



Metchosin Muse

Vol. 32 Issue 2

February 2024

metchosinmuse@gmail.com www.metchosinmuse.ca



Outgoing editor Johnny Carline displaying the awards presented to the Muse team as Citizens of the Year. Barb Sawatsky photo

New Muse Co-Editor Wanted

Johnny Carline and Allen Jones

After writing for the *Muse* since 2014 and being a volunteer co-editor since 2016, Johnny Carline is stepping down from his co-editor position for personal reasons (see 'Editor's Musings', p. 3). He has edited the February edition and will help with the transition for a replacement co-editor.

The *Muse* currently has two co-editors, and they alternate monthly responsibility. Each month, the *Muse* team meets and identifies possible stories for the next edition. The editor receives articles from groups and individuals in Metchosin and usually writes one or two articles a month. When all articles have been submitted, the editor will

read them to determine suitability and any need for editing for length or clarity. Some basic computer skills and use of English grammar are needed in the editing.

The editor then submits articles for proofreading by the team of dedicated volunteers, after which the editor will amend, then send the articles to the person responsible for design and layout. The editor makes recommendations about the layout and approves the finished layout before the final proofreading by the team. As a director, the co-editor takes part in any business issues that may arise.

The co-editor position may be one of the most rewarding volunteer positions in Metchosin and is

much appreciated by our readers. The actual editing process before proofing can take a couple of days every other month, and the opportunity to write articles is in addition to that. Be assured, the editor is supported by a positive and experienced team. The technical details are easily learned. You will also note that the *Muse* has had a series of successful editors over 30 years of publication, all of whom had little or no experience when they started!

If you think this opportunity might interest you and you are available to start, preferably in spring 2024, please call Allen Jones (778-265-6385) or Johnny Carline (250-474-4601) to express your interest.

ReImagine West Shore Takes on Metchosin's Repair Café

Cindy Moyer

You may remember the Repair Café that took place last April at the Metchosin Arts & Cultural Centre (MACC), where folks were able to learn how to fix a few basic things with borrowed tools and get broken items repaired for free or the cost of a replacement part or two. Well, it's coming back to MACC on Sunday, February 25 with a new non-profit at the helm. ReImagine West Shore is an organization dedicated to helping community members embrace the behavioural changes we need to make in response to the rising cost of living and climate change, including promoting sustainable lifestyle choices with initiatives like the Repair Café.

So, gather up your broken items like toasters, lamps, hair dryers, bikes, toys etc., and join ReImagine West Shore on February 25 from 11:00am to 3:00pm at the Metchosin Arts & Cultural Centre where a fantastic volunteer repair team can assess and more than likely help you get your item repaired. And for those who want to give DIY a try, there will be tools and materials on hand for you to work on fixing some things yourself!

By promoting repairs, ReImagine West Shore wants to help reduce the waste our lifestyle's produce. This is critical according to ReImagine West Shore Vice-President Shannon Carman. "We throw away piles and piles of things, even things which have practically nothing wrong with them, and which could easily be used again after a simple repair. We forget how easy it can be to fix things. Repair Café wants to change that."

ReImagine West Shore is aiming to organize a Repair Café on a regular and rotating site basis around the West Shore. Visit ReImagineUs.ca for the latest

and visit Repaircafe.org/en to learn more about the Repair Café concept.

Since its inception late last year ReImagine West Shore has hosted a Cozy Soup Workshop in collaboration with Royal Bay

Secondary School to promote affordable home cooking with local in-season ingredients, and a Swap & Shop in collaboration with the Metchosin Arts & Cultural Centre Association, to celebrate Upcycling and keep more

textiles out of the landfill. And on March 9 at Belmont Secondary School's Learning Commons in Langford, ReImagine will be presenting the first West Shore Seedy Saturday (Sprout Edition) to test the waters for establishing a larger

seedy food security event in 2025. We have more sustainable living happenings planned throughout the year, so follow us on social media (Facebook & Instagram) or subscribe to our e-newsletter for updates at ReImagineUs.ca.



April 2023's Repair Cafe brought out Metchosinites like Eric White, Katie Nelson, Dave Wilmhurst, Chris VandeWater and his son Mike, Marcia Farquhar and her partner, as well as Mark Atherton.

Metchosin Muse

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AD and copy DEADLINE

The 15th of the month for month-end publication.

ACCOUNTS & CLASSIFIEDS

Linda Spiller, 250-590-0168
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Classified Ads

\$15 for up to 25 words per edition.
 Deadline: 15th of the month.
 Payment in advance preferably by e-transfer. Contact Linda at amuselinda@gmail.com or 250-590-0168.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE AND HOW TO SEND COPY

All articles and advertisements are due by the 15th of the month. Please send copy as an email attachment using Microsoft Word, text or RTF to: metchosinmuse@gmail.com. Do not send PDFs. Photos should be high resolution and be in jpg or tif format only. Typewritten or handwritten copy may be acceptable if you have no computer access; please call Linda at 250-590-0168 for arrangements. All submissions may be edited for length, style and suitability of content and language. Submissions are accepted on this understanding. Please visit our website for more information: www.metchosinmuse.ca

ABOUT THE MUSE

The *Metchosin Muse* is a local non-profit, arts, interests and activities publication, produced by the *Metchosin Muse* Society. The opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors, not the paper. The *Muse* endeavours to promote respectful and open dialogue in the community and aims to interest a broad cross-section of the residents of Metchosin and Beecher Bay.

CURRENT CIRCULATION

2800

Letters to the Editor

The *Metchosin Muse* welcomes letters to the editor, of not more than 200 words. Your letter may be edited for style or length. Please email your letter to metchosinmuse@gmail.com (with electronic signature if possible). An address and telephone number are required but will not be published.

Future of Farming

I am writing as I am concerned with what the future may hold for Metchosin farmers/landowners. I am hearing rumblings in other communities on the island and in our province, in light of governmental policies, specifically Bills 31, 42 and 44. There is an alarming trend of government not allowing public input with these new legislations. Many people do not seem to be aware of the implications of these bills. With food security becoming an issue, Metchosin could be a valuable area to assist with this problem. Traditionally, farming used to be considered a cherished and valuable vocation as it pertains to local food security, but recent governmental legislations seem to devalue farmers with harsh regulations making farming more and more difficult in an already inflated economy. Many farmers around the province are experiencing this with restrictions on water and fertilizers etc. Also, farmlands being taken over by large corporations make smaller operations feel threatened. One response to this has been the formation of Land Keepers Leadership Society which was started by concerned Cowichan farmers/property owners. Metchosinites might want to look into this resource: landkeepersociety.com. Land

Keepers Leadership Society is a platform for all landowners province wide to connect and be a common voice to send a message to the government that rights to private land ownership must be respected and upheld.

Cheryl Bistric

Need for a Unified Community

Several *Muse* issues ago Mr. Carline authored a compelling article juxtaposing facts and opinions – things to consider. Two issues ago John Ranns wrote a letter expressing concern over the expenditure involved in hiring a new CAO. His letter was factual – Ms. Tarnowski has done an excellent job as CAO and CFO, she gets along well with staff, understands the rural imperative, and the two councillors that topped the polls in the last election think she is exceptional. This new hire will incur a new expense and will raise taxes. I concur with Mr. Ranns – I think no one wants another double-digit tax increase!

Mr. Ranns has demonstrated for over 30 years his commitment to Metchosin protecting our rural and magical place to live. His opinion and advice on this topic are valid and based on fact. He suggested it may have been prudent to wait for another budget cycle to assess priorities and that

making significant financial decisions based on a 3/2 vote should be revisited. Constructive advice from a very qualified man.

In stark contrast, Mr. Saluke's follow-up letter was shocking. Starting a letter with "all due respect" typically opens the door for disrespect and Mr. Saluke did not disappoint. Essentially it was a declaration of his fealty for Mayor Little, and that he does not care for Mr. Ranns. A vent that tacitly implies anyone hired under previous mayor and councils' "regime" was hired due to cronyism and therefore must be incompetent; not factual and not true. I did, however, enjoy his articles about water – he clearly is more qualified to speak on that issue.

We may have different opinions but we all agree we live in a wonderful and magical place and want to keep it that way. Our elected officials and support staff – past and present – play a key role in achieving that goal. I have lived here for 36 years and believe we face the biggest threat ever to our magical place. Personal, divisive, and partisan politics will only blur issues. Now more than ever a unified council and unified community, creative thinking and innovation is what will save us. We need to redefine what Metchosin is and our role in the CRD and we need to do it soon.

Owen Clarke

Visit our website!

www.metchosinmuse.ca

The *Muse* website provides a quick way to access Metchosin's monthly newspaper, and it allows those with vision challenges to magnify the PDF files to a comfortable reading size. The current issue and issues from past years are there, along with contact information and information for submissions, advertisers, and deadlines.

Muse Subscriptions

We welcome subscriptions for the *Metchosin Muse* (11 issues/year), which can be mailed to Canadian addresses for \$35/year. Extra postage will be added to the cost for addresses outside Canada.

Please contact Laura Farquharson, 250-478-1197 or email laura.farquharson@shaw.ca, and include full address, email and phone number. If this is to be a gift for another person, please give the necessary contact information.

Payment can be made to the *Muse* Treasurer by e-transfer to amuselinda@gmail.com, or by cheque made out to the *Metchosin Muse*, c/o Linda Spiller, 4741 Lisandra Road, Victoria, BC V9C 4G1.



Council News

FEBRUARY 2024



Snow and Ice Removal

Ice control and snow plow service is provided on priority route basis with Happy Valley, Metchosin, William Head, Rocky Point and Kangaroo Roads being top priority as major collector roads. BC Transit routes and school bus routes are next, after which all other roads will be serviced. Response times will vary depending on weather conditions. During a significant snow event, while snow removal crews are on snow removal around the clock, it is to be expected that roads will become covered once again after plowing.

Snow plows need sufficient room to maneuver, turn around and pile snow. Residents are cautioned that leaving cars on road shoulders, cul-de-sacs/dead end roads may result in your road not being able to be plowed. Cars left on the road that prevent plowing, are at risk of being towed at the owner's expense. Please park your vehicles at the end of your driveway or on your property. If you shovel snow to the left side of your driveway (facing in) where it meets the road, this will minimize the amount of snow pushed back into your driveway when the plows pass. As well, please keep recycling bins off the road.

If you have an urgent medical appointment or are a medical professional needing to get to work, call the Emergency Program Coordinator at the Metchosin Fire Hall at 250-478-1307; or after hours, Langford dispatch at 250-478-9555 and ask for the Metchosin duty officer to be paged.

Grant In Aid Program

Is your community organization in need of funding? Not-for-profit societies can apply to Metchosin Council for a grant-in-aid. Deadline for applications is March 15. Council announces the names of recipients in June. Applications are available at metchosin.ca and at the Municipal Hall.

