

# Stuart Island Community Association Newsletter



Issue 1

Fall 2009

Contact Us: Tel: 250-202-3625 • VHF Channel 66A • email: [StuartIslandCA@aol.com](mailto:StuartIslandCA@aol.com)  
Postal address: Stuart Island, BC, Canada V0P 1V0 • Website: [www.stuartislanddock.org](http://www.stuartislanddock.org)

## Letter from the President

I'd like to thank the community for all the help you've given in the last six years - bringing our community hall to a usable facility, general store, post office, liquor store, laundry and shower and taking the dock and making it into a marina. In these six years SICA has been able to pay its bills (inventory purchases, PST, GST, liability and directors insurance, workers compensation, labour costs, etc...).

The property on which the community center is located is in transition. Campbell River School District #72 is hoping to transfer the property to the Strathcona Regional District (SRD) that would in turn lease the property to SICA. Partnering with SRD through a long-term, no-cost lease agreement would eliminate the need to find funds to buy the property. In talks with SRD Director Jim Abram it appears that such a partnership could also lead to a reduction in our insurance costs and other operating overhead and might also provide annual funding from SRD.

In April of this year we were given one of the old Brimacombe Lodge cabins that has now been moved to the property. The generator shed was relocated to the top of the property and an inverter system installed. The inverter allows us to have lights and cash computers available at all times.

We're 85% finished at the facility and all of the pieces are in place to finish this project:

- 144' of docks in place just needs bargeboard and bull rails; decking is already available just needs to be put down
- get 2-bedroom cabin on line - re-side and stain, lattice work; water and sewer is already next to cabin just needs to be hooked up
- landscaping - plants for deck and yard
- as I write this the kitchen is being framed in by volunteer Bill Creighton and others. I hope we can use it in the 2010 season. Will still need electrical and plumbing.
- finish the overhang - needs bargeboard installed and finish staining
- hiking trail to Eagle Lake is 95% finished and work will continue in the spring
- water system is still needed and once in place earnings will increase thru the espresso machine, kitchen on line and cabin rental
- plans are to turn the store into more of a historic museum with old fishing gear, old boating gear, historic pictures, aft brass steering wheel. We would love any calls if you have any historic items or pictures you would like to donate to this.
- complete the generator shed now at the top of property (insulation, siding and interior sheeting)

One of the biggest problems SICA is facing is having the necessary cash flow to maintain inventory - post office supplies, clothing, liquor, general store goods, generator fuel... A limitation we will always face is that we will probably never have power or fuel to the docks. Other issues we face are fish farms, Plutonic Power and other industrial intrusions on Bute and other inlets.

In closing we have a valuable asset and we've come a long way as you can see from the pictures in this newsletter. So please ask yourselves "Is there a way I can help?" Maybe support the post office or store or volunteer on one of the work projects mentioned above. This will help bring a positive attitude to Stuart Island Community Association and make this a lasting project that brings services to the community and local employment in the area.

Thank you,  
Roger Minor

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### **Stuart Island**

A place of unrivaled beauty, Stuart Island has attracted people for decades to harvest its natural resources. It's not an easy place to get to, and it's not a particularly easy place to live. The winters are severe, the ocean waters are treacherous and the tides take precedence over the clock. But there is something about the place that brings us here and keeps us coming back.

Stuart Island means different things to different people. For some it is where we live and work year-round. For some it's where we come to work only part of the year. For still others it's a retreat from the hustle and bustle of life in another place. It has become a corporate retreat for several large, international companies that have chosen Stuart Island as a place to enjoy and to entertain business associates. But for all of us, it's a place we choose to be. We may "harvest" some fish and some logs, but primarily we "harvest" the serenity and beauty of the place.

Big Bay had served as a community center for decades, and the Stuart Island Community Association's board of directors is committed to continuing that legacy. That is one reason we have launched this newsletter. We want it to become a way to share news, to publicize events and to communicate our ideas (maybe even our dreams) for the community center. In doing so, we hope to get your involvement in making them a reality. Life at Stuart Island takes ingenuity, tenacity and patience. If we all work together, there's no telling what we can accomplish. We not only want to share with you our ideas, but we encourage each of you to share your opinions and advice about what we are doing. In that way you become a participant in our "field of dreams."

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### **Community Association Membership**

Thanks to all of you who are long standing members of the Stuart Island Community Association. The association was founded in 1964 and your membership helps keep it alive. Annual membership costs \$20 per person. Although membership fees have contributed only a fraction of the money needed for the transformation that has taken place, each member is important. It demonstrates your interest in community matters, and membership in the association gives you voting rights in such matters. If you have not renewed your membership, please mail your cheque payable to SICA to Stuart Island Community Association, Stuart Island, BC, V0P 1V0. If it's not on your cheque, please include your mailing address, phone number and email address. If you've never been a member, contact us at the email address on the front page to ask that your name be put forward at the next Annual General Meeting.

