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West Shore Voice News

4 pages this issue

The Voice Since 2011

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WEB COURTESY EDITION

Week #296 of The Voice

Colour print edition on newsstand at Shoppers Drug Mart Sooke

Pulling it all together on 'this west side' of the island: people, business, politics, health, education & community.

ROYAL TOUR in VICTORIA
 September 24 to October 1

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Friday, September 23, 2016

West side of Vancouver Island v3

Locally-sourced menu items for the Royal visit

by Mary P Brooke, West Shore Voice News

The preparation of meals for the visit by Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and their two children was organized earlier this week at Government House.

William and Kate, and their young children Prince George, 3 and Princess Charlotte, 16 months, will be staying at Government House on Rockland Avenue in Victoria, September 24 to October 1.

This week, a media tour of the reception areas, main floor dining room, and food preparation areas at Government House revealed a steady hum of activity.

Executive Chef Aleks Kornat was excited to explain that he's been sourcing out local food products for the royal family's meals, including produce, proteins and wine. Asked if he was nervous, Kornat said: "We're getting ready. Once we're ready, we'll be in full swing."

Kornat has been at Government House for about two years. He has about 10 staff to help with the food preparation for the eight-day royal stay. Meals, snacks and beverages are being planned.

"It's a fantastic opportunity to showcase the foods of BC," the head chef said. "It will be a full-on menu, specific to our region." Government House has its own orchard, vegetable garden and beehive, from which products will be drawn. Menus have been provided ahead of time to the royal couple, so they can make selections for themselves and their children, Kornat explained.

Meanwhile, Director of Operations Thandi Williams explained that she and her staff have been arranging to have toys and activities on hand for the young prince and princess. Even rain gear has been arranged for the children, as required.

The young prince and princess will be attended during the full stay at Government House by the royal couple's own child care personnel, says Williams. William and Kate will be making daytrips to designated spots in BC and Yukon, returning to Government House to be with their children.

A children's party will be held on September 29, to which military families with young children have been invited. "There will be special things in and around the grounds and in the house for the children to play with," says Williams.

An evening reception on Monday,



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Local produce, proteins, honey and wine have been sourced for the preparation of meals for the royals, by Government House Executive Chef Aleks Kornat.

September 26 at Government House will feature a guest list compiled by both Lieutenant Government Judith Guichon and BC Premier Christy Clark. Notable British Columbians – including recipients of the Order of BC – are invited. "It will be a comfortable size, a stand-up reception of about 300 people," says Williams.

Accommodation for the royals at Government House has been set up from among a total of 13 bedrooms. Some office space is also available for quick adaptation for more space, as required.

"This is a family that is well-traveled and worldly," stated Williams, who has taken this into account while organizing the eight-day stay. "They will be able to move freely and we hope they will feel at home," she told media.

Treats in the rooms will feature BC and Canadian favourites including Rogers and Purdy's chocolates and some local beverages including beer.

The grounds of Government House – normally open to the public, will be closed from the evening of September 23 through to October 2. Additional security is being handled by the RCMP.

Getting rid of that ivy

West Shore Voice News

If removing ivy from trees sounds like fun to you, then this Sunday, September 25 at Ed Macgregor Park you'll have an opportunity to do just that!

An invasive species cleanup will take place from 9 am to 3 pm. Just come as you are (pruners and gloves provided), or bring equipment and gloves that you're comfortable with. You can help out for an hour or two, or the full six hours.

Long pants, long sleeves and good footwear are recommended as the ground is uneven.

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The event is being organized by the Juan de Fuca Community Trails Society (JdFCTS) and the Greater Victoria Green Team, with some sponsorship support from the District of Sooke.

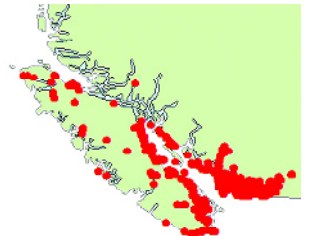
The Juan de Fuca Trails Society has organized invasive species cleanup events for years, at various locations. Working with the District of Sooke, JdFCTS has removed broom from Whiffin Spit for 10 years and will continue to do so as the seed bank will remain in the soil for decades, explains Rosemary Jorna, one of the JdFCTS organizers.

