



Volume Eleven - Issue Four

Shawnigan Focus

May 2020

A Non-Profit Community Publication ~ Special Edition

STRONGER TOGETHER



Sierra Acton
CVRD Director

LOVE GRATITUDE HOPE

I don't know about you, but I am finding that the upheaval to our lives, and the corresponding uncertainty, is causing many mixed emotions for me through the day. I feel for the families who have lost their jobs and all the kids who are stuck at home not understanding why they can't play with their friends. I am disappointed that so many great community initiatives have been postponed. I am also very concerned for our business community. Our village was finally full (with many businesses looking to expand or move in), but now the reality is that some may close and

some may not return when we are "back to normal" (a great reason to support local as much as you can).

Even with all of these concerns, here in Shawnigan a few things are shining through: Love, Gratitude and Hope.

Right after we got the news that non-essential services were to close, the community wanted to help. Many in the community were very concerned that schools were not going back and concerned that some of the supports provided by school would also be cancelled. Many community members were reaching out wanting to give and wanting to know where there was a need. The decision was made and the Hearts lawn sign was created to show our community

spirit and cheer on the efforts of our frontline workers, while raising funds to support food programs in the valley - Nourish Cowichan and the foodbank to be specific. The Shawnigan Residents Association picked up, pitched in and made it happen overnight. The first weekend we exceeded our weekend goal of \$5,000 and we were quickly moving towards our campaign goal of \$20,000. It ended as quickly as it started and after 4 weeks it was over. Thanks to the SRA, many volunteers and the generosity of so many the campaign was a huge success.

Here's what the community had to say;

Thank you, Shawnigan Lake. This will definitely bolster the spirit of the troops. Shawnigan is truly a wonderful community that we are proud to serve.

- **Sargent Tim Desaulniers,**
RCMP Detachment

The Hearts campaign was beautiful and brilliant. I heard many nurses and doctors comment while I was in the hospital about their appreciation, and the fact that donations were going to Nourish made it even more special. Personally, I love the message so much I might leave my heart at the end of my driveway forever.

- **Deana Robertson, Physician and Chair of Nourish Cowichan**

It was a pleasure to help and especially heart-warming to be welcomed at so many homes by appreciative people (from a distance of course). - Volunteer sign installer

Thank you to all who helped out, and the delivery folks for doing such a great job, a huge act of kindness that you let many share in. 5 stars for all of you! - R. Cuthbert,

During these unprecedented times it is challenging to deal with the unknown. I hope you are safe and with your loved ones. If I can offer a message of well-being: Now, more than ever, it is important to get outside and enjoy our many parks and trails, to come together to support each other and to support our local businesses.

Although I am on Zoom, more often than not, my phone still works so please reach out. As our lawn signs declared, I too wish love to the whole community, gratitude to the frontline workers and hope to all for our future as a world and a community.

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Lori Treloar
Shawnigan Focus Editor

I came across the following Facebook post and subsequently talked to Sam, the person who posted it. It is the epitome of what we are trying to share in the Special Edition of the Focus. The article is based on an interview with Sam.

Sammy Lou

Thank you to Stewart (drives white truck) at Masons. Anyone know this earth angel? I encountered him at tonight after my shift as a covid street nurse... This lovely man bought my purchase after noticing my island health ID badge. What he didn't know was how tough my day was so this gesture really gave

me a boost!!! Thank you, Stewart, for your kindness and spirit of community~Love shawnigan!

Sam is a mental health street nurse who works with vulnerable people. In an ironic twist, Sam finds that this is the single most rewarding time in her career – a time when she can fight fear and confusion with love and be a 'ground' for people. The experience in her Facebook post was after four days of work and, to her, it exemplified the power of community – the experience 'fixed the day'. In fact, the next day a different person offered to pay for her order!

In addition, people have dropped off fruit and vegetables as well as anonymous thank

you letters. While Sam totally appreciates the expressions of gratitude for her role in the pandemic she very much believes that we are all in it together and that she is not a hero. She feels lucky to be able to help.

Everyone has a role that is important, Sam said. Part of that role is recognizing the power of the community and how we can fill each other's cup by intuitively rallying around each other and intentionally caring for one another. Shawnigan has stepped to the plate in this way with the 7 p.m. noisemaking, the birthday parades, the heart campaign that raised \$20 000 for Nourish Cowichan to feed the needy, the masks being

produced by YSAGS and the random acts of compassion and goodness that are happening in our community.

Sam also shared some great insight into human behaviour. We are all farmers. We plant the seeds with small gestures. As farmers, we all contribute the seeds of encouragement, sunshine and nourishment needed for a community (garden) to grow and flourish. As individuals, we are all bits and pieces. When we come together we are community. Power is in the small gestures.

Sam has lived in Shawnigan for three years, loves it, and feels grateful for the beautiful acknowledgements she has experienced from her community.

Shawnigan Focus - Community



Social Distanced kayak birthday parade

Being On Dialysis

I go in to the Duncan Community Dialysis Facility for dialysis twice a week.

The nurses there are truly amazing and, during this pandemic, keeping the patients safe, well, and calm is not easy. No visitors allowed at this time and everyone, patients and their assistants, are screened at the door. Anyone with a cough is put in an isolated corner and monitored (no one has tested positive so far) carefully.

The clinic gets an extra cleaning at mid-day apart from the normal one after the clinic closes. There is an extra nurse on the team, and what a team it is - they work together filling in as needed, and they are always cheerful, compassionate, and dedicated. I am deeply thankful and always impressed by the care the nurses and support staff give to all their patients

~Joanna M. Weston

The New Normal

In view of the Corona virus admonitions to sequester at home and avoid contact with others as much as possible, I've stuck to the same small social group of three close neighbours. Plus, I've nailed up signs on the trees to warn the squirrels, birds, raccoons, deer, etc. not to break protocol and to maintain strict social distancing!

No more sharing of salt licks, deer! And squirrels, stop squabbling and chasing each other up and down the trees! Birds, remember: Only ONE at a time at the bird feeder!

But while the wild creatures can romp freely and naturally, sometimes adherence to the correct social response can create awkward situations for us humans.

Last week at SaveOn Foods, a woman who was coming up the aisle behind me with her cart paused and asked anxiously, "Is it okay if we pass each other?". I replied, "I think it will be all right as long as our carts don't engage in inappropriate touching".

Since hugging, hand shaking and such have been banned, perhaps we should adapt a different form of greeting: Ladies should curtsey, and gentlemen should bow. A much more elegant form of expression,

and quite acceptable under Covid19 doily drill.

There are even websites with demonstrations on how to properly perform these movements! These studies would provide useful practice for when the restrictions are eased, and we can at last shake off our inhibitions, powder our wigs, and take ourselves to the ball!

~Mary Desmond

Home with Family

I feel my privilege so much these days. My intact family and I have warm, safe and comfortable shelter, a stocked pantry and freezer, fairly secure jobs working from home, family and community support, well-adjusted and healthy kids, amazing weather and so on. But for some, this pandemic will cause great insecurity, hyper-anxiety and even violence as they are stuck inside with an abuser, get laid off or terminated from their employment or desperately try to decide whether to risk leaving the kids in the car or take them in the grocery store because neither option is great, but they are the only options for a solo-parent.

I am the fortunate one who, having adjusted to working two feet away from my partner who deals with IT and has a penchant for the F-word, has accepted a new routine that involves actually taking a tea break in the morning and wrapping up the work day on the balcony, watching the world go by. My days are still just as full as they were pre-COVID-19, but in a different way. It is more harmonized, interconnected and, interestingly, peaceful.

Rather than spending at least 1.5 hours 4 days/week commuting, that time is now spent learning alongside my children. Rather than having to wake an hour before leaving for work, I rise without an alarm to start the kids on schoolwork and log into my work email while still in my pjs. The time I used-up the night before making lunches, I now spend making a fresh and/or hot lunch for my family the day of. Those hours I spent arranging and getting myself or my kids to activities, is now spent being together going for walks, watching a show or playing real-life "Granny".

For me, I am grateful for this time for myself, my family, my

community and my planet and am hopeful a new way-of-life for humanity is emerging.

