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Friday, February 5, 2016 Sooke, BC

Real estate market pushes hard

WEST SHORE &
SOOKE VOICE NEWS

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MLS SALES January 2016 VREB		
	Data-Adjusted Benchmark	Actual Avg Sale Price
Sooke	\$355,000	\$383,601
Langford	\$436,500	\$535,299
Colwood	\$474,100	\$562,763
View Royal	\$534,600	\$522,143
All G.V.	\$524,000	\$696,367

Chart by West Shore VOICE

The real estate market in the Greater Victoria area in January 2016 saw the strongest January sales tally since 2002, says the Greater Victoria Real Estate Board (VREB). Low interest rates on the horizon of upward movement (can't go much lower) and housing prices are somewhat topped out (sustainably can't get much higher). The market is understandably hot.

In January this year there were 539 property sales, an increase of 53.6% compared to 351 properties sold in January 2015. January and February are usually slow months in the regional market, ahead of March-May annual peak listing totals (spring/summer is the best time to move).

Good and ready properties have moved through the buy-sell market in the past year. MLS inventory levels with VREB plummeted by 24.7% in one year. In January 2016 there were 2,471 listings compared to 3,283 in January last year.

"Really poor families" buy clothes at central local thrift shop

SOOKE VOICE NEWS

"There's a huge need. We have some really poor families in Sooke," says the retail manager of the new Sooke Family Resources Society (SFRS) Thrift Shop. That's the main reason behind the relatively swift opening of the Sooke Family Resources Centre Thrift Shop. In its tight little spot next to Sooke Power Supplies in the 6700-block of West Coast Road, the shop is short on parking but centrally located, right across from the Cedar Grove Mall.

"Clothing is a big seller." The donated inventory also includes housewares and brick-a-brack. "We've had a tremendous amount of support from the community," says Lewis. "We get 20 to 25 bags of donations every day. We always want clothing, especially for boys. We have lots of girls' clothing. We're always interested in plus-size, and the men's clothing section is weak." Lewis says her customers tell her that the clothes are quite reasonably priced.

The Community Thrift Shop idea came up last summer after the Salvation Army store closed in June 2015. The SFRS board approved funding, a 'social enterprise' was set up with the government, and by mid-October they were open.

There is one paid staff person (Lewis) and the other operators are volunteers. There are no part-time employees. Of the 25 volunteers – most do two 4-hour shifts a week. Some do three 4-hour shifts. If they can only do one day a week they do a 4-hour shift, explains Lewis.

Lewis moved to Sooke from Vancouver about two years ago. She is a former corporate retail financial collections agent and a former financial recovery agent for RBC and CIBC.

Rent, operating expenses and wages at the SFRS community Thrift Shop are covered by store revenues. The rest goes to supporting health and social programs of the Sooke Family Resource Society which operates out of a building on Wadams Way (still locally known as the former CASA building).

Average sales in January were about \$423/day, and at the busy Christmas season averaged \$545/day. Most shops apparently do about \$300/day.

The SFRS Community Thrift Shop is holding a grand opening on Saturday, February 13 from 11am to 2pm. They're at 6715 West Coast Road.

Two new NDP MLAs head to the BC Legislature

by Mary P Brooke | WEST SHORE VOICE



Melanie Mark
Elected in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant



Jodie Wickens
Elected in Coquitlam-Burke Mountain

Two new NDP MLAs were elected to the BC Legislature on Tuesday, February 2. By-election results in the two Lower Mainland ridings were posted quickly on the Elections BC website after the 8pm close of the polls.

The by-elections were called after two former MLAs resigned in 2015 – one was Liberal and the other NDP. The replacement is two NDP.

Melanie Mark (NDP) showed a clear lead early on as voting results rolled in, winning handily in the downtown riding of Vancouver-Mount Pleasant with 60.82% of the vote. The next strongest contender was Green party candidate Pete Fry with 26.42%. Melanie Mark will be the first indigenous woman to serve in the BC Legislature.

