

Community Land Trust of Waldron Island



Winter Greetings from the CLTWI

by *Rebecca Moore*

Reflecting on 2022 and looking ahead to the new year, we want to thank everyone who has been a part of and supported this organization over the past 30 years. So many people have generously contributed time and effort and donations to keep our small organization running! The list of contributors is long and we extend much gratitude to the founders and doers for getting organized and keeping us on track.

Since our last newsletter, Nickie McDonald has moved on from the board and will be greatly missed for her organizational skills, commitment to follow-through, and gentle leadership. In her place, we welcome our newest board member, Chris Rogers, who brings a wealth of relevant experience and a contagious enthusiasm to the group.

In this issue, you will be introduced to all five of our current board members, and we invite you to also share in our appreciation for all the folks who did the hard work of creating the CLTWI in the first place and who kept it moving, slowly but surely, toward its goals.

For those of you unfamiliar with the origins of the CLTWI, this fall Nickie McDonald sat down with Bob Gamble and Winnie Adams to hear their story of how the CLTWI began. You can read their description on page 5.

Also in this issue, you'll find CLTWI updates including a new regular column, "Caring for the Commons," with news on activities, plans, and progress on the Waldron Commons; a glimpse of the scenes at the Summer Craft Faire with a summation of the success of this year's popular annual event (page 6); a description of the presentation at our Annual Meeting by guest speaker Rena Priest, Washington state Poet Laureate and a member of Lhaq'temish (Lummi) Nation (pages 8-10); plus other community news briefs.

We encourage each of you to renew your membership or become a member if you aren't one, and join with us to help shape the future of community on the island.

Caring for the Commons

by *Chris Rogers*

In late November 2022, Erin Halcomb of the San Juan County Conservation Land Bank visited Waldron as part of the agency's annual review of island properties subject to conservation easements, including the Waldron Commons. Erin's annual visit is a requirement of the conservation easement to ensure that the Land Trust of Waldron Island (CLTWI) is managing the property for its known conservation values and as a resource for island residents.

The walkabout with Erin allowed us to take note of the rich diversity of plant species found on the property and revealed the impact that invasive species are having on the land, including Scotch broom and Himalayan blackberry. The walk also enabled the CLTWI to better imagine how an expanded trail system throughout the 20 acres would improve access for recreation and education, forest management, and the removal of invasive species.

Toward that end, the CLTWI is seeking a Commons Land Steward
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Erin Halcomb

Caring for the Commons, *continued*



Nickie McDonald clearing the boundary line of the Commons

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to help further its stewardship responsibilities and goals in the coming year. Ideally, this part-time paid position would be filled by a current island resident who has experience with trail building and forest management and would help with several small building projects in the community gathering clearing. If you are interested, please contact us at waldronlandtrust@gmail.com for a full job description.

In the coming months, the Land Trust will evaluate how the Commons is used today and what the future might hold to maximize the land's benefit to the community. This will include revisiting earlier feasibility studies that looked at potential housing, especially in the context of current land use codes and policies.

Please Support Your Land Trust

Once a year, the Land Trust asks for your generous support through its member appeal. Your contributions are crucial to ensuring our organization can thrive and grow as land stewards, community conveners, and advocates of affordable housing in our rapidly changing county.

Our annual membership rates are quite modest: **\$15 per person for recurring members; \$12/mo for 12 months for sustaining members (\$144); and \$25 per person for new members.** And this year, there is a unique opportunity for those able to provide additional support so that we can hire a part-time paid Commons Land Steward! We greatly appreciate your help in backing local jobs like this one!

You are always welcome to attend the board meetings, held on the third Sunday each month. Those of us on the Board are doing what we can to promote sustainability on Waldron, but we can't do it without your help. Become a CLTWI member today!

All donations are tax deductible and can be made through our website or with a check mailed to PO Box 11, Waldron, WA 98297. Checks should be made out to CLTWI. Thank you for your annual support of the Community Land Trust of Waldron Island.

