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Texada and the Coastal Range
by Mark Prior

facebook.com/markprior.images

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The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Publisher.

Kaimerata

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Friday, August 7th at 7:00 p.m.
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Beethoven Archduke Trio

Saturday, August 8th at 4:00 p.m.
Schubert Aveugle Sonata
Beethoven Cello Sonata no. 5
Beethoven Opus 18 no. 5 String Quartet

Sunday, August 9th at 2:30 p.m.
Beethoven Opus 111 Piano Sonata
Schubert Cello Quintet in C Major

Featuring: Isabella Person, violin. Catherine Ordronneau, Beth Root Sandvoss, Rebecca Rutherford, violin. Tilman Sandvoss, viola. Sabine Sandvoss, cello

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SAVE THE DATE: FREE Tax Clinic Returning to Hornby & Denman Islands

By Lleilah Chernovsky

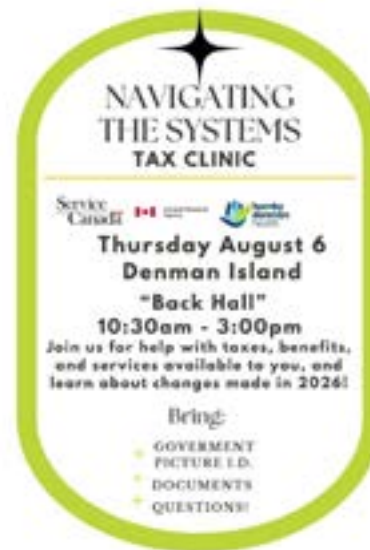
If you missed the chance to speak with CRA and Service Canada representatives during the “Navigating the Systems” event in March, the SUPER TAX CLINIC is making its way back to Hornby Island on August 5th and to Denman Island on August 6th. The clinic brings IN PERSON support and advice. They can print missing tax slips, answer benefit questions, and assist in filing personal taxes. This summer, the GST/HST credit gets replaced with the Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit (CGEB), which increases credit payout by 25%. If you do not have your taxes up to date, you will not see this payout. So take a break from the sun, and get it DONE this summer! **Please note: while the clinic may be able to answer questions on self employment, they may not be able to file taxes for those who are self employed with their own business. Below are some of the services provided:

CRA:

- Tax Slip information (T4, T5007, T4A -Pension, T4A-OAS and more)
- Notice of Assessments (NOAs) and Assistance with CRA correspondence
- Benefits and Credits information: Disability Tax Credit (DTC), Canada Child Benefit (CCB), GST/HST credit changes, Canada Worker's Benefit (CWB)
- Account updates (address, contact number, etc.)

Service Canada:

- NEW Canada Disability Benefit – Information and Application
- Canadian Dental Care Plan - Information and Application/Attestation
- Pension information on Old Age Security and Canada Pension Plan
- Get a Social Insurance Number (birth certificate in most cases will be required)
- Receive an access code to sign up for online My Service Canada
- General Government of Canada information



TIDE TABLE

• Secondary Tidal Station Ford Cove •
• Source: tides.gc.ca •

2026-07-30 (Thu)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
00:27	3.4	11.3
04:47	4.0	13.3
12:04	0.8	2.8
19:28	4.6	15.2
2026-07-31 (Fri)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
00:59	3.2	10.7
05:35	4.0	13.2
12:36	0.9	3.2
19:49	4.6	15.3
2026-08-01 (Sat)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
01:35	3.0	9.9
06:25	3.9	13.0
13:08	1.2	4.0
20:09	4.6	15.4
2026-08-02 (Sun)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
02:13	2.7	8.9
07:19	3.8	12.7
13:41	1.6	5.2
20:30	4.6	15.3
2026-08-03 (Mon)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
02:55	2.4	7.9
08:22	3.7	12.3
14:17	2.0	6.8
20:52	4.6	15.2
2026-08-04 (Tue)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
03:42	2.0	6.7
09:37	3.6	12.0
14:58	2.5	8.5
21:17	4.5	15.1
2026-08-05 (Wed)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
04:33	1.7	5.6
11:14	3.6	12.0
15:48	3.1	10.2
21:47	4.5	14.9
2026-08-06 (Thu)		
Time	PST (m)	(ft)
05:30	1.3	4.6
13:11	3.8	12.6
16:57	3.5	11.6
22:26	4.4	14.7

It is important to bring government issued ID and if you already have your NOAs and tax slips, it will save you time. This will be a one-on-one service, on a first come, first served basis. If you have all your information but need help getting your taxes done, limited volunteer tax filing will be available on premises, after checking in with the CRA rep first. This event is coming up soon, so save the date!

Wednesday, August 5th Hornby Island 10:30am-2:45pm at Joe King Park

Thursday, August 6th Denman Island 10:30am-3:00pm at the Denman Back Hall

If you have any questions, contact Lleilah @ (778) 585-4585 or lleilah@hornbydenmanhealth.com



A Reminder from The Denman Island Waste Management Committee

Thank you to the Denman Island residents who created this sign. We have included it in this publication as a reminder to everyone to put garbage in critter proof containers. Other conditions include a sticker (\$2.50) which may be purchased at the general store or the recycling depot and a maximize weight of 40 pounds per bag. The Waste Management Committee will be on the agenda for the next Denman Island Residents Association meeting on Monday, August 10 at 7:30 in the back hall. Change is afoot. For more information: <https://denmanresidents.com/waste-management-committee/>



The Book Report

By A Bae Hel

No Friend to this House

Natalie Haynes

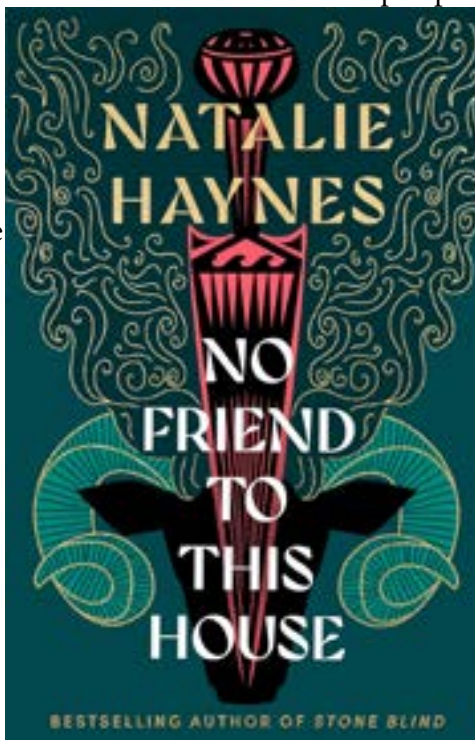
Greek myths are currently enjoying a spotlight in current entertainment due to the recently released movie of Odysseus and the upset and outrage over the casting. Apparently, there is a right way to cast fictional mythical characters and a wrong way to cast them and the people who have never read Greek myths know the right way. I love the wounded outrage over mythical characters portrayal.

