Presidents Report – 2018 Annual General Meeting

Welcome to the 2018 Annual General Meeting of your Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce. An Annual General Meeting is a recap of past accomplishments since the previous AGM, and it has been a good year for the Chamber.

Members are the backbone of any Chamber and member participation is key. A growth in new members and retention of current members is always a goal. A chamber of commerce is in place to promote successful business outcomes for its members, to support them, and to create a positive background for all enterprises to prosper. Who is in business? Anyone supplying an item or a service to the public is in business.

In our predominantly tourism based economy, there have been some very successful events, either sponsored or supported by your Chamber, in an effort to encourage shoulder season economic benefit for the Salt Spring community.

Sip & Savour Harvest Festival brings attention in the fall to our important agricultural sector. Christmas on Salt Spring encourages Shop Local for our retail and home studio sectors. Mixers throughout the year invite members to meet and to share triumphs and concerns. The February Festival with its Indoor Saturday Market, plus the March Home and Garden Show, promoting the various trades that also encourage Shop Local outcomes, were two successful shoulder season events. The Chamber supports April events and this year organized a Project Ganges clean-up committee for the Earth Day celebration.

A special mention for the first annual Salty Awards in October...a way to thank the Islanders for their amazing work for this community. Work is already underway for the fall’s second annual Salty Awards. Be a part of this.

Your Board of Directors are a working board, and their commitment is also to time (monthly meeting, if on executive then two meetings a month, committee work, participation in events, a chamber presence at other groups meetings), and always with a thoughtful and proactive desire to work for best outcomes for Salt Spring...your directors for 2017 to 2018 year have all been big-picture thinkers.

Stepping forward: it’s a civic election year. The outcome of September 2017 incorporation vote has been the creation of two different island groups attempting to work within the system of governance. Ongoing work to achieve rural status for Salt Spring, the unresolved water moratorium, the affordable housing and work rental crisis, the accommodations sector and perceived impact of Airbnb...these are all serious issues and any solutions will require all groups to work together.

The Chamber office continues to offer leadership and innovation. Thank you to Executive Director, Janet Clouston, to Gail Beattie, and to Len Brown. The Chamber’s voice on behalf of its members remains strong. Perhaps that is the message to take into the 2018-2019 year.

Li Read, President
Dear Chamber Members and Board of Directors,

I am pleased to report an uneventful year!

Uneventful and plan fulfilling is what we finance people like to see. The year unfolded with our Chamber Operations meeting budget expectation in a relative consistent manor. Some initiatives exceeded our expectations, others fell short. On balance we met our overall operating budget expectations.

We know projects vary. We work to achieve overall balance.

Team members have learned the art of adjusting plans in ways that are mindful of our overall financial viability. I commend both Janet and Gail for watching the revenue and expenses on a daily and monthly basis. This ongoing attention is what lets me present a positive report to members at year end.

This year we have adjusted our allocation of visitor map revenue forward to 2019. As a result the revenue associated with it appears as deferred revenue. In the past, sales for an upcoming map were shown in the spring revenue of the statement year. Our decision to adjust this reporting reflects the appropriate and accepted method of reporting. This change does impact our net income line for 2017/2018 though, resulting in a loss. If we had been reporting as in prior years, we would have had a small surplus.

We are primarily here to reinvest annual funds in operating activities, we are here to benefit business and the community. That said, over the coming years we do hope to achieve modest surpluses each year, working towards a 6 month operating expense surplus. This is our current stretch goal and will likely require several years (8 to 10) to achieve.

Thank you to the members who support the chamber through annual dues, event sponsorship, event participation, and all the many ways you support the continued economic viability of Salt Spring Island.

Cornelia J. Krikke
Treasurer,
Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce
Membership Committee Report – 2018 Annual General Meeting

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank a few people for their hard work and on-going effort and support of the Membership Committee this past year.

The Salty Awards were introduced this year and showcased everything Salt Spring Island! Award ceremonies held during Small Business Week included business awards as well as awards focused on celebrating our community.