"Once an invasive species is well established it becomes a multi-year problem as the roots and seeds can re-establish themselves. In much of Ed Macgregor Park, the ivy has smothered everything on the forest floor and has grown up into the tree canopy weakening the tree, competing for light and water," says Jorna. "Working with the District of Sooke and joined by the Greater Victoria Green Team we will make a start," she says. Ivy grows year round and can survive low light and low water conditions. This presents a challenge to native forest growth.

Organizers are also looking for a team of 4 to 6 people for the heavier task of removing some Daphne overgrowth, as this plant is toxic and will require special care. www.jdftrails.ca



Ivy on trees in Ed Macgregor Park.



English Ivy is an invasive species in various areas of Vancouver Island and the BC lower mainland. [Map: www.bcinvatives.ca]

Tricky driving

Roadwork continued on Hwy 14 (Sooke Rd) at the new West Shore Parkway intersection this week. Medians and directional signage were installed. Many traffic cones are still in place. No lines to mark the lanes yet, so driving can be a bit challenging, especially at night.



Enjoy an evening swim on behalf of TELUS.



Join us at the SEAPARC Leisure Complex on Friday, September 30, from 5:00 to 7:00 PM

FREE Swim sponsored by TELUS.

We will be onsite to answer your questions about the TELUS PureFibre™ network.

telus.com/sooke



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EDITORIAL

Editorials aim to explore broader issues of concern to communities, economy and society as a whole.

Monarchist or not, this is a big deal

● **A crowd of 10,000 is expected** to blanket the front lawn of the BC Legislature in Victoria on Saturday, September 24. The big draw? The official arrival of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (aka Will and Kate). They will be greeted by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, BC Lieutenant Governor Judith Guichon, and BC Premier Christy Clark. The last speaker on the schedule is the Duke (Prince William) himself.

Monarchy fan or not, this is a big deal. Of all the locations in Canada that the young royal couple could have chosen in response to Trudeau's invitation to visit Canada, they picked the most British-flavoured of cities as their home base. From their home-awa-from-home at Government House in Victoria, they will take day trips to Vancouver, Kelowna, Haida Gwaii and Bella Bella during their eight-day stay (Sept 24 to Oct 1).

A royal tour puts any visited region into the spotlight. A great deal of destination marketing is being done around this visit. However, the biggest focus for Will and Kate seems to be getting a closeup view of social problems (visiting centres that focus on families, teen pregnancies, and mental health). They will learn more about BC's First Nations peoples and issues. And they will take in some of the grandest natural beauty of this province – forest, mountain and sea.

The week at Government House for young Prince George and baby Princess Charlotte will surely produce memories for their parents, and for the two youngest royals through photos of their playtime here, in the years to come.



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

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BC News

Breaking news:
www.westshorevoiceneews.com

Internet Highway expanded to more homes & schools on Vancouver Island

● **Completion of a new fibre-optic cable along Highway 4 from Port Alberni to the Ucluelet junction** is being celebrated by the BC government (Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services), TELUS, BC Hydro and All Nations Trust Company (ANTCO).

The new connection has dramatically improved Internet and wireless capacity, alleviating congestion for many communities on the island's west coast.

About \$12 million was invested to enable Internet service providers to offer upgraded high-speed Internet access while connecting many homes, schools, health care facilities and businesses for the first time. The latest technology applications and other web-based services such as video conferencing, e-learning and online banking will now be possible in the region. First Nations communities with health centres will also have the necessary bandwidth to partner with the First Nations Health Authority to run cutting-edge telehealth technologies, including remote consultations with medical specialists.

The fibre-optic cable was installed by TELUS. The large telecom also contributed financially in collaboration with the project's partners.

The new fibre-optic line replaces over 360 service poles. More than 95% of British Columbians have access to high-speed Internet. The BC government says it has committed to ensuring that 100% of British Columbians have high-speed Internet access by the end of 2021.

Through the #BCTECH Strategy, government's goal is to see every British Columbian with access to high-speed Internet by end of 2021, it was stated in a news release this week. The Province is working with other levels of government and the private sector to make this happen.

The #BCTECH Strategy is a key component of the BC Jobs Plan to support the growth of BC's technology sector and strengthen BC's diverse innovation economy. The multi-year strategy includes a \$100-million BC Tech Fund and initiatives to increase talent development and market access for tech companies that will drive innovation and productivity throughout the province.