~Gailene Flaman

Yoga

I opened Kali Yoga Studio 12 years ago now after offering Yoga classes at the Community Centre and at my home studio for a few years. It had been my dream for some time to have a studio just for Yoga and it was a wonderful experience to put together a space for the community to meet. Over the years many people came and went, but a steady core of regulars came and return "no matter what" every week, or even every day. We do Yoga, we go for coffee (I think most of Shawnigan knows now to avoid the coffee house at 10.30, as we Yogis tend to take over the shop) We go for walks and get to know each other. Newcomers find their first connections in town at the studio, produce from gardens is distributed, crafting skills are shared, books lent out and community information is spread. A safety network that allows laughter and tears.

In mid March everything changed for all of us! Just like many shops, the studio also closed its doors. Only then I realized how much I miss my Yoga community! Yes, I could do yoga by myself, or watch a video online to follow. But it, by far, is not a substitute for meeting in person, chatting about aches and pains of the body, the worries and joys of life, and drinking coffee together.

Just as many other small business owners I set up live online classes to follow, where at least we can come together virtually, check in on each other, join in our Yoga practice and bring our minds together as the community we all need for support. It certainly is not the same as meeting in person, but it is the next best thing we can do to stay connected and stay safe. Classes are offered for everyone inclusive. For more information please check www.kaliyoga.ca

Stay safe, I miss you! Namaste.
~Nicola Cusi

Big Changes

Coronavirus has made a very big change for me in my life. I am a grade 7 at École Cobble Hill, I was really excited for Grade 7 graduation and our big trip to Strathcona Outdoor Adventure Centre, but COVID-19 changed that. Lots of my activities were cancelled, like my theatre group and girl guides. I am lucky though, because my music teacher found a way to keep teaching me in person using physical distancing. Each week for my lesson I walk to her backyard where she has everything clean and ready to go, so it works very well.

At home during weekdays, I do schoolwork from my normal school hours and I have work sent out from my teachers to

online and on my own. During my free time I Facetime friends, read, bake and play videogames. I also go outside a lot because the weather is nice and we have a yard to play in and safe neighborhood to explore. I have a trampoline and a little sister to keep me entertained.

I have Zoom meetings with my class every week so I can see my friends from class too. My parents work from home in the day, so I help my sister with her work and Zoom meetings. But even though I have schoolwork in the day, I still have chores to do. It is okay though because I have the whole day to fit that in.

At night, my sister and I clean up from dinner and go to bed a little later than we would if there was real school. We do our night routine then read a little bit for quiet time and go to bed. In the morning we wake up, eat, play a little bit of video games, then do our daily routine again.

~Sunny Flaman-Taylor

A Breath of Fresh Air

The great air quality is the best result of Covid. With backyard burns banned I can enjoy my garden. Every year the Spring and Fall burns drive me indoors as toxic smoke fills my garden, but this Spring the air is clean.

Less air and road traffic means better air quality and the quiet is wonderful.

With no meetings or visitors I have lots of time for walks and gardening.

My wish for post Covid is the CVRD permanently ban backyard burning and pair that with free yard waste pickup.

~Mary Vane-Hunt

Sowing the Seeds of Tomorrow

Each morning, with a little bit of happy anticipation, I check on the many plants and seedlings in our garden and along various window ledges inside our house.

This is our second summer in our new home, and one of the features I was most delighted by when we moved in was the deer-proofed garden with nine raised beds.

Last year, the garden was mostly my territory, and I tended to it over the course of a few precious weekend days throughout the spring and summer. One of my happiest memories from last summer is eating dinner all together

on a warm summer evening in our back yard – pasta with beans, peas, kale, tomatoes, and basil, all from the garden.

This year, our garden is more of a family affair – everyone is pitching in, and the bounty will reflect all the extra helping hands.

It seems like a tiny reflection of what's happening in our community, our province, and around the world.

We're all coming to terms with the abrupt and at times jarring changes that we've faced over these last two months, and as much as we're having to be physically apart, we seem to be finding ways to come together as we navigate this new world. The Shawnigan Residents Association's "Hearts" program is a great example of this, having raised over \$20,000 for food programs while brightening our community with bright red hearts and the essential reminder to keep love, gratitude, and hope at the centre of all we do.

As a member of the Safe Seniors Committee, I am heartened to hear each week that people signing up to volunteer outnumber those who are seeking help.

Compassion and caring have emerged as dominant responses to this health crisis. There have been reports in the media of distressing behaviours from some, including incidents of racism, but the overwhelming majority of people have made conscious efforts to help others.

We have been reminded that public health care, highly trained medical professionals and experts, governments working in service of citizens, and scientists are essential to our well-being. We have also come to recognize that workers who are too often under-valued – care home workers, grocery clerks, transport drivers, child care workers – are in fact essential to the functioning of our communities and society, and they need to be valued as such.

And so, as I watch the many seeds in our well-tended and cared for garden grow into plants and begin to blossom, I think of the seeds that we are sowing today for the future. Let's absolutely keep compassion and kindness and hope at the centre of what we do, and let's not forget for one moment that our well-being is deeply connected to the well-being of others. Let's ensure that the seeds we're planting today, together, will be ones that reflect the best of all of us.

~ Sonia Furstenau



Shawnigan Focus

Silver Linings

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought sudden and unsettling changes to the patterns of our daily lives. While our hearts go out to those dealing with serious and tragic consequences, as humans, we also need to look for positive and hopeful aspects. Here are a few bright spots worth a mention:

More Free Time: Many shops and services have recently reduced hours and days of operation. It was only a few decades ago when most businesses were closed on Sunday.

Having one day each week reserved for appreciating life and spending quality time with family and friends is a good thing. It need not be associated with any particular belief. In a competitive economy such a measure would need to be mandated by government and not everyone would agree. Still, as a society, this might be a conversation worth having.

Back to the Basics: There appears to be a revival of things like baking, sewing, and growing vegetables. Again, it wasn't that long ago when this was commonplace. Such tasks are rewarding. Being more self-sufficient is good for mind and body!

So far, the supply chain seems resilient and local stores have done a fine job of keeping the shelves stocked. It will be interesting to see how things play out over the next year. Food security is a primal concern and could lead to an increased capacity to provide for ourselves locally. A secure local food supply would require more government regulation along with appropriate incentives. Balancing this against the lower prices, but greater risk, of a completely free market would be a challenge. More food for thought.

Revisiting Core Values:

Most of us have life events which result in reflection and a re-evaluation of what is truly meaningful and important. It is rare to have a collective opportunity to do this as a society over an extended period.

There are a multitude of areas to consider but here are a few suggestions:

- ★ A better understanding of our place in the natural world.
- ★ Bridging the gap between left and right with capable and respectful leadership.
- ★ Less political correctness and more common sense.
- ★ A meaningful debate on consumerism and materialism.
- ★ Acknowledging that a socioeconomic system based on increasing growth will eventually fail.
- ★ The importance of kindness and helping others.

Global Collaboration:

The pandemic has stimulated unprecedented efforts to develop anti-viral drugs and vaccines that will be effective against the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is providing billions of dollars to help fund factories for seven promising vaccines. The World Health Organization has partnered with global heads of government, institutions and industry to accelerate the development of COVID-19 products and ensure access for all communities worldwide. Experts from many disciplines are involved and the potential for long term spin-off benefits is large.

When compared to many other places the Shawnigan Community is very fortunate. We can still get outside and enjoy the lake and nearby trails while maintaining a safe distance. We have stores that are well supplied and staffed by remarkable people. Our Doctors, Nurses and other Health Care Professionals are doing an amazing job. Police, Fire, Ambulance and other Front-Line Services are still there when needed. We have capable leadership. Dr. Bonnie Henry, our Provincial Health Officer, has become a hero. Ed Bain, Jeff King and the rest of the CHEK News Team bring smiles to our faces with the "Upside". We have a strong community and will find opportunities in the wake of the COVID-19 storm.

*~Dave Hutchinson,
Shawnigan Focus Editor*

**As Dr. Bonnie Henry would say:
“be kind, be calm, be safe...”**

Making the most of more time at home

There have been many minuses regarding the pandemic and a few pluses in regard to how it has affected the lives of my husband, John, and me. Although we miss all our social commitments and weekly activities and seeing all our friends, we feel less pressured time wise and life has taken on a slower pace. Another plus is the time we are spending in our garden which is an activity we both love. We have been working on a new larger vegetable garden and look forward to the harvest!

A huge negative aspect is not being able to hug our children and grandchildren. Luckily, we have much space outside where we can visit - keeping a 6 foot distance, of course. But gone are our family meals and visits inside our home. Nobody has crossed our threshold since March 14 which is now 7 weeks today! We also miss dinners

and visits with our friends. We have had to cancel two get togethers where friends from afar were coming to stay.

