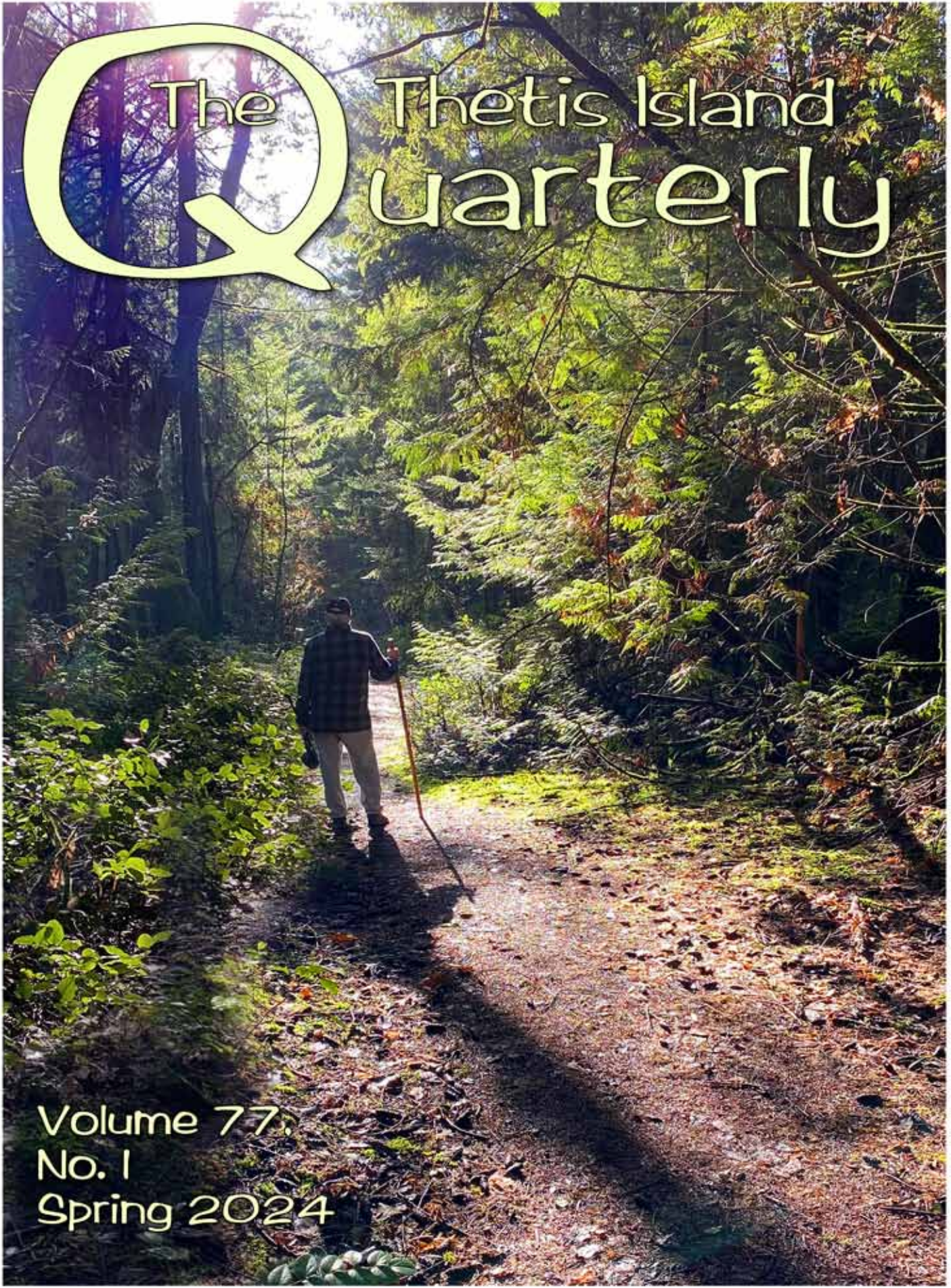




The

Thetis Island Quarterly

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**THE THETIS
ISLAND
QUARTERLY**

The Quarterly is published by the Thetis Island Community Association around the 1st of March, June, September and December of each year, to highlight the people and activities of Thetis Island. The new digital Quarterly comes free with TICA membership but both digital and print versions may also be obtained by subscription at \$30 per year.

Perspectives and opinions contained herein are not necessarily those of TICA, and the editor reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, brevity or taste. Substantial edits must be approved by the author before going to print.

The deadline for all submissions is roughly four weeks prior to the publication date (i.e. Feb. 1st, May 1st, Aug. 1st, and Nov. 1st.)

Electronic submissions are preferred where possible, and should be sent to the Editors at quarterly@thetisland.net. Or mailing to Box 6-15, Thetis Island, VoR 2Y0

Subscriptions may be purchased through Nan Beals, c/o The Quarterly, Box 1-7, Thetis Island, VoR 2Y0 or 4nanbeals@gmail.com

Cover photo is by Pat English, of a hiker on the new Mt. Burchell trail. See article on page 17.

EDITORIAL - THE Q IN FOCUS

Michelangelo saw sculpture as the art of recognizing the form already in the stone, and chipping away to set it free. Every Quarterly is a bit like that. There's a certain magic about it, that in the end, it falls together. You'd think, after 20+ years of involvement in various aspects of it, I'd have learned to trust that. And I almost do, but until you see the form in the mass of material, you never quite know. I guess that's part of the magic too.

The Quarterly is probably one of the loveliest jobs available in this community. You get to not just read, but understand and work with the stories of so many people. Even "just" committee reports, because we know who wrote them and did the work, hold clues and insights into both the service and the personalities involved. For anyone who likes people and takes an interest in the place and the times and what makes life work around here, the Q is a privilege to work for.

So this is another in the series, started last issue, of a *Focus on Community Service* - this time an overview of the vehicle itself, the Quarterly. Sheila Tonkin, Easton Vance's daughter, wrote: "Thank you so very much again for allowing me to share about dad. Thetis Islanders are very lucky to have this outlet. There are not many places that have such an intimate and longstanding record."

I agree, and I hope you do too, that we are very lucky to have this (and many thanks to Ann Dickie for starting it, back in 1990!) Obviously, it takes more than luck - it takes people who value it and understand that it enhances the community they live in, and are willing to be part of it. I love it, and will happily keep on working on it in whatever capacity for as long as I can. But I was 50 years old when I first joined Ruth's team, and I'm 76 now, in and out and in again, many jobs and editors later. Alternate editor Carol Sowerby and I would love to be able to work with new people and help out as they get started, but we're none of us immortal. Please consider joining the team before you or someone gets thrown in at the deep end with no back-up!

There are lots of ways to be involved without taking it all on - just getting your toes in the water. The **advertising** is a separate yet connected part, requiring mainly keeping track, sometimes inviting new ads, invoicing every year, things like that. **Circulation**, currently managed by Nan Beals, is another separate but needed job that could use new people learning the ropes. Being part of **the team that brainstorms** each issue, thinks about what's been happening, stories that might be out there, subjects we haven't looked at in awhile, not to mention **proof-reading!** Then there's **layout**, which may take a learning curve if you haven't done it before, but it's not rocket science, and again, there's lots of help around if you need it. **Graphic design? Photoshop?** All skills that we can use or help with. If you like **writing**, this is obviously an easy fit! A knack for **humour**? Yes please! **Photography** - lots of scope there! **Editing**... everyone has their own take on that, but mainly, the idea is to let people have their own voice as much as possible. This isn't a commercial magazine - we aren't trying to please the whole world. We're just the vehicle for islanders to share with other islanders - "Letters Home" - anything that keeps us abreast of what's happening, what matters to some of us and we want to share it. **Readership** is as much a participation as writing, because that too means becoming involved with your neighbours in ways that rarely happen in larger communities.

We hope you value the Quarterly as much as we do. There's no getting around it - for all our differences, it's love that makes a place like this worth living in. And love, and enthusiasm, and enjoyment, and concerns, all need an outlet, or they're just that uncarved block of stone. Please join us!

Veronica Shelford

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LETTERS HOME

October 7, 1946 – June 4th 1947

Part 2

Part 2 of the letters from 18 year old Audree Sherlock (later Rees of Thetis Island), during her adventure crewing on the yacht Reverie as it attempted to sail from Vancouver to New York, through the Panama Canal. Part 1 is in the Winter 2023-24 issue of the Quarterly. We have kept to her own words and spellings, as these letters were effectively her diary.

Oct 12th, 1946

Getting bored?

The next day was spent trying to make land we'd seen in the early dawn. The breeze was light tho and I was contented to be sitting in the sunshine. I was on the 8pm to 12 watch that night and it was starting to get dusty as I turned in only to be called out at 3:30am to help take down the main and stay sail because it had really blown up. We set a course West under the mizzen only. The night before, several airplanes went overhead and a large liner passed us going west but we never did get sight of that land again.

By this time, we were getting used to rolling around and heading out to sea. We'd kid Skipper about seeing the Coast of China ahead. At midnight we hove-to under the mizzen and kept a lookout. The only lights we had now were two huge coal oil burning navigation lights, a storm lantern with broken glass, and a coal oil lamp for the binnacle. We had caught onto the idea of enclosing the doghouse with a tarpaulin which helped to keep us warm. Skipper would lose his patience every night with those navigations (red and green) lights tho because the wind always blew out the matches. They'd have to be cleaned every day too because our oil smoked in them. There was a picture of a pessimist if I ever saw one - we admired him every minute tho.

Wednesday Oct 12th, was somebody's birthday but I couldn't find Western Union anywhere. We saw ships and headed for land trying out the new storm sail as it was still blowing too hard for our main. All day long Reverie ran before it with waves trying their worst to break over the stern but the ship wasn't having any. At dusk we reduced sail to the stay-sail and mizzen for safety and



John, Audree and Lucy on the Reverie, 1946

headed right at the land in our desperate effort to get a bearing. I was at the wheel with Skipper dozing on the pail at 10:30 that night when a light suddenly appeared flashing every 5 seconds. From the charts he made it to Point Reyes just north of San Francisco. We were pretty pleased to have made it so close. I was positively amazed the next morning when I came up after breakfast to see big straw-coloured hills almost within spitting distance.

