
January Update from Teale!

1 message

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25 January 2025 at
22:18



Happy New Year from Teale (Updated and Re-Formatted)

Friends,

Thank you to the folks to alerted my to the strange layout issues with my last newsletter. I hope I've resolved them here. I'm also adding a few additional updated since I sent out my last email. I've flagged the new content below, and thank you all for your patience.

I hope you have a lovely winter holidays. I spent much of the winter holidays hunkered down working on wrapping up a number of research writing projects. Things went pretty well, and I managed to write a report, finish a draft of a book chapter, make headway on another, and found a bit of time for some reading.

2024 was a very full year and I'm looking forward to an eventful and productive 2025. I was just running the numbers and it looks like I had a total of 202 coffee meetings at the Roundhouse Cafe this past year! If you are ever interested in grabbing a seasonally appropriate beverage and chatting local issues, don't hesitate to get in touch.

I have a handful of fresh updates added since I first sent out this newsletter last week:

- **Noise Camera Pilot:** As you know, I have been championing the use of noise cameras as a way of addressing vehicular noise pollution for a number of years. While I was unable to initiate a pilot here in Saanich, I'm delighted to say that Port Moody has stepped up. Thanks to the leadership of Councillors Samantha Agtarap and Diana Dilworth, Port Moody Council recently voted to set up a pilot. You can learn more from articles in the [Vancouver Sun](#), [City News](#), and [TriCity News](#). I have been doing what I can to support these efforts and will keep folks in the loop as they move forward.

- **Council Approves Alternative Approval Process for Borrowing:** When municipalities need to borrow funds or seek approval on critical matters outside of an election year, an Alternative Approval Process (AAP) can be held to put questions to electors. AAPs are provincially legislated and can be used for a variety of matters, including borrowing money for a project, establishing new municipal services or adjusting parkland dedications.

To ensure we don't overburden taxpayers with higher annual tax lifts, borrowing helps to spread the financial impact over several years. Local governments must obtain consent of the electors for borrowing where the costs for servicing its total debt exceed 5% of eligible revenue. This past Monday, January 20th, Council approved five AAPs for our sewer capital program (\$400,000), storm drainage program (\$1.7 million), transportation program (\$3.1 million), parks capital program (\$1.2 million) and community facilities (\$3.215 million). [Click here](#) to learn more about the AAP process and these specific programs. And you can also read more from the [Times Colonist](#) and [Saanich News](#).

- **Public Engagement Around the Saanich Budget:** We are looking for feedback on the District's financial plan. Saanich has an online budget simulation tool and survey which provide an opportunity for folks to explore and adjust how their tax dollars are allocated to Saanich's programs. Be sure to check out the survey and budget simulation tool [here](#), before February 16th. And learn more about [additional engagement opportunities here](#) and on the [HelloSaanich](#) platform.
- **New Housing on McKenzie:** This past Monday, Council also approved a new project that will see 122 new units in two six-story buildings. Learn more from the [Times Colonist](#) and [Saanich News](#).



More News!

As always, there's a ton going on at the District of Saanich, so here's a brief summary of a few recent highlights in no particular order:

- **Council Holiday Message:** [Winter holiday greetings](#) from Mayor and Saanich Council, and read [Mayor Murdock's reflections on 2024](#) and the [Mayor's Annual Address](#).
- **Extreme Weather Response:** The District has been working hard to address the need for more warming centres and shelter beds during extreme weather events. Municipal staff is working with third-party community organizations to increase options available to mitigate the effects of extreme weather on folks experiencing homelessness in the municipality. You can learn more from this [press release](#), as well as articles in the [Times Colonist](#), [CHEK News](#), and [Victoria Buzz](#). A big thank you to everyone who wrote in to Council about this important issue.



- **Burnside Road Watermain Replacement:** We have begun a significant watermain replacement project along Burnside Road. Thank you for your patience while the work is underway. Learn more from the [Victoria Buzz](#).
- **Active Transportation Safety:** Bollards are back on the agenda at the CRD, and reviews concerning the safety of bollards on trails are currently being conducted. [Learn more here](#).
- **Water Supply Update:** As you may know, I serve as a Director on the [Regional Water Supply Commission](#), and I'm pleased to say that progress has been made on acquiring important land that is part of the Sooke Lake Reservoir. These 1,973 hectares of land will help protect our region's water supply. You can [learn more here](#).
- **Saanich Police Stop Impaired Drivers:** In November, Saanich PD removed a record 580 impaired drivers from our roads. Impaired driving is incredibly dangerous and these efforts helped improve the safety of our roads. The high number of impaired drivers who received roadside prohibitions should serve as a powerful reminder to not drink and drive! Learn more from the [Times Colonist](#) and [Saanich News](#).



