

Reviews and articles about *SHALE*

First issue by Kit Szanto:

<http://www.soudernews.com/content/archives/2001-02-02/SHALE.htm>

[SHALE by Caitlin Fullerton](#), *Gabriola SOUNDER*, July 2003

[SHALE by Nick Doe](#), *Gabriola SOUNDER*, July 2008

SHALE by Caitlin Fullerton, *Gabriola SOUNDER*, p.12, July 3, 2003

When I think of Manhattan Island, for some reason Gabriola Island doesn't come to mind. But in the sixth issue of *SHALE*, Journal of the Gabriola Historical & Museum Society, there's more humour than logic in drawing comparisons between the two islands.

According to *SHALE*, which has about 120 subscribers worldwide, "the islands (Manhattan and Gabriola) are surprisingly similar in size and shape". But really, how many islands are perfect circles?

If readers rely on comic relief and not common sense in this Big Apple to little oranges comparison, then they'll laugh and learn their way through several interesting facts, such as: Manhattan has more raccoons whereas Gabriola has more deer; and Manhattan has 2700 intersections with traffic lights whereas Gabriola has only one. But once readers get past the tale-of-two-islands bit, which covers everything from population to diversity to number of vehicles and writers per capita, soon enough that timeless textbook-style clouds any previous clarity.

From here the authors of *SHALE* take readers—not including mathematicians, physicists, geologists, and historians—on a whirlwind tour of gargantuan words: centripetal, centrifugal, cephalopods, and abecedarian, are the few that come to mind and quickly shoot out the other ear. The phrase "they did their homework" more than applies to this journal of local and natural history, which also skims through such subjects as geology, climatology, oceanography, and math and science.

True, *SHALE* readers might agree with the authors that the square root of two is in fact irrational and that the explanation is indeed quite simple. However, if the footnoted explanation isn't so simple, then proceed to modestly scoff and skip to the collection of short stories recorded and edited by the deceased BC journalist Beryl Cryer who published some 70 stories in Victoria's newspaper, the Daily Colonist. These appetizer-sized stories follow the tales of native elders, of which the majority are female, living in what today form the communities of Snuneymux, Chemainus, Halalt, Lyakson, Penelakut, and Cowichan. The small selection of stories included in *SHALE* stress the significance of oral tradition within a culture and time that didn't depend on electricity to communicate.

Probably the most fascinating part of the sixth *SHALE* (sounds like the next Indiana Jones flick) is the section on tides entitled, "Two tides a day?" When the reading gets heavy, there are plenty of diagrams. What's more, Nick Doe, the author of this section and editor of *SHALE*, reveals a

great weight-loss technique that neither cabbage soup nor grapefruit diets can challenge. Here's a hint: walk to the highest point of the island. Gravity will do the rest.

Also included, *SHALE* takes the reader back 60 years to the beginnings of Page's Marina (a map would have been great to more clearly illustrate the web of family names and street names). The section "Reviews and reports" reads like Harper's Magazine not an easy read but interesting nevertheless. And the part entitled, "Notes" helps clear and then quickly add some confusion to what the author himself questions, "So what's all this to do with *SHALE*?"

Eventually, the eyes blur and the sentence you've been reading over and over again melts into the previous description of the gravitational pull of the sun and moon. At this point, it may be wise to flip back to the beginning to re-read the factual fragments on Gabriola and its new-found sister island, Manhattan.

Reader's tip: pace yourself, in no time you'll be surprised to spout words of gargantuan size.

Copies of *SHALE* are available at the Gabriola Museum, Gabriola Library, Women's Institute, and Page's Resort & Marina. Single copies are \$6 (incl GST), four copies are \$20 (incl. GST) with back issues available for purchase at select locations.

[Views expressed about *SHALE* are those of the reporter and not necessarily those of the *Gabriola Sounder*]

SHALE by Nick Doe, *Gabriola SOUNDER*, p.18, July 7, 2008

Besides running the museum and archives, the Gabriola Historical and Museum Society also publishes a journal called *SHALE*. *SHALE* usually runs to more than forty pages, and is packed with articles by Gabriolans about all aspects of Gabriola's past, including the history of the settlers and the oral history and archaeological record of the Snuneymuxw, particularly their petroglyphs. It also carries articles on a wide range of other topics including the island's geology, groundwater, natural history, Spanish history, industrial past, island institutions, the cold weather, and early cartography. It is in effect a "work in progress" on the latest results of on-going research, lightened with short stories, a good sense of humour, and puzzlers like why mirrors reverse left-right but not up-down. Very little in *SHALE* has been published elsewhere. Examples are articles on the origin of Gabriola's name (no, it's not Seagull Island), what causes holes in sandstone (no, it's not the wind and the waves), the whereabouts of *Puerto del Descanso* (no, it's not Descanso Bay), and why many of the early settlers came here (no, it was not always to become farmers). Not bad for a \$20 subscription for four issues. The website is www.gabriolamuseum.org/shale.html
