

WELCOME, NEIGHBOUR!

A Newcomer Guide to Our Island



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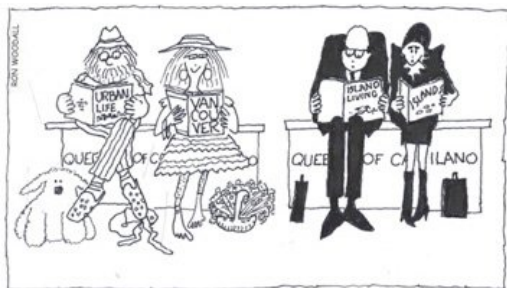
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WELCOME, NEIGHBOUR!

You're moving to Bowen Island—or you're already here. Congratulations on a great decision, and a sincere and hearty “welcome aboard” from all of us, your new neighbours. This guide is for you. It's a compendium of field-tested advice to put you on the inside track to the best of the Island and to help you sidestep some typical newbie obstacles to getting settled here.

Safe to say, even if you're familiar with the Island, there is more to living here than meets the visitor's eye. Adjustments no doubt will be required. From time to time—actually, quite often—expect a few inconveniences, annoyances, even added expenses, all because of your island location. We hasten to add, though, that the rewards are substantial: Instant everyday access to glorious coastal nature, and a solid sense of belonging to a close-knit, interesting community.



Culture Shift

TOP TIPS FOR NEWCOMERS

1. GET THE BOWEN ISLAND PHONE BOOK (AKA THE GOLD PAGES OR ALMANAC).

Published every year, the Phone Book is a goldmine of residential phone numbers and email addresses, business and government listings, and much more, including photos and art and features on local people and history. It's available in electronic form, but the print version is indispensable. Old copies are usually kept, not tossed out. Be sure to add your own name to next year's listings. Find it at the General Store, the Building Centre (IRLY), and other outlets, or contact the publisher at barbarawiltshire@shaw.ca.

- ★ Insider Tip: Speaking of phones, note that your landline will begin with “947,” our exclusive prefix in the 604 area code. So, we use only four digits when giving out our island numbers—the “947” prefix is assumed.

2. **MAKE YOUR PEACE WITH THE FERRY.** It's best to view the ferry as a good thing, the fundamental feature that makes Bowen life so special. For some, this is a big hurdle—when people decide the Island isn't for them after all, the ferry is often why. Lately, options for stress-free commuting have expanded, so if you plan carefully, this need not be a burr in your saddle. See “On the Move,” below, for how to ride the *Cap* like an old-timer.

- ★ Insider Tip: Get a BC Ferries Experience Card (www.bcferreries.com/experience_and_coast_card/what_it_is/). Save money by preloading it to receive a discounted rate on Bowen Island and Sunshine Coast ferries, applied to both passengers and vehicle fares. (Minimum \$115 per account reload for vehicle use, \$65 for foot passengers. Note that you can link multiple Experience Cards to a single account.)

3. **BE ON BOWEN, BUY ON BOWEN.** It is a truth universally acknowledged that the more you are here, and the less you are in traffic somewhere else, the happier you will be. Do this by transferring as much of your life to Bowen as possible, taking advantage of a surprising variety of on-island resources. You will pay a little more for some goods, reflecting freight costs and smaller economies of scale. But you will save on ferry fares, keep your dollars on-island, and top up your peace of mind.

4. **LIVE THE WHOLE ISLAND.** You came here to be closer to nature and community, so use them! You will be amazed by the possibilities beyond your own little corner of paradise. The Rotary Club map (bowentrails.ca) is your guide to a growing system of trails linking up many destinations, and Tourism Bowen Island (tourismbowenidland.com) is a source for deciding where to go. On the cultural and community side, check out Bowen Island Community Recreation's offerings (www.bowencommunityrecreation.com/), visit a charming museum or two in Snug Cove, and join the public library (www.bowenlibrary.ca).