With whales spouting in our path, it made quite a picture after 13 days at sea. There was a super breeze, small ripple green sea with a big white bow wave to add as we sailed along the coast. As Lucy put it, the hills looked like somebody had gone over them with a blowtorch. There was a lime kiln grooved in the hills and a railway track along the coast line with trains going by nearly every 5 minutes. The Point itself was quite a sight - very high yet blunt and there were a couple of buildings for the diaphone on the lower level then a ladder like stairway up the flattened top where the lighthouse and a very large farm-like house were. They looked cut off from everything up there with nothing but treeless hills for miles. Maybe the picture I took of it will turn out. [It didn't.]

We boiled along the coast in the warm sunshine all day looking for a Point that measured just 17 miles from the Point.

The wind got a little too spicy about 5:30pm and we rolled quite a reef in the main before finally taking it down. Hove-to again but with uncertainty ruling. Lights were starting to flash everywhere around us, we were just off a point with quite a town next to it, none of this on our chart. Once more we hove-to for the night and kept watch on the variety of lights.



Reyes Point lighthouse in the 1940s



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October 15th 1946

In the morning we set off for the next point along the coast expecting to see the Golden Gate anytime. But the breaks weren't with us. All day long we sailed expectantly point to point, sure as fire the next one would be Bonito our goal. The day was bright and warm tho and I was just satisfied to gaze at the odd land while sitting at the wheel. One of the birds called Pelicans flew right at the boat and scared me blue by landing right on the doghouse roof in front of me. We'd seen pelicans since the Point but this kind of behaviour was new - standing smack in the middle of a life saver and not even budging when the Skipper poked at him, telling him to scam. After a few minutes it took off only to return and light on the cabin top. We could get as close as we liked.

About 6pm we came around a big point that looked so much like what we were seeking that Lucy bet 25 cents on it. It was dusk as we headed in along the coast there - lights came on everywhere, cars were plainly visible driving along the roads - there were neon signs among the groups that form the business district of a city ahead - and finally - a row of white lights in the form of a long high bridge. The Golden Gate - oh sure!

Two things lacking tho, boats and lights to show the channel. So doing what comes naturally, we hove-to and waited for daylight. On watch I saw a big amusement park on shore that reminded me so much of Santa Monica and Long Beach. We were just a mile or so off shore and the air seemed so much warmer than the other nights.

Lucy and Skipper had really been getting the short end of the stick for sleep. I couldn't even wake her up for her watch so went back to looking at the lights

feeling very wide-awake.

I never had such an unbelievable awakening as I did that morning. October 5th Saturday, about 8am sleeping in the main cabin, I awoke when Skipper called out to a fisherman "Where's this beautiful bridge of yours, the Golden Gate?" A good American voice yelled out, "That's way up north in San Francisco you're in Santa Monica." Honest I was too numb to move - but when I got on deck there was our bridge, it was none other than the Santa Monica Pacific Palisades and the pier was dead ahead. I acted as pilot as we went around the breakwater (which was covered with pelicans) and dropped anchor. Just call me breathless.

After breakfast I started nosing around in the galley and found that the floor came out so proceeded to take the pieces up on deck and scrub them with sandpaper-soap (like sand). I won't say that later in the day, Lucy didn't run up forward for something and slip into the hole because she did.

We found there was a tender there and would come for 3 honks of a horn - out came the old bellows while we two were making a mad dash to change into something presentable. The tender was fast and the fellow handled it like I've never seen before - heading straight for a boat one minute and alongside it in seconds.

Now I haven't the log book to tell you what happened there from Saturday the 5th to Friday the 11th but it's not been hard to recall one of the most enjoyable times of your life - the people were so good to us.

To be continued...

RED BULL FOLLOW-UP

As regular readers will remember, last year former Thetis Islander, James Elliott competed in the RedBull Xalps, the world's toughest adventure race.

As a reminder, It's a fiercely contested battle across the Alps lasting almost two weeks in which around 30 athletes run, hike and fly by paraglider up to 150km a day passing set Turnpoints positioned across iconic mountains and famous resorts. With athletes often hiking up to 4,000m of vertical ascent a day and running as much as 100km on foot, it's not only an incredible test of physical endurance but it has become recognized as the supreme test for the world's best hike-and-fly athletes.

The RedBull Xalps is only open to the world's best paraglider pilots and adventure athletes, but uniquely it is a race where men and women compete equally. The race was founded in 2003 by the late adventurer Hannes Arch and has taken place every two years since then. The 2023 edition will therefore mark the 20th anniversary of the iconic race.

James was picked to lead Team Canada and competed against 31 other teams from around the world.

Both the training and the race were unbelievably grueling. James' training schedule was broken up into two



From "This is BC": Vancouver's James Elliott first Canadian to complete one of the most challenging adventure races in the world | Watch News Videos Online (globalnews.ca) - Global News BC Video

parts: Endurance and Flying. For almost a year, he would alternate almost daily between 20km runs and 40km mountain hikes, all with a weighted pack on his back. For the flying component of his training, James competed in other hike and fly races, including the X-Pyr where he placed 11/42 teams. Score – X-Pyr | The Pyrenean challenge. And the X-RedRocks in Utah. James had a target of being in the air for 200 hours each year, leading up to the RedBull Xalps. There was also flight specific training he went through, where he would practice taking off and landing from very tight spaces and flying in windy and difficult conditions, trying to replicate what he would face cruising over the Alps.

Beyond flying, James needed a great deal of support from the ground and assembled a team to help him. Jonathan Klimow was James' chief race strategist and also ran his social media leading up to and during the race. Basically, he would sit behind a computer for 17 hours a days, reading weather patterns, planning James' route and responding to questions or ideas from James in the air. Dan Vallaries backed up Jonathan as a secondary strategist. Norm Krcmar drove the



Having the time of his life...

van on the ground and also was the cook for the team and Guillaume Labranche was the sherpa and in charge of all the gear.

The race took off on June 11, 2023 in Kitzbühel and is one massive loop around the alps. The race travels east through Austria, north into Germany, then quickly cuts back into Austria before heading west through Switzerland. The Athletes navigate some of the countries' highest mountains, before turning anti-clockwise around Mt. Blanc start heading back east through Switzerland and into Italy, across the lakes then back over the Alps one last time to finish at Zell am See on the South side of the Alps.

There are 15 turn points that must be tagged along the way. At some, the athletes have to stop and physically sign their name and at others, they are digitally scanned as the athlete flies over. The goal is to spend as much time in the air as you can, as you are only allowed to move by either hiking or flying during daylight hours. James' best day was 200 kms of flying. His toughest was only 17 km of airtime and the rest spent hiking all day down a mountain, when the wind conditions were too tough to launch. This almost cost him the ability to finish the race on time.

Out of 32 athletes, 23 finished and I am very proud to say that Thetis Island's very own James Elliot was among them, and became the first ever Canadian to finish the race.

Please visit the links below for more information and documentaries on James' historical feat.

On behalf of everybody on Thetis, congratulations James. We sure are proud of you!!!

Nigel Andison

<https://youtu.be/IzBwLHeRKP8> - RedBull Documentary

James Elliott reveals his magic moments | Red Bull X-Alps (redbullxalps.com)

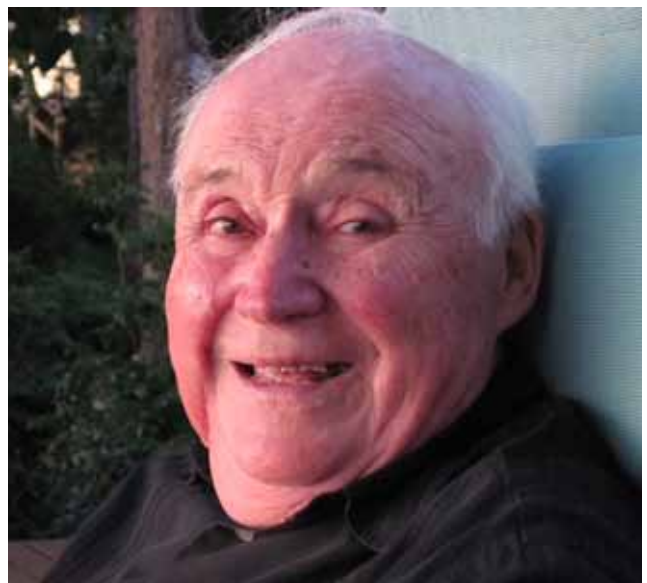
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REMEMBERING

EASTON VANCE: A REMEMBRANCE

On July 7, 2023, our cheeky, clever, fun-loving, determined, caring and affectionate father, Easton, passed away in Cowichan District Hospital in Duncan BC after a short illness. He was a few months shy of his 93rd birthday, and while one knows that such passing will inevitably come, it remains a shock. It seemed that Easton, in his ever robust health, with his acute intelligence, still exploring engineering problems and reckoning with the intricacies of world events as a no-nagenarian, would simply keep going.

Only two months prior to falling ill, Easton had been



Easton Vance
October 21, 1930 - July 7, 2023



Very young Easton with his Dad

in Australia visiting his daughter Sheila. Each day he would walk the hilly suburban terrain 2 kms to the shops and back to collect his daily newspapers, stopping to rest on low brick walls lining front yards. Having spent part of each year in Australia over a long period, Easton knew well all the shopkeepers and chatted away with them each morning, offering up some quip or story. He also collected friends in the surrounding streets who he came to know through his daily walks. On his most recent visit, he recounted with amusement that on one such walk, he was resting on a low wall, looking upwards into the branches of a tree, watching the lorikeets. He heard from behind him some friends calling, "Easton!" Without turning around and still looking up into the branches, Easton replied, "Yes, Lord?",



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his friends bursting into laughter. An example of the famous Easton sense of humour. This is a recurring theme in people's memories of him.

