

Georgia Strait Alliance—caring for our coastal waters since 1990

the only citizens' group focused on protecting the marine environment in and around the whole Strait of Georgia, Canada's most at-risk natural environment

New member of the Clean Marine BC family

by Michelle Young

Great news: this summer we added another member to our *Clean Marine BC* family. In August, the **Royal Vancouver Yacht Club's Jericho Marina** was awarded its *Clean Marine* flag and certificate, after achieving the impressive ranking of "4 Anchors" in its independent environmental best practices audit.

This brings the total so far to eight Eco-Certified marine facilities in our region, plus a dozen more marinas that are currently working towards their audit.

The coveted 5-Anchor rating (the highest possible score) has been awarded in Ontario, but has yet to be won by any west coast marinas—so we look



The smiles came easily on the day that the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club's Jericho Marina was presented with its Clean Marine BC flag and certificate. L to R: Mark Montrose (Harbourmaster, RVYC Jericho), Michelle Young (GSA Program Coordinator), Carmen Derricott (General Manager, RVYC), Guy Walters (Commodore, RVYC), Paul Shield (Rear Commodore, RVYC Jericho).

Photo courtesy Royal Vancouver Yacht Club

forward to the day we cross that threshold. Some of our *Clean Marine BC* marinas are scheduled for re-certification audits next spring, and since the program is focused on continual improvement, perhaps the elusive 5 Anchors will be awarded then.

Or maybe your own marina would like to have the honour of being first?

You can learn more about our award winning *Clean Marine BC* program (both Marina Eco-Certification and Green Boating) at www.GeorgiaStrait.org/CleanMarineBC. If you'd like to get your marina involved, please contact Michelle Young at 250-753-3459 or cmhc@georgiastrait.org.

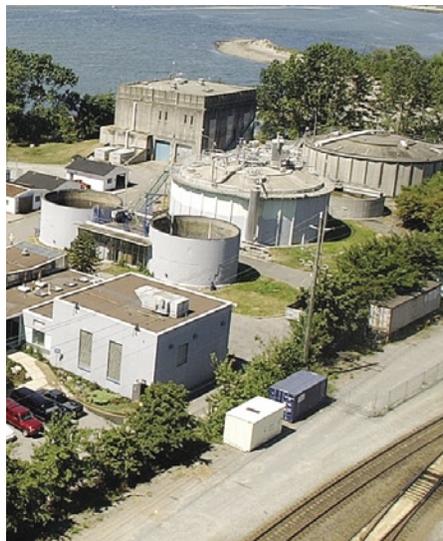
Nearing bricks and mortar

by Christianne Wilhelmson

Over the years this newsletter has often included updates on GSA's ongoing—and frequently frustrating—battle to get local, provincial and federal governments to stop the pollution of our waters by sewage.

By contrast, the latest developments on this front provide a breath of fresh air. Instead of focusing on *whether* to treat sewage or upgrade treatment plants, governments are taking some big steps forward to bring secondary treatment to all major centres across our region, and in fact, all across the country.

See page 5 for the good news for Victoria, Metro Vancouver and other communities on this important issue.



The existing Lions Gate sewage plant.

Photo by Mike Wakefield, North Shore News



Take Action on Tankers

The threat of a major oil spill in the Strait of Georgia is very real and poised to get worse: regular shipments of tar sands crude oil are already passing through our waters, and a major increase is planned.

Please go online to check out our latest info resources and take action. Visit www.GeorgiaStrait.org/tankerpetition, where you'll find GSA's new petition urging no further increases in oil tanker traffic, as well as animated models of what would happen if a spill occurred here and much more.

Strait Thoughts: The Hope that Springs from Action

by Christianne Wilhelmson, Executive Director

I have often been asked how I can possibly keep doing the work of an activist—people assume that it must be far too depressing, especially now, with so many attacks on environmental regulations and organizations.

To my dismay, I've generally been able to offer only clichés or off-the-cuff remarks that don't do justice to the question, which is an important one. It's been frustrating, especially for someone who thinks of words as her stock and trade, to not be able to express the fact that "depressed" is the last thing I feel.

That's why I was profoundly struck by a recent CBC radio interview with journalist, author and social activist, Michele Landsburg. In response to that same question, she answered with a simple and beautiful clarity: "Because I have the optimism of an activist".

When you have the privilege of working every day to create meaningful social change, you can remain hopeful because you are doing something to make things better. You also benefit from the energy of smart, creative and passionate people who are by your side and who are making a great difference every day. You know you are not alone, and as result, you are not without hope.