The generosity of our members as well as many others has enabled us to get to where we are today. Before discussing the future, let's review what your gifts have helped make possible.

## Brief History of the Community Center

There have been many accomplishments since the government wharf was granted to the Stuart Island Community Association in 2004. The docks and wharf had gone without maintenance for quite some time, and they were run down and unsafe for general use. At the shore end of the wharf government property was home to an old school, a community hall and several other out buildings. Forces of nature had reduced the school to a public hazard and the community hall sat in a quagmire surrounded by weeds and bramble.



Over the next five years with hard work and financial support from all of you, a wonderful transformation has taken place.

The wharf and two original docks were completely rebuilt, the school site was cleared and the community hall was refurbished. A covered deck, new storage and a second bathroom with a shower were added to the community hall, and the usable out buildings were renovated. But the construction didn't stop there.

The docks were reoriented, three new fingers were added and the historic windwall was rebuilt to protect the harbor from the ravages of winter's Bute winds. To the extent possible throughout the construction process, local people were employed for all phases of the various projects.



When the community hall was usable it immediately gave life once again to an island store. When local postal service was threatened with closure the community rallied successfully to get a permit to operate a post office at the community store three days a week.



In 2007 community and regional funding enabled the association to provide laundry facilities. With another hard-fought effort the Stuart Island Community Association was granted a license so the store could add alcoholic beverages to its offerings. In 2008 a generous donation provided funding for a new generator and its placement further

away from the community center. In 2009 the donation of the 2-bedroom cabin now perched on the lawn brings us up to date.



For their large financial contributions, special thanks go to Dave Ritchie, Tammy Ritchie and Sonora Island Resort. Special thanks, too, to Chris Mailman, John and Pat Wane, Discovery Launch, PACCAR and Dent Island Lodge for invaluable donations of goods and services.

This very brief summary greatly abbreviates five years of untiring physical work, constant fund-raising and hard-fought battles to make possible what you see today. But the dream doesn't stop here.

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### **Water, Water Everywhere**

As the poem goes, "Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink!" That is exactly the situation at the community center. We do not have a well. The water we have comes from a stream, and although it is very clear and clean, because it is stream water, it is subject to contamination. For that reason it is not considered potable for public consumption. So, in order to use the espresso machine that sits idly waiting in the store or to use the kitchen for general food service, we must get certification that the water is safe to drink. First we need someone with expertise in water quality to assess the situation and make a recommendation as to

how to insure safe water. Then we need the funds to implement that recommendation. If anyone has that expertise, or would like to fund the water project – in full or just partially – we would welcome your assistance.

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### **Kitchen**

In addition to the tables and chairs now on the community hall deck and display cases and shelving in the store, Stuart Island Community Association bought other surplus equipment once used at Big Bay Marina. We have a stove and ovens but we are lacking a propane refrigerator and a sink. With the ovens it would be possible to make fresh baked breakfast pastries and bread, but we'd need a commercial mixer.



As mentioned in the President's Letter, construction work on the kitchen began in October. With the framing done, we just need electrical work, safe drinking water and a few more appliances in order to have a functioning kitchen.

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### **Eagle Lake**

The Eagle Lake area has been designated as a Provincial Recreation site. BC Forestry has granted Stuart Island Community Association a lease on the land from Eagle Lake to Bassett Bay on the east side of the island. The lease gives us authority to make

improvements to the area. We are excited about making the site a more desirable destination for both locals and guests. Next spring we plan to continue improving the trail to Eagle Lake, build a standing wharf and dock at the lake and proceed with work on a trail from the lake to Bassett Bay. Sam Anderson is coordinating trails projects. To find out how you can help, contact Sam via email to [sam\\_nanook@hotmail.com](mailto:sam_nanook@hotmail.com).

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### Summer 2009

The docks and wharf have for several years been a destination or waypoint for boating traffic up and down the coast. Now that there are additional amenities at the community center, we hope to increase moorage. In 2009 the depressed economy had the same impact of the community dock as on other businesses in the area catering to tourists. Fortunately the salmon did not respond negatively to the poor economy and fishing was better than it has been in several years.

A plaque in the store reports the results of an annual Salmon Derby sponsored by the association from 1964 through 1982. During that period the largest fish was caught in 1976 and weighed-in at 43 pounds. For the first time since 1982 the Salmon Derby was reinstated this summer, and Bob Morgan caught the 22-pound winning fish.

