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Metchosin Muse

Vol. 34 Issue 1 January 2026

metchosinmuse@gmail.com www.metchosinmuse.ca

Schoolhouse Museum Opened for a Victorian Christmas

Judith van Manen

Metchosin Schoolhouse Museum hosted its first ever Christmas event on the weekend of December 6 and 7, 2025. The display was designed and organized by two highly creative members of the Museum Society, Deborah and Micah James, who already have achieved distinction as the creators of Doll Day at the schoolhouse in 2024.

Christmas 150 years ago was much simpler than today. Decorations were manufactured from natural elements, like holly and ivy, along with handmade or ornate items like gilded walnuts, paper chains, sugar-dipped fruit, colorful paper chains, painted pinecones, gingerbread, lace ornaments, and garlands made from popcorn and cranberries.

The museum visitors discovered the schoolhouse decked and outfitted with glorious memories from bygone times. Boughs of green draped atop the museum display cabinets, and even the huge whalebone of Metchosin fame was decorated with poinsettias. Handmade decorations adorned the Christmas tree which was lit with imitation electric candle lights rather than the original wax candles.

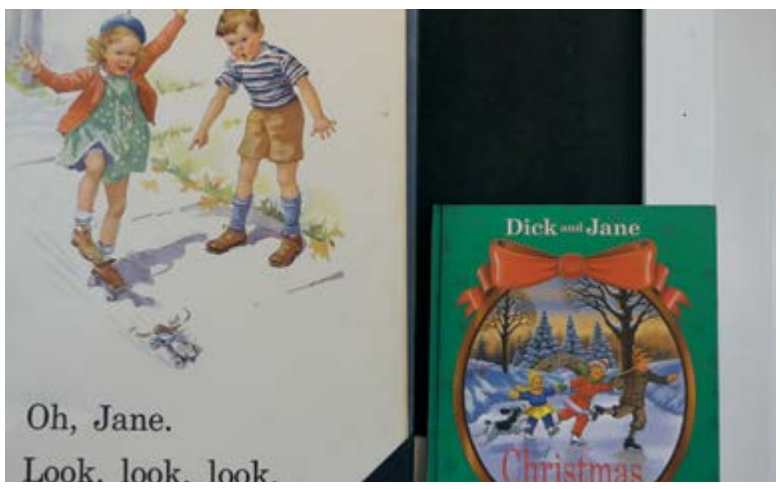
Historical information was placed on the tree branches, on top of student desks, museum walls and on chalkboards, so visitors could learn about Christmas traditions during Victorian times. Even the old Witty piano was enhanced with vintage Christmas song books. People marvelled at the old stories, poetry, and Christmas cards from the museum archives. To add to the festive atmosphere, a large, detailed miniature Victorian village exhibit was displayed on the cursive writing cabinet. Visitors could be seen making their own paper chains and even attempting to play with the vintage disc music box.

The Metchosin Museum Society thanks our volunteers, especially Deborah and Micah James, who donated their time and enthusiasm.

The Schoolhouse Museum will reopen for the regular season on April 4, 2026.

Classroom view with Christmas décor. Allen Jones photo.

Informative notices helpfully added. Allen Jones photo.



Charming memorabilia. Allen Jones photo.

Victorian viillage at Christmas. Allen Jones photo.

Docents Deborah and Micah welcome visitors. Judith van Manen photo.

A Year of Scouting

Scouter Brendan

As we welcome a New Year, it feels like the perfect time to catch up and share what the Wolf Cubs of the Metchosin 14th Juan de Fuca Scouting group have been up to. Last year was a full and exciting season, and our Cubs packed it with adventure, learning, and community spirit.

From festive fun to outdoor skills, the Cub Scouts enjoyed a wide range of activities. They kicked off the holiday season by decorating stockings, baking Christmas cookies, and gathering around a warm campfire with a special guest: "the Grinch," who brought plenty of laughs.

Throughout the year, the group explored the outdoors with energy and enthusiasm. A highlight was the visit to Goldstream Park to witness the annual salmon run, an experience that connected the Cubs to local wildlife and their environment. They also embarked on numerous hikes and camps, giving the youth a chance to build confidence, resilience, and teamwork in nature.

Skill-building was a big focus this year. The Cubs learned essentials such as building a campfire, safely handling pocketknives, outdoor cooking, and navigating with a compass. Each activity helped them grow in capability and confidence, preparing them for bigger Scouting adventures ahead.

It has been a fantastic year for the Wolf Cubs of Metchosin, and we look forward to sharing even more adventures with the community in the months ahead.

Scouts welcome Christmas with the Grinch. Jennifer Begley photo.

Canoeing on the lake in 2025. Chris Gehrig photo.

Metchosin Muse

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AD AND 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 in Microsoft Word, text or RTF to: metchosinmuse@gmail.com. Do not send PDFs (ads excepted). Photos should be high resolution and be in jpg or tif format only. 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.

Metchosin Muse Ad Rates

Display Ad Sizes	1 - 5 Issues	6 - 11 Issues
Business Card (H) – 4"w x 2.5"h	$56.00	$44.00
Business Card (V) – 2"w x 5"h	$56.00	$44.00
4"w x 4"h	$88.00	$71.00
1/6 page (V) – 4"w x 5"h	$110.00	$88.00
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1/4 page (V) – 5"w x 7.5"h	$165.00	$138.00
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Council News

JANUARY 2026

Driveway Culvert Maintenance

Residents are reminded it is homeowners' responsibility to clear driveway culverts of debris to help prevent flooding and to ensure that water and gravel from your driveway does not enter onto the roadway. A permit is required to undertake any work on the municipal roadway, including installation of driveways and culverts.

Priority Roads Service for snow & ice control

Snow removal and ice control is provided on a priority basis according to forecast and conditions. Happy Valley, Metchosin, William Head, Rocky Point, Kangaroo, Lindholm (and Neild, due to elevation) Roads are Metchosin's main, arterial, priority roads. Next are BC Transit and school bus routes, followed by all other roads.

