bell, Let’s Talk”.

Clara Hughes can now add writer to her impressive list of skills. Although the subject matter was sometimes sad, it was also very inspirational. This book was a quick read and very hard to put down. It was written and published just before Clara’s Big Ride, a recent cycling trip across Canada, designed to focus on the stigma of talking about mental health issues.

I expect another book is coming soon and I very much look forward to reading it. You’ll want to share this one.

Rating: 5/5 stars

“The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance”

Bruce Fraser
Shawnigan Focus

The quote is most often attributed to Thomas Jefferson. In our modern context it is tempting to reiterate its message in the light of current events in the United States. But, it is equally important to cast it anew in this form:

“The price of environmental health is eternal ecological vigilance”, a rephrasing that applies to the health of the Shawnigan Watershed.

Our most celebrated case of ecological vigilance is the community’s battle against the imposition of a contaminated soil landfill in the watershed

headwaters, now in the midst of endless court and tribunal appearances. The landfill fight is a necessary exercise of the “price” but alone it is not sufficient.

The environmental health of the watershed is the result of many factors, all of which must be included in the “price”.

The historic ecological health of Shawnigan Lake was the cumulative result of conditions that included an intact mature forest, stable upland soils, intact streams, undisturbed wetlands, cold water, intact foreshore vegetation, abundance of indigenous species, lack of invasive species, incorrect nutrient levels, lack of physical and

contaminant pollution from habitation and recreation and a stable climate. All of these conditions have to varying degrees been diminished in the last 70 years.

Shawnigan has seen extensive upland logging, quarrying and gravel mining accompanied by siltation of streams and release of nutrients, many captured in sediments rather than being flushed out in the single outlet creek. Wetlands have been eliminated and unrestored spent gravel pits or open land parcels have been used as dumpsites.

Foreshore vegetation has been removed for lawns and beaches and replaced by rock walls and landfill. Shoreline

trees have been cut down to improve lake views. Introduced fish species have replaced indigenous ones. Introduced weeds have proliferated in the lake. Inadequate lakeside septic fields leak nutrients and contaminants into the lake, especially during winter high water when many are flooded. The proliferation of high-powered boats brings exhaust products, foreshore disturbance and foreign weeds. Changing climate conditions are leading to greater soil, contaminant and nutrient transport to the lake during increasingly powerful winter storms and higher temperatures in both the input streams and the lake as a whole during

extended summer droughts. All of these taken together add up to a case of cumulative impacts that overshadows any one of the changes by itself and all are continuing.

Ecological vigilance, the “price”, extends to the cumulative impact but can only be successfully paid by focusing attention on each and every single one of the changed conditions.

No member of our community, resident, business owner, land owner, resource developer or recreational visitor, public or private, is possessed of interests that absolve them from joining the common effort to see that the full “price” is duly and sufficiently paid.

Family storytime in the library

Stories, songs and craft activities for children ages 2 – 8 and a caregiver.

- ★ Saturday, January 28 – Feb 18, 10:30-11 (4 sessions)
- ★ Drop-in attendance. South Cowichan Library (Mill Bay Centre) - 250-743-5436

Parent and Child Mother Goose:

- ★ An early literacy series for babies and toddlers and a social time for children and parents. Together we will learn and build a repertoire of nursery rhymes, action songs and stories. At the end of the program, caregivers will receive a list of all the rhymes and songs learned.

Please register for this program on the first week that you attend. South Cowichan Library (Mill Bay Centre). 250-743-5436

For infants ages 0-2 and a caregiver: In the South Cowichan Library

- ★ Fridays, 10:30-11:30 January 20 – March 10 (8 weeks)

For toddlers ages 2-4 and a caregiver: In the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre (located on Cowichan Bay Rd.)

- ★ Thursdays, 11-12, January 19 – March 9 (8 weeks)
- ★ South Cowichan Library Branch
- ★ Tel: 250 743-5283



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Have something to say? Send in a letter to editor@shawniganfocus.ca

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch

Win Teague
PR Coordinator

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 134 has placed a large storage bin on its property for people in the local area to have some place to put old metal to recycle it. We have had a large number of items dropped into the bin including stoves, fridges etc. When the company comes to pick up the full bin we normally see a cheque for about \$150 BUT when they have to take the bin to the dump to get rid of garbage, it costs over \$100.

We are asking our friends and neighbours to refrain from putting garbage into the metal bin. The bin was placed there to provide a service to the public. We just ask that you respect that service.



