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Shaw Ocean Discovery Celebrates Volunteers

Author: A. Gortan,
Citizen Journalist

Appreciation was bubbling over at the Shaw Ocean Discovery Center, during a reception recognizing volunteers for their dedication. Executive Director Angus Matthews opened the event by expressing his gratitude. **"We can't do it without you. Go read the**

guest book. There is not a day that goes by without comments that say, 'amazing volunteer', 'so knowledgeable' and 'so friendly'. That is the soul of this place."

Guest speaker and host of the CBC National Science Radio Program 'Quirks & Quarks', Bob McDonald, praised the center for the important role it plays in the lives of young

people. **"This is a fabulous, fabulous place. I believe and support places like this, because this is where I began. Science centers, large and small - they take people and make them aware in a way schools cannot do."**...

Continued online at:
www.SaanichVoiceOnline.ca

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A Triumph for Transparency

Author: A. Gortan,
Citizen Journalist

Two years after first considering the idea of videotaping council meetings, the cameras in Central Saanich are finally rolling.

The move followed a wave of controversy in 2011, when residents discovered that council was no longer recording their votes in the Minutes. The lack of record keeping became a significant issue during the last general election, resulting in promises from candidates to increase transparency.

Councillor Zeb King believes webcasting council meetings is the beginning of fulfilling this commitment. **"Today's Council needs to be commended for taking Central Saanich out of the dark ages and opening up the proceedings to the 21st century with webcasting."**

North Saanich was the first municipality in the CRD to webcast meetings and has offered this service for over two years. Sooke began webcasting last year and is presently the only District that webcasts meetings live, while they are in session.

Central Saanich is now the third municipality to webcast meetings and Colwood will begin in the coming weeks. The City of Victoria plans to start in September.

The addition of microphones has also benefited members of the audience who now say they can hear much better. An external speaker has been installed in the lobby, for those rare occasions when attendance exceeds chamber capacity and people are standing outside the chamber doors.

Central Saanich Manager of Information Technology Tony Bousquet is "thrilled" with the new system. The move to webcast meetings has been an exciting development in his eight year career with the District. He believes the two year wait prior to implementing the technology, **"actually helped us."**

New Councillors for Central Saanich

Author: Ed Johnson,
Citizen Journalist

On May 6th 2013, the swearing-in of Central Saanich's newest municipal councillors will take place in the council chambers. Alicia Cormier and Ryan Windsor topped the polls in the recent by-election, winning their seats

on council. An exclusive Saanich Voice Online video interview demonstrates the issues that are important to each candidate.

"Seventy to eighty percent of the people I spoke to wanted the same things as myself for Central Saanich - protect farmland and the rural environment and build a local economy", said Cormier.

Ryan Windsor believes the expansion of the Urban Containment Boundary is another important issue. **"We need to ask what is the motivation behind the expansion of the Urban Containment Boundary. That ques-**

tion has not been answered and it's a big question with me."

A voter turnout of almost 3000 voters represented 20% of eligible voters in the district. First place Cormier tallied 872 votes in the preliminary election results, while Windsor was close behind with 859. Bob Thompson, a previous councillor in Central Saanich came in third, trailing Windsor by 32 votes.

Continued online with exclusive video interview with Alicia Cormier and Ryan Windsor at:
www.saanichvoiceonline.ca

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A Life and Death Conversation with Stephen P. Roberts

Author: J. Barlow,
Citizen Journalist

What would you give for just one more day with someone you loved?

Did you both have a chance to say everything you wanted; to leave nothing undone? Sometimes death sneaks up and catches you unprepared; sometimes you see it coming a mile away, and you're still not ready.

Stephen P. Roberts, North Saanich Gulf Islands Provincial Liberal candidate and member of the Vancouver Hospice Board of Directors fundraising committee, knows death is not a popular topic for conversation. Taxes; the environment; BC Ferries fares and salaries; people love to talk about those issues.