Council Meetings

The 2024 schedule for regular Council Meetings and Standing Committee Meetings is posted on the website: www.metchosin.ca>Meetings>Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held in the Council Chambers at 7:00pm unless otherwise stated, and are subject to change. For updated information please call the Municipal Hall at 250-474-3167 or refer to the website at www.metchosin.ca.

- Finance Committee Meeting and Council Meeting February 5
- Special Finance Committee -Budget Meeting 4:00-6:00 pm, February 8
- Community Planning, Environment & Natural Areas, and Public Works & Protective Services Committees February 12
- Special Community Planning Committee-Joint Meeting with Parks & Trails Select Advisory Committee February 20
- Special Finance Committee-Budget Meeting. 4:00-6:00 pm, February 22
- Healthy Community Advisory Select Committee. 4:30 pm, February 27
- Metchosin Environmental Advisory Select Committee. February 27

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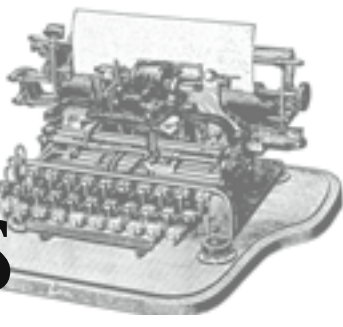
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 25 words or less, \$15.
 Deadline: 15th of each month.
 Payment in advance preferably by e-transfer. Contact Linda at amuselinda@gmail.com or 250-590-0168

Metchosin Municipal Hall

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Editor's Musings



Johnny Carline

When I started writing for the *Muse* in 2014, I had many conversations with Brian Domney about how the *Muse* originally developed its focus on maintaining harmony in the community, and how times had changed and how we needed to revisit that philosophy. I joined Brian as co-editor in 2016, but he had served a lengthy stint as editor and soon retired from the *Muse*. Fortunately, Allen Jones had joined us, so I still had a co-editor.

I took on the task of updating the paper's philosophy from "maintaining harmony" to one of promoting "respectful and open dialogue in the community". Having worked in local municipal government for over 40 years, I naturally took on the "local politics" beat (in addition to cricket). However, while I thought my experience might enable me to offer some occasional commentary, I tried, to the extent possible, to ensure that different points of view were fairly represented and that the paper did not become

politically aligned to just one point of view.

I knew that elected officials might naturally be anxious about having their deliberations being publicly examined and that the mixture of factual reporting and opinion might be new and challenging to some. However, by 2022, I was comfortable that this approach was in place and largely accepted and, as I had served about the same length of time as Brian had, I began discussing with my wife, Nadene, the possibility of my passing the torch.

Then in mid-2023 the unimaginable happened; without warning, Nadene died. My world imploded. I decided to try to "carry on" with the *Muse* partly out of a sense of duty and partly in the hope that it might help distract me, a least a little, from what I was feeling. I am very grateful to my *Muse* team colleagues for their

friendship and support during this time.

But, without Nadene at my side, what had once seemed like a part of a pleasant post-retirement stroll with my loved one through the evening of our lives began to feel more like a treadmill of self-imposed obligations. It became difficult to maintain the necessary level of commitment and focus to produce a quality product.

I have been advised to find some new interests without ties to the past that I might personally enjoy and find fulfilling. I have become convinced that I need to heed that advice and act quickly for the sake of my physical and mental health. To do this, I know that I have to shed the responsibility of being a co-editor for the *Muse*. So this will be the last edition of the *Muse* I will edit.

The *Muse* will, therefore, need a new co-editor, and I appeal

to any of you who may be even remotely interested, to step forward. It is a worthwhile task and one which yields a great deal of satisfaction. I will certainly be happy to "show you the ropes" and transition into the job.

I will miss the process, my colleagues and the regular contributors. I will also miss the readers, most of whom I have never met, but whom I have come to view as almost friends. A number of those I did meet passed on encouragement and good wishes, for which I will always be grateful. If my departure is unexpected, I hope that my need to step away will be understood, as I try to deal with my new life circumstances. Farewell.

Please note the deadline for the March issue of the Muse is February 14.

Clarifications

Johnny Carline

A couple of readers pointed out some statements in our previous *Muse* which they suggested needed some clarification. We are happy to oblige.

1. In the article "Metchosin has a New CAO", it was stated that "After examining Metchosin's needs for over a year, the new Council has made a decision to appoint a new Chief Administrative Officer." That article is correct with respect to the appointment of Bob Payette, the new CAO. However, as the reader pointed out, the decision to search for (and subsequently appoint) a new CAO was made on March 6, 2023 after Council had been in office 17 weeks.
2. In the article "Metchosin's Council Officer Positions", it was stated that "an officer may be terminated by the Council ... for cause ... (or) on reasonable notice, subject to the affirmative vote of at least 2/3 of all Council. This requirement of the Act may not apply to the proposed reorganization." A reader questioned whether this meant one could use reorganization to circumvent the 2/3 requirement of the Act. The answer to that is no. The 2/3 vote requirement is always required for the termination of an officer. What the article was referring to was the rare situation that appears to apply to the situation which developed in Metchosin, where an officer in one position was assigned, on acting basis, to a second position, also normally an officer position, and then, through reorganization, reassigned solely to the original officer position, which they had never

vacated. As the article implies, this may be permissible on a simple majority vote provided that the interim assignment to the second officer position never involved a Council vote to formally install the person in that second position as an officer. That case could well be interpreted as involving no actual termination of an officer. The *Muse* offers no opinion on what actually did or should have happened.

3. In "Editor's Musings", the acknowledgment of various generous donations to the *Muse* included "Linda Spiller and the Metchosin Community Association." A member of MCA clarified that while Linda Spiller's donation consisted of the payments made by the MCA to her for working as the acting office coordinator, these were wages paid by the MCA, not a donation. The decision to donate these to the *Muse* was Linda's alone. We stand corrected.

4. Finally, sometimes we pick up our own errors – too late! In the article on Spirit Bay reference was made to "spill-response ship *K.J. Gardener* ... The ship can carry one million tons of oil ..." It should have said "spill-response ship *K.J. Gardner* ... can carry one thousand tons of oil ..." Hopefully even that is bigger than we will ever need.

We appreciate our readers' attention to detail and taking the trouble to communicate to us, not just when we don't get things perfectly correct (and despite our best efforts, we do make the odd mistake) – but also when what we write may be correct but could be interpreted in a way that is not. Together we make a better product.

Frosty Blockades on the Goose

Ric Perron

Nicole and I followed odd looking snow tracks along the Galloping Goose for a hundred metres, our curiosity building. When we rounded the corner, we were very pleasantly surprised by the enormity of this snowball. We have no idea of its creator. Shout out to its roller(s). Neither of us could budge the giant from its spot. Obviously, nor could the creators. So here it lies at km 22 to shrink away and become a fond memory.



One thing is for sure. No-one threw it! Nicole Lalonde photo

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Blast from the Muse's Past

To celebrate the *Muse's* 30th anniversary, we are publishing one article per month from the past decade, 2013 to 2023. This month's article, below, is from the February 2018 issue of the *Muse*.

Ken Farquharson Celebrates Birthday at Rough Voice

Barb Sawatsky

Much to his surprise, Ken celebrated his January 8 birthday at the Community House surrounded by more than 50 people, most of whom he hadn't previously met. Not wishing to miss the first Rough Voice evening of the new year, Laura had told him she was "taking him somewhere special" for his birthday. Prior to the start of the regular program, and to much laughter, Laura told the story of the sad background of Ken's singing history and then Happy Birthday and Mull of Kintyre were sung with great gusto. Cake provided by Laura was shared during the break and Ken was an awfully good sport, playing the role of Man In the Spotlight with his usual aplomb. The next day he sent the following email: "Many thanks for adjusting your program last night to allow a celebration of my birthday, special Scots songs and all. It gave me a good start to the coming year. Laura really did surprise me with the cake. I had expected a story or two, but not the cake." Laura's email read, "my Scotsman is not noted for showing enormous enthusiasm, but he was very touched by the program you had put together for him last night. It was wonderful how supportive everyone was and there were so many nice comments at the end."



The Birthday Laddie with his sneaky wife at the Community House. Barb Sawatsky photo

Ken Farquharson passed away in August of 2021, and is deeply missed. An active resident of Metchosin, "Ken was community through and through" (Johnny Carline).

Scoundrels, Fraudsters and Scammers

Barb Sawatsky

Scams and Frauds Discussion
Friday, February 9, 7:00pm
Metchosin Community House

As if nuisance robocalls aren't annoying enough we must now learn to be wary of our responses to simple questions when answering an unfamiliar number on the phone. However, crank calls are minor when compared to computer scams and frauds which are becoming more complicated and sophisticated. Some are easy to spot but many, especially with the advent of AI, are not. Although most of us are aware that we must keep access codes, user ID, passwords and PINs a secret, scams and frauds that attempt to imitate government services can be confusing, especially if the caller is using demanding or threatening language.

Twelve-month 2023 statistics from the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre have not yet been released but they do show that in the first six months of last year, more than \$283M was lost through fraud schemes and online scams

in Canada alone. This is enough proof that we are not as aware as we might think we are and are therefore vulnerable to the evolving sophistication of fraudsters.

At a Metchosin Council meeting in November, RCMP Sgt. Todd Preston suggested that our community would benefit from a discussion on the subject of frauds. Following up on this, on Friday, February 9 at 7:00 pm, the Metchosin Community House will be hosting an informal talk on scams and fraud by a member of the RCMP Community Policing Division. The goal of the talk is simply to bring awareness and "to get people's 'Spidey senses' tingling" when they receive strange phone calls or texts to hopefully make them question before sending money or clicking on a link. There will be time during the evening for those present to ask questions and to share stories if they have experienced an attempt at fraud. As is the usual hospitality of the House, please stay and enjoy a cup of tea and a chat with fellow Metchosinites after the presentation.

Coexisting with Cougars

Mollie Cameron, President, Wild Wise

With recent cougar attacks on livestock, it's a good time for some useful reminders on coexisting with the big cats.

Securing our attractants at all times and not exclusively when sightings are posted is the best way to prevent conflicts or an escalation in habituated behaviors with wildlife.

Best practices with cougars include keeping pets on leash, bringing free-roaming cats indoors and properly securing livestock (especially during dusk and dawn) with adequate electric fencing, secured shelters, and avoiding the use of enclosures close to heavily forested areas.

It's important to understand that while cougars are opportunistic hunters and can be active during any time of day or night, they will often make great efforts to avoid people.

We encourage the public to report cougar sightings to Wild Wise.