Enter Medea. This is the telling of her story, not Jason's. Not the Argonauts. And it is not Euripides's story. The telling is broken into parts told by the various women and goddesses involved. And animals. While the perspective is that of the women, it remains true to the canon, just fills in where the traditional male arc missed out. Medea's tragedy is

spun out with well researched detail. The author knows her Greek myths and uses that base to build an involving, richly detailed narrative about the characters. Medea is a character much more than the helper of heroes, or the woman betrayed. She is given complexity and a lot less rage than I would expect given the betrayal. But her vengeance is epic, and her decisions understandable.

The author has given us several books on Greek myths told from the perspectives of the female

characters along with several non-fiction on the myths and ancient Greece. She is an excellent story teller and well worth your time. I can only imagine the outrage should someone decide to make a movie of her portrayal of the 'heroes' of the Trojan war.



The Women of Troy Book 1 and 2

The Silence of the Girls The Women of Troy

Pat Barker

As I have said, I love finding re-imagined fairy tales, myths and

continued on p.5...

...continued from p.4

legends. The Greek myths books in the school library were my favourites and I read them over and over, but as an old woman I want to hear the story from the perspective of someone other than the toxic male.

These are those stories.

For 10 long years the Greeks waged war on Troy simply because a man got all pissy when his wife left

him. There is debate whether she left on her own accord, or whether she was kidnapped and raped by

Paris, but to Menalus it didn't matter, his ego was bruised. So, for 10 years he and his king buddies laid

siege to Troy. Some say it was all plotted by Zeus to deal with over population. After 10 years of war,

you can be fairly certain it hampered future population booms.

After the Greeks destroyed Troy, they were stuck there on the land where they had set up camp

because apparently another god, Poseidon was pissed that his favourite didn't win.

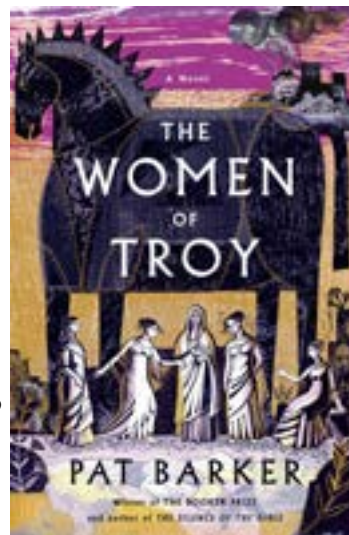
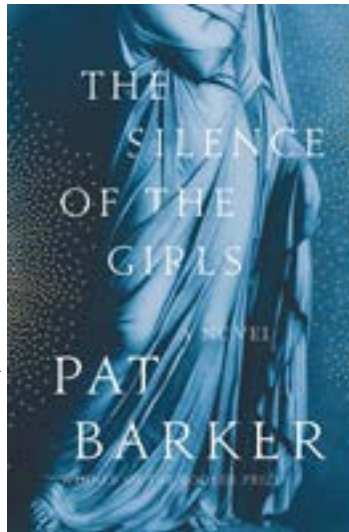
These are the stories of the women taken as slaves and conquest of war. Women whose men had all been killed.

Women handed around as honor gifts to other kings.

The stories not put in the Greek and Roman myths books in the school library. These stories are narrated by Brisels a queen of one of Toy's neighbouring kingdoms who becomes the prize of Achilles.

Just one of the thousands of women taken as bounty, she narrates the lives of the camp and the conflicts post war. Women trying to navigate survival in a post war victors camp where pissing matches continue even after the enemy is gone.

Well researched and filling in the gaps again. Worth your time



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SCULPTURE TOURS

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SPECIAL EVENTS

Aaron Richmond

Artist-Scholar Resident

Thu July 16 12pm

Borealis String Quartet

Tue July 21 12pm

Wed July 22 10am*

Thu July 23 8pm**

Fri July 24 12pm***

Zoe Jordan

Plastic : Elastic

Tue July 28 7:30pm

Dance film premiere & photo exhibition
On for remainder of openings

* July 22 Gaia: Theatre of Fire dress rehearsal.
Audience researchers wanted, admission by
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** July 23 premiere of Gaia: Theatre of Fire, the
inaugural Borealis Lab. Limited indoor seating

*** July 24 world premiere of 'Island Portraits:
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DIRA and DenmanWorks?*By Cylon2036 We/Us*

There was a time when "public consultation" meant asking people what they thought before making a decision. That was adorable. Today's local tax-funded institutions have refined the process into something far more sophisticated. The decision is made first, then the public is invited to participate in the exciting tradition of discovering why it was inevitable. This is known as engagement.

The modern consultation begins by cheerfully announcing that your opinion matters. The local institution proudly proclaims that "information has been made publicly available." Indeed. Transparency and accountability have apparently become estranged cousins who no longer speak to one another.

Transparency used to mean making things easy to understand. Now it hides in plain sight while explaining even less. This counts as informed consent. Then comes the public consultations, following the announcement of Chair appointments and budget allocations, while the timeline has already been approved.

Questions from residents are warmly welcomed. Answers, however, are another matter. Questioners are thanked, comments are appreciated, concerns are acknowledged, responses are compiled, clarifications are under review, while additional information will be available at a later date. The vote is then taken.

One cannot help admiring the efficiency. Why spend time educating residents before asking them to vote, when you can simply educate them afterward about why the outcome was always the correct one? Nothing calms disappointment quite like retroactive explanations.

This approach has several advantages. First, it saves time. Second, it minimizes awkward public debate. Third, it eliminates the risk that informed citizens might suggest alternatives before tax dollars become invested in a single plan. Flexibility is now considered overrated.

Institutions often reassure residents that "we're listening." No one doubts this. Listening has never been the problem. The challenge has always been what happens immediately afterward. Listening, it turns out, is entirely compatible with continuing in exactly the same direction regardless of feedback.