In partnership with the BC Innovation Council, the province is hosting BC's second #BCTECH Summit, March 14-15, 2017. <http://bctechsummit.ca> **WSV**

BC to buy existing housing units & build more

● **This week, the Government of BC announced what it is calling its largest housing investment** in the province's history. They are committing \$500 million to create more affordable rental housing. It's the largest housing investment in a single year by any province in Canada, said the Ministry of Natural Gas Development and Responsible for Housing in a news release on September 19.

A total of 2,900 rental units will be created, in partnership with non-profit societies, local governments, government agencies, community organizations and the private sector.

This is in addition to \$355 million announced in February to create 2,000 additional new units of affordable rental housing throughout BC, bringing BC's total investment announced this year to \$855 million.

"This is another significant step towards helping more people find an affordable place to live," said Premier Christy Clark. "Thanks to our growing, diverse economy, we're able to make the largest affordable housing investment in one year by any province in Canadian history."

A mix of new housing will meet a variety of housing needs throughout the province including for low-to moderate-income renters, seniors, youth, students, adults with developmental disabilities, Aboriginal people, and women and children.

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Funding will be provided from the government's newly-created Housing Priority Initiatives Special Account. Projects will include a combination of acquisition of existing units from the private market (to help with immediate needs) as well as new construction. All projects will be identified and approved by March 2017. Newly constructed housing will be completed over the next 24 to 36 months.

The province's Six Principles of Housing Affordability are given as:
1. Ensuring the dream of home ownership remains within the reach of the middle class
2. Increasing housing supply
3. Smart transit expansion
4. Supporting first-time home buyers
5. Ensuring consumer protection
6. Increasing rental supply. <http://housingaffordability.gov.bc.ca> **WSV**

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Drug overdose crisis continues in BC

● **The number of illicit drug deaths dropped slightly in August** but the number of deaths from illicit drug use remains significantly increased from previous years, says the BC Coroners Service.

In January through August of this year, the total number of deaths from illicit drug use was 488, up 61.6% from the same time period in 2015. There were 505 illicit drug-use deaths in all of 2015.

The short term view shows the total of illicit drug deaths down to 49 in July, compared to 55 in June. The total number of deaths in August was smaller than for the same month in 2015, as reported by chief coroner Lisa Lapointe.

The powerful Fentanyl drug that dealers are for some reason mixing into illicit street drugs remains a major contributor to the high death tally. During January to July, there were 264 deaths in which fentanyl was detected, that being about 60% of all illicit drug deaths. That's over three times the number of fentanyl-detected deaths for the same period last year. Fentanyl is 100 times more powerful than morphine.

In a media session, Lapointe attempted to dampen any sense of blaming or shaming that people may express around the use of illicit drugs such as cocaine and heroin. "Destigmatizing drug use can actually save lives," she said on live TV on September 21.

"Many deaths are being prevented through the use of naloxone," said Lapointe. "Without the work that has been done to increase the availability of this antidote to opioid overdoses, we would have seen many more deaths. But no one should ever assume that the presence of naloxone at a scene will automatically mean a good outcome."

BC Health Minister Terry Lake told media that over 11,000 first responders and community health workers in BC have received training on how to administer naloxone. Hospital emergency departments also have kits.

The BC Coroners Service continues to work with health, community and law enforcement agencies and with the provincial government's Joint Task Force on Overdose Response to try reducing the death toll.

Number of Deaths: www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/death-investigation/statistical/illicit-drug.pdf

Fentanyl-Related: www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/death-investigation/statistical/fentanyl-detected-overdose.pdf **WSV**

Island communities of Tofino & Ucluelet part of a continued resort funding initiative

● **As BC experiences some of its strongest tourism growth** in years, with a record number of international visitors during the first half of the year, Valemount is receiving \$54,624 from BC's Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI).

The RMI provides \$10.5 million each year to help eligible resort-oriented municipalities to develop and enhance their tourism infrastructure and amenities. RMI communities include Whistler, Fernie, Kimberley, Golden, Harrison Hot Springs, Invermere, Osoyoos, Radium Hot Springs, Revelstoke, Rossland, Sun Peaks, Tofino, Ucluelet and Valemount.

