

# Letter - Pull together to restore surgical services

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It started out a dull grey day. Like recent grey days, not a time for optimism.

By the time 45 minutes had elapsed, the sun may well have shone for weeks and all because we learned that a community cares for the same thing that we do.

As members of the ad hoc Save our Surgery Committee, the goal that day was to attempt to gauge the support of the people served by our Hospital District in having the surgical services and the use of the new OR returned to its former capacity. The place, Fulford Harbour ferry terminal as well as the line-up for coffee at the Rock Salt Café, the time 9:15 a.m. We have been gathering signatures on the SOS postcards for a period of six weeks and the response has been revelatory.

A population starved of facts, befuddled by rumours and exposed to deception was finally included in the debate. The excitement, the enthusiasm and plain gratitude towards us for working on their behalf was balm to the soul.

"Thank you for doing this," "Good on ya." "What a stupid decision," "what a backward step," "give me 10 of those," "give me 25."

Signing that piece of paper seemed to release something, a reassertion of a sense of community and the right (need?) to be heard, to have their say, heretofore denied them. Salt Spring as well as the other Gulf Islands need to know that the SOS group will not let this issue rest until it is resolved to our satisfaction. We are not going away. We will carry on. With your help we can prove to the 'authorities' (your provincial government and the Vancouver Island Health Authority) that they owe us, and they owe us big.

The SOS group has been studiously and effectively gaining information that contradicts the facts upon which the decision to close the OR was based. VIHA engineered the closing of the OR and reduction in services to LMH by reducing the funding.

This agenda works against the well being of islanders, in particular young pregnant women and older groups at a time when being close to home and family is paramount. We are a group who would welcome invitations from interested parties, large or small who would like to have light shed on this issue. We need young families to get involved.

For the health, safety and comfort of all Islanders, we must pull together to ensure the return of surgical services at Lady Minto Hospital.

RUTH TARASOFF,

Salt Spring

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