If you witness a cougar posing a threat to public safety, please contact the conservation service at 1-877-952-7277.

Please remember to consider wildlife in all that you do. Coexistence is possible if we all participate!

Photo courtesy of The Cougar Coexistence Initiative



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"Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone, let your heart burn with loving-kindness for all who may cross your path."
(Baha'i Writings)

For information on the Metchosin Baha'i Community please call or text: Mona at (250) 514-1756 / Doug at (250) 858-2053 / Bahai.org

FEBRUARY 3 - 29



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Winter Weather Delays Critical Budget Discussions

Johnny Carline

One casualty of the freezing weather was the District budget discussion scheduled for January 11. Showing excellent anticipation, the District cancelled the meeting early in the day and got the word out, saving people from attempting a cold and potentially dangerous trip in the cold snap and snow that came later.

On the agenda was an examination of the District's proposed operating budget. This had to be rescheduled to January 25, but the Finance Committee and Council face a difficult task. It is hard to find an "easy" target for cutting in the proposed budget which

would have a significant impact on the budget. Inflation is what it is; the increase in police costs were apparently committed once the District exceeded the threshold population of 5,000, and the question on whether to hire a new Chief Administrative Officer, which has a big budget impact, has been irreversibly decided.

One might note first that use of reserves will mitigate the impact of the increase of police costs on property taxes, and secondly that by budgeting half the cost of a new CAO in 2023, the impact on the apparent increase on 2024 property taxes, 2024 over 2023, is only half the actual increase in spending resulting from that

decision. Despite both of these, the current budget proposal still projects an increase of over 15% in property taxes, 2024 over 2023.

Let us assume that, in broad terms, every element in the budget is, when considered in isolation and in relation to its cost, still considered worthwhile. Except for a few minor items, this may well be the case. There may even be additional worthwhile items not so far in the budget, such as the further examination of our aquifers being urged by Bev Bacon. Nonetheless, a 15.3% increase in property taxes, following last year's 13.4% increase, is almost certain to create public concern, as evidenced by the

article by Kathleen MacPherson in this issue (see below).

Now Council has two more difficult decisions to make. First, in benefit-cost terms, which budget items are of the lowest priority and therefore the first choices for potential budget cuts. And then, once identified, which would the community prefer – foregoing having those items, or being prepared to live with a 15% budget increase. These are both very difficult decisions, consensus is unlikely and, whatever the outcome, not everybody will be happy. This is when our council members will have to earn their stipend and they have our good wishes in undertaking this task.

Food Donation Thanks

Jim MacPherson

Thank you to all who contributed to the Community House's Food Bank program. Food, hygiene products and cash were collected on behalf of the Goldstream Food Bank. These were delivered early in the New Year to help overcome traditional January shortfalls.

The Goldstream Food Bank was most appreciative of the contribution. The food bank contribution is an annual program of the Metchosin Community Association.

Municipal Budget

Kathleen MacPherson

I have learned from the recently released proposed budgetary plan of the District that we are facing a tax increase in 2024 of 15.3%, after having had a tax increase of 13.4% last year. The 2024 budget is showing a projected increase of \$560,273 over the 2023 budget. Anticipated policing costs in 2024 of \$995,000 and a potential deficit from 2023 of \$137,800 are excluded from this total. Needless to say, Canadians are still dealing with inflation and there are many people in Metchosin, particularly seniors, who are struggling to make ends meet. Unfortunately, with these proposed increases, some may very well be forced to sell in order to generate adequate income.

I have also heard that Instinct has been allowed to cancel its contract with the District with no penalty. Why? This contract to rent space at the old school would presumably have been drawn up by a lawyer who would have protected the District by including a penalty clause for cancellation.

"Extra Services" costs, as documented in the 2024 Budget, are significant and total \$547,269. These include the hiring of a full-time CAO at a cost of \$178,600/year including wages and benefits with yearly increases as a given (\$89,300 was budgeted for this position in 2023 and carried over).

Other departments showing cost increases for extra services include the Fire Department for a new support staff position costing \$65,367. The Planner's salary is increasing \$40,686 for two extra days/week for a total salary cost of \$95,680 (and is to increase in 2025 to \$147,514). Policing is increasing by \$200,000-\$150,000 for a fifth officer and \$50,000 for one support staff. Public Works is to fund a supervisor's position for \$27,142 and Road Administration

is showing, effective July, an engineer's contract of \$33,080 (net). However, statements that it was a "good idea" or "should be done" do not justify such costs considering the financial position of the District and the current economic climate.

I have heard that a number of the in-camera Council meetings have been of a legal nature. Legal fees should be noted to have increased from \$10,199 in 2022 to \$75,000 in 2024 – \$50,000 for Administration, \$20,000 for Planning and Environmental Services, and \$5,000 for the school. This is a significant cost increase. It also raises the issue of why so many in-camera meetings are being held in light of the need for public transparency as promised by the Mayor.

There are two further items that should be clarified. These are new expenditures of \$27,000 to "Doggie Doo collection" to cover signage and three times weekly drop-off and a \$20,000 cost for electronic signage (besides regular signage) which is projected to increase in cost every year to 2028 for a final budget cost of \$332,993.

Possible suggestions which Council may want to consider in order to reduce the current and future tax loads in such a small municipality might include:

1. Budgeting to a set tax rate rather than the reverse.
2. Resurrecting the plan from years ago of exploring the possibility of amalgamating with East Sooke, which would provide an expanded tax base.
3. Permitting commercial development along Sooke highway; again to expand the tax base.
4. In terms of housing, permitting small detached houses on appropriately sized lots, recognizing the potential problems for sewer and water services.
5. Consider selling "the buffer lands".



Even these deer look a little indignant – but at all the snow, not the proposed tax increase. Barb Sawatsky photo



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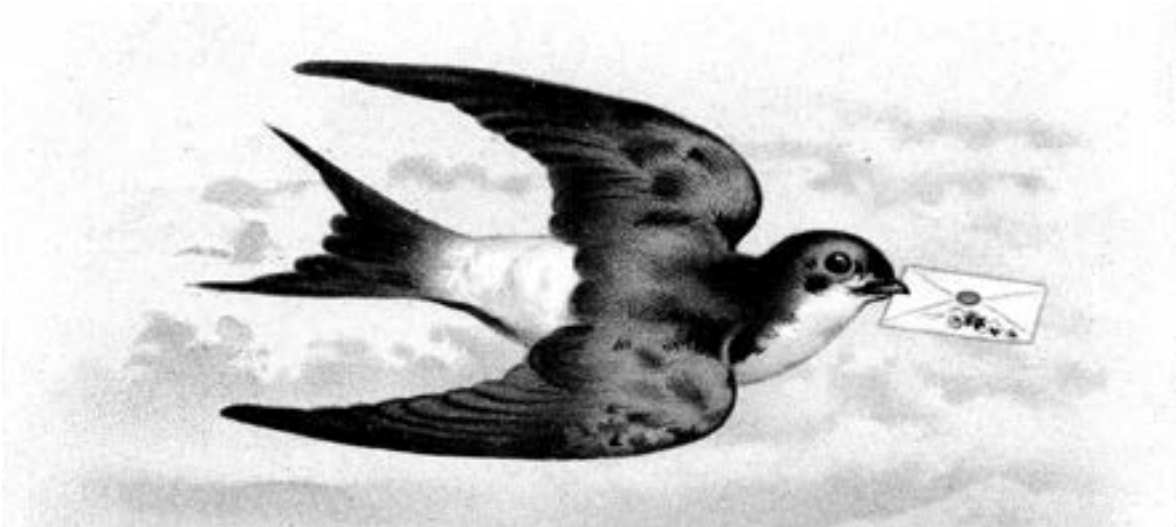
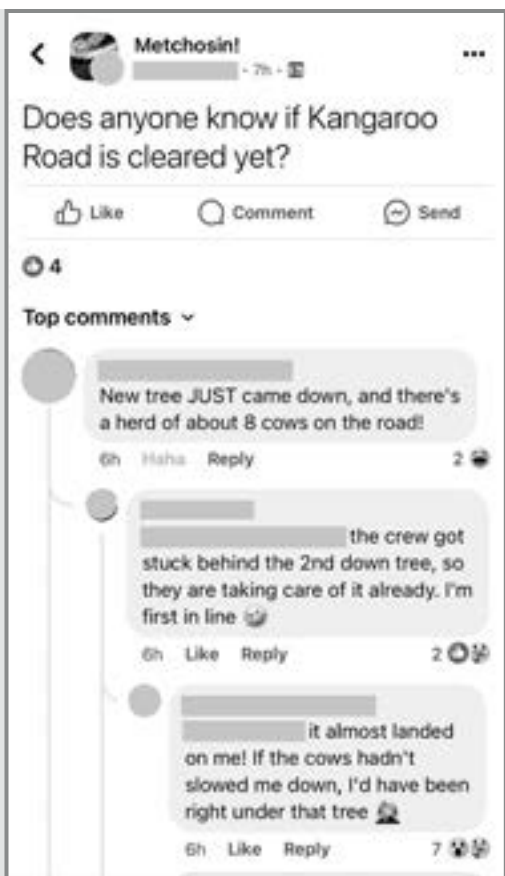
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Found on Facebook ...

Metchosin was sure a hopping community during the month of January. Between snowball blockades on the Goose (see page 3), trees on the roads, and of course snow, we just had to hunker down. One lucky resident was saved from a falling tree by some slow moo-ing cows!



Valentines in the Digital Age

Charles Krusekopf and ChatGPT

As Valentine's Day approaches, many people feel a certain amount of dread at the thought that they will need to come up with some witty and personalized way to say "I Love You" to those who are closest to them. A store-bought card rarely captures one's true sentiment and offers generic lines that may not fit your personal situation. However, coming up with your own poem or words of affection is a daunting task as most of us don't fancy ourselves wordsmiths who can match Wordsworth or one of the romantics who works at Hallmark.

Luckily technology, in the form of Artificial Intelligence (AI) assistants, has arrived to help everyone who needs a little help in expressing their true feelings but may feel a little apprehensive about channeling their inner poetry skills. By setting up a free ChatGPT account you can type in a prompt and within seconds it produces a written response customized to your requested subject and format. This gives you great freedom to play around with styles and have some fun.

As someone who works in education, I know there is great apprehension about how new AI tools such as ChatGPT will be used to replace personal expression and writing. However, at least in its current format, English teachers should rest easy. ChatGPT is great for getting one started and some creative play, but there is still the need for the human touch to create something truly personal.

To show *Muse* readers the strength (and limitations) of ChatGPT you can check out some of our digital age love letters written purely by ChatGPT given the prompts below ...

Prompt: Poem on how to tell your spouse you still love them even if you forgot Valentine's Day

In the rush of life, a day slipped by,
Forgive my heart, let out a sigh.
Valentine's Day, I failed to portray,
But my love for you, it's here to stay.