In late 2024, I joined the board of [Climate Caucus](#). This is a non-partisan network of 700 current and former local elected leaders and over 1,400 allies, leading the transformation needed for communities to thrive within planetary boundaries. The mission of Climate Caucus is to connect, support, and advocate for locally elected leaders to accelerate the transformation for

communities to thrive. Where thriving communities are resilient, healthy, regenerative, decarbonized and socially just.

Since its launch in 2019, Climate Caucus has grown to fill an important gap in the local government space. Starting with the dream of one councilor to connect local climate leaders across Canada, it has become a strong and supportive community, demonstrating that local governments can lead on environmental action. I am looking forward to serving on the board and doing what I can to help support the work of Climate Caucus in the year ahead.



On a related theme, I'm off to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM's) [Sustainable Communities Conference 2025](#) in Fredericton next month. Stay tuned for updates from this conference.

There are a number of other upcoming engagement opportunities, and I wanted to remind folks that the [2024 Resident Pulse Survey](#) wraps up on January 26th. As always you can learn about these and participate on the [HelloSaanich platform](#).

Reproductive Justice Advocacy



I have exciting reproductive justice news! Over the winter holidays, the BC government expanded free prescription contraception to include two new types: Lolo and Slynd! Lo Loestrin Fe, also known as Lolo, is a “low-dose” pill, containing the lowest dose of estrogen currently on the market. Slynd (Drospirinone) is a progesterone only pill that is more effective in preventing pregnancy than older progesterone-only pills. You can learn more from our [recent press release here](#), and from this article in [Castanet](#).



The AccessBC Campaign made a lot of progress in 2024 - [over 250,000 people](#) were able to access free prescription contraception in BC since the policy was first adopted. [Recent research from UBC](#) has found that free prescription contraception has helped increase contraception usage in the province. As of June 2024, the number of people using any form of prescription contraception in the province increased by 10%, and of the 80,200 people in BC using long-acting reversible contraceptives (such as IUDs and implants), 11,400 of these people would not have been had the government not enacted free prescription contraception.

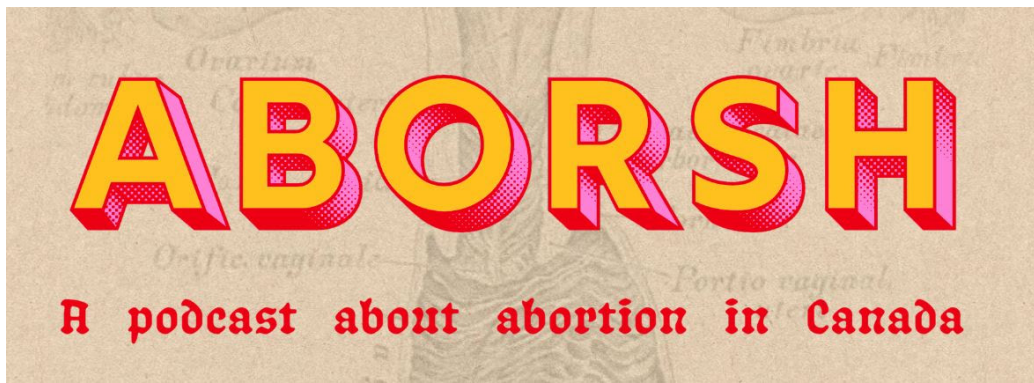
A huge thank you to everyone who participated in our national letter writing campaigns this year! Stay tuned for more calls to action as the year unfolds.



But wait, there's more! The AccessBC campaign has been a grassroots campaign since its inception in 2017, and we've been laser focused on making prescription contraception in BC free. With the policy in place and changing lives across the BC, things are getting a little more complex.

