

# SALT SPRING ACCOMMODATIONS GROUP

FEBRUARY 2021 ISSUE

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## FAREWELL TO WINTER

Ready to welcome a new season next month? This winter has been a challenging one between the surprise snowstorms and the continuing pandemic. Luckily, winter should be on its way out in a matter of weeks, so hang in there! In the meantime, SSAG has got your latest updates for February in this issue.

***February marks the start of our Newsletter Sponsorship Program, starting with Spa by Lenice on Page 8.***

# SSAG UPDATES

## WEBSITE STATS

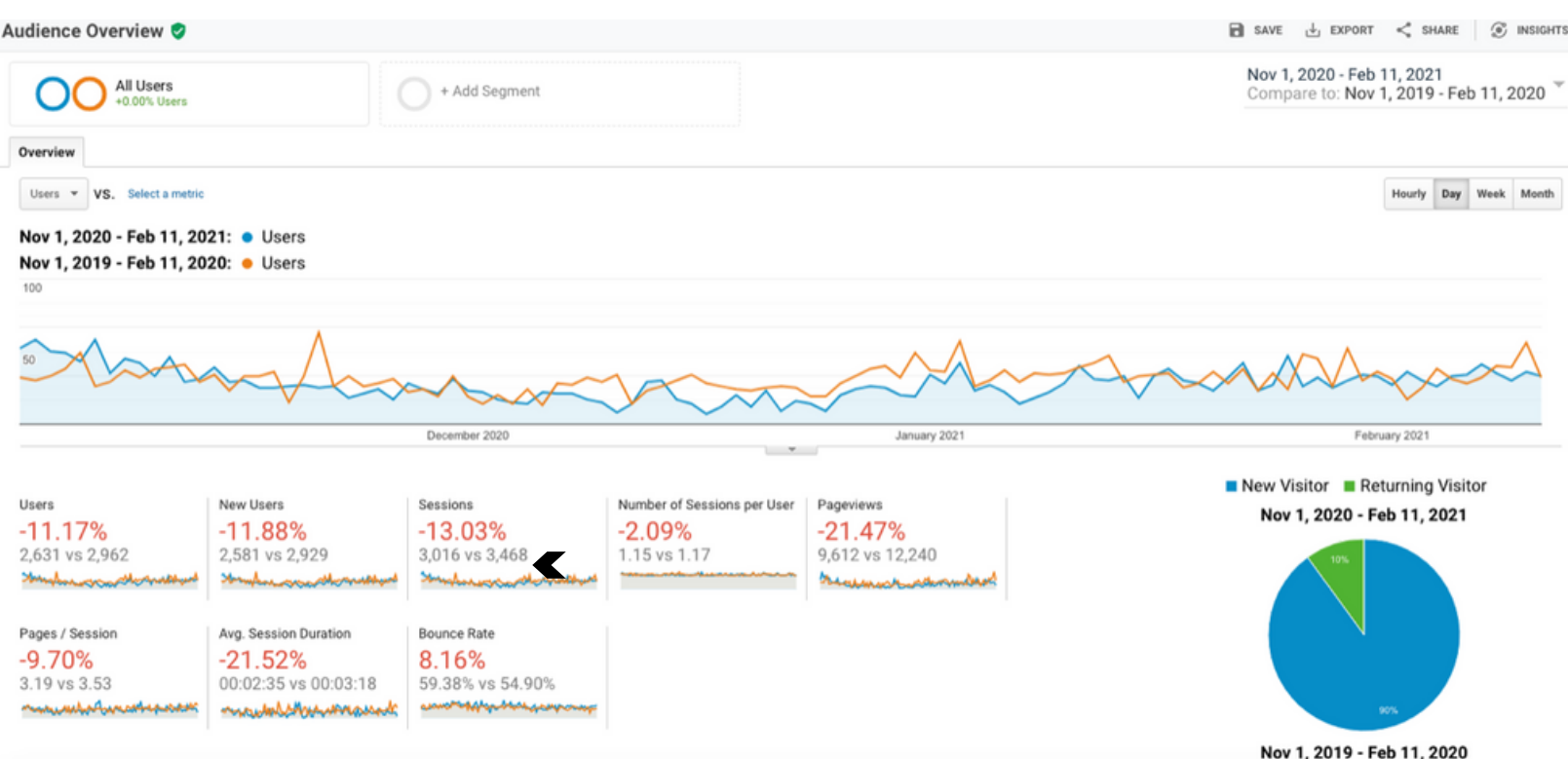
Device Category ?	Acquisition
	Users ? ↓
	11.17% ↓ 2,631 vs 2,962
desktop	
Nov 1, 2020 - Feb 11, 2021	1,701 (64.65%)
Nov 1, 2019 - Feb 11, 2020	1,930 (65.16%)
% Change	-11.87%
mobile	
Nov 1, 2020 - Feb 11, 2021	814 (30.94%)
Nov 1, 2019 - Feb 11, 2020	802 (27.08%)
% Change	1.50%
tablet	
Nov 1, 2020 - Feb 11, 2021	116 (4.41%)
Nov 1, 2019 - Feb 11, 2020	230 (7.77%)
% Change	-49.57%

### Traffic from Nov.1-Present

Numbers are actually slightly down on last year which is pretty good--given that last year, we were not in the Pandemic while we are still there this year. On the device stats, mobile again is the only one showing slight growth year on year in this quarter.