Jodie Wickens (NDP) was running neck-and-neck in the suburban Coquitlam-Burke Mountain riding against BC Liberal candidate Joan Isaacs as the voting results were posted, but Wickens won in the end with 46.24% of the vote. Isaacs carried 38.11%. Transit infrastructure and schools were major issues for the Coquitlam riding. Jodie Wickens has made a community impact as Executive Director of the Autism Support Network.

By-elections can be a barometer of which way the political wind is blowing, which for the BC NDP is particularly important as they start ramping up to the May 2017 provincial election.

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New Corporate Officer already in place at District of Sooke

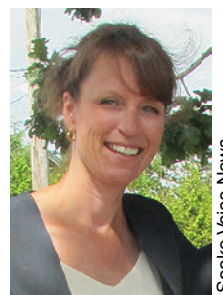
WEST SHORE VOICE NEWS

The District of Sooke has swiftly hired a new Corporate Officer, fast on the heels of last week's departure of Bonnie Sprinkling who held that position for several years (she was with the District for over 16 years).

The new Corporate Officer is Gabryel Joseph. He started in the position on February 1, 2016. "Gabryel Joseph is an expert in communications, human resources and economic development," said District of Sooke Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Teresa Sullivan this week.

Joseph's profile at LinkedIn shows his last post being April 2014 to April 2015 with the City of Edmonton as a Legislative Services Advisor. Before that he was briefly a Senior Policy Advisor to the Government of Alberta (when the government was still Conservative). He has in the past also been an associate with Sullivan & Associates (headed up by Teresa Sullivan) where he was "passionate about being a catalyst in both individual and organization transformation" and "never afraid to ask the tough questions".

Sullivan became CAO in December 2015. As head of staff she brought Joseph into the fold this week in the wake of the departure of three senior staff in recent weeks, notably the Director of Finance (Michael Dillabaugh), the chief municipal engineer (Elisabeth Nelson), and the now-former Corporate Officer (Bonnie Sprinkling). Since December, Sullivan has been holding a long series of private one-on-one meetings with community movers and shakers as a way of getting to better know the Sooke community.



Teresa Sullivan
Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
District of Sooke



Gabryel Joseph
Corporate Officer
District of Sooke

Sooke Voice News

Web-source

REDUCE REUSE RECYCLE REINVEST
SFRS Community Thrift Shop

Sat February 13

11am to 2 pm
6715 West Coast Rd

Grand Opening

A Program of the Sooke Family Resource Society

WEB COURTESY EDITION

EDITORIAL

SVN editorials aim to explore broader issues of concern to the local community, economy and society as a whole.

TGIF has new meaning in BC!

Ever since the 9 to 5 workday became a standard thing in the mid-20th century, TGIF ('thank goodness it's Friday') became a 'meme' (before there were memes) to represent a sense of liberation from the drudge of the Monday to Friday work week.

Certainly by the turn of the millenium there was flexibility in the work week and variety in how people put energy to task for making a living. Flex days, job-sharing, and tele-com-muting were well in place. But somehow TGIF never lost its 'stickiness' and the acronym still conveys a sense of socially-acceptable rebellion against the system that incorporates human souls into the grind of the corporate workplace.

It's taken no time at all for Family Day to take hold in BC as a statutory holiday (observed on the second Monday of February since 2013). TGIF could now be taken to mean 'thank goodness it's February' or 'thank goodness it's Family Day'. No one ever argued about a day off in the gloom of the year's shortest month when moods tend to sag due to the many long nights since the onset of winter (except during 2007-2011 when the BC Chamber of Commerce and the Campbell government fought against a 'costly' Family Day becoming law). Grinding through post-Xmas bills could have something to do with February gloom too!

People have planned extended vacations around the February 6 to 8 long weekend this year. Relief in the middle of February? Wahoo! Apart from the legislative authority of it all, BC Family Day is more than here to stay.

The benefits of a refreshed workforce and happier families are likely translated into a stronger bottom line for businesses and the overall economy. It's a good example of how putting people first actually helps the rest of the cogs of the wheel stay in lubricated motion.