Please help us by being prepared:

- Equip your vehicles with winter appropriate tires, carry chains. All-season tires lose their pliability and traction at seven degrees Celsius.
- Avoid parking vehicles on the road or paved shoulders at all times during the winter. Snowplough trucks need room to maneuver and roads with vehicles parked on them may not be ploughed.
- Please give snowplough operators plenty of room on the road and don't assume they can see you especially if conditions are poor.
- Clear snow to the left side of your driveway (facing in) where it meets the road to minimize the amount of snow pushed back into your driveway when the ploughs pass.

District of Metchosin Meeting Schedule – January 2026

The 2026 Schedule for Regular Council Meetings and Committee of the Whole meetings are posted on the website: www.metchosin.ca>Meetings>Meeting Schedule

Please see below meeting dates and times for January 2026. Meetings are held in the Council Chambers at 7:00 pm unless otherwise stated.

Meetings are subject to change. For updated information please call the Municipal Hall at 250-474-3167 or check the website at www.metchosin.ca.

Council Meeting……January 12.

Agricultural Advisory Select Committee……January 15

Committee of the Whole ……January 19

Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee (4:00 pm.)……January 20

Healthy Community Advisory Select Committee (4:30 pm.)……January 27

Metchosin Environmental Advisory Select Committee……January 27

Metchosin Municipal Hall

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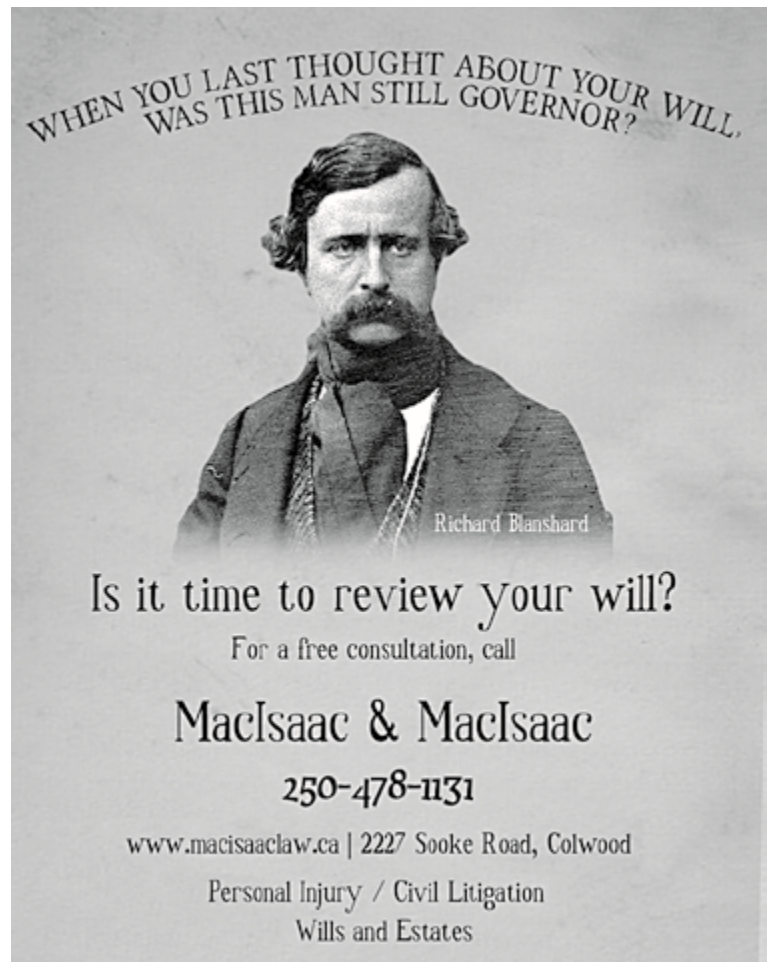
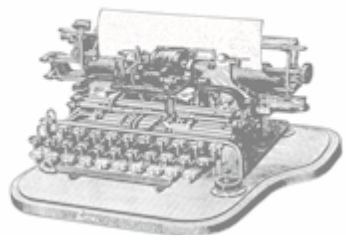


The *Metchosin Muse* welcomes volunteers who would like to help out with the community newspaper. Please send an email to metchosinmuse@gmail.com if you are interested.

Editor's Musings



Allen Jones

Life is becoming more difficult to comprehend with the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI). So, we ask our photographers to inform us if their submissions are using AI as we can no longer trust what we see. The attached photo was taken in the summer and transformed using AI. Be careful out there!

Another concern is that 2026 is an election year. While this is a good time to showcase local democracy, we ask that our contributors avoid overt electioneering as we strive to maintain community harmony in Metchosin without the need for censorship.

Our thanks to all who have supported the *Muse* over the past three decades including our loyal advertisers! We also welcome new advertisers to help to balance our budget. In the past, financial donations from Metchosinites have ensured the Metchosin *Muse* carried on for thirty years. As we must keep our advertising rates level with annual inflation, we cannot ask our advertisers to dig deeper. Nonetheless, it is possible that we will be seeking help from our readers in the spring to offset increased printing and postage rates. We thank you for your understanding of these necessities.

We are delighted to be able to thank our 2025 *Muse* donors:

Rachel French de Mejia
Terry Wilson
Bob & Jennifer Burgis
Peter & Margaret Newman
Anonymous

A very Happy New Year to all our readers and advertisers!

P.S. To have letters and articles considered for the February issue, please note our deadline of January 14.

A scenic view of the Schoolhouse Museum. Allen Jones with AI photo.

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.** *Editor's note:* **The opinions expressed in letters to the editor are those of the authors, not of the** *Muse*.

Debate Belongs in the Council Chamber

Not knowing much about the proposed firehall renovation/rebuild I eagerly started reading Councillor Steve Gray's letter in the December Muse. Very quickly it became apparent that this was not an objective, informative letter meant to educate the Metchosin public about the proposed construction. Instead, it veered off into an attack on the decision the council, of which he is a part, has made. These veiled, somewhat misleading attacks are not appropriate for an elected official to voice publicly. There are certainly many opportunities during regular meetings to air opinions. The council was voted in by the Metchosin taxpayers to work for us as a cohesive unit. If they can't come to a satisfactory consensus in regular meetings, they must figure out how to solve the issue or agree to disagree. For a councillor to debate issues in the media after approval is not the way to deal with municipal issues and goes against the basic tenet on which council decisions stand. To get ALL of the facts on the firehall rebuild people can easily check everything on the District of Metchosin website.