Since the inception of RMI in 2006, over \$108.6 million has been invested in tourism infrastructure and programs to support local and regional tourism economies in 14 participating communities. **WSV**

Screen in BC Day

● **BC rolled out the red carpet** to recognize the contribution of screen-based industries to BC's creative economy, by proclaiming Sept 21 as "Screen in BC Day". Reps from the BC government, Creative BC, the Motion Picture Production Industry Assoc of BC, the Canadian Media Producers Assoc, and industry stakeholders, unveiled an official proclamation. **WSV**

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The Sooke Voice News

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McKenzie Interchange construction prompts this: New bus service for Langford commuters

West Shore Voice News

Preliminary design:



A 50-seat bus called the Langtoria Greenline will be available to weekday commuters from Langford to downtown Victoria, starting October 17.

• **Taking the easy road** to downtown Victoria might be the way to go for Langford commuters.

A new bus service called the Langtoria Greenline will offer comfortable transportation from park-and-ride areas around Langford, to various stops in Victoria. At about \$100 to \$150 per month, the service would include desktop trays for working and snacks, Wi-Fi, coffee and newspapers.

Wilson's Transportation has been brought on board by the City of Langford to pull this project together.

In anticipation of the traffic frustrations that are likely to result during long-term McKenzie Interchange construction, Langford Mayor Stew Young came up with the idea of Langford to Victoria direct bussing.

He pitched the idea to Wilson's Transportation, and this week they were developing the details. An FAQ about the new service will be available soon.

"Langford is subsidizing it, and we are running it," says Wilson's Transportation consultant Jeff Warwick.

"It will take 50 cars off the road," says Langford's pro-active Mayor Stew Young. "It's a start, it will help".

It's still to be finalized, but the proposed three boarding locations for the Langtoria Greenline would be City Centre Park in Westhills (near the Y), Langford core (Goldstream at Claude Rd, near the fountain), and near the Langford Fire Hall on Peatt Road.

Departure times include leaving the last pickup stop in Langford at 7am, aiming to get commuters to Victoria between 7:45 am and 8 am. One drop-off destination will be Uptown mall, followed by a direct route to stops at Yates Street and Fort Street downtown, ending at the central bus depot on Douglas Street.

The bus may not get to Victoria any faster than if you're driving your own car. But on the bus your hands are free to use your phone or tablet, drink your coffee and read a newspaper. The bus itself will be a high-end motor coach with comfortable roomy seats and a washroom. And it's guaranteed seating, no standing in a full bus.

For regular vehicle commuters, this offers the additional saving of not having to pay for downtown parking.

All in all, an innovative offering to serve a fast-upcoming need. **WSV**

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Drinking fountains & waste recovery centre proposed

• **Three key proposals were made by Zero Waste Sooke** at the September 12 District of Sooke Committee of the Whole. A ban through zoning to disallow the use of plastic bags at retail checkouts was one. The local group also proposed the installation of drinking water fountains in various areas around Sooke (particularly parks) and a full-service resource recovery centre. These and other ideas were generated by local citizens at an Open Space Symposium, back in April. Full report online at www.zerowastesooke.ca **WSV**

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SOOKE FALL FAIR

Counterfeit bills caught at Sooke banks



West Shore Voice News

• **Sooke RCMP are investigating five complaints of counterfeit currency** received by local businesses in the past month. In each case, the counterfeit bills were \$100 bills. **WEB COURTESY EDITION**

"The exact circumstances of the exchanges are not all known as the bills have been received in deposits at local banks. We expect more of these counterfeit bills to be passed in Sooke in the upcoming weeks," says Sooke RCMP Detachment Commander S/Sgt Jeff McArthur.

S/Sgt McArthur says the bills are "easy to detect if inspected". The bills replicated are the type in the new polymer series. The counterfeit detection section of the Bank of Canada website is a good resource to learn how to detect these bills: www.bankofcanada.ca/banknotes/counterfeit-prevention/

The Bank of Canada website says that security features are helpful only if you use them. To fight counterfeiting, the Bank offers free training materials to help the public, businesses, and police agencies use the security features in genuine bank notes. "If you know your notes, you'll be able to detect a counterfeit at a glance and protect yourself from fraud." **WEB COURTESY EDITION**

Timely reporting helps police and prosecutors bring counterfeiters to justice. Contact the RCMP Sooke Detachment 250-642-5241 for assistance.