5. **CHOOSE THE RIGHT NEIGHBOURHOOD FOR YOU.** There are 30 or so neighbourhoods on the Island, all with unique charms. Be aware that your choice can shape your life here, more than you might realize at first. First, you must decide whether or not to live near the ferry. Some, especially families with children, find living near Snug Cove translates to an easier and much freer life. Schools, ferry and marinas,

shops and services—all are only minutes by foot. You must weigh this option against some outstanding attractions in more distant hamlets, but which come with considerably more time behind the wheel.

- ★ Insider Tip: Rent a kayak or wangle a boat ride, and experience Bowen Island from a wilder, saltier perspective. If you swim or boat, check current conditions at weather.gc.ca.

6. IF YOU PLAN TO BUILD A HOME, CAREFUL RESEARCH IS ESSENTIAL. Here, as elsewhere, be fully aware of local building regulations, and look into rural and island site conditions that may be new to you, such as water, septic and stream setback concerns; tree issues, hazardous slopes, and strata restrictions; or easements or covenants. When hiring contractors, do your homework, using the Phone Book, social media, and your new neighbours. And definitely check references. Construction is easily Bowen Island's biggest industry, so you have an excellent range of choices; many skilled people are available on the Island.

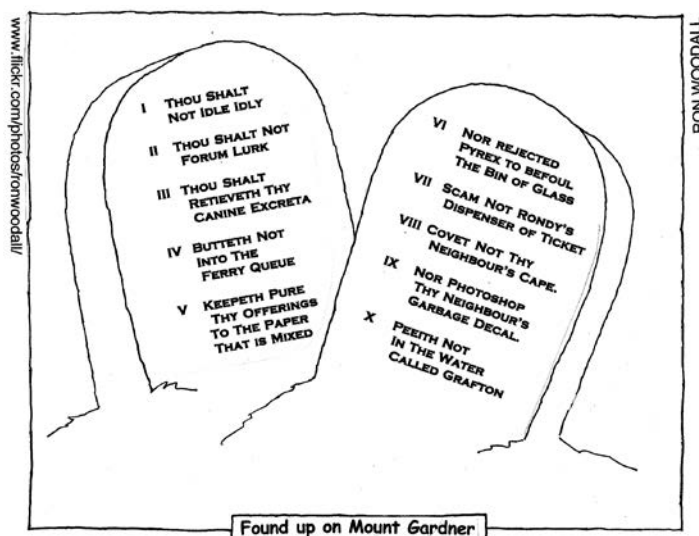
- ★ Insider Tip: Rent a home or room here while you build, to oversee the process. Difficulties tend to arise through miscommunication across distance.

7. IT'S EASY TO BREAK IN SOCIALLY. Thanks to ferry schedules, you may see your "off-island" friends less often and need some new on-island ones. Luckily, the Island is friendly, with many recent newcomers. Dozens of clubs and organizations, volunteer opportunities, and cultural experiences offer you multiple entry points. With minimal infrastructure for entertainment, house parties, pub nights, and small, intimate musical events prevail here. (See "Social Scene: Finding Your People," below.)

8. HEALTH AND EMERGENCIES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW. Currently, two family doctors serve our Island. For complete information about health and caregiving resources on Bowen Island, read Bowen's *Health Resources Guide* (caringcircle.ca/health-resource-guide). The Island is fully served by 9-1-1 emergency services, with an RCMP detachment, ambulance service, Volunteer Fire Department and two fire halls, water taxis (available at any time of night), and the occasional helicopter (for critical incidents). Please make sure first responders can find you—install a reflective house number visible from the road.

- ★ Insider Tip: Use the Travel Assistance Program, or TAP Form. If you are referred to a medical service that is unavailable on the Island, the Province will reimburse your ferry fare, with a TAP form provided in advance by your doctor. Details at the Ministry of Health (<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/tap-bc/travel-assistance-program-tap-bc>).

9. PREPARE FOR WINTER. Summer on Bowen Island is divine. But the August long weekend is the cue to turn your mind to winter-time. Winter can be serious over here, with snowfall, windstorms, falling trees, power outages, and impassable roads, in any combination. Bottom line? Lay in an ample supply of dry (cured) firewood, and buy a boatload of LED camp lanterns. (See "Forage," below.)