Johanna Buhr

Emergency Preparedness Presentation to Preschool Parents

The Metchosin Co-op Preschool invites parents and community members to attend a special presentation on Tuesday, January 13 at 7:15 pm. in Classroom 2 at 4495 Happy Valley Road.
Fire Chief Stephanie Dunlop will be leading the session, sharing important emergency preparedness information, and answering questions.

Chief Dunlop has presented to Metchosin Co-op Preschool parents for many years, and her talks are consistently engaging, informative, and well received. All interested families are encouraged to attend this valuable community event.

Caitlin Eindhoven

Looking Back to 2023

So, what exactly was achieved by Mayor and Council in 2023? Specific highlights include: the completion of a new gym floor, a new crosswalk at Hans Helgason school, expansion of the Farmers' Market, the issuance of funds for an agricultural study and approval by council for produce and community surveys to help create an agricultural plan, approval of a proposal for the Duke Road Trail, installation of dog poo signs and bins on two beaches, the arrival of a new fire truck, a budget surplus of over $4 million, and approval to hire a fulltime CAO. On the other hand, there was a mixed response to the free concert for volunteers which included paid musicians, our tax rate climbed to 13.4%, the old school continued to be a financial albatross, new policing costs appeared, in-camera meetings increased (why?), as did legal fees, (why?), criticism of council's initial strategic plan, and a dispute with the developer of the Beckingham Estates.

Kathleen MacPherson

Editor's note: The property tax bill for the average residential property in 2023 was approximately a 10.3% increase on the previous year. In 2025 it was down to a 6% increase.

Call out to Community Volunteers
District of Metchosin Advisory Select Committees

The District of Metchosin is seeking community volunteers to serve on the following Advisory Committees:

Healthy Community Advisory Select Committee
Parks & Trails Advisory Select Committee
Agricultural Advisory Select Committee

The Healthy Community Advisory Select Committee makes recommendations to Council and supports community activities that seek improvements to living in Metchosin which reflect our health and well-being while strengthening the sense of community. The Committee usually meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 4:30 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 systems. The Committee meets on the third Tuesday of every month at 4:00 p.m.

The Agricultural Advisory Select Committee provides support to Council in implementing the Metchosin Agricultural Area Plan and to sustain and promote the agricultural community and improve agricultural viability within Metchosin. The Committee meets a minimum of three times each year or at the call of the Chair.

Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission

The District of Metchosin is a member of the Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission (PAAC) along with the Districts of Central Saanich, North Saanich and Saanich and is seeking community representatives to serve on the Commission. The Commission meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. or at the call of the Chair (no meetings in July, August or December).

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 Friday, February 20, 2026, at 4:00 p.m., to:

DISTRICT OF METCHOSIN
4450 Happy Valley Road, Victoria, British Columbia V9C 3Z3
Telephone: 250-474-3167 · Fax 250-474-6298 · email: mayorandcouncil@metchosin.ca

Friday Film Night: "TWELVE" (2008)

Samuel Perez

If you could go back and speak to your 12-year-old self, what would you say?

Through this 43-minute documentary, "TWELVE", Philippine-born filmmaker Lester Alfonso attempts to answer this question by interviewing twelve diverse immigrant subjects, each of whom, like himself, moved to Canada at age 12.

Sam Perez, Economics teacher at Pearson College, and some Pearson students will engage the audience in a discussion afterward. This gives viewers a chance to meet and exchange reactions, thoughts, stories, and observations – a rewarding community event!

Date: Friday, January 30
Time: 7:00 pm
Film length: 43 minutes

Metchosin Community House Admission free (donations welcomed)

Popcorn included!

Happy New Year
METCHOSIN

Special Thanks to

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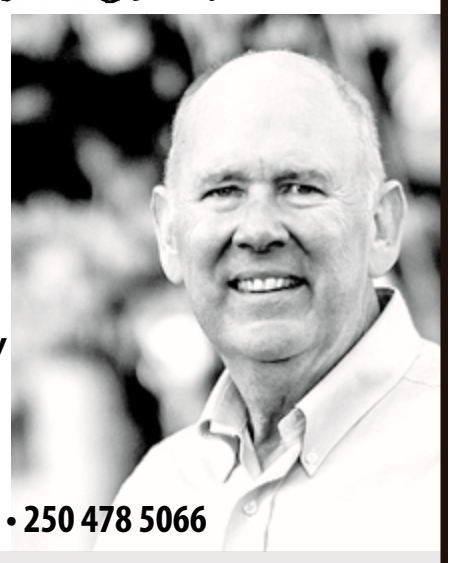

Councillor Steve Gray

Conversations welcome
Reach me at
SGray@Metchosin.ca • 250 478 5066

@metchosinsteve

Metchosin's Community of Gardeners Is Growing

Robyn Penfold

What began as bramble patch behind the Old School Museum has blossomed into a vibrant community project. Over the past year, the Metchosin Community Garden has experienced growth not only in the vegetables sprouting from its soil, but in the people who have come together to tend it. A community of gardeners is growing. They meet often for work parties and believe there is something special that happens when you grow food together. You learn from each other, you share the work, and at the end of the season, you get to share the bounty. It brings people closer.

The group had great success this year hosting a plant sale and a Harvest Festival where people came to pick out pumpkins which were plump and plentiful. Creating a corn maze and sunflower fort was a highlight; the local Metchosin Embers group had fun racing through the maze and saving sunflower seeds for next year's growing season.

In the coming months, the community of volunteers will be at the Sooke Seedy Saturday as well as the Westshore Seedy Saturday hosted by ReImagine Westshore. Look out for the coming Blueberry Plant Fundraiser and plan to get your starts at the plant sale held on the Sunday of the Mighty Metchosin Garage Sale weekend.