Hopelessness comes from the sense that there is nothing we can do, and I know that today many people feel exactly that way. It's understandable: it seems like our federal government and industry are running roughshod over everything we value—counting, perhaps, on nurturing a sense of hopelessness so Canadians will not respond or take action.

But in reality there's plenty of reason for hope—and plenty of ways to take action. Each of us is part of a greater like-minded community, and there is a great deal we can do.

What does this mean on a practical level? You can join with your neighbours and friends to create local actions to ensure that your community is the kind in which you want to live. Sign petitions, join letter writing campaigns, participate in rallies, talk with your local representative or take consumer action.

Even better, work with friends and neighbours to build something positive close to home: community gardens, local food cooperatives, and "buy local" campaigns. We're fortunate to have a great many choices available to allow us to live in relative harmony with our personal values—and as I see every day, where there are no existing options, people are creating them.

Strait Talk © Georgia Strait Alliance 2012
Also available online at www.GeorgiaStrait.org as a PDF with live links.

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Beyond our local communities, let's remember how important it is to nurture hope and take action at the regional level as well. One important way you can do this is to help ensure that Georgia Strait Alliance can continue to represent your values as we work to create a more sustainable region.

There are many battles on the horizon, including some that will push our small organization to the limits of its capacity: for example, more tankers bringing tar sands crude oil to foul our shores, and another omnibus federal budget which will likely have, at its core, the weakening of the *Species at Risk Act*. So if you've always wanted to support GSA, please make a charitable donation today. Or if you are already a member, we hope we can count on your support again in 2012 and into the future.

These may be economically and politically challenging times, but that's not a reason for pessimism—instead, it's a recipe for action. GSA members and friends have invested in our organization so that together, we can provide a beacon of hope. With your continuing actions in your own community and your ongoing support for GSA, we'll keep on shining that light for a long time to come, and create meaningful and lasting change for our region.



Harlock Island near Sidney was donated to GSA and our legal eagles at Ecojustice. Now we need a buyer—is it you?

Photo courtesy Marc Owen-Flood

Would you like to buy an island?

Georgia Strait Alliance isn't in the business of real estate, but thanks to an amazingly generous donor who wanted our work to continue after he was gone, we indeed have an island to sell. All proceeds from the sale will be split between GSA and our colleagues at Ecojustice.

Just under one acre, this precious little gem is in Page Passage, southeast of Canoe Cove on the Saanich Peninsula. You can see the realtor's listing and details, along with a gallery of photos, at www.georgiastrait.org/harlockisland.

If owning an island is not for you, please forward this information to anyone you think might be interested.

To learn more about the wonderful donor who thought of GSA and Ecojustice as part of his planned giving, visit www.georgiastrait.org/benefactorprofiles.

Down at the Dock: Boating season draws to a close

by Michelle Young

Over the summer we had a number of wonderful opportunities to engage with boaters, and we made considerable headway in our Clean Marine BC program. And with the great weather, what an amazing boating season it was!

The big news, of course, is the addition of the **Royal Vancouver Yacht Club's** Jericho Marina to our roster of *Clean Marine BC's* Eco-Certified marinas (see page 1 for photo and story).

It always feels wonderful to spend time down at the dock, and so we were pleased to participate in four great boat shows around Georgia Strait this summer.

The first show of the season was the **Wooden Boat Festival at Maple Bay Marina**, which was very fitting given that Maple Bay is an Eco-Certified marina. Our hosts Carol and Dave Messier were fantastic and very enthusiastic about spreading the word on green boating practices. There was also a spectacular selection of lovingly cared for wooden boats on display, and live music on the docks.

Next on our boat show circuit was the **Nanaimo Floating Boat Show**, an annual event which takes place just a block



GSA's Mermaid Ambassador, Georgia, and a band of pirates at the Vancouver Wooden Boat Festival.
Photo by Michelle Young

away from our office. We are always happy to attend this wonderful show as it provides a great opportunity to meet many folks interested in our work to preserve and protect Georgia Strait.

Later in the summer, the annual **Vancouver Wooden Boat Festival** brought GSA, and a host of incredible wooden boats, to vibrant Granville Island for four days of festivities. Once again the great folks at the Vancouver Wooden Boat Society outdid themselves and the show was a huge hit.

Last but not least we attended the **Boat Show at the Creek** at Mosquito Creek Marina in North Vancouver. This was their 6th annual boat show, and it was a brilliantly managed event.