GOVERNMENT: HOW THINGS WORK

Bowen Island Municipality (BIM) is the only island municipality in the province. It's part of the Metro Vancouver Regional District (www.metrovancouver.org) and the Islands Trust (www.islandstrust.bc.ca). The Island is governed by a mayor and six councillors, assisted by a chief administrative officer and about 35 full-time and part-time staff. Our public school is administered by the West Vancouver School Board. Islanders vote directly for School Board candidates.

The BIM website (www.bimbc.ca) is the authoritative source of information on a very wide range of topics, from our Official Community Plan and bylaws, to garbage schedules, permit applications, and transportation options. Learn about the biggest issues, and deeper layers, of life on the Island by attending a council or committee meeting. Schedules

and agenda packages are posted, and most meetings are livestreamed and videorecorded.

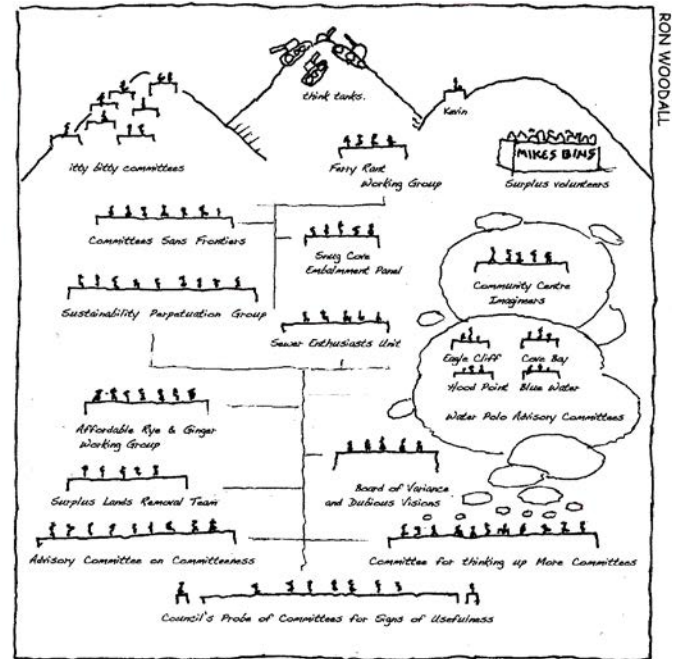
- ★ Insider Tip: From the BIM website, download the *Bowen Island Community Profile* for the facts and figures on your new island home.

SOCIAL SCENE: FIND YOUR PEOPLE

Here, “community” is more than a pleasant lifestyle feature. It is essential infrastructure. Also, people here like to have fun. All kinds live on the Island, and many have arrived fairly recently. And for almost any pursuit, there is a club you can join, with a long tradition of friendly egalitarian mixing, at a variety of community events and parties.

Every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, a Community Lunch is also held at the Legion, run by the Caring Circle. All grown-ups welcome. Homemade gourmet soup, bread, and dessert, with coffee or tea, \$5. Seriously.

- ★ Insider Tip: Experience the famous Friday-night community dinner at the Bowen Island Legion for great food at a nominal cost, with optional bar purchase. It's an authentic meet-and-greet opportunity. Children are welcome. Find out who is cooking by checking online (www.facebook.com/Bowen-Island-Legion-231705376847870/).



BOWEN ISLAND FAUX PAS

Just do not do it:

- ✗ Cut into the ferry line.
- ✗ Pass other cars.
- ✗ Drive too fast.
- ✗ Cut ahead in Horseshoe Bay as you approach the ticket booth. Unwritten rule: No racing once you've made the turnoff to the terminal.
- ✗ Leave old furniture on roads.
- ✗ Litter.
- ✗ Dump tree branches on public land. This is littering. Instead: Chip them up, or call a local green-waste pickup service.
- ✗ Smoke on the beach. Ruins the experience for everyone.
- ✗ Smoke in the forests, especially in summer. Extremely dangerous.
- ✗ Fail to control your dog in public. This is a significant irritant, especially on Crippen Park trails and our beaches.
- ✗ Let your dog eliminate on a beach.
- ✗ Let your dog eliminate anywhere (even in the bush) and not pick up.
- ✗ Attack someone on social media.
- ✗ Ask online for whom an ambulance siren was sounding. (For thee, friend.)