To support the garden's expanding vision which includes installing more permanent fencing, and building a much-needed shed and greenhouse, the team is seeking new volunteers eager to join the community. Cash donations are also appreciated, along with any garden-related building materials that residents would be willing to contribute. Specifically, we are looking for: garden tools, a wheelbarrow, old tarps, edging material for beds (wood, bricks, breeze blocks etc.).

Sunflower. Bonnie Boyner photo.

As winter has settled in, the garden beds may quiet down, but the momentum and community spirit behind the Metchosin Community Garden continues to grow. If this past year is any indication, the seasons ahead promise even more to celebrate. Please reach out to get involved or donate and check out our website at: www.metchosingrown.ca.

Councillor Shelley Donaldson with fellow gardeners. Robyn Penfold photo

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Metchosin Council to Consider Park Status for The Buffer Land

Councillor Jay Shukin

Metchosin may get a new park in 2026. District Council and staff have discussed formally conveying "park" status on the Buffer Land, a 113.5-acre parcel located between Centre Mountain and Happy Valley Road. The steps to doing so were reviewed at the December 8, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting, with Council expressing support for the set of actions.

The Buffer Land has been the subject of ongoing discussion since it came to the district as part of the 2017 boundary adjustment involving the Sc'ianew First Nation and the City of Langford. The parcel is currently split zoned as Commercial Recreation CR2 and CR3. Both zones allow for the development of a golf course and associated uses, as well as subdivision of 9.88 acres (CR2) and 4.95 acres (CR3) residential lots.

In 2023, council appointed a working group to examine future options for managing Buffer Land. Following a six-month process that included nine public meetings and two community input sessions, the working group returned with recommendations, including continued Metchosin-ownership, rezoning the parcel to a park, and developing a park management plan that supports the Buffer Land as a protective ecological area.

Formally designating municipal land as a park is authorized by the Community Charter, one of the main pieces of provincial legislation covering local government functions. This would be done through a land-specific bylaw, and would provide a level of protection against a sale by a future Council by requiring an 'electoral approval' process.

Council is also set to consider other protective measures, such as creating a new zone to support conservation and environmental protection goals, amending the Official Community Plan, and potentially adopting a land-use covenant. The covenant option comes from Section 219 of the *Land Title Act*, which allows landowners (in this case, the district) to register on property title specific things that are allowed or not allowed. Section 219 covenants are often used by local governments and land trusts as a means of enshrining conservation objectives on land parcels.

A new community group called Friends of the Buffer Land gave a presentation the same night as Council reviewed the Buffer Land options. Group members are interested in supporting the restoration and conservation effort on the Buffer. Invasive species removal events are being planned, starting in early 2026.

The Buffer Land is an important part of the Bilston Watershed. Metchosin Creek runs through this land before entering Bilston Creek, and it has been suggested that a new name be developed: potentially the Metchosin Creek Protective Area.

While Council has a clearer sense of direction on Buffer Land matters, significant work is required to bring these measures to reality. Drafting effective bylaws and title documents is complex work and will require considerable time by District staff. Residents will see and be able to comment on this work as material comes before Council through 2026.

Workshop on Agritourism at Bilston Creek Farm

Robin Tunnicliffe

The Metchosin Agriculture Select Committee is offering a speaker's series this year with the aim of informing landowners, farmers, and the public of ways to increase farm revenue and long-term farm viability.

The first event will focus on agritourism, which was identified in our agriculture plan as an area of interest for local farmers and residents. Agritourism is a creative means to bring customers to you, where they can buy your products while having farm experience. We will have a speaker from Destination Victoria as well as speakers from farms of different scales who will provide a variety of agrarian experiences. Agritourism is a broad term that applies to travellers and residents alike. Farms with novel products might be interested in attracting a wide range of visitors, whereas farmers who produce food staples can be more interested in bringing locals to their farms. This can inspire regular buying habits and richer connections to food and agriculture products.

Agritourism can take many forms: it can be as simple as signing on to a local tour of farms for a single day or making a bigger commitment like offering workshops or experiences on your farm. There are even opportunities like having contracts with tourism providers and offering regular agritourism packages. One size does not fit all, and that is what we will explore during this speaker's series.

In September, the Premier's Task Force on Agriculture met and decided that the threshold for obtaining farm tax status will be raised. The threshold for qualifying for a reduced property tax rate has been set at $2500 for the past 20 years. During our Metchosin Agriculture Plan development process, we learned that of almost two hundred farmers in Metchosin, more than half will be affected by this change. No timelines or numbers have been released by the government, but the Metchosin Agriculture Select Committee wants to help guide the community through this transition with the aim of helping farmers stay on their land and of maintaining the agrarian nature of our municipality.

We plan to host events over the next few months on topics related to farm viability. We also aim to have a group session about what kinds of infrastructure might help us make our farms more productive and efficient. We have a list of contacts from past agriculture planning events, and we will reach out when we have more details. If you are interested in being added to our list, please contact me: robintunnicliffe@hotmail.com

Location: **Bilston Creek Farm**
When: **TBA January 2026.**

The community table at Bilston Creek Farm. Robin Tunnicliffe photo.

Got something to say? Write an article for the Muse!

Contact us at:

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Farewell 2025!

Allen Jones

The year 2025 started with the New Year's Day delighted screams from the chilling waters of Taylor Beach – as did 2026. Followed by a few days of snowy weather allowing some of us to question global warming, life carried on in Metchosin.

The annual events were organised by the usual groups of diligent volunteers and enjoyed by the community and visitors from the area. We started off with the Polar Bear Swim and continued with the Mighty Metchosin Garage Sale, the Parisian Café, Bonfire Night and Halloween, Metchosin Community Day, Volunteers' Concert, Festivus, and numerous Christmas Fairs. They will no doubt be enjoyed again in 2026!

Hello 2026!

Polar Bear swimmers launch the New Year at Taylor's Beach. Ric Perron photo.