Easton was born in Rutherglen, Scotland, on October 21, 1930 to Easton Vance and Mary Thom. He was elder brother to Jim. Life in the 1930s and 1940s was tough, with first the depression and then the war. Easton's stories from that time were, as to be expected, mixed. Tragically, his mother passed away at an early age from tuberculosis. He lost a favoured uncle in the war. He recalled the stress of hearing the air raid siren and rushing to take his younger brother to a bomb shelter. Yet there was also humour and fond memories from that time: the field with Jenny's Burn running behind their home; the dog Laddie and his brother Jim's menagerie of animals; feeding carrots to Peggy the Clydesdale who drew his uncle's delivery cart; going to the cinema to watch Flash Gordon; the jawbreakers that lived up to their name and the delights of takeaway hot, mushy peas with vinegar. The time he got the non-alcoholic communion wine and alcoholic wine mixed up for the church delivery; the sheer terror he felt at realising the grave sin he had committed and telling the shopkeeper, who said sternly, 'tell no one about this'; and the confused relief he felt at his father's belly laugh at the thought of those parishioners unwittingly quaffing the claret. Easton was heavily involved in the Boy's Brigade. He enjoyed sailing. He was a boxer. He discovered a great love of music, having been introduced to classical music by a friend he was tutoring in mathematics. He learned the bugle and had a fine singing voice, inherited from his father, who sang in a choir that traveled to various locales to perform.

Easton had a natural affinity for both electrical and mechanical apparatus. He would take machines apart, figure out how they worked, and put them back together. His step-mother, Anne, would arrange for him to fix the radios and other appliances of friends and neighbours. This kept him in pocket money. He would go into the local military surplus store and sometimes he would receive gratis defunct machinery and told if he could fix it he could keep it. Easton went to work at the Colvilles steel manufacturing plant and he served an indentured apprenticeship in Electrical Engineering, attending both Coatbridge and Glasgow Technical Colleges.

When he was 20, Easton met his beloved wife of 48 years, Maggie, through her friend Ethna, his brother Jim's girlfriend and now wife of many years. Later, Jim would tease him, claiming that Easton needed Jim to find him a wife. At 21, Easton was called up to the Royal Air Force (RAF) for national service. This was a seminal period for the young adult Easton. He served as electrician, working on various aircraft. He was posted at RAF Kinloss and described flying over coastal Scotland at night, seeing the brilliance of the white sands reflecting the moonlight. Easton's time in service in Malta and Sardinia left a deep impression, expanding his world-view and possibly contributing to his later desire to move abroad and see more of the world. His stories from that time are evocative:



Easton in the cockpit

the close humid heat in the tight spaces of the aircraft as he undertook repairs; the dangerous sheet lightning flashing across the tarmac; the praying mantis that was tethered and kept in the billet to contain the other insects; the ceiling creeping geckos, occasionally losing grip and dropping onto the startled occupant of the bed below; and especially the joys of a delicious mediterranean dish paired with a glass of wine. At the end of his period of service, Easton was offered an officer's commission, but he declined. Upon his return from the service, Easton was employed in the Instrument Department at Colvilles and was assistant to the Chief Electrical Engineer.

Easton and Maggie were married on September 9, 1955. The following year they emigrated to Vancouver, where Easton's close friend from the RAF had moved previously. The young couple

throve in their new home. Maggie worked as a shorthand stenographer and typist and Easton worked in various engineering occupations, including as design draftsman at H. A. Simons, where he produced control systems for pulp mills, and at Ford, Bacon and Davis where he designed explosion proof control systems for the natural gas pipeline that ran from Fort St. John to Vancouver. Easton and Maggie purchased a home in Richmond and their two children, Michael and Sheila were born. Easton took up wood-working as a hobby and built all of the baby furniture, as well as bureaus and cabinets for their new home. He made elegantly shaped wooden tables, topped with glass. He undertook major home improvement projects in their first and second homes in Richmond and later on Thetis: carport, greenhouse, trellis, backyard

pond complete with waterfall, among many other renovations. Maggie had the creative vision and Easton made it a reality. On weekends, Easton was often to be found in his workshop, Michael helping him. Michael has since been able to apply in his own home the knowledge he gained from Easton.

At the time Michael was born, Easton was working at Munshaw Colour Labs, where early work on colour photography was undertaken. Easton's role was to refit old black and white printers to operate as colour printers, complete with electronic exposure control. The Vance family archive contains piles of photographs of Michael as a baby and toddler, multiple copies with various exposures and a photographer's marker circling some infelicity in the development process.

Over several decades, Easton designed a variety of electrical systems for the wood and telecommunications industries in British Columbia and abroad. An innovator in design, Easton was at the forefront of the application of emerging technologies and was involved in alternative energy, designing systems for wind powered sites. Throughout the 1960s, Easton was Chief Electrical Engineer at Durand Machine Co. Ltd, where he formed the electrical and the electronic divisions. He introduced the new solid state logic devices to the lumber industry. His research and development work included the investigation of veneer drying using microwave energy and the use of carbon dioxide laser for sawing and bark removal, undertaken in collaboration with the Electrical Department at the University of British Columbia (UBC). This was prior to the development of home-based microwave appliances. Alert to its dangers, Easton would not allow a microwave oven into the house for some time until he was satisfied that the technology was well-tested and safe.

In the 1970s, Easton became involved in the telecommunications industry, first as Vice President of Engineering at Crown Electronics, then as Partner and Engineering Manager of Research Industries, Ltd (RIL). During this period he designed several major items of equipment for telephone companies, including automatic testing devices to monitor billing

equipment. Among other things, Easton introduced micro-processor controls to the large power system produced by RIL. In 1977, Easton co-founded Canadian Energy Conversion Industries, serving as President and Engineering Manager, where he set about promoting the use of wind energy and where he developed two distinct types of control systems and three completely engineered systems. In the 1980s, Easton ran the engineering department of Hawker Siddeley, later Kockums-Cancar. Easton later left this

employment to form his own consulting company, Perikon Ltd., where he continued to design for the lumber industry.

It was Easton's work with wind energy that led to his and Maggie's connection to Thetis Island. The former owner of Dayman Island, Con Andre, had purchased a wind turbine. Travelling back and forth for this project, Easton got to know Thetis well. In 1980, Maggie and Easton purchased an undeveloped lot with only a driveway carved into the dense forest. They bought a trailer-home and moved it to the property. Easton set about clearing a section of forest to create space for a home and to open up the stunning view. The property remained a rustic getaway for a decade until construction was begun on a house. Maggie and Easton moved

permanently to Thetis in the early 1990s, with Easton continuing to run his engineering consulting business from home. Upon completion of the build, Maggie created a beautiful and extensive garden with apple, pear and fig trees, kiwi fruit vines, vegetables and herbs, rhododendrons, columbines (her favourite), hostas, and a swathe of different types of heather, among many other much loved plants and trees.

Easton and Maggie thoroughly enjoyed the life they had made on Thetis. They made many strong and lasting friendships and were very involved in island life. Easton was heavily engaged in the work of the Thetis Island Improvement District, particularly in relation to emergency measures. He was very proud of his relationship with the Chief of the Penelakut nation, with whom he worked closely on the matter of the government dock on Thetis. After Maggie's death in 2003, Easton retired completely from work, wind-



Easton and Maggie in the 50s

ing up his consulting business, and no longer was so closely involved in island community work. He nevertheless over many years maintained a keen interest in engineering problems. Right up to the point he fell ill in 2023, he was working on the development of a new type of generator, spending many hours in his garage workshop, and in earlier times, he oftentimes was to be found in Harry Armstrong's well-appointed workshop.

When his children married, Easton delighted in having gained two extended families and he retained a keen interest in all the families' doings. Particularly after Maggie's passing, Easton frequently spent time with family in Nova Scotia and Australia, and joined them on trips to Ottawa, PEI, France and Scotland, where he also enjoyed time with brother Jim and sister-in-law Ethna and their children and grandchildren, and with Maggie's sister Sheila, with whom he remained close until her passing, and her children. He was devoted to his beloved granddaughter, Rebecca; they shared the same sense of humour and, particularly as she got older, common interests in mathematics and science.

Easton retained the lifelong passion for music sparked in his youth, as his friends on Thetis who attended his 'musical evenings' can attest. He built his own stereo system cabinets and when first Michael and then Sheila were born he said that he would not curb his listening, that his offspring would just have to get used to it. We well remember falling asleep each night to whichever record took his fancy that evening. Usually it was classical, but sometimes we might get something lively like Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass. There were strict controls on record use: from him we learned the proper way to remove a vinyl record and return it to its sleeve. We have been reliably informed that even recently among adult friends, no one was allowed to place the record on the turntable but him.

Both Easton and Maggie were avid readers and had a great appreciation for language. Like his own

father, Easton wrote poetry throughout his life. He also had a wonderful facility for recitation, creating a natural rhythm and flow, and imbuing the words with feeling. He spoke with us children as he would his adult peers. I'm not sure how many other children in elementary school would have known words like obstreperous (usually directed at Sheila) and perspicacious. Our home was full of books, and everyone read and read and read. We always had dinner together and, particularly as we got older, the conversations were very stimulating, at times loud, as we

all strove to get our various points of view across. A friend described coming to the house and being able to hear the lively discussion from outside. Our parents fostered in us a real love of learning.

Later in life, with easy access to world television stations, Easton developed a fascination with Japan. His favourite programs were on Japanese art, landscaping, cooking, and other aspects of the culture. A particular favourite was Sumo wrestling. He would describe with great enthusiasm and humour the goings on of the latest tournament, much

to the bemusement of his family.

An independent spirit with a curious mind, Easton was an inventor, raconteur, and devoted family man and friend. He was very much loved by his family and his many friends in Australia and Canada, and is very much missed. As a boy and young man in Rutherglen, Easton could not have known that through his intellect and industry he would create for his future family a world of comfort and possibility, with full and happy lives for which we are very grateful.

