

Directors' Report, AGM September 20, 2018

Acquisition of the second newer bus

After a major fund-raising campaign last October called *30 for Gertie*, we had sufficient money to purchase our second newer bus. In November, we purchased the Chevy subsequently named Jay D in memory of Jay Dearman. GERTIE was awarded an Infrastructure Grant in April 2017 of \$77,600 to upgrade our bus fleet. This amount represents 1/3 federal funds and 1/3 provincial funds but it must be matched by 1/3 GERTIE funds (\$38,800) for a grand total of \$116,400. We were given permission to use the remaining funds to purchase a third bus which we hope to do soon. Using the newer buses has significantly reduced our maintenance and repair costs. As a result, we have been able to increase our service, for instance, running the Saturday afternoon runs all year round. Three buses, one of the Sprinters, Blanche and Gus, have been sold.

Gabriola Auxiliary for Island Health Care Society grant

We received a grant last fall from the GHCA of \$2000 to subsidize bus travel for PHC clients. Approximately 18 to 20 PHC clients have been issued with bus passes which they use regularly.

Riders Guides

Riders guides are printed twice yearly: one printing for fall/winter (October until mid-May) and one for late spring/summer (May until October). We get 1500 printed for fall/winter and 2,000 printed for spring/summer. Martin Velsen pays for the colour and our other sponsors pay \$100 each for ads in the riders guides. Susan Yates distributes the guides to 32 locations for spring/summer and 25 locations for fall/winter.

VLS donation and evening runs

The 1% of July sales from Village Liquor Store amounted to \$1350.00 – a very timely amount that helped to offset the cost of running the Friday/Saturday evening route to Silva Bay and around the island, in order to get boaters and other south-end visitors to the restaurants and commercial outlets in the village, from May to the end of September.

Bus cleaning

Monique Morley has joined the GERTIE team this summer. She has been cleaning the interior of the buses on a weekly basis, with Scott Colbourne as her job coach. They prepare a plan for each two-hour shift together, choose the appropriate supplies, and then Monique works independently until the buses are clean and ready for their next trip.

Monique says she loves the job and she especially likes getting waves from GERTIE drivers as she walks her dogs because she knows that bus is clean.

Visit by Minister Trevena

In May of this year we had a visit from the Minister of Transportation, Claire Trevena, together with Doug Routley, our MLA. They had heard positive reports of GERTIE and wanted to go for a ride and hear more about how GERTIE operates. We provided an overview of how GERTIE came into being and how it continues to grow and support the needs of Gabriola. We also advocated for changes to the regulatory system for community buses as well as support for a province wide forum.

Nanaimo Foundation Grant : A New Home for GERTIE

We have been fortunate to have a home on the Gabriola Commons. The office space has served us well for the past five years. However, changes in our future as well as proposed changes to the Commons space we are in has led to our plan for a portable office. We recently received \$3000 from the Nanaimo Foundation, which will go towards building that office.

Technological developments

There are three areas where we have been working on technological supports, as follows:

1. Thanks to George Wu, GERTIE is now part of the Google Transit system, so anyone is able to use Google maps to find out how and when they can get from one point to another on Gabriola using public transit.
2. Thanks to Stephen McCarthy, anyone can now find out where the Gertie bus is and how long it will take to get to a specific stop (although this is only really effective when the bus is on the road). The app is available at <https://wheresgertie.ca> and can be used on a computer, tablet or smart phone. It is now (effective Sept. 22nd) ready to be released to the public.
3. George Wu is currently working on a smart-phone app for the drivers' phones that will simplify the process of counting passengers (and dogs and bikes). The app will know where the bus is and will assign embarking and disembarking passengers to a specific stopping point.

Survey 2018 results and ridership

Since it had been some time since we last conducted a survey, we ran an electronic survey from mid-August to mid-September. Approximately 100 people responded, mainly full-time residents of Gabriola. Many of the respondents used Gertie rarely or never. The main reason given was the timing of the bus runs. When asked about preferences for increased bus service, the majority wanted mid-day runs on Wednesday all year round, closely followed by mid-day runs on Friday all year round. Almost as many wanted mid-day service on Monday and just slightly fewer wanted service on Sunday.

GERTIE and community participation

There is a network of people that make GERTIE what it is.

Buses need maintenance and most of this work is done by Doug Robertson of Robertson Mobile Engine Works and Ray and Sean at Gabriola Automotive. They all offer prompt and flexible service and lots of advice.

All the drivers, who are very personable, know many of their passengers by name and the passengers know theirs.

Our riders who give the coordinator lots of positive feedback. Some riders have moved to Gabriola because of our bus service; others have sold their cars because they prefer to use the bus. Gertie functions as an informal town square where visitors, members of the community and drivers all connect with each other.