Every proposal contains the comforting phrase, "Please share your thoughts." It rarely contains the option to reject the premise of the entire project. Instead, participants are invited to rank their enthusiasm for predetermined outcomes.

"Perhaps everyone should slow down for a moment and explain what we're actually doing" is not an option. That option was eliminated during private discussions about efficiency. The local institution later reports that "public engagement demonstrated community support." And then the proposal proceeds exactly as planned. Coincidence is a beautiful thing.

Perhaps the greatest achievement is the invention of procedural transparency. Everything hides in plain sight. Every meeting time is made public, on short notice, and with little information available in advance. It is all perfectly visible, much like a submarine with glass windows. You can see everything, but just can't get inside before it leaves the harbour.

When public trust declines, local institutions claim that they don't understand why there's not greater participation in local governance. The irony is exquisite. Perhaps this is all a misunderstanding, and the phrase "public consultation" has simply been redefined. It no longer means asking citizens what should happen, but instead informing them of what has already been decided.

The meeting minutes will read: "Thank you for your valuable input."



Informing Institutions

By Leif LeBaron

I know I'm not alone in feeling relatively inconsequential against institutional behavior. After more than three years of simply trying to resolve a particular case of damage to public infrastructure caused by a government contractor, and confronting an insidious cascade of mendacious irresponsibility, some things became clear:

- don't let it infect you; such stress is morbid
- quantity is more effective than quality
- activate elected representatives and hold them to it
- remain kind and civil but be persistent

Confronting institutional pathology can be discouraging and stressful, so best take measures to remain happy, healthy and strong, and work to raise awareness in the community rather than doing it alone.

Irrefutable evidence and clear documentation be damned when quality is subordinate to quantity. In other words, one person making a comprehensive and coherent case is more easily ignored than many people simply saying "stop that!" (i.e., especially from many distinct individuals, in contrast to petitions or other centralised approaches). It's also enough to simply register opposition, without justifying position or explaining rationale. Details can be discussed once dialogue has opened.

Futile as it may seem, we still have people in office who are paid to listen to us and act on our behalf, and they are likely more fluent in the language of office. Best concentrate on those who wish to be reelected.

Persistence is essential, and empathy; to remember that real people exist inside the impersonal, and often offensive, Kafkaesque machinery.

For example, the BC Government betrayed due process and community trust in recklessly executing questionable "improvements" to Tribune Bay campground on Hornby. Now Denman is also affected as water is being removed from Chickadee Lake to irrigate poor decisions on Hornby. One hopes that even the BC Government is upset by the results, but it should not be surprising that an industrial contractor from Alberta might be a poor choice to construct a campground in a rural community on a small island in a coastal environment.

In any case, considering the significant opposition, how did it happen and what about Phase 2? Instead of leaving it to others to confront the bureaucratic bully, and waiting until the damage is done, here's to personal responsibility in proactive protection and prevention!

"Tribune Bay Park is a jewel in B.C. and people are drawn to this area to experience the natural beauty,"

Tamara Davidson, Minister of Environment and Parks

ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca
250 387 1187

Further reading (thank you, Petra!): tribunebayecosystem.wordpress.com

The proposed expansion at Gravely Bay was successfully halted thanks to the people who protested in number and in person. 🍇



Photo: Vladan Myška

The Ombudsperson Defence for Finding the BCF Commissioner is in Compliance

By Sharon Small

Here is the BC Ombudsperson's not surprising decision to close File 24-006480 regarding the Ferry Commissioner's breach of office and the Coastal Ferry Act. You can read the entire letter on the *Drag Rag*. My rejection of the investigator's findings will appear in the next *Grapevine* edition. I urge all to email the Office of the Ombudsperson with your responses--mail@bcombudsperson.ca--especially the claim that the Commissioner has been successful in directing BCF to engage more meaningfully with the FACs, the only evidence of compliance offered in the investigator's lengthy defence, which is shattered by BCF disbanding the FACs immediately after the Commissioner posted her directive to significantly improve engagement.

BC Ombudsperson Officer Wendy Byrne closed File 24-006480, finding that the Office of the Commissioner acted within its jurisdiction, in accordance with applicable legislation and statutory guidelines, with no administrative unfairness identified. In her July 16, 2026 letter, Byrne emphasizes that the Office of the BC Ferries Commissioner operates strictly under the legal parameters established by the *Coastal Ferry Act* and the *Coastal Ferry Services Contract*.

The following breakdown outlines the Commissioner's jurisdictional limits and how statutory obligations were evaluated and met:

What the Commissioner Cannot Do

No Operational Control: The Commission does not have authority over BC Ferries' day-to-day operations and operating expenses, customer service policies, safety procedures, or specific ferry fares (except to set an overall system-wide price cap).

No Fleet or Route Decisions: Managing wait times, cable ferry reliability, and decisions to expand or replace vessels rest solely with BCF.

What the Commissioner Can Do

High-Level Mandate: Responsible for setting price

caps, considering major capital expenditures, regulating unfair competitive advantage, approving BC Ferries' customer complaints process, and monitoring adherence to the Coastal Services contract.

Balancing Authority: Regulates minimum round trips under Section 38 while balancing user interests, taxpayer costs, and operator financial sustainability in the manner the Commissioner considers appropriate using its statutory authority and expertise.

How Statutory Obligations Were Met

Forwarding Complaints: Referring operational concerns directly to BC Ferries management was appropriate and reasonable given jurisdictional limits.

Evaluating Reporting: It remains within the Commission's discretion to determine if public evidence is sufficient for the Commission to question BCF's reporting on cancellations.

Public Engagement Oversight: Exercised statutory monitoring by requiring BC Ferries to submit annual reports and clearly define and communicate what role the FACs will have in the enhanced vision of BC Ferries' Public Engagement.

In defending the Commissioner's compliance under Section 38 of the Act, Byrne writes that the regulator's authority is legally restricted to high-level system oversight. These duties include establishing overall price caps, evaluating major capital expenditures, regulating unfair competitive advantages, and monitoring compliance with minimum annual round-trip schedules set out in Schedule A. Daily operational matters—such as specific sailing disruptions, cable ferry reliability, terminal traffic congestion, safety protocols, and customer service policies—rest entirely under the governance of BC Ferries as the operating corporation. The Commission possesses no statutory authority to order operational alterations or dictate vessel replacements.

In evaluating how community concerns were handled, Byrne clarifies that the Office of the Commissioner's responses accurately reflected the legal limits of its office. Because the Commission lacks statutory authority over daily operations, issuing standard responses clarifying these jurisdictional boundaries and referring resident complaints directly to BC Ferries management was an action in accordance with their legislation.

