

Living Well • Week 30 • Among the Trees

COMM INFO

By Verna Isbister

The sociologist, Tony Campolo, asked fifty elders over the age of ninety-five how they would live life differently as they now look back on their lives. Three answers emerged:

1. I would reflect more. “Reflect on the things that have real personal significance,” summarizes Campolo. He “believes that people, if given the chance to do things over again would treasure their husband, wife and children fully [friends and partners]. To him every moment, every memory made, every life experience is an opportunity to be joyful” (Leah Lancione)
2. I’d take more risks. “Do exciting things with your life.” (Campolo)
3. I would do more things that would live on after I’m dead. These elders had a desire to make a difference. “Do something that will have a positive effect on someone else’s life.” (Campolo)

In Mary Oliver’s poem, When I am Among the Trees, she touches on these themes:

*When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.*

*I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.*

*Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, “Stay awhile.”
The light flows from their branches.*

*And they call again, “It’s simple,” they say,
“and you too have come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled
with light, and to shine.”*

On our lovely Island, we might substitute the trees that Mary Oliver names to our west coast trees:

*especially the cedars and the Douglas fir,
equally the hemlock, the pines and the alders*

As the fast approaching month of November ushers in the colder weather with its shorter days, I invite you to daily walk among the trees, “to go easy, to be filled with light, and to shine.” 🍷

Notes from a Trustee

COMM INFO

By David Critchley

As the pandemic grinds on, the Islands Trust continues to adapt to meetings by Zoom. In addition to Local Trust Committee meetings (thirteen such committees in the Trust) there are quarterly Trust Council meetings (26 Trustees plus staff) and various other subsidiary committees and working groups all using the Zoom platform to conduct business. Most of these meetings are live-streamed and recorded, so opportunities for added public engagement are a consequential benefit, as is reduced car use and greenhouse gas emissions.

These meetings require new skills for all participants, especially our Chairs and the staff running the equipment. I congratulate them for being so adaptable. There is research suggesting that participants in electronic meetings experience more fatigue than in live meetings. Although this is somewhat counterintuitive I have to say it seems to be

true. Science also says that our attention and effectiveness drops off after about an hour, yet we often press on for five hours. Hopefully, we still make prudent decisions in the later hours. Perhaps this is a topic for further research.

The Trust Programs Committee is working on overdue revisions to the Trust Policy Statement. The benign title of this document belies its importance in the implementation of the mandate of the

Trust to preserve and protect. It is basically our constitutional document. Three topics of significance are completely absent: indigenous relationships, climate change and affordable housing. These omissions show how much our world has changed in a relatively short time.

However, we are now making a major effort to remedy this. We have established small working groups for each topic and we meet approximate every two weeks. Our main committee will also increase it's meetings to keep the project moving so that we can complete it within the current term of the Trustees, of which there is (shockingly) only two years remaining.

Locally, at our last LTC (Local Trust Committee) meeting we had an informative, though somewhat discouraging, presentation from two senior representatives of the BC Farm Industry Review Board. It has exclusive jurisdiction over complaints against farming practices, including aquaculture. There have been only two aquaculture complaints and they both were from Cortez Island; these were essentially determined in favour of the farmer. There have been no complaints to the Board from the Baynes Sound area. The cases are decided based on evidence as to what are "normal farm practices". If the farm practices are "normal" (even though they may have adverse effects or even be a nuisance in other settings) they will be protected. The Board is not in the business of creating a code of conduct for farm practice standards. The onus is on the complainant to establish that the conduct is not a normal farm practice. The Board has no jurisdiction over issues relating to the environment, health or pollution. They do try to resolve complaints via a dispute resolution process before embarking on a formal hearing. A power point presentation was included and a copy of it should be available on the Trust website for those interested.

The Denman Green affordable housing application was reviewed by the LTC, and following a staff recommendation we resolved to defer further consideration until the applicant has secured source water approval from Island Health (which has jurisdiction on approving the provision of water). As readers may recall, the project was unable to find a good source of well water on the property, so the society is seeking approval of a system of rain water catchment as the sole source of potable water. Regulations have only recently changed to make this a possibility but what the system requirements will be and whether it is approvable for such a project of this scale remains to be seen. Suffice to say that the proposal is innovative, not only in the T usiasts and skeptics in this regard.

The seniors affordable housing project in the village area was also considered and we asked staff to make some minor changes to the draft bylaw and to produce a plain language guide in advance of a future Community Information Meeting.

Other business included issuance of a development permit, amending a restrictive covenant and discussing a request to build within an archeological covenant area (for which we require further information). We also had a very informative presentation from the Trust's freshwater specialist who is working

on a potential groundwater sustainability strategy for Denman. This will be further considered at a future meeting.

Our next meeting, via Zoom, will be on November 3rd at 12:30



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