Mary P Brooke, B.Sc., Cert PR Editor & Publisher Sooke Voice News & West Shore Voice News

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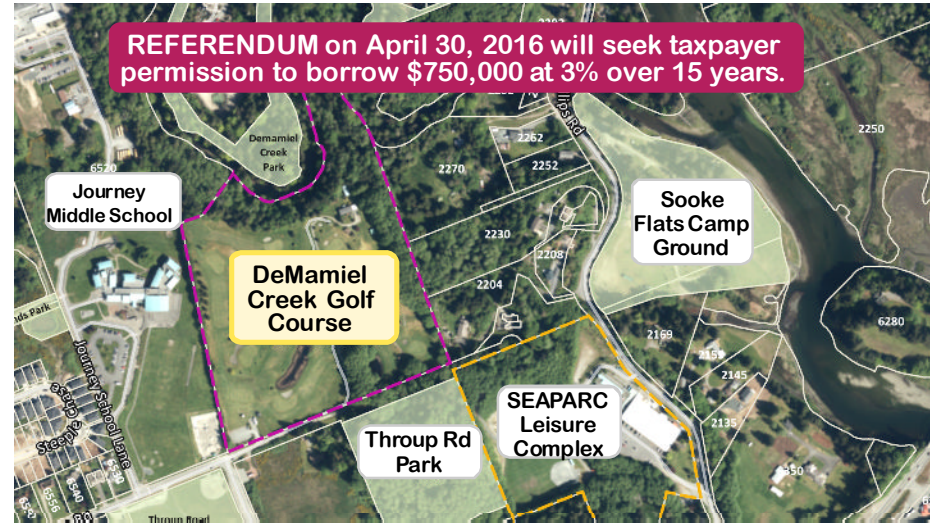
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Referendum: SEAPARC hopes to buy a golf course



ADAPTED: map provided by SEAPARC

SEAPARC has made an offer to purchase the 23-acre Demamiel Creek Golf Course subject to a referendum to be held on April 30 for the Juan de Fuca and Sooke residents. Current playing fields and SEAPARC facilities are operating at full capacity and we have an opportunity to purchase the adjacent cleared and relatively level lands neighbouring SEAPARC.

This acquisition is a long term investment which will satisfy the land requirements for all future outdoor recreational projects. It will not result in a tax increase for Sooke or JdF residents and SEAPARC will spend the next two months communicating the plan. In addition to public meetings, residents may access information at www.crd.bc.ca/seaparc or e-mail SEAPARC Manager Steve Knoke sknoke@crd.bc.ca or SEAPARC Chair Mike Hicks at directorjdf@crd.bc.ca with any questions.

WEB COURTESY EDITION

Here is the plan:

SEAPARC is a partnership between the District of Sooke and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, serving residents from East Sooke to Port Renfrew. The annual budget to operate and maintain the pool, ice arena, bike park, skate board park and Stan Jones field is approximately \$3.6 million dollars of which \$ 1 million is derived from user fees and \$2.6 million is requisitioned from the taxpayers via property taxes. The taxes are apportioned between the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area and District of Sooke based on population resulting in a 75% Sooke / 25% JdF split.

The annual \$3.6 budget million is apportioned between Operating and Capital Reserve. \$3.1 million is used for Operating wages, repairs and maintenance and utilities and \$ 500,000 in Capital Reserves is used for equipment replacement, building improvements, vehicle replacements, signage, major repairs, land purchase and building additions.

WEB COURTESY EDITION

An average payment of \$378,000 was paid to service the \$4.4 million pool debt established in 1998. At this time, SEAPARC has no debt. There is \$1 million in the Capital Reserve fund and an annual requisition of \$500,000 towards the fund.

In anticipation of the debt retirement, SEAPARC commissioned a strategic plan to identify the recreational needs and desires of the community. The process

— involving staff, commission and community consultation— recommended the short-term strategy of adding a 4,000 sqft weight/activity/exercise room and a long-term strategy of purchasing additional land for future recreational needs.

The SEAPARC Commission has decided to maintain the tax



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BC Safety News

Avalanche safety efforts

In the wake of the deaths of five people in an avalanche near McBride (near Prince George, BC close to the Alberta border) on Jan 29, the BC Coroners Service and Avalanche Canada are collaborating to stress the need for preparedness for the backcountry.