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Throw yourself a housewarming party. Doesn't have to be fancy—just a simple kitchen party to show your new neighbours you don't have horns, and let them welcome you. You will meet some super people, be regaled by local lore, and tap into advice about who to call, or not call, for this and that.

JOINING GROUPS

Unless you plan to be a recluse, joining groups and/or volunteering for community events, projects, and jobs, is the key to a fun, active life here. Shop around until you find your people. You'll find a good list of clubs, groups, and organizations at Bowen Online (www.bowen-island-bc.com/directory/groups.html).

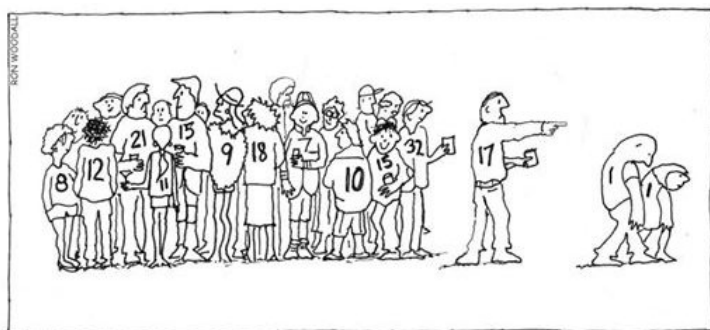
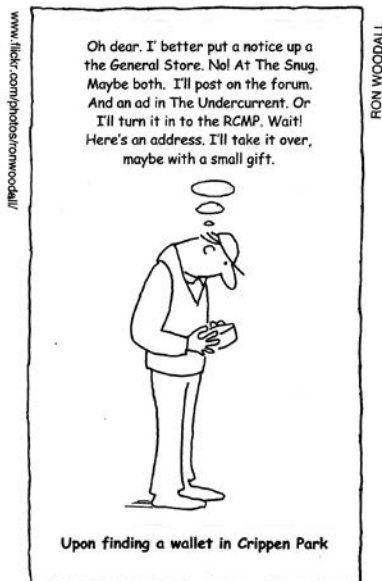
- ★ Insider Tip: Two venerable island clubs welcome newcomers enthusiastically: The Garden Club (you don't even need to garden), and the (public) Golf Club. Both groups make up for any lack of age diversity by being incredibly diverse in other ways, with people from all walks of life, old-timers and newcomers alike. For more active fun, there's also the Football Club.



BOWEN ISLAND VALUES AND MORES

At the risk of over-generalizing, some typical island attitudes and long-standing values seem to persist, even with a growth in population:

- People here seem to care less about “appearances,” such as how someone is dressed.
- A tradition of socializing across different walks of life means having a very eclectic group of friends.
- There is a “thing” here: People will invariably ask you how long you have lived on the Island, so they can say “25 years!” It is inevitable. Although your duration here should not be relevant, and the length of their residency means very little really, they ask anyway. Just accept it.
- A love of nature; Islanders care passionately about nature and wildlife and environmental protection—on land and in the ocean around us.



COMMUNITY AMENITIES

Bowen Island is rich in volunteerism, and in charitable, arts, social, and recreation events and initiatives. Islanders make creative use of many venues (notably the Bowen Island Community School or BICS) to present a full calendar of events and activities every year.

THE ARTS. If you love art and music, you are in the right place. Our wide variety of artists—visual, performing, literary—offer concerts, gigs, gallery shows, launches, and the like. It's easy to jump into the scene.

- Check the Bowen Island Arts Council web calendar (www.biac.ca/calendar.php), the newspaper, social media at Facebook Bowen Island Events (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/bowenislandevents/>), or the Forum (www.bowen-island-bc.ca/forum)..
- The Gallery at Artisan Square is the physical and spiritual home of the Island's many artists.

RECREATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION. Islanders enjoy an abundance of sport and recreation options:

- Bowen Island Community Recreation (www.bowencommunityrecreation.com) coordinates seasonal programs of classes, activities, and events for all ages, engaging skilled local instructors; mostly held at BICS.
- All ages participate in popular outdoor soccer leagues at the Island's “outdoor gym” and playing field, located at BICS.
- Clubs and private classes are also offered for many other sports and fitness pursuits, such as yoga, equestrian, sailing, martial arts, and more. There's baseball, too. Just check the Phone Book or Bowen Online directory.
- A challenging and picturesque nine-hole public golf course on south Bowen Island is an important social and recreational resource, attracting residents and visitors (and has a restaurant, The Cup Cutter).

MORE WAYS TO FIND YOUR WAY

Go to every single annual event for a guaranteed good time: Hallowe'en in Deep Bay, Canada Day at Crippen Park Festival Field, Light Up Bowen and Lantern Parade, Remembrance Day at the Cenotaph, Polar Bear Swim on Jan. 1, and many others.

Volunteer, volunteer, volunteer. Ask around for possible opportunities.

BOWEN AND KIDS

A topnotch primary school, great programming for younger kids, a tight-knit community that has your back, growing up immersed in nature—no wonder childhood on Bowen Island is often called magical.

Kids can free-range in safe neighbourhoods without the overarching worry that can plague urban child-rearing, with easy access to nature and recreation. In many ways, life is simpler here. And you'll find a large population of other parents with whom to network and raise your kids.

MAJOR RESOURCES FOR PARENTS:

- If any one place is the “heart” of the community, it's BICS. If your kids attend the community school, there are many ways to become involved and enrich your kids' experience in the process. BICS is also the venue for community concerts, dances, and special events; adult recreation and outdoor soccer; voting in elections; crafts fairs and farmers' markets.
- If you have a baby or toddler, you will love Family Place at the Bowen Children's Centre on Carter Road. For about 30 years, it's been *the* place for new mums and dads to meet and share, and for babies to begin socializing—a modest but powerful little public service.
- Resources abound for younger children, but it's a little tougher for teens. The Teen Centre, and a new “Open Gym” program at BICS, are helpful. Recently, Bowen Island Community Foundation developed a Youth Council to improve life here for adolescents and young adults.

IN THE KNOW: INFORMATION HUBS

Online resources for Bowen life are abundant these days. And because our web communities comprise folks who know each other, or easily could, discussion is generally (but not always) cordial and helpful. You can learn a lot simply by following the topics of the day on discussion sites. And when you have a “Bowen” question, just put it out to your island cloud-crowd. All will be answered.

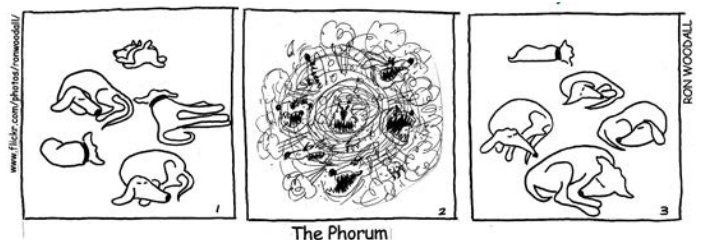
A caution, though: You cannot really know this quirky small town in Howe Sound from its online face alone. For that you need face-time.



October 30, 2009. Shaw is down for the entire day.
Trauma counselling continues

PLACES TO FIND THINGS OUT:

- Bowen Island Municipality's website (www.bimbc.ca). Learn about your public representatives, municipal services and amenities, and political processes. Municipal Hall, tucked away on Artisan Lane, is a friendly, helpful place.
- Bowen Online (www.bowen-island-bc.com), the web adjunct to the Bowen Island Phone Book, offers useful listings and ads. It also hosts the Forum (AKA the Phorum), a long-standing discussion site. To join, or place an ad, email barbarawiltshire@shaw.ca.



- The Undercurrent (www.bowenislandundercurrent.com), the Island's long-time weekly newspaper, apprises us of local events and politics, with features

about the Island and people, and often very entertaining letters and ads.

- Bowen Island Public Library (www.bowenlibrary.ca) is housed in the Island's best-known heritage building, and is much more than a repository of books, with amazing electronic resources and services like Tech Tutoring and free internet access. You'll also find the "Med Shed," where you can borrow medical equipment for free. And staff will order in for you any book in the Metro library system.

