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News for inquisitive readers on Vancouver Island since 2011 News digest weekly on Fridays (print & online) by Brookline Publishing House Inc

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Friday, February 12, 2016 Sooke, BC

100-year delay for Einstein

Mary P. Brooke, B.Sc. WEST SHORE VOICE NEWS

“Einstein would have been very happy today,” is how international science communicator Bob McDonald (on CBC-TV) concluded his explanation of the February 11 announcement by the Advanced Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (Advanced LIGO) team in the USA, that gravitational waves have been detected (heard) at last.

The existence of gravitational waves – now heard as sound – was predicted by Albert Einstein 100 years ago using mathematical calculations.

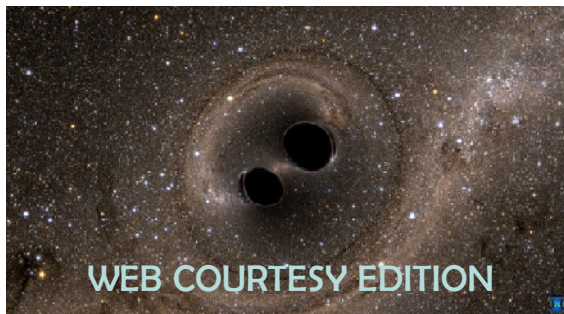
Advanced LIGO has at last detected gravitational waves, “the enigmatic and elusive ripples in the fabric of spacetime that Albert Einstein first predicted in 1915, in his theory of general relativity,” says online science magazine *Gizmag.com*.

Essentially, when things move – and particularly if they collide – they produce a reaction. This is obvious on our planet. But Einstein said the vibrations of such impacts in outer space would essentially ‘bend’ space itself.

For Star Trek fans out

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Two black holes collided, and the sound vibration of that impact finally reached Earth in 2015.

there, this gives a little more clout to the possibility of warp-speed travel. Someday.

The announcement by LIGO Caltech (California Institute of Technology) included an audio file in which a ‘chirp’ or ping could be heard. That one simple sound was produced about 1.3 billion years ago, resulting from the collision of two black holes (creating one larger black hole).

“Gravitational waves carry information about their dramatic origins and about the nature of gravity that cannot otherwise be obtained,” LIGO Caltech said in a news release February 11. “Physicists have concluded that the detected gravitational waves were produced during the final fraction of a second of the merger of two black holes to produce a single, more massive spinning black hole. This collision of two black holes had been predicted but never observed.”

Scientists now feel that they will be able to eventually detect the original ‘big bang’ that created the universe as we presently know of it.

First detected on September 14, 2015 at 5:51 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time, the gravitational waves were recorded by both of the twin Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO) detectors, located in Livingston, Louisiana and in Hanford, Washington. **WSV**

MSP petition reaches BC Legislature

WEST SHORE VOICE NEWS WEB COURTESY EDITION

Public support continues to grow for a movement to change the process by which British Columbians pay for health care. Over 66,000 signatures now appear on a petition requesting reform of the BC Medical Services Plan (MSP).

When presented in the BC Legislature on February 11, the petition had 65,721 signatures. It was presented by Green Party MLA, Andrew Weaver (Oak Bay-Gordon Head), even though it's been the BC-NDP who have postured for years about the hardship of MSP premiums on working families.

As Leader of the BC Green Party, Weaver called on the BC government to eliminate BC's regressive ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to collecting MSP premiums.

“When we continue to rely on regressive taxes like this, it is easy to see why BC has one of the highest poverty rates in



Andrew Weaver, MLA, Leader of the BC Green Party

BC: Monthly MSP Premiums (2016)

Adjusted Net Income	One Person	Family of 2	Family of 3+
\$0 - \$22,000	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$22,001 - \$24,000	\$12.80	\$23.20	\$25.60
\$24,001 - \$26,000	\$25.60	\$46.40	\$51.20
\$26,001 - \$28,000	\$38.40	\$69.60	\$76.80
\$28,001 - \$30,000	\$51.20	\$92.80	\$102.40
Over \$30,000	\$75.00	\$136.00	\$150.00

http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/msp/bc-residents/premiums

Canada,” says Weaver. “It’s a choice to favour regressive over progressive taxation. It’s a choice to put the interests of the wealthy over the interests of British Columbians with low and fixed incomes, and ahead of small businesses. I think it’s time we made a different choice,” said Weaver on the BC Green Party website.