When the avalanche hit, 17 snowmobilers were in the Mount Renshaw Alpine Recreation Site. First responders, the BC Coroners Service and Avalanche Canada note that the majority of groups had proper rescue equipment with them, and that the impressive effort made by those on scene to rescue themselves and others undoubtedly prevented more loss of life.

However, it's important to know how to prevent an avalanche incident from occurring in the first place. "Avalanche safety education is essential for all winter backcountry recreationists," says Gilles Valade, executive director, Avalanche Canada. "Basic skills, such as recognizing avalanche terrain and not exposing multiple people to overhead hazard, make a big difference in reducing the consequences of an event."

Equipment alone is not enough, noted chief coroner Lisa Lapointe. Three of the five fatalities from the Renshaw avalanche had deployed avalanche airbags designed to 'float' someone along the surface of a moving avalanche. But the airbags were ineffective in this case because the victims were in a gully at the bottom of a slope – an area where the debris flow of the avalanche is too constricted.

The vast majority of fatal avalanches are triggered by the victim or someone in the victim's party, says the BC Ministry of Public Safety news release. Avalanche skills training courses teach proper trip planning, terrain selection and safe travel techniques, which can be effective in preventing accidents.

Info on training and equipment: www.avalanche.ca WSV

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Sampler edition (PDF), archives, breaking news:

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West Shore Voice News

Health News

Blood donors will be asked about travel

Blood donors are asked to complete a Canadian Blood Services questionnaire prior to donating blood, along with a private screening discussion with a nurse before being allowed to give blood. This helps check for many things including possible exposure to the Zika virus while travelling abroad. Next local clinic: Feb 15 at Sooke Legion (see events, pg 4). www.blood.ca WSV

requisition at the present level in order to build the weight/activity/exercise room addition and purchase the 23-acre former golf course adjacent to SEAPARC. The land would be financed over 15 years and it is hoped the activity room expansion would be built in the next three years. SEAPARC is forecasting that the present tax rate would be sufficient to fund the purchase and there would be no tax increase necessary to fund these two projects. It is also planned that the requisition would be re-examined after completion of the addition.

The owners of DeMamiel Creek Golf Course have accepted a \$1 million dollar offer from SEAPARC subject to a referendum. Although the Commission, in the short term, will consider contracting-out the golf course operation on a break-even basis, the intermediate and long term vision is for future recreational fields for the expanding Sooke and Juan de Fuca population.

Currently Juan de Fuca residents have a mill rate of .498 and Sooke .878. SEAPARC will be borrowing \$750,000 at 3% interest, amortized over 15 years. The annual payment of \$ 61,000 will result in a cost of \$4.80 each year for a home valued at \$ 400,000 in the JdF and the annual cost of \$8.40 for the same valued home in Sooke. The \$61,000 would be allocated from the Capital Reserve Fund with the remaining \$439,000 dedicated to funding the capital replacement items and expansion. There would not be an increase in the overall annual tax rate required to fund the land acquisition.

The SEAPARC Commission fully appreciates that property taxes are high and have done all they can over the past few years to manage SEAPARC in a frugal, efficient manner. They also realize that the adjacent property could supply all the field requirements for the next 100 years.

80 years ago the Sooke Community Association had the foresight to purchase land for the recreational needs of Sooke and JdF residents. We have the opportunity to add to their legacy and through the upcoming referendum, planned for April 30, 2016, Sooke and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area electorate will voice their opinion on this important decision. The Commission is hopeful that residents will recognize the value of this undertaking and support obtaining this key property for future generations. ~Mike Hicks, Chair, SEAPARC Commission



West Coast Lifestyle

21st Century Living

Daily news updates - Sooke & West Shore: www.sookevoicenews.com/SOOKE-LOCALbreakingnews.htm

Tourism chat at upcoming SRTA AGM

WEST SHORE / SOOKE VOICE NEWS

The Sooke Region Tourism Association (SRTA) will be holding their 2106 Annual General Meeting (AGM) coming up Monday, February 29. The two-hour meeting will be held at Sooke Harbour House, 7 to 9 pm.

Each year there is a guest speaker. Last year's meeting included a lively discussion about how the Sooke fishing community needs to be better included in tourism marketing of the region, especially during the off-season. There was also a discussion about how far the 'reach' of Sooke region tourism marketing should be. For several years the range has encompassed Alberta, BC Mainland, and northwest USA to bring visitors in from those areas, as opposed to promoting staycations for locals.