In the chaos of days, I let it slide,
Yet, for you, my love, it's an endless tide.
No cards or flowers, my lapse is clear,
But in my heart, you're always near.

Let me make it up in every way,
With love that lasts, come what may.
Forgive this lapse, my dearest dove,
For you, my sweet, it's endless love.

Prompt: Sea shanty Valentine to my three-legged dog

(Chorus)
Yo-ho-ho to my three-legged mate,
A seafaring pup with a pirate's gait.
Through storms and tides, you've sailed with glee,
Forever my first mate upon the sea.

In Metchosin's coves, where the waves do roar,
You prance on the shore, a legend for sure.
With three legs, you conquer the sand,
A fearless rover, footprints in the land.

So here's to you, my canine heart,
In our shanty of love, we'll never part.
A three-legged legend, my brave little star,
Yo-ho-ho, no matter where we are.

Prompt: Rap Valentine to the rabbits in the garden

Yo, in the garden where the veggies grow,
Rabbits hoppin', like they own the show.
Munchin' on my greens, bold and sly,
Valentine's Day, but they don't shy.

Fluffy bandits, in the moonlight's gleam,
Carrots disappearing like in a dream.
Love and loathing, a crazy affair,
In this veggie war, they play unfair.

Ears floppin', tails thumpin', bold as brass,
Valentine's vibes in the veggie patch.
I chase them away, but they don't care,
Rabbits in my garden, it's a love affair.

So, here's a rap, to the bunnies so sly,
In my garden, under the sky.
Valentine's love, a twist of fate,
Even for the rabbits, who just can't wait.

Prompt: What to say to your loved one when you use ChatGPT to write your Valentine

This Valentine's message comes with a twist,
A touch of tech, a virtual assist.
In ChatGPT's algorithms, I confide,
Yet, the words are sincere, nowhere to hide.

In circuits and code, our love I express,
A digital ode, but no less, no less.
For in this message, the sentiment's true,
Crafted with care, especially for you.

So here's to us, in the digital dance,
A love transcending every circumstance.
ChatGPT may help, but the heart is mine,
Forever yours, my Valentine.

As you can see, ChatGPT is sometimes witty. But despite the occasional surprising twist, the limitations of machines do persist and are no match for a skilled linguist. Therefore, if it is love you want to convey, you are best to use your own words this Valentine's Day!

Editor's note: If you're at a loss, you could also borrow the following words from a real bard!

Sonnet 116

William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height
be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips
and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

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MitziDean.ca

CRD Walks and Local Events of Interest

February 2024

The Secret Lives of Wolves (Guided Walk) • All ages • Feb 3, 2024, 1:30pm-3:00pm • Metchosin, Witty's Lagoon Regional Park

Supernatural Winter Wander (Guided Walk) • 8 years+ • Feb 10, 2024, 10:00am-11:30am • East Sooke, East Sooke Regional Park

Family Fun Walk (Guided Walk) • All ages • Feb 18, 2024, 1:30pm-3:00pm • Metchosin, Witty's Lagoon Regional Park

To preregister for these walks, please visit: <https://crdregionalparks.perfectmind.com>

Subject to change; check www.crd.bc.ca/about/events

Tell them you saw it in the *Muse*!

Input Sought for Metchosin Agricultural Plan

Alex Fletcher

Community Open House on Metchosin Agricultural Plan • Friday, February 16 • 1:00–4:00pm • Bilston Creek Farm

A Community Open House is scheduled for Friday, February 16, from 1:00–4:00pm at Bilston Creek Farm. The primary purpose will be to present the Draft Agricultural Plan to the community and receive feedback. There will be a presentation from the Agricultural Plan consultants and group discussions. Key questions to be considered are: Is the right mix of recommendations included in the plan? What are the highest priority recommendations? How are the District and agricultural community best suited to implement the recommendations? Should a new organization/group be established to implement the plan? Refreshments and snacks will be available. If interested in joining, please RSVP by registering for the event here: <https://bit.ly/48xM735> (or scan the QR code below).

Survey results released

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Metchosin Agricultural Plan Survey. The committee received a total of 372 survey responses of which 73 were from the farmer/producer survey. A few highlights from a preliminary survey analysis are included below. The full results of the surveys will be incorporated into a Community Engagement Report which will inform the recommendations for action in the Draft Agricultural Plan. The Draft Plan is expected to be available at the beginning of February.

Of the farmer survey respondents, 65% own their land and farm it themselves. The most common forms of production are: 47% field vegetables, 43% tree fruits, 39% eggs, 25% sheep or goats. The most popular means of marketing are: 49% farmstands, 46% direct delivery to customers, 30% restaurants and 21% wholesale.

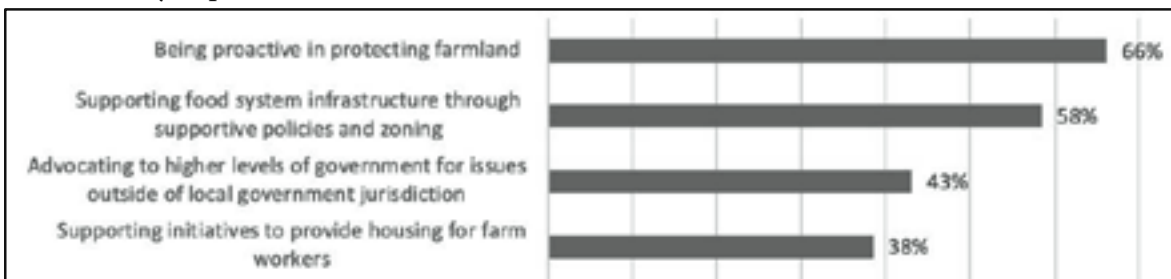
Of the community survey respondents, 83% live in Metchosin, 48% often purchase locally produced food, 32% sometimes do. When asked what would encourage them to purchase more locally produced food, 57% indicated increased convenience, 47% affordability, 41% information to help them locate local foods, and 38% more variety of local food products, including processed items.

In both the farmer survey and community survey, when asked what are the most important ways the District of Metchosin can support agriculture, respondents ranked the same four key actions as the highest priorities:

Community Survey responses



Farmer Survey responses



Next Steps

Following the Ag Plan Open House in February, the Agricultural Plan will be revised then sent to Metchosin Council for review and adoption.

For more information

This project is led by the Ag Plan Sub-Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Metchosin Agriculture Advisory Select Committee (MAASC). Sub-Committee members are: Shelly Donaldson (Council Liaison), Robin Tunnicliffe (MAASC Chair), Peter Chettleburgh, Andrew Penn, and Alex Fletcher (Sub-Committee Lead, 250-661-8099 or alexchisholmfletcher@gmail.com).

This project is supported by Upland Agricultural Consulting, led by Ione Smith (778-999-2149 or ione@uplandconsulting.ca).



The Towel Project – You Are Invited

Nan Hsieh

**The Towel Project
Sunday, February 25, 2:00–4:00pm
Metchosin Community Hall**

Hello Metchosin! You are invited to the seventeenth annual Towel Project happening this month at Metchosin Community Hall on Sunday, February 25.

Those of you familiar with this event know that it provides shower supplies for the bath programs at Our Place and Rock Bay Landing, two organizations that cater to the needs of the unhoused in the Victoria area. For those of you who wish to assist in addressing these needs, we ask that you consider contributions of new bath towels, new socks, packaged soaps, toothpaste, and individually packaged toothbrushes. Our Place has also told us that they welcome packaged underwear, shampoo, and other toiletries as well.

We are excited to say that besides collecting needed toiletries

and other supplies, we will be making cards to add to goodie bags that participants will be making as gifts for those who come to the shelters.

Once we have completed the work portion of our event, it will be time to socialize! This year we will have the pleasure of enjoying members of REACH Performing Company leading us in a sing along. Be prepared to sing and dance! It is impossible to sit still while listening to their upbeat music! They bring the room alive! After all that activity it will be time to visit the snack table groaning with a variety of finger food snacks and drinks.

For those who are not able to attend this event in person but still wish to contribute, we will be offering a drop-off option outside of the Community Hall, on the day of the event.

We look forward to sponsoring this service event and joining hands with our Metchosin

community to assist the unhoused population in the Greater Victoria area.

We encourage children to invite their friends and especially invite their parents! Spread the word about this event and the opportunity to be of service, to donate and to help others. We look forward to seeing many of you at this happy occasion. Please contact Mona Nakhjavini Bossi 250-514-1757 for more information.

The following items are especially appreciated:

- new bath towels
- new socks
- packaged soaps
- toothpaste
- individually packaged toothbrushes
- shampoo and other toiletries
- packaged underwear

Local Firefighter Recognized

FireSmart BC News Release

We're pleased to announce that Gloria Lejour is the FireSmart Local FireSmart Representative (LFR) of the month! As the FireSmart Coordinator for the district of Metchosin, Gloria has been an LFR for over two years.

She has also been a structural firefighter for six years with the Metchosin Fire Department and had the

opportunity to deploy to the wildfires in 2021. This experience inspired her to explore the wildfire side of firefighting and made her eager to spread FireSmart knowledge throughout the community in Metchosin.

Thank you for all your hard work, Gloria! Learn more about Gloria and previous LFRs of the month at: <http://tinyurl.com/mrtwstvf>



Call out to Community Volunteers District of Metchosin Advisory Select Committees

Metchosin Council is seeking volunteers to serve on the Agricultural Advisory, and Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committees.

The Agricultural Advisory Select Committee assists Council in developing a plan to sustain and promote the agricultural community and improve agricultural viability within Metchosin. The Committee usually meets at the Call of the Chair at least three times a year at 7:00 p.m.

The Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee considers parks, trails and recreation matters and reports its findings and opinions to Council. Committee members often have direct, hands-on involvement in maintaining the District's parks and trails. The Committee meets on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m.

If you are interested in volunteering on one of these committees, please submit a letter of interest and a brief resume of experience and knowledge no later than Thursday, February 29, 2024, to:

District of Metchosin
4450 Happy Valley Road
Victoria, BC V9C 3Z3
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For more information, please contact the Municipal Hall at 250-474-3167 or visit the District of Metchosin website at www.metchosin.ca.



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Pearson College Students Enjoy Their First Snow

Andrew Walker, Digital Content & Media Relations Coordinator,
Lester B. Pearson College, UWC

These photos were captured the night the snowfall hit our campus. This was the first time many of our students experienced snow! Some of the students pictured in the photos come from Chile, Argentina, Dominican Republic, to name a few. They couldn't believe what they were seeing, and many decided to take part in a campus snowball competition.

Lucas Olscamp photos



East Sooke Park in January was magical.
Kota, right, was curious about the icicles.