BC residents who report a net income of over \$30,000 are required to pay the same amount, which puts a significantly higher burden on modest-income

CPP benefits up \$330 in 2016

WEST SHORE VOICE NEWS

At the start of 2016, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) benefits increased by 1.2% for those already receiving that support. For 2016, the maximum CPP retirement benefit for new recipients age 65 is \$1,092.50 per month, an increase of \$330 for the year compared to the 2015 maximum CPP retirement benefit.

CPP benefits are revised once a year, in January, based on changes over the 12-month period (November 2014 to October 2015) in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is the cost-of-living measure used by Statistics Canada.

The Old Age Security (OAS) benefits program in Canada is funded through general tax revenues and provides a basic monthly income for Canadian seniors.

For 2014-2015, \$44.1 billion in OAS benefits was provided to 5.6 million individuals.

OAS benefits consist of the basic OAS pension, the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) and the

Options for John Phillips Memorial Park in Sooke

SOOKE VOICE NEWS

Attendance was steady to view a series of poster-board displays about John Phillips Memorial Park (JPMP) on Wednesday, Feb 10 at SEAPARC Leisure Complex.

People indicated their preferences from among various features proposed for the underdeveloped JPMP on Otter Point Road near Sooke municipal hall. Options included water park, public washroom, putting green, jogging trail, dog run, picnic shelter, and more.

Members of the District of Sooke Parks & Trails Advisory Committee were in attendance (including committee chair John Boquist, Debbie Clarkston, and Mark Ziegler), as well as Sooke environment staffer Laura Hooper, and Acting Mayor Kerrie Reay.

The features put forward by

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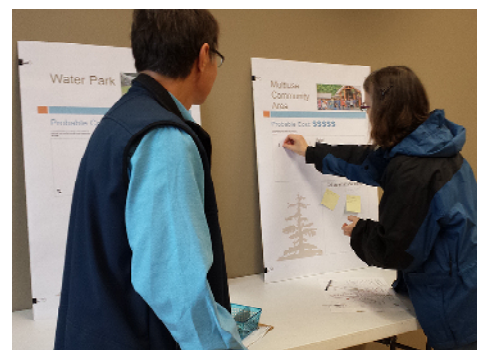
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Allowances. OAS increased by 0.1% for the first quarter of 2016 (Jan-Mar). As of January 1, 2016, the basic OAS pension increased from \$569.95 to \$570.52 per month.

OAS benefits are also based on the CPI, but are reviewed quarterly (in January, April, July and October) and revised as required to reflect increases in the cost of living as measured by the CPI.

Although OAS and CPP benefits are not indexed at the same time, they are both adjusted with the cost of living over a given year, says Employment and Social Development Canada. “The CPP is a stable, well-designed plan that is portable from province to province.” **WSV**



Mark Ziegler of the Parks & Trails Advisory Committee (left), watches as preferences are indicated. the Parks and Trails committee were a full list dusted off from a 2009 planning exercise, says Boquist.

Several of the proposed improvements would make the park more suitable for public events and celebrations, particularly a bridge over the pond, a gazebo, benches and public washroom.

Forum findings will be assembled by the committee, and eventually reach Sooke council as a report with recommendations. See page 4 of the Feb 5, 2016 edition of *West Shore/Sooke Voice News* for a full list of features, including proposed installation and maintenance costs. **WSV**

families. In other provinces the health tax system is ‘automatic’ through the general taxation process. In Ontario there is a sliding scale (contributions by those with taxable income over \$20,000 a year, increasing to a top point at about \$200,000). In Manitoba and Saskatchewan a fully socialized model sees that all residents are covered. See detailed coverage about MSP premiums and oppressive collection action in the Jan 22, 2016 edition of *West Shore/Sooke Voice News*.

The petition to reform MSP was created by small business owner Michelle Coulter of Ucluelet, BC. The petition first appeared online in Dec 2015 at <https://www.change.org/p/christyclarkbc-abolish-msp-premiums-in-bc> without reference to any political party.

