

Trial Island's rare flora

A SUNDAY JAUNT with 75 Friends of Ecological Reserves yielded these little-known facts: Trial Island, south of McMicking Point in Oak Bay, has more rare and endangered plant species than any other site in British Columbia; many are associated with plant communities of northern California and central Oregon (having been scattered along Victoria's waterfront before it was domesticated); none of the areas where the rarest species flourish enjoy the protection of restricted land use, although places like Rocky Point, because of its department of national defence land-use restrictions, are afforded more floral protection than Trial Island.

Adolf Ceska, a Czechoslovakian-born botanist living in Victoria since 1969, showed the visitors some of Trial Island's rarities, including the tiny Macoun's foam-flower. En route to the spot, which he likes to keep secret from crowds, he dropped to his hands and knees to point out a dozen or so species inhabiting a metre-square depression where rainwater collects. He also said that locoweed growing on a nearby hill is usually found in interior grasslands and sometimes in the Vancouver Island Mountains, whereas the distinctly five-branched bear's-foot sanicle grows only at Saxe Point, on Bentinck Island (near Race Rocks), in the Chinese cemetery, on Alpha Islet (an ecological reserve off Discovery Island) and on Trial Island.

In 1981, Ceska and two other botanists proposed protecting Trial Island's rich flora in an ecological reserve. There is a hitch, however. Oak Bay municipality has been eyeing the island, a part of the municipality since March, 1981, as a site for a sewage treatment plant if the recently upgraded raw sewage outfall at Kitty Islet, off McMicking Point, proves hazardous to health. Any level of government can veto the creation of an ecological reserve.

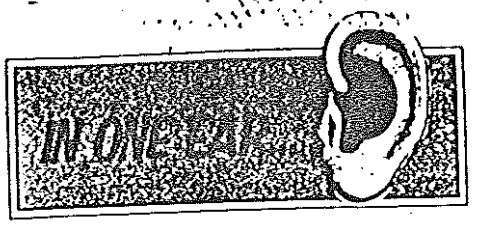


PETER GRANT/ICBC

Adolf Ceska pointing at rare Macoun's foam-flower (inset): pushing for an ecological reserve on Trial Island

But here's late-breaking news: a report to the Capital Regional District's waste disposal committee on June 1 will almost certainly propose diverting sewage from the city's east side to Clover Point. Voilà! Except for winter overflows, no more sewage on the beach near McMicking Point. Says Oak Bay mayor Doug Watts about the ecological reserve proposal: "Our objections may not be permanent." If the east coast diversion goes ahead, look for Oak Bay council to review Trial Island's future—and Adolf Ceska to breathe easier.

—Peter Grant



Chalk scoop: It looks like the long-sought Social Credit education policy has been discovered in that most obvious of places, the Queen's Printer's office. We could be wrong on this, but in a well-hidden corner is the Bill Bennett songbook for seniors. Called *Something to Sing About*, this free 1982 publication is one of the lesser-known glossy handouts of our provincial government. After reading the introductory exhortation from the premier to "Sing out in good health and good spirits," we turned to page 9 to find, under the title "School Days", the following statement:

"School days, school days, dear old golden rule days;
 Readin' and 'ritin' and 'rithmetic,
 Taught to the tune of the hickery (sic) stick.
 You were my queen in calico,
 I was your bashful barefoot beau,
 And you wrote on my slate "I love Joe",
 When we were a couple of kids."

Other policy nuggets in this publication can be found under the titles "Marching Along Together," (Intergovernmental Affairs) "Let a Smile be Your Umbrella" (Human Resources), "Now is the Hour, (Health) "Smiles" (Tourism), "S-M-I-L-E (Higher Education), "Sunny Side Up (Small Business), "The Old Gray Mare (Agriculture), and "When You're Smiling (B.C. Place).

Victoria's artistically gifted teen should get a school of their own, think Gary Rupert, of School District 61's curriculum department. He has arranged for the Jefferson Dancers, from Portland Ore. fine arts high school, to perform at McPherson Playhouse Sunday, May 22, 8 pm. to convince local trustees to establish a similar "magnet" school—drawing students from all over the city—in Victoria.

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that Canada has and the Americans want, including energy and water. That approach can hardly be less successful than the Brian-and-Ron duo.

its standing as official opposition along with the revenue from the public that brings.

1985—President Ronald Reagan signed an executive order in total trade embargo on Nicaragua.

The Canadian Press

Doctors' billing numbers

An article entitled "Medical group optimistic about billing number appeal" (April 8) contained inaccurate information on controlling doctors' billing numbers. I would like to correct the record to ensure that the public is properly informed on this matter.

Contrary to what information you may have obtained from Dr. Janet Martini, spokesperson for the Professional Association of Residents and Interns, physicians who practise only on a fee-for-service basis are *not* limited in the amount they can bill for medical services.