Boating season may be over for this year, but our work continues. GSA is always happy to meet with marinas, boating clubs and other groups, to give a presentation or workshop, provide information or discuss the *Clean Marine BC* program and how we can all reduce our impacts on our cruising waters. Please call or email me if you're interested: 250-753-3459, cmcb@georgiastrait.org.



Maple Bay Marina was a busy place during their Wooden Boat Festival.

Photo by Michelle Young

Watch for GSA's booth at the **Vancouver International Boat Show** in February—we look forward to meeting you there!

Thinking beyond tankers

by Mike Richards



Fossil fuels have been used by humans for a long time, powering everything from household fires to entire countries and economies. There is no doubt that many amazing and positive things have come from their development. Unfortunately there have been costs along the way and as we approach both a climate crisis and the end of the fossil fuel era, those costs are becoming more significant and many would say are starting to outweigh the benefits.

No matter what your point of view, though, the reality is that if we continue to use fossil fuels as we have been doing, we will run out of them at some point. As we transition to a future that won't be dominated by a fossil fuel economy, we have to make a choice: do we wait until we have sucked every reserve dry and then try to cope? Or do we transition sooner, in a well thought out process?

Those wanting to increase shipments of Alberta tar sands crude oil through Georgia Strait might think that the benefits outweigh the risks and that

we should get as much crude out of the ground as we can sell, as quickly as possible. They may believe that supporting our current fossil fuel-based economy is a worthy goal, supplying jobs and helping provide continual economic growth, and that transition to a new economy can come later.

At GSA, we are taking a different approach. We believe we need to think beyond the status quo and question what we are doing as a society. We see plenty of evidence that our current economic model is failing, and that continual growth isn't possible in any truly sustainable way. Of course we cannot just stop using oil and other fossil fuels, but the question is, how do we transition to a community, a region, a nation and a world that is not reliant on coal, oil and natural gas?

That's a huge question and will require deep and complex thought along with careful planning and a lot of hard work. (See *right for some useful starting points*).

In the meantime, we would encourage governments, port authorities and transportation companies (including shippers of tar sands crude) to start looking beyond the process of transportation, to *what* they actually ship, and considering all of the impacts of these products, not just economic, but social and environmental too. What will be the end use of that tar sands crude oil? Do we really need to import vast numbers of different coloured cell phone cases or multiple styles of plastic toilet brushes?

Please be sure to sign GSA's new petition on crude oil tanker traffic, which is specific to our region and directed to the Port of Metro Vancouver, Transport Canada and other relevant officials. You'll find it, and many other useful links, at: www.GeorgiaStrait.org/tankerpetition.

Some useful starting points:

Much excellent, up-to-date info is available. Try BC's very own New Society Publishers (www.newsociety.com), Clean Energy Canada (www.cleanenergycanada.org), or the US-based Post Carbon Institute (www.postcarbon.org). An excellent video, 300 years of FOSSIL FUELS in 300 seconds, is at www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJ-J91SwP8w&feature=youtu.be.

Bricks *continued from page 1*

Funding for Victoria treatment

With the Province and Capital Regional District (CRD) having finally agreed on a plan for secondary sewage treatment, and each having put their money on the table, the only thing that was missing to start the long overdue construction was the federal government's portion of that funding.

In mid-July the federal government finally made that long awaited announcement, committing \$253 million—1/3 of the estimated cost of construction. With the funds now in place, the CRD is moving forward, with construction expected to begin later this year. For the latest details, visit <http://www.wastewatermadeclear.ca/>

Federal regulations

It was a week of good news on wastewater treatment! Just as we heard about the federal funds for the CRD plans, the federal government also announced it was implementing long

awaited national regulations that will bring secondary treatment (the minimum standard accepted by the US and the European Union) to over 800 Canadian communities that currently don't meet that standard.

The regulations were created through a multi-year, cross-sectoral process run by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment and based on the best available science.

GSA was heavily involved in the consultation process leading up to the new regulations. Although we still have concerns about the timelines and some of the criteria for assessing risk from sewage discharge (*outlined in our earlier submission, which you can see at www.GeorgiaStrait.org/sewageregsub*), we welcome national standards that put all communities on the same level when it comes to stopping pollution from wastewater.

Details of the new regulations are at: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2012-139/FullText.html>.

Lions Gate

In accordance with the new regulations, Metro Vancouver must upgrade its two primary wastewater treatment plants: the Lions Gate plant on the North Shore by 2020, and the Iona plant in Richmond, which serves most of Vancouver, by 2030.