In gratitude,
 Rebecca Moore, Chairperson
 Jeana Bird, Treasurer
 Chris Rogers, Secretary
 Litia Perta
 Tony Scruton

Article spells out widening wealth gap in San Juan Islands

by *Rebecca Moore*

From its origins in the early 1990s, the CLTWI has always carried a vision of a vibrant year-round community on Waldron Island, with affordable access to land as the central focus.

Though seemingly a world apart from the other San Juan Islands, it is clear that Waldron is not immune to the effects of an increasing wealth gap and the likelihood that it will become more and more expensive for people of modest means to afford to live here. A recent article in the online newspaper, the *Salish Current*, "By the numbers: wealth gap grows in the San Juan Islands" by Kathryn Wheeler (see link below), presents many statistics reflective of this trend.

Looking at census data and other sources, Kathryn presents a snapshot of the demographics in San Juan County, highlighting a population growth of 15 percent since 2010 (nearly double that of the rest of the nation); a median household income of \$68,577 (the eighth highest in the state); and an increase in the number of SJC residents living at or below poverty level, up from 9.2% in 2000 to 10.9% in 2021. Additionally, the cost of housing in the islands has risen dramatically with the median cost of a home going from \$450,000 in 2010 to \$890,000 in 2020, putting homeownership out of reach for many.

Looking at these trends helps to remind us why removing land from the speculative market to make it permanently affordable is the keystone of the Community Land Trust model and is also the core mission of the CLTWI. As we continue working toward that mission, we invite you all to join us in our efforts in forging a more sustainable path for our island community. **See the full article here:**

<https://salish-current.org/2022/12/16/by-the-numbers-wealth-gap-grows-in-the-san-juan-islands/>

Get to know more about your CLTWI Board members

Chris Rogers is the newest elected member of the CLTWI Board. Chris' full-time move to Waldron three years ago fulfilled a dream that started with his purchase of land on the mountain in 2007. Chris' professional experience includes eight years with the Trust for Public Land and his role in protecting some treasured places on our Salish Sea islands, including additions to the Watmough Preserve on Lopez, the acquisition of Lummi Mountain, and the protection of Turtleback Mountain on Orcas.



For more than 15 years and counting, Chris has provided project management to non-profit organizations and their capital projects. Chris is enthusiastic to work with an exceptional team of CLTWI board members and other members to further the Waldron community's hand in protecting and giving shape to this special place through land conservation, stewardship, and affordable housing.

members over the years has been a highlight for her and she looks forward to assisting the Land Trust in manifesting plans and projects that support a vibrant year-round Waldron community.

The past five plus years have found Rebecca and her family splitting their time between Waldron and San Juan Island while sons Hans and Jasper attend high school in Friday Harbor, and so Blue Moon Produce has been on a bit of a hiatus. Rebecca and her husband Sam Shayler are very much looking forward to returning to the island full-time in the fall of 2023 and re-integrating with the land and community, and with plans to resume more active food production on the farm. Members can contact her with any thoughts, ideas, questions, or feedback at waldronlandtrust@gmail.com



Jeana Bird has lived on Waldron for six years and feels deep gratitude for the ways it is possible to live here within landscape—the quiet and walkability, solitude as well as neighborly connections, the ability to grow and forage food.

Jeana moved to the San Juan Islands 14 years ago to participate in a permaculture internship with the Bullock farm on Orcas Island, after a diagnosis of an autoimmune illness pushed her interest toward health, sustainability, and resilience studies. Over the many years she lived on Orcas much of the quiet and simplicity she was first drawn to gave way to more tourism and development, which seemed to her to increasingly fragment community connections.

Joining the CLTWI board is part of her concern and curiosity to engage in conversations for how to protect both human and nature communities so that each can thrive and nourish the other. Alongside her interest in food systems and equitable community building she has been a committed student of interpersonal neurobiology and works as a space holder for conversations exploring holistic awareness and practice of relational health. She is particularly passionate about neurodiversity, developmental trauma awareness, as well as inclusion and value of people with disabilities.

