

# GBCF Annual Report 2015/2016

Submitted by the GBCF Directors September 14, 2016

This has been a full and exciting year for the GERTIE bus. Prior to the successful February referendum we applied for and received charitable status. After the referendum we spent considerable time developing the organization to meet the demands required to operate a public transit system as we prepared for the transition of the service from the Island Futures Society. Key was a community visioning session held in April that gave us a road forward endorsed by community members. Preparing to operate GERTIE also included getting a National Safety Certificate, approval from the Passenger Transportation licensing Branch and working with the RDN to finalize an MOU that reflected the needs of Gabriolans to manage their public transit system. Anne Drozd and Steve Struthers worked with Bob McKechnie and Marilyn Campbell from Island Futures Society to ensure a smooth transition for GERTIE.

May 1, 2016 GCBF became the organization responsible for operating GERTIE. Trevor Gear was hired as the coordinator and started at the beginning of May. We then hired 8 drivers in the month of May to begin driving, as paid drivers for June 1. Our summer service has been very successful, in particular the midday runs as residents and tourists alike hop on Gertie to see the island as well as meet friends for lunch, do their shopping and get to and from work. We also developed a brochure featuring self guided tours of Gabriola using Gertie that was well received. We've had many buses full of boaters coming from Silva Bay to the Village to shop and enjoy Gabriola's restaurants and cafes. One person told us her bus trip to work was the highlight of her day. The enthusiasm and friendliness of our drivers, both paid and volunteer, has earned numerous kudos for GERTIE.

Going forward we are focused on improving our fleet with newer busses that require fewer repairs. We will continue to emphasize reducing carbon emissions through fuel efficiency, use of waste vegetable oil, and investigating electric vehicles. We will also continue to work with other community groups, providing rides to the Salmon Barbeque, rides home from Galltt's island long walk, and rides around the island hearing about its history. We are working towards schedules in formats and availability that make them easy to understand and use, and we continue to work towards keeping within the budget, continued engagement of community members, and continued celebration of passengers as well as those who dedicate their time and effort in making GERTIE the best community bus system in the world.