Some travel agents say that Canadians and Americans are staying close to home for vacations. West shore travel agent Melanie Davis with Merit Travel says: "Travel activity to Europe is down. Americans are staying put or going to Alaska as it's closer to home. Canadians are staying in Canada. It's likely a combination of responding to a fear of terrorism, the impact of the US dollar, and also now the Zika virus," Davis said.

Everyone who has an interest in tourism is welcome to attend the SRTA AGM; members may vote. Light refreshments will be served. WSV

Tofino revitalization supported by BC funds

Tofino is looking to its past to help shape its future as its historic Main Street undergoes a major revitalization. The first phase of the town's Main Street revitalization project starts this month. The project is being supported by almost \$310,000 of the Province's Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) funding, says the BC Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Responsible for Labour. The RMI program helps grow the tourism sector in 14 eligible BC resort municipalities.

The goal of the revitalization is to bring more action back to Tofino's historic downtown -- near the water, where historical buildings remain in the commercial hub that runs from First St to Fourth St. The improvements will create a more walkable, bikeable and inclusive downtown by adding new boardwalks, sidewalks and benches. New landscaping will also encourage people to explore downtown by exploring local history and water views in addition to eating at local restaurants and shopping at nearby businesses. "The changes will enhance the visitor experience in Tofino, encourage people to stay longer and to return to the popular resort destination," said a January 29 news release.

As a key sector in the BC Jobs Plan, tourism is a key economic driver in the province. "BC's tourism sector is strong and growing amid fierce global competition for tourists," says the BC Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training.

BC has over 19,200 tourism-related businesses. Over 17,000 (almost 93%) are small businesses. In 2013, the tourism industry generated \$13.9 billion in revenue with a direct contribution to BC's gross domestic product of \$7.3 billion. WSV

Local Sooke artist Linda Gordon in 'art battle'

Local artist Linda Gordon will be participating in the Victoria Art Battle on February 11 (7 pm, Victoria Event Centre, 1415 Broad St, \$20 at the door). Live painting competitions draw in the audience who then choose the winner. A dozen painters will be given 20 minutes to create a work of art. The audience cheers and votes for a favourite painting.



Art Battles are being held across Canada with the winners representing their community in regional championships to be held this summer. In 2015 over 2,500 artists took part; the final competition was held in Ottawa in July. http://artbattle.ca

Linda Gordon has recently opened an art studio in her home. WSV

Additional sailings on Family Day weekend

BC Ferries has announced extra sailings on the main routes for Family Day long weekend, in anticipation of heavy traffic.



On the Swartz Bay (Victoria) -

Tsawwassen (Vancouver) route, there will be additional sailings:

Departing Swartz Bay: Fri Feb 5 (12 noon and 4pm); on Sun Feb 7 (12 noon); and Mon Feb 8 (12 noon and 4pm).

Departing Tsawwassen: Fri Feb 5 (2 pm and 6pm); Sun Feb 7 (2pm); and Mon Feb 8 (2 pm and 6pm).

On the Departure Bay (Nanaimo)-Horseshoe Bay (West Vancouver) route, the additional sailings will be on Mon Feb 8 at 7pm departing from Departure Bay and at 9pm from Horseshoe Bay. WSV

Sooke Councillors attended leadership session

A one-day workshop called 'Respect for the Office' is being attended by several District of Sooke Councillors February 4 in Vancouver. Representing Sooke

were Acting Mayor Kerrie Reay and Councillors Rick Kasper, Ebony Logins and Brenda Parkinson. The new District of Sooke CAO Teresa Sullivan also attended.

The session was presented at the Local Government Management Association of BC (LGMA) Leadership Forum.

District of Sooke Councillors decide each year as to which conventions and leadership seminars they will attend. Travel costs are paid by the District of Sooke. WSV

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McKenzie Interchange: public info session #2 coming right up!