Note: The website will be down from February 25th-27th for maintenance.

### ➤ OVERVIEW



# SSAG NOTICES

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## BECOME A MEMBER OF SGITP

Don't forget to become a member of SGITP! It's free. Here is a [new link](#) to register.

## ISLANDS TRUST OPEN HOUSE

The Islands Trust Policy Statement Amendment Open House is on March 3. This is the final opportunity for public comment prior to the new policy drafting step. Register [here](#).



## SSAG BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

*This month, we're introducing Joe Seewald*

*Owner of The Curious Crow B & B*

Joe and his wife Nikki bought a house in Salt Spring Island in 2015. After a long and successful career with the Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Service, he retired with the rank of Deputy Chief. They moved to the island in 2016 and immediately began preparations to open a Bed & Breakfast.

The Curious Crow B&B opened its doors in April of 2017 and has been receiving guests ever since. Joe joined the board of directors for the Accommodations Group in 2018 and started helping out with membership at that time. More recently, Joe has taken on the responsibility of recording secretary at SSAG's meetings.

When Joe is not busy working on B&B concerns, he works at a few part-time jobs like many islanders. He is Deputy Coordinator for the island's emergency program and oversees the Pod program. Joe is also one of three Marriage Commissioners on island, and to round off his work portfolio, he does casual work for Hayward's Funeral Home. When Joe isn't working in some capacity, he enjoys tinkering, traveling with Nikki (in non-Covid times), and loves to best her at fishing on the odd occasion.



# SSAG NOTICES

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## THOUGHTS FROM THE BOARD

We wanted to bring to your attention the latest charm offensive put forth by the Islands Trust. Several notices about public meetings and discussions, initiatives, etc. have been circulating of late. To see a representative sampling, check the latest issue of the [Salt Spring Exchange Newsletter](#). A few of these are initiated by other constituencies to encourage the IT further in their current efforts.

Whether initiated by the Trust itself, or others, these kinds of political events are intended to drive the Trust, and certainly increase the likelihood that the Trust, with their political self-interest in mind, will consider the support to be a good justification for their poorly reasoned witch-hunts.

As one local island land use attorney told us this past week; Until a viable, and loud alternative constituency exists to counter these weak arguments, we (accommodation providers) will always be on the defensive. No amount of direct pleading to the Trust officers will likely change their ultimate votes, as they are merely measuring the decibel level of the various constituencies, not the rationality of their arguments. Of course, it's worth noting that the more rational and logical approach to dealing with available low-income housing barely seems to have a voice at present, or at a minimum, it doesn't seem to be being argued with any force or effect. It is SSAG's hope to begin to change this reality!

Otherwise, the result will be the continued vilification of accommodation providers. And of course, the net effect of these policies, while providing an easy scapegoat, will NEVER generate a significant change in the availability of affordable housing. It's worth noting that the 2% MRDT tax that we all pay on bookings as accommodation providers provide a source of revenue which among other uses, is intended to support new low-income housing. Short of this revenue-generating approach, no amount of harassment and closures of local tourist accommodation providers of any stripe (including resident STVRs) will generate a meaningful change in the availability of low-income housing. What it will accomplish instead, is the decimation of the only real industry Salt Spring has, tourism, and thus likely greatly reduce the availability of jobs for low-income wage earners. Thus, the Trust's current approach is actually a "lose-lose". Let's instead (all together) advocate for a "win-win" result!

**We ask that you consider joining the online Town Hall meeting on March 3, 2021. [Register here.](#)**

# SSAG NOTICES

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## **BYLAW ENFORCEMENT IS BACK ON THE AGENDA**

It seems that after a hiatus during the pandemic (which is still happening !!) the Islands Trust is once again pursuing accommodation providers that they perceive are not conforming to Bylaw #355. Letters have been sent out to a number of our members.

Although we can not provide legal or accounting advice we are here to help any of our members on this issue if they feel that they have been wrongfully targeted. The Trust has revised bylaw # 446 to include a list of fines for specific infractions, which gives them the ability to issue fines or refer them to adjudication.

In addition, there is a Trust document called: "Benda Brochure" which explains how the system is supposed to work. However, Bylaw #355 has not been revised and so the same grey areas remain. This makes it hard for members to know how to comply, especially given how the Trust Bylaw Officers interpret the bylaw.