Christmas cheer at the fire hall. Allen Jones photo.

Helen McArthur returns from Antarctica after another marathon run. Helen McArthur photo.

A thrilling Fire Dept. rescue on Sugarloaf Mountain. Fire Dept. photo.

An exhibition of the Icelandic Saga of Njal at the Old School. Katie Pirquet photo.

Metchosin Invasive Species Cooperative ready for action. CRD photo.

Metchosin recruits new volunteer fire crew. Barb Sawatsky photo.

Work starts at the new site of the Victoria Humane Society. Katie Pirquet photo.

Art Brendon starts an epic mural on the Old Barn. Barb Sawatsky photo.

The Parisian Café returns for our seniors. Yvonne Cottrell photo.

The winning cake by Hannah Davies on Metchosin Day. Barb Sawatsky photo.

Early visitors to the MCA Garage Sale. Barb Sawatsky photo.

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EVENTS at METCHOSIN ArtPod

FRI 30 JAN- SUN 15 MAR

THREADS: weaving narratives

- **Guest Juror: Elizabeth Carefoot**
- **Open Call closes: FRI 16 January 2026, midnight**
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Workshop at ArtPod:

STITCHED SCROLLS:

A hands-on workshop with Elizabeth Carefoot

Create your own memory scroll

Date: SAT 7 Feb
Time: 12:30- 4:30pm
Price: $75
Where: MACC Event Room, 4495 Happy Valley Rd, Metchosin

★ GALLERY CLOSED 22 Dec- 29 Jan ★

Solo Show in the *NEW* Cove Gallery

FRI 30 JAN- SUN 15 FEB

Landlines

Memet Burnett showcases her recent watercolour and clay sculptural works inspired by Canada's landscapes and animal sentinels within them

ArtPod Weekly Ateliers

****START AGAIN WEEK OF 5 JANUARY 2026****

- ***Mondays**** *1-3pm Watercolour (*except holiday Mondays),* ***$10***
- ***Tuesdays*** *10-12pm Life and portrait drawing w/ live model,* ***$15***
- ***Wednesdays*** *- Rural Sketching- see website for details*
- ***all levels welcome • MACC Event Room, top floor • cash SVP***

What is an atelier?
Art ***ateliers*** *provide space and/or training to artists in the skills and techniques associated with creating various specific forms of art.*

See metchosinartpod.ca for details

Metchosin ArtPod
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METCHOSIN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

HOUSE HAPPENINGS!

MCA OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED DEC. 24 - JAN. 6, 2026

Adult Day Program	Monday, Wed., Thurs	9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Evening Knitting Café	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Drop-In Art Group	Tuesdays	10:00 am - 1:00 pm
Afternoon Knitting Café	2nd & 4th Tuesdays	1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Embers	Tuesdays	6:15 pm - 8:15 pm
Weights and Measures	Tuesday Mornings	8:30 am - 10:00 am
Scouts	Thursdays	6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Creative Rug Hooking	1st & 3rd Fridays	12:00 am - 3:00 pm
Parents & Tots Program	Fridays	9:30 am - 11:30 pm
Friday Socials	Last Friday of the Month	1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Ukulele Group	3rd Friday	5:00 pm - 6:30 pm
Friday Night Films	Last Friday of the Month	7:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Rough Voice Singers	3rd Sunday	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

★★★

Valuing Metchosin's Non-Profit Agencies

Heloise Nicholl and Morgan Yates

With the arrival of a New Year, we have a renewed opportunity to reflect on the organizations that bring so much value to our beautiful rural community. Among them are non-profit agencies that provide a wide range of important services to Metchosin. In recognition of the social, cultural, ecological, and recreational benefits these agencies provide, our municipality has historically supported them with corresponding property tax exemptions.

In September 2025, a key information gap in the 2026 Permissive Tax Exemption Report by the District Chief Financial Officer (CFO) contributed to a decision by members of Council to reduce permissive tax exemptions by approximately fifty percent. While at first blush this decision might appear to create a modest cost savings for the average Metchosin resident, more thorough analysis would show that the opposite is true. The decision came as a surprise to the affected organizations, threatening adverse impacts on their already tight budgets. In response, this article aims to provide a clear rationale for providing tax exemptions to non-profits.

The CFO's September Report included several themes in which local government and non-profit agency perspectives are well-aligned: restraint in annual property tax increases and transparency in reporting the costs of permissive tax exemptions and grants (known as 'grants-in-aid') and is important. There is also value in assessing the impacts of local non-profits in relation to our community's over-arching goals, as outlined in the 2022 year-end District of Metchosin Annual Report and its examination of sustainability across economic, environmental, and social realms. This provides common ground from which policy reassessment can begin.

Unfortunately, the CFO's report failed to examine the combined monetary and non-monetary benefits delivered by non-profit agencies to Metchosin residents. Taken together, these far outweigh the modest cost to local taxpayers of giving non-profits a break on their taxes. Excluding the benefits from what should have been a cost/benefit analysis leaves out the biggest part of the picture.

While each of the affected non-profits can make a compelling case for the monetary and non-monetary benefits they deliver to our community, it is worthwhile to examine their aggregate benefits. An extensive report published by the Victoria Foundation in November 2025 noted that for 2023, the value of economic activity from registered charities operating within the Capital Region was $5.4 billion, supporting the equivalent of $366 million in municipal taxes. Based on an estimated 2023 CRD population of 450,000, the per capita (not per taxpayer) value of municipal tax equivalents would thus be more than $800 per year. In comparison, the per capita cost of providing full permissive tax exemptions to all seven non-profit agencies in Metchosin is about $40 per year. In short, the report clearly shows that the financial benefits delivered by regional non-profits far outweighs their cost to taxpayers. Perhaps this should not be surprising, given the extent to which non-profits are staffed or otherwise supported by volunteers.

Beyond dollars and cents, we can consider the significant contribution that our volunteer-supported agencies make to sustaining Metchosin's unique character. For generations, our community character has been shaped by a combination of local agriculture, extensive natural areas, and a vibrant spirit of volunteerism. Part of this character is exemplified in properties owned and maintained by our non-profits: Who among us does not feel a sense of joy and community belonging, when in springtime we pass by the volunteer-tended Garry oak meadow that envelopes the old St. Mary's Church and its historic cemetery?

