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**SPRING ’25 CAST REPORT**

**Love Thy Neighbourhood**

The grounds at the HICEEC and Natural History Centre are in bloom, thanks largely to green-thumbed volunteers on the Natural History Board. Special thanks to Neil and Norma for the fabulous new arbour. To all the volunteers who’ve put time and heart into this project: Your efforts have created something joyful for all who pass by.

**Sharing the Wealth**

The Provincial Government initiated the “pillow tax” as a marketing program, to promote tourism. Over the years the program has morphed and while still supporting events and activities, on Hornby the bulk of these taxes (paid by visitors staying in “fixed roof accommodations”) are being set aside for affordable workforce housing.

For the portion still mandated for tourism, local non-profits, groups, and business collaborations can apply for funds for sports tournaments, events, and initiatives that are attractive for public participation. Focus on shoulder season. Grant funds remain available. Visit [**https://hiceec.org/mrdt**](https://hiceec.org/mrdt) for the information package. Or give Karen a call.

**Hornby Bus**

* Operations June 27 to August 31
* Part of the solution, not part of the problem: The bus does turn and back up: Continue to ask for respect on the roads, DEFER TO THE BUS.
* Staffing: Manager/Driver Jill Gathright. Drivers: David Hayward returning. New hires Jerry Dean and Roman Hudson. Relief Tara Stonehouse.
* Thanks to the Volunteer Steering Committee – for all their work in redoing the route map and schedule, weed eating, bus stop maintenance, sandwich boards, etc.
* Fare is by donation. There is a commercial style fare box onboard.
* New for this year:
* Route map, more user friendly, now delineated for 3 routes
* B.C. Transit policy adopted for furred and feather friends – soft sided carriers, size to fit on your lap.
* At the drivers’ discretion, based on safety, potential to stop at people’s driveways if the person has mobility issues or heavy loads.
	+ Not flag down, only pick up at the bus stops which have been pre-vetted for safety.

**Very Canadian, eh?**
The 2025/26 Hornby Island Visitor Guide has landed! If you’re a participating advertiser, feel free to pick up your copies at the HICEEC office. Many thanks to those who chose to promote their businesses while supporting sustainable tourism.

This year's design features a subtle nod to our northern pride—a discreet Canadian maple leaf tucked into the cover image. It’s a detail not everyone will catch, but it’s sure to bring a smile to those who do.

**The Ferries: The Verdict**

Take a moment to celebrate the win: the 44-vehicle Quinitsa will be deployed to the Hornby route in 2027, year-round! While it's disappointing that all the needed improvements haven’t been implemented, this helps.

In the meantime, the Kahloke will continue as the primary vessel on Route 22 and will shift to a supplemental role on Route 21 during peak seasons. (Note that the Kahloke is scheduled for a refit this October.) The Quinitsa will serve Hornby during the peak season in 2025 and 2026.

So, although better, year-round service on Hornby is still a few years off, the commitment has been made. The bigger outstanding issue is the lack of a clear plan to improve the service on the Buckley Bay to Denman Island portion of our service. Since the Ferry Advisory Committees have been disbanded, the Hornby Ferry Action Discussion Group continues to work on ferry issues. Watch for requests for lobbying support as potential actions are identified.

**Sincere thanks to the HICEEC volunteer Board:**
John Heinegg, John Grayson, Jack Hornstein, Katherine Ronan, Donna Tuele, Sheila McDonnell, Stu Amos, and Marilyn Kopansky