Curtis Becker photos



35th Annual Polar Bear Swim



Above: Getting ready. Janet Gray photo

Left: OMG it's COLD! Ric Perron photo

Johnny Carline

Once again, former District Councillor Andy MacKinnon led the charge into the frigid waters to celebrate the beginning of a new year, 2024. About 16 brave souls took the plunge and we

have received no reports of any participants experiencing ill effects beyond, briefly, some very cold bodies. The *Muse* celebrates this annual demonstration of joyous eccentricity and hopes it will continue in future years.

BCSPCA Wild ARC Patient Highlight: The Lucky Unlucky Chickadee

Carlee Bouillon

In early December, a chestnut-backed chickadee came into Wild ARC with her wings stuck fast to a glue trap. Glue traps are intended for insects and rodents, but capture all kinds of small animals. They function by sticking to the animal's feathers or fur and, as the animal struggles, they are trapped further into the glue. They often break bones and sustain other damage, and suffer until they starve or die of their injuries.

Unfortunately, Wild ARC receives several glue-trapped songbirds per year, and this particular chickadee was already the second glue-trapped songbird that week. But fortunately for this tiny bird, this particular glue trap was intended for flies and was not very rigid. So, she had not sustained any skeletal damage, and rehabilitators were able to work her feathers out of the trap immediately using a feather-safe oil.

When she was finally free of the trap, however, a lot of damage was left. Her primary feathers on both wings were heavily soiled with glue, as well as her tail. This rendered her unable to fly and also not waterproof, both of which are critical elements to any bird's survival.

In addition to the soiling, rehabilitators noticed that she drooped both of her wings and was hesitant to flap them. This, however, was impossible to fully assess under the soiling, so rehabilitators put her on a cycle of pain medication and commenced an oil spill bath routine. Oil spill bathing is the process of removing contaminants from feathers or fur and is a complex, fragile procedure. A soiled animal often needs several baths, which keeps them in care for a long period of time.

To undergo an oil spill bath, an animal must be stable enough to be sedated. Then rehabilitators work them through several stations of temperature-controlled wash stations that move from a high to low concentration of feather-safe soap solution, while monitoring their stability. The animal then goes through a drying process, specialized to their species, that allows them to thermoregulate safely as they wake up from sedation. In the case of birds, it allows and encourages them to begin preening their feathers back into shape.

Fortunately, after only one oil spill bath, this chickadee bounced back with amazing speed. By the next day, she was bright and

eating everything in sight. She had done an incredible job preening the leftover residue out of her feathers, and she flitted around her basket with an agility that made rehabilitators believe she was likely fully flighted. Her wing droop was gone, so it was clear that she had not sustained any lasting soft tissue damage. After acclimating her to the cooler outdoor temperature, rehabilitators moved her to an outside enclosure for release conditioning. Her flight, body condition, and waterproofing were so good that rehabilitators expedited her release, and she went home only nine days after she came in. This little bird had a happy outcome in a situation that often does not have a happy outcome. Wild ARC implores everyone: don't use glue traps!

Wild ARC receives several glue-trapped songbirds per year ... this chickadee was the second glue-trapped songbird that week.



Sorry looking Chickadee in the glue. Wild Arc photo

The Impact of Bathroom Water Use

CRD Environmental Services

If someone were to ask you where you consume the most water at home, your initial thoughts might gravitate toward the kitchen or the invigorating daily shower. Surprisingly, however, the real culprit might be the often-overlooked hero of our daily hygiene routine – the toilet.

When it comes to indoor water use, about 65% is in the bathroom with showers using the second-most water and the third-most energy in the house.

Despite residing on the picturesque and seemingly endlessly rainy west coast, the Sooke Lake reservoir has a finite capacity that must last the entire year. The reservoir must endure not only the daily demands of a growing population but also the challenges posed by dry summer months when precipitation becomes a rarity.

By adopting water-wise habits, we not only defer the need for costly infrastructure but also ensure a sustained supply of potable water for an expanding population and a thriving ecosystem.

Consider these practical tips to be water-wise in the bathroom:

- **Shower smart:** Embrace shorter showers and invest in low-flow showerheads to minimize water usage without compromising your cleansing routine.
- **Turn off the tap:** Simple acts, such as turning off the tap while brushing your teeth or lathering soap when washing your hands or in the shower, can save substantial amounts of water over time.
- **Choose high-efficiency fixtures:** When renovating or upgrading your bathroom, choose high-efficiency toilets, showerheads, and faucets. These fixtures are designed to use less water without compromising performance. Look for the WaterSense label which confirms the fixtures are tested for their efficiency.
- **Fix leaky fixtures:** Household leaks make up to 14% of all indoor water use. A dripping faucet may seem inconsequential, but over time, it can contribute to significant water wastage. Promptly address leaks to prevent unnecessary water loss.
- **Flush with care:** Reevaluate your flushing habits and don't use your toilet as a trash can. When you flush things you shouldn't, it makes your toilet and the sewer system work harder, and sometimes not at all.

Through mindful choices and small changes in our habits, we can collectively contribute to a more water-resilient future, safeguarding our resources for generations to come. To learn more ways to use your water wisely in the bathroom, visit www.crd.bc.ca/water.

Residential Indoor Water Use



Everything Water!

Shelly Donaldson

All Things Water Presentation
Wednesday, February 28
6:30 - 8:30pm
Metchosin Municipal Chambers

Water resources are a growing concern in Metchosin with hundreds of residents experiencing dry wells earlier each year. There are many reasons for this; climate change causing increased levels of drought, development and industrial activity that have negative impacts on groundwater sustainability, risks of contamination to the water table and so on.

To meet our basic needs, it is imperative we understand water conservation, alternate methods of water collection and irrigation to maintain vegetable gardens, and to hydrate humans and

livestock sufficiently to sustain health. We need to ensure adequate resources are available for emergency fire suppression as each year there is a further risk of wildfires.

Mr. Gord Baird of Eco-Sense Living will be giving a presentation on all things water. Come learn more about aquifers, the importance of groundwater recharge, effects of development on water resources, conservation, rainwater collection, alternatives for potable water sources both for human consumption and controlled irrigation as well as water related to sensitive ecosystems.

Through his work at Eco-Sense, Gord's focus on water has grown, leading to a successful career in water system design and consulting. His expertise spans

residential, commercial, and public systems, and he serves as a policy consultant for both provincial and local governments.

Gord will guide us through a captivating conversation about everything water-related. This will include the entire water cycle, from source to end-use. Beyond exploring how we manage this precious resource, Gord delves into tools and strategies we can implement to protect, preserve, and enhance our aquifers.

Please join us at the Municipal Chambers on February 28. For further information please contact: Councillor Shelly Donaldson, JdF Water Commissioner, at sdonaldson@metchosin.ca.

These donkeys are wondering what's up with the weather, why they aren't in the barn with the sheep, and what's with that other donkey on the next page.

Lorraine Buchanan photo



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Christmas in Metchosin



A Shetland "donkey" patiently awaits its turn to be in the nativity scene at St Mary's Anglican Church on December 24. David McArthur photo

Rosemary Vogt

A sense of community spirit and whimsy is immediately evident as you arrive at St. Mary's Anglican Church in Metchosin for the Christmas Eve drop-in nativity. On the lawn, children, adults and a donkey – no wait – a Shetland pony are posing around a wooden nativity structure for photos. As you park your vehicle and make your way inside, it becomes evident that the pony is attending the service as well. Inside the church there is a flurry of activity as some children and grown-ups are already dressed in angel, shepherd or animal costumes while still others are rummaging through the selection of available costuming options. At the back of the church, prior to taking a seat, attendees greet each other warmly, catch up on news and interact with a gorgeous standard poodle who later stands in for a sheep in the nativity. Whether or not you chose to select a costume to participate in the event physically or settle into your seat in expectation of the service, there was excitement and anticipation

for the re-enactment of the birth of the Christ child.

Reverend Wally Eamer casually opens the service. He provides instruction regarding protocol, with advice and guidance from an attendee in the audience. In the vestibule, Joseph, Mary, and their entourage have assembled. A small child runs up and down the aisle from the back of the church to the front of the stage, and the pony in the foyer whinnies during the opening prayer.

Scripture is read, a carol is sung and down the aisle comes the Star of Bethlehem held high by a teen in a Santa hat. Next come Mary and Joseph, an adult in a cow costume, two wise men, a hybrid participant, possibly part shepherd/part angel (has shepherd hook and angel wings), the standard poodle masquerading as a sheep (wearing pink butterfly wings), and his radiant handler wearing a halo of gold. A child wears a donkey costume, there are three children in sheep's clothing, and there is a mature angel in a scarlet robe and small angel with a long golden wand. All take

their place on the front stage with the exception of the pony/donkey who enters last with his handler, taking a spot at the side of the front stage.

Throughout the service scripture is read intermittently with congregational singing of traditional Christmas carols. The pony/donkey is skillfully handled for this indoor event, but even ponies have a threshold of tolerance for church services, so it leaves the sanctuary via a side door for a break from keeping up appearances. Re-entering the space after grazing outside, the pony continues its charade as the Christmas donkey, but is the first to leave the scene via the front foyer when the service draws to a close.

Christmas is the time of year when we celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus who, according to the Bible, was born over 2000 years ago as God's gift of love to mankind. Amid our daily situations and various contexts, we grapple with the fundamental challenges of human existence, and it is easy to lose sight of love: the nativity drop-in calls us back to love in the heart of community.

St. Mary's Metchosin Challenge 2024

Sharleen Thompson

This year we are challenging you to understand your health better. This is the ninth continuous year of St. Mary's Challenge to our community to live better by being more aware of issues in our world. In the past we have tackled climate change, human rights, adapting to change, things that we can do that make a difference, or big world issues. Last year we asked the children of Metchosin what their big issues were. This year rather than looking outward, we are looking inward at issues that affect our own health and lives.

The Metchosin Challenge this year at St. Mary's will have six speakers, on six issues that are controversial or new, or good summaries on six different health issues. They will be presented by six speakers who are researchers or professionals in their fields. They will run on six Wednesday evenings starting February 21 at 7:00pm during Lent in the St. Mary's new church across from the golf course, on Metchosin Road. To see the exact schedule go to St. Mary's website.

We do not have all the topics confirmed yet, but they will include cancer survivorship, presented by Dr. Alida Moonen who is currently writing a book

on how surviving cancer and its treatments affect people's lives. We will also be having a presentation and discussion on dying and MAID. We will be looking at the statistics on the effects of exercise on various chronic diseases. We will be looking at the new treatments for and understandings of Parkinson's disease and other common neurological diseases. We hope to have speakers on nutrition and cardiovascular disease and the new understanding of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

Some of the presenters are local professionals, others come from much farther away. Some of these will be presented on Zoom to a group at the church and be available on Zoom for people not able to attend in person. Others will present live at the church with a Zoom link for online as well as in-person participation. To get the Zoom link you need to send an email to St. Mary's and a link will be sent to you. You are, of course, welcome to come "live" to the church to interact with other people who are attending.