ON THE MOVE: FERRY AND COMMUTING SURVIVAL

As you have surely noticed, the ferry schedule determines the rhythm of life here. (The flurry of activity in the Cove at ferry times is known as "rush minute.") Here, we advise on how to co-exist successfully with That Which Cannot Be Changed, the ferry schedule, and related matters.

- ★ Insider Tip: The number-one way to reduce car commuting stress is to line up early for a given sailing. What's early? Depending on the time of year, anywhere from 15 to 45 minutes. Don't live by last-minute, hail-Mary ferry dashes on the Upper Levels or the Island's roads. That lifestyle makes people miserable and crazy, and is a threat to public safety.

WAITING FOR THE FERRY

The process of lining up along the Bowen Trunk Road is known as "ferry marshalling." There is no "marshall"—just painted lines, roadside signage, and an expectation that you will comply with the rules, both posted and implicit. The basic principle? Snug up. Don't leave any unnecessary gaps.

The line consists of two major sections:

- The lower line-up, below "the crossroads" of Miller/Dorman and Bowen Trunk Road. Line up single file, all the way down to the ferry dock, avoiding yellow cross-hatched areas.
- The upper line-up starts uphill from "the crossroads" and itself has two sections. The lower part is single-lane, then divides farther up the hill into two lanes. The "upper-upper" lanes work zipper-style, for both lining up and loading. Vehicles merge alternately—regardless

of who arrived first. Usually. If you're toward the end of the line, let the person who arrived first, go first.

- If the ferry marshalling area is full, it is illegal and very unsafe to continue lining up along the Trunk Road. You must leave the line-up, and return once the boat has sailed.
- No idling! It's the law. Cars must be turned off while in line. In colder weather, go to a café to warm up, or keep blankets in the car.
- ★ Insider Tip: Cutting into the ferry line is the ultimate Bowen Island faux pas. Know how the line-up works, and play by the rules. A key unwritten rule: In the lower line-up "below" the crossroads, people often leave gaps where another car could legitimately squeeze into the line-up. You may "fill in" that spot, but only if the total line-up does not yet extend uphill from the pharmacy. Expect a big fuss if you flout this rule.

ISLAND FACEBOOK GROUPS

Here are some of the more active groups, but new groups and pages seem to be popping up weekly. (If you search for "Bowen" or "Bowen Island," make sure you're not looking at groups in Bowen Island, Australia.)

- Most active: Bowen Island Everything Else
- BIFF: Bowen Islanders for Ferry Fairness
- BIWBusiness
- Bowen Babies Play Group
- Bowen Businesses & Community
- Bowen in Transition
- Bowen Innovation
- Bowen Island Artists/Crafters/Growers/Jammers
- Bowen Island Bus
- Bowen Island Buy/Sell/Trade/Loan
- Bowen Island Commuters
- Bowen Island Doings: Classes/Programs/Workshops/Seminars
- Bowen Island Events
- Bowen Island Rentals & FSBO
- Bowen Island Task/Errand/Small Jobs
- Bowen Island Tech
- Bowen's Veggie Virgins
- Bowfest
- Concerned Citizens Bowen
- Gigabit for Bowen
- Imagine Snug Cove

