FROM THE LIONS DEN

APRIL 2015.

Long ago, semi-lost in the smog of time, the Mayne Lions Club founded their annual 222 draw. Two hundred and twenty-two tickets were sold for $20.00 each, with about half the proceeds going to prizes and the remainder to a worthy cause. Last year’s draw subsidized the Mayne Island Pathways and Trails Association’s proposed pathway between Village Bay and the Library, and this year, the project is the restoration of the “Old School House”, the oldest building on the island, its timbers held together by hundreds of hand-forged iron nails, little different from those used by the Roman garrison that abandoned its fort at Inchtuthill in Scotland two thousand years ago, leaving a cache of 750,000 nails behind. The Mayne Island Volunteers Firemen’s Association is supplying the muscle and skill to restore the old school, and needs funds. The 222 draw will help. If any Mayne Islanders who attended the old school have tales to relate about their school days, I should like to hear from them, for I may be able to use them here, or on the Mayne Island Lions website.

An alternative project proposed for this year’s draw was the struggling Community Bus service, and we set up a committee of two, Bob Soper and John Glover, to look into public transit on the Southern Gulf Islands. At our last Executive meeting, they presented a 48-page report that summed up their research. BC Transit has already produced a feasibility study for the CRD, which must take the lead if a regular bus service is to materialize. Among possible ways to go is an attractive option which would have our island sharing resources along with Galiano, Pender and Saturna, but that will need government funding. One remark in the feasibility study that BC Transit produced sounded a sour note: it revealed that while the authors found substantial support for transit, they did not “gather any input on resident appetite to pay [for it] through property taxes.” The cost of funding a bus service is daunting for our club, which is not a registered charity and cannot give donors receipts for income tax deductions. But the Lions remain loyal to their motto: `We Serve,` and our committee has made our MLA, Gary Holman, aware of Mayne Island`s problems -- and he offers assistance. He will visit our island on 8 April, 6:30 - 8 p.m., Agricultural Hall. Watch our web site for further news.

By the time that readers see this column, the 2015 Mayne Island Lions Telephone Directory will have appeared in their mailboxes. It was assembled in three days, March 13-15, by six shifts of Lions, working at the Alea Printshop under Richard Jarco’s direction. I could take only one shift before medical appointments called me away, but it was long enough for me to realize how much volunteer work went into producing the directory. But we were happy workers, and the revenue from the phone book is a major source of income for our club. We’re grateful to our advertisers and to our persuasive salesmen who sold them the advertisements. They are good value for their money.

The March Lions General meeting hosted a welcome visitor, Carl Bunnin, the newly-appointed Harbour Commissioner for the Southern Gulf Islands as well as chair of the Association of Mayne Island Boaters. Mayne Island has two government docks, one the CRD dock at Miners Bay and the other the Horton Bay Community Dock, which is a better anchorage and brings in more revenue than Miners Bay but access to the quay is clouded by legal issues. Carl Bunnin made a point that we all accept, that adequate moorage for boats is vital for the prosperity of our island, and so until the legal issues hanging over Horton Bay are cleared up, the immediate aim of the Southern Gulf Islands Harbour Commission is to improve facilities at Miners Bay. In 2009, the dock there was closed to wheeled traffic because it was deteriorating beyond the point of safety. The problem does not seem to be lack of money for maintenance. There is room for a lot of improvement.

Back in 2013, the Lions made a modest grant to Mayne Islander John Aitken, the multi-talented artist who sculpted the arresting Honouring Figure at Felix Jack Park, to help him take his pantomime, “The Gift”, on a tour of the Southern Gulf Islands. I have just now learned that the Canada Council has offered him a grant to produce “The Gift” at Presentation House Theatre in North Vancouver (333 Chesterfield Avenue} later in 2015 or in 2016. It is always good to know that the Lions Club has helped propel a Mayne Islander up the glittering road to fame. We tender John our congratulations and best wishes.

ALLAN EVANS

SECRETARY, MAYNE ISLAND LIONS CLUB.