

OPINION

2019 CCNA Awards
Gold - Best Editorial Page | Gold - Best Feature Series (Gail Sjuberg)
Bronze - Best News Story (Elizabeth Nolan) | Bronze - Community Service

2022 BCYNA Awards
Gold - Best All Round (for circulation Category C)
Bronze - Community Service Award



EDITORIAL

Driftwood

Published every Wednesday by
Driftwood Publishing Ltd.

Tony Richards, MANAGING DIRECTOR



Nancy Johnson
PUBLISHER

nancy.johnson@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Gail Sjuberg
MANAGING EDITOR

news@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Lorraine Sullivan
PRODUCTION MANAGER

production@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Derek Capitaine
OFFICE MANAGER

driftwood@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Elizabeth M. Zook
OFFICE MANAGER

driftwood@gulfislandsdriftwood.com



Emelie Peacock
REPORTER

epeacock@driftwoodgulfislandsmedia.com



Sky Marcano
ACCOUNT MANAGER

sky.marcano@gulfislandsdriftwood.com

Flawed process

The last thing residents of Canvasback Place on Salt Spring Island want is to end up with a criminal record.

But they feel so strongly about how the approval process for a 40-metre telecommunications tower proposed for their back yard has unfolded that they have been willing to flirt with that possibility by blocking contractors' access to the construction site in their neighbourhood.

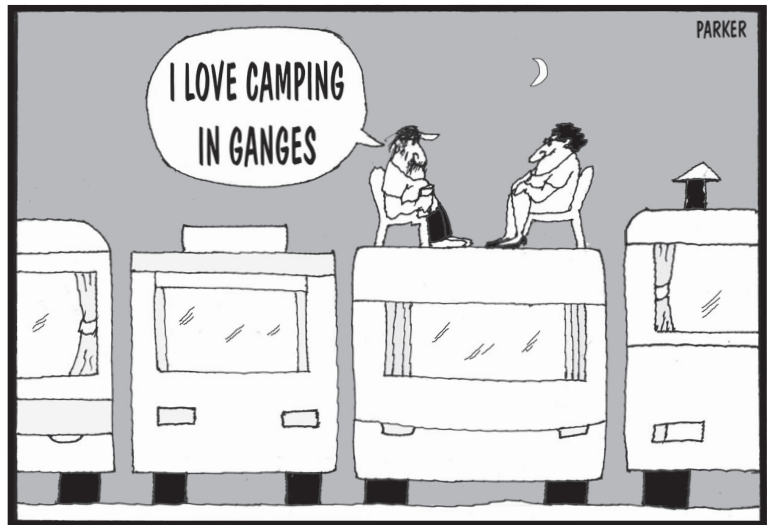
Residents stressed last week they are not against cell towers and should not be portrayed as part of a "tin foil hat" club, referring to people who feel they can be protected from electromagnetic radiation by aluminum foil. They do not consider the site or installation a "government approved" one because in March of this year the Salt Spring Local Trust Committee (LTC) rescinded a previous decision to provide its stamp of approval, although the federal Industry, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) is the regulating body for telecommunications installations.

THE ISSUE: Canvasback cell tower issue

WE SAY: Model strategy should be used

Residents are dissecting various documents trying to pinpoint clauses or processes that will result in a different site being chosen, with some of those efforts having more potential impact than others. Where they are absolutely right is that if the conditions laid out in an Islands Trust Model Strategy for Antenna Systems had been followed, Trust staff and the LTC may not have considered the site appropriate due to its close proximity to several residential dwellings — as close as 42 metres or 137 feet — and the environmentally sensitive Salt Spring Island Watershed Preservation Society lands. Rogers and its agent Cypress Land Services would have also been required to hold a public information session and have more direct communication with the LTC earlier in the process. The model strategy had not actually been adopted by the LTC when the original decision was made, although it was forwarded to Cypress Land Services and a letter from that firm states the protocol was followed in terms of the public consultation process. In making its original approving decision in July of 2021 the LTC relied on that incorrect information, contained as part of a staff report that recommended support for the application.

The LTC is now in disagreement with ISED about whether or not it can rescind its approval. As of this writing, the matter is with Islands Trust legal counsel and a positive resolution hopefully in sight.



Too late to save Salt Spring?

BY FRANCINE CARLIN

VIEWPOINT

As a result of years of fractured Salt Spring local governance, special/narrow interests and extreme voices consistently creating barriers to being able to sustain a diverse demographic and an economically thriving rural island community, it may be too late to save Salt Spring. Covid exposed more cracks and now coming out of Covid the community is experiencing the same narrow self-interests raising their heads once again.

The B.C. empty home tax, or speculation and vacancy tax (SVT) has been a remedy for communities smaller than Salt Spring Island for managing land grabbing for quick profit. For Salt Spring Island the increasing number of homes that have been purchased by offshore non-residents over the past years is turning Salt Spring into an Airbnb wasteland. What the Salt Spring Official Community Plan had planned for — small inns, conforming B&Bs — has been transformed by speculators who have and are purchasing home after home and renting them at exorbitant prices during the summer season as well as year-round. Salt Spring is becoming a haven for summer party houses with little regard for water or fire conservation.

Most visitors are unaware of the squeeze they are putting on our weak infrastructure. Residents and visitors complain about the traffic — the crowds — a result of the over subscription, during the summer season, of homes being used to house more people than the island can support.

Speculators from across North America and offshore know there is little Salt

Spring Island regulation and no consequences for their purchase for profit. The voices against a speculation and vacancy tax say it will hurt the long-time vacation home owners. This may be true, but it's time for these vacation home owners to say, "I'm willing to pay a tax for the pleasure of having a second home." It's time for these vacation home-owners to do their part to protect this community from becoming another Martha's Vineyard shipping workers in to serve the wealthy and the retired. Our lovely hospital may not survive. Medical staff, health workers, police, tradespeople, retail and service workers will not be able to live and work here. In fact, who wants to live in a community with no amenities? Of course those who bring their servants and food with them for a holiday don't notice!

So rise up, housing minister Selena Robinson, I urge you to act to commit to keeping Salt Spring Island from becoming a one-dimensional community, existing only for the rich and the privileged. You can make a positive difference for generations to come by extending the empty home-speculation tax to Salt Spring Island. By going beyond the ordinary and expected, you can rise up to act now to protect the rural nature and character of Salt Spring, and insure that for future generations our rural island community is a place where a diverse demographic resides, thrives and is able to sustain Salt Spring Island as a priceless social, cultural and economic asset for B.C.

The writer is a full-time Salt Spring resident.

241 Fulford-Ganges Road, Salt Spring Island, B.C. V8K 2K7 | PH: 250-537-9933
Email: driftwood@gulfislandsdriftwood.com | Website: www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com

OFFICE HOURS: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday to Friday
SUBSCRIPTION RATES PER YEAR:
Digital Edition with Print Edition: \$85.00 | Elsewhere in Canada \$115.00
Foreign: \$248.00 | Digital Edition: \$45.00 anywhere | Prices include GST



Funded by the
Government
of Canada



Canada Publication Mail No. 0040050837 | International Standards Serial Number 1198-7782
Member of News Media Canada + National NewsMedia Council, and BC & Yukon Community NewsMedia Association

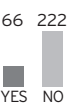
THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Are you getting concerned about summer drought and wildfire risk?

Yes No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Do you think the Channel Ridge Rogers cell tower should go ahead?



Cast your ballot online at www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com before Monday 2 p.m. or clip this box and drop it at our office before Monday at 2 p.m.