Jeana keeps her hopes up in a challenging world through art, music, and growing a big garden with her partner Addison.



Since moving to the island in 1997 **Rebecca Moore** has felt lucky to be a part of the Waldron community. Fresh out of college, where she studied ecological agriculture and community development, she quickly dove into island life, getting to know the people and the place. After several years working at

Nootka Rose Farm, the opportunity arose to start Blue Moon Produce at Point Hammond Farm, and growing that farm business became her main focus for the next 23 years. Affordable access to land for farming was a key to making that possible, thanks to a unique relationship with the Ragen family, owners of the property.

Rebecca has been a strong supporter of the CLTWI, serving on the board for several different stretches of time, including the years leading up to and following purchase of the Waldron Commons. Now serving as the Chair and Newsletter coordinator, Rebecca has been reviewing CLTWI archives to be reminded of all that's happened over the organization's history, with a goal to keep the institutional memory going forward. Working with so many different board

(Continued, next page)

Get to know more about your CLTWI Board members, *continued*:



Throughout the fall of 2019, **Litia Perta** had the strongest gut sense that it was time to pack up shop on her family's Los Angeles life and move northward to Waldron Island. It took some convincing but she and her partner and young child moved their lives to her

partner's family orchard in January, 2020. At that time, she had no idea about the sub-area plan, the land trust, or any of the other organizational structures that nourish this place's roots—her steep learning curve has been its own deep and joyful education.

She has never lived with trees as neighbors or the tides as the day's timekeepers, and from her vantage point now, she doesn't know how she made it so long in cities. Her child is now a proud student at the Waldron Island School, and she serves on both the CLTWI Board as well as on the School's Site Council. In both capacities, she is committed to supporting an ever more egalitarian and thriving year-round community that sees connection to one another and to the land as integral to both community and individual wellbeing. When she is not volunteering, she is a writer and a creative consultant to artists, writers, and scholars around the world.

Tony Scruton said, "I have lived on Waldron for 60 years. The first 40 were as a renter or caretaker. We purchased a leasehold in 2001. We built a home and developed a boatyard in support of the mailboat.



"The rise in land prices makes it very difficult for lower income people to get a foothold on Waldron. Leaseholds with CLT are one method of pushing back against rising land prices, where only the well-off own Waldron land. A healthy balance of full and part-time residents makes this a community we all value. Part-time summer homes alone do not make a community. The CLT is small but persistent in its support of land access for lower income Waldron residents. In the face of gentrification and the lack of capital, the CLT's future is uncertain. But we persist."



Carol Sudtelgte and Daniel Rouse

CLTWI Welcomes New Members

By Chris Rogers

We welcome new CLTWI members Carol Sudtelgte and Daniel Rouse, who are making their new home up on the mountain.

Carol and Daniel recently moved to Waldron Island from Philadelphia where they raised two sons and had professional work as a certified nurse-midwife (Carol) and an elementary school teacher at the Germantown Friends School (Daniel).

In addition to wanting to be closer to one of their sons who resides with his young family in Seattle, when asked "Why Waldron?," Daniel shared their desire to move to a rural place where people worked hard and neighborly support was a shared community value. Daniel and Carol have already become active members of our community, sharing what they know and learning from others. Carol has joined the Waldron Medical Brigade and Daniel was recently elected to the Waldron School Site Council.

And of course, they are spending a lot of time advancing their homestead, restoring an older home, planting a garden and vineyard, and getting their systems up and running.



The Creation of the Community Land Trust of Waldron Island

By Bob Gamble and Winnie Adams, with Nickie McDonald



By the spring of 1990, Point Hammond farm, also known as Mittlestad's, had been on the real estate market for several years. The Waldron community was concerned about what would happen to that large parcel. They wondered who might purchase it and what they might do with it.

Microsoft co-founders and business magnates Bill Gates and Paul Allen flew out with their realtor, Steve Hopkins, who had lived on Waldron previously. Steve heard them talking about how they might be able to get from Seattle to their Waldron property in under an hour in their boats. Steve, much to his credit, commented to his clients that they might be happier somewhere else and steered them away from the Point

Hammond property. Several years later they each ended up buying separate large parcels, one on Lopez and one on Shaw.

