



THE CAPITAL AND VANCOUVER ISLAND

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Glitch blamed after B.C. Ferries books customers on sailings that didn't exist

PEDRO ARRAIS
Times Colonist

A computer glitch has been blamed after some B.C. Ferries customers who had reserved sailings on a busy holiday Monday arrived to find their scheduled sailing did not exist. Ferry customers on routes from Tsawwassen, Pender Island and Salt Spring Island were affected.

Judith Barnett has travelled frequently between Salt Spring Island and the mainland for the last eight years. Knowing how busy it gets in the summer, she always reserves in advance. On Monday morning, she arrived at the Tsawwassen ferry terminal almost an hour and a half early for her 9:10 a.m. ferry, only to be told that there was no boat. "It was just an unbelievable situation, as I got a confirmation

of my reservation when I booked and even received a generic email reminding me of my sailing on Friday," said Barnett, 63. "I was not the only person either, with a long line of people — dogs, children and holidaymakers — in the same situation." The time of departure when she made the booking — 9:10 a.m. — was odd, but she didn't think much of it because the ferry corporation regularly puts on extra

sailings in the summer to meet demand. B.C. Ferries called the incident a scheduling error. "Unfortunately, some sailings were incorrectly built in our system for the holiday Monday, and some customers booked for sailings that were not actually scheduled," the corporation said in a statement. Barnett ended up having to take a roundabout route — first

travelling to Swartz Bay and then transferring to a ferry bound for Fulford Harbour on Salt Spring, arriving just after 2 p.m., three hours later than she expected. She said some fellow travellers looked obviously agitated on Monday. B.C. Ferries said affected customers were provided with full refunds and put on regularly scheduled sailings. parrais@timescolonist.com

Our Place harvests bounty from rooftop garden

JEFF BELL
Times Colonist

A rooftop garden at Our Place is producing a ready supply fresh fruit and vegetables for the agency's clientele, including people who are homeless and suffering from addictions. Staff members at the Pandora Avenue facility, which provides daily meals for those in need, started the garden in May and have watched it expand to 65 planters, growing everything from lettuce to chard, strawberries, tomatoes and various herbs. "Some things grow a lot better up here than other things," said Our Place kitchen manager Brian Cox. "I'm just very excited about it. We've talked about it for years and it never happened."

Combined with food grown at its New Roads centre in View Royal and fruits and vegetables from donors, Our Place has enough in its gardens to reduce its produce budget by a third, Cox said. New Roads gives people a chance to improve their lives through gardening and other activities, said Grant McKenzie, Our Place director of communications.

New Roads resident Lee Morton, who has been there about four months, said gardening and learning about plants — as well as looking after chickens — has been therapeutic for him. "It's my recovery," he said. "When I'm out there gardening, it's hugely meditative for me." At Our Place, the rooftop garden is restricted to staff for safety reasons, although fencing could be added in the future, McKenzie said.

He said there have also been discussions about putting rooftop gardens on the tiny homes that provide shelter next to Royal Athletic Park, perhaps for flowers. Our Place manages the site, which features living spaces fashioned from shipping containers.



Our Place director of communications Grant McKenzie, left, and kitchen manager Brian Cox with the rooftop garden planters. ADRIAN LAM, TIMES COLONIST

"It would keep the containers cooler and also add greenery," he said. "It would benefit the residents. Also, I think whenever you're growing living things instead of having concrete it's a benefit for the community at large." Our Place users on Tuesday gave the rooftop garden a thumb's up. "I think it's a great idea and it needs to be all over the city," said Sandy Fisher. Daescu Ion, who drops in daily for a coffee and lunch, said

having extra vegetables on hand makes sense. McKenzie said Our Place likes to offer vegetarian options in the summer for people who don't want meat — something the supply of fresh vegetables allows it to offer. "You can't always do that year-round." There is talk about turning the rooftop plantings into a winter garden for the colder months, McKenzie said. The rooftop garden was created in partnership with FED, or Food Eco District, a food-

sustainability initiative under the umbrella of the Synergy Foundation, while the RBC Foundation contributed \$10,000 to the project. Our Place also has a source of fresh vegetables through the Farmlands Trust (Greater Victoria) Society, established to enhance farming capacity in the capital region and produce food for those in need. Our Place CEO Julian Daly said just because someone is struggling with poverty, addiction issues or mental-health

challenges "doesn't mean they don't deserve the best meal possible." Cox said the rooftop garden has worked out well in its first few months with an array of produce. "It's really neat to know where it comes from, how it's grown." McKenzie said the produce couldn't be more local. "What's more local than a couple of storeys above your kitchen?" jbell@timescolonist.com



A carved bentwood box containing Madeline Milne's mother's ashes was taken from a home on Collinson Street in Victoria between July 27 and Aug. 1, police say. VIA VICTORIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

‘What a heartless thing to do’: Ashes dumped in alley after container stolen from home

JEFF BELL
Times Colonist

Madeline Milne can't believe that the person who stole a wooden box from her home had the callousness to throw away her mother's ashes after finding them inside. Her mother, Metchosin councillor Moralea Milne, died in a car crash in Surrey in 2018. "It's absolutely shocking that this is the one item that they would steal, and not the laptop or the TV or whatever," Milne said. The ashes were found in an alley along Vancouver Street and taken to Sands Funeral Chapel on Quadra Street, she said. The funeral home let her know on Monday night that it had the bag, then confirmed the

next day that it contained her mother's remains. "Unbeknownst to me, there's an ID tag on these things, and it turns out it is our mother's remains," Milne said. It's good news that the ashes are back, she said, "but what a heartless thing to do." The break-in is believed to have happened at Milne's Collinson Street residence some time between July 27 and Aug. 1, when the home was unoccupied. The theft was discovered by her roommate on Monday afternoon. "It was only thing stolen from the house, which was odd," she said. "It would suggest that whoever stole it understood its monetary value. But if they understood its monetary value, then they would probably also

understand its cultural value — which is surprising to me, [that] they would then in turn steal it." Milne said the bentwood box, which has a First Nations design, has been in the family for about 15 years. "It was where our father's remains were and then our grandfather's and now our mother's," she said. "It's a very distinctive piece of First Nations art, so anyone trying to sell it, I think, with the media coverage we're getting right now, is going to be hard-pressed to sell it to any legitimate dealer, that's for sure." Victoria police ask anyone with information to call them 250-995-7654 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477). jbell@timescolonist.com

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