Dr. Martini is also quoted as saying that "the billing numbers that have been given out since the spring of 1985 have been restricted to the Victoria area." Such a situation would be ludicrous, given the more than adequate number of physicians in the Victoria area.

Permanent practitioner numbers have in fact been issued in every region of the province and for all types of practice since 1985. Relative to its population, very few additional numbers have been issued in Victoria in recent years.

Dr. Martini states that the doctors who locate in northern regions have no guarantee that a permanent practitioner number will be issued if they choose to remain in the northern community. I can assure you that no physician who has chosen to locate in a northern or isolated community where additional physicians are required has ever been denied a permanent practitioner number.

In this same article, Dr. David Jones, president of the British Columbia Medical Association, was quoted as criticizing Ministry of Health statistics because they do not account for doctors who have retired

or for the high proportion of elderly residents in Victoria.

First, the Medical Services Plan physician manpower statistics include only those physicians who are billing the plan. These statistics are also adjusted to account for physicians who work less than full time. Secondly, the physician-to-population ratios which apply to the Capital Regional District have, in fact, been adjusted for the high proportion of seniors in the region.

S. P. Dubas, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health, Victoria.

Editor's note: Dr. Martini was incorrectly quoted in her comment on the issuing of billing numbers for Victoria. She said: "In fact, the billing numbers that have been given out in Victoria since the spring of 1985 have been restricted to the Victoria area and that's curious because the government has complained that Victoria is overserved by doctors."

What deal?

Regarding the story April 23, "Developer impatient as tenants hedge on fair compromise":

Norm Isherwood, owner of 140-150 Douglas Street, said in that story that he has already delayed conversion of the apartments there for a year and has offered tenants one month rent-free or the cash equivalent but has not received a response from the Tenants' Action Committee.

This "deal" is news to the Tenants' Action Committee. After a city council meeting in February, Isherwood told us he probably wouldn't begin construction until next year. This was not an offer. As for "one month rent-free," this is also news.

The latest article also says he

originally wanted to delay construction "to help the tenants." In a February article, his reason was different: "to finish renovation on the Alhambra."

Ideally, we want to stay in our homes, but we are willing to compromise if city council takes action to preserve affordable family housing during the housing crisis. We are the ones compromising; the ball is in the court of city hall and the developers.

Cathy Lewitz, Victoria.

May 1, 1988
Times Colonist
Ecological nonsense

In the article on Trial Island in the *Islander*, April 24, an ecologist with the Ministry of Environment is quoted as saying: "Trial Island is one of the few places in British Columbia where many rare and endangered plant species are found."

Are we really supposed to believe such gibberish — that Trial Island harbors something that can't be found up and down the coast?

I'm not sure of the ulterior motive behind this call for an ecological reserve on Trial Island, as I was led to believe during years of involvement with such matters that the primary purpose of ecological reserves was to serve as "benchmarks" for future generations or for those of today wishing to study a piece of relatively pristine environment.

It defies rational thinking how anyone can consider Trial Island as a possible ecological reserve, since it has been denuded for decades. It is the site of a lighthouse which was maintained over the years by live-in families who used the island as their personal estate and it is the location of several radio towers.

To complete the charade, we are told that "a reserve would also protect two vernal pools — ecological phenomena rare in this area." From such nonsensical statements in the decision-making process, it is not hard to understand why our resource industries throughout the province are being harassed out of their livelihood.

Perhaps it is time to stop all growth, development and change in British Columbia and give it back to the Indians so that we can all live with nature in wiggams.

Charles J. Keenan, Victoria.

Israel no longer wise

Flora Lewis's article on Israel (Comment page, April 13) includes a point worth repeating, for it states clearly what many people in this country, including politically progressive Jews, are thinking:

"Israel is a candidate for inclusion in Barbara Tuchmann's *March of Folly*, as a country working against

its own best interests, a world in which politics that subvert the country's survival are called pariahs. Arabs are not unaware of a dangerous change in the main change in the Arabs they've ceased to consider wise country."

A former Israeli intel officer, Yehoshafat Harbaki, words for the newspaper does one's heart good to individuals in Israel who ly that the survival of the being subverted by the su of Prime Minister Sham ment.

For too long, the wo who have held views contrary Harbaki's have hesitated out, knowing that the man of Hitler's fascism will grant any criticism of Israel. A Israel's prime minister c dangerous and cruel war Palestinians, unknowing that he is rapidly alienating would prefer to be friends

It behooves those who ciliation between Israel Palestinians as necessary peace to speak out, as I done, against the Shamir M.J

Brainwashed by

Environment Minister chan's comments about 1 of commercial fishing ar of ignorance and stupidity It is too bad that the et *Times-Colonist*, in their of

Please limit your letter to about 200 words, sign it, include your address and a phone number where you can be reached during the day. Letters may be edited.