

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## ROBERTS CREEK

# In its 25th year, mandala still art of the community

**MICHAEL GURNEY**  
Arts & Culture Writer

The Roberts Creek mandala, a community art project that began as an exuberant rejoinder to hateful vandalism, this month reached its 25th year.

More than 600 volunteers painters contributed to the circular design on pavement near the mouth of Roberts Creek. Each year, perennial mastermind Robert Marion sketches an original mosaic, outlining scores of sections in white paint. Community members — newborns to octogenarians — assemble over several “painting days” to fill in part of the mosaic with unique images.

According to Marion, it is customary for Roberts Creek parents to enshrine the hand and footprints of infants. This year, the shape of feet from a two-month-old baby appear at the south end of the 15-metre diameter circle.

Marion is a landscaper and artist originally from Thunder Bay, Ontario. Shortly before the start of the Creek Days festival in 1998, vandals marred the waterfront site with a swastika and murderous words.

Marion gathered three friends and covered the graffiti with geometric patterns, choosing the style of traditional Hindu and Buddhist artworks that represent spiritual progression. Mandala is a Sanskrit word that signifies a circle.

The annual mandala gathering was suspended during the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The design’s bright colours faded with the constant battering of rain, sand and seawater.

After its resumption on July 21, the guidelines remained simple. “People are very cooperative about it,” said Marion. “We don’t even call them rules. We just say: no words, no slogans, no advertising of any kind, don’t write your name, et cetera. Be creative with colour and make sure you’re telling your story.”

The 2022 mandala evokes the a giant tortoise, its legs splayed and its head stretched seaward. The concept is meant to reflect the unhurried determination of contributors and admirers.

“We just came out of COVID apparently,” said Marion, “so the turtle, slow and steady, represents that we can get through. It’s also a



JAKE BLACKSTAFFE PHOTO

Seen from above, the 2022 Roberts Creek mandala takes shape as a giant tortoise.

Turtle Island, the Indigenous understanding that this continent is one island made up of unceded territories.”

Marion outlines the circle by affixing a long string to a spike planted at its centre. He marks the cardinal compass directions and stains the remnants of previous designs with dark paint. Using a

bamboo rod and a stick of chalk, he ambles around the perimeter. The last step is to delineate the inner image segments in white.

Marion himself creates the design in the innermost circle. This year, it depicts a skeletal hand gripped by a fleshy palm. “It’s because we’ve had a lot of people die around here this year,” he said.

“A lot of younger people, and my mom died back in Thunder Bay. But it’s kind of a universal theme, the idea of greeting death. Hey, we’ve all got to do it.”

In 2014, Marion was wed at the centre of the mandala. His wife Johanna, who now helps coordinate the annual painting project, said that it reflects the community’s inclusive nature: “There are so many artists here, but [the mandala] reminds us that anybody can be an artist. There are kids who have taken part, and now their kids have grown up on it. It’s basically like a weeklong art festival.”

Pamela Messner obtains the necessary municipal permits and arranges food service from local vendors. “I also end up being the voice of mom,” she said, “asking people to please not walk around on the wet paint. You just navigate the best you can, and love everybody.” Messner’s 24-year-old son traveled from Vancouver to participate.

See images of the mandala painting in progress at facebook.com/Roberts-Creek-Community-Mandala-132864961112.

## ART BEAT

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Organized by the Sunshine Coast Arts Council, the Hackett Park Artisan Fair has been an annual tradition on the Coast for 34 years. It attracts close to 5,000 visitors who browse and buy creations of artisans who are jury-selected based on talent, originality, and the uniqueness of their wares.

More information (including a highly recommended vendor map) is available online at sunshinecoastartscouncil.com.

### Setting the record... straight up

Due to an out-of-date source, last week’s coverage of the upcoming Rogue Fest (August 19-21, roguifest.ca) included a reference to a former musical collaborator of Roberts Creek blacksmith Kelly Backs.

Unfortunately, Dan Small passed away eight years ago. Instead, Chris Booth — the master brew-

er at the 101 Brewhouse in Gibsons — is the instigator of the intoxicating Blacksmith & Brewer duo of which Backs is part.

We apologize for the error, and encourage readers to take a listen at blacksmithbrewer.bandcamp.com.