Regarding allegations of under-reported sailings, Officer Byrne notes that Section 38 grants the Commissioner *sole discretion to judge whether*

continued on p.9...

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public evidence warrants formal questioning of BC Ferries. Furthermore, in balancing user interests, taxpayer costs, and operator financial sustainability, provincial law explicitly accords the Commissioner *wide latitude* to weigh these competing priorities in the manner the Commissioner considers appropriate.

Regarding community relations and Ferry Advisory Committees (FACs), Byrne writes that the Commission fulfilled its statutory mandate to monitor how BC Ferries communicates with the public. Following a 2022 performance review, the Commission issued for-

mal orders requiring BC Ferries to submit annual public engagement reports and formally respond to regulatory recommendations, including clarifying the evolving role of the FACs. Because BC Ferries submitted its required annual filings addressing these recommendations, the Commission satisfied its statutory monitoring duties under the Act. Concluding that the Office of the Commissioner operated within its statutory authority and validly exercised its legal discretion, Officer Byrne found no evidence of administrative unfairness, procedural failure, or improper exercise of discretion, and formally closed the file under Section 13 of the *Ombudsperson Act*.



Shucking Oysters: Inhale This

By Alex Allen

Special
Interest

Remember every road trip, sitting in the back of our family cars (without seat belts on) breathing in our parent's cigarette fumes? Remember when it was cool to smoke? Remember when they were less than \$5 a pack? Different times. If coffin nails are so harmful, then why can people still buy them?

Once again follow the money. There's nothing in this world that doesn't have some monetary umbilical cord attached to it – even when it is inherently bad for you. The Canadian federal government obviously know that smoking tobacco is unhealthy, and yet they continue to sell darts and fags, because they make a lot of money.

Instead of just banning tobacco, come August 1st, the government has introduced more new graphic warnings that will adorn the generic drab brown (Pantone 448) packages. This is the fourth incarnation of graphic warnings since Canada became the first country to introduce them in 2001. The new images depict a range of health issues – from the dangers of second-hand smoke for children (and hello, dogs in cars, people), to diseases such as throat, lung, tongue and mouth cancers.

Did you know that cigarette smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals? Formaldehyde and benzene, toxic chemicals used in industrial manufacturing and cyanide and arsenic, highly toxic agents that damage blood cells, to name a few.

It's clear that the images are working on those who have never smoked and over 300,000 Canadians who smoked in 2023 quit in 2024. Data also shows smoking dropping to an "all-time low" of less than 2% for youth in 2024. Definitely not cool anymore.

David Hammond, a professor at the University of Waterloo's School of Public Health Sciences, said the "scary and frightening" images and statistics on cigarette boxes are still having an impact. "But I will say that tweaking these warnings, changing the pictures, changing the wording, is likely going to have far less impact than other measures."

Two of the images are being reused. One is of Barb Tarbox, a 42-year-old woman from Alberta who died of lung and brain cancer in 2003. The image shows her skeletal body near the end of her life with a cigarette still in hand, paired with the words "highly addictive." The other is of bloody urine in a toilet bowl, "27 per cent of kidney cancer victims die within five years." Six new messages are also being printed – in 8 point Lucida Sans Serif – on individual cigarettes, such as "Poison in every puff" and "Cigarettes cause impotence."

In the UK, anyone born on or after January 1, 2009 will be banned from buying tobacco products as of 2027, a move aimed at preventing future generations from becoming addicted to nicotine. In Canada, the government is "monitoring measures taken by like-minded countries to reduce youth smoking," however, they have "no plans to introduce a similar prohibition at this time."

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The Canadian cigarette and tobacco wholesaling industry made over \$8 billion in revenue in 2026. The profit number would be even larger, if not for contraband tobacco, which accounted for over 38% of the 18 billion cigarettes smoked in Canada last year. In 2023-24, the average Canadian smoker paid \$1,629 in tobacco taxes, with the government collecting over \$5 billion in tax revenue – a split between \$2 billion for the federal government and \$3 billion collectively for provincial and territorial governments. By comparison, our federal and provincial governments make roughly \$13 billion a year from alcohol sales. And now billions more from cannabis dispensaries.

Instead of graphic images, they should just print the amount of taxes each cigarette package is giving back to Ottawa. That might be an incentive. I quit smoking many moons ago, not because of my health but because of the price – \$3 a pack. Today, a cheap pack of smokes at the store can set you back \$25.

So, why can't we just ban tobacco completely? Save a few lives and lower healthcare costs versus personal choice and lost tax revenue. Or like marijuana, people could grow three tobacco plants and roll their own. Follow the money. Canadian tobacco companies are formidable, constantly lobbying governments on issues like taxation and product regulations. Imperial Tobacco should have their own embassy in Ottawa given the amount of lobbying they participate in.

Now the tobacco industry are focusing on e-cigarette and vaping rules. Nicotine lobbying arms are heavily pressuring Health Canada, arguing that strict flavour restrictions (as in mint and menthol only, not candy flavours) push adult users back to cigarettes and encourage illegal markets. Both Rothmans and Benson and Hedges maintain that these products are a safer alternative for people looking to quit smoking cigarettes.

Research from The Johns Hopkins University published in October 2021 revealed 1,500 unique chemical ingredients in vape products, most of which are not even identified. Among those they

could identify were several potentially harmful substances, including caffeine, three chemicals never previously found in e-cigarettes, a pesticide and two flavourings linked with possible toxic effects and respiratory irritation. Dr. Hassan Mir, a cardiologist and medical director of smoking cessation at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, said some of his patients are vaping the nicotine equivalent of 100 cigarettes a day, without realizing. Safer?

Smokers often question why there are not warnings on alcohol. In fact, a bill currently before the senate is proposing adding warnings on alcoholic packaging in Canada. We will see how the alcohol industry swallows that. Why not just put the iconic BC ferry slippery surface graphic on everything? That'll cover the basics, because isn't everything a slippery slope these days? 🍷



WorkBC Employment Services
Services d'emploi

August 2026 / août 2026

Hornby Island: by appointment only / Sur rendez-vous seulement

Denman Island: Tuesdays 9:00 am - 3:00 pm / mardi 9h à 15h

Date	Location
August / août 4	Denman Island
August / août 11	Denman Island
August / août 18	Denman Island
August / août 25	Denman Island

dominique@ceas.ca / 250-334-3119

www.workbccentre-courtenay.ca

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Review: Sally Campbell, A Mediator's Eye View, Essays on War, Peace, & Shared Humanity

By Keith Porteous

You'd think it would be easy to review a book by someone with a worldview that is aligned closely with one's own, by a writer who has been a regular contributor to this publication. Not so! Instead, I'll abandon any pretence of objectivity. In her new book, Sally Campbell not only tells it like it is, she gives us the tools we can use in the reconciliation of conflicts, big and small.