BC Premier Christy Clark said last month that “one of the reasons BC has an MSP system – and it’s had it for a long, long time – is to remind people that health care isn’t a free service”. Therein lies a philosophical implication that people will unnecessarily take advantage of health care services. That belief may no longer be applicable to today’s modern population which has a heightened awareness of health prevention and health costs. **WSV**

EDITORIAL

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

The night the table moved

Those of you who attend Sooke Council meetings will know there is a table reserved for media professionals. Under the new CAO Teresa Sullivan, the media table was relocated this week to a different side of the room.

Why does this matter? Well, for starters, there is now a better view of the presentation screen when guests or staff have PowerPoint presentations to deliver. But more than that, the media is more visible to Council – gotta keep an eye on those editors! The angle is not so great for subtly taking photos of most of Council or indeed any speakers (the public podium has been replaced with a seat at a long table facing Council). There's the usual surface space upon which to spread out agenda, notes, sound-recorder, camera(s) and an extra pen.

What's important is that the municipality finally seems to be solidifying their recognition of the role of media within the overall process of responsiveness to the citizenry. Media is one part of a democratic counterpoint: a) jurisdictional governance; b) public/community/taxpayers; and c) journalism observations and information to the public based on the principle of free speech and helping to inform public opinion based on context and timeline.

Meanwhile, it was intensely disappointing that one of the first public comments made at the new podium setup was nothing short of a verbal strip-down of a member of the media (apparently not this one, according to CAO Sullivan the next day). The Sooke Lions representative who made the comments may have had some valid points but essentially attacked the fundamental role of free speech. Without identifying the media outlet or the writer, the comments were entirely disrespectful of the role of dissemination of information for public consumption (through a 'blog' he said), even if the published information had been wrong or not well-researched.

Sullivan told *West Shore/Sooke Voice News* the next day that she knew the comments were coming to the public portion of the meeting. So, unfortunately the 'public whipping' was in a sense condoned by the District as well, or at the very least not discouraged. Think we're overboard with this line of comment? Listen for yourself, in the webcast archives at www.sooke.ca (Regular Council Meeting, Feb 9, 2016, approximately 35 minutes from the start).

A more traditional and straightforward relationship between media, public and District in the months and years ahead will serve all parties for the better. Reputable news publications have a Letters section for public comment. Perhaps there was no comment/reply function in the blog that the complainant was referring to.

Staff updates at the District of Sooke

The District of Sooke officially moved up former Corporate Assistant Tina Hansen into the position of Acting Corporate Officer (CO) as announced at their February 9, 2016 council meeting.

Please note, this is a correction from last week, when it was stated that new employee Gabryel Joseph would be the CO. Gabryel Joseph is in fact the new Director of Corporate Services, a new position at the municipality.

The previous Corporate Officer was Bonnie Sprinkling who held that position for the last few years (she was with the District for over 16 years).

The new Director of Development Services (a combination of the previous planning and engineering departments) is Rob Howat, who has served as an Approving Officer for Sooke since September 2013.

Brent Blackhall has become the Director of Finance (previously Deputy Director of Finance).

The "new corporate leadership team" as announced February 9 set to rest some of the speculation about staffing and District operations that had been swirling around Sooke in recent weeks.

The team is listed as:

- Teresa Sullivan, Chief Administrative Officer
- Rob Howat, Director of Development Services
- Brent Blackhall, Director of Finance
- Gabryel Joseph, Director of Corporate Services
- Steve Sorensen, Fire Chief
- Tina Hansen, Acting Corporate Officer

Since being hired by Council in December 2015, CAO Teresa Sullivan has set up her staff team.

A former Colwood Councillor and career media specialist, Sullivan sees her role as "an exciting opportunity help Mayor and Council implement their Strategic Plan and to build strong community relationships and shape the future of Sooke." *WSV*

Teresa Sullivan
CAO,
District of Sooke



Gabryel Joseph
Director of Corporate
Services, District of Sooke



Tina Hansen
Acting Corporate Officer,
District of Sooke



Mary P Brooke,
B.Sc., Cert PR
Editor & Publisher
Sooke Voice News
& *West Shore
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OPEN MON-Sat (open late on Wed)**

Travel News

Ferry fare discounts in March

BC Ferries is offering a 30% fare discount on some sailings during March 10 to 29 (Mon-Thurs & Sat on south coast routes). On north coast routes the discount will apply on every sailing March 10 to 29. Space on the select promotional sailings is on a first-come, first-served basis. The off-peak pricing promotion will *not* apply on Thursday, March 24 ahead of the Easter long weekend, and not on Easter Monday, March 28.

www.bcferrys.com

Sooke Economy

Collaboration in Sooke

An open invitation from the Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce (SRCOC) to businesses, organizations and community leaders seeks collaboration at a meeting on February 18.