The Vance family thanks very dear friends Kathryn, Michelle and Bing for their love and support during a difficult time. We would also like to thank all of Easton and Maggie's friends and neighbours in the Thetis Island Maggie community for their friendship and support of our parents over many years. Living some distance away, it has always been a great comfort to know that they had such a wonderful group of friends on Thetis.

The Vance Family



Easton and Maggie on Thetis

SHEILA KELSEY

(1925 – 2023)

On hearing that Sheila had died, a cousin of hers wrote: "... she was my idol... I loved everything about her, from her sterling character and fine mind to her enthusiasm for life, her mischievous nature, sense of humour and fun!" These words capture beautifully the nature of the young woman who became my wife, companion and best friend for over 70 years. I have been blessed to be able to share my life with her.

We met at the home of a mutual friend, just three weeks before she was booked to return to England, perhaps for good. We had a fun golf outing the next day, and we saw each other every day after that, until she left. My feelings for her grew from interest, to fascination to being deeply smitten. I had never met a girl like her.

In those days (the early 1950's) there were no cell phones, no internet. Long distance telephone calls were very expensive, and reception poor. Telegrams and overseas cables were reliable, but expensively out of the question if you used more than a few words in them.

So my courtship continued by mail to the UK. We wrote each other nearly every day. Long letters, on flimsy air-mail paper. We learned that we shared many interests and feelings. As we came to know each other more deeply, our exchanges began edging towards dreams of a life together.

I look back to a Sunday evening, March 1, 1953. My heart and mind had come firmly to the decision to propose to her. So I sat down at my desk, letting my thoughts and hopes pour out onto the page, including the critical paragraph: "So I am asking you now darling to marry me. No ifs and buts about it... will you come back to Canada just as soon as you feel you can leave your family without hurting them too much and after a little while – the shorter the better – be my wife?"

I remember popping the letter into the mailbox, and the feelings of excitement and hope I had while doing so.

I waited anxiously for a reply. My air-mail letter somehow got delayed. Several days went by. Had I somehow misread the situation, leaving the poor girl in a puzzled state, wondering how to reply to such an outrageous invitation?



Then there was a knock on the door. A messenger from Canadian Pacific Telegraphs handed me an envelope. The overseas cable read: "With All My Heart Dearest Sheila".

As the saying goes: the rest is history!

Sheila was born in Beckenham, a residential suburb about 8 miles south-east of the centre of London. Her father managed a moderately prosperous family business in the recycling trade, in Deptford, downriver on the Thames. They reclaimed mostly rags for paper-making, and some metals.

Sheila was a lively little character and with two older brothers to share fun and adventures with, she became rather a tomboy. She thought some girls, preoccupied with dolls and fussing and dressing up, as rather "silly creatures".

In those days it was safe for little children to roam at will, and she enjoyed visiting tradespeople in the town, where she was accepted with affection. She remembers often getting up early and running to the baker's shop, bringing home a delicious loaf of bread, just out of the oven, for the family breakfast.

The schools she attended in her early years were of mediocre quality, and it wasn't until she was about fifteen that learning really "turned her on". She loved sports and the outdoors and animals. She excelled at lacrosse, darting agilely between the legs of bigger, slower girls! The family of a close friend owed a farm out in the countryside, with a couple of horses, and she often spoke of the idyllic holidays she had there.

When she was 14 she was sent to a "public" boarding school called Queenswood. She disliked it. The often plodding, unimaginative ways of many of the teachers, the enforced conformity and the sometimes mindless discipline were at odds with her free spirit.

Wisely, her parents sensed her unhappiness, and moved her to a small private girls' school, "Tortington Park", about which they had heard good things. It was wartime now, and to escape the bombing the school had been evacuated from the south of England to the remote hamlet of Ballachulish, on the west coast of Scotland, where they took over an old hotel.

It was a turning point in Sheila's life. She has written lovingly about the school:

"The Headmistress, who was wise in many ways, had over the years gathered and trained a small

group of gifted teachers. She loved fine art, and the walls of rooms in the old building were now covered with copies of famous paintings. The girls, quite a few of whom were from Jewish families, were friendly and caring. I hadn't much enjoyed school before, except for the sports, and for the first time I became inspired with a love of learning. In contrast to the strict and sometimes mindless discipline of Queenswood, we were held "on loose rein", and encouraged to find our own intellectual passions. I also loved exploring the rugged countryside near the Pass of Glencoe, notorious for the traitorous massacre there in 1692.

"I also have a vivid memory of one day seeing and hearing a lone piper winding his way down a distant trail across the Loch. I still feel a tingle up my spine whenever I think of the strangely stirring strains of his piping, carrying across the water to me."

In 1941 Sheila passed her University of Oxford School Certificate Examinations, earning a Distinction in Art. She stayed on at the school for another happy year of enrichment.

After a brief time working as a medical stenographer, she started her training in Physiotherapy at St. Thomas's Hospital, just across the Thames River, opposite the Houses of Parliament in the centre of London. The training took two and a half years. The class rotated every six months between London and related sector hospitals in other places. None of the students went to University, as physios do today, and they commenced treating patients after their first six months of training.

The centre of London was the target for almost incessant bombing by the Luftwaffe. Several high explosive bombs fell on the hospital, as well as dozens of incendiary bombs. The physiotherapy department sustained a direct hit, and four staff physiotherapists were killed. Fortunately, Sheila was not there at the time.

Speaking of the Blitz, she also survived the blast from a flying bomb, or "Doodlebug", as they were nicknamed. It crashed into her parents' garden in the middle of the night, demolishing their home. Fortunately, she and her Mum and Dad were sleeping, huddled on bunks in their underground air-raid shelter.

Sheila tells of her experiences in the late spring of

1944, while at a sector hospital on the south coast of England: "We found that all our patients were being sent elsewhere. Finally, the hospital was empty. Although nothing was mentioned to us or the public, we realized that a great battle must be brewing. D-Day, the invasion of Europe by the Allied Forces, was not far away.

"When the first ambulances and busses arrived with the wounded, who had been brought straight from the beaches of Normandy across the Channel, it was my job to undress the men, often having to cut their clothing away, and prepare them to be seen by the Doctors. They would decide who should be treated immediately, or others who could be sent away to be treated elsewhere. Some of the injuries were terrible.

"As the wounded poured in, the surgeons were trying out new ways of dealing with fractures that had never been used before. Plating broken bones took place for the first time, and I believe that Plaster of Paris was experimented with and used much more widely. The physios were always in close contact with the doctors, who told us what they were striving for, and what they wanted us to do. Getting patients mobile whenever possible was important, and new methods evolved in rehabilitation. We learned quickly,

and were much in demand. It was a fine time to be in training."

Musing about Sheila's character, it occurs to me that her childhood, with the stimulus of two older brothers, and then her wartime experiences, reinforced an innate strength and courage in her. While gentle and caring, indeed very loving when the occasion called for it, she was no "softie".

I recollect, with a chuckle, an incident on our honeymoon.

We were riding to Lake O'Hara, in the Rockies. Turning a corner, my horse was spooked by something, and bucked me off ... I am not much of a rider. As I lay on the ground, winded, I imagined my new bride gently caressing my bruised body, and murmuring soothing words to ease my bruised ego. That was not quite what happened. "Den, hang on to those reins", she said. Then: "Get up, and put your foot in the stirrup ... I'll help you get back on. You always have to show the horse that you are in charge!"

After she had graduated, and the War had ended,



Sheila's family home after the Doodlebug in 1944

she stayed on as a staff physio at St. Thomas's. One day the Matron of the Orthopaedic Department, a formidable character, left a message for her to come to her office at a certain time. Sheila was apprehensive, thinking that she was about to be "hauled over the coals" for some infraction. Not so. Matron greeted her warmly and informed her that Dr. James ("Jimmy") Cyriax, head of the Department, wanted her to join him and his long-standing Physio Nan Keating in his private practice in Wimpole Street.

Sheila was delighted with the offer; the job was a plum. She was puzzled, though, as to why he had chosen her. She had done well in her training, but hadn't shone academically. But Cyriax knew what he was doing. I think he saw in her a person of uncomplicated and cheery character, with a streak of thoughtful independence. He had also been impressed with her caring and encouraging way with patients, without regard for their class or background.

Her horizons broadened. Cyriax, who is widely regarded as the father of modern orthopaedic medicine, was a brilliant and sometimes eccentric character. She learned so much from him, not just about medicine, but about life as well. A fine "chemistry" grew between him and Nan and Sheila.

She developed outside interests. She sang in a BBC choir. Quite often she rode pillion with her brother Stuart, speeding down to the Hayling Island Sailing Club, near Portsmouth, to race their sailing dinghy. She had a skiing holiday in Switzerland. Another time she and Stuart and a friend were caught at night in a violent storm, sailing their Dad's 35 ft. Sloop Anadyomene back across the English Channel from France. The boys were so seasick they had to go below, leaving her alone at the helm. It was terrifying.

One day early in 1950 Sheila mentioned to Jimmy that she had been thinking of going to Canada for a spell. "Why on earth would you do that?" he asked. She explained that perhaps it was time for a break from still drab post-war Britain, while she was unattached, and that she had been attracted by what she had learned from Canadian soldiers about their country. British Columbia sounded particularly inviting. It was just a short discussion.

About six weeks later Jimmy came to her: "It is all arranged!" he said. She was puzzled. "What are you talking

about? What's all arranged?". "Your job in Canada", was the answer. "... in Vancouver, actually". It turned out that a doctor from Vancouver had attended one of Jimmy's seminars, and had expressed a desire to further his work there. But he would need an experienced physio to help him. "I know just the girl," said Jimmy – he was always quick to seize an opportunity – "I will miss her, but I know she is wanting to leave and go to western Canada anyway."

After some soul searching, Sheila decided to "go for it". She promised her parents that she would give it a try for two years, and then come back and reassess the situation for the longer term.