I look forward to the day when I can resume my weekly activities of folk dancing, zumba classes, line dancing and volunteering at the local food bank. I have done a little dancing online but it is just not the same!! For exercise, I have been going on hikes with friends and family members (one at a time) and keeping a 6 foot distance.

Buying and dealing with food during this pandemic has been a major issue. When I go to a grocery store I wear gloves and sometimes a mask. I have also ordered online from Thrifty's Foods but couldn't always procure a delivery date due to the high amount of requests. That situation has improved now as Thrifty's has three delivery trucks instead of one. We wash all our produce in soapy water which apparently is efficacious in killing the virus. (See photo). We also wipe all boxes and packaging with antibacterial wipes or a light bleach solution. Some items we put in a spare room and leave them for a few days after which it is safe to handle them.

On the plus side, I am cooking more and have made five loaves of bread - I confess with a bread machine! Another plus is the money we are saving by staying home much more and saving on gas. By staying home, we are not dining out or shopping for items other than food.

We are heartened by the wonderful way Dr. Bonnie Henry is dealing with the pandemic and how communities are rallying round to help those in need. The goodness of people is shining through with fund raisers and how they show appreciation for frontline workers, etc. This community spirit, I think, will continue as people pull together during a crisis.

~Kate Roberts, resident

More Than A Lake's Reflection

It's hard to write of my experience with the recently changed world when so many are going through great hardships, so I do acknowledge that, for most, it is a trying time. This time of more solitude has brought a deeper appreciation for where we live and for the people who share our community. I have slowed down to one task at a time, enjoying the focus I have on each and every job I do.

With going as long as possible between shopping I am surprised at how much more time I have to devote to other things, like growing huge, vast pulsating amounts of sourdough starter. I sometimes think I hear it breathing in the night. Trying to come up with inventive uses for it, I have true admiration for people who use it all the time. With all the waiting, it takes about 16 hours to make a loaf of bread! It's

very good, but still 16 hours.

I've put in a raised garden bed, complete with fencing to outwit the deer and bunnies, I am surprised how much joy I get out of seeing new seedlings emerge. I have taken to more keenly watching the birds and other animals that frequent the property and the lake - the solitary beaver who goes by early every day surprised us with a partner in tow one morning. The turtles on the logs seem bolder than before.

Most of all I have seen such care and giving in our community. The bad apples always make the news, but it is our quiet unsung heroes that touch my heart. People are, in general, are quick to lend a hand, to be generous, to share, to help out and to give even more. The local stores that are working so hard to keep us safe and supplied with our needs, the inventiveness of our local services to keep things happening by changing the way we can contact them but still providing. People in shops taking just what they need, mindful of the next person. Kindness at every turn.

When this time is over, we should all be able to look at ourselves in the mirror and know we did the right thing.

~Roz Cuthbert

Corona Virus: How It Affects Me

I don't get to see my friends. I don't go to school. I'm bored because I don't get to parks. But I got to play more video games during Spring Break. I am mad because I have to stay at home lots. In July, I get to see a friend in person.

~Declan Scott - Age 8

Making a Joyful Noise in Shawnigan

It's become pretty quiet here at the north end of the West Arm. The birds are out in full force, competing only with the odd boat going by, or the sound of a power washer doing some spring clean-up.

There was that guy across the Arm, grinding a tree stump for several days but, thank goodness, that came to an end. Living in the country is idyllic, but has its challenges. Noise can make even the best of neighbours (like me) tetchy.

There is, however, something very noisy that happens every night at 7:00 PM. In BC, it started in the West End of Vancouver. The residents living in the highrises

close to St. Paul's Hospital came out with pots and pans and applauded the healthcare workers for their bravery and dedication during the Covid-19 crisis. This has spread all over the province, and, yes, there is evidence that it is here in Shawnigan Lake as well.

If you look online, there have been wonderful operatic renditions in Italy, trombones and rock guitars in New York, and car parades in cities like Victoria. In communities all over the world, it has been wonderful and heart-warming to watch these spectacles. So many people in social isolation are coming out to join in creating something loud and hopeful together.

So, it was with some excitement that I came out to my deck in mid-March, determined to add to the tribute. What to bring? I considered pots and pans and then remembered an old hand school bell a friend had given me years ago. Ringing it loudly in the house, I terrified the dog and shocked the husband, so I knew this was just the thing.

That first night I was ringing alone for a few minutes, feeling a little silly. Then I heard a large WHOOMP across the lake and a siren kicked in. The Fire Department was onboard! I rang and rang, my heart full.

The next few nights someone had a large drum. That felt good, too. Then two friends down the lake came to our dock by boat at 7:00 and clanged their "instrument". We were all so pleased with ourselves. And doesn't sound carry perfectly across the water?

The sounds have varied but my very favourite is the dinner gong rung by the young neighbour next door. He and I ring together, sometimes alternating, and it makes me smile every time I hear him. Senior and youngster, we are in perfect harmony, doing our bit for our local community.

Some nights I feel that the two of us are the only ones following this ritual, but other nights I hear a faint crashing or even applauding. I don't know how long this will continue, but it still feels good to ring that bell as hard as I can saying thank you to all the frontline workers. And when I ring I feel hope that, no matter how this pandemic plays out, we will remain strong and united.

~Marcy Green



Shawnigan Focus - Businesses

Shawnigan House Coffee & Chocolate

After the initial shock and surrealism of feeling like we are living in an apocalyptic movie, and the two week self-quarantine, we knew that we needed to do something drastic to the storefront of Shawnigan House Coffee and Chocolate.

Once our new reality set in, we began working on various designs to remain open to offer our valued customers a ‘take-out’ option. With “necessity” being the mother of invention”, we collaborated with one of Trevor’s colleagues from the fire department to assist in the creation of our unique drawbridge serving hatch, which continues to receive multiple compliments.

This Draw-Bridge not only serves our ongoing deliciously locally roasted coffees and teas, cold beverages, and our selection of in-house chocolates, but also hope. Hope that there is a sense of normality after the transition we are living through, smiles, barrels of laughter and shared stories of those who pop past for their regular dose of comfort in a mug. We have also included a small selection of pastries for the not-so-hungry, in the interim, to complete the normality experience we all hunger after.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers who have ventured out in rain, wind and sun to support us during this time. Many of our customers have been so grateful that we have managed to find a solution to stay open as it has positively contributed to their mental health (and ours too).

Being open has been a great comfort to those who have come past, we know that we have been a ‘window’ of hope to the spinsters, widowed and the lonely, as well as those who long to see their family and friends. They have meant as much to us as we have to them. It has been a pleasure seeing their smiling faces every day, albeit through a plexiglass window.

The benefit of this is that it has given us a greater opportunity to get to know our community and gives us something to look forward to once a sense of normality returns to this strange planet

This could not have been possible if it weren’t for our suppliers and their staff who have managed to stay safe and open during this trying time. They have been integral in helping us staying open. We are grateful to them and to our customers.

We look forward to continuing our relationship with you even if it is holding hands in a literal meaning.
~Trevor and Family

Shawnigan Village Family Practice

Greetings to all in the community! This is an announcement about Family Practice in the Cowichan Valley.

As we all do our best to stay in our respective bubbles to limit the spread of COVID-19, the physicians of the Cowichan Valley are

busily working behind the scenes to prepare for the wave that we all hope to avert.

Regular day to day medical needs continue however, and this message is to let you know that your personal family physician remains available to provide you with ongoing care. It may look a little different in that visits are mostly done by telephone or video consultation, but all Family Practice offices in the Valley are ready to serve the needs of their patients.

Just call your family doctor’s regular line and the staff will be able to make you a virtual appointment. Yours in Good Health,
~Dr. Bill

Social Dis-DANCE-ing is in full swing for LT Dance Studio students and families!

“Move the couch, put away the video games, get your kids into their dance attire and get ready for online learning!” - the start of a new era in dance education.

On Tuesday, March 17th, 2020 we received the news - schools and businesses would need to close. Without hesitation, our team rapidly pulled together to deliver an exceptional online learning platform. Students ranging in ages from toddlers to adults began their first week of virtual dance classes Tuesday March 24th, 2020.

We could have never predicted that we would “return” from March Break through only a screen. Yet, here we are and we’re making the most of it!

