

Bowen Island Times

EXPLORING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SINCE 2009

February 06, 2009 Vol. 1/Issue 3 **FREE**



**NEW BC FERRY
DOES A TEST RUN**
unfortunately it's not ours!



**CBC COMES TO
THE ISLAND**

local characters in the spotlight

**economic
sustainability**
planning for
self sufficiency

**what kind
of
legacy
is a
bedroom
community
?**

An island without an
economic plan
can't flourish,
and a bedroom community
without amenities
will merely languish.



**NO PLACE
TO AGE**
and almost half
the island population
is over 45



Cohousing Opportunity
introduced to islanders
could this project
help our affordable
housing problem?

**A
HOUSING
SOLUTION**

Bowen Island Times

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*Retailworks Interactive Retailers Ltd. DBA StickyBee

Editor and publisher:

Tim Rhodes

tim@bowenistimes.com

Production and advertising:

Darcie Buzzelle

darcie@bowenistimes.com

RR1 G76

Bowen Island, BC V0N 1G0

Phn: 604-947-0750

Fax: 604-947-9651

CORRECTION:

January 23, 2009, Vol. 1/Issue 2, Back Cover: The ad for the 2010 Business Opportunities Workshop read Chamber Members - Free / Non-Members \$10. The correct price is \$10 for all. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Letter from the editor Learning Curve

I was inspired to do a newspaper because of the frustration I heard during the recent election campaign at the lack of information the general public had on most issues. I firmly believe that as long as the Times is factual in these pages, the source of its funding should not be at issue. It is ultimately up to the readers to determine if the information the Times is delivering is factual or not. And if you do not think it is, please call me on it.

Contrary to how the Times is being portrayed, I am not interested in representing a single perspective on the issue of Cape Roger Curtis. I am supportive of the CRC Neighbourhood Plan going to public information sessions because I see much of value in it. However I respect and value opposing opinions but it is difficult to present those opinions, articles or letters here unless they are submitted.

Not surprising that there are some who prefer to ignore the Times because, in their opinion it has no credibility without their opinion. However, it was surprising to have requests for op-ed opinions rejected on the assumption that what was offered would be edited to suit a certain view. I do not edit articles, opinions or letters that are appropriate for publication other than for typos and spelling. Articles not appropriate for publication will not be published. Where editing is necessary to reduce the length of the article, the author will be requested to do so themselves. I invite participation from all points of view.

It was more of a surprise to have others, prospective authors, interview subjects and advertisers, decline to participate based on fear of reprisals. These people expressed a concern that they will lose friends if they voice an opinion that others disagree with or lose business if they advertise in a publication where that opinion is expressed. It is a sad comment on our community if we cannot tolerate our neighbours opinions when they differ from our own. But most surprising were those who call for debate but attempt to discredit the Times rather than engage with its readers in an ongoing dialogue. But as a good friend is fond of saying, "You asked for the job."

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A Housing Solution

Cohousing Opportunity on The Rock

by Ronaye Matthew

On February 1, Belterra Cohousing held its first public consultation meeting on Bowen Island. There were two purposes for this meeting. The first was to inform the public about cohousing and answer any questions. The second was to describe the Belterra project in general terms and ask for feedback from the audience.

The word "cohousing" refers to a type of community where the residents live in their own private, complete and self contained homes, centred around and focused on shared facilities.

Typically a cohousing community is created by a group of committed members who purchase a piece of land at market value, secure the necessary zoning, and work together with consultants to create the community that they want. Home prices are reduced because the cohousing members act as the developer and build the community at cost.

The communal amenities add to the cost per square foot of the private homes, however residents often find that they can live just as comfortably with less floor area, which reduces the cost of their unit. Shared spaces such as workshops, guest suites, adult meeting rooms, library, media rooms, large dining/gathering room, children's play areas, offices, exercise rooms, storage and garden sheds, etc. all improve lifestyle without increasing the size of individual private residences. Cohousing communities are always compact and clustered, preserving green space and encouraging communal gardens, walkways and outdoor recreation

areas.

Cohousing attracts people who are concerned about sustainability and minimizing their affect on the natural environment. Innovative energy saving systems and devices are always incorporated into the buildings and often residents will get together to buy vehicles, or share trips to the store or social events, or take the kids to school.

Children thrive in a cohousing community because their friends are close by, the

community is safe and sheltered, and parents receive support and form lasting friendships. The saying "It takes a community to raise a child" reflects perfectly the cohousing lifestyle. Single people, young families, empty nesters and seniors all enjoy the delicate balance of companionship and respect for privacy which is the foundation of cohousing.

The neighbourhoods range from the urban multi storey "apartment" style

buildings and multi-family townhouses, to more rural single family clustered homes.

The site, zoning, and the needs and desires of the cohousing group will eventually lead to the final design, and once the members move in they rarely move out. To quote Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett from their book *A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*: "The beauty of cohousing is that you have a private life and a community life, but only as much of each as you want."

Ronaye Matthew is a Cohousing Development Consultant www.cohousingconsulting.ca



Creekside Commons



Roberts Creek, side yard

An Interview

by Tim Rhodes

Roger McGillivray and Stephanie Legg bring not only passion to this venture but a commitment to community that goes well beyond the stated requirements. Their plan for a cohousing development proposes a 35% contribution to affordable housing (well over the 15% required) as well as a 50% park dedication to protect the creek running through the property. Although Roger jokes that he dreams about Belterra, he is a patient man. He and Stephanie have owned the property for almost 20 years and perhaps have made as many plans, "but this is the first one the just feels right".

Roger and Stephanie are co-owners of Armac Construction Ltd. and the founding members of the Belterra Cohousing Group. Armac is the owner of a ten acre parcel of land, fifteen minutes walk west of Snug Cove. Early in 2009, Armac intends to present to Council a proposal for a re-zoning of this property to allow for a cohousing development (Belterra). The proposal will contain significant affordability features, a large parkland dedication and a commitment to high quality green design with minimal building footprint. "Armac will work with neighbours, municipal planners and the public to ensure that Belterra becomes a beautiful and compact community, delightful to its residents and pleasing to the rest of the Island".

Roger quotes the OCP ideals: "high priority given to environmental and social factors, maintenance of a population with varying income levels, lifestyles and age groups, recognizing Snug Cove as the commercial and community heart of Bowen Island [and] recognizing deficiencies in the quantity and quality of existing housing". He is determined that Belterra will satisfy all of those concerns. He is also pragmatic and realizes the density he needs to build his dream is outside the current OCP and may be a stumbling block for council. "It doesn't matter where you are building it, you can't build affordable housing without density". That's a fact.

More information on the *Belterra Cohousing Group* is available at www.belterrahousing.ca