During the summer Sonora Island Resort held two salmon derbies. The largest fish and the winning guides were as follows:

Derby #1		
1st place	37 lb.	Tommy Thompson
2nd place	23 lb.	Mike Cyr
3rd place	22 lb.	Wes Sewell

Derby #2		
1st place	34 lb.	Bruce Peaker
2nd place	32 lb.	Benito (Sonora Resort)
3rd place	31 lb.	Kelsey Matheson

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was the beneficiary of a charity Coho Derby held on September 4 and organized by board member, Kyle Dempsey. There were 44 entries in the derby. A total of eight fish were weighed-in to compete for the prize. The winner was Bob Herron, who caught a 17.5 pound coho. His guide was none other than the derby organizer, Kyle Dempsey. Kyle assures us there was nothing fishy about his participation as guide for the winning angler!!

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### Gillard Pass Hatchery

Gillard Pass Fisheries Association is the Stuart Island area salmon enhancement project. George Stephenson, longtime area logger and then owner of Sea Lion Rock Lodge, started the program in 1986. He saw the need to build a hatchery to augment salmon runs in Stuart Island area streams. In 1994 George passed responsibility for the program to Greg Barlow. The efforts of the association have become focused on the Phillips River system on the mainland about 28 km north of Stuart Island. Recently a board of directors was formed to provide guidance, and Rupert Gale came on as Program Coordinator. Greg remains as operations manager and tireless worker, receiving direction and support from the board. The Phillips River hosts all five species of salmon but the association's focus is primarily on the chinook population. Several times a year volunteers help Greg capture chinook brood stock from the river. Partly as a result of years of association effort, large chinook runs were observed in 2009 and brood stock capture was very successful. Over 120,000 fertilized eggs will be incubated in the recently renovated hatchery on Sonora Island until early spring when the fry will be

released back into the Phillips River system to continue their lifecycle. Look for more about GPFA projects in future newsletters.

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### **Annual Dinner and Auction**

If it's the first weekend in August at Stuart Island, it's time for the annual Gillard Pass Fisheries Association Dinner and Auction!! This year's event took place at the Stuart Island Community Center on August 1 with a full house of over 250 folks joining in the festivities. The Stuart Island Community Association hosted the event to benefit the Gillard Pass salmon enhancement program. This special evening didn't just magically happen. It took the coordinated effort of lots of people. Volunteers worked for several months planning the event and getting items donated for the auction. Lodges in the area donated the food and community members decorated, cooked, served and tended bar at the gala.



Once again, the professional auctioneers provided by Dave Ritchie got top dollar for the great assortment of auction items, which ranged from local art and handmade crafts and jewelry to adventure tours and a dinner cruise for eight on a luxury yacht. Thanks to the generosity of the attendees the fundraising effort was a huge success, raising about \$90,000 in support of Gillard Pass Fisheries operations.

### **Save Bute Inlet**

On Saturday, September 12 some fifty folks attended an informational meeting at the community hall to hear about the private power project proposed for Bute Inlet.



Since Stuart Island is at the mouth of Bute Inlet, it is reasonable for us to be aware of what's happening there. Sam Anderson coordinated the event with Quadra Island activist Anita Brochocka and Friends of Bute Inlet founder Lannie Keller. The event provided a wealth of information about the magnitude and impact of the run of the river (ROR) power generation facilities planned in the Bute Inlet watershed.

Gwen Barlee, policy director of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, explained that the massive 1,027-megawatt Bute Inlet development, proposed by Plutonic Power and General Electric Energy Financial Services, would be the largest private power project in Canada. There would be seventeen river diversions on the sixteen tributaries within the Bute watershed. It would require construction of over 445 kilometers of transmission lines, 314 kilometers of roads, and 104 bridges - all in the heart of grizzly, mountain goat, and salmon habitat. Although this project is billed as "green

power,” the impact on the ecology and natural beauty of the area are no less devastating.

At a time when many people are looking for work, job creation is a selling point of the project. Although the project will likely provide some jobs for locals, much of the work will require the special expertise of outside workers. And the jobs created will be short-term because once construction is completed, the power generation will be automated and there will be little ongoing job opportunity.

There is also the question of who benefits from the Bute Inlet project. Does BC really need additional power at the time of the year when ROR projects generate it? The project will produce energy at the same time that the existing BC Hydro dams are at their maximum capacity. The excess power will be exported across the border, likely to California where energy is needed to meet growing demands. Because this is a private rather than a government project, the proceeds go to Plutonic Power and its shareholders, not to support provincial programs for the citizens of BC.

Stuart Island Community Association feels that the negative aspects of the project for both BC and Stuart Island far outweigh its benefits. The association is committed to working against this development. The task is tremendous, but by working together with organizations like Friends of Bute Inlet, Western Canada Wilderness Committee and Sierra Club of BC, we hope our voice will be heard, and we can preserve Bute Inlet as we have known it for years.