On behalf of its members, SSAG is working with a leading law firm in Victoria specializing in land use to get clarification on these issues.

We will keep you posted on further developments. Please let us know if you have received a letter from the Island Trust in this regard.

Thank you,  
SSAG Board



# SSAG NOTICES

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## FAREWELL TO ELLIE THORBURN

*Salt Spring B & B operator 1990 - 2021*

Today we'd like to say farewell to one of our own, Ellie Thorburn. Ellie started "The Beach House" B & B in 1990, and has operated it for 30 years.

Sherri Irwin (Cedar Beach Resort) and Ellie started the first Salt Spring Accommodations Group in 1991.

Ellie says :

"I have always been a member of the Accommodations Group in the format that it existed at the time. It did reincarnate itself a few times. With SSAG my membership listing said I was a member since 2014, but maybe it should have said 1991!"

"The greatest benefit for me personally was the production of the Guest Information (Island Information) Books. I purchased enough copies to have one in each room and found them very helpful when assisting guests in planning their time on SSI. Guests often commented on how useful they were to them as well."

"We are moving to Parksville at the end of March. Our new owners will not be operating the B&B so we are shutting down Beach House Salt Spring."

It's the end of an era for Ellie. She says she will miss SSI and life on the beach, but we are sure she will settle down well on the big island.

Ellie has also been involved in many other volunteer activities, including being a member of the *BC Ferry Advisory Committee* for Salt Spring. She has been a loyal supporter of SSAG since founding the group 30 years ago and we will miss her support and energy.

We wish her all the very best in her "retirement " in Parksville!

# UPDATES

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## **SALT SPRING ADVENTURES CO.**

### *Under New Ownership*

Zoë Ward has recently taken over Salt Spring Adventures Co. from Yvonne Poirier. She is passionate about marine environments and delivering conservation education through outdoor adventure. Zoë grew up on the west coast and has a degree in marine biology and sustainability with a background in ecotourism; she is eager to share her love of our coastal ecosystems with a broad demographic of customers.

"I am excited to start this new chapter and take on the company that Yvonne has built so passionately over the years. I believe Salt Spring Adventures Co. has built a name for itself as a trusted adventure company on the island and I hope to maintain this reputation as well as put my own mark on the industry. I look forward to integrating into this beautiful and vibrant community, soaking up all that Salt Spring has to offer and facilitating lasting memories for visitors and locals alike. "



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## PAPER COVERS ROCK

Reminder: It's almost time for Paper Covers Rock, Salt Spring Island's Readers & Writers Festival! While the in-person events have been moved to October 2021, the festival is still kicking off in March with some online workshops. Check out some of the inaugural workshops [here](#).

### REGISTER NOW FOR ONLINE WORKSHOPS



**CHRIS HUMPHREYS**  
FANTASY WORLDS &  
HOW TO BUILD THEM

March 6, 10AM



**SONJA LARSEN**  
MEMOIR: FROM  
MEMORY TO MEANING

March 6, 2PM



**JOSEPH DANDURAND**  
STORYTELLING:  
SHARING OUR GIFT

March 6, 5PM



**MARGRIET RUURS**  
CHILDREN'S WRITING  
AND PUBLISHING

March 6 and 7, 12PM

PRESENTED BY



**Tickets**  
[www.papercoversrock.ca](http://www.papercoversrock.ca)  
**\$15**



# FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER SPONSOR

## SPA BY LENICE

*SSAG has started a new Sponsorship Program for our monthly newsletters. Our very first sponsor is Spa by Lenice.*

Retreat to this quiet and peaceful seaside Spaaah, where you will receive all the care and pampering you would expect. Spa By Lenice is located on a destination Island that caters to both Locals and visitors alike (women and men) who want stress relief and relaxation in a serene atmosphere.

It's an ideal place to gather with friends, celebrate life's milestones, reconnect with a loved one, or turn to as your very own destination for stress relief and self-renewal. It's an oasis dedicated to your health and well-being - with 4 treatment rooms for every reason there is to spaaah.

Whether you come to the spa to ensure that you always look your very best, or your visit is more about stress relief and survival in a busy world, Spa by Lenice is an ideal place to spend a few hours for self-renewal. With a coffee and juice bar and 4 treatment rooms, we provide comfort, convenience, and flexibility to cater to demanding schedules. Guests can be rejuvenated from head to toe.

**Spa by Lenice**  
Soothe Mind, Body and Soul

Manicures & Pedicures  
Gel Nail Extensions  
Tinting & Waxing

Massage & Body  
Facials  
Makeup

**Ask about our Island Escape Package!**

\* 5.5 hours of pure pampering \*  
\* includes full lunch \*

**É**  
ÉMINENCE  
HUNGARY

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