The goal of the Metchosin Challenge is to keep our community aware of the issues in the world that all of us encounter in our lives. It is not intended as a chance to proselytize to you but a commitment from our church to live well, in the real word, in a meaningful way.

IN LOVING MEMORY

CHARLIE

June 13, 2008–December 25, 2023

With heavy hearts we let our border collie, Charlie, die peacefully on Christmas Day. After life on a farm in Wyoming, he spent his last years on Vancouver Island.

Charlie was happiest walking the trails of Metchosin in any weather and, on the beach, he could set a fine pace. His black and white markings made him easily recognisable and his brown eyes let passersby know that he was a trusted friend. Although he became deaf and mobility became harder, his spirit never failed.

Donations and thanks to ElderDogs.ca.



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How do we love thee? ArtPod offers ways.

Diana Smith

Are you bored with love? Is your long-term relationship with love needing some juice? Are you tired with the idea of love as synonymous with only chocolates and roses? In Metchosin, for example, have you felt the passion some people have for fungi, animals both domestic and wild, trees of all kinds, people of all ages, a response to a creek in need of protecting, or a bright green, leafy lettuce? Art is an outlet for expressing this passion. There are so many ways.

Hopefully you will see this diversity of expression on display with the new show at ArtPod, opening Friday, February 2, called *The Look of Love: Art as a Love Language*. Artists from Metchosin and beyond have submitted work which has been juried by Wilma Millette, an established collage artist living in the Cowichan Valley.

Our in-person gala openings are always interesting so come and feel the love, up-close (or not) and personal at the gallery, on Saturday, February 3, 2:00 to 4:00pm.

To further inflame those passions, ArtPod is offering two workshops and an evening event over the course of the show.

If you are stuck for words or expressing love with the same old cliches, ArtPod's first workshop offering may be for you. Have you been to a poetry workshop before? If not, what better time of the year to try something new and surprise a loved one with the depth of your feelings. Dave Morris, the facilitator, brings his skills and talents as a trained improviser to the poetry genre in our *How To Love Poetry* workshop, but this workshop is about writing poems not stand-up improv. It is focusing on the 'page', not the 'stage'. The poetry-writing workshop will use the artwork in the gallery as a jumping-off point for inspiration. The written pieces will be posted alongside the artwork in the gallery and website, if permission is given by participants.

During this two-hour workshop, on Saturday, February 10 (conveniently scheduled just prior to Valentine's Day), from

9:00 to 11:00am, Dave will likely start with an introduction, perhaps read some poems, lead some exercises to free people up, then set some challenges for participants. He will discuss poetry, writing, what gets in our way and will answer any questions people have. Participants will be invited to share their poem, but it is optional, and there isn't any pressure. People are always surprising and surprised at what they produce.

Improvisors like Dave, founder of Paper Street Improv Troupe, spoken word poet, and instructor, often have a 'yes, and' attitude, which, incidentally, is not a bad attitude for approaching life in general.

An example of this attitude might be:

ArtPod: Do you want to take a poetry workshop on Saturday, February 10 from 9:00 to 11:00?

YOU 1: YES, and I wonder what amazing things I will create.

YOU 2: YES, and I'll bet I rock at that.

YOU 3: YES, and I am going to invite my taciturn and creative partner.

ArtPod member and workshop organizer, Memet Burnett says of Dave: "That he is good at improv makes him good at, well, everything, including poetry. Had I not heard a poem of his, I would never have thought to ask him to lead a poetry workshop. His poem, which he calls "Death," is one of the best poems I have read (or heard) on parenthood ... There is not a more positive and empowering person in Victoria." (Dave will be asked to share this poem at the workshop).

Here is his TEDx talk on the way of Improvising: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUO-pWJ0riQ>

Later, on February 24 from 12:30 to 4:00pm, our second workshop, *How to Love Collage*, will be led by instructor, artist, photographer and ArtPod member, Phyllis Schwartz. Here too you will get to practice working with what you have and find, to create beauty. You might even be inspired by some of the words, lines or complete poems generated in the *How to Love* workshop. You will be given the



How to Fall in Love by Memet Burnett, one of the submissions to a new show at ArtPod called *The Look of Love: Art as a Love Language*. Memet Burnett photo

opportunity to put all these resources into art pieces, under the excellent guidance of Phyllis.

Lastly, in our quest to make your life richer and more fun and love-filled, save the date for the 1920's Parisian-style

(costume optional) music and spoken word *Café de Love* on March 23 from 7:00 to 9:00pm, set in the lovely Metchosin ArtPod Gallery.

Hope to see you at one or all these events. Details at metchosinartpod.ca.

METCHOSIN ARTS AND CULTURAL CENTRE

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February 2024 POV Hallway Gallery Exhibition

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See poster in this issue, created by RBSS students.

Curious About Publishing?

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Sunday, February 11, 2:00-4:00pm
at the Metchosin Art Centre DIY Studio.

Featuring:
Filidh Publishing and local authors:
Charmaine Welch, Jim Challenger, and Zoe Duff

See ad on page 13 for more details.

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METCHOSIN ARTS AND CULTURAL CENTRE
4495 Happy Valley Road – info@metchosinartcentre.ca
metchosinartcentre.ca

EVENTS at METCHOSIN

ArtPod



THE LOOK OF 2 FEB- 7 APRIL

LOVE: Art as a love language

- 3 Feb. Opening Reception 2-4pm
- 10 Feb 9-11am. How to Love Poetry Workshop with Dave Morris
- 24 Feb. How to Love Collage Workshop
- 25 March. Cafe de Love music and poetry soiree



CALL TO ARTISTS:

- Art Nature Cards 2024. INSECTS
- In collaboration with Metchosin Foundation and community artists
- See website for details

WONDER OF

12 APRIL- 26 MAY WATER

- 17 March. Open Call to Artist closes
- 15 April. Opening Reception 2-4pm
- Earth/ Ocean Workshop (details TBA)
- Celebrating World Collage Day
- Kids POV Hallway Gallery show



See metchosinartpod.ca for details



METCHOSIN ARTPOD
4495 HAPPY VALLEY RD, METCHOSIN B.C.
METCHOSINARTPOD.CA

Hours: 11am-4pm Fri-Sun #METCHOSINARTPOD

Visit the Muse website!

Past issues and more! <http://www.metchosinmuse.ca>

Local Conservation Legacies

Chris Pratt

Those who live here will agree that our community has a certain, unique character. It was the first of Greater Victoria's Western Communities to incorporate as a municipality and, since then, our venerable yet forward-looking Official Community Plan has served us well.

A decade or so following Metchosin's incorporation, a visionary Metchosin resident, the late David Wolsk, enthusiastically and successfully promoted several complementary ways in which the special character of our rural community could be strengthened and maintained. He observed that Metchosin should have its own newspaper, a community centre and a non-profit agency focused on preserving our natural environment and supporting the related goal of community well-being. Thus, we now have the *Muse*, the Community House and more recently, the Metchosin Foundation.

My family's roots here preceded the District's incorporation by several decades. My parents, older sister Jean and I (then a very young toddler) came to live here in 1925. It was only a brief stay of just a few months, since my father was a Victoria-based businessman and in those days, there was no commuting. However, each summer from then on, my family camped at Weir Beach and the Weir family made us welcome at their farm. We made good and lasting friends here. When my father was ready to retire, Gavin Weir agreed to let us buy the property my home now occupies, and ever since, this has been a hub for our extended family. Although my late sister Jean Milner went on



Chris Pratt and his older sister Jean on Weir Beach in 1925. Pratt family archives photo

to pursue a career based in eastern Canada, Metchosin continued to be where her heart was and indeed, was the place she continued to call home.

As a beneficiary of my sister's will and reflecting upon the enduring importance of Metchosin's rural character and natural environment in both Jean's life and my own, I feel privileged to be able to make a legacy donation to the Metchosin Foundation, from Jean's estate. It is my

intention that these funds be used to support the conservation of Metchosin's natural areas and biodiversity. Perhaps this desire to leave a local conservation legacy may inspire others to take similar steps, consistent with their own circumstances and capacity.

With appreciation to the *Muse* for allowing me to share the above reflections and to the Metchosin Foundation, for providing a vehicle for the realization of local conservation goals.

CURIOUS ABOUT PUBLISHING Your Creative Work?

MACCA Will Be Hosting An Informative Q & A With
Filidh Publishing

& Published Authors Jim Challenger, Zoe Duff
& Charmaine Welch



Sunday February 11th
2-4pm
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METCHOSIN COMMUNITY HOUSE HOUSE HAPPENINGS

ONGOING PROGRAMMING

Mondays

Vancouver Island Health Authority Adult Day Program. 9:00am-3:30pm. Contact Mobile program coordinator Ken Hillicke at 250-213-2440.

Knitting Café. 7:00-9:00pm on the first and third Mondays monthly. Contact Heather at 250-478-6590. Knitters of all levels are welcome.

Tuesdays

Drop-In Art Group. 9:30am-12:30pm weekly. Contact Arlene at 250-391-7905. Everyone is welcome.

Knitting Café. 1:00-3:00pm on the second and fourth Tuesdays monthly. Contact Nance at 250-478-7708 after 11:00am. Knitters of all levels are welcome.

Wednesdays

Vancouver Island Health Authority Adult Day Program. 9:00am-3:30 pm (see Monday for details).

Thursdays

Weights and Measures. 8:30-10:00am weekly. Weights and Measures is a weight loss and healthy lifestyle support group for anyone in the community. Contact Nancy at 250-478-7467.

Creative Rug Hooking. The first and third Thursdays monthly, 10:30am-1:30pm. Contact Sheila (250-595-6406, email blueheronstudio@telus.net) to discuss supplies needed. Experienced rug hookers are invited to bring their own projects.

Fridays

Parent and Tot Program. 9:30-11:30am. Calling all Metchosin tots! The Parent and Tot Drop-In Program invites moms, dads, caregivers and their young children to join us Friday mornings for our community program.

Friday Socials. The last Friday of each month from 1:00-3:00pm. Drop in for coffee and conversation. Hosted by Baha'is of Metchosin and the Seniors' Resource Centre. SRC offers drives to anyone who needs a ride; call 250-478-5150 or email SRC. All ages, everyone is welcome! Details: <https://metchosinseniors.ca/friday-socials/>

Ukulele Gathering. 5:00-6:30pm, third Friday of each month. Contact Margaretha, memetopia@shaw.ca.