The level of support we have experienced from our LTD Families over the last seven weeks has been remarkable. We have received many heartwarming messages of gratitude and appreciation for our abundant efforts to continue our programs.

Our students sign-in week after week, enthusiastic and ready to not only learn, but connect with their peers and share their passions. We have met their pets and danced with their siblings, used cans of soup and stinky socks for props, we have tackled technique and explored new choreography, enjoyed games that keep our spirits high and shared heart-warming conversations that inspire us to continue. We have celebrated Earth Day and International Dance Day and we are now navigating how to recognize them with a year-end performance and celebration.

We are resilient through this diversity thanks to the incredible commitment of our faculty and the vigorous support and encouragement from our students and their families. We have greeted this opportunity to exercise our mettle and encourage our students to do the same.

With hearts in our windows and painted rocks in our garden, we send our hope, love and support out to our communities. We are in this together.

Living To, Loving To, Learning To Dance,
~Bonnie Cuthbertson

Teky Technical Services and COVID-19

Teky was in our 11th year of operation in the Cowichan Valley when we started hearing about Coronavirus and COVID-19. Being a critical service that doesn’t require close contact with our clients, the effect of the virus was minimal for us. More on that later.

Teky (www.teky.ca) provides technical services for home and businesses in the Cowichan Valley. We are 100% local. The products and services we provide are critical because people and businesses depend on technology to work, learn, and generally keep in touch from home; those activities all increased with social isolation brought about by COVID-19.

Our call volume waned a bit at the start of the lockdown, but then surged as people understood their new situation. Common requests involved either new technology (laptops, desktops, Internet access, webcams, online meeting software, etc.), or repairs to their existing technology in order to work from home.

Teky adjusted to the new health rules by being more diligent in cleaning and physical distancing. Our technicians were encouraged to increase the frequency and thoroughness of washing their hands, wiping down often-touched surfaces, and cleaning client equipment in for repair. Onsite service continued for low-risk clients, but we often found alternative solutions: drop-off/pick-up at the office offered less time in proximity of one another, but remote assistance was by far the best option.

As long as your computer is booting up and getting online, Teky can help remotely with many issues through our help portal, remote.teky.ca. This keeps us physically distant, while saving time and money in traveling between the office and the client location.

There has been a bit of a run on webcams (shortages and higher prices), and generally all shipments of new equipment have been delayed, but we do our best to stock similar items (in smaller quantities) as the big box stores, saving you trips to Duncan or Victoria.

~Jeff Wright

V.I. Inspection Services

V.I. Inspection Services Inc. began in the Victoria area but, after some research and a brilliant move, we are so happy to call Shawnigan Lake home. We saw a community with a true “community vibe”; somewhere we felt we could offer our experience and education and give guidance and information to a community that cares.

We offer home inspections and consulting with any of your home or building concerns. We bring to the table some of the highest education in the inspection industry and continue to learn as new products and building processes evolve. Gary is a Certified Home Inspector, Registered Building Official and a red seal carpenter. He has a passion for building science

and loves to share information with people.

The current situation we face as a community, province, country and global entity made us rethink how we can safely offer our service without compromise.

With a little brainstorming and following guidelines set out for our business, we touch only what is necessary and wipe afterwards using alcohol based sanitizer; we request no one be around while we conduct business on your behalf, and we offer a virtual walkthrough via FaceTime or any video service you are comfortable with.

Our reports are produced as we inspect. At the end of the inspection, we call you to go over our findings and allow you the opportunity to ask specific questions. This virtual work through guides you along through the video chat and we immediately send you the link to your report. We encourage follow up calls or emails for any questions regarding your report and are happy to discuss any findings you may have after moving in.

Your peace of mind is our business and we will adapt to make sure the health of you and your family are as important as the inspection and your purchase.
~Debbie Faykes

From the Style Centre Barber shop ...

Being asked to close our doors in mid-March due to COVID-19 was tough, but it was a necessary request and one that has to be followed until we can safely re-open.

Yikes!! Hair grows approximately a half inch a month so by now those who like it short are starting to see curls!!!

In desperation they call their barber for help ... to which he says, “Google it!!”

Google suggests to start with asking yourself ...

- ★ How desperate are you?
 - ★ Will a hat be enough?
 - ★ Do I trust my wife with scissors that close to my ear?
 - ★ Do I remember how my barber cut it?
 - ★ Can I really do it myself?
- So, you still think there must be a way! Read on for the tips Google suggested ...
- ★ Never cut your hair wet. (Hmm, but the barber does. What does he know that I don’t know?)
 - ★ Before attempting to cut, wash and dry it in the style you wear it. No products!
 - ★ So, you have a barbering kit. Note ... a barber did not write the instructions!
 - ★ Use only super-sharp scissors with fine blades; no sewing or kitchen shears!!
 - ★ Hair shrinks so cut LESS than you think you need off!!
 - ★ Have plenty of mirrors propped up so you can see your head from all sides!
 - ★ Have a first aid kit close by. Be sure there are extra Band-Aids.
 - ★ If you start on one side be sure to cut the other side the same.

- ★ Remember right hand scissors on one side become left hand scissors on the other side!
- ★ Oops, did you not cover your shoulders with a tablecloth? A bath towel is too thick and now there is a hole in it?

Like all personal care services, our Barbershop will not be open until we are given the green light. However, it is uncertain if what we looked like before the pandemic will be the same again. We may be masked; you may be masked and there may be a need to book an appointment. But what is certain ... we will be ready to ‘fix’ what Google says for the price of a haircut!
~Roy Davies

Shawnigan Lake Spa, Salon and Boutique

I have had a business in Shawnigan for 17 years now and even though there have been ups and downs I have never experienced anything quite like this. It’s definitely challenging for a small business to figure out ways to survive.

We, like so many around here, provide a personal service to the community and really feel the loss of connection to the people. We have such a great little thriving town and I sure hope we are able to get back to having that pulse that we took so long to get to... 250-743-4611
www.shawniganlakespa.com
~Ingrid Hansen

Shawnigan Dental Health Centre

These have certainly been unprecedented times that have affected not only our community, but the entire world. As the owner of the dental clinic for so many years it goes without saying that it has been difficult to be unable to treat our patients and watch my staff not being able to practice.

Myself and the staff of Shawnigan Dental Health Centre have however, been working behind the scenes since the middle of March referring emergencies, triaging patients for when we return and accessing PPE’s for the clinic. We have also been working closely with the BC Dental Association, CDSBC and The Canadian Dental Association.

They and the minister for health will let us know when we will be allowed to safely open our clinic and what precautions are required. The new normal will look a little different, but don’t let that cause you any concern. We will talk you through everything before your scheduled appointment. If you have a dental emergency in the meantime, please call the clinic on 250 743 1952 and we will assist with any concerns you may have. Our website is brand new and you can get more information on Covid 19 and clinics that are open on Vancouver Island for dental emergencies.

We really can't tell you how much we are looking forward to resuming practice and treating you safely in the near future. Stay safe and well. Dr. Rachel E. Lawless and the staff of Shawnigan Dental Health.

~Dr. Rachel Lawless

Shawnigan Focus

From the Shawnigan Garage

We are excited to announce that in early March the Davies' family purchased Shawnigan Lake Automotive Services, known to most as the Shawnigan Garage! We are the fifth local family to own this prominent corner of our village and it is the second corner to hold our name.

Our family has been a proud part of the community since the early 60's and we all carry the beat of the village in our hearts.

Throughout these unprecedented times we have strived to keep business as usual at the Garage! With the full-service fuel bar open seven days a week, and the mechanics booking in boats and vehicles, we are truly keeping the community running.

Other than asking customers to remain in their cars for the protection of staff, and the "Price of Gas", little has changed at the pumps. You may also notice the scent of disinfectant, but our canine visitors still get their treat and our staff are always ready to serve. Families at home have been using this time for garden maintenance or cutting firewood and we have been there with fuel and oil for every tool.

Looking forward, now is the time to book an appointment for your vehicle or boat's routine checkup... before the rush happens! Just call our service desk at 250-743-2122 and we will be happy to book you in.

On behalf of our family, our amazing staff and our appreciated customers we thank the community of Shawnigan Lake for your patronage and support. We are all in this together and proud to do our part to keep Shawnigan Lake strong and healthy!

~The Davies Family

Harlequin Nature Graphics Ltd.