For this New Year, let us come together and put things right. Beginning with areas of common ground, let us build on our CFO's report by recognizing and documenting the outsized benefits that our volunteer-supported non-profits bring to the community. Then let us provide the tax exemption certainty and stability that these agencies need, to sustain our community character now and in the future.

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Visit the Muse website!
Past issues and more! http://www.metchosinmuse.ca

Metchosin Pickleball Club – A Review

Carol Voyt, Metchosin Pickleball Club

Metchosin Pickleball Club (MPC) was founded in February 2023 when we became an affiliate club with Pickleball BC and Pickleball Canada. In 2024 we played pickleball for the first time in Metchosin's newly renovated gym. There was no heat in the gym back then and at times the temperature was only in the single digits, but we bundled up and played, so happy to have a beautiful bright new space in which to play our favourite sport.

We ended 2024 with 224 members and by December 2025 we had over 340 active members. In 2025 alone we will have paid over $32,000 in gym rentals to the District of Metchosin.

The principal members of the club (Wayne Forland, Myrna Forland, and Carol Voyt) have now taught 85 new players the basics of the game. To our delight three of our District councillors are now playing pickleball weekly at our gym!

Metchosin Pickleball Club is offering introductory pickleball lessons at the old school gym. No experience necessary. The cost of $8 per person per lesson includes facility rental and the use of equipment. Email us at: metchosinpickleball@gmail.com to confirm interest. Please leave your full name, email address, and phone number. We will contact everyone to offer possible dates and times to begin a new session.

We also have opportunities for experienced players to join established pickleball groups. Please email your contact information, availability, and an indication of your level of play. We will do our best to connect you with an appropriate group.

Pickleball players on the court. Carol Voyt photo.

Calling all Cruciverbalists in Metchosin

Diana Smith

What is a small, sheltered recess along the coast? Or, what is the name of the new art venue in ArtPod? Four letters? Answer: cove.

Yes, our little alcove in the gallery has not only had a make-over but has a name: The Cove Gallery.

The new mini-gallery will be an opportunity for individual ArtPod members to display a body of work for three-week periods. Some might choose to show work inspired by a theme while others may want to exhibit new work in greater numbers than our current space allows. The Cove Gallery will provide a space for member artists to share their ongoing artistic explorations and current projects with other artists and the greater community. It also is a reason to visit ArtPod more often than every two months, the time span of our regular shows.

The first artist to display in the Cove Gallery is Memet Burnett with her show Landlines: Land as Story. In her show statement, Memet writes: "Landlines showcases my recently completed prairie watercolours and some clay sculptural works inspired by my May 2025 drive through some of Canada's wondrous bioregions to a residency in Southern Saskatchewan. In Landlines, I am investigating the concept of Land as Story, told through the lenses of water and clay."

Landlines runs January 30 to February 22 with the official opening celebration Saturday, January 31, at 1:30 pm, just before the 2:00 pm opening for ArtPod's first open call juried show of 2026, Threads: Weaving Narratives, juried by guest fibre artist Elizabeth Carefoot.

There is still time, up to January 16, to submit work for this juried show. The theme is an opportunity to explore fibre and thread as both material and metaphor. Some ideas: What are the threads that connect us to others? What is the fabric of our lives, our relationships, or our community? Artists are invited to consider themes such as memory, migration, and identity, or to explore the formal aesthetics that emerge when weaving patterns, structures, and tensions into shape. Works may be intimate in scale or immersive and expansive and can be of any media. The show runs until March 15.

Elizabeth will be giving a workshop on Saturday, February 7, inviting participants to make stitched scrolls that will display their creativity and tell stories of their own life or the lives of others.

Continuing the cruciverbalist challenge: what is red and very hot and something Chief Dunlop wants to stamp out; it is the theme of the next show at ArtPod. Answer at our website metchosinartpod.ca or in next month's Muse.

A watercolour by Memet Burnett from her show Landlines. Memet Burnett photo.

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Shop manager Erin Van de Water with Gwynne and MacKintosh celebrating a year in business at the Flying Dutchman market. They now offer products from two dozen local suppliers. Allen Jones photo.

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Chris Van de Water with daughter Erin welcoming customers to the Flying Dutchman Market. Marijke Van de Water photos.

Happy New Year!

Seniors' Resource Centre

METCHOSIN

Yvonne Cottrell, Office Manager

WEST SHORE GRIEF & LOSS PEER SUPPORT GROUP

Monday, January 5, 10:00 - 11:30 am

Contact: Marianne at 250-896-5179

55+ BUS TRIPS!

Thursday, January 15, Juan De Fuca Library 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Join us to experience what the library has to offer and borrow a book or two! JDF Library has a huge collection of books, audiobooks, and special online tools like Ancestry.

55+ BUS TRIPS!

Thursday, January 29 , Trip to Bear Mountain for Coffee/Tea 10:00 am -12:00 pm

Join us on a group Bus Trip.

DRIVER TRAINING PRESENTATION WITH JOAN WALLACE

Tuesday, January 13, 1:00 – 2:30 pm

Basic vehicle controls, Parking, Hazard avoidance, Aggressive drivers, Collision Avoidance, Zipper merging and more

NAVIGATING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM WITH DEBRA SWAIN

Thursday, January 8, 1:00 – 2:00 pm

This will cover many of the available medical services and what you can expect from them. Effective communication between the patient and their healthcare provider is emphasized.

METCHOSIN CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Thursday, January 15, 10:00 – 11:30 am

Share the experience of caring for family members or friends. Register at cgsupport@familycaregiversbc.ca or phone 250-384-0408.

GETTING TO KNOW DEMENTIA: PRESENTED BY MEGEN GAIGA FROM THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF BC

Thursday January 22, 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Learn how dementia can affect an individual's brain and behaviour. Topics will include different types of dementia, behaviours, stages and progression, common myths, and communication tips.

