

OPINION

2022 CCNA Awards
 Gold - Best Special Section | Gold - Best Local Cartoon (Dennis Parker)
 Silver - Best Editorial (Gail Sjuberg) | Bronze - Best Editorial Page

2022 BCYCN Awards
 Gold - Best All Round (for circulation Category C)
 Bronze - Community Service Award



Driftwood

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EDITORIAL

Bright lights

Complaints about streetlights being too bright have probably never been uttered on Salt Spring Island. Most people comment about how dark our streets appear at night.

But in the case of at least one spot where the bulb was recently replaced on a BC Hydro pole light standard as part of an island- and province-wide program, complaints have been aired and are justified.

Jill Schulze, who lives on Vesuvius Bay Road across from the entrance to Portlock Park, contacted the Driftwood to share the story of how she and her husband have had their sleep disturbed, and their chickens too, since the old bulb was replaced with a new LED 114-watt unit. The options are a 75-watt bulb, which is the dominant type replaced on the island, or a 39-watt bulb.

THE ISSUE: Vesuvius Bay Road streetlight

WE SAY: Change to less bright bulb needed

An evening drive by the area confirms that the 114-watt bulb installed is much brighter than needed. And if residents are truly affected by the change, which is beyond a doubt in this case, then it should be replaced by one of the less-bright options.

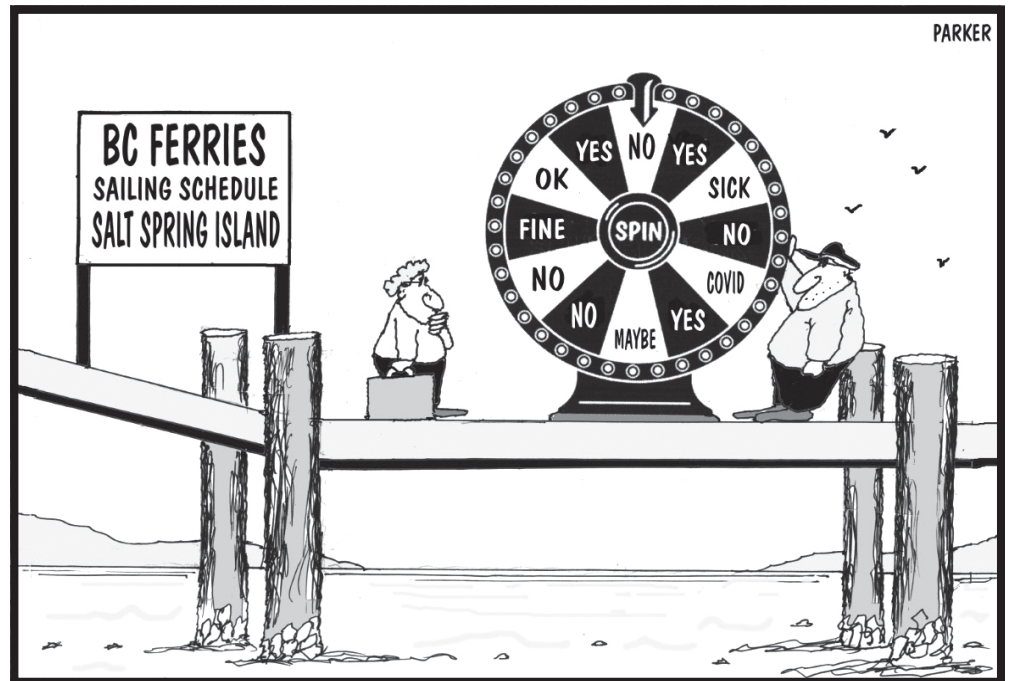
If the CRD's rationale for the higher-watt option is that it lights the vehicle entrance to Portlock Park, then that doesn't make sense since the park is not set up for night use. If the CRD hopes to discourage vandalism to its Portlock Park building or other facilities with a brighter area light, that does not justify disturbing area residents and their farm animals with an unnecessarily glaring orb.

As well, it's easy enough to see vehicles with their headlights on at night. It's pedestrians who need to be served by brighter lights in areas where they regularly walk and should be seen by vehicle drivers.

The CRD has been in charge of street lighting on Salt Spring since 2018, with property owners paying approximately \$25,000 per year in taxes for the service. (It fell under the purview and taxation authority of the fire department before then.)

BC Hydro charges a fixed amount of money for each unit it services on their poles. It takes between 20 and 30 minutes to make a change. Cost should not be a consideration in this case.

The CRD and BC Hydro need to do the right thing and give relief to Jill Schulze and her neighbours as soon as possible.



Deep sea mining a concern

BY LUCY DIWA AND DAVID WILLIAMS

PACIFIC PEOPLES' PARTNERSHIP

The Victoria-based Pacific Peoples' Partnership is calling for a moratorium on deep sea mining (DSM) exploration in the Pacific Ocean. We ask that no new contracts for these activities be issued.

In support of Pacific nations Vanuatu, Samoa, Palau and Micronesia, and in partnership with Pacific Blue Line Collective and Mining Watch Canada, the Pacific Peoples' Partnership urges the Canadian government to join other member nations of the United Nations such as Germany, France, Spain, New Zealand, Costa Rica, Chile and Panama in support of a moratorium on mining and exploration in the Pacific Ocean.

Not enough is known about the impacts of DSM and exploration on the ecological health of oceans or on the cultural and economic lives of Pacific Islanders. We ask that a moratorium stay in place until it is clear that these activities can be carried out in ways that do not harm deep sea ecosystems, and in accord with the precautionary principle.

Past harms to Indigenous peoples who rely upon the ocean must not be repeated and thus we call for full free, prior and informed consent from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples wherever this activity is contemplated. Mechanisms must be put in place to achieve this by the International Seabed Authority.

VIEWPOINT

Canadian mining companies like The Metals Company have already contracted with South Pacific countries like

Cook Islands, Tonga, Papua New Guinea and Nauru to begin exploration in their territorial waters. It is becoming an unregulated "gold rush" as companies take advantage of cash-strapped countries and the world's effort to wean itself from fossil fuels. The search is on for minerals like cobalt, nickel, manganese, selenium and others, believed to lie in large quantities over vast stretches of the ocean floor.

There are far better and safer options set within a circular economic model in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Human activity in international waters is regulated by the International Seabed Authority, made up of 167 member states and the European Union, and mandated by the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea. So far the International Seabed Authority has refused to impose a moratorium. This body must, without bias or undue influence from industry, exercise its authority responsibly and impose a moratorium. Canada, home to 75 per cent of the world's mining companies, must add its voice to those calling for a moratorium on deep sea mining and exploration.

For more information please contact Lucy Diwa at lucy@pacificpeoplespartnership.org or David Williams at 250-381-4131.

So far the International Seabed Authority has refused to impose a moratorium.

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THIS WEEK'S POLL QUESTION:

Should a completed Ganges Harbour Walk be a community priority? Yes No

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Is a trip to a warm place part of your winter plans?
 YES: 30 NO: 107

Cast your ballot online at www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com before Monday 2 p.m. or clip this box and drop it at our office before Monday at 2 p.m.