WEST SHORE VOICE NEWS

Information gathered in the first phase of consultation for the McKenzie interchange is now publicly available and being used to move the project design forward. http://engage.gov.bc.ca/mckenzieinterchange/

Additional information and updated concepts will be presented at a second open house on Wednesday, Feb. 24 (3:30 to 7:30pm, 753 Burnside Rd W).

"We have received valuable input from the community and continue to talk to stakeholders and the public as we take the next steps in bringing this important infrastructure project to commuters, commercial drivers, transit users, cyclists and pedestrians," says BC Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Todd Stone.

The summary report takes into account more than 1,100 public comments and submissions, as well as input provided from meetings with First Nations, local governments and key stakeholders. Top themes include traffic flow at the interchange, the McKenzie/Burnside intersection, Cuthbert Holmes Park, consideration of transit, cycling and pedestrians, and support for options where the highway passes underneath McKenzie/Admirals. Technical and financial information is also being incorporated to further refine the interchange concepts. WSV

Fundraising continues toward bringing a refugee family to Sooke



WEST SHORE / SOOKE VOICE NEWS

Bringing a refugee family to Sooke or the Juan de Fuca area is the goal. So far a local group with this goal has raised \$20,000 of the minimum \$35,000 needed to support a family for one year. That's since early December.

Donations can be made by cheque, made payable to St Rose of Lima Catholic Church, and mailed to 2191 Townsend Rd, Sooke BC V9Z 0H4. Details at http://teamsookejuandefuca.ca

Donations can also be made online, and will be paid to St Rose of Lima Parish via an online processing centre at www.canadahelps.org where 'giving is made simple'. A transaction fee is charged.

"We're pleased with how many in the community have realized that this is an important cause. But we still have to raise almost \$15,000 more before we can invite a family" said Sid Jorna, chair of the Team Sooke/Juan de Fuca Refugee Sponsorship Committee. "We have to reach more people."

Since the committee's inaugural meeting in early December the sponsorship group has assembled a settlement plan for the new family, approached individuals and groups for donations and support, and created an online presence. People have been responding with generosity. Those contributing so far include local businesses, Sooke Rotary, and individual donors. In-kind donations include furniture and household goods.

Juan de Fuca Regional Director Mike Hicks has indicated the availability of "a significant sum" once the refugee committee fund hits \$35,000, said a new release from the organization this week. All donated funds will go directly to supporting the newcomers. Administration and overhead costs are being donated by volunteers. The overall fundraising goal is \$50,000: of that, \$40,000 will be for basic expenses, and \$10,000 as a contingency fund. The newly arrived family will need to be housed, fed, clothed and have all basic needs met for a full year. At this time, the group doesn't know how many people will arrive.

Some communities have resettled families of six or eight. "So, we feel a lot more comfortable with a contingency amount," Jorna said. The young people of Sooke have been quick to get on board. At Journey Middle School, students and teachers will hold events to raise awareness about refugees. At EMCS, the Youth for Change group may partner with the sponsorship group to host a spring concert/awareness celebration.

The sponsorship group doesn't yet know where the family will be from. It could be Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria or Syria. But they do feel that the newcomers "will enrich our inclusive community as future citizens, perhaps as business owners, students and neighbours who can both teach and learn from us".

"Some people ask 'why Sooke?' and I answer 'why not'," says Jorna. He cites "friendly residents and a generous spirit" as well as a lower cost of living than in big cities and the uplifting natural beauty of this region. "We have many things to offer a family that has lost so much." WSV

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A Taste of BC - Sat Feb 6, 7 to 9:30 pm. At EMCS, Tx \$35 at Shoppers, Peoples & EMCS. Harbourside Lions.

BC Family Day. Statutory holiday in BC. Mon Feb 8. Makes for a long weekend (Feb 6-8).

Family Day at SEAPARC. Free admission all day. Mon Feb 8. Skate 12-3 pm, Swim 12-6 pm. www.seaparc.ca

BC Throne Speech. Tues Feb 9 and Legislature in full session Wed Feb 10.

District of Sooke Regular Council Meeting. Tues Feb 9. 7pm. Council Chambers. www.sooke.ca

Education Committee of the Whole Sooke School District 62 (SD62) Tues Feb 9. 7pm. This month at Royal Bay Secondary in Colwood. www.sd62.bc.ca

District of Sooke Public Forum about John Phillips Memorial Park. Wed Feb 10. Ask questions of the Parks & Trails Committee from 4 to 7pm in the lobby at SEAPARC Leisure Complex, 2168 Phillips Road. See ad on pg 1 & details below on pg 4.