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### **Upcoming Events**

Tammy Ritchie is planning a Stuart Island Guide Reunion to be held in Richmond in April 2010. She is working on a venue, compiling an email list and gathering names.

She has lots of pictures but would welcome any you might want to share. Contact her by phone at 604-817-8574 or via email to [t.richie@shaw.ca](mailto:t.richie@shaw.ca).

At the end of the season quite a lot must be done at the community center to prepare for the winter. Seasonal store inventory must be stored, outdoor furniture must be stowed inside, the out buildings closed and water pipes drained. Come spring the community center comes alive again - but not without a significant amount of work - moving furniture, cleaning, gardening and general maintenance. It would be great to have help getting the center ready for the summer. If you are willing to help, please contact us via email or telephone. Contact information is on the first page of this newsletter.

The next issue of the newsletter is scheduled for the spring. We hope to have a calendar of events and encourage you to let us know of upcoming items to include. We also welcome any news that you'd like to share with the community. Please send such items to Martha Hollenbeck via email to [mwhbeck@comcast.net](mailto:mwhbeck@comcast.net).

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### **Board of Director Profiles**

There are presently nine elected directors on the Stuart Island Community Association Board. Here's a brief profile of each of us:

Roger Minor came to Stuart Island in 1977 from Manchester, Washington. "From my first time here I knew I wouldn't be leaving for a long time. I was a fishing guide for many years and have for the last 6 years tried to help on the Stuart Island Community Association's projects. I really hope when most people look at this project they will look at it as an over all project and a great opportunity for a small community."

Cathy Minor came to Sonora Island on a fishing trip in 1987 and fell in love with her

fishing guide, Roger. Stuart Island became her home in 1994. "You may know me as your Community Store clerk, the voice on the VHF 66A for Stuart Island Community Dock or as a Stuart Island Community Association Director. In these roles I've been lucky to get to know and become friends with many of you in this diverse community. As a director for Stuart Island Community Association my broad goal is to support local community initiatives that benefit members of the community."

Greg Barlow came to Stuart Island in 1979 and worked as a fishing guide for over 20 years. Greg managed the local Stuart Island area salmon enhancement program for 15 years and now works as Operations Manager under the new directorship of Gillard Pass Fisheries Association. He has worked many professions in the marine world on the BC coast but has found his calling working for the enhancement of salmon. The Phillips River system is where Greg's true passion lies.

Tammy Ritchie has been coming to Stuart Island since 1984 and has been actively involved in the family Fishing Lodge (The Barge) for over 25 years. "Having spent 12 summers at Stuart Island and now the past 13 years or so, somewhat reluctantly based in Vancouver, I still have a strong connection to the Island and care deeply for the history and character of the community. Having seen many changes in the area, I look forward to staying involved and making sure that the Stuart Island Community continues to grow and prosper."

Sam Anderson was born in Denver, Colorado. While growing up he was fortunate to join his father for annual summer trips to the BC coast. After attending UNBC he helped his father, Larry Anderson, build Nanook Lodge in 1998. Since then Sam became a guide for Nanook and now he with his wife Stephanie has assumed the role of manager at the lodge. He is an active member of the

Gillard Pass Fisheries Association and enjoys working on the trails in the Stuart Island Rec site. "Nothing like a good hike or bike on a Stuart Island summer day!!"

Peter Geneau first came to the Stuart Island area in 1986 to volunteer in the salmon enhancement program that George Stephenson had just started. George asked him to come back the following year as a fishing guide at Sea Lion Rock Lodge. After several years there he moved over to guide at Big Bay Marina for about 8 years. Since then he has guided independently, specializing in fly-fishing.

Kyle Dempsey was born on Read Island and has been in the Stuart Island area most of his life. He is currently employed by Ritchie's resort where he has worked for the past eight years. Seeing so many recent changes in the area Kyle has many concerns about the community's future.

Scott Burneski has been guiding at Stuart Island for the past 20 years. "I started in 1990 at Big Bay Marina where I was trained as a fishing guide and after two years moved next door to Eagle Creek Lodge (PACCAR). I have spent the last 18 years at ECL and have taken on responsibilities as head guide for the lodge. I am looking forward to working with the strong team of Stuart Island Community Association Directors to make the community hall a place for tourists and locals to come and enjoy and for it to prosper in the years to come."

Martha Hollenbeck lives in Greenbrae, California, just north of San Francisco. She and her husband, Peter, bought property on Stuart Island in 1998. They have a small house about halfway between Whirlpool and Kelsey Points. Now that they are both retired, they enjoy spending much of the spring, summer and early fall at Stuart Island. Martha would like to help bring back to the island the sense of community that had grown up around Big Bay Marina.