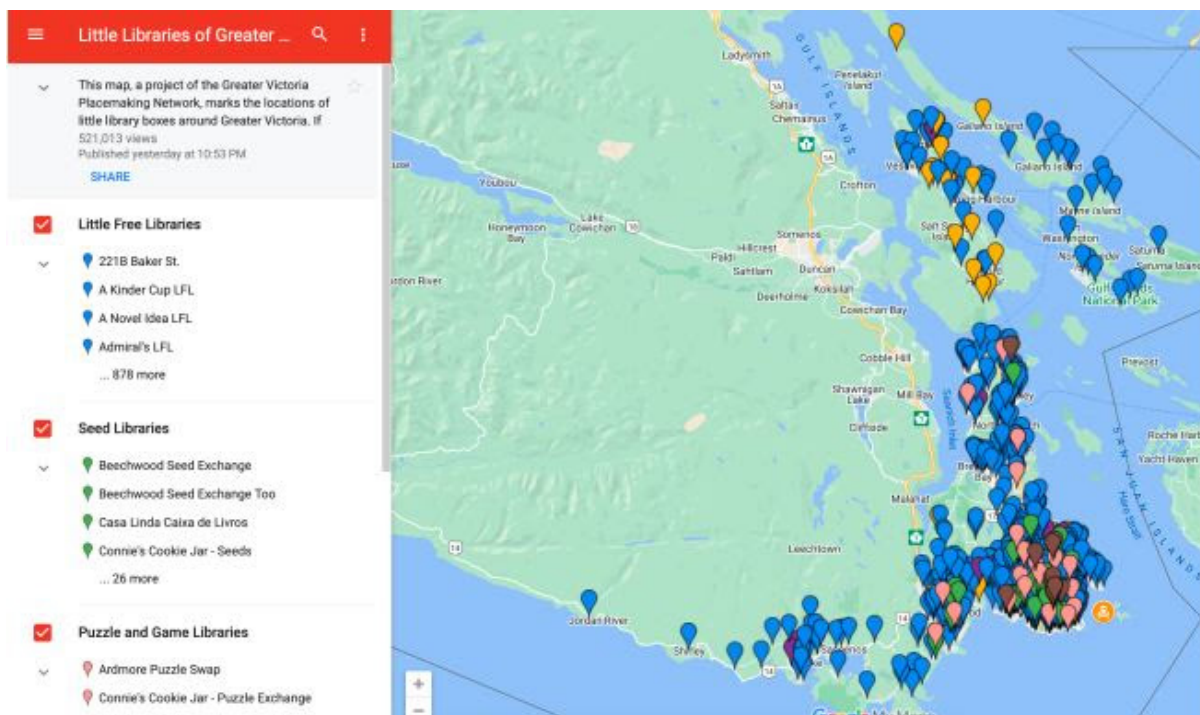
In addition to pushing for the expansion of free prescription contraception in BC, we have also taken on a leadership role supporting the work of our sister campaigns across the country and coordinating national advocacy efforts. In order to continue this important work, we have decided to transform the AccessBC Campaign into a formal society. We are interested in a few recruits to serve on the board and are particularly looking for someone with relevant experience to serve as treasurer. If you are interested in learning more, please drop me a line.

There are some expenses associated with becoming a society and we are gearing up for what looks to be an intense year of advocacy. If you are able to spare anything, we would greatly appreciate it. [Learn more and support the campaign here.](#)



A new episode of the [Aborsh Podcast](#) just dropped, and this one features the AccessBC Campaign and yours truly talking about access to prescription contraception.

Little Free Libraries



Our region's growing network of little free libraries!

It has been an exciting and transformative year for the Pocket Places Project! I wanted to share some of the highlights and numbers for 2024, so I've put together a '[Year End Celebration](#)' blog post. Check it out!

I recently expanded our region's [LFL map](#) to include a special category for little free art galleries and art supplies boxes, of which there are now 13 in the region. You can find these marked in brown on the map.

We are also getting very close to the region's 900th LFL, so stay tuned for more information about this exciting milestone.



The BC Humanist Association Research Team was hard at work in 2024. You can learn more about some of the projects I worked on this past year in this helpful [year in review](#). Looking forward, we are going to continue our work on the [Saguenay Project](#), which examines unconstitutional prayer in municipal council meetings across Canada. Over the winter holidays I drafted a report looking at BC municipalities, and our team is currently working on reports for the Maritimes.

As 2025 unfolds, we will be leading projects examining tax exemptions, crisis pregnancy centres, polling places, humanist chaplains in prisons, and a number of school district policies. Our team is made up of volunteers and if you are ever interested in helping out, we are always looking for volunteers to help out with everything from data gathering, transcription, coding, and report writing. Please get in touch if you are interested.

Marine Conservation



As you likely know, one of my areas of expertise is wildlife crime targeting sea cucumbers. My research and investigative work has explore sea cucumber crime around the world, including [Mexico](#), [Sri Lanka and India](#), and last year I published a [book chapter](#) on the wider topic. This past week we had an example of sea cucumber crime a little closer to home.

In early January, [Scott Stanley Matthew Steer](#) was found guilty of illegally harvesting and selling sea cucumbers. The Nanaimo man was guilty on eight counts relating to the contravention of the Federal Fisheries Act. Sentencing is pending. You can learn more about the case from the [Vancouver Sun](#), [Nanaimo News Now](#), and [Victoria News](#). And I recently sat down with [Ryan Price from CFX 1070](#) to chat about the case and issue more broadly.

I currently have a paper exploring crime in Canadian sea cucumber fisheries under review and my work on this paper tells me that is one of, if not the, biggest cases of sea cucumber crime in Canadian history. The sentencing in this case is pending.

I hope 2025 is getting off to a great start and I wish you all the very best this year!

Warm regards,



Dr. Teale Phelps Bondaroff

P.S. - If you have Saanich friends and neighbours who might like to receive these newsletter, do please share [this link](#) with them.



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