Campbell is a teacher and a mediator, and a former lawyer. She is also an extremely literate communicator who carries the valuable talent of equanimity, some of which she acquired during her work with indigenous communities across Canada. Her ability to address the horror and pain of conflicts big and small, without escalating the entrenched divisions in public discourse, is her special gift.

A Mediator's Eye View is a collection of essays, some of which first appeared in *The Islands Grapevine*, touching on global conflicts and war from the perspective of someone who dares to imagine that we might be able to end them, by facing the factual and historical realities with intellectual honesty, and employing

the tools of peacemaking and reconciliation with dedicated persistence.

From the decades long divides of Israeli apartheid and murderous occupation in Palestine, to the more recent NATO provocations of a catastrophic proxy war in Ukraine, Campbell refuses to allow the Western media narratives to corrupt the truth that desperately needs more exposure to an audience that has been force fed a steady diet of corrupt government propaganda dutifully reported by legacy media.

A Mediator's Eye View gives us the straight and unvarnished goods on war, empire, and militarism. It also makes the crucially important connection between the massively expanding war machine and the ongoing climate catastrophe, something that is a rare commodity in any current media discourse. And all this with the literal icing on the cake of sharing some of her favourite recipes for the healing practice of baking. Bravo!

We can only hope that Sally will return to these pages as a regular contributor to *The Islands Grapevine* following her leave of absence to complete this book. We've missed you Sally!



A Mediator's Eye View

Essays on War, Peace & Shared Humanity



Sally Campbell

A Mediator's Eye View is available from Abraxas Books on Denman, or directly through Sally at Farmers Market Wednesdays on Hornby. Alternatively, Friesen Press Bookstore, online at <https://books.friesenpress.com> has both paperback and e-copy available.

Sadly, Russophobia is Alive and Well!

By Yvon Raoul

“He who does not regret the destruction of the Soviet Union has no heart; he who wants it recreated in its former shape has no brain.” Vladimir Putin.

I doubt very much that this statement by Putin has ever been heard in our Western media which only quotes the established narrative, while overlooking remarks that reveal greater complexity.

I am writing to follow up on an article in the Grapevine (July 2nd 2026) by Keith Porteous. In it he draws on Carl Jung, who analyzed our tendency to project our own faults onto others. Projection allows us to minimize our own shortcomings while placing someone else's under a spotlight. I agree that this is the case in the West's perception of Russia.

On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. The crisis had been building for years, but the invasion was shocking nonetheless. Russia described it as a “special military operation.” At the time I found the euphemistic expression unsettling—a piece of Orwellian Newspeak designed to disguise the enormity of what was taking place. It already possessed an immense territory and was earning enormous revenues from oil and gas exports.

My understanding of Ukraine in the pre-invasion period was superficial. Like many others I imagined a country of vast sunflower fields—a newly liberated nation that had finally escaped the shackles of a despotic, blood-sucking Communist regime, one seemingly more terrible than anything imagined by Ivan the Terrible. I'm barely exaggerating.

Since then I have listened to commentators like Professor John Mearsheimer, journalist Chris Hedges, and economist and UN advisor Jeffrey Sachs, including pro-Ukrainian voices such as Timothy Snyder, history professor at the University of Toronto, and journalist Philip Short, the author of “Putin”, a biography. I gradually came to view this conflict through a much wider historical and geopolitical lens than the one generally

offered by our mainstream media.

The image of Russia as the “Evil Empire”—echoing Ronald Reagan's famous rhetoric during the final years of the Cold War—still lingers in most of our newsrooms, shaping both the language and the assumptions that permeate our collective minds. Our press is more ready to point at Soviet Gulags than at the massacres created by our assumed-to-be-free world. Pointing the finger at others keeps us distracted from our own horror shows.

Russia has never been a land of uninterrupted peace and brotherly love, but then I cannot think of any nation since Adam and Eve that has managed such a feat for very long. Russia has endured more than its share of invasion, civil war, famine, repression, and misery. From Mongol horsemen to Nazi tank divisions, foreign armies have repeatedly crossed Russia's frontiers in search of territory, power, and resources. Now that I have read more about the history, I understand better why Russia did not want Ukraine to be part of NATO.

The United States has been fortunate to have two great oceans protecting it from the repeated invasions that have shaped so much of European and Russian history. Yet Americans still found themselves slaughtering one another during the Civil War, which claimed close to one million lives. I'm skipping here the rest of the twentieth century calamities orchestrated by the American “Land of the Free.” Yet, in much of the Western imagination, Russia remains the ultimate bogeyman.

This is not to excuse Russia's own wars or abuses, but rather to question the selective way history is remembered. We need to recall that Russia has been attacked by the Swedes (1708), Napoleon (1812), Britain, France, Finland, Turkey (1853), Japan (1904), Germany (1914), and the combined forces of Britain, France, the United States, Japan, Canada, and Italy (1918).

In the Second World War, Nazi Germany's barbarous invasion of the Soviet Union left 25 million Russian casualties. European fascist volunteers fought alongside Nazi forces, including the Ukrainian Galician S.S. nationalists, many of which participated in killing tens of thousands of Poles, Jews, Roma, and Russians.