Anyone having information about this offence is asked to contact the Sooke RCMP or Crimestoppers at 1-800-222-8477. **WSV**



'Royal Visit' issues of West Shore Voice News Sept 30 & Oct 7 Inquire about custom advertising details. 250.217.5821

Modern Nature



WEB COURTESY EDITION

Photo by Jennifer Brooke

Nature photos: A weekly feature in West Shore Voice

Push-tech at Belmont keeps everyone informed

by Mary P Brooke
West Shore Voice News

• **A custom app that can be loaded up** with timetable info, homework assignments and event notices is now in active use at Belmont Secondary in Langford.

In the first 24 hours of availability, over 1,100 users had signed up. There are 1,340 students at Belmont for 2016-2017.

The app is available to anyone who wants to follow Belmont activities, including students, parents and others who interact with the school.

Belmont Principal Ray Miller can "push" messages – like "have a nice day" – out to certain classes and groups, or



West Shore Voice News

West Shore Voice News
Courtesy online edition

WEB COURTESY EDITION

to the full school community. Teachers can post assignments to their classes, so there's no missing any homework assignments anymore!

There was a startup fee paid to Friesens, a company that has been associated with schools for a long time with their yearbook print production services. For Friesens, developing this app represents a significant shift into the digital publishing market. The school will carry a yearly cost for use of the app. **WSV**

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NDP

You're Invited!

Electoral Reform Town Hall

SEPT 24

A panel and discussion about how to make our voting system fairer.

Time: 2:00pm - 3:30pm

Location: Belmont Secondary School
3041 Langford Lake Rd

Randall Garrison
MP - ESQUIMALT-SANNICH-SOOKE
Phone: 250 405 6560

Alistair MacGregor
MP - COWICHAN-MALAHAT-LANGFORD
Phone: 1 866 609 9998

Electoral reform explored by Island MPs

West Shore Voice News

• **Voting may be a whole different ball of wax come 2019.** The Liberals have promised electoral reform in time for the next federal election. **WEB COURTESY EDITION**

In recent weeks there have been many town halls across Canada to explore and explain the in-and-outs and political shifts that would result from changing the present first-past-the-post voting system to one where votes are essentially weighted differently.

Coming up this weekend on Saturday, September 24, two NDP Members of Parliament – Randall Garrison (Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke) and Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan-Malahat-Langford) – will host a public meeting about electoral reform. The 1.5 hour public event (2 to 3:30 pm) will be held at Belmont Secondary, 3041 Langford Lake Rd (nestled in the Westhills development, lots of parking).

This meeting follows on the heels of a similar meeting led by Fair Vote Canada vice-president David Merner (Sooke, Sept 15). Merner was fluent about how proportional

representation could ensure more of a voice for a wider number of candidates who might be favoured by local communities.

The Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reform (active since June) will hold a public meeting in Victoria at the Harbour Towers Hotel, on Tuesday, Sept 27 (4 to 9:30 pm). www.parl.gc.ca/Committees/en/ERRE **WSV**

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Royal Visit in BC. Sept 24 to Oct 1. Open to the public: Official Welcome of Duke & Duchess of Cambridge to BC, at the BC Legislature on **Sat Sept 24**. 5 pm

Free Bike Tune-Up. Active living event **Sat Sept 24** courtesy of TELUS PureFibre, at Goldstream Bicycles, 694 Goldstream Ave. 10am to 4pm. Free ice cream! www.telus.com/westshore

Sooke Country Market. Sat Sept 24. Otter Pt Rd at Eustace. 10am-2pm.

Sooke Fall Fair Monthly Market. Sat Sept 24 Sooke Community Hall 10-2. Order pies: 250-812-2830.

Electoral Reform Town Hall. Sat Sept 24 with MPs Randall Garrison & Alistair MacGregor, 2-3:30pm at Belmont Secondary, Langford. www.fairvote.ca

Overtide Sept 14 to Oct 2 Coast Collective. **Fighting in Flanders. Sept 16 to Dec 2.**

Power of the ocean and human emotion. www.coastcollective.ca
 Travelling exhibit from the Canadian War Museum. www.sookeregionmuseum.ca

Post your exhibit here (& online) \$29.95+GST/month. Call 250-217-5821 or email: advertising@westshorevoicenews.com



Wadams Way Fun Run & Ride, Sat Sept 24. 9am ride prep at 6672 Wadams Way (get registered & decorate your bike, wheelchair or stroller; no fee). 2km ride starts 9:30 am. Includes official opening of John Phillips Memorial Park Loop Trail by Mayor Maja Tait. Then 3rd annual Wadams Way Market, 10am-2pm.