SPECIAL EVENTS

FILM NIGHT. Friday, February 23, 7:00-10:00pm. Join our host Samuel Perez de Leon, Faculty Member, Pearson College, for an exciting new showing.

Please check the MCA website for specific program details and contact information.



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Metchosin Community House

4430 Happy Valley Road Info: 250-478-5155

mcahouse@telus.net | metchosincommunityhouse.com

Metchosin's got us uncovered!



Above: The snow plow in action on Brotherstone Road during Metchosin's brush with winter on January 18. Bev Propp photo

Below: Another plow out making sure that Metchosin's roads are the best ones in the West Shore. Fire Department photo



Volunteers Needed to Support Metchosin's Wide Range of Seniors

Shannon Carman, Seniors' Resource Centre Office Manager

You may be aware that just over one quarter of Metchosin's population is composed of people 65 years and older. This demographic of 'seniors' defies definition as it covers a very broad range of individuals!

There are the 'junior' seniors – people in their 60s and 70s, many of whom are blessed with good health and almost boundless energy, some of whom could out-bike a 20-year-old! We certainly have seniors in their 80s and 90s, still chopping wood, driving and volunteering; there are seniors who are as sharp as tacks, but coping with mobility challenges; there are seniors who have lived in Metchosin for decades, who suddenly find themselves unable to drive. A spectrum, to be sure.

Here at the Seniors' Resource Centre, our focus is on helping seniors find information and resources, a ride to an appointment, help with their laptop computer, or just a friendly visit. In a community of large rural lots and long driveways, it can be all too easy to become socially isolated. We know now that loneliness affects not only our mental but our physical health and that a small effort on our part can have a big impact on the health of the people around us.

The Metchosin Seniors' Resource Centre is currently looking for volunteers to help support seniors in our community. We are looking for volunteer drivers to give rides, for people to make visits to isolated seniors and check in with phone calls, as well as volunteers to assist with events.

This kind of volunteering is very flexible, fitting into almost any schedule. It is also extremely rewarding, as you meet some incredible humans that you might not otherwise come across. We hear from our volunteers again and again how much they enjoy getting to know elders in our community, the surprising things they learn, and how gratifying it is to connect with other people, knowing that they are making a tangible difference in someone's life.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, or you would like more information, please contact the Seniors' Resource Centre at 250.478.5150 or email info@metchosin seniors.ca. We would love to hear from you.

Seniors' Resource Centre METCHOSIN

Shannon Carman, Office Manager

METCHOSIN CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Thursday, February 15, 10:00 am
Metchosin Seniors' Resource Centre

This free monthly support group brings caregivers together based on a mutual experience of caregiving for a family or friend. Join us in a safe environment to help lighten your load and share possible solutions. Give yourself a short break where you will find support and relief with others who understand what you are going through and who are dealing with similar issues. Facilitated by Family Caregivers of BC. Register at cgsupport@family-caregiversbc.ca or phone 250-384-0408.

FRIDAY SOCIAL

Friday, February 23, 1:00 to 3:00pm
Metchosin Community House
4430 Happy Valley Road

Drop in for coffee and conversation on the last Friday of the month. Hosted by Baha'is of Metchosin and the SRC at the Metchosin Community House. Please call 250-478-5150 for a ride. Everyone welcome!

The Seniors' Resource Centre at 4495 Happy Valley Rd. in the Metchosin Arts & Cultural Centre is open Tuesday through Friday from 11:00-3:00 pm. Staff and volunteers are here to assist seniors and their families with support, resource information, and services.

Metchosin Seniors' Resource Centre (SRC)

1407-4495 Happy Valley Road

250-478-5150 • info@metchosin seniors.ca • www.metchosin seniors.ca

We thank you for the continued support and wish you all a happy and healthy New Year, 2024!

Please see our website for current days/hours of operation.



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IAN FENWICK BROOKE YOUNG (1930-2023)

Ian died peacefully of COVID-related causes on December 6, 2023. Pre-deceased by his wife of 47 years Sonja, and his brother Alistair of Brantford, Ontario. Leaves his two grateful daughters, Susan of Chelsea, Quebec and Vanessa (Steve) of Victoria, and four grandchildren, Liam, Thomas, Chloe, and Yann.

Ian loved wordplay, singing, cricket, golf and chocolate. Later in life he was a devoted Anglican. Born in Shipley, Yorkshire he attended Wells School, Malsis Hall and Wrekin College in Shropshire, and Bradford Technical College. He did his 18 months of obligatory army reserve service as a radar operator in the RAF. At age 20, along with numerous others, he caught polio from the local pool and spent six months in the hospital. In 1956, hands-on learning of an IBM mainframe cemented his career as a systems analyst. He worked for Yorkshire Copperworks and Dorman Long (Leeds), and after being convinced by Sonja to emigrate to Canada in 1967, Canadian Pacific (Montreal) and BC Systems Corporation, retiring in 1988.

Ian and Sonja were vigorous contributors to Metchosin life for 30 years and received its Citizen of the Year award in 2000. Ian tolerated the menagerie of animals Sonja introduced to their 2.5-acre property, making regular chocolate cakes to compensate for the mess. Perennially social, he was a founding member of Metchosin Cricket Club and long-time umpire for the Victoria and District Cricket Association, docent of the Metchosin Museum, member of Victoria's Post-Polio Awareness and Support Society, of the Orion Male Voice Choir and of the underground Metchosin bridge club, and for years obligingly held onto horses' lead ropes when asked.

After steadfastly cancelling out each other's vote in countless elections, Ian graciously took up the Greens' torch, recognizing the urgency his wife espoused. After his retirement, Ian and Sonja enjoyed touring with fellow cricket enthusiasts to the Cayman Islands, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, and Mexico. In 2000, after the last, much-loved horse, Sherry, died, Ian and Sonja downsized to the top of Triangle Mountain, where he continued with bridge, church, crosswords, swimming at Juan de Fuca pool, scoring cricket matches and watching the Port Angeles ferry go back and forth from their deck.

He came through a stroke mainly unscathed, and then Sonja died in 2010. Initially Ian lived in the Alex Mackie Lodge in Langford, then spent his last five years in Parkwood Court on Shelbourne Street, where he enjoyed visits from Rose, Thursday singalongs, and afternoon tea with chocolate cake. He will be remembered for his gentlemanly manners, his lustrous head of hair, his recipe for "crunch", his lovely tenor voice, and his bimblybops. The family would like to thank the staff of Parkwood Court for their loving care, especially in his final weeks. A memorial service will be held in the spring of 2024.

Published by the *Times Colonist* from Dec. 12 to Dec. 14, 2023.



Ian Young. Photo supplied

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RCMP Call-Outs

DECEMBER 11, 2023–
JANUARY 7, 2024

Brian Kerr, OPS Support, Media Relations Officer, West Shore RCMP | GRC de West Shore

- Dec 11 **William Head Road area** – Check well-being of a person who was found to be in good health.
Neff Road – Aggravated assault of a person who was taken to hospital with severe injuries, further investigation being conducted.
Kangaroo Road – Complaint of a suspicious male who offered a young female a ride at a bus stop. Male later located. Still under investigation.
Sooke Road – Assistance provided to Saanich Police to try and locate a male who failed to stop for police, male not located.
- Dec 13 **Metchosin Road** – Report of a suspicious vehicle, not located.
- Dec 14 **Metchosin Road** – Report of a missing person who was located.
Rocky Point Road area – Assistance provided to ambulance service in taking a person to hospital.
Rocky Point Road – Report of a suspicious male in the area of the mailboxes at the Galloping Goose Trail, male not located.
Rocky Point Road – Complaint of a possible impaired driver operating a green Hyundai vehicle with no left front tire and driving erratically. Vehicle located at the registered owner's address.
Sooke Road – Complaint of a possible impaired driver, vehicle stopped in Langford and driver found to be sober.
- Dec 15 **Metchosin Road** – Complaint of a person breaching a court order. Patrol members located the male and arrested him in breach of court conditions.
- William Head Road** – Domestic dispute, possible assault, still under investigation.
Liberty Drive – Check well-being of a person who was located and taken to hospital.
- Dec 16 **Sooke Road** – Erratic driving complaint, suspect vehicle not located.
- Dec 17 **Metchosin Road** – Suspicious occurrence, reported for information purposes.
- Dec 18 **Sooke Road** – Check welfare of a person found lying on side of highway, person found to be injured, taken to hospital by ambulance.
Metchosin Road area – Suspicious persons complaint, suspects attempting to get contracts paving driveways, appears suspects are con artists. Still under investigation.
William Head Road – Check welfare of a person who was located.
- Dec 19 **Neff Road** – Police requested to keep the peace at a residence.
Sooke Road – Erratic driver, vehicle later located by Sooke RCMP and driver given warning.
- Dec 22 **Happy Valley Road area** – Assistance provided to ambulance for youths who had taken magic mushrooms, two youths taken to hospital.
Sooke Road – Two vehicle accident, no injuries. One vehicle towed from scene.
- Dec 23 **Metchosin Road** – Report of possible missing person, still under investigation.
Kangaroo Road area – Report of a possible breach of court conditions, still under investigation.
Sooke Road – Erratic driving complaint, owner of vehicle given verbal warning.
- Happy Valley Road** – Another complaint of suspicious persons attempting to get contracts paving driveways, still under investigation. If anyone has contact with these individuals they are asked to call police.
- Dec 24 **Rocky Point Road area** – Assistance provided to the Coroner's Office regarding a sudden death.
Kangaroo Road area – Request to check well-being of a person who was located.
Rocky Point Road – Suspicious male observed who appeared to be looking at residences. Male located, he explained why he was in the area, not suspicious.
Sooke Road – Erratic driver, vehicle not located.
- Dec 25 **Sooke Road** – Possible impaired driver, patrols failed to locate vehicle.
- Dec 26 **Sooke Road** – Single vehicle accident, no injuries, vehicle towed from scene.
- Dec 27 **Happy Valley Road** – Attempted phone fraud, no money given. Reported for information purposes.
Metchosin Road – Break and enter reported to a business. Nothing stolen and no suspects identified.
Happy Valley Road – Report of a theft of items from private residence, investigation continuing.
- Dec 29 **Rocky Point Road area** – Check welfare of a person, person located and taken to hospital under the *Mental Health Act*.
Sooke Road – Possible impaired driver, passed onto Sooke RCMP.
Neff Road – Attempts made to locate person wanted on a criminal warrant, person not located.