Conversations about death and dying are painful and uncomfortable; people would rather not think about it. They put it off, thinking, 'There'll be time for that later.' Regrettably, for some people, "later" too often becomes "too late".

For Stephen "later" came when his father was diagnosed with liver cancer four years ago. The family provided 24-hour in-home care as long as possible, taking turns staying up at night. "Everyone's life was on hold. No one knew when the disease would take its toll. Providing round the clock care is exhausting and many people just can't do those kinds of things for their loved ones," says Stephen.

It was heartbreaking when his father inevitably went into the hospital. "Most people would prefer to be in our homes when we pass on," Stephen observes, "but the reality is most of us will be in a hospital where people are busy and no one has time to be with you." As for his father, "He spent his last two days in the hospital. They didn't even have a room for him. He was in the hallway."

When Stephen's mother was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer a year

later, things were very different. The frail 75 year old spent her last four days in Hospice, with a private room, a cot for sleepovers, a kitchen, and personal touches like a hand-crafted quilt on her bed. Even the family pet was welcome. And the nurses! "They were like guardian angels," Stephen recalls.

At the end, Stephen was at his mother's side. "I was humming a church tune that I knew she would know ... I was holding her hand when she passed away. It was very moving for me."



Dave Traynor, Manager of Communications at Victoria Hospice, joins the conversation. "We see that every day. People come in and they've never been through anything like this and it becomes a very profound experience - I almost hate to say it's positive and yet that's how it ends up."

As if the Roberts family had not endured enough, Stephen's brother also passed away three years ago from a massive heart attack. Stephen reflects on his passing. "There was no warning... he went suddenly and I never got a chance to help him."

Dave notes that this scenario occurs all too often. "... about 20% [of the people at Hospice] are people who experience sudden or unexpected death and come in and seek our resources."

The privilege of sharing end-of-life moments is a gift. "The end of a good life is something to be embraced



and celebrated," Dave asserts. "We all come up against it at some point. People get a chance to shed all that stuff that gets built up in life. They get to clean up their own lives and make amends if that's what they need to do... everyone is better off if they get a chance to do that."

Stephen has a suggestion for how everyone can make a difference. "We as individuals can advocate for better end of life care. We can also do what we can ourselves to make the end-of-life experience better. Government can do better, but we can also take responsibility to do better ourselves because government can't do everything. We can donate or volunteer in so many ways."

Both Stephen and Dave urge families to have those critical conversations before it's too late. It might make you squirm, but a candid conversation about after death can bring peace of mind on the worst day of your life. If you're not sure how to begin, Hospice can help, with reading and support material to point you in the right direction. Visit their website. While you're there, maybe you could make a donation - more than half of their budget depends on donor dollars.

Do it today - not later. You never know when "later" might become "too late".
www.victoriahospice.org
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Local Councillor Wins Speaking Contest

Author: J. Barlow,
Citizen Journalist

The hall at St. Patrick's Church on Haultain Ave was crowded on Friday the 19th of April with over 100 Toastmasters from all over Victoria and beyond. From Sooke to Sidney they gathered to hear Victoria's six top public speakers vie for the honour of representing Victoria in the upcoming Toastmasters District 21 International Speech Contest.

To reach this point, all six contestants had to win a contest in their Club,

followed by a second win when they competed against contestants from other clubs in their Area.

Representing the elite from 36 local Toastmasters Clubs were Steve Bertrand, David Best, [Central Saanich Councillor] Carl Jensen, Mike LaPlante, Shawn O'Hara, and Peter Scott.

Taking top honours was Carl Jensen, with Shawn O'Hara coming in second, and David Best claiming third place.

From here Carl will advance to the District 21 Contest in Nanaimo...

Continued online at:
www.SaanichVoiceOnline.ca

Members of the public are welcome to attend the speech contest in Nanaimo. For details, or to find a Toastmasters club near you, visit the District 21 website at:
www.d21toastmasters.org



Photo by: Katherine Marshall

"Good government requires an effective opposition; British Columbians need diverse voices in their legislature." - Adam Olsen Olsen4MLA.ca



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