AS THE WORLD TURNS...the season starts to as well

Brandy Gallagher
OUR EcoVillage

Suddenly the weather changes and we raise up our heads and realize that we are in a new year ... and that spring is fast approaching. With longer days and the sun dazzling us all we naturally begin to feel inspired by those New Year resolutions we might have made or simply the longing for change and a new start.

This change of pattern is often referred to as “seasonal living” and is what farmers, health professionals and sustainable living professionals ... and really most of us, recognize as an inherent opportunity to catalyze positive opportunities. Whether you feel inspired to start digging into your new seed catalogues and perhaps even your garden beds, or begin taking long walks in the nearly double

digit temperatures, and even begin to shift the kinds of foods we eat ... this season of ten heralds in a time of starting to “clean up”, or detox, and begin working towards what is next. February is often a preparatory time for so many things and a good time to create a fresh start again as a basis to move forward from.

The snow is barely gone and we can already see fresh stinging nettle breaking through the ground here at the farm at OUR Ecovillage. A sure sign that all the February “detox” wild plants are calling us, and our underlying seasonal rhythms, to begin preparing for spring and the opportunity to “detox” is mirrored back to us through nature everywhere.

This is a good time for harvesting the strong cleansing plants; nettle, dandelion, yellow dock, and generally

anything from the “bitters” family. It also becomes a good time to begin doing a purge in our lives in other ways; cleaning out closets, yards and first round of prep on garden beds. And, as always, beginning a round of sauna or hot tub treatments and exercise helps to move the lymphatic system.

OUR “Eco-Wellness” team of practitioners and doctors at OUR EcoVillage are “walking our/OUR talk” and have begun a series of Retreats and Wellness days on site at OUR farm and Healing Sanctuary.

With wellness colleagues and “food as medicine” chefs we are all learning together. Whether it is jumping on dealing with your bad knee and working through “Yoga Therapy” and herbal poultices or taking on that extra

10 pounds to get stronger in readiness for the upcoming season - now is the time.

If you really wish to “go green” consider joining us for Saint Patrick’s Day and OUR “Spring Into Wellness” Eco-retreat weekend ... or at least come for the Wellness Dinner on Saturday night the 18th of March to meet OUR practitioners/doctors. And every month there is a dinner or retreat planned for you to link up with meeting the doctors and folks who are focused on seasonal living and eco-wellness.

Reach out and we will introduce you to the locals who are now practicing in the South Cowichan and have so much skill in expertise in building a wellness community around them.

www.ourecoovillage.org
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Department Members Attended 27 incidents in January

- ★ Sunday, Jan 1 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- ★ Monday, Jan 2 - 1st Responder off Skylar Circle
- ★ Monday, Jan 2 – Hydro Lines on Renfrew Rd
- ★ Tuesday, Jan 3 - 1st Responder on TCH, Malahat
- ★ Thursday, Jan 5 - 1st Responder in Beach Estates
- ★ Thursday, Jan 5 - 1st Responder in the Village
- ★ Friday, Jan 6 – HazMat on Renfrew Rd
- ★ Friday, Jan 6 - 1st Responder off Campbell Rd
- ★ Saturday, Jan 7 – Couch Fire on W Shawnigan Lake Rd
- ★ Saturday, Jan 7 - 1st Responder on TCH, Malahat
- ★ Sunday, Jan 8 – MVI on Renfrew Rd
- ★ Tuesday, Jan 10 – MVI on Shawnigan-Mill Bay Rd
- ★ Wednesday, Jan 11 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan-Mill Bay Rd
- ★ Wednesday, Jan 11 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- ★ Friday, Jan 13 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- ★ Monday, Jan 16 – Chimney Fire on Worthington Rd
- ★ Tuesday, Jan 17 - 1st Responder off Cameron-Taggart Rd
- ★ Tuesday, Jan 17 – Chimney Fire on Shawnigan Lake Rd
- ★ Wednesday, Jan 18 - 1st Responder in Beach Estates
- ★ Thursday, Jan 19 - 1st Responder on TCH, Malahat
- ★ Sunday, Jan 22 – MVI on Shawnigan Lake Rd
- ★ Sunday, Jan 22 – MVI on Thain Rd
- ★ Tuesday, Jan 24 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- ★ Thursday, Jan 26 - 1st Responder off W Shawnigan Lake Rd
- ★ Thursday, Jan 26 - 1st Responder off S Shawnigan Lake Rd
- ★ Thursday, Jan 26 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan-Mill Bay Rd
- ★ Thursday, Jan 26 – Burning Complaint on Renfrew Rd