FRIDAY COFFEE SOCIAL HOSTED BY THE BAHA'I GROUP

Friday, January 30, 1:00–3:00 pm

Metchosin Community House, 4430 Happy Valley Rd. Enjoy coffee, tea, snacks, and friendly conversation.

Please contact SRC to register for presentations and rides to our events.

Join our Better at Home Program! Volunteers offer friendly visits, rides (medical/groceries) to help seniors live independently. Call for details!

Become a Lifetime Member for a one-time fee of $20

Metchosin Seniors' Resource Centre (SRC)
1047–4495 Happy Valley Road
250-478-5150 • info@metchosinseniors.ca • www.metchosinseniors.ca

RCMP Call-Outs

NOVEMBER 2025

Cpl Nancy Saggar, West Shore RCMP | GRC de West Shore

There were ninety-two calls for service in Metchosin for the month of November 2025. A summary of the calls for service is reported below. However, due to privacy concerns, limited information is provided, and not all 92 files are included below.

11- 04 A report of mischief to a vehicle on Kangaroo Road.

11- 06 School zone patrols at Hans Helgeson Elementary School.

Traffic patrols on Metchosin Road and Wootton Road.

A single vehicle collision occurred on William Head Road. No injuries, impairment not a factor.

11- 07 A single vehicle collision occurred on Sooke Road. Driver was determined to be impaired and was issued a 90-day roadside prohibition, and a 30-day vehicle impound, as well as a violation ticket for Driving Without Due Care.

00-13 A noise bylaw complaint was received, which was quieted down by police upon attendance.

11-14 School zone patrols at Hans Helgeson Elementary School.

11-15 Traffic patrols on Rocky Point Road and Pedder Bay Drive.

11-17 Traffic patrols on Rocky Point Road and Windover Terrace.

11-18 A single vehicle collision occurred on William Head Road. No injuries sustained, impairment not a factor.

11-19 A single vehicle collision occurred on a rural property in which a dump truck rolled over. No injuries sustained, impairment not a factor.

11-20 A collision occurred between two vehicles on Sooke Road, no injuries sustained, impairment not a factor.

11-21 Police stopped a vehicle in the 3000 block of Sooke Road driving 127km/h in an 80 km/h zone. Driver was found to be unlicensed and was issued a ticket for same, along with an Excessive Speed ticket. Their vehicle was impounded for seven days.

11-22 Traffic patrols on Winfall Road and Rocky Point Road.

Traffic patrols on Metchosin Road and Happy Valley Road.

Police attended a report of a possible impaired driver on Metchosin Road. The male driver was located and determined to be impaired by drugs. Investigation ongoing.

A Metchosin resident was defrauded of $1000 via an online gift card scam.

A single vehicle collision occurred in the 4500 block of Sooke Road. Driver and passenger not injured, impairment not a factor.

Police stopped a vehicle in the 3700 block of Sooke Road driving 126 km/h in an 80km/h zone. Driver was issued a violation ticket for excessive speeding and the vehicle was impounded for seven days.

Police stopped a vehicle in the 3900 block of Sooke Road driving 152 km/h in an 80 km/h zone. Driver was issued a violation ticket for excessive speeding, and the vehicle was impounded for seven days.

11-24 Police assisted Metchosin Fire with traffic control while the fire department was on scene at a trailer fire. Cause of the fire was determined to be accidental.

A male was found to be camping on the property of a Metchosin resident and was warned for trespassing and sent on his way. The male soon after attended the William Head Penitentiary, attempted to siphon gas from vehicles and caused a disturbance. Male was again arrested for mischief and theft and was held in cell overnight.

00-27 Traffic patrols on Rocky Point Road and Windover Terrace.

A bear was reported to be near a residence in the 3700 block of Sooke Road. Conservation advised.

A single vehicle collision occurred ending in a ditch near Duke Road. No injuries sustained, impairment not a factor.

11-28 Mischief to vehicle tires occurred overnight on Sooke Road.

Important Dates & Events

January

Important Dates & Events

Jan. 1 New Year's Day, Polar Bear Swim.....
Jan. 13 Co-op Preschool presentation .....
Jan. 30 Film Night.....p. 3
Jan. 30 Exhibition opening: Landline.....p. 10
Council Meetings.....p. 2
House Happenings.....p. 8
MACCA events.....p. 8
Seniors' Resource Centre events..... p.11

Fire Department Call-Outs

Fire Chief Stephanie Dunlop

There were 65 fire call-outs in **November 2025**.

These included:

Medical - 38
Fire - 12
Motor Vehicle Incidents - 6
Other - 9

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Birds of Metchosin

The Bald Eagle

Allen Jones

The majestic bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus) can be seen soaring on two-metre-wide wings. The distinctive white head and tail appear after the first year, together with a huge yellow bill. Its brown plumage is commonly seen in the area and it is found from Alaska to Labrador and as far south as Northern Mexico. Eagles feed mainly on fish and so are usually found near water. They are heavier than owls and use their strength to kill smaller birds and animals when carrion is not readily available. Eggs are laid in early March with fledglings appearing in late July. Trail walkers will be familiar with the chirping whistles and piercing screams that identify their presence.

The Bald Eagle. Allen Jones photo

Nature Metchosin 2025; a Lot of Good News and a Little Bad

Kem Luther

Some 2025 photos from iNaturalist observations. Images from upper left, clockwise: Nevada Tiger Moth by Moralea Milne; Texas Balloonwort by Nathan Earley; a pseudoscorpion by Thomas Barbin; Northern Feather Duster Worm by iNaturalist user ellery_mf, Stilt Sandpiper by iNaturalist user dityson; Stalked Orange-peel Fungus by Amanda Ray Garner. Photos used under Creative Commons license.

The Metchosin Biodiversity Project (MBP), https://metchosinbiodiversity.com, was established in 2011 to increase understanding of Metchosin's species and ecosystems and to share this information with the ultimate goal of protecting and preserving Metchosin's natural assets.