Hi, I am the owner of Harlequin Nature Graphics and my wife and I live in Shawnigan Lake. We moved our business to Cobble Hill in 2009 to be closer to our home. The 10 minute commute is a beautiful thing. I saw the request for stories about how Covid 19 has affected business so I thought I would share ours. I arrived from out of the country on March 14th so immediately I went into self-isolation which was still so new that BC Ferries didn't want to let us park above the bottom car deck without a reservation. That has changed.

By March 20th our business was pretty much shut down. Orders were being cancelled from across the country. Twenty five percent of our business is with local organizations and businesses and this is traditionally our busiest time of year as local businesses want new shirts and swag to advertise and promote their businesses. That too has pretty much stopped, for obvious reasons. So, we are down to one shift a week for production and

I try to keep our office staff busy working from their homes.

Thank God for the help the government has given us. Our employees have some kind of income and can supplement with part time work we are limited to offering.

Seventy five percent of our business is with the souvenir/tourism industry across the country and needless to say they are not ordering product. Things don't look good.

However, our suppliers have been fantastic, even big players out of the US have told us to pay them when we can. Others have extended us much longer terms and lines of credit for product.

Customers that can pay are paying as quickly as they can. Those that can't, we work with.

With all of the dark feelings that can grab hold of you during a time like this, the light is that we are all in this together and we can only make it out of this if we work together and support each other. The birthday drive-by's are a hoot and seeing people actually caring about each other is heartwarming.

The clear blue sky is a thing of beauty. We can only hope that we can come out of this time better than when we went in. www.harlequinnaturegraphics.ca

~Kevin Clancy

Compass Mexican Bistro

My name is Carlos Arias, and I am the owner of Compass Mexican Bistro in Shawnigan Lake.

I'm originally from Mazatlan, Sinaloa, on the west coast of Mexico.

I immigrated to Canada in 2013 after getting married to a Canadian woman in Mexico and starting a family. I have two beautiful daughters who are now 8 and 9 years old. In 2015, we moved to Vancouver Island after living in friendly Manitoba for 2 years, where my wife Sheri is originally from. We decided to move to the west coast as I was not able to handle the harsh prairie winters.

I created Mayan Green Coffee Imports Ltd in 2016 and started bringing specialty coffee from

Chiapas, Mexico, a place where the conditions for growing coffee are just perfect.

In Mexico I had the experience of building several restaurants, some of them very successful to this day, and some that no longer exist. My experience as a jack of all trades and my passion for building new spaces got me to create Compass Mexican Bistro in Shawnigan - a place where you can always find a smile behind the counter and a good cup of coffee, not to mention the numerous and delicious burritos & tacos that we offer every day.

The situation around COVID-19 has been pretty difficult, but at the same time we have been able to create new ways of interacting with our customers. We now offer delivery and take out services (250-

929-4940) all around the Cowichan Valley as a result. It is a great pleasure to have such a great team of committed employees with lots of positive energy and to be serving the beautiful people of the valley.

This is a great place to be right now. I hope we can take this opportunity to manifest the best of all of us. Let's start planting more gardens and caring for our neighbours! Soon we will be laughing about this and enjoying ourselves in one of the best places in the world...our patio!! lol...just kidding.

Stop by and give us the opportunity to serve you! Stay safe.

~Carlos Arias

West Coast Vintage

A Renewed Vibrancy in Shawnigan Village:

We live near the Kinsol Trestle, so when we head to the Victoria region, we tend to take West Shawnigan Lake Road, which translates to...we hardly ever went to the Village. As relatively new residents, the Village felt like a black and white photo - kind of drab and uninviting and we felt like outsiders. However, that all changed April 27, 2019 when I opened West Coast Vintage in the old Steeples building. Suddenly, I was in the middle of the 'action' of Shawnigan Lake. Soon a couple other businesses opened, and all of the storefronts in the Village were occupied. It was amazing!

For a number of years it seemed like every time Shawnigan Lake was in the news it was negative. People appeared less friendly, less talkative, less Shawnigan. Then last spring it felt like a very heavy, dark cloud lifted off of the community. There was a new vibrancy in the Village; people appeared happier, welcoming, and super supportive of local businesses.

I cannot express the appreciation I have for the members of the Shawnigan Lake community. The support I received not only from residents, and from local small businesses, including the other vintage stores was, and still is, incredible. Even now, during a time of such uncertainty, our community has pulled together and supported one another. The vibrancy of last spring and summer is still here. You can still feel it, especially with the anticipation of retail, restaurants, parks, and health & beauty opening by the end of May.

Unfortunately, I was closed on the first anniversary of my store's opening; the silver lining is I am able to reopen June 4th 2020 at 11:00am. The very fact I am able to open my doors again, is a testament to the incredible community I live and work in.

~Tracey Otto, Owner

Sutton West Coast Realty

I've been helping home owners sell their properties for over 20 years and helping buyers find homes that are just right for them. Raising children here gave me the opportunity to be hands on with the school

system and sports community - a great way to become involved, make friends and contacts, and gain an insider's knowledge about our area.

Real estate marketing has transitioned to an online presence over the past several years while purchasing homes remained a physical event - buyers physically viewing homes. Covid-19 has been instrumental in moving viewings from strictly attending properties to virtual showings. Multimedia platforms allow buyers and their Realtors to virtually walk through homes and exterior spaces without being physically present. This benefits sellers by allowing them to proceed with the sale of their homes in a safe environment and enables buyers to purchase their first or next home when they need to. Viewing and signing of related documents and Contracts are also completed online with electronic signature software readily available.

I've been involved with real estate online technology for many years, implementing advantageous marketing and administrative steps as they became available.

The volume of sales in March and April declined from same time last year, but average selling prices continue to increase modestly. With restrictions slowly being lifted, there will be more inventory available and more buyers looking to purchase. If you would like additional market information or to sign up for my e-newsletter, please contact me. www.janetabbott.com

~Janet Abbott, Realtor

The Vintage Brush

The Vintage Brush is continuing to serve our community with online sales through our social media. We offer FREE delivery on orders over \$50 or no contact

porch pick up at our personal residence in Cowichan Bay. If you're looking for a gift, home decor, unique up-cycled furniture, paint for your next project or DIY Craft Kits for the kids, check us out on Facebook or Instagram. We thank you for supporting our family run business.

Stay safe and healthy. thevintagebrush.ca

~Ashley Ball

Sitka's Story:

Yes :) We are all in this together and will support and uphold one another. There are so many unknowns in these unprecedented times, but there is one thing we know for sure:

We can still MAKE MUSIC.

In changing times, our commitment to our valued Sitka families, community, and wonderful staff remains the same. Music is amazing - it brings calm, builds community, inspires connection and nurtures creativity... all things that I know we will hold close in the times ahead. As I sit here with my husband Kyle, and our two month old beautiful baby girl, we have been thoughtfully contemplating the time ahead...

Our goal is to keep our Sitka students and family's health priority above all. We also feel a strong calling and responsibility to continue to keep music a part of our students' lives and in your homes - especially during this time of social distancing when children find themselves with more free time at home. It's the perfect opportunity for them to continue to create music, keep music a part of routine and carry on with their musical progress and growth - and oh how uplifting and mood boosting music is!

Music blossoms the mind and heart. Music can bring us calm and be a place to release and just be. It can also be an energy outlet to unleash our creativity and have fun! There are so many excellent benefits to keeping music lessons in our homes during this time.

In light of this, we have temporarily switched all lessons to ON-LINE using Zoom. We're thankful for this platform to ensure safety by social distancing for all students, families, and teachers by not continuing in-studio lessons during this time. We were excited to take this new step of continuing learning and growth through online teaching. Zoom lessons are super easy to set up on your laptop, Ipad, tablet, or smartphone, and we're thankful we've had great success!

It's been a very, very busy last month setting this up and getting in the swing of it for students and teachers, but our Sitka team of teachers ROCK, and we're on a ROLL! We're working on creating new ways each week that we can make online lessons more innovative and fun for all our students. We SO enjoy seeing our students faces online each week and connecting with you!

THANK YOU to our ALL STAR PARENTS and STUDENTS for your endless support and understanding in helping to set up online. Supporting them in their music during this time has so many positive benefits!

Everywhere around us I see the new growth of SPRING sprouting and blossoming. I am so grateful for the reminder that new growth and healing is ahead for our world as well. And I know that MUSIC will be here to help us all through. We're accepting new registrations for Guitar, Piano, & Singing LESSONS for ALL AGES this Spring! Interested?