This incident got Waldron folks talking about the potential downsides of a wealthy person not in sync with Waldron values purchasing the 165-acre Point Hammond property. Waldron resident Cerek Dancing took the lead and did a large amount of research, background work, and writing to present to the Waldron community the idea of forming a 501(c)3 following the guidelines of the National Community Land Trust principles. He convinced Waldron folks that establishing such a tax-deductible entity would place the community in a position to help in the preservation of part of the Point Hammond property. The CLTWI would not exist without the hard work and perseverance of Cerek Dancing, the participation of all those who have served on the Board in the ensuing years, and the support of others who have contributed in many ways, ongoing.

By early 1992, the Community Land Trust of Waldron Island signed Articles of Incorporation as a Washington nonprofit and in February 1993 the CLTWI became an official entity registered with the federal government as a 501(c)3. The first Board of Trustees of the CLTWI made a decision to contact the Mittlestad estate about purchasing Point Hammond in order to preserve that property, and in the following year the community raised \$15,000 toward that end.

As it turned out, the perfect buyer for Point Hammond showed up. In February of 1994 Seattle investment banker, civic leader, and historian Brooks Ragen and his wife Susie purchased the entire parcel and ended up preserving it as a working farm, donating portions as a conservation easement to the San Juan Preservation Trust, and has been providing affordable access to the land for farming ever since.

What was known as Baatz Field, a 40-acre parcel, then came on the market. Through a simple land division, 20 acres were bought by Janice Lyons and Jannick von Rosenvinge and 20 acres by Bob Gamble and Winnie Adams. Bob Gamble had been on the board of the community land trust on Orcas Island (OPAL) for several years. Because of his involvement with OPAL, one of the values Bob came to appreciate was the principal of year-round occupancy, which supports a stronger community. Following this goal, Bob and Winnie sold 10 of their acres through the CLTWI to become leasehold property.

The owners of the first CLTWI leasehold were David and Julian Edelman in 1995. The leasehold agreement stipulated that the Edelmanns provide the purchase price and accept restrictions on resale value, house size, and year-round occupancy. They moved on to the property and built a small home. After the Edelmanns moved off the island in 1999, the leasehold transferred to Tony and Josie Scruton, who live there now with a 99-year inheritable lease.

The CLTWI has since purchased two more parcels, one near Mail Bay with leaseholders Zane and Nina Hutcheson and one near the cemetery known as the Commons. The Commons houses the emergency equipment shelter and pizza oven, provides a community gathering space, and remains available for other potential community uses as they arise, including affordable housing.

Winnie said, "Having an organization that can own a piece of property has already proven its value. The Commons creates a 'gravitational' effect by pulling us together and giving us a place to hold our gatherings. The CLTWI supports shaping our neighborhood by looking at the long view, at the differences between part-time residency vs full-time and how that involvement affects the community. Over time, continuity seems to be a feature that strengthens." *[Map: Thomas Metsker, SJ County, 1961, via historicmaps.com]*



L-R: Potter Betsy Sharp with some of her wares; Donna Adams with weaver Margaret Thorson; the Michael Ludwig Blues Band with Michael Ludwig on guitar, Tom Fuhrmann on keys, Jesse Hagopian on harp, and Tony Scruton on bass (photo of band by Kathy Moles Gustafson)

2022 Craft Faire and Pizza Feed Brings Community Together

by Nickie McDonald

The 2022 Craft Faire and Pizza Feed was a tremendous success. There were many great scenes: a happy crowd of Waldron folks munching on their pizzas while talking with neighbors and the soundtrack of the '60s and '70s playing in the background. Others meandering through the crafts tables circling the maple tree.

Then there were the pizza makers, heads down, sweating over the glass table. Secret ingredient. Barry shuffling pizzas in and out of the hot oven. Pleasant servers interacting with the customers. Stalwart Rita at the cashier's table. And behind the scenes, the folks who pitched in to set up and clean up. Dough makers who labored in their own kitchens and delivered their overflowing bowls of dough. Craft makers who spent countless hours perfecting their crafts.