"Ideally, from the meeting we will come out of it with a shortlist of engaged people who want to work together to maximize our resources for the bet-



Kerry Cavers
President,
Sooke Region Chamber
of Commerce

West Shore Voice News

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West Shore Voice News

Regional economics: Sooke bows out

Sooke once again strikes out independently! In November and December 2015 there was a strong pitch from Councillor Rick Kasper and others on District of Sooke Council to see Sooke take part in the South Vancouver Island Regional Economic Development Association (SVIDEA). SVIDEA is a regional economic development venture launched out of Victoria and the West Shore. But Sooke Council on January 25 decided in-camera to not take part in the venture. The initial commitment would have been about \$10,000, with more funds due in 2016. According to Councillor Kasper after the February 9 Sooke Council meeting, there would have been a fee of \$10,000 required of each business to participate in the South Vancouver Island Economic Development Association board. Sooke Council considered that out of reach for most Sooke businesses, and leading to unbalanced representation in favour of other municipalities.

Councillor Bev Berger had been appointed by Sooke Council to sit on the board of the SVIDEA (each participating municipality sent one rep). Berger brought the new information (about costs for business membership in SVIDEA) back to Sooke council after attending the December 11 meeting.

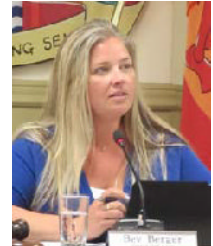
The in-camera revelation was the last item on the agenda at the February 9 Regular Council Meeting. Generally, these 'last bits' are not elaborated on at Council meetings, leaving the public to speculate. As it was, nothing was actually said on the public record. The actual reasons (as mentioned above), were learned by *Sooke Voice News* after the February 9 meeting.

Some opposition was made to the original proposal by Councillor Ebony Logins and others who saw that the uniqueness of the Sooke region would be squeezed by participation in a south island venture. However, employment opportunities 'don't stop at the border of municipalities', as Kasper explained at Council back in November.

The Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce service contract with the District of Sooke is up for renewal in the 2016 budget process. The Chamber has received \$28,500 from the District of Sooke each year for the past three years, significantly to provide economic development for all businesses in the Sooke area (not just their members). *WSV*



Councillor Rick Kasper



Councillor Bev Berger



Councillor Ebony Logins

Building the McKenzie Interchange: public info session #2

UPCOMING EVENT

WEST SHORE VOICE NEWS



WEB COURTESY EDITION

Mary P Brooke

The official announcement of the Hwy 1 / McKenzie Interchange project in July 2015 was well attended by VIPs, media and the public.

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).

At Sooke Council on February 9, Councillor Rick Kasper promoted the upcoming open house as something worthwhile for Sooke residents to check out.

WEB COURTESY EDITION

Feedback from the first public engagement in Fall 2015 includes these indicators:

How often do you travel through the intersection of Highway 1 & Admirals Road/McKenzie Avenue?

- 4 or more times per week 59%
- 1-3 times per week 30%
- Fewer than 3x per month 11%

How do you currently use the intersection of Highway 1 and Admirals Road/McKenzie Avenue?

- Car 97%
- Bike 34%
- Public Transit 17%
- Pedestrian (walking, wheelchair, electric scooter) 14%

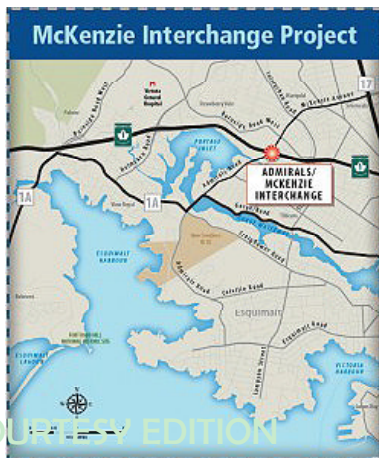
Top themes in the summary report include traffic flow at the interchange, the McKenzie/Burnside intersection, Cuthbert Holmes Park, consideration of transit, cycling and pedestrians, and support for options where the highway passes underneath McKenzie/Admirals. Technical and financial information is also being incorporated to further refine the interchange concepts.