Contact us: sitkamusicschool@gmail.com 250-710-5852 www.sitkamusics.com

~Malea



Shawnigan Focus - Organizations



Royal Canadian Legion Malahat District #134

The Legion has been supporting the Shawnigan Lake community since it opened in 1934. While our doors are now closed because of COVID-19, the Legion is still working with, and for, the Shawnigan community. As our sign says, If you need help, contact us at MalahatLegion.ca.

Money raised before the shutdown was allocated to various local charities have been disbursed. Unfortunately, all of our regular events are cancelled until further notice. The only way we had to pay our bills came from our bar sales.

We are in dire need as we continue to follow our mandate of supporting our veterans and community. Regular bills continue to come in and must be paid. To date, we have not been able to apply for any grants or loans. A major bottle and can collection is underway and will continue until we are open again. Thank you to everyone who has donated. Drop off your bottles and pick up a mask made by the YSAG Quilters Club. They have produced over 1200 and more orders are coming in. They are free but any donations would be appreciated. We are still short of elastic for the masks, if you have any to spare, please drop them off.

The parking lot (our new "office") has seen some good things happening. Judy Bobke, our Community and Entertainment Rep has worked tirelessly not only for our Legion but for the Shawnigan community and individuals who need special help.

Through these extraordinary times, Judy has organized a "Disney Birthday Parade" for kids in Shawnigan Lake, using all the current precautions for kids who most likely cannot comprehend what is happening to the world delivered found 9 boxes of masks to local medical establishments delivered masks made by YSAG Quilting Club and others to anyone needing them organized a furniture, clothing and food drive to support for a vet's son with special needs who was badly burned when his apartment was destroyed by fire.

Legion members are checking in with Veterans and other Legion members who have health issues and to make sure they are safe and in need of anything.

Gloria Solley

Go Local!

I Want To Buy Local, But How Do I Find What I Am Looking For? Go to... thesra.ca/directory

In Shawnigan and the Cowichan Valley we want to shop local and in these unique times, we especially want to support our local businesses to help them survive, to thrive and to be there for us for the long term.

Our community is full of creative and competent initiatives and businesses, so why would we go elsewhere for our needs? We have to support them! But how do we easily find out what is available in our local area...what services they offer...what hours are they open...and how to contact them? Remember the Phonebook? That's long gone. Now people use Facebook or Google, but sometimes that information is ephemeral or hard to search.

The Shawnigan Residents Association is trying to help by building a free community directory of our local businesses and organizations in order to support the concept of BUYING LOCAL. It will include all of the store-front businesses, home-based businesses or contractors that can be hard to find, as well as our community organizations and associations.

I want to list my business in the directory:

We want to see ALL of our businesses and organizations sign up; the more complete the directory, the more useful it will be to the community. It's free to sign up and each business is able to update their information to keep it current. Think about it...promoting your business for free?... directly to your market audience?... C'mon, you can't beat that.

Here's how... just send an email to shawniganresidentsassociation@gmail.com and request a listing. We will send you directions on how to setup your account and fill out the information to be presented in the directory.

The directory area stretches south from Whippletree Junction to the Malahat – including Cowichan Station, Cowichan Bay, Shawnigan Lake, Cobble Hill, Mill Bay and the Malahat.

I am looking for a local business?

For residents, the directory will be a fantastic resource to search for local businesses or associations that are open, by category or by keywords. For example, if you want to see what local businesses are open and delivering food? Simply search for "delivery".

THE DIRECTORY is at: www.thesra.ca/directory

www.thesra.ca/directory

The directory is live right now. Join it as a business, use it as a resident. Keep our community strong and self-sufficient. The Shawnigan Residents Association is grateful to Areas A, B, C and D of the CVRD for supporting this initiative.

Membership:

SRA Membership is important. Drawing strength as a community with a strong voice allows us to make our issues known to governments, public/private bodies and allows us to influence decisions that impact our community. Be informed and get involved today! Join the SRA at; www.thesra.ca/membership

In Support of Community... the Shawnigan Residents Association. shawniganresidentsassociation@gmail.com - thesra.ca

Alex Acton

From Sylvan United Church

Sylvan United Church has been offering spiritual care, rituals and rites, and caring connection to the South Cowichan Valley from our current site and our predecessors in Shawnigan Lake and Mill Bay United Churches, for over 100 years. We are a place where people, in many different stages and places on a journey of faith, can gather for conversations about the things of life that truly matter – and a place to celebrate joys and mourn sorrows, explore doubts and ask questions as well as deepen faith and nurture our Spirits. We are rooted in the Christian tradition, and are open to many different expressions of spirituality and faith.

The BC Centre for Disease Control has said that Faith Communities such as Sylvan are "pillars of strength in communities, [that] have an important role in connecting the community, contributing to beneficial and safe social interactions". In this time of physical-distancing, we have met the challenge of caring for each other and "gathering" for services in new and creative ways. Our minister, Rev Katherine Brittain, records weekly reflections and services on our YouTube channel. Along with regular phone calls, we "meet" for coffee over Zoom on Sunday mornings to be able to see each other. We are making use of social media such as Facebook and Instagram as well. We are reaching out to meet needs in our community by supporting the important work of groups such as Nourish Cowichan, the CMS Food Bank and Warmland House through regular financial donations - places where many in our community volunteered when we were allowed to gather.

Although our buildings are closed, we are blessed with a beautiful outdoor labyrinth in a lovingly tended garden. We have chosen to leave our gates open and invite people to take some time there in quiet contemplation - simply asking everyone to obey the Physical Distancing guidelines from Public Health. Please visit our website:

www.sylvanunited.ca, for church services, to read our newsletter, "Celebrating-A-Round", and for other announcements. Also, watch for our up-coming plant sale.

Robbie Fritz

Cowichan South Arts Guild

Cowichan South Arts Guild (CSAG) is a registered not-for-profit organization funded by the CVRD and was created to bring the collaboration of 'Arts and Culture' to Shawnigan, Cobble Hill, and Mill Bay. As a volunteer driven organization, we are excited to work towards bringing collaboration and animation to as many artists and art related organizations within the South Cowichan as possible.

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically altered how we work to bring together events and inspiration in our community. We are shifting into some great new opportunities! With the need to 'shelter in place' many folks have had renewed ability to work on their artistic gifts ... and they have lots to share. As a result, CSAG is MOVING ONLINE as much as possible!!!

If you have something to share, are techno-savvy, and wish to support your local community with getting the arts out into the wider realms of connection, or if you simply wish to participate in any way - please reach out to: terry.dheensaw@gmail.com and we will conjure up great ways to collaborate on creating beauty, fun, and creativity within our community!

Terry Dheensaw

Covid and the Shawnigan Lake Museum

Our Mission: *To connect community and visitors with the Shawnigan Lake Experience.*

Our Vision: *To share the passion for Shawnigan Lake — past, present and future.*

It was with heavy hearts that the museum was closed in Mid March due to Covid imposed restrictions. Unfortunately, March is the beginning of the museum 'season' with planned school visits, events and an increasing number of visitors. As with other local businesses, the museum is facing a significant loss of revenue that would normally come from donations at the door, school visits, events and gift shop sales. In addition, the Museum's annual fundraising event, which helps to raise money for the proposed museum expansion, will not happen this year.

On the upside, there is a lot of work to be done even with the museum closed. One initiative that has started is Stories from the Lake. Every few weeks, a new presentation on Shawnigan's history will be shared on Facebook, the Museum youtube channel and the Museum website. Most of these 'stories' will literally be filmed from the lake. The first in the series was Memory Island – if you haven't already, check it out.

The Museum has benefitted, recently, from a flurry of online orders from the Museum gift shop

– thank you! Staff and volunteers are available to fill your orders with social distancing practises – by mail, local drop off or pre-arranged hands-free pick up. Memberships can also be renewed in this manner. We accept credit cards, e-transfers or by cheque. We encourage you to check out some of the options on the Gift Shop tab at www.shawniganlakemuseum.com Thank you for supporting Shawnigan's community Museum.

With the latest information from the Premier, B.C. is set to restart the economy in phases. Museums have been given the green light to re-open in Phase 1 if they can follow the guidelines of social distancing and cleanliness. The Shawnigan Lake Museum will be working on a plan based on guidelines from the greater Museum community which have yet to be developed. Hope to see you soon...stay tuned.