OVERLOADS

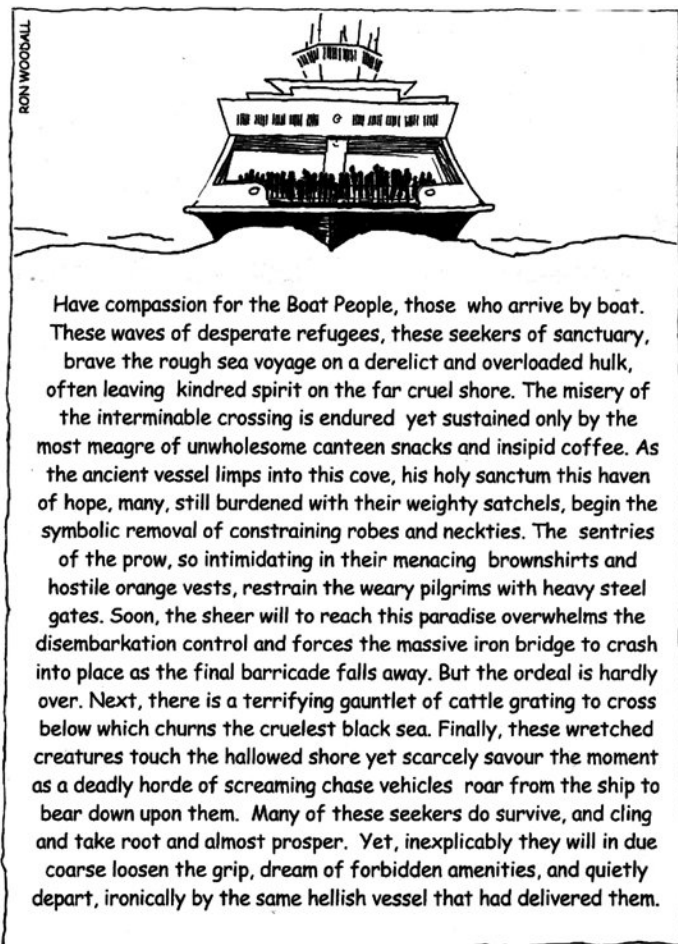
Learn which sailings experience high demand, and avoid them, if possible. This happens primarily in summer, especially Thursday and Friday afternoon/early evening sailings from Horseshoe Bay, and sometimes Sunday afternoons leaving Snug Cove. Either switch sailings, or line up 45 minutes or so before departure.

- ★ Parent Tip: Always be equipped for an overload, with sufficient snacks, drinks, and activities to survive an extra hour of waiting.

On the ferry, park within 2 feet of the car in front of you. Giant gaps add up to cars left behind.

If you are overloaded, just enjoy it. Get a coffee, do sudoku, walk, nap. Always have good reading material, or a knitting project, stashed in the car.

- ★ Insider Tip: When a patient's health would be compromised by waiting for a long time in the ferry line-up, BC Ferries provides medical assured loading letters if requested in advance by a physician or hospital. This gives you priority loading both in Horseshoe Bay and in Snug Cove. Details at caringcircle.ca/transportation.



FOOT PASSENGER STRATEGIES

If your home is handy to either of two community bus routes, Bluewater and Eaglecliff, it's easy to get to the ferry (most sailings). But how to commute to "town" (AKA the mainland) and back?

TRANSLINK: Use the BC Ferries/TransLink connection, with two bus routes (250 or 257 Express) linking Horseshoe Bay to Downtown Vancouver. It's a reliable commuting strategy. Passenger car drop-off is on Cardena Road, across from the bus stop. You can park your scooter, motorcycle, or bike at the dock, near the washrooms.

BOWEN EXPRESS/CORMORANT MARINE WATER TAXI: A great new option is a downtown express bus privately run by Bowen Island Community Transit, AKA "Peter's bus." It runs several times in mornings and afternoons (but not mid-day), and connects to Cormorant Marine (cormorantwatertaxi.com) commuter runs from Horseshoe Bay. Passengers usually save 45 minutes to an hour versus BC Ferries/TransLink service. Check out the Bowen Bus Facebook Group (www.facebook.com/groups/1118997098126572/).

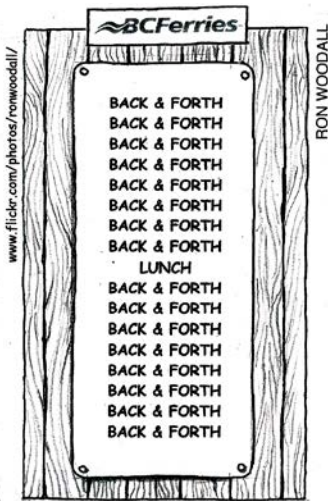
DIRECT TO DOWNTOWN WATER TAXI: English Bay Launch (www.eblaunch.com) offers service from Bowen to downtown in under 35 minutes. Check the website to confirm the schedule and route.