The strongest theme in public comments was support for Option 2 – a partial cloverleaf

Project costs

HWY1 McKenzie/ Admirals INTERCHANGE Construction: Two-year \$85 million project starting toward the end of 2016.
FEDERAL: \$32.6 million BC: \$53 million

WESTSHORE PARKWAY EXTENSION Construction: Two-year \$22.5 million project starting toward the end of 2016.
FEDERAL: \$7.45 million BC: \$7.45 million
CITY OF LANGFORD: \$7.6 million



BC Government

WEST SHORE VOICE NEWS

structure with Hwy1 under McKenzie Admirals. The next most-supported design option was a diamond interchange with Hwy1 going under McKenzie/Admirals.

Apart from actual road design, the most frequent comment was to eliminate or reduce the number of traffic lights at the interchange.

The decades-long desire to improve highway access in and out of the west shore will finally come to fruition with the McKenzie Interchange. BC Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Todd Stone last week repeated a message that he delivered at the July 22, 2015 official announcement at the side of Hwy1 on a bright summer's day: that the McKenzie Interchange project is important to commuters, commercial drivers, transit users, cyclists and pedestrians.

The total project cost of the McKenzie/Admirals Interchange is \$85 million. Of that \$32.6 is federal money and \$53 is from the BC Government.

The new interchange – with a 2-year construction period starting around December 2016 – will certainly also boost the economic fluidity of the west shore, notably Langford and Sooke (particularly with also the Westshore Parkway extension going in at the same time).

Saanich will also benefit for the many commuters who head to UVic and Camosun College in that municipality.

As such, Langford Mayor Stew Young and Saanich Mayor Richard Atwell were in attendance at the July official announcement, as well as two Councillors from the District of Sooke: Rick Kasper and Kevin Pearson.

The summary report from the Fall 2015 public input (online, in consultations and at a public session) 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. **WSV**



Sooke Voice News

City of Langford Mayor Stew Young thanked BC Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure Todd Stone for the project green light.



Sooke Voice News

At the official announcement last summer (from left): Sooke Councillor Kevin Pearson; BC Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure Todd Stone; Sooke Councillor Rick Kasper; and Jordan Sturdy, MLA (then-Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure).

WEB COURTESY EDITION

Project benefits

- Travel time savings
- Reductions in idling & fuel consumption
- Improved transit facilities
- Improved safety for cyclists & pedestrians
- Better reliability
- Reductions in accident frequency/severity

Busy TransCanada (Hwy #1) traffic heading into Victoria on a bright summer morning, July 2015.

Sooke Voice News

More Early Years Centres to open in BC

WEST SHORE / SOOKE VOICE NEWS

Families in 21 more communities in BC will soon benefit from one-stop access to supports and services aimed at helping children learn, grow and thrive.

The new centres will bring the total to 47 BC Early Years Centres throughout the province. **WEB COURTESY EDITION**

Two of the new centres will be on Vancouver Island -- one in Alberni (SD70) and the other in the Victoria-area (Saanich Neighbourhood Place). There are already three centres operating on Vancouver Island: Comox Valley Early Years Centre in Courtenay; Peninsula Early Years Centre in Saanichton; and the Sooke Westshore Early Years Centre (with a satellite centre in Colwood).

"Evidence suggests that 90% of brain development occurs in the first six years of a child's life, and economists have noted that the benefits of investment in the early years far outweigh the costs," says the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development.

The BC early years strategy includes the creation of over 2,000 new licensed child-care spaces by March 2016 with the goal of opening 13,000 new spaces by 2020. This builds on the approximately 111,000 spaces that government currently supports throughout BC.

BC Early Years Centres:
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early_years/centres.htmStrategy_web.pdf **WSV**

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RRSP & TFSA a good investment mix

It's RRSP season, and the TD Canada Trust branch in Sooke is happy to help anyone start or revise their retirement savings through RRSPs and TFSA's.

The Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA) is not specifically designed as a retirement savings account (savings can be for anything you like), but its flexibility makes for an excellent complement to a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP).

"If you have already maximized your RRSP contributions, then a TFSA is another option for you to save more money and get the benefits of tax-free growth and withdrawals," says Mark Doberstein, branch manager, at TD Canada Trust Sooke.

"There is no maximum age limit on a TFSA (but you must be at least 18 years of age to open one). You can continue contributing to your TFSA and enjoy tax-free growth and withdrawals throughout your retirement," says Doberstein, who moved to Sooke in December to become the new branch manager for TD Sooke.

Ideally, your retirement plan would include both an RRSP and a TFSA. If you're just getting started, your RRSP contribution can be even as low as \$25 per month. It really adds up. Contributions to RRSP's are tax deductible, whereas TFSA contributions are not tax deductible (but can be withdrawn at any time). Funds in both RRSPs and TFSA's can be carried forward to future tax years.

The TD Canada Trust Sooke branch at 6770 Sooke Road is open 7 days a week. Staff at the branch are available to do a free no obligation review of your retirement investment plan. Info: 250-642-1230. **WSV**

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

Valentine's at Yesaki's at Prestige Oceanfront Resort. Sushi Lover's Platter \$45. Sat Feb 13.

Valentine's Day. Sun Feb 14.

Valentine's at West Coast Grill.

4-course special evening menu \$55, Sat Feb 13 & Sun Feb 14. Classical acoustic guitarist live on Sunday night.

Kemp Lake Cafe. Sun Feb 14. Singer-songwriter Taylor Caspersen performance. 1pm.

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

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

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District of Sooke Community Centre Advisory Committee. Thurs Feb 18. 10am. www.sooke.ca
Community & Business Collaboration Meeting. Thurs Feb 18. (by RSVP). 2 to 4pm. www.sookeregionchamber.ca

Non-Instructional Day in SD62. Fri Feb 19
Transition Sooke AGM. Fri Feb 19 7pm at Harbourside on Home 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 fundraiser. Sat Feb 20. 7:30pm Holy Trinity, 1962 Murray Rd. Local performers. 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 at 753 Burnside Rd W in Saanich. <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/mckenzieinterchange>

Seedy Saturday & Sooke Fall Fair. Sat Feb 27. 10am to 3pm at Sooke Community Hall. Workshops, speakers. Buy seeds and products. Food downstairs. www.sookefoodchi.ca & www.sookefallfair.ca

Sooke Therapeutic Yoga Society. Exploring near-death-experience. Sat Feb 27. 2-4pm. 6750 West Coast Rd. \$15. Register: 250-642-9642 www.sookeyoga.com

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

Cosmetics Gala at Shoppers Drug Mart. Sat Mar 5. A fundraiser to help support BC Cancer Foundation's mobile mammogram service vans. More tba

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

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WEB COURTESY EDITION

Women in Business. Sun Mar 6. International Women's Day afternoon tea by Sooke Chamber. \$35.

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

Sooke School District SD62 - Spring Break (2 weeks plus Easter Weekend). Students out of school Sat Mar 12 through Tues Mar 29 inclusive. Back to School March 30.

Daylight Savings Time - clocks forward one hour at 2:00 am on Sun Mar 13.

Easter Weekend. Good Friday Mar 25, Sat-Sun Mar 26-27, Easter Monday Mar 28.

SEAPARC referendum ~ permission to borrow funds for golf course. Vote at SEAPARC Sat Apr 30. See details in January 15 WSV (pg 1) and February 5 WSV (pg 2); www.sookevoiceneews.com/archives.htm

Sooke Rotary Spring Fair & Auction at SEAPARC. Sat Apr 30. www.sookerotary.com

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Blood donors to wait 3 weeks after travel abroad

As of February 5, anyone who has travelled outside of Canada, the continental USA and Europe is temporarily ineligible to give blood in Canada for three weeks, due to concerns about the Zika virus entering the Canadian blood supply, says Canadian Blood Services. The next blood donor clinic in Sooke is on Mon Feb 15 (11:30am to 6:30 pm, at the Sooke Legion) and then not again until Mon April 11. The next clinic in Colwood is on Mon March 21 (12-7pm, Church of the Advent, 510 Mount View Ave).