Lori Treloar, Curator

Shawnigan Lake Fire Department

COVID 19 has certainly changed the way we do business in the Fire Department. When it initially hit we backed off from practises, gathered N95 masks, purchased faceshields and went on a disposable coverall hunt. Our standard operating procedures changed, especially for medical aid calls. Our priority being our First Responders Safety.

The first thing we noticed is our regular call volume dropped significantly other than burning complaints. Once the Province put a halt to open burning a lot of people were unaware of the closure hence the complaints. I attribute the drop to a lot of people staying at home and being extra cautious. The BC ambulance service also realigned the medical calls we get dispatched to, with us only responding to the most critical or when they are seriously delayed. So, if you are in need and possibly expect the Fire Department to show up first to support the ambulance it may not happen. If we do get dispatched you'll also notice we're a little slower getting to your door. On arrival we have to get our coveralls, mask, gloves and faceshields on to protect ourselves while the clock keeps ticking.

After input from all our members we decided that in order to stay sharp in the way we do business we have to keep training. We now, for the time being, practise in small groups and different days and times while trying to maintain our social distancing and disinfecting after we finish. This meant these last couple of weeks we've trained every week day. This changes as each officer tries to accommodate their group's schedule. We have had a great turnout with the new small group training protocols. This to me really speaks to your volunteer's dedication in providing the service that the public has come to expect.

I couldn't ask for a better group of committed people to work with. This is a group we can all be proud of!

Keith Shields, Fire Chief

Shawnigan Focus

Shawnigan Lake Community Association (SLCA)

2020 has not been a year of perfect vision!! If only we could have seen a pandemic coming, we could have been more prepared! In February we hosted a very successful Meet and Greet evening of community leaders and local business owners. There we shared plans for the year and filled a calendar with events, meetings, classes and so much more. Little did we know than one month later all would be cancelled!

That evening brought together new folk recently coming into our community, and many more experienced who know how special our community is. We are strong, resilient and stand together to support each other. By meeting face to face we built a community in friendship that encourages support. Posted hearts show we care for the frontline workers, but also for our community!

The SLCA had to cancel our Easter Event on Easter Sunday. This would have been a time for families to come together for a couple of hours of fun including an Egg Hunt. It was tough to cancel the inflatable and other activities but it was heart warming to know that our candy has supported many children in need that may never have been able to attend such an event!

Our next event should be the Canada Day celebrations. Like all other gatherings this too will be changed. We encourage all businesses and homes to brighten every road with red and white decorations to show your pride in our great country! Share your story on-line of your greatest moment as a Canadian, or post a photo of your favourite Canadian destination and why it is! Show your Canadian colours!!

We are working on bringing a Virtual Canada Day Celebration to our community. Watch our Facebook page for more information or email shawniganlakecomassoc@gmail.com

The SLCA will be watching to see how the restrictions will be lifted and when that will happen. In the meantime, our thoughts are with the community. We know, by working together, we will get through this time together. Going forward we will remember the strength we gained as we flattened the curve together!

Our Ecovillage

Our Ecovillage is a 25-acre demonstration site and education centre which is home to four organizations co-working to serve over 10K learners per year, generally, ... but not these days!

Given we have space, technology, and the ability to feed many, many people from OUR farm, the team has pivoted quickly, and all is not lost, as we are focusing on three major ways of contributing to the wider community:

Creating online content for folks who wish to film/edit, assist with online meetings, teaching through

e-courses, having conferences, and creating festivals.

Providing 'Educational Community Supported Agriculture Food Boxes' (CSA) with goodies from local community businesses and OUR produce (fruit, meats, poultry, eggs, etc.)

Providing safe shelter which includes hosting a Palliative space for a new friend. We are doing OUR best to support in ways which can be supportive for a wide variety of needs in these turbulent times.

Stay tuned for OUR creative solution of a new "Slow Food Drive Through" (not providing fast food for sure!). We have positions opening for a few individuals who can work well in the online environment and a number of summer youth positions as well.

~Brandy Gallagher

The George Pringle Memorial Camp

The George Pringle Memorial Camp, better known as Camp Pringle, has been a member of the Shawnigan Lake community since we hosted our first campers during the summer of 1950! Now 70 years later, our site looks very different but our values haven't changed. We are proud to provide opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and identities to connect with others in a beautiful outdoor environment. At Camp Pringle we offer facility rentals, after school childcare and summer camp programs for children, teens and families. Since 2018 we have been the Vancouver Island location of "Camp Good-times" and in partnership with the Canadian Cancer Society we offer two weeks of specialized camps for participants affected by cancer. Last summer we offered our first gender inclusive camp where children of all gender identities and expressions were able to participate in a welcoming and supportive overnight camp experience.

Over the winter we were preparing for a busy season of events and camps celebrating our 70th anniversary. Regrettably, due to COVID-19, our organization, like so many others, has had to adapt. On March 18th to ensure the safety of our program participants, our renters and our staff we made the difficult but necessary decision to cancel all facility operations. This included cancelling spring rentals for churches, non-profits, schools and private weddings.

Our licensed childcare program is closed until schools re-open and we will confirm whether we can run our summer camps, and at what capacity, by June 5th.

In a time of uncertainty, we have still found ways to stay connected with our community and show support from a distance. After cancelling our catered rental bookings in March, we donated all the food from our commercial kitchen to Nourish Cowichan who are working hard to continue feeding over 900 local kids and teens while schools are closed. We have also compiled an extensive online list of amazing resources to support kids,

teens and families staying home. In April we began our free Virtual Campfire series! From the comfort of home, you can join us through the zoom video chat service for campfire songs and stories every second Thursday night. Our next free Virtual Campfire program will be held Thursday May 14th at 6:30pm. Login details can be found on our website (www.campprangle.com) or social media. We are extremely thankful for the messages of compassion and support we have received and we are glad to do our part to share kindness, love and hope in Shawnigan Lake and beyond.

~Claire Friedrich - Camp Director

The Clay Hub

For over 5 years now there has been a volunteer run clay community space, The Clay Hub is for all people of all ages interested in playing with clay in the Cowichan Valley. Local potters were aware that there was no clay community facility in the entire Cowichan Valley for people to make pots so they got together and with a lot of hard work and support the Clay Hub is now a reality. We're a part of The HUB, 2375 Kokslah Road, Cowichan Station. The Clay Hub offers clay classes, workshops, and 3-hour open studio sessions 6 days a week. There's a wide variety of classes during the day or in the evening, varying in length from 1 to 2 day workshops to weekly classes from 3 to 12 weeks. The class could be for learning to throw on the potter's wheel, hand-building or a variety of both with some classes for beginners and others advanced classes and sometimes with specific themes.

It's a busy place with lots going on but this all changed in mid-March for us just like it did for everyone. We had to close our doors leaving some people part way through weekly classes and others with clay pieces in process. Refunds have been sent and pieces taken home by members to complete. Upcoming classes are cancelled as well. Recently, volunteer monitors scheduled open times for members to come and pick up their clay to play with clay at home.

We are hoping to get a couple of on-line classes up and going for people to do on ZOOM at home so stayed tuned! Hopefully things will ease off soon and we'll be able to have people that are interested to play with clay be able to do so again soon.

The most updated information can always be found on our web site. To register for future classes and for more information regarding what's happening at the Clay Hub go to our web site: theclayhubcollective.com.

~Angela Woodgate

The Shawnigan Basin Society - Nearing a Decade of Dedicated Service!

Eight years ago, the Shawnigan Basin Society (SBS) was founded

and committed to the protection, preservation and restoration of the local watershed.

Recently the Society lost its core funding from the CVRD and now, due to COVID-19, grant applications have been postponed or closed and donations are down significantly. With the loss in revenue, ongoing operational costs continue to accrue. At this time the SBS is in immediate need of assistance and dependent on public donations from our community. The Society is in danger of closing its doors.

SBS projects including water quality testing, approaches for controlling Eurasian Milfoil, and the restoration of riparian zones are ongoing initiatives towards maintaining and protecting the integrity of our watershed. We have assisted local citizens with sediment sampling, water sampling, and interaction with regulatory agencies to prevent environmental damage from activities in the watershed.

Major accomplishments of the SBS include the Ecosystem-Based Conservation Plan for the Shawnigan lake Watershed by Herb Hammond, and the establishment of an Ecological Design Panel. This ground-breaking work has provided a rational approach for the preservation ecological function in the watershed. The SBS promises help with any situation or decision where the health our natural environment should be considered.