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COMMUNITY GROUPS

- ★ **Area B Director's meetings with Sonia Furstenau**
Office hours by appointment. Email sfurstenau@cvrld.bc.ca For meeting updates check www.soniafurstenau.ca
- ★ **Shawnigan Advisory Planning Commission (APC)**
Meeting TBA at Watershed office: #4-1760 Shawnigan Mill Bay Rd. **Contact:** grtreloar@shaw.ca
- ★ **Shawnigan Parks and Recreation Commission**
Meetings are held bi-monthly on the third Thursday of the month. 7pm at the Shawnigan Lake Community Centre. Next meeting Feb. 16th
- ★ **Shawnigan Lake Community Centre Commission**
TBA as needed. Shawnigan Lake Community Centre
- ★ **Shawnigan Improvement District**
2nd Monday of each month 7 pm at #1 Fire Hall
- ★ **Shawnigan Residents Association (SRA)**
For info: check www.thesra.ca
- ★ **Canada Day - 150 Celebration meeting** last Thursday of each month at the Watershed office : Unit 4-1760 Shawnigan Mill Bay Road.
- ★ **Shawnigan Lake Community Association (SLCA)**
Contact: bburr@shaw.ca
- ★ **Shawnigan Basin Society**
Meetings held 1st Tuesday of the month in Watershed office: Unit 4-1760 Shawnigan Mill Bay Road. Contact: luvlife@shaw.ca
- ★ **Young Seniors Action Group (YSAGS)**
Contact: www.ysag.ca email: ysagssl@gmail.com
- ★ **Shawnigan Lake Museum**
Open Fri., Sat., and Sun 10:30-4 www.shawniganlakemuseum.com
For info contact: shawniganlakemuseum@shaw.ca
- ★ **South Cowichan Community Policing**
Contact: 250-929-7222 - www.southcowichancommunitypolicing.ca

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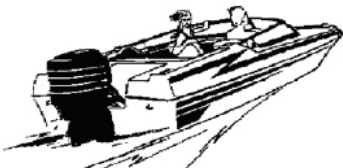


One lucky respondent with the correct answer will be randomly selected to win two Specialty Coffees at Shawnigan House.
Reply to: editor@shawniganfocus.ca

CONGRATULATIONS

The winning answer for January was submitted by Laura Buss who recognized the "Gang" of feral turkeys that call Shawnigan home. We received some excellent responses about these birds and so decided to provide a little more info in a WildSide article, also in this issue.

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HEALTHY BEGINNINGS

A Free Drop-In at the
Shawnigan Lake Community Centre



Healthy Beginnings is a friendly, relaxed group for moms and dads with babies and toddlers from birth to 3 years of age. There is no registration required, just drop-in to visit and share a cup of coffee or a snack. We will be discussing a wide range of topics. Gathering every Thursday morning except the weeks with a statutory holiday.

Toddler Group starts at 9:30 AM | Infant Group starts at 11:00 AM

INFORMATION : Rhoda - 250 709 3050

EMAIL : rhoda.taylor@viha.ca

FACEBOOK : Healthy Beginnings Cowichan

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WildSide: A Gang of Turkeys

There are three collective nouns for a group of turkeys: Rafter, Posse or Gang. For the group pictured in last month's What-Is-It contest, they really do look like a gang as they strut through the Village.

We had several responses to the photo, and while John Hodgins was not the first respondent, he did provide the most information:

This photo was taken in Shawnigan Village on Shawnigan-Mill Bay Rd. looking towards Mill Bay. Between the cars are feral turkeys likely originating from a small domestic flock on Sylvester Rd. about 20 years ago. There are no truly "wild" turkeys on the Island. Many of us in this neighbourhood look after and look out for these birds as they are truly harmless and quite entertaining. Their numbers rise and fall year by year as they a food source for eagles, owls and racoons.



Shawnigan Lake celebrated Canada's 100th

Fifty years ago, through the years 1966 and 1967, residents of Shawnigan Lake were busy with several Centennial projects leading up to Canada's 100th birthday. One of the major projects at that time was the research and development of Green Branches and Fallen Leaves – The Story of a Community. Local historian, Alice L. Gibson (Brownie), compiled the book under the auspices of the Shawnigan Lake Confederation Centennial Committee of 1966-1967. This excel-

lent book, about the history and development of Shawnigan Lake, is still in print after 50 years. It is available at the Shawnigan Lake Museum.

Another major project that was completed for the centennial is the rock cairn at Cairn Park, across from the Shawnigan Lake Fire Hall on Shawnigan Mill Bay Road.

Several projects are planned in Shawnigan Lake to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday, from a multipurpose timber frame shelter to a big

bash on Canada Day. If you want to be involved in any of these projects, please email editor@shawniganfocus.ca



Carl Larson & Alf Neilsen building the cairn

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