The 21-day waiting period is to "mitigate the risk of the Zika virus entering the Canadian blood supply", and also applies to cord blood and stem cell donors who have travelled to affected areas.

The mosquito that carries the Zika virus does not live in Canada due to our colder climate. The ineligibility period will reduce the number of donors available to donate in the coming months. "We are therefore urging Canadians to donate before they travel, to help make up for the shortfall," says Robin Fleming who coordinates for Canadian Blood Services in the Sooke area. www.blood.ca WSV



Sooke Rotary gearing up for spring fair

Sooke Rotary is gearing up for another active spring fundraising season. On February 24, Rotarian Jeannette Wilford will give a pep talk about getting donors for this year's annual spring fair. The group's largest fundraiser is the annual Sooke Rotary Auction & Spring Fair which is coming up April 30 (at SEAPARC arena). The fair offers an opportunity for a community gathering and a business showcase. About 2,000 people attend the 10am to 8pm event. Silent and live auctions generate funds for the many Sooke Rotary programs, grants and sponsorships.

Revenues generated by the 2015 fair were "about the same as last year, maybe up slightly - on target, for which we are immensely grateful," says Sooke Rotary public relations rep, John Bridal.

Meanwhile, guest speakers at Sooke Rotary weekly lunch meetings held in the upstairs lunch room at Village Foods include Sooke RCMP Detachment Commander Jeff McArthur (February 10); Stephanie Croft of Sooke Literacy Outreach (March 9); and Alexander Kovalchuk giving a journalistic account of Globalization vs International (March 16). WSV



Self-sustaining Sooke Folk Music Society art auction

A silent auction of local art will be held at the Sooke Folk Music Society (SFMS)'s monthly coffee house on Saturday, Feb 20 (7:30 pm, Holy Trinity, 1962 Murray Rd). SFMS president Dave Gallant says the organization does not seek grants, but is self-sustaining from ticket sales and fundraisers. WSV

REFUGEE FAMILY Refugee fundraising underway

BUYING A HOUSE New down-payment rules

Valentine's musings

At Valentine's, we can think of February as the love month that will renew energy and bring us closer to spring. The hearts and flowers are a positive message to love one another.

This follows the aftermath of the sometimes difficult Christmas season. The traditional approach to Christmas of sharing togetherness, food, conversation and hopefully unconditional love is a universal dream. Blessed are the extended families with grandparents and great-grandparents in their lives, to help supply that support. Wisdom, knowledge and experience are the balance between generations. Memories are shaped.

Behaviours are modeled by the people in our lives. Each generation has the opportunity to change the sadness pattern to a more joyful attitude. There is a wealth of books to help understand every human dysfunction, as well as professionals who are trained to supply the tools required to create change. There is no shame in learning how to live happier.

Linda Ellis wrote a poem in 1996 called *The Dash* (between the dates on a tomb stone) that is the unique story of a lifetime. We each have the power to make our "dash" a life that served the purpose with kindness. WSV

A presentation was made to Sooke Council on Tuesday night, Feb 9, about the fundraising that is underway to bring a refugee family to Sooke. Sid Jorna of the Team Sooke/Juan de Fuca refugee sponsorship committee said a sponsored refugee family would be cleared by the United Nations and would not be asylum-seekers. The fundraising target of \$50,000 has achieved about \$20,000 so far. A new family would need to be supported in full for one year. Team Sooke did not ask Sooke Council for funds, but that Council "help this be an accepting community... to make this happen". WSV

As of February 15, 2016 the required down-payment to purchase a home in Canada is now 5% on the first \$500,000 and 10% on any amount over that up to \$1 million. If a closing occurs prior to July 1, 2016 a purchase can still be completed with only 5% down. House price over \$1 million? Those downpayments now need to be 20%. WSV

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Valentine's at the hotel in Sooke

The in-house restaurant at the Prestige Oceanfront Resort is doing "a romantic 4-course menu" for \$55 alongside their regular menu on Saturday and Sunday evenings, February 13 and 14.

"We have a classical acoustic guitarist playing live on Sunday night," says West Coast Grill general manager Dan Houle.

Yesaki's sushi bar in the hotel lobby area will be offering a \$45 'Sushi Lover's platter' on Saturday night, February 13. WSV



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