The Society is dedicated to protecting your watershed and is in need of financial assistance of \$30,000 to remain committed to this cause. We continue to pursue grant financing to assist with our costs. We hope to gain local support until our applications are successful.

All donations are welcome, tax receipts offered for donations over \$25 through Cowichan Community Land Trust and a certificate of support for donations over \$500.

Donations can be made by cash, e-transfer, cheque or credit/debit credit. Cash/Cheque – in person or mail - E-transfer to director @ shawniganbasinsociety.org, Credit/Debit Credit online through the Cowichan Community Land Trust *TAX RECEIPT AVAILABLE www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/6042

Please ensure your donation reaches us directly using Cowichan Community Land Trust by changing the FUND TYPE on the drop-down list to Stewardship Projects & comment SBS donation in the message section. Your tax-

deductible donation receipt will generate upon completion of your transaction.

Whatever is upstream ends up downstream. We must take action now to ensure the Shawnigan Basin Society doors remain open as a strong advocate for our beloved watershed in the future.

~Brettany Flowers

Cobble Hill Fair Cancelled

Replaced with a 'Virtual Fair' First of all, we hope that you and your family are keeping safe and well during this event that has gripped our community and, in fact, the world.

It is with considerable sadness, and a very real sense of loss, that the Board of the Shawnigan Cobble Hill Farmers Institute cancelled the August 22, 2020 - 111th Cobble Hill Fair. Like Doctor Bonnie Henry, the Provincial Health Officer for BC, we want to ensure everyone in our community is safe and stays well during these very difficult and unusual times.

The Cobble Hill Fair attracts around 6,000 visitors annually who look forward to viewing the exhibits and sharing time with neighbours and friends.

Our Old-Fashioned Country Fair is one of many signs that summer is coming to a close. It provides residents, 4-H members, exhibitors, vendors and volunteers with an opportunity to showcase the wonderful bounty South Cowichan has to offer.

After being a core summertime event in our community for 110 years, we could not let the Fair go quietly. In its place we will stage a 'Virtual Fair' and provide our community with an opportunity to participate by submitting their Fair entries through photographs and perhaps short videos that will be posted on our cobblehillfair.ca website. The website will be open for everyone to view. Although some of our usual entry activities will be available, our focus will be on encouraging children to participate.

We look forward to safer times along with an economic recovery and a return to normal, whatever that new normal looks like. We hope you and your family will participate in our Virtual Fair and that we will see you in person at our 2021 Fair.

We want to assure you when the danger of this global pandemic has passed, we will find ways to celebrate with you. In the meantime, please stay safe and well!

~Gerry Giles

Thank you to Sierra Acton for the idea, and support, to publish a special Shawnigan Covid edition of the Focus and thank you to everyone who contributed to this community collaboration.

Shawnigan Focus - Schools



SLS Observatory

Shawnigan Lake School's Outreach in the local community:

During a time when mandated social distancing and self-isolation could lead to a fracturing of communities and community spirit, Shawnigan Lake School is continuing to foster and grow its connections in the Cowichan Valley.

In March, the School established four strategic guiding principles as a 'North Star' for the pandemic and ensuing period of uncertainty, including one focused on our commitment to local community:

'We will step forward to support our local and surrounding community with our Shawnigan resources as part of our ongoing commitment to Shawnigan Lake Village and the Cowichan Valley.'

"We have been proactive in reaching out to local schools, organizations, community groups and neighbours to see how people are managing during these difficult and unsettling times," says Sara Blair, Director of Community Partnerships at Shawnigan.

In April, we met with the Heads of local high schools connected along the Shawnigan Creek: Brentwood College, Frances Kelsey, St. John's Academy and Shawnigan Lake School. This was an opportunity for us to support each other and help guide our schools through this time of crisis.

"All of us are connected through our commitment to our local community and all of the students in our care. It is a time to support one another, ask for help where we need it, and give help where we can," says Headmaster Larry Lamont.

The schools are looking at how they can best create systems during this period of innovative disruption and support our teachers to rethink education, methodology and delivery.

A number of these schools

have established ways to thank essential workers in our community, and Shawnigan is committed to doing the same, asking families and staff members to share the opportunity to ring our Chapel bell every evening at 7:00 pm.

Shawnigan is also doing its part to alleviate food insecurity, with the School's culinary staff developing and creating healthy dinners that work well for the "Meals on the Ground" program. This wonderful crew, along with teacher, Gary Dukelow, and Chaplain Jim Holland, are also continuing to keep up with Shawnigan's service commitment to the Dandelion Society, providing 100 sandwiches each week to those living on the streets of Victoria. This program, also known as "Wake-up Wednesdays" is one that Shawnigan has been supporting for some time. Now, with shelters closed, support is needed more than ever.

The School has been recognized by Tom Longridge, Associate Superintendent, Cowichan Valley School District No. 79, for partnering with Nourish Cowichan, the Starfish Program, and the Shawnigan Residents Association through the Cowichan Hearts Campaign to support families at risk in the local area. The lawn sign fundraising initiative has seen signs pop up across the Cowichan Valley, including on the School's campus grounds, encouraging passers-by to embrace "Love, gratitude, hope."

Two Shawnigan students, Milena J. and Aslan F., have got hands-on with the project, helping the SRA promote the campaign initiative through social media. With their creative and knowledgeable support, the Association's online presence has grown in the last month, with a significant jump in the number of people engaging with the campaign through social media.

The Shawnigan staff community is funding continued support for the local community during the period of the pandemic – with a local Board member matching their donations.

"Our commitment to service is there to inspire our students to contribute in their communities – wherever they are in the world - at this time," says Headmaster Lamont.

Shawnigan draws upon its values and community spirit, referencing its response and strategic guiding principles to Covid-19.

"We, as a School, are committed to our ongoing approach of 'Conversation, Compassion, Community – and Courage' in the face of adversity and in support of others. We recognize many of you in the Shawnigan community may face challenges in the coming months, and we shall offer support to the best of our ability," says Headmaster Lamont.

Teacher Take it on the Road at Frances Kelsey

I saw a library sign photographed and posted on Facebook recently that said "Please Note: The post-apocalyptic fiction section has been moved to Current Affairs." It expressed how many of us who have ever read a dystopian novel are feeling. But although dystopian novels usually end with a shadow of darkness looming in the periphery to fuel its expected sequel, they also often end with the brightness of a renewed world coming soon. Watching the flurry of activity at Frances Kelsey Secondary these days, I feel I am witnessing that brightening, and it instills hope for a better and more compassionate future.

Our industrial kitchen is a flurry of activity as usual when school is back in, but school isn't in. There are no hungry teenagers in the hall skipping class early to line up at the Kelsey Kafe, but there are still hungry teenagers in our south end, now with no access to our breakfast cart or the healthy lunch options of smoothies, salads, sandwiches, and daily specials we provided. So, a partnership has quickly solidified with Nourish Cowichan and we are helping to feed those in need in our Valley.

There are 350-400 families in need, approximately 30 of whom live in our catchment. So many of our Kelsey staff are in the kitchen helping with the preparation and packaging of a portion of the meals coordinated by Nourish Cowichan, who then in turn deliver full food hampers back to our school for delivery to

needy families in our area. Our industrial kitchen has been the perfect place to prepare over 200 Shepherd pies, crispy chicken dinners, fruit crumbles, pizza rolls, and turkey soup. It started by using our already stocked inventory, approx. \$6000 worth, and is now also supplemented by local donations from businesses.

Along with the industrial kitchen feeding hungry students and families, those living in poverty often don't have access to technology, and so our library has pushed out the iPads and laptops we usually lend out within the school for home use. Advisors discreetly surveyed the families in their groups, checked if lack of technology was a problem, and set them up with both a device and, if necessary, the free access to a network system that was being offered by companies during this pandemic. As teachers, we wanted all students to know they were included in our virtual classrooms and welcome to join us #togetherapart.

So in this last week, as our music video expressing how much we miss our student and family community went out on Facebook, I think I speak for everyone at our school when I say that we know our world won't go back to "normal," but maybe that's okay – just maybe, we've had a few necessary life changing reminders, gotten a different kind of education, and maybe we are on the road to a more inclusive, compassionate community existence.

That's a world we all want to live in.

~Alana Baker