Waldron folks lingered, not wanting to leave the Commons. That's a sign of a successful event. Folks were happy to see each other and visit in a very pleasant setting. It was a lovely day.

And it was a profitable day. Vendors' 10% donation to the CLTWI was \$449.00. Income from the food sales minus expenses was \$1,444.50 for a total income to the CLTWI of \$1,893.50. A great day, thanks to the efforts of all who contributed and participated.



Calling all creatives!

For any of you who enjoy taking up a drawing pen on a long winter's night, CLTWI wants to make some baseball caps and maybe tees and ... maybe more (aka mystery swag)!

We are inviting all Waldron doodlers, designers, dreamers, and big-thinkers to imagine a simple line drawing (think of the embroidery on a baseball cap) that evokes Waldron Island and the community land trust goals/values of communally owned property, housing justice, and land stewardship. The CLTWI

name should be included somewhere as an acronym or if you like to play with letters rather than lines, we are open to a letter-based design as well.

We look forward to publishing what we receive in the next newsletter and we hope to find a design or pair of designs that can work for CLTWI stuff. Questions can be directed to Board member Litia Perta. Please submit drawings by April 1, 2023 to Litia or to waldronlandtrust@gmail.com

Annual Meeting Features Poet Laureate Rena Priest



Rena Priest reading her poetry at Annual Meeting

CLTWI had the great honor this past year of welcoming member of the Lhaq'temish or Lummi nation and Washington State's poet laureate Rena Priest to the island for a reading and talk in August, 2022. Board member Litia Perta gave a brief introduction that began with Rena Priest's own words:

"measure wealth by how well you enjoy the hours" and

"don't mistake leisure for laziness/this gratitude is rigorous"

The following is a brief excerpt from the introduction and three poems that Rena shared with us that sunny day in August.

By Litia Perta

I have been living these last few weeks with what it means to introduce Rena Priest today. It has lived as a question rattling around, clack-tapping rhythms in my hollows. And I have been sitting with the roots of the word: *introduce*. It comes from the Latin *ducere* which means to lead, as in to lead in to a

group or situation. And I have struggled with a feeling of misinformation, like somehow we got the order wrong.

Because the more I have become immersed in the poetry Rena Priest is giving this world, the more certain I am that it is she who is doing the leading in. She is opening pathways that, if taken, may lead us towards more honest tellings of settler pasts, towards a deeper presence, and so into futures more connected to the awe-inspiring fact of being alive, engaged in every moment with the imperiled beauty of this earth.

Introductions also reveal something about what is valued by a community: what we choose to say about one another shows what we think is important. So I will come eventually to the more familiar and list a small selection of the many accolades and awards she has honored by receiving them, but I want first to mention some of what her words have introduced me to these last many weeks of reading her from cover to cover and going down one YouTube wormhole after another, listening to her talks.

There is a dance of humor and delight at the edges of every poem and story I have heard her read or tell. Her words teach the relation of rivers to the Milky Way; they delight in the fact of salmonberries; they note the inextricable ways that in her tradition use and beauty are intertwined; they muse over the relationship of a snowflake to a sestina, a villain to a villanelle; her poems honor the trees, the fish, and circles. She writes:

"let the song hold you rapt/nature loves a circle"

Her words honor: goosebumps and song; prayer and the way to treat the animals. They play in whether Jesus or Salmon are the more powerful or more miraculous, and they delight that the age of a salmon can be counted by the tiny rings on each of a salmon's many scales. They take joy in telling why the cedar bough wreaths are placed on canoes for the journey, and they regard the soul in everything. Her words express a fierce critique, rooted in love, of all that has separated us from knowing more profoundly the value of being alive, and of being knit in with this earth.

Of these islands we settlers have the privilege of inhabiting, she writes:

"I have heard it said that half-histories are half-truths and half-truths are lies.