Metro Vancouver has now taken the first steps on upgrading the Lions Gate plant. Various advisory groups have been created to help in this process, and GSA has been appointed, as an environmental representative, to the Public Advisory Committee. You can keep up to date on our meetings, and learn about opportunities for your involvement, at www.metrovancouver.org/services/constructionprojects/wastewater/Pages/LionsGateWastewaterTreatmentPlant.aspx.

This process provides a great opportunity for the region: not only can we improve our wastewater management, but we can also take advantage of the latest technologies to use sewage as an energy resource for the community. If done right, this could mean a big win for both our oceans *and* our region's efforts to lower our greenhouse gas emissions.

Raffle roundup

On September 18 we drew the winning tickets in this year's "Celebrate the Strait" raffle. Congratulations to the four lucky winners:

- **Bev Ford** of Surrey won a 3-week Sailing Certificate Course from *Nanaimo Yacht Charters*
- **Jerry Whalley** of North Vancouver won the Island Adventure package: two nights for two at *Yellow Point Lodge* and binoculars from *The Harbour Chandler*
- **Koala Yang** of Nanaimo won a PFD and paddle from *Feathercraft* and *Alberni Outpost*
- **Tia Williams** of Vancouver won a handcrafted garden lantern from *Crazy Duck Pottery*



*Koala Yang with her prizes.
Photo by Cathy Booler*

Congratulations to all our winners, and a big THANK YOU to our generous sponsors and to everyone who bought raffle tickets to support GSA's work!



Grand prize winner of last year's GSA Raffle, Mary Sinclair with Paul Sinclair, enjoying her four-day Kayaking trip with West Coast Expeditions this summer.

Photo by Serina Allison

Overwaitea scraps net-pen fish

Great news for BC consumers: this summer Overwaitea Food Group became the first large Canadian retailer to stop selling all net-pen farmed salmon. The company now sells only wild salmon and *Sweet Spring* farmed salmon, which is grown in closed containment.

As a result of this decision, along with other positive steps the company has taken to support sustainability of seafood resources, the grocery chain won this year's top spot in Greenpeace's 2012 Supermarket Ranking on seafood sustainability.

Comings & goings

We sadly bid "Adieu" recently to GSA's two summer students, **Isabelle Gendron-Lemieux** and **Deanna McGillivray**. Isabelle has returned to Sherbrooke, Quebec to pursue her post-graduate studies in Environmental Management. Deanna has returned to Vancouver Island University to continue her studies in Geography. They were an excellent team to represent GSA at events around the region over the summer, and we will miss their enthusiasm, energy and "joie de vivre"! We wish them great success in the future.



Isabelle (L) and Deanna at World Oceans Day.

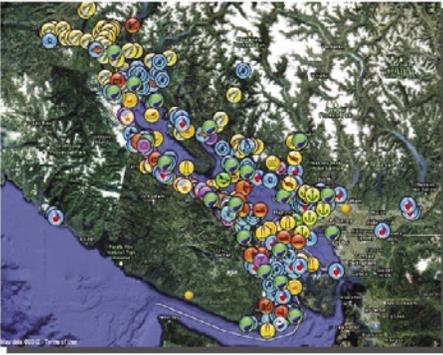
We are thrilled and honoured to announce the appointment of **Kathy Fletcher** to GSA's Board of Directors! Kathy founded and was for 20 years executive director of People For Puget Sound, a citizens' organization formed to protect and restore the southern portion of our Salish Sea—a role that saw her working closely with GSA over many years. She retired in 2011.

Kathy lives in Seattle and has a second home in Vancouver. She has a long-standing connection with BC and passion for our marine waters: for decades she has spent much of her time at her family's cabin in Desolation Sound and sailed the waters of Georgia Strait and beyond.

Before People for Puget Sound Kathy chaired Washington State's Puget Sound Water Quality Authority, and during the Carter Administration she served on the White House Staff, handling environmental and natural resource issues. She has taught environmental policy and non-profit management at the University of Washington, worked for the Environmental Defense Fund and other environmental organizations, and headed up environmental, energy conservation and other programs at Seattle City Light, along with serving on many non-profit organization boards. Among her many honours, Kathy has been named a "Hero of the Seas" by the Blue Frontier Campaign, and has received a lifetime achievement award from Restore America's Estuaries. We welcome Kathy to our Board.



Photo by Ken Weiner



Explore! Connect! Share!

Be sure to check out the latest developments in our Georgia Strait Communities Atlas. The online Atlas is a happening place, with interactive maps full of information and a growing body of valuable local knowledge and stories from around the region. Take a tour of the Atlas and its community forum, and share your stories! You'll find the Atlas at: www.GeorgiaStrait.org/communitiesatlas.