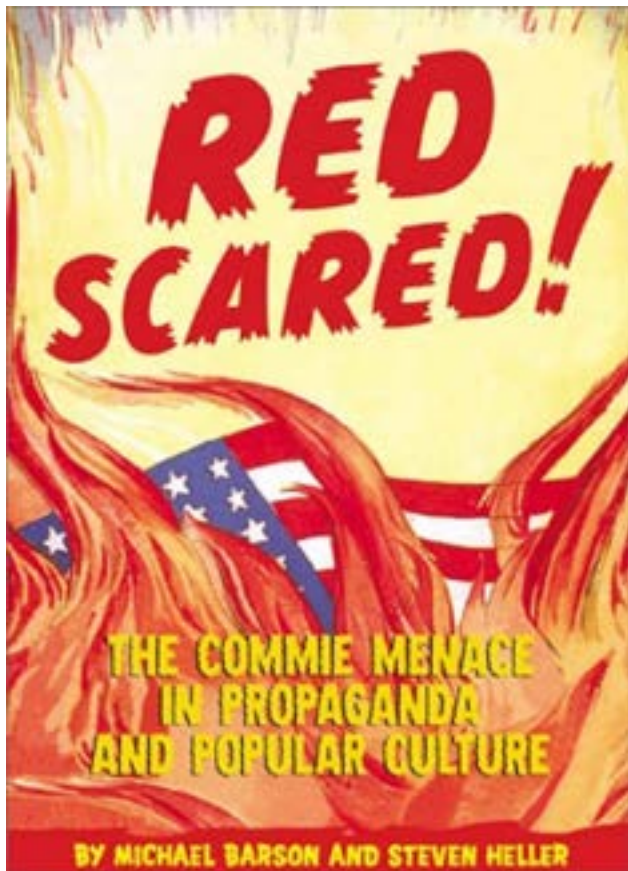
The proverb “once bitten, twice shy”, has no doubt infused the

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psyche of the Russian population, including Putin, whose brother starved during the Leningrad siege that killed more people than Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined: 750 000 human beings. Yet we still see Russia as the recurring villain, and our history books rarely mention that Nazi Germany would never have been defeated without the Soviet offensives that destroyed much of the German army in the East.

Our D-Day commemorations relegate the Soviet contribution to the defeat of Nazi Germany to the margin, leaving the impression that the war was won almost entirely by the United States and its Western allies. Similarly, looking back to the nineteenth century, had Napoleon's Grande Armée not been shattered in Russia, would Wellington have prevailed at Waterloo?



Collective memory helps explain why many Russians remain deeply apprehensive about military threats approaching from the West. From Gorbachev to Yeltsin and now Putin, NATO's expansion has always been a worrisome menace to Russian leaders. During the negotiations over German reunification, US Secretary of State James Baker proclaimed loud and clear that

"NATO will not expand one inch to the east."

From Putin's perspective, "Our biggest mistake was to trust you too much. Your mistake was to take that trust as weakness and abuse it." After all, after he came to power, Putin suggested that Russia become part of the European Union and NATO.

Russia has remained a primary villain of Western political mythology since the end of the Second World War. It is far easier to reduce an entire nation to a handful of labels than to understand its history. "The Evil Empire," "Mordor," "the Reds," "the Commies," "the Ruskies"—each becomes a convenient stereotype, a verbal box into which an entire people can be placed.

If we hope to build a more peaceful world, we must make the effort to understand how our so-called enemies see us. Peace cannot rest on caricatures or blind spots that reduce those on the other side to little more than embodiments of evil.

Sadly, NATO and the vast U.S. military-industrial lobby set the agenda, the media packages it in "newspeak", and politicians dutifully repeat this mantra to a public that often has little time to question the narrative.

None of this negates the horror Ukrainians suffer from being a buffer state, the death of soldiers on both sides, or the economic hardships felt in other countries because of a war that could have been avoided in 2014 if the Minsk Accord had been implemented.



The Beaker That Wouldn't Settle

*Gabriel Jeroschewitz, June 12th, 2026, dedicated to Professor Drake Utonium, the brilliant, gentle-hearted scientist and adopted father in **The Powerpuff Girls**.*

As the quintessential deuteragonist, he serves as the perfect moral anchor

Literary

It happened to be a Friday when the beaker finally exploded. It didn't blast into a million pieces or emit a loud pop or whoosh as it broke. Instead, the beaker burped, a faint violet vapour drifting out of it that smelled peculiarly of existential anxiety.

Professor Utonium stared at it. The beaker stared back

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at him, as though somehow capable of understanding him and his professorial life. From the beaker's opening he perceived a faint luminescence, as though his creation was breathing, and figures within the glow that seemed to study him with deep concern - though that glow seemed to come from the beaker itself.

"What," said Professor Utonium, combing his perfectly straight part with his index finger, "have I done?" What he had done was create three of the most dangerous authors active in the Western literary tradition: Fyodor Dostoevsky, Franz Kafka, and Albert Camus. Each of them would take up residence in his laboratory and his head for the foreseeable future. The first to approach him was the tall one - the embodiment of Dostoevsky.

He showed up at six in the morning, restless and insomniac in his approach to the life of a professor. "You see," said Dostoevsky, who wandered around the beaker of water that Utonium had filled for a morning cup of tea, "the question is not whether the water is hot. The question is whether the water deserves to be hot. What is the relationship between water and its own temperature? Does the water suffer, Professor? Does it know of the suffering of others?" "I just wanted to boil some water for tea," said Professor Utonium

"Tea!" said Dostoevsky, his eyes stretched wide with such realization and joy that Utonium almost thought he was possessed by religious zealotry. "You reduce the cosmos to tea! When you boil water and drink it, you allow the hot water to interact with your tongue, your cup, your table, the floor, the building, and the earth. Professor, meet God!"

The kettle screamed in the Professor's kitchen. The second to arrive was the one without announcement - Kafka himself.

Sitting in the corner of the laboratory was a thin man in a suit that did not appear to fit him properly. He looked up when Professor Utonium entered the laboratory.

"I have been told," said Kafka, "that you are the one responsible for my existence."

"I - I mean, technically -"

"No," said Kafka, "you are not responsible for my existence. I require Form 27-B, but I have not been provided with a copy. Instead, I have been provided with a beaker. The beaker, I suspect, is insufficient. I have filed a complaint with the Administration, but it has been routed to a nonexistent department. They have also told me that I do not exist."

"They have?"

"They have."

Utonium never did discover what Kafka desired of him. He suspected that Kafka did not know himself. Every morning Kafka would appear with a new form. Every morning the form would be rejected by the Administration. Yet every morning, Utonium would find forms in his own handwriting, submitted to the Administration in a language he did not understand, but with a signature that approximated his own.

The last to arrive was the third - the embodiment of Camus.

Camus showed up with two mugs of coffee and a smile that was either peaceful or unhinged.

"You've made a mistake," said Camus, placing one of the mugs into Professor Utonium's hand. "All three of you have made a mistake. But that's all right."

Utonium investigated the coffee. It was perfect. The fact that it was perfect was the most unsettling element of their existence.

"How is any of this 'the point'?" asked Professor Utonium.