RANDEESH GOFF PHOTO

The Creek Daze Higgeldy Piggeldy parade in 2018.

### Daily Sailings

*Schedules subject to change without notice — Visit [bcferries.com](http://bcferries.com)*

LEAVE HORSESHOE BAY / LEAVE LANGDALE		LEAVE EARLS COVE / LEAVE SALTERY BAY	
June 23 to September 5, 2022		May 27 to September 5, 2022	
7:30 am . . . . Daily	6:20 am . . . . Daily	6:30 am . . . . Daily	5:35 am . . . . Daily
8:20 am . . Saturday	7:05 am . . Saturday		
9:50 am . . . . Daily	8:40 am . . . . Daily	8:25 am . . . . Daily	7:30 am . . . . Daily
10:40 am* . Mon, Thur, Fri, Sat	9:30 am* . Mon, Thur, Fri, Sat		
12:10 pm . . . . Daily	11:00 am . . . . Daily	10:35 am . . . . Daily	9:25 am . . . . Daily
12:55 pm . . . Thurs-Mon	11:45 am . . . Thurs-Mon		
2:25 pm . . . . Daily	1:15 pm . . . . Daily	12:55 pm . . . . Daily	11:45 am . . . . Daily
3:15 pm . . Mon, Thur, Fri, Sun	2:05 pm . . Mon, Thur, Fri, Sun		
4:45 pm . . . . Daily	3:35 pm . . . . Daily	3:40 pm . . . . Daily	2:30 pm . . . . Daily
5:30 pm* . Mon, Thur, Fri, Sun	4:20 pm* . Mon, Thur, Fri, Sun		
7:05 pm . . . . Daily	5:55 pm . . . . Daily	6:00 pm . . . . Daily	4:55 pm . . . . Daily
9:25 pm . . . . Daily	6:45 pm* . . . . Mon, Sun		
11:30 pm . . . . Daily	8:15 pm . . . . Daily	8:05 pm . . . . Daily	7:05 pm . . . . Daily
	10:30 pm . . . . Daily	10:00 pm . . . . Daily	
* NOT AVAILABLE 10:40 AM Mon - SEP 5 5:30 PM Sun - SEP 4		* NOT AVAILABLE 9:30 AM Mon - SEP 5 4:20 PM Sun - SEP 4 6:45 PM Mon - AUG 15, 22, 29 6:45 PM Sun - SEP 4	

**Sailing Time: 40 minutes**  
*Horseshoe Bay:* Ticket sales for vehicles & walk-on passengers end 10 minutes before sailing time.  
*Langdale:* Ticket sales & loading end 5 minutes before sailing time for vehicles & walk-on passengers.

**Sailing Time: 50 minutes**  
*Earls Cove & Saltery Bay:* Ticket sales & loading end 5 minutes before scheduled sailing time for vehicles & walk-on passengers.

Schedules subject to change without notice.  
For up-to-the-minute schedules, fare info or to reserve:  
**1-888-223-3779 | [www.bcferries.com](http://www.bcferries.com)**

## WEEKLY TIDE TABLE

Reference: Pt. Atkinson - PDT

DATE	TIME	(M)	(FT)
2022-08-12	05:12	4.3	14.3
	12:29	0.3	1
	19:47	4.7	15.4
2022-08-13	01:14	3.1	10.1
	06:12	4.3	14
	13:12	0.5	1.7
2022-08-14	20:19	4.7	15.5
	02:05	2.8	9.1
	07:11	4.1	13.5
2022-08-15	13:54	0.9	2.9
	20:49	4.7	15.5
	02:57	2.5	8.1
2022-08-16	08:13	3.9	12.8
	14:34	1.4	4.5
	21:19	4.7	15.3
2022-08-17	03:48	2.2	7.1
	09:20	3.7	12.2
	15:15	1.9	6.3
2022-08-18	21:49	4.6	15
	04:39	1.9	6.2
	10:40	3.6	11.8
2022-08-18	16:00	2.5	8.1
	22:18	4.4	14.4
	05:29	1.7	5.5
2022-08-18	12:15	3.6	11.8
	16:55	3	9.8
	22:48	4.2	13.8

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