She embraced her new life. She found quarters to share – top floor of a house on the south-west corner of 25th and Dunbar - with two likeable Canadian girls. She laughingly "gave as good as she got" when they teased her about her accent and the words she used to describe things. She connected with the yachting world and was fortunate to be accepted as a crew member for Captain "Barney" Johnson, a Patriarch of the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. He had sailed Clipper Ships in his early days, and was a martinet when afloat in his beautiful racing yacht Winston. Once ashore, though, he was a delightful host and companion. She joined the Bach Choir. She saved enough money to buy a used Morris Mini-Minor car, which she named "Wee Willie". She explored the countryside in Willie, including a camping adventure into the Rockies. They had an unintended meeting with a bear, who nosed into their little campground.

She drove to Portland, Oregon twice to visit her Uncle Jim and his family. He was her Mum's older brother; he had emigrated to the US from Scotland as a young engineer. He like to tell of introducing Sheila to salmon fishing. They were trolling back and forth at the mouth of the Columbia River, near Astoria; two hours had gone by, without even a nibble. Suddenly, a fish struck. Sheila's line went screaming out, reel whirring, tip of her rod bent low, shaking violently. Thrilling moment! Struggling to hold onto the rod, she turned to Jim: "I think I may have got something." He cited this, with a chuckle, as a typical example of British understatement.

After a fight, guided by Jim, she landed her first salmon. It weighted 22 lbs. She was "hooked" on fishing for the rest of her active life.



A young Sheila "hooked on fishing"

Sheila's job in Vancouver didn't turn out well. The doctor whom Jimmy had met had a lazy streak, and seemed to think that Sheila should diagnose some of his patients' conditions. This was unacceptable. She found work, with better pay, with the Workmen's (now Workers') Compensation Board, going from hospital to hospital to treat the victims of industrial accidents. It was "right down her alley" and she became known and well regarded by doctors in the orthopaedic community.

The two years passed quickly, and she made arrangements and reservations to return to England, as she had promised her parents she would. Then, three weeks before the date she was due to leave, fate brought us together.

We had a very happy marriage. Our feelings of loving and caring and sharing and respecting each other grew and deepened with time.

It was not always easy for her. The accounting firm in which I was a partner was growing rapidly, and my responsibilities increasing, and I would quite often work late into the night. My work required me to travel to distant places, sometimes being away for more than a week at a time, leaving her alone and lonely, with two little kids to care for. She never complained.

On the other hand, there were so many things that gave strength to our union. We shared an English cultural background. I grew fond of her parents and relatives, and she of mine. My firm was successful; we had no financial worries. We lived moderately, and there was no need for Sheila to have a job. We found we had many shared interests, and we built on them: dogs, boating, the outdoors, reading, art, music, photography, to name a few. We had reasonably good health.

Two lovely children came along, and we had fun raising them to become estimable people, later with fine families of their own. Sheila was a particularly good homemaker, cook and a wise mother.

I digress to mention a small example of her wisdom. When son Chris was about seven or eight years old,

he went through a rather insecure period. He was bullied by some of his classmates. Sheila suggested he should take boxing lessons. That was a bit too much for him, but after some negotiation he agreed to take a course in Judo. In casual conversation later with a couple of other mothers, Sheila mentioned that Chris was enjoying this and doing rather well at it. The bullying stopped.

When I was in town I made a point of trying to be home by 6:30 PM. Sheila would have supper ready, and we would linger over it, often with lively conversation. After, we would clean up the dishes together, before the kids went off to do their homework and get ready for bed.

We tried to keep weekends free for activities as a family. Similarly, we took fairly long holidays each year, sometimes in places where the office couldn't reach me. It was before the days when e-mails could track you down, and demand your attention, almost anywhere.

Television was fairly new. We didn't watch it much. Sometimes on Sunday evenings as a treat we would bring in supper (Chicken Pickins from the White Spot was a favourite) and watch the Ed Sullivan show.

Sheila built on some of her natural interests. She became a Docent at the Vancouver Aquarium, introducing classes of school children to the wonders of the marine world. At home, she and Chris worked together collecting and breeding tropical fish. At one point they had five tanks going. We never lacked a dog in the family; at one time we had three.



Den and Sheila on their wedding day

She took up curling. She volunteered at the YWCA to teach English to newly-arrived Chinese immigrant ladies. She gardened. She kept in touch with a few close friends. The years slipped by.

I retired from the accounting practice in 1982; a couple of years later we moved to Thetis, building a house there on a lovely property we had bought back in 1968. And so began a new chapter in our lives. And what a happy chapter it has been, over thirty years of it!

It hadn't been "our thing" to get caught up in the social swirl in Vancouver, with its seemingly endless

succession of cocktail parties and fleeting acquaintances. Someone laughingly spoke of us as “the couple who doesn’t go to parties”. We stuck with our few close friends.

As we settled in to life on Thetis, we found many kindred spirits. People from all walks of life, interesting backgrounds, special skills and interests ... all bound together by a sense of community and common purpose. Contacts were not fleeting; there was time and opportunity to get to know people really well, to recognize and admire their strengths, while being tolerant of their occasional weaknesses. We have a host of good memories of times with individuals like Olive Sadler, “Teddy” Suiker and Louise Carpenter, and with fine couples, like the Napiers and the Carncrosses, and many, many more.

Sheila thrived. Life was full. She loved the outdoors, with the opportunities it offered. She masterminded the creation of our lovely garden. We grew vegetables. She raised chickens. We had long walks most days, with our dogs usually free to run, off-leash. In her 80’s she took up Agility Training with our Shetland Sheepdog “Tucker.” We fished, we gathered oysters and clams. She helped me in bee-keeping. She took beautiful photos with her digital cameras, and became a whiz at using Photoshop. We built modest collections of Netsuke and paintings. We read widely. She directed the rehabilitation and development of St. Margaret’s Cemetery, and wrote the book “Lives Behind the Headstones”, which is still in print and demand.

We travelled to a few interesting places, sometimes in search for the sun in wintertime.

Thetis became a gathering place for Anne and Chris and their families. Sheila nurtured the children’s interest in nature. We delighted in keeping abreast of ... and having some part to play ... in the development of our grandchildren as interesting and caring human beings.

In about 2013 Sheila began to show serious signs of memory loss and impaired cognitive ability. Her situation continued to deteriorate, slowly but steadily, and it became clear that living on Thetis no longer made sense. We moved to the Berwick Assisted Living Complex in Comox, the town where Chris and Sue live.

In early 2022 she went into full-time care at Glacier



Den and Sheila (and Tucker) on Thetis

View Lodge, where she was lovingly looked after by a remarkable team of caregivers.

I was with her when she died on September 20, 2023.

As I think of that dear person, her good and full life, and the 70 years we had together, I am reminded of the words of the poet David Whyte:

“The race is run and shall be run again,
joyfully, and you shall run with me,
the territory opened to us like returned laughter
or remembered childhood.

Remember,
I was here, and you were here,
and together we made a world.”

Written by her husband Denham

NATURE

ASK ANDY: ARE THE SEA STARS BACK? – PART 2

With special guest co-author Neil McDaniel

In part 1, the focus was on the intertidal zone where sea stars are available for most Thetisites who venture on to an island beach at low tide. Part 2 will take a peek below the surface into the subtidal realm off Thetis Island shores. Based on the first-hand observations via members of TIME (Thetis Island Marine Explorers), this update will focus on species primarily living below the waves.

Sunflower star *Pycnopodia helianthoides*

At about the same time (2013) as Thetis Islanders first noticed wasting purple stars en masse, an almost identical scenario was happening to sunflower stars throughout the Salish Sea. While the species (particularly as small juveniles) may be exposed at extreme low tides, the subtidal zone is its primary habitat. SCUBA divers were appalled by what they observed happening to their iconic “dive buddies”. And many Thetisites who had traditionally encountered large, annoying sunflower stars within the prawn and crab traps noticed their absence.

Historical Summary

As you move through the following set of photographs and captions, the progression of sea star wasting is presented. The author is very thankful to Neil McDaniel – friend, dive buddy, underwater photographer/cinematographer, biologist and part time Thetis Islander – for the outstanding images.

Current Local Situation

Members of TIME (particularly Michelle Sutter, Bill Golley and yours truly) have been monitoring several sites around and nearby Thetis Island since the 2013 outbreak. Observations are routinely supplied to a citizen science depository at the University of California Santa Cruz.



A healthy adult sunflower star on the prowl for prey – just about anything animal in its path. (Neil McDaniel)



Pycnopodia helianthoides juvenile
© Neil McDaniel

Left – A tiny barely recognizable juvenile. All sea stars begin with 5 arms (rays) but multi-rayed species add them with growth.

Right – A small juvenile sunflower star – an occasional find for Thetis Islanders walking the beaches on a very low tide.



Pycnopodia helianthoides
February 21, 2014
Croker Island, Indian Arm, BC
approx. 6 cm diam.
© Neil McDaniel



Pycnopodia helianthoides
With wasting syndrome
Croker Island, Indian Arm
Oct. 9, 2013
Neil McDaniel photo

An adult showing early-stage infection featuring lesions with internal organs leaking out and drooping rays (arms). Something is definitely amiss.



Pycnopodia helianthoides
Saknaw Rock, Sechart Inlet, BC
Jan 19, 2014
Neil McDaniel photo

Another adult a little further along an infection. Its rays (arms) falling off with more internal organs visible. OWCH! Such individuals are still alive and even body parts can move using available tube feet - and usually become scattered about.



Above left: Another adult that is in full in disintegration mode but still recognizable. It has become a feast for decomposers too. At this point, the unfortunate victim has definitely perished –RIP.

Above right: Just before a total disappearance from the Salish Sea, a barely recognizable adult is now pile of goo.

During this time period, we generally find a few, usually healthy sunflower stars on most dives. But nowhere near the numbers pre-2013. The specimens are almost always juveniles less than 20 cm (8 in) across.

Why no large adults? Do they perish before attaining a larger size? Aging sea stars is currently not possible but it would seem that in the approximately ten-year interim, with regular yearly recruitment of sunflower stars, some would have grown larger than what we are seeing.