Light up the Hills by Westhills & West Shore Arts Council. **Sat Sept 24.** 7:30 pm. In support of Victoria Hospice. www.westhillsbc.com/lightupthehills

Invasive Species Cleanup at Ed Macgregor Park. Sun Sept 25 Help remove ivy from tree trunks at Ed Macgregor Park, 9am-3pm. Sponsored by the Juan de Fuca Community Trails Society, District of Sooke, and Greater Victoria Green Team. **WEB COURTESY EDITION**

3rd Annual Apple Fest. Sun Sept 25 at Sunriver Community Gardens, 10am-3pm. www.sookefoodchi.ca

Blood Donor Clinic. Mon Sept 26. Sooke Legion, 6726 Eustace Rd. Register at www.blood.ca

SD62 Board Meeting. 8pm. Tues Sept 27. Board office, 3143 Jacklin Rd. www.sd62.bc.ca

District of Sooke - Sooke Program of the Arts Committee. 9:30 am. Wed Sept 28. www.sooke.ca

West Shore Voice News - AD DEADLINE for Sept 30 Royal Visit edition. 5pm. **Wed Sept 28.** Inquiries: advertising@westshorevoicenews.com

Free Swim. Active living event **Fri Sept 30** courtesy of TELUS PureFibre, at SEAPARC Leisure Complex. Free ice cream! 5 to 7 pm. www.telus.com/sooke

Royal Visit in BC. Sat Oct 1. Open to the public: final departure of the Duke & Duchess of Cambridge at Victoria Inner Harbour. 3:30 pm

District of Sooke Parks & Trails Committee. 1 pm. Tues Oct 4. www.sooke.ca

West Shore Voice News - AD DEADLINE for Oct 7 Royal Visit (part 2) and Thanksgiving edition. 5pm. **Tues Oct 4.** advertising@westshorevoicenews.com

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Thanksgiving Long Weekend. Sat Oct 8 through Mon Oct 10.

District of Sooke Committee of Whole 6pm; **Regular Council** 7pm. **Tues Oct 11.** Agenda & webcast: www.sooke.ca

Awareness Film Night, 22nd season premier. Wed Oct 12. 'Requiem for the American Dream'. 7pm, EMCS, 6218 Sooke Rd. www.awarenessfilmmight.ca

Great BC Shakeout. 'Drop, cover and hold on' during BC-wide earthquake drill **Thurs Oct 20.** Register yourself, business or school at www.shakeoutbc.ca

Sooke Official Community Plan. Drop-in Open House on District of Sooke Draft Vision of OCP. **Thurs Oct 20.** 3:30-7:30pm, municipal hall. www.sooke.ca

Halloween Dog Party. Sat Oct 22. Fundraiser for The Boneless Project, at Speedsource Fitness, 2197 Otter Point Rd, Sooke, 11am-3pm. Bring dogs in costume. Treats & beverage by donation. www.safars.org

Exhibits

Bag of beans to help Hum get back to Africa

by Mary P Brooke, WEST SHORE VOICE NEWS



One powerful bag of beans.

Some special coffee beans are now on sale at The Stick in the Mud Coffee House at Sooke. The 1lb bags of beans called *Ethiopia Limu Grade 2* are part of a special venture.

From procurement of the beans (courtesy of Atlas Coffee Importers of Seattle), through roasting, packaging and sales, the beans will produce a chunk of funds for a unique cause. The bean sales at \$20 per bag could amount to almost \$2,000. All the funds will go directly to Eric Anderson (aka Hum), for whom helping out in Ethiopia is near and dear to his heart. **WEB COURTESY EDITION**

Stick owner/roaster David Evans is excited about this special opportunity to support the long-time work that Hum has

been doing in Ethiopia over the decades. In that African country, Hum helps out children (some of them orphans) with medical needs by getting them to a clinic, or just helping them get back on their feet in whatever way is required.