Chinese New Year is on Feb 8 this year. Year of the Monkey.

West Shore Voice News - ad deadline Wed Feb 10 for the Feb 12th Valentine's edition. Fee-based service organizations get 13% off. Non-profits get a whopping 21% discount. Call/text: 250-217-5821 www.sookevoicenews.com/advertising.htm

Awareness Film Night presents *Pernaculture* night, Wed Feb 10 with film *Inhabit*. Panel discussion. Admission by donation. www.awarenessfilmnight.ca

Sooke Family Resource Centre THRIFT SHOP Grand Opening. Sat Feb 13 11am to 2pm at 6715 West Coast Road.

Sooke Folk Music Society concert: Lynn Miles. 8pm Sat Feb 13 at Holy Trinity, 1962 Murray Rd. Tix in advance \$15 at Shoppers, \$20 at door. www.sookefolkmusicsociety.com

Valentine's Day. Sun Feb 14.

Blood Donor Clinic. Mon Feb 15 at Sooke Legion. 11:30am-6:30pm. Appointments 1-888-236-6283 www.blood.ca

SD62 Adademies (Gr6-8) for Sept 2016. Online registration starts 6am Wed Feb 17. https://registration.sd62.bc.ca/apps/academy

District of Sooke Community Centre Advisory Committee. Thurs Feb 18. 10am. www.sooke.ca

Non-Instructional Day in SD62. Fri Feb 19

Transition Sooke AGM. Fri Feb 19 7pm at Harbourside on Horne Rd. www.transitionsooke.org

RAMSAR Bottle Drive. Sat Feb 20 alongside Sooke Rd at Phillips Rd (near Sooke Welcome sign).

Sooke Folk Music coffee house concert. Sat Feb 20. 7:30pm at Holy Trinity, 1962 Murray Rd. Local performers on stage. Silent art auction. \$10 at door.

District of Sooke Committee of the Whole. Mon Feb 22. 6pm. Council Chambers. www.sooke.ca

District of Sooke Regular Council Meeting. Mon Feb 22. 7pm. Council Chambers. www.sooke.ca

District of Sooke Program for the Arts (SPA) Committee. Wed Feb 24. 9:30am. www.sooke.ca

McKenzie Interchange open house. Wed Feb 24. 3:30-7:30pm. http://engage.gov.bc.ca/mckenzieinterchange

Sooke Region Tourism Assoc (SRTA) AGM. Mon Feb 29. 7pm at Sooke Harbour House

Appetite for Art. Sat Mar 5. 7pm, Prestige Oceanfront Resort Food/Art Fundraiser. \$20 at the door.

Women in Business. Sun Mar 6. International Women's Day afternoon tea by Sooke Region Chamber. Tickets \$35. www.sookeregionchamber.com

'Chilliwack' rock concert. Sat Mar 12. 7pm at EMCS in Sooke. Tx \$40 at Shoppers, The Stick, EMCS.

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Sooke: thefts of opportunity up

SOOKE RCMP ~ 250-642-5241



Make sure your car door is locked, to help prevent thefts.

● **Thefts from vehicles** in the Sooke area have increased in the past few months, says Sooke RCMP Detachment Commander Jeff McArthur.

The tally is 37 reported thefts from vehicles since Dec 1, 2015.

Also 31 other types of thefts have been reported for that same two-month period. "These are mostly thefts of opportunity," says McArthur. Not just from vehicles, but also from accessible yard areas from which bicycles, tools and even garden ornaments have been stolen.

The thefts were not confined to one specific area but occurred through various residential areas around the Sooke core. Even a school text book and some notes were stolen, showing an increasing range of items being taken.

Sooke RCMP reminds the community to not leave valuable items in vehicles. Any suspicious activity should be reported to the local detachment at 250-642-5241, says McArthur. **WSV**



Garden ornaments are among the missing items taken when yards have been accessible.