Also, where are the sexually mature sunflower stars located that are supplying the juveniles that we are seeing? Perhaps the best possibility is that they are surviving at depths below TIME member's comfortable diving depths. This thought is supported by some reports by Salish Sea prawn trapping folks of large sunflower stars still occasionally being hauled up.

Good News

Neil and others who routinely dive and monitor sunflower star populations north of the Salish Sea report finding healthy adults in numbers. Queen Charlotte Strait and Knight Inlet (off the north end of Vancouver Island) are prime examples of such positive reporting. Apparently, sunflower star biological refuges. But why? Always more questions. One possibility is better water conditions – higher salinity, colder regular temperatures, less pollution – there than in the Salish Sea. Perhaps a similar situation to what is available in the deeper waters of the Salish Sea.

Andy Lamb



Above left – Such mass aggregations of healthy sunflower stars were common in some parts of the Salish Sea – although not found around Thetis Island. The good news is that similar aggregations have been seen in Knight Inlet in the summer of 2023 (Neil McDaniel photo). Above right: A large healthy specimen from Queen Charlotte Strait (Jackie Hildering photo)

“If the sea is sick, we’ll feel it. If it dies, we die. Our future and the state of the oceans are one.”

Sylvia Earle

Mt. BURCHELL TRAIL

What is old becomes new again

Thanks to the generosity of the Kasting family, the familiar Burchell Hill Trail is being made available to the TIRRA Trail Committee for management and maintenance and its name has reverted to its original moniker, Mt. Burchell Trail. This one-way trail is 2.5 km in length with a sign indicating the end.

A familiar hike for many Islanders over the past decades, it is now being brought into the TIRRA Trails network. Norm Kasting has erected a new entrance gate to deter any wheeled devices (such as dirt bikes, bicycles, ATV's etc.) as well as creating a fire lane. Arborist Chris completed a hazardous tree inspection and those identified were removed. New signage has been posted under the direction of the Kastings with a designated connection to the Fairyslipper Reserve Trail.

Trail users are asked to keep to the path and to be respectful of the property owners and the TIRRA Trail Guidelines. There is a sign to mark the end of the trail.

This property has been in the Kasting family since Rupert Forbes purchased it from Henry Burchell in the late 1800's and rises to the highest point on Thetis Island. A big thank you to Mary Forbes for providing the funds for the sign near the beginning of the trail which tells the history of this property.

This new trail is a wonderful addition to Thetis Island trail network and we are grateful to the Kasting family for making this possible.

TIRRA Trails Committee



Above Right: Arlene and Norm Kasting at the start of the trail. Below is the text of the sign visible beside them. Note that the cover image for this Quarterly is a lovely view of a hiker (Frank English) on this newly accessible trail.

Mt. Burchell Trail History

There are many years of Forbes family history invested in this trail. The bottom portion originated as a logging road used by Henry Burchell from 1894 and subsequently in 1910 by his nephew, Rupert (Hoffman) Forbes, for selective logging of the south and east slopes. Most logging roads have reverted back to undergrowth but Mt. Burchell Trail has been kept passable by its evolution into a beautiful trail to the summit (Mt. Burchell), the highest point on the island. Rupert Forbes would drive his 1926 Chevy truck (still functioning at Overbury Farm) up the trail to drag the logs down to the water for transport to the mill. Family picnics at the summit in the 1950's and 1960's with Rupert and Laura Forbes are fondly remembered by family members.

EVENTS

ROBBIE BURNS NIGHT RETURNS TO THETIS

On January 27th Thetis Island joined in the celebrations of the immortal Scottish poet Robbie Burns. More than 80 people filled Forbes Hall to participate in the traditional rites and enjoy the entertainment. Helen Bird decorated the hall masterfully, taking us quickly into the mood. In addition to wine and beer, the bar served Scottish stout and four different Scottish whiskeys. The most popular whiskey was the unpronounceable (at least for me) Bunnahabhain

12-year-old single malt whiskey. Master of Ceremonies, Gary Geddes, was indeed a master of the ceremony as he led the gathering through the program.

The evening started with a short taste of the entertainment portion. Five members of the Kathy White Highland Dance Academy gave a short performance to the piping of Sandy Adams. The Dance Academy has an impressive record of trophies and medals in highland dance competitions in BC and

as far away as Scotland. Our piper Sandy Adams is part of the Simon Fraser University Pipe Band which perennially finishes in the top 3 at the world championships in Edinburgh, Scotland and has been world champions six times.

Jennifer White then gave the Selkirk Grace (a poem attributed to Robbie Burns), which was followed by the evenings first course: a delicious Cock-a-leekie Soup. Following the soup Sandy piped in the Haggis, which was presented to the gathering by Emily McIvor on behalf of the kitchen staff. Jaime White recited Burns Address to the Haggis ("Great chieftain of the pudding race" – my favourite line) and then MC Gary Geddes stabbed and carved the haggis as required by tradition.

The main course then came featuring Haggis with Blackberry-Whiskey sauce, Tatties & Neeps with crisped Prosciutto, Sweet & Sour Cabbage with apples, sultanas & orange, and Creamed Spinach. Vegetarian alternatives were provided for the meat dishes including a wonderful vegetarian haggis. A dessert of Scottish Trifle completed the meal. The meal was true to the tradition and was well received. Thanks go to the culinary team of Ann Dickie, Don Sinclair and Kathleen Thompson as well as the serving and support team.

After the main course we were again entertained by the highland dancers and piper. Among the dancers was 4-year-old Braelynn Smith who stole the show. Braelynn was the daughter of dancer Alyssa White and granddaughter of Kathy White. She did a solo performance and then a demonstration of her training regimen with her mother. Braelynn was often seen at the edge of the dance floor practicing the moves of the older dancers as they performed. Following the dancing Sandy piped a couple of solos demonstrating his skill as a piper.

Ernie Hunter provided the Toast Tae the Immortal Memory, providing insights into the life and accomplishments of the great poet. Then following dessert



Charming us all, Alyssa White, daughter Braelynn Smith, and mother Kathy White (whose Highland Dance group provided the performers for the evening, Sandy Adams (on the right) pipes the music for the dancers.



Nae Robbie Burns night is complete without it - the always memorable haggis

Mike and Elly Ruge entertained us with the toast to Lassies and the reply from the Lassies. This was followed by a third set of piping and dancing.

As the piper and dancers raced for the last ferry Susan Jones led a poetry recital. Each table was provided a famous Burns poem to recite. Time constraints limited the number of recitals, but even so we got a good flavour of the man and his poetry. The last entertainment was a set of traditional songs by Minardi/Winders

family who were joined by Gary Geddes and Wayne Loiselle (violin). In keeping with tradition at Thetis events, entertainment exceeded the time allowed. The evening closed with the Burns classic Auld Lang Syne.

The event only happened because many islanders gave generously of their time and knowledge to plan, prepare, perform, and of course clean up. Thanks go to all who helped make this a tremendously successful event. Special thanks to the Victoria Foundation which provided a grant to help with travel costs for performers. The piper and dancers all spoke of it being one of their favourite Robbie Burns Night events and we are eager to return in 2025.

David Reay, on behalf of the Robbie Burns Night Organizing Committee

POETRY

Poems have always been a welcome addition to the pages of the Quarterly. Gary Geddes' eloquent introduction to the Robbie Burns festivities this year is a prose poem in itself, reminding us of why we so often turn to it, to express things that refuse to speak to us in any other voice:

What is it that brings large and small groups of people together world-wide every year to celebrate a controversial and rebellious poet born 265 years and two days ago on January 25, 1759, and who had a short life of only 37 years? Is it just the chance to consume excessive quantities of alcohol? Or to over-indulge in that dubious dish known as the haggis, a carnivore's delight which consists of the liver, heart and lungs of a sheep, minced and mixed with onions, oatmeal and beef suet, stuffed into a sheep's stomach and boiled? I don't think so.

I believe it's poetry that brings us out to celebrate. Why poetry? Because poetry is the primary process language we start learning at birth, or even earlier, listening to our mother's rhythmic heartbeat. We learn to repeat the sounds coming from our mother's mouth, word by word, long before we know what those words mean. It's sound, not sense, that appeals to our infant selves. In other words, we are all ears, not concerned with reason or logic. We have no

trouble imagining impossible things, like a cow jumping over the moon or a dish running away to Seattle for a clandestine weekend with a spoon. What we're doing is building a bridge, a substitute umbilical cord of words, to connect us again to the mother and all those hulking creatures gathered round called family. So, it's not surprising later in life, in moments of extreme joy or grief that we reach out for a poem, which takes us back to the sound-based language of our beginnings.

I'm convinced Robbie Burns shares my belief that poetry is both a call to action and, at its best, a source of comfort and healing. It speaks to the wound in each of us, the part that is broken and so often in ruins. Burns' love poems and songs, as well as his social and political writings that attack the tyrannies of organized religion, racism, ideology and greed, speak to us in that rich, primal language of the heart. That's why I'm here tonight. And I think that's what you'll be reminded of over and over again this evening.

Gary Geddes

And not only that evening. Two more island voices:

MORNING

So quietly the dawn came on
It caught us napping in our beds
As silently as kitten paws
To not disturb our dream filled heads

The darkness yielding grudgingly
To graying hints of softened light
So slowly do the shapes appear
To push away the shrouded night

The first to greet the coming day
The robins joyful warbled song
Announcing to the slumbering world
It's time to wake and sing along

Then soon the rasping crows respond
As if annoyed their sleep disturbed
Soon followed by a single loon
To cry the changing color tune

The gulls arrive in ones and twos
The buffle heads at first a few
The morning fishing at first light
To chase the hunger pangs of night

The changing hues reveal the beds
Where daffodils raise up their heads

A smile upon their golden faces
They dip a curtsy and sway their graces

The clouds reveal their tumbled shapes
And part to show the day has come
It's time to wake, your peace to make
And greet the rising morning sun.

Wayne Loiselle

TAKES US AWHILE

My friend texted me the other day
Quote: "The first testicular guard was used in hockey in 1874 and the first helmet was used in 1974. It took 100 years for men to realize that their brain was also important."