Here in the Sooke area, Hum has lived 'off the grid' in a small cottage in the Sooke Hills for the last 40 years, writing novels in his spare time. An avid cyclist, he bikes everywhere. From his earnings as a community health care worker, he now lives off a small pension. It turns out he has spent much of his retirement savings on his trips to Ethiopia over the years. Now at age 72, he thinks this may be his last trip back to Ethiopia.



Hum helping out in Ethiopia. Image from the promo for his Orphan Girl docudrama.

If you happen to run into Hum at any of the local Sooke coffee shops or the Sooke Library, he will tell you his story. He is a well-educated, well-read, well-travelled and well-deserving fellow who has put others ahead of himself for a very long time. That's why now the beans for sale for Hum at The Stick. The Stick's main branch outlet is at 6715 Eustace Road in Sooke.

There is also a crowd-sourcing portal called *Back-to-Africa* that was setup by local activist Jeff Bateman in June, with a goal of raising \$5,000 to support Hum's "last venture". So far, \$1,525 has been pledged. See: www.gofundme.com/hum_aid **WEB COURTESY EDITION**

Last year a docudrama by Hum called *Orphan Girl* (2015) – about his work in Ethiopia – was shown in Sooke as another fundraising effort. **WSV**

LETTER

Tree or no tree in Sooke roundabout this Xmas? Write to: letters@westshorevoicenews.com

It seems either the spirit of Ebenezer Scrooge or that of the Grinch has infiltrated the Sooke Christmas tree debate (news report, Sept 16, 2016 *West Shore Voice News*). Some community members don't want a Christmas Tree in the roundabout. Fair enough, we are a community of diversification and respect must be shown to all that's what makes Canada a great country. Maybe the reasons for not wanting a Christmas Tree in the roundabout aren't based on religion, perhaps there is some fear adorning the community with festive decorations will increase their taxes. Whatever the naysayers' reasons are, I am all for the Christmas Tree in the roundabout. One only needs to look at communities like Ladysmith and realize that beautifying your community not only creates a sense of pride but it's also a good return on your investment.

~ Rick Gilley, East Sooke

Plastic bags: 1,000 years to break down

by Jo Phillips of Zero Waste Sooke

Why is single-use plastic such a problem? Canadians go through a staggering 2.86 billion plastic bags a year, very few of which are recycled. An estimated 95% end up in landfills where they are likely to be carried away by wind and water and animals onto roadsides and from there into waterways and the oceans.

Only 20% of marine litter comes from boats. The rest is from land. As is commonly known, plastic does not break down for a thousand years. And when it does, it breaks into microscopic pieces.

Ocean researchers estimate that there are already between 50,000 and a million of these plastic fragments in every square mile of the world's oceans. Microplastics can absorb cancer-causing, hormone-disrupting pollutants such as PCBs. The plastic bits and their accompanying pollutants kill at least 2 million birds, whales, dolphins, turtles, sea lions and seals every year. Either they choke or get tangled up in the larger pieces of plastic, or they eat plastic fragments which leads to internal infections, congestion of their digestive tracts, starvation and death. Plastic fragments and chemicals make their way up the food chain to seafood-eating humans and become part of our own biology.

Plastic bags are made from petroleum or natural gas, both non-renewable resources whose extraction contributes to contamination of waterways large and small as well as the dangerously high levels of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. **WEB COURTESY EDITION**

The amount of plastic in the world's oceans has been doubling every three years. Business-as-usual will fuel this alarming trend. If we stop using single-use plastic shopping bags it will cultivate an awareness about how much plastic we are using – much of it completely unnecessary.

As to what will work for garbage, there are several solutions put forward by cities and towns that have banned plastic bags already:

Since garbage is pretty clean these days (no food waste or soiled cans and bottles) the same bag can be used many times over. Just dump the contents, bagless, into our garbage cans for pickup.

In the months prior to bans taking effect, some cities have established plastic bag repositories (contributed by people who have collected way too many or by stores that will not be using them any more). These were housed in public places (libraries, thrift stores, community centres, day cares, etc) and made available to everyone.

Truly biodegradable plastic bags are available for purchase. These can be used for animal waste, throwaway diapers and other offensively aromatic waste. **WSV**

September Jewelry Sale Open 7 days a week!
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