The MBP maintains a database of local species on the crowdsourced iNaturalist. The species count took a huge leap in 2025 and about 450 new species were added, making 2025 by far the most productive year since MBP switched to iNaturalist in 2018. The current count of 4250 species in Metchosin may be the highest among similar sized municipal regions in Canada.

The records added in 2025 were culled from a pool of 11,000 iNaturalist observations made by 550 people and vetted by twice that many experts from all around the world. (See our database at https://inaturalist.ca/projects/metchosin-biodiversity.)

Here are some of the species that were added to the MBP's database in 2025:

Birds. A dozen new birds are in this year's records. The expansion of our records has been mostly thanks to hosting the Rocky Point Bird Observatory and their skilled birders. Our first Cassin's Auklet (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*) was sighted in 2024 but only added to the database this year. It is a red-listed diving bird that lives on offshore islands. The Virginia Rail *(Rallus limicola*), a large, comical bird that hangs around brackish marshes, popped by in August. In the same month, an Eastern Kingbird (T*yrannus tyrannus*) balanced on the top of a Douglas-fir. The Stilt Sandpiper (*Calidris himantopus*), a long-distance traveller, usually migrates through eastern North America on its way from Arctic breeding grounds to winter feeding in South America, but a few of them make their way to the West Coast — as this one did.

Insects. More than half of the species added to our iNaturalist database in 2025 were insects. About 60 were hymenoptera (bees, wasps, flies, and ants). About 30 were coleoptera (beetles); and almost as many were arachnids (spiders, mites, etc). The real performers were the lepidoptera (butterflies and moths). MBP had nearly a hundred new records in this order of insects. Three-quarters of these moths were thanks to Moralea Milne, a former Metchosin councillor. When she died in 2018, Moralea left behind a trove of nature photos, many taken around her home along the Sooke Road. Libby Avis, a local moth expert, meticulously went through all Moralea's lepidoptera photos, identified them, and added them to our database. Moralea was one of the MBP's founders, and it was touching to see her legacy carried on in this way.

Vascular plants and mosses. While MBP does not add cultivated plants to the database, many plants that were introduced to Canada have learned to survive outside of cultivation, qualifying them to be included in our records. About a third of the 50 plants added for the first time to the Metchosin iNaturalist records in 2025 fall into this category. Some of these, because they cause harm to native ecosystems and displace native plants, might be called invasives. Field peppergrass (*Lepidium campestre*) fits the invasive category. In contrast, the delicate Nodding Trisetum (*Graphephorum cernuum*), found in May by James Miskelly, is one of our less common native grasses.

Mosses and liverworts. Among the twelve new Metchosin species in this category was the lovely, rare, and aptly named Texas Balloonwort (*Sphaerocarpos texanus*, see photo). A BC bryologist commented that this discovery deserved "flashing lights and international billing."

Fungi and Slime Moulds. About 75 species of fungi, lichens, and slime moulds were first added to the Metchosin records in 2025. Many in Metchosin will be familiar with the ubiquitous Orange-peel Fungus (*Aleuria aurantia),* but in 2025 Amanda Ray Garner recorded the handsome Stalked Orange-peel Fungus (*Sowerbyella rhenana*).

The launch of the new BC Mycomap project in September (https://mycota.com/the-mycomap-bc-network/), funded in part by the Metchosin Foundation, added a new slant to work on the local fungi and slime moulds. Members of these phyla can be hard to identify all the way to species level. For many of them, it is essential to obtain sequences of an area of their genome known as the 'fungal barcode'. BC has historically trailed US states south of the border in obtaining and publishing these barcodes. The Mycomap project's goal is bring BC up to speed in this important effort. At the time of writing, about a hundred people from all over BC have taken on the task of submitting vouchers for sequencing. Of the 10,000+ collections made, 4% have come from Metchosin. Leading contributors to the Metchosin vouchers include Simone Littledale, Karen Dyke, Bill Weir, Roanan DeMeyer, Tina and Ian Brown, and me. When the results start to arrive, numerous new species will become part of the Metchosin count.

Marine Life. About 60 new species fall under the loose heading of 'marine life'. These include seaweeds, barnacles, chitons, crabs, fish, molluscs, nudibranchs, amphipods (e.g. shrimp), sponges, and sea worms. One of the crabs was, unfortunately, the European Green Crab (*Carcinus maenas*), which has been spreading along the Southwest Coast of BC. A supercompetitor that displaces native crabs and damages crucial marine habitat, it arrived on the West Coast about 1990, and in 2012 a well-established population was discovered in the Sooke Basin. The Coastal Restoration Society has trapped and removed more than 600,000 of these crabs from Sooke and Clayoquot Sound. Discussions are taking place about what can be done to prevent their spread in Metchosin waters.

Celebration of Gratitude

Iman Zandieh

On the evening of November 29, we celebrated the eighth annual gratitude award at the Metchosin Community House to a packed house. We reflected on various aspects of gratitude, and the key role that service plays in building and strengthening community. We celebrated this year's recipients: Doug and Barb Sawatsky, a truly dynamic duo! Friends, neighbours, and co-workers shared some humorous and memorable highlights from their 54 years as Metchosin residents. A common theme was the sincere gratitude that everyone expressed for their many years of service to others and to our community.

Nine years ago, the Metchosin Baha'i Community was consulting about potential future service projects. We were amazed by the number of unsung heroes in Metchosin who dedicate so much of their talent, time, and efforts to a specific cause and to others. The Baha'i community recognized how grateful we are for these individuals, for they are, in many ways the pillars supporting this amazing community. We hoped that by creating the annual gratitude award and recognizing these special groups and individuals, that perhaps this would further raise our collective consciousness about this important virtue and strengthen its practice. Although the Metchosin community has always participated in the awards process, this year was certainly the most noticeable - both from the various nominations that were forwarded and the many positive responses that were received when this year's recipients were announced.

Thank you, Barb and Doug, for your many years of service!

Barb and Doug Sawatsky are awarded for their community volunteering by Mojdeh and Iman at the Baha'i Gratitude Night. Jim Challenger photo.