Very funny, I said.
Men can be so stupid.
We're hard-wired
to ignore risks.
Go out and kill the mammoths
or whatever.
Provide and protect our tribe.
It's modern times now and
we are confused.
We are supposed to be gentle.

Read minds.
Know what to say and do
at all times.
I'm older and wiser now
And I'm confused at times.
I know how to build things
and fix stuff.
Forgive me
I'm just a man.

Pat Clarke

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL

We have settled back into our routines after the winter break here at TIES. It was a well-deserved break for the kids, who worked tirelessly on our holiday play back in December. Thank you for your support if you came out to watch, and if you didn't, you sure missed a good show! Our students were amazing!

TIES has acquired a new class pet! Sonic is a Hermann's tortoise. The vet thinks he's about 35 years old. He likes to eat, sleep, bask in the artificial sun, and walk around in circles. Sometimes he even gets the zoomies! The kids take turns collecting his food, feeding him, cleaning old debris from his living quarters, and even giving him a bath!

Currently, we are learning about Canada's provinces and territories and the human nervous system, among other things. Our Education Assistant, Ms. Simone, is teaching our younger students how to manage big feelings and show kindness with the help of some puppet friends named Melvin and Tucker. Students have been happy for the chance to play and build in the snow and to take a couple of trips to the Fuller Lake Arena to do some skating.

TIES is looking for seniors in the community who would like to spend an hour, one afternoon per month (on Thursdays) with our students at the community centre. We would love an opportunity for the young and the not-so-young to mingle, chat, and play games. We have chess, battleship, scrabble, and a few others; we welcome other game ideas and also thought it might be fun to teach some of the kids to play Cribbage. If interested, please email Ms. Lucchetti: slucchetti@sd79.bc.ca. We hope to start sometime in February.

TIES Staff



Lily Galbraith and Ivan Crook; Sonic the tortoise taking a leisurely bath



Above - (Front L to R): Kiersley Gall, Livia Black, Colten Dufort, Ari Hartwell, Ivan Crook, Logan Dufort, Asher Atkins, Meadow Wetmore, Caia Hartwell (Back): Lily Galbraith, Alber McClellan, Levi Elias, Jayleigh Gall, Alina Ensminger, Athenia Willowbrook

Fun at the Rink!

Below, L to R: Athenia Willowbrook gives Caia Hartwell a ride;

Levi Elias;

Livia Black;

Ari Hartwell.





NOTES FROM THE T.I.V.F.D.

LIVE FIRE TRAINING

Under certain conditions, fires can start very easily and very quickly, and can be caused by any number of things, such as simply operating machinery in very dry conditions, burn piles, campfires, downed hydro lines, lightning, broken glass, discarded smoking materials, etc.

Here on Thetis Island, similar to most places in the province and the country, in the event of a structure fire or a wildfire, we rely on volunteer firefighters to protect our critical infrastructure such as our community center, our school, our marinas, and our homes.

However, being on an island means that we rely solely on the volunteer firefighters that form the Thetis Island Volunteer Fire Department, and live here on Thetis.

Fire moves fast, and when the fire danger rating is high, then fire can move faster than any off-island support could ever hope to reach us to help.

This is why it's so important for everyone in the community to make efforts to fire smart their homes and properties, and reduce the risk of fires starting and spreading, whenever possible.

It's also important for the community to have well trained volunteer firefighters, ready to act when the call comes in.

In November 2023, I and several other members of the TIVFD attended an intensive two-day Live Fire Training session at the Comox Fire Training Center, where we expanded upon our knowledge and skills, and practiced fighting real fire inside and around structures, vehicles, propane tanks, etc. It was a very well organized and professional training exercise, and



Margaret Woodhouse, Norm Kasting, Julian Jackman and John Gall at the Live Fire training last November (2023). Thank you for doing this!

it was both challenging and rewarding to be a part of.

Every year, members of the TIVFD attend these and other intensive training programs, in addition to our weekly drill nights, to practice and maintain our skills and increase our aptitude.

As a member of the TIVFD, I've had the opportunity to help extinguish several real fires here on Thetis Island over the last few years. And each time we're called to action, we've needed every available member's involvement, including our auxiliary support members and our rest and rehab teams.

Preventing fires and fighting fires is really a community effort, and we can all do our part. Feel free to arrange a visit with us at the fire hall if you'd like to learn more, or drop by a drill night on Wednesday's at 7 pm. We're always here to help provide information and to welcome new members.

Julian Jackman

FIRESMART - SPRING 2024

In BC, wildfire season is typically from April 1st to October 31st. Last year, 2,245 wildfires burned more than 2.84 million



hectares of forest and land in BC. This is the most hectares burned in a wildfire season in BC's recorded history. 80% of these fires were 5 hectares or less. 25% of

these fires were human caused.

As we move into spring and temperatures start to rise, now is a great time to FireSmart your property!

There are numerous projects that can be undertaken before wildfire season. It's always good to start with the area closest to your home, which is called the Immediate Zone (0-1.5m around your home's perimeter). A few routine chores in this zone could save your home in the event of a wildfire.

1. Clean under your deck. The area beneath your deck can accumulate an abundance of branches, leaves, needles, and other flammable debris throughout the year. Once this area has been cleared, it's strongly recommended to sheath the the base of your deck with fire-resistant materials to reduce the risk of embers igniting your home.

2. Safely check your roof and gutters for debris. Roofs of all sizes and shapes can contain areas where

debris and embers may collect. Gutters can often collect highly flammable materials. Before they dry out, clogged gutters can also be a great breeding ground for mosquitoes. Where debris accumulates is where embers will also accumulate, igniting any debris.

3. Relocate firewood and other combustible materials. Stored items can pose a significant risk when exposed to wildfire. Firewood that is stored near your home can ignite from embers and cause your home to also catch fire. Instead of keeping these items against your siding or under your deck, move them to a location at least 10m to 30m away from your home.

4. Prune trees on your property. Prune branches on coniferous trees in late winter (trees with cones and needles), within 2m of the ground. Remove flammable debris that may have fallen from your trees. This will help keep a surface fire more con-



Upper left: pre-drill briefing. Upper right: loading the drop tank
Lower left: installing the structure protection sprinklers. Lower right: drop tank feeding the sprinklers in action.

fined, limiting the heights flames can reach. Deciduous trees (leafy) tend to be more resistant to wildfire, but should be pruned regularly to optimize safety.

5. Create a Wildfire Evacuation Plan. If you have not already done so, take some time to create a wildfire evacuation plan. Not sure where to start? Take a look at the 'Last Minute Wildfire Checklist' <https://firesmartbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/>

FireSmartCanada-Evacuation-Checklist.pdf

For more tips and projects, check out the 'FireSmart Begins at Home Guide':

<https://begins-at-home-guide.firesmartbc.ca>

Structure Protection Unit,
FireSmart Thetis Island
Auxiliary of TIVFD

Contact us at firesmartthetisland@gmail.com

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

TICA: REDUCING THE DEBT - MEMBERSHIP - ENERGY EFFICIENCIES & GREEN INITIATIVES

Reducing the Local Lender Debt from \$310,000 to \$150,000...

On December 31, 2023, the Thetis Island Community Association paid \$160,000 of their \$310,000 debt to Local Lenders. The remaining \$150,000 has been loaned for another 3 years. TICA now has until December 31, 2026, to raise the final \$150,000. To succeed in this fundraising, the TICA Board and its committees will continue in their work to welcome all community members to the Hall and to broaden the events, activities and services provided. The funding by all donors and the work of all volunteers shows a remarkable commitment to the vision of a thriving Community Centre.

More Members than Ever...

For the first time, in 2023 the TICA membership grew to more than 400. This growth speaks to a new level of participation and ownership of Forbes Hall Community Centre.

Energy Efficiencies and Moving Towards a Greener Future...

Following a discussion about Climate Resiliency at the January meeting of the Thetis Community Assembly, the TICA Board reviewed green initiatives at Forbes Hall and the provision of a climate shelter for islanders.

Moving forward in an energy-efficient way for Forbes Hall was done through its rebuild; it was planned for the long term, providing an energy-efficient building to serve our community well into the future.

This list shows improvements achieved through both the building code and the design:

- Thicker exterior walls are part of the new construction, replacing 2 x 4 and 2 x 6 walls with a mixture of 2 x 6 and 2 x 8 walls, providing more space for thicker insulation.
- The low-maintenance exterior sidings have a long life and require fewer applications of fresh paint.
- Metal roofing was chosen due to its far longer life than Duroid shingles, and it being preferred for cleaner water collection.
- The large exterior overhangs reduce the impact of heat on interior spaces, and environmental wear on the exterior walls.
- Heat Pumps, as used in the Assembly Hall, Multi-purpose Room, Library and Main Kitchen, are an energy and cost-efficient alternative to other methods of electric heat, with the added advantage of providing cooling.
- Rainwater Collection is used for a portion of the Hall's water use. Currently there is a twinned system providing rainwater for toilets and irrigation. Once another tank is installed to accommodate the amount needed for total hall usage, we will be working towards approval with Island Health to use rainwater for all uses.
- Local wood interior finishing: wood milled from donated windfalls from the storm of December 20, 2018.
- The Master Switch reduces electrical use when the Hall isn't in use.
- Led Lighting is used throughout the hall as it is more energy efficient and has longer-lasting bulbs.
- On-site EV charging station, through donation of the equipment by Peter and Simone Luckham.

Although the building is over twice the size of the former one (and has the basement), it does not cost twice the amount to operate, noting that usage and room design impact the amount of energy used.

- Hall usage is higher than in 2018 (the last full year of operations in the original building), more frequent, and supports full day uses regularly; Forbes Hall is averaging 1,200 visits per month.
- The Assembly Hall is challenging to heat efficiently with its large windows and high ceilings; public education of the system's settings is ongoing.

