

Cobble Hill
Farmers
Institute



*SHAWNIGAN COBBLE HILL FARMERS INSTITUTE AND
AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY*

2020/21 Annual Report to the CVRD

Submitted by: Gerry Giles, Secretary
Date: July 31, 2020

As this report is being written, we are in the midst of a global pandemic known as Covid19. This virus has adversely impacted the lives of individuals as well as the bottom line of businesses and organizations including the many not-for-profit societies in our community. The Shawnigan Cobble Hill Farmers Institute and Agricultural Society (Farmers Institute) is no exception to the effect this wide-ranging disease has had on the valley, the province, the country and the world.

Since March of 2020, all fundraising and community events normally hosted by the Farmers Institute have been cancelled. To comply with the orders issued by Dr. Bonnie Henry, the Provincial Health Officer, all building rentals have also been cancelled. The rental situation along with its influence on the Farmers Institute's operating budget is reviewed monthly by the Directors of the organization.

With all fundraising activities and building rentals on hold, now more than ever, the annual grant provided by Cobble Hill taxpayers, through the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), is paramount to the Farmers Institute's continued existence.

In order to present some background to the annual grant provided to the Farmers Institute the following information is offered. In November of 1985, a referendum was held during the Cobble Hill civic elections to gauge taxpayers support for providing an annual grant to the Farmers Institute. In that referendum, Cobble Hill residents voted 'yes' by over 70 per cent thereby giving permission for an annual grant to go toward the maintenance and operation of the Cobble Hill Hall. Every year the funds provided by Cobble Hill taxpayers have been used to cover annual insurance costs with any remaining funds going toward the maintenance of the facility.

As a result of the pandemic, this year the funds provided by Cobble Hill taxpayers have become vital to the continuation of a society that has existed for 106 years.

We are grateful to the citizens of Cobble Hill for this annual grant. As in past years, this year's funds will pay the annual insurance costs as well as help this volunteer organization to maintain and operate the Cobble Hill Hall, the Youth Hall, the Stu Armour Hall along with the various buildings situated on the approximate 6 acres of land that comprise the Farmers Institute's holdings, which are located in the heart of the Cobble Hill Village.

This annual funding normally enables our volunteer members to plan and carry out annual activities that enrich the lives of many in the South Cowichan area. As previously mentioned, most of the events held by the Farmers Institute, including hall rentals, have been cancelled. However, one of our sponsored events has adapted to the challenges presented by the pandemic and it is still operating and gaining support.

1. **South Cowichan Seniors** - Over the past several years, more than 150 Seniors from across the valley have gathered in the Cobble Hill Hall on the second and fourth Mondays of each month to enjoy the Seniors luncheons

held there. With the onset of Covid19 these inside events were cancelled in March and replaced with a takeout meal service. The meals are made by 'FoodSafe' volunteers. Meals are designed to be satisfying and nutritious.

Meals are prepared and packaged on Monday and either cooled or frozen for pick up or delivery on Tuesday. This group has also made meals for the Cowichan Green Community and the Warmland House in Duncan. The Farmers Institute sponsors South Cowichan Seniors by providing free use of the Cobble Hill Hall with its commercial kitchen.

NORMAL EVENTS CANCELLED FOR 2020

2. **Seedy Saturday** - Our annual seed and garden show along with its seed exchange component brings people together to buy, sell and exchange seeds. The focus is on heirloom varieties. This event also provides an opportunity to learn about many aspects of gardening from the experts in attendance. In 2019 well over 2,500 people attend our expanded Seedy Saturday event held in the Cobble Hill and the Stu Armour Halls.
3. **Easter Egg Hunt** - The first 'hunt' was held in 2011 and it has grown in popularity since then. The hunt focuses on providing younger children with a well protected venue for their event while also creating a more challenging environment for older ones. Over 100 children attended our 2019 event, which is without question the best Easter Egg Hunt in the Valley.

MODIFIED EVENTS FOR 2020

4. **Cobble Hill Fair** - Although the traditional 111th Cobble Hill Fair is being replaced this year by a Virtual Fair, we are hopeful this cornerstone event will take place as usual next year. 2021 will mark the 112th year of this wonderful reminder of Cobble Hill's agricultural past while at the same time noting, promoting and celebrating the future of community and of agriculture in our area.

Ours is an old fashioned country Fair. It embraces everything from farm animals to scarecrow building along with wine making to vegetable and flower exhibits. There are multiple exhibitors and competitors representing many aspects of community life in South Cowichan: bee keeping, history, quilting and the best cake baked by a man to name but a few. Our Fair was attended by approximately 6,000 people in 2019 and displays in our domestic science and photography sections were at an all time high. Every year we try to change the Fair and add something new to keep it refreshed and exciting for Fair goers.

Our Fair brings people from all walks of life together to celebrate the importance of agriculture and community. Our 2021 Fair will be held on

Saturday, August 28th and we are hopeful it will return as another of the terrific family events being held in the South Cowichan area.

UNKNOWN AT THIS TIME

5. **Remembrance Day Ceremonies** - On this day, the hall is usually filled to capacity for the passing of the torch ceremony while more than 2,000 people wait outside for the Cenotaph ceremony. Time will tell whether this event can be held as usual or whether it will be modified to be held outside only.
6. **Christmas and Spring Variety Shows** - Although we are hopeful these concerts can be held, at this point it seems unlikely. These variety shows are usually held in the spring and in late November or early December. They are open to the community in exchange for a donation of food or cash for the CMS Food Bank. Over the years these events have proved to be wonderful community gatherings.

All Farmers Institute sponsored events are organized and staffed by very committed volunteers who generously give their time and energy to our community. We are fortunate to live in an area where volunteerism plays such a huge role in our daily lives.

Funds granted to Farmers Institute by Cobble Hill (Area 'C') taxpayers are gratefully acknowledged as being crucial to the repair, maintenance and operation of the Shawnigan Cobble Hill Farmers Institute and Agricultural Society facilities.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerry Giles". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G' and 'G'.

Gerry Giles, Secretary

**Shawnigan Cobble Hill Farmers Institute
Covid Budget to June 30, 2021**

Bank

Chequing Bank Account	9,187.50	
Contingency Fund - Premium Savings	7,819.20	
Reserve for Security Lease	7,003.16	
Duncan Dabber Reserve	6,000.00	
Expected Profit from Virtual Fair	6,000.00	
Expected CVRD Grant in February	10,000.00	
	<u>46,009.86</u>	

Expenses

Cleaning	1,000.00	
Duncan Dabber Electrical	6,000.00	
Insurance	16,200.00	
Repairs & Maintenance - Grounds	250.00	
Repairs & Maintenance - Bldgs	1,000.00	For Emergencies only
Telephone & Security	7,970.52	
Hydro - Main Hall	5,000.00	
Hydro - Youth and Stu Armour	3,500.00	
Heating and Cooking Fuel	800.00	
Water	535.00	
Garbage Disposal	560.00	
Bank Charges	500.00	
Postage	100.00	
Website Expenses	2,500.00	
	<u>45,915.52</u>	

Profit 94.34