Camus kicked his feet up on the laboratory table and gestured at the other two.

"Look at them. Look at us. We have been given one beaker and one counter in the world, and for the rest of our lives have been given these questions that have no answers. Dostoevsky seeks an answer through suffering. Kafka seeks an answer in the Administration that created his existence. I seek coffee despite the existence of suffering." He took a sip. "The rock will roll down the hill, Professor. It always does. The only question is whether you roll it back up the hill with a smile."

"That's -"

"Don't say that" said Camus.

"You'll spoil the moment."

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The three of them established a routine within the laboratory. Dostoevsky would spend his mornings with Professor Utonium engaging in moral dilemmas that left Utonium questioning the very existence of his conscience. Camus would spend his afternoons in the kitchen, preparing elaborate meals for the trio in a demonstration of rebellion against an absurd existence. Kafka would spend his evenings standing in the doorways of the laboratory, waiting for a call that never came, sighing intensely with each passing hour. There would be arguments. There were big ones. "The human soul is a battlefield!" Dostoevsky cried. Camus's coffee jumped into the air in concern. Kafka's form was splattered with coffee and instantly voided.

"The human bureaucracy is the battlefield," said Kafka, "and the battlefield is located within Form 9-C, which Professor Utonium has incorrectly filled out." "There is no battlefield!" Camus cried, laughing. "Look around you. It's Friday. There's a hill and a rock and a man. The man rolls the rock down the hill. The rock falls. The man rolls again. That's not suffering. "But Now its Tuesday." "Tuesday is suffering!" Dostoevsky shouted. "No," Camus said, almost gently. "Tuesday is absurd. Suffering is the idea that Tuesday is supposed to mean something."

Kafka looked up from the voided form. "I filled out a form once," he said, "that stated I was not suffering. The Administration rejected my form and stated that I was, in fact, suffering for having denied suffering. It required that I suffer in a different wing of the Administration facility." The room went silent. Even Dostoevsky didn't have anything to add to that.

It was a Thursday when Professor Utonium finally sat down across from the three of them and admitted what had been eating at him since the beaker first glowed.

"I don't know what to do with you," he said. "You're all too much. You're loud, and sad, and confusing, and you won't leave, and I think—" He paused, fixing his immaculate part. "I think you broke my ability to have a normal thought."

"Good," said Dostoevsky.

"That's the process," said Kafka.

"That's the point," said Camus, and raised his coffee cup. Utonium looked at the beaker on his desk—still faintly glowing, still slightly violet, still faintly ominous. He thought about the forms, the suffering, the rock, and the hill. He thought about the way Kafka stood in doorways, waiting for permission that was never granted. He thought about the way Dostoevsky's eyes burned with questions that had no safe answers. He thought about the way Camus smiled, not because everything was fine, but because smiling was its own answer—a small, defiant, absolutely unreasonable act of defiance within the face of a universe that had no obligations to any of them. He picked up his own cup. It was cold. He drank it anyway.

"Tomorrow," he said, "someone is going to have to explain to the university why I've been filing my lab reports in triplicate and weeping into a kettle." "Welcome to the team," Camus said.

And the beaker, as if in agreement, gave one final, quiet glow—then settled, at last, into repose.



Opinion

Letters to the Editor

A letter to the editor:

According to "The New Nelson Japanese Character Dictionary" (Tuttle, 1997), the Japanese word "maga", written with the character 禍 or with 禍, means "calamity, misfortune, woe, evil, curse". How accurate this definition is about that uppercase "maga" homonym! Attached is the dictionary entry.

Harvey Abramson
Denman Island, BC



禍 4102 禍 4103 KA calamity,
J3252 J-X misfortune.
M24766 M24766
maga, wazawai calamity, misfortune,

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There Will Be Times, Oh My Child, When It All Seems Hopeless

By Caitlin Johnstone

July 26th, 2026



There will be times,
oh my child,
when it all seems hopeless.
When the trees all have QR codes
and the bank boys and balrogs
are holding all the cards.
When your refrigerator tells you
“THE IRANIAN PEOPLE YEARN FOR FREEDOM”
and your electric shaver can smell
if you’ve been reading Parenti.
When you’re on a first-name basis
with the police surveillance drones
and your colonoscopy screen
in the exam room
is running ads for Northrop Grumman.
And it is true,
oh my child,
it is true that the machine is mighty

and that its armor is very thick.
It is true that the bank boys
have long fingers
and they are putting marbles
in our minds.

The sky is red,
and the moon has a FOR SALE sign,
and parts of Palestinians
are turning up in our tap water.
But oh my child, do not be daunted,
and oh my child, do not despair.
There are forces within us
the Flock cameras can’t see.
There are depths within us
not even the balrogs can reach.
Beneath all the doomscroll addiction psychosis,
beneath all the oceans of trauma and toil,
a creature is stirring
and opening its eyes,
its eyes full of primordial déjà vu,
its eyes full of Big Bang recursions
full of eyes
watching eyes
watching eyes
watching eyes.
It looks at you,
and you meet its gaze.
Everything goes still.
You remember what you are.
Oh my sweet, darling child,
you see it now.
You see that This
could never be contained.