- The new advantage of a cooling system with heat pumps is the provision of a cool respite for islanders during high-heat weather; this cooling requires energy.
- The larger, better-equipped kitchen has fed record amounts of people, the Beverage Station is used daily for casual use besides its workhorse use during events, and washing and required sanitizing of dishes in both rooms uses energy.

The comparison of electrical use shows that even with the much larger building and its associated increased usage, Hydro costs per month are less than may have been expected (these numbers do not reflect any Hydro fee increases over the past 5 years):

- Original build: \$280 per month (2018)
- New build: \$412 per month (2023)

In addition to all the above, the design of Forbes Hall provides for self-sufficiency during environmental challenges and power outages.

Food & Event Services continually review ingredients and packaging used for take-outs and casual meals to provide a more sustainable service; recycling and basic composting are encouraged, as well as using the Digester, reducing garbage, and returning beverage containers. Public information for hall users is being developed on the cleaning and sorting of dishes prepared for washing, and how recycled and composted items get streamed.

Final phase: when funding becomes available, the addition of solar panels will be explored. From the beginning, the intention was to take advantage of reduced energy costs that solar panels can provide.

The TICA Board

THETIS COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY

The Thetis Community Assembly held its first meeting in November of 2022. The assembly was created to allow for collaboration between groups who have common concerns; for the different organizations to give and receive updates from other member organizations; and for the public to bring forward issues and ideas to the representatives of Thetis Island’s associations and societies. Its main benefit is for the organizations who work on behalf of the public or their membership to be aware of other groups’ initiatives on Thetis, including the needs for volunteers and funding. At each meeting information and discussions are held regarding Reconciliation and Climate Change. Thetis Community Assembly’s Indigenous Working Group has been organized since the Assembly’s January 4th 2024 meeting.

The organizations representatives sit at a horseshoe of tables with other members of the community seated at the open end. Keith Rush and Ann Dickie are the current facilitators of these meetings. To date 4 meetings have been held, with the next meeting scheduled for Monday, April 15, 2024, at 7:00 pm at Forbes Hall. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

Member Organizations:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| TI Improvement District | TI Fire Department | Community Climate Resilience |
| TI Nature Conservancy | TI Residents’ & Ratepayers’ Association | CVRD Area G Director |
| TI Community Association | TI Port Commission | Ferry Advisory Committee |
| TI Community Fund | TI Parents’ Association | Islands Trust |
| TI Volunteer Firefighters’ Society | Anchorage Concerns Thetis | St. Margaret’s Cemetery |

In addition to these groups, the following have been invited: Thetis Island Food Bank, Capernwray, Pioneer Pacific, Telegraph Harbour Marina, Thetis Island Marina, and Jollity Farm.

Ann Dickie, for the Thetis Community Assembly





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For further information contact Veronica Shelford or Carol Sowerby at quarterlyads@thetisland.net

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March

Day	Time	Metres	Day	Time	Metres
1 Fri	0134 0737 1516 2300	2.5 3.5 1.3 2.9	16 Sat	0304 0803 1554	2.8 3.4 0.9
2 Sat	0156 0757 1610	2.8 3.6 1.1	17 Sun	0009 0428 0825 1654	3.4 3.1 3.3 0.9
3 Sun	0112 0213 0826 1709	3 3 3.6 0.9	18 Mon	0136 0653 0840 1757	3.5 3.2 3.2 0.9
4 Mon	0907 1810	3.6 0.8	19 Tue	0239 1859	3.7 0.9
5 Tue	0317 0615 1011 1909	3.4 3.3 3.5 0.7	20 Wed	0324 0947 1135 1955	3.7 2.9 2.9 0.9
6 Wed	0341 0757 1140 2004	3.5 3.2 3.4 0.7	21 Thu	0359 1001 1324 2045	3.7 2.7 2.9 1
7 Thu	0406 0859 1314 2054	3.6 2.9 3.3 0.7	22 Fri	0427 1018 1444 2130	3.6 2.5 3 1.2
8 Fri	0432 0946 1436 2142	3.7 2.6 3.3 0.8	23 Sat	0449 1037 1549 2210	3.5 2.3 3 1.4
9 Sat	0459 1029 1547 2228	3.7 2.3 3.4 0.9	24 Sun	0505 1059 1646 2245	3.4 2 3.1 1.7
10 Sun	0526 1111 1651 2311	3.7 2 3.4 1.2	25 Mon	0517 1124 1740 2318	3.4 1.7 3.2 1.9
11 Mon	0553 1152 1753 2354	3.7 1.7 3.4 1.4	26 Tue	0526 1152 1833 2348	3.3 1.5 3.2 2.2
12 Tue	0620 1235 1856	3.7 1.4 3.4	27 Wed	0534 1224 1928	3.4 1.2 3.2
13 Wed	0037 0647 1320 2001	1.8 3.6 1.2 3.4	28 Thu	0017 0544 1300 2028	2.5 3.4 1 3.2
14 Thu	0121 0714 1407 2113	2.2 3.6 1 3.3	29 Fri	0047 0559 1341 2135	2.7 3.5 0.9 3.2
15 Fri	0208 0739 1458 2236	2.5 3.5 0.9 3.3	30 Sat	0120 0620 1427 2251	2.9 3.5 0.8 3.3
			31 Sun	0206 0647 1519	3.1 3.5 0.8

April

Day	Time	Metres	Day	Time	Metres
1 Mon	0007 0323 0724 1618	3.3 3.2 3.4 0.8	16 Tue	0053 1705	3.7 1
2 Tue	0107 0527 0823 1721	3.4 3.2 3.2 0.9	17 Wed	0142 1808	3.7 1.2
3 Wed	0150 0708 1010 1826	3.5 3 3.1 0.9	18 Thu	0220 0918 1215 1907	3.7 2.5 2.6 1.4
4 Thu	0224 0804 1210 1927	3.5 2.6 3 1	19 Fri	0249 0922 1359 2001	3.6 2.2 2.6 1.6
5 Fri	0255 0847 1348 2023	3.6 2.3 3 1.2	20 Sat	0310 0936 1515 2049	3.5 1.9 2.8 1.8
6 Sat	0325 0927 1506 2115	3.6 1.9 3.2 1.3	21 Sun	0326 0955 1617 2131	3.4 1.6 3 2.1
7 Sun	0354 1005 1613 2204	3.6 1.5 3.3 1.6	22 Mon	0336 1019 1712 2209	3.3 1.3 3.1 2.3
8 Mon	0422 1044 1715 2251	3.6 1.2 3.4 1.8	23 Tue	0344 1046 1804 2244	3.3 1 3.3 2.6
9 Tue	0449 1124 1814 2338	3.6 0.9 3.5 2.1	24 Wed	0353 1116 1854 2318	3.4 0.8 3.4 2.8
10 Wed	0516 1205 1915	3.5 0.7 3.6	25 Thu	0406 1149 1946 2354	3.5 0.5 3.5 3
11 Thu	0025 0540 1247 2017	2.4 3.5 0.6 3.6	26 Fri	0425 1226 2039	3.5 0.4 3.5
12 Fri	0116 0603 1331 2125	2.7 3.4 0.5 3.6	27 Sat	0036 0449 1307 2133	3.1 3.5 0.4 3.5
13 Sat	0216 0621 1418 2237	3 3.3 0.6 3.7	28 Sun	0129 0518 1351 2226	3.2 3.5 0.4 3.6
14 Sun	0345 0628 1508 2350	3.1 3.2 0.7 3.7	29 Mon	0245 0553 1440 2315	3.2 3.4 0.5 3.6
15 Mon	1604	0.8	30 Tue	0431 0641 1535 2359	3.1 3.1 0.7 3.6

May

Day	Time	Metres	Day	Time	Metres
1 Wed	0609 0821 1636	2.8 2.9 0.9	17 Fri	0105 0826 1245 1801	3.6 2.1 2.4 1.8
2 Thu	0038 0703 1042 1740	3.6 2.5 2.7 1.2	18 Sat	0126 0836 1429 1858	3.5 1.8 2.5 2.1
3 Fri	0114 0745 1241 1844	3.6 2.1 2.7 1.5	19 Sun	0140 0854 1545 1950	3.4 1.4 2.8 2.4
4 Sat	0147 0824 1414 1946	3.6 1.7 2.9 1.7	20 Mon	0151 0917 1646 2039	3.4 1.1 3 2.7
5 Sun	0219 0902 1529 2044	3.6 1.3 3.1 2	21 Tue	0201 0944 1738 2124	3.4 0.8 3.3 2.9
6 Mon	0249 0941 1635 2139	3.6 0.9 3.3 2.2	22 Wed	0214 1015 1826 2208	3.5 0.5 3.5 3.1
7 Tue	0318 1020 1735 2232	3.6 0.6 3.5 2.5	23 Thu	0232 1048 1910 2253	3.6 0.3 3.6 3.3
8 Wed	0345 1059 1833 2326	3.6 0.3 3.7 2.8	24 Fri	0257 1124 1952 2343	3.6 0.1 3.7 3.3
9 Thu	0410 1139 1930	3.5 0.2 3.8	25 Sat	0328 1202 2033	3.6 0.1 3.8
10 Fri	0023 0432 1220 2028	3 3.4 0.1 3.9	26 Sun	0041 0404 1242 2112	3.3 3.6 0.1 3.8
11 Sat	0129 0448 1302 2126	3.1 3.3 0.2 3.9	27 Mon	0150 0446 1325 2149	3.3 3.4 0.3 3.8
12 Sun	0303 0446 1345 2222	3.2 3.2 0.3 3.9	28 Tue	0311 0541 1411 2226	3.1 3.2 0.5 3.8
13 Mon	1430 2315	0.5 3.9	29 Wed	0434 0704 1501 2301	2.8 2.9 0.8 3.8
14 Tue	1518 2359	0.8 3.8	30 Thu	0538 0903 1555 2336	2.4 2.6 1.1 3.8
15 Wed	1609	1.1	31 Fri	0628 1108 1655	2 2.5 1.5
16 Thu	0036 1704	3.7 1.5			



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