Donna Robinson and Deborah Osborne worked tirelessly for countless hours to organize and execute this successful event. Behind the scenes, Gail Beattie was instrumental in coordinating the voting and results. Janet Clouston was, as always, essential to finalizing details and getting crowds to the event. Thank you to Janet, Gail, Donna, and Deborah for carrying the ball.

I want also to acknowledge Len Brown who has been the true coordinator of membership. His work to sign up new members and meet with existing members is vital to maintaining the membership of the Salt Spring Chamber of Commerce.

I want to thank Li Read for her thoughtful and inspired leadership as President. And thank you to the other members of the Board of Directors for their support and guidance which was appreciated on a regular basis.

As I am stepping away from the Board, I look forward to supporting the Salt Spring Chamber and everything they do in the future.

Dale Schweighardt
Chair of the Membership Committee
Ganges Village Group – Project Overview

The Board of Directors of the Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce has agreed to form a Ganges Village Improvement Committee. Ganges Village is the economic hub of the island and the majority of Chamber members have business and non-profit entities in the area. Our Board recognizes the need to focus on improvements in order to sustain the overall economy and community wellbeing.

Within the scope of our mandate of improving trade and commerce on behalf of our members and the community at large, we are committed to being solutions-oriented and seeking to find ways to improve Ganges Village for local residents and visitors alike. These will include matters involving signage, beautification, cleanliness, traffic flow, parking, safety, infrastructure and resident wellbeing.

In order to make this effort inclusive, we intend to work in concert with community members, government, non-profit groups and business leaders, both members and non-members, who have a common interest in improvements to Ganges Village and hope to contribute the Chamber’s voice to finding solutions.

Our key areas of focus will be:

- Beautification and Cleanliness
- Transportation and Parking
- Infrastructure and Services

Our plans will include meeting with stakeholder to discuss solutions to areas of concern, support establishing programs such as “Ganges Village Clean-up Day” and “Shoreline Clean-up” for Ganges Harbour as well as fun competitions for storefronts and flower displays.

We are in discussion with several groups to establish the way forward on this matter. We invite you to become involved in this program. We plan to meet on a regular basis with stakeholder groups and individuals and to investigate funding sources for projects that fit within the scope of this work.

Questions are to be addresses to: Jeremy Milsom or Ian Clement, Committee Co-Chairs, or to the Chamber of Commerce.

Jeremy Milsom – info@saltspringinn.com     Ian Clement – ianhclement@gmail.com

Chamber of Commerce – chamber@saltspringchamber.com
Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce AGM; June 2018

Communications Committee Report

In 2017 and 2018 your Communications Committee engaged in many projects promoting Salt Spring Island’s community and economic opportunities within the challenges of our rapidly changing world.

Communications activity in 2017:

- Actively participating with other stakeholders in the CRD’s, Community Economic Development Commission (CEDC) to attract additional Destination funding which will generate improved tourism activity and destination experience and grow more seasonal balance through direct destination management initiatives.
- With recent marketing activities being so successful in attracting visitors, the enhancement of our destination experience is a critical key to the future reputation of our tourism sector. It will provide many other direct and indirect community benefits and provide for necessary infrastructure refinements.
- Provided guidance in the formation of the Local Village Committee to raise awareness of growing concerns for the need to replenish aging infrastructure, encourage positive actions for village beautification and cleanliness, and to find innovative parking options on weekends.
- Promoted and participated in the Ganges Clean-up initiative that had 35 volunteers cleaning, sweeping, weeding and otherwise inspiring local merchants to do the same on Earth Day.
- Provided a business “viewpoint” article to Driftwood addressing ways for both employees and businesses to plan and manage themselves through changes such as minimum wage and future payroll tax cost increases.
- Heightening awareness of the implications of our aging demographics and several, workable opportunities to drive positive outcomes for community resilience and balance. They focus on developing improved shoulder season tourism, advocating for integrated business, employment and housing solutions, and supporting the sustainability of micro-agriculture and agri-tourism that are increasingly limited by inadequate housing options for workers.
- Additional to the above, this Driftwood article pointed to the importance of adapting and preserving the viability of our Ganges Village as the “beating heart” of the community. The many challenges ahead may include finding integrated housing options and more expedient ways to restore derelict building issues at a realistic budget and time line.