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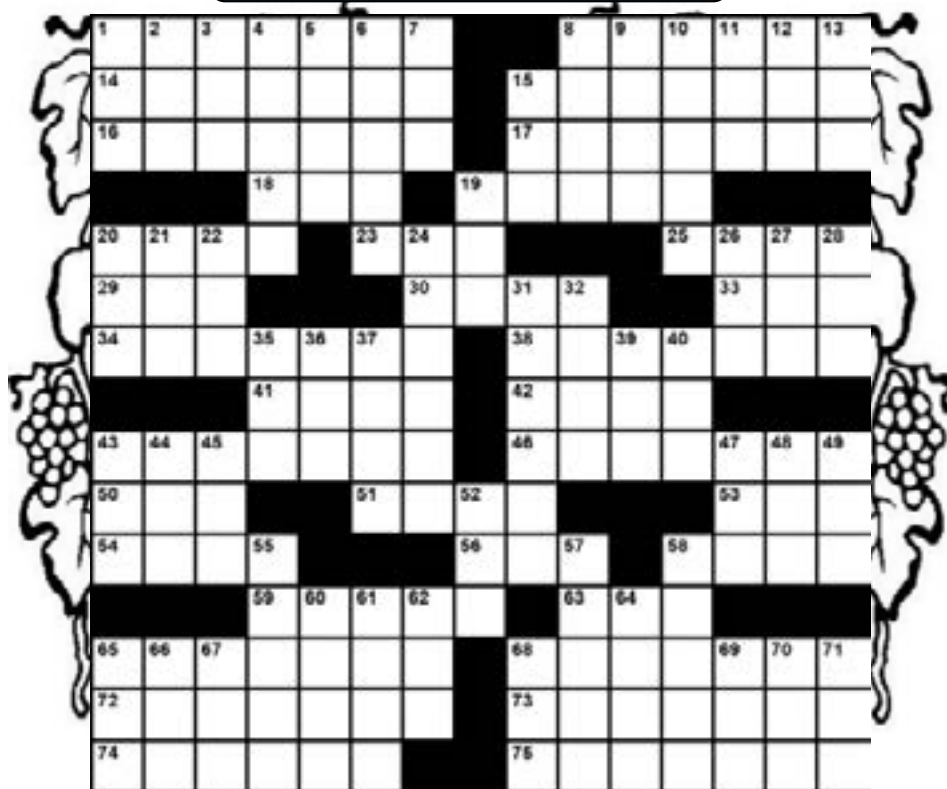
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68. Mindless
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73. Choral piece
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11. Approx.
12. Luau wear
13. Jiffy
15. Cold weather malady
19. Bauxite bonanza
20. Acct., often
21. Black gold
22. Actress Tilly
24. Music movement
26. Cuckoo
27. Namely
28. Be unoriginal

31. Orderly arrangements
32. Clean and tidy
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36. A rel.
37. Band
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48. Baby's break
49. Mail HQ
52. Dispose of
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60. Crow's nest place
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62. After deductions
64. Hokkaido ancients
65. Boring tool
66. Actor McBride
67. Cloth for cleaning
68. Arctic surface
69. -chi ch'uan
70. Skater Midori
71. Certainly may

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• Last Issue's Answers •

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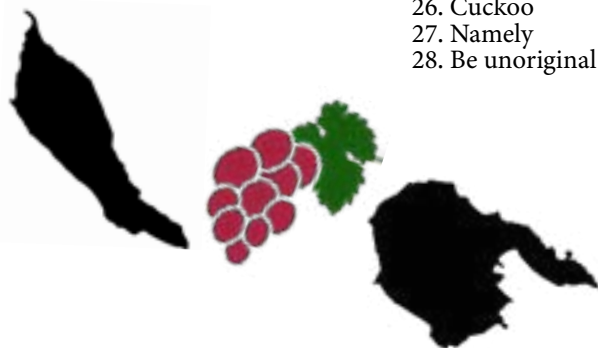
GRUMPISM

“ Two psychics meet on the street. One says “lovely weather at the moment”. The other says, “yes, reminds me of the summer of 2027”. ”



• Last Issues's ANSWERS •

I	O	N				S	E	A				D	I	P
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- Promotional content for products, services, programs, and events will be published at going advertising rates.
- Public service announcements, notices of meetings, and news releases will be published for a fee. Exceptions will be made for emergencies where the public is immediately endangered.
- With regret, no exceptions can be made for non-profit status.
- Letters to the Editor are published free of charge.

The Grapevine is happy to provide an open, public forum for all islanders to speak and be heard. We are steadfast in our commitment to uphold freedom of expression.

As the record of our times, every issue of the Grapevine is a compilation of that week's submissions. We do not editorialize content, nor do we censor. We ask that writers moderate their own content. The Grapevine reserves the right to edit for brevity.

We are open to contributions from all Denman & Hornby Islanders. If you've something to say, send it our way! No copy and paste submissions. In your own words, please!

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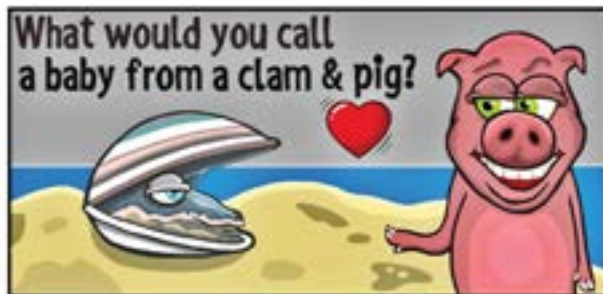
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- RECYCLING CENTRE 1-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 1-5pm
- FREE STORE 3-5pm
- FOOD BANK Hub Comm. Hall 3:30-6:30pm
- Community Choir 2:30pm Back Hall

31 Fri

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- AA Meeting DIUC Gathering Place 7pm

1 Sat

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- RECYCLING CENTRE 9:30am-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 9:30am-5pm
- FREE STORE 9-12:30pm

2 Sun

3 Mon

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- AA Meeting DIUC Gathering Place 7pm
- Songwriter's Workshop 7pm Hornby Arts Centre

4 Tues

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- Employment Services 9am-3pm DAC

5 Wed

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- RECYCLING CENTRE 1-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 1-5pm
- Choose to Move 11:30-12:30 Gathering Place

6 Thur

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- RECYCLING CENTRE 1-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 1-5pm
- FREE STORE 3-5pm
- FOOD BANK Hub Comm. Hall 3:30-6:30pm
- Tax Clinic 10:30am-3pm Back Hall

7 Fri

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- AA Meeting DIUC Gathering Place 7pm
- Kaimerata 2026 7pm D.I. Community Hall

8 Sat

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- RECYCLING CENTRE 9:30am-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 9:30am-5pm
- FREE STORE 9-12:30pm
- Kaimerata 2026 4pm D.I. Community Hall

9 Sun

- Kaimerata 2026 2:30pm D.I. Community Hall

10 Mon

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- AA Meeting DIUC Gathering Place 7pm
- Songwriter's Workshop 7pm Hornby Arts Centre
- DIRA Meeting 7:30pm Back Hall

11 Tues

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- Employment Services 9am-3pm DAC

12 Wed

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- RECYCLING CENTRE 1-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 1-5pm
- Choose to Move 11:30-12:30 Gathering Place
- Living to Die and Dying to Live w. Dr. Bev Spring
1:30-2:30PM DAC

13 Thur

- Dora Drinkwater Library 1:30pm-3:30pm
- RECYCLING CENTRE 1-5pm
- BOTTLE DEPOT 1-5pm
- FREE STORE 3-5pm
- FOOD BANK Hub Comm. Hall 3:30-6:30pm
- Community Choir 2:30pm Back Hall



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