Important Dates & Events

- Feb. 9 **Scams and Frauds Discussion** p. 4
- Feb. 14 **Valentine's Day**
- Feb. 16 **Agricultural Plan Open House** p. 7
- Feb. 19 **Family Day** (statutory holiday)
- Feb. 25 **The Towel Project** p. 7
- Feb. 28 **All Things Water Presentation** p. 10
- Other events:**
- Council Meetings** p. 2
- Metchosin Community House Programs and Special Events** p. 13
- Seniors' Resource Centre Events** p. 14

- Dec 30 **William Head Road** – Report of possible prowlers on private property late at night, patrols failed to locate anyone.
- Jan 1 **Happy Valley Road** – Possible break in to a private residence, still under investigation.
- Jan 2 **Sooke Road** – Possible impaired driver, vehicle located in Langford and driver found to be sober, given verbal warning for driving offences.
Happy Valley Road – Disturbance at a private residence, one male taken into custody and later released.
Taylor Road – Report of a suspicious male in the area, patrols failed to locate him.
- Jan 3 **Happy Valley Road** – Complaint of harassment, still under investigation.
Pearson College Drive – Abandoned vehicle which was gone on police arrival.
- Jan 5 **Sooke Road** – Erratic driver, vehicle not located.
Kangaroo Road area – Report of a missing person who was later located.
- Jan 6 **Albert Head** – Noise complaint, two people given verbal warning and asked to leave the area.
- Jan 7 **Sooke Road** – Traffic Unit stopped vehicle for no valid insurance, driver also did not have a valid licence. Vehicle towed and driver served with violation ticket.



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Metchosin Directory

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Police (Non-Emergency):
250-474-2264

Military Police Non-Emergency
250-363-4032

District Office (office hours):
250-474-3167

ALL EMERGENCY CALLS

911

- Report a fire
- Save a life
- Report a crime
- Imminent safety
- Report an accident

ORGANIZATIONS

- AIR CADETS**
250-590-3690
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848air@cadets.gc.ca
Facebook 848aircadets
- ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF BC**
250-382-2052
www.alzheimerbc.org
- ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL METCHOSIN (APRM)**
metchosinaprm@gmail.com
FB Metchosin APRM
www.metchosinaprm.org
- BADMINTON**
Women's 250-478-9648
- BILSTON WATERSHED HABITAT PROTECTION ASSOCIATION**
250-478-2387
bilstonwatershed@gmail.com
bilstonwatershed.org
- CRD PARKS**
250-478-3344
crdparks@crd.bc.ca
www.crd.bc.ca/parks
- GIRL GUIDES OF CANADA (Metchosin and Colwood)**
250-478-5484
tandwcampandcomish@shaw.ca
- LA LECHE LEAGUE CANADA**
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- METCHOSIN 4-H CLUB**
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www.district.metchosin.bc.ca/meetings
- METCHOSIN CRICKET CLUB**
250-474-4601
www.victoriacricket.com
FB MetchosinCricketClub
- METCHOSIN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**
250-478-1307, ham operators call in on 146.550. POD members can call FRS (Family Radio Service) radios: Channel 1 with "0" privacy tone
- METCHOSIN EQUESTRIAN SOCIETY**
metchosinequestrian@gmail.com
mesmetchosin.com
- METCHOSIN FOUNDATION**
contact@metchosinfoundation.ca
metchosinfoundation.ca

- METCHOSIN HALL SOCIETY**
250-478-6424
metchosinhall.com
- METCHOSIN HIKING CLUB**
250-478-4778
- METCHOSIN INVASIVE SPECIES COOPERATIVE (MISC)**
metchosininvasives@gmail.com
- METCHOSIN MUSEUM SOCIETY**
250-382-1989
metchosinmuseum.ca
- METCHOSIN PRESCHOOL**
250-478-9241
metchosinpreschool@gmail.com
www.metchosinpreschool.com
- METCHOSIN PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION**
metchosinfarmersmarket@gmail.com
FB Metchosin Farmers' Market
- METCHOSIN SEARCH & RESCUE**
metchosin.sar@gmail.com
www.metchosinsar.ca
- METCHOSIN SENIORS' ASSOCIATION/ SENIORS' RESOURCE CENTRE**
250-478-5150,
info@metchosinseniors.ca
www.metchosinseniors.ca
- MT. MATHESON CONSERVATION SOCIETY**
250-642-0238
- NEIGHBOURHOOD EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM (POD Leaders)**
Kathleen Sutherland 250-474-3966
neighbourhoodpod@gmail.com

- PACIFIC CENTRE FAMILY SERVICES ASSOCIATION**
345 Wale Road, Colwood
250-886-2481
www.pacificcentrefamilyservices.org
- ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION** Branch 91,
Station Rd, Langford Ladies Auxilliary
250-478-5484
- SCOUTS CANADA**
14th Juan de Fuca (Metchosin)
Email: 14thjdf@scouts.ca
To register: go to myscouts.ca and choose '14th Juan de Fuca'
- SEA CADETS**
250-478-7813
- WEIGHTS AND MEASURES**
250-478-7688
- WEST SHORE ARTS COUNCIL**
250-478-2286
info@westshorearts.org
www.westshorearts.org
- WESTSHORE COMMUNITY CONCERT BAND**
250-474-3999
info@westshoreband.org
www.westshoreband.org
- WEST SHORE PARKS AND RECREATION**
250-478-8384
wspr.ca

- WESTSHORE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB**
U14.U16.manager@gmail.com
westshorerfc.com
- FAITHS**
- BAHA'I FAITH**
250-514-1757
- GORDON UNITED CHURCH**
250-478-6632
www.gordonunitedchurch.ca
- HOLY TRINITY REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH**
250-727-3722
- OPEN GATE CHURCH**
Anglican Network
250-590-6736
www.opengatechurch.ca
- ST MARYS' METCHOSIN**
Anglican Church of Canada
250-474-4119
stmarysmetchosin.ca
- WESTSIDE BIBLE CHURCH**
250-478-8066
www.westsidefamily.org
- WESTSONG COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE SALVATION ARMY**
250-474-5967
saconnectionpoint.ca

This listing is a directory of local organizations. Please email changes to the editor at metchosinmuse@gmail.com. Individuals, groups and organizations are invited to submit details on upcoming events which may be included in an upcoming issue. Deadline for submission is the 15th of the month preceding the issue date, unless otherwise noted.

Farmer Lo Shrum Receives the Bob Mitchell Micro-loan for 2024



Lo Shrum (right) explains the workings of The Greener Side Farm to Robin Tunnicliffe. Sasha Kubicek photo

Robin Tunnicliffe

We were warmly greeted by the bright green gate, and ushered into The Greener Side Farm in Sooke, just off Sooke Road. Tidy rows of abundantly producing winter greens and vegetables filled out the acre plot. The organized site features an up-cycled, and smartly designed washing and veggie packing facility, and a greenhouse thoughtfully chosen for a windy site. The livestock area was well back into the tree line, where we could see layer hens grazing. Lo Shrum is the picture of resourcefulness and resilience in a young agrarian.

Lo attends the Sooke and Shirley Markets, and sells to area restaurants, including Wild Mountain. They also have a Community Supported Agriculture

(CSA) box program where they provide 20 families with veggies, as well as organically raised eggs and pork. They take a lot of pride in feeding the community, and they especially love the low-income coupon program offered by the Sooke and Shirley markets where they can feed everyone, regardless of income.

Lo is the recipient of the Bob Mitchell Micro-loan for 2024. Bob used to help out our Sea Bluff “graduates” with a start-up loan to help them get growing on their new farms. At Bob’s funeral, we fundraised shamelessly to help create this interest-free micro-loan of \$10,000. Bob would have approved, and many of you gave generously. Take pride that your money is still in circulation, helping new growers get traction

in their endeavours to feed our region. Yet again this year we had 100% paid back, on time, which is a testament to how new growers appreciate this leg up.

Lo wasn’t a Sea Bluff graduate, but since we didn’t have any farmhands this year who were able to secure access to land, we ventured out of our inner circle. We knew of Lo from the farming community. Chef Oliver Kenast of Wild Mountain Restaurant, and farmer Tom Henry of Stillmeadow Farm, gave Lo glowing reviews and the utmost respect for their endeavours.

Lo has a lot of projects in mind to undertake with the loan funds, but it will be a matter of prioritizing. They don’t have electricity to their site, and since losing a

permanent housing situation last year, Lo has to find a way to power lights and heat benches for seedlings this spring. A solar hook up could do just this, and it could help power their produce cooler that is on site but currently unusable. They also need more greenhouse space for shoulder season growing. A moveable high tunnel might just be the solution.

If you would like to help out new growers like Lo, please consider sending an e-transfer to seabluffbox@outlook.com with “Micro Loan” in the subject line. We would like to build this loan so that we can help more farmers. If you’d like to join Lo’s CSA or give them a leg up directly, their email is thegreensidefarm@gmail.com.

The Muse Travels!

Laura Farquharson

Joan Bradley joined the *Muse* team 25 years ago and for 20 of them she did a great job of looking after subscriptions. She has just retired and I have taken over. It was interesting to discover that the *Muse* is mailed to Black Creek, Edmonton, Dawson Creek, Liverpool in Nova Scotia, Parksville, Surrey, Vernon, and even Denver, USA, plus nearby Sooke, East Sooke and Victoria. I wondered, what is the link? Did the recipients live in Metchosin at some time, or perhaps attended school, or had holidays here, visited relatives and still have family members resident in Metchosin? It would be interesting to know.

Recently, I had the opportunity to satisfy a little of my curiosity as Stephanie Longstaff gave her uncle, Cecil Gould, a subscription as a gift and I had the pleasure of

talking to him. Cecil is now 93, living in Victoria, and in 1961 he became a teacher at the Metchosin School. He was appointed Principal in 1964, retiring in 1975. He very much enjoyed those years and has great memories of the school, the staff, pupils and life in very rural Metchosin. He is appreciative of Stephanie’s gift and enjoyed reading the January issue, in which he found familiar names plus learning of some of the present-day events and issues.

If you are a subscriber, I would appreciate it if you could send me your email address and phone number so that I don’t have to send out gentle reminders of renewal dates, etc. via Canada Post.

If you would like to take out a subscription, you will find all the necessary information on page 2. My email address is laura.farquharson@shaw.ca.

The Muse Traveller

Hanli Loubser, Annalize Loubser, and Odell Loubser took their copy of the Metchosin Muse, to enjoy at Stilbaai (Stil Bay) on the southern coast of South Africa in December, 2023. Andries Loubser photo



Where will the *Muse* take you? Share your photos with us! metchosinmuse@gmail.com

We ♥ Locals
The Metchosin Muse!

Do you like to write, or have a story or photo of interest to the community that you’d like to share? Perhaps proofreading is in your blood or you’d love to be an editor? The *Metchosin Muse* welcomes volunteers who would like to help out with the community newspaper. Please send an email to the editor, Allen Jones, at metchosinmuse@gmail.com if you are interested.