In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous. Aristotle

Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it. Confucius



Send an ocean of love

This holiday season, why not send GSA's beautiful greeting cards to your friends and family? Two sets of four cards each are available, all with beautiful photos from our region by Laurie MacBride, Isabelle Groc, Michelle Young and Ernest Keeley. Each card in the 'Inspirational' set includes an inspirational quote on the inside (*samples above*), while the 'Wildlife' set is blank inside. All the cards have info about the featured location or animal on the back. Just \$8/set (includes envelopes) or 4 sets for \$25 plus shipping/handling. You can order them at: www.GeorgiaStrait.org/cards.

AGM highlights

Outgoing Board President **Brent England** was honoured for his long commitment to GSA at our annual general meeting this summer. Brent was presented in absentia with a Lifetime Membership award and thanked for guiding our organization through some very challenging times, with his passion, humour and supportive leadership.

Special awards were also given to Straitkeepers **Julie Johnston and Pat Haugh**, who have been leading Pender Island volunteers in carrying out GSA's intertidal quadrat studies for an incredible 13 years, and to Victoria Straitkeepers **Colin & Trisha Dowar**, who have been coordinating and leading our intertidal studies in Victoria for the past three years.

GSA's Board of Directors

Melinda Skeels (*President*) is an attorney focused on aboriginal and environmental law.

Dave Macdonald (*Vice-President/Treasurer*) is a Certified Management Accountant helping businesses and entrepreneurs develop sustainable practices.

Frank Tester (*Secretary*) is a UBC Professor who works on social and environmental issues in Nunavut and BC.

Don Bulmer is a Portfolio Manager, Senior Wealth Advisor and Certified Financial Planner with extensive experience in estate and charitable gift planning.



Some of our new Board at the AGM (L to R):
Dave Macdonald, Tara Todesco, Melinda Skeels, Don Bulmer.
Not in photo: Frank Tester, Lesli Boldt, and Kathy Fletcher.

Photo by Michelle Young

Lesli Boldt is a communications and public affairs professional and President of a Vancouver-based marketing communications firm.

Kathy Fletcher is a longtime and highly respected environmental leader (*see page 6*)

Tara Todesco is currently completing a Masters in Environmental Studies and works in Community Based Research at UVIC.

You can learn more about each of them at:
www.GeorgiaStrait.org/board

SPECIAL THANKS TO...

Jane Aiers, Jessica Alford, Bryan Allan, Petra Allen, Charles & Lynne Marie Alton, James Alton & Hortensa Nawatzki, Brian Amos, Carol Anderson, Michele Anderson, Dr. Saul Arbes, Harvey Armstrong, Carol Arnold, Dr. Bill Austin, Helen Baker, Derek Balderston, Betty Ball, Patrick Barber, Derek & Jennifer Barrio, Susan Bartlett, BC Marine Trades Association, BC Provincial Employees Community Services Fund, Jim & Trudy Beaton, Florence Bell, Jackie Lynn Bell, Rosamond Bell, Keith Bennett, Tammi Bergeron, Dr. Lorne Berman, Joyce Berry, Donna-Marie Berthiaume, Florence Best & Ruth Miller, Kathleen Bibbs, Alan Bird, Karin Boisclair-Joly, Lesli Boldt, Kenneth Bond, Cathy Booler, Linda & Peter Booler, David Borrowman, Steve Borthwick, Elisabeth Boshier, Lorraine Bourbonnais & Jacques Gobeil, Stan Boychuk, Stephen Boycott, James Bradshaw, Jen Bradshaw, Jolyon Briggs, Yvonne Brosz-DeFoor, Alice Brown, Miranda Brown & Kim Darwin, Bronwyn Brown, David R. 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GEORGIA STRAIT ALLIANCE IS ALSO GRATEFUL FOR A GIFT MADE IN MEMORY OF **Robert C. Scott**.

Thanks to all who provided support from May 4 to September 26, 2012, including others not listed due to space limitations.

Do you share our view of the Strait?

One of the best ways you can help protect Georgia Strait is to become a MONTHLY DONOR.

Monthly donations provide the reliability GSA needs to plan, make strategic decisions and leverage matching funds. A donation of \$5, \$10 or \$20 a month—deducted automatically from your chequing account or credit card—makes a world of difference to our work. And it earns you a valuable tax receipt.

To become a MONTHLY DONOR today, call or email us:
gsa@georgiastrait.org 250-753-3459 www.GeorgiaStrait.org