Let me tell it to you whole:
This used to be a garden."

Poet Laureate Rena Priest Reads Her Poetry at Annual Meeting



Rena Priest signing books in August; Anore Jones at right

Songs on the Salmon Scale

A salmon is a song sung in rounds,
a series of concentric circles
like a raindrop in the sea,
rippling out and returning.

A series of concentric circles,
a chorus and a verse
rippling out and returning
in a shining body of treasure.

A chorus and a verse,
a hero, home from adventure
in a shining body of treasure
bearing gifts from the deep.

a hero home from adventure
like a raindrop on the sea
bearing gifts from the deep,
a salmon is a song sung in rounds.

Nail Salon

The colors shimmer
in rows along the walls,
like springtime on shrooms.
A conundrum conjuring variety,
glistening like an impossible city.
Choice is always a factor
in happiness.
The more choices we're given,
the greater our capacity
for dissatisfaction.
It's okay. There's always red,
but then, there they stand
a selection sorted aside; sordid
in their suggestion. "Snake's tongue!"
Granny used to call painted nails.
"Poesis!" I say. The name
to make the shade.
"Fishnet Stockings," red.
"Freaky Friday Night," red.
"Gypsy Girl," red.
"Vodka and Caviar," red.
"Drive Church Ladies Insane
With Envy," red.
"Cat Fight," red.
"Will Somebody Please Pay
Attention to ME?!" red.
All this and still, I can't find
a shade to fit the statement that
I want to make:
"This Predatory, Capitalist, Patriarchy
Is Killing Me and I'm Trying
To Learn to Like It." Why
have I never seen that shade in here before?
Probably, the labels are too small
so they call it, "Girl,
Just Gamboge and Forget It."



Beach Fire

Measure wealth by how well you enjoy the hours fluttering by in praise of sunshine and the ocean breeze, whispering love songs across waves that kiss the beach, This wealth takes work, and absolutely no work at all.

Fluttering by in praise of sunshine and the ocean breeze, don't mistake leisure for laziness. This gratitude is rigorous. This wealth takes work, and absolutely no work at all. This gift of a moment, to be alive, to feel at peace ...

don't mistake leisure for laziness. This gratitude is rigorous. To be filled up and satisfied by a day at the beach, this gift of a moment, to be alive, to feel at peace, it means your heart-fire flames a lovely heat,

to be filled up and satisfied by a day at the beach. You could toast marshmallows by that warmth, it means your heart-fire flames a lovely heat, the glowing embers, a boundless source of power.

you could toast marshmallows by that warmth, whispering love songs across waves that kiss the beach, the glowing embers, a boundless source of power. Measure wealth by how well you enjoy the hours.

—Rena Priest



Waldron Island Brigade furthers training, responds to multiple emergencies

by Vickie Heater

The Waldron Island Brigade has had a busy year and we will be sending out a newsletter early this year with news and schedules for training and practice.

The Brigade responded to more than a dozen medical emergencies in 2022, aiding and transporting neighbors on-island to medical care with Airlift NW, Lifeflight, and San Juan Island EMS. We had training in wildland fire response and CPR and helped set up vaccine clinics. We learned about wildland fire behavior and prevention from DNR and other professionals.

It's been a year of learning skills and gaining confidence. We are grateful for the many partners who work with us now and look forward to more neighbors joining us in the new year.



Left: Kyle Dodd, wildland fire trainer, explains tactics during training on Waldron last summer; Right: Nina Hutcheson, EMT, confers with emergency personnel during transport of patient to Airlift NW helicopter.

January 2023

CLTWI Membership & Contributions

—Memberships are per person—

Renew \$15 Join \$25 \$12/mo X 1 year

\$50 Contribution \$100 Contribution

\$250 Contribution \$500 Contribution

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Community Land Trust of Waldron Island

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Our Mission:

The mission of the Community Land Trust of Waldron Island is to be a resource for and provide access to affordable homes and land for Waldron residents while cultivating economic sustainability and nurturing land stewardship, thus enriching the entire community.

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