

I have friends and family members involved in the arts as poets, painters, potters, writers, photographers, weavers, musicians and fabric artists. My daughter ran a successful craft business for several years, my sister teaches dance, my parents were heavily involved in musical theater, I write book reviews and sing in the Salt Spring Singers. I would not live here if there were not a vibrant arts community.

Q 1. How would you enhance support for the arts? What more should be done to promote and sustain the arts?

Arts promotion is an ongoing task. My sense is that the community already works hard at this. There are avenues of co-operation with other businesses, B & Bs, caterers, restaurants that could be explored. SS Singers did offer a dinner /concert combination ticket for one of their concerts which sold out quickly. Increasing tourism and direct access to studios and galleries is another way to increase support for the arts. In the summer perhaps use could be made of school buses to run special tours to artists' studios. Although the self-directed studio tour is excellent, I know from experience that tourists often have difficulty navigating around the island, especially off the main routes. A dedicated bus tour, perhaps potters on one day, fabric arts another day, painters another day, might be an interesting possibility.

Q 2. What opportunities you see for SSAC to access other regional and provincial funding, in particular from the CRD?

On investigating the CRD Arts Development Service, I notice that none of the unincorporated areas belongs to it. There is a cost per capita to subscribe that would reduce the amount of money available on the island and artists would then compete for funding with everyone from the larger municipalities. This would probably also require repealing the bylaw that establishes arts funding for Salt Spring. It makes sense to keep that money on the island and make it available solely to locals. However I do not have access yet to CRD budget and financial information beyond what is posted on the website so I cannot give a fuller answer. I certainly would support any initiatives to access any funding from other sources. I imagine the loss of gaming revenue from the province has caused a funding shortfall that is difficult to replace.

Q 3. How will you address the need for affordable housing on SSI?

This is a complex issue and not easily solved. The community has to agree on a definition of "affordable" and then engage property owners in a discussion about how to provide affordable housing within this framework. There are many problems on both sides of the issue. Landlords are not allowed to restrict who they rent to, (e.g. cannot advertise "will only rent to single starving artist") and are accountable for the behaviour of their tenants. Not all tenants are respectful of property or neighbourhoods so many landlords are unwilling to keep their rents low. It is not an unsolvable issue but it is a difficult one.

Q 4. What role do you see that SSAC and the arts have in enhancing economic development on the island?

The arts are an integral part of the community of Salt Spring Island and have an important role in economic development. Artistic endeavours are logical home business ventures that do not require commercial or industrial land zoning. The move towards an arts school could also be very positive in terms of greater sustainability with minimal impact on land and services.

Q 5. How will you address the need to increase tourism to SSI?

It would not be beyond possibility to work with B & Bs , restaurants or caterers and artists to put together package deals that include local produce and studio visits with art instruction weekends. A relative in Cornwall England puts together similar package deals for Art Weeks or Art Weekends (without the magic of the ferry ride). This question is part of the larger question of economic sustainability and development.

Q 6. What is your position regarding BC Ferries fares? How would you pursue the interest of SS islanders in having affordable travel?

The CRD Director obviously does not have direct influence over BC Ferries, however I would certainly lend any influence I could bring to bear on lowering ferry fares. A special resident rate for major routes as well as the minor routes would be a start. I would be open to any ideas others put forward. As long as the interior ferries are run free of charge as part of the road system, then I believe coastal ferries should at least receive a much higher subsidy. When major roadwork is needed, e.g. the rock fall that blocked the road to Lion's Bay and Whistler, residents do not have to pay for the repair. We deserve much better treatment than we get!

Q 7. How will you support SSAC's requests for inclusion of island arts in ferry gift shops and a meeting with ferry officials?

I am surprised that this is an issue. I have been very pleased to see Salt Spring artists and crafts people featured in display cases and assumed that those items, and others, were available for sale. I would certainly support any initiative to heighten awareness of our vibrant arts community and make local products readily available on all ferries. I know that SS artists have been "artist in residence" on the ill-fated Queen of the North, giving demonstrations on board during the sailing. This is an opportunity that could readily be expanded to all the major routes and would certainly enhance the "magical experience". Since BC Ferry Corporation seems determined to become a "travel agent" promoting combination tours that would include Art Weekends or Art Weeks (see questions 1, 4, 5) in a package with ferry fare is one obvious suggestion.