Sooke RCMP calls for service tally steady over the last three years

SOOKE VOICE NEWS

● **The Sooke RCMP statistical report** to Council on January 25 showed a total of 4,361 calls for service in 2015, somewhat on par with the two previous years: 4,241 calls in 2014 and 4,425 calls in 2013.

Sooke RCMP Detachment Commander S/Sgt Jeff McArthur makes a report to Council in person once every three months.

Of the 4,361 calls for service in 2015, 152 of those were for mischief/property damage under \$5,000, and 143 were categorized under the Mental Health Act. Thefts under \$5,000 saw a tally of 125 calls, with thefts of under \$5,000 from vehicles showed a 94 tally.

There were 94 assaults in 2015 within the Sooke RCMP detachment area which stretches from East Sooke to Port Renfrew. Of those occurrences, nine were categorized as sexual assaults.

There were 31 break-and-enter events at residences, and 25 B&E's at businesses in 2015.

In 2015 there 183 non-injury motor vehicle incidents, but 64 with injuries and one fatality.

Violations for failing to wear a seatbelt tallied to 17. Driving without a driver's licence, well there were 32 instances of those. Driving without insurance was tallied in 24 instances. Fifty-seven vehicles were impounded.

Nine impaired drivers blew a blood alcohol level of over .08 last year. There were 14 Liquor Act Charges.

WSV



S/Sgt Jeff McArthur in red serge at a community event in Dec 2015

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What to do about that park!

Public Input

● The District of Sooke Parks & Trails Advisory Committee met on Tuesday afternoon February 2 in Council Chambers.

The agenda included a discussion about the upcoming community consultation forum about **John Phillips Memorial Park** - the forum date is Wednesday, February 10 from 4 to 7 pm in the SEAPARC lobby.

Boggy marsh it can be, John Phillips Memorial Park is presently used mostly for dog-walking and sometimes the occasional summer event. Nearby residents enjoy the sound of tree frogs in spring and summer.

But it could be more, for a broader range of Sooke residents and visitors. Your opinion counts! A casual public info forum in the lobby at SEAPARC on **Wednesday, February 10** (4pm to 7pm) is your chance to give early-stage input. The forum is being hosted by the District of Sooke Parks & Trails Advisory Committee. The long-neglected park was last discussed with documented public input during 2005-2008.

Features for consideration in the long-neglected park could spread over a few years of budgeting. The list includes:

Proposed Features for John Phillips Memorial Park

Wed Feb 10 at SEAPARC 4 to 7pm

Feature	Setup	Annual Mtce
Water Park	\$100,000 to \$350,000	\$10K-\$35K
Public washroom	\$35,000 to \$120,000	\$10K
Multi-Use area & washroom	\$450,000 +/-	\$20K-\$45K + \$7,500
Putting Green	\$25,000	\$2,500+
Public Access to pond edge	\$20,000	\$2,000
Jogging Trail	\$30,000 to \$45,000	\$1.5-\$2.5K
Trim Trail	\$10,000	\$1,000
Picnic Tables	\$25,000	\$500
Gazebo	\$35,000	\$1,500
Picnic Shelter	\$50,000	\$3,000
Boardwalk over pond with wedding bridge	\$100,000	not provided
Dog Run	\$25,000	\$2,000

Source: Parks & Trails Advisory Committee agenda: February 2, 2016

Water park, public washroom, multi-use community area, putting green, public access to pond edge, jogging trail loop, trim trail apparatus, picnic tables, gazebo, covered picnic shelter, boardwalk over the pond with wedding bridge, and a dog run.

District of Sooke Councilor Brenda Parkinson sits on the Parks & Trails Advisory Committee. Of the list the committee selected (without Parkinson present), she would like to see a children's water park, a public washroom, a putting green, and a jogging trail. She's in favour of a gazebo: "I would like to see a structure erected for cover when there are events or markets in the park in case of rain and maybe to keep out of the sun," says Parkinson. **WSV**



Lynn Miles in concert

Saturday February 13 ~ 8 pm Holy Trinity Church, 1962 Murray Rd
Tickets \$15 at Shoppers Drug Mart (Sooke), or \$20 at door

www.sookefolkmusicsociety.com



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