Continuing Directions forward for 2017-2018:

- Recognizing the broad community interest in finding solutions for the prevailing governance deficiencies, we are “reaching out” to the several groups such as Community Alliance, the CEDC and Positively Forward with the intention of creating a collaborative relationship and sharing of ideas (the WHY) and creating strategies to enable the recommendations (the HOW).
- With our strong working relationship with the CEDC, we are actively pursuing substantial infrastructure funding opportunities that might emerge from the CRD’s re-designation of the 5 largest Southern Gulf Islands to “Rural” from “Urban”.

Jeremy Milsom, Communications Director with support from Janet Clouston and other Directors
Executive Directors Report – 2018 Annual General Meeting  
Submitted by Janet Clouston, Executive Director

It was an overall busy year for the Chamber, for Salt Spring Island overall and for local businesses in general, particularly trades and construction. I am happy to be in my 7th year as Chamber Executive Director and feel that we have contributed towards the business and community successes being felt on the Island. Along with the staff team of Gail Beattie and Len Brown, the 15 Volunteers on the Board of Directors and the 50 Volunteers in the Info Centre, we have accomplished much this year. There are a few areas that stood out for me this year:

**Shop Local Program** – In 2017, we successfully took over the work of the Welcome Wagon in support of the Shop Local Program. With help from volunteer Terri Skjaveland, over 300 Welcome Bags have been handed out to newcomers arriving to Salt Spring. We are offering this as a free service to our members and we thank those who have been participating in this. Len would be happy to answer your questions about this program.

**Experience the Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Marketing Project** – We completed our second year this destination partnership with the 5 Southern Gulf Islands that is managed via the Salt Spring Chamber. In fall of 2017, we were awarded the “Innovator of the Year Award” from Tourism Vancouver Island for work being done to promote the Gulf Islands and the Vancouver Island Region. We have produced a new video and event calendar.

**Home & Garden Show** – we hosted the 2nd Annual Home and Garden Show at the Farmer’s Institute the Salt presented by Mouat’s Trading. We worked with our friends at Windsor Plywood and Slegg Lumber and 30 local and Vancouver Island vendors to host a great event with 1300 attendees over 3 days. We were able to showcase a diversity of trade’s people, home décor, home products and services, and several feature guest speakers.

**Harvest Food and Drink Festival** – 2017 saw the return of the successful Sip & Savour Salt Spring event. We are now showcasing the island in October – starting with the Apple Festival and finishing with Halloween Fireworks Show – as a great place to celebrate the harvest. We had 250 ticket holders and guests attend the event at the Farmers Institute that showcased 50 food and drink venders, including local, regional and BC producers.

**Canada 150 Celebrations** – along with the Salt Spring CRD’s Parks and Recreation Department, and grants from the Salt Spring Foundation and the Government of Canada, we celebrated “150 Days of Fun on Salt Spring Island” that began in April and concluded in October. We were able to support hundreds of events through the period and with the generosity of Thrifty Foods and Salt Spring Fire & Rescue, we hosted the fireworks show.

**Successful Grants** - We were successful in receiving several grants including: funding for Canada 150, Destination BC Grants for the Visitor Information Centre, for Southern Gulf Islands marketing as well as a Canada Summer Student Grant. These funds account for $100,000 in revenue to the organization and allow us to further leverage the funds generated by our Visitor Guide and Map and annual membership dues.

**Solid Financials** - I am proud to report that we are maintaining a solid financial footing. Along with the Board’s Finance Committee and our staff, we have worked at ensuring that we have stable funding, growth in membership revenues, and have been conservative with spending as we work towards positive community-building activities.

Thank you to Mouat’s Trading, Country Grocer, Thrifty Foods, and Windsor Plywood for their continued support. Also thank you to Island Savings for your ongoing support of the Salty Awards. A very special thank you to our 300 members – without you there is no Chamber of Commerce!