CAR-SHARING: With a fleet of Car2Go vehicles in Horseshoe Bay, two-person Smart Car-pools are now possible. You have to join, pay a fee, and calculate whether it fits your transportation budget. Not strictly a "foot" option, but an improvement over total car commuting.

RIDE-SHARING: Bowen LIFT (www.bowenlift.com) connects riders and drivers in real time, making it easier to find and give rides on the ferry and around the island. If you can get a spot, the Jack Bell RideShare VanPool goes through downtown to UBC and back, leaving on the 7:30 a.m. ferry and returning on the 4:30 p.m. Email info@ride-share.com.

- ★ Insider Tip: When leaving the ferry, choose the sidewalk that allows you to avoid crossing Cardena and be on your way. When the ferry is unloading or loading, it's polite (and safer) to wait before using the crosswalk at the library. Pedestrians yield to ferry traffic.

SCHEDULE INTERRUPTIONS



With the new schedule
the ferry was never late again

When the *Queen of Capilano* is off schedule, your day may be thrown into chaos. If you miss your dream-job interview, it's hardly consoling to know this happens only rarely. But you have options: BC Ferries may engage Bowen Island water taxis to provide foot passenger service. Water taxis can cope with virtually all weather conditions, and leave from Government Dock in Snug Cove. In Horseshoe Bay, pick up a Car2Go, catch a 257 bus, or Peter's bus, and still arrive without breaking a sweat.

- ★ Insider Tip: Beware Wednesdays, and the dangerous cargo sailings on *which regular passengers and vehicles are not allowed*—on the 9 a.m. sailing from Horseshoe Bay, and the 4 p.m. sailing from Snug Cove. We all forget this at some point. Also on weekends, double-check the early morning and evening runs for schedule “gaps.”

WHERE'S THE FERRY?

Know the current location of the *Queen of Cap* at all times:

Check on current vessel position (www.bcferrries.com/current_conditions/vessel_positions.html).

Get BC Ferries service notices by signing up (<https://www.bcferrries.com/bcferrries/faces/reservation/booking.jsp?pcode=ACCOUNT>). You will need to create an account (not the same account as your Experience Card). Respond to the confirmation email message. Select “Subscriptions” and choose “Bowen Island service notices.”

Follow @bcferries on Twitter. This is faster than email notifications, but you may need to proactively check your Twitter feed.

Check the Forum (www.bowen-island-bc.com/forum) or an island Facebook group.

THE COMMUNITY BUS

Flag down the on-island bus anywhere along the route—for example, the end of your driveway. The bus operates in tandem with the ferry schedule. You'll find the current schedule posted in the Forum banner (www.bowen-island-bc.com/forum). Not all areas of the island are currently served by transit. Got questions? Call 604-947-0229.

- ★ Insider Tip: Going to the airport? If you live near the bus, you can easily go all the way to YVR, via bus and Canada Line, car-free, for peanuts!

LATE-NIGHT WATER TAXI SERVICE

For Islanders who work late or take in evening events on the mainland, Cormorant Marine (cormorantwatertaxi.com) makes a late-night water taxi run every single night, running from Government Dock in Snug Cove to Government Dock in Horseshoe Bay (near the Boathouse Restaurant) and back, with some 30+ years of outstanding reliability. Also available for private hire.

DRIVE: BOWEN'S (UNWRITTEN) RULES OF THE ROAD

Unless otherwise posted, the speed limit is 40 km/h, posted at 30 in many stretches. That's plenty fast for most island roads: super hilly, with tight corners, and twists and turns. Sidewalks are almost non-existent—pedestrians can be difficult to see. So are deer—one may dart suddenly into the road and suddenly seem to fling itself at your car. More than a few Islanders have experienced this tragedy, and speed can be a factor. Learn to love driving at the posted stately pace.

School Zone is 30 km/h limit and applies at all times, period. Speeding in the School Zone is a serious faux pas. The Island's busiest intersection bursts with activity when commuters, school kids, trades vehicles, buses, and trucks all converge. Dead slow, no wake, please.

- ★ Insider Tip: Drive super-slow to get a better look at the oh-so authentically Bowen slug-themed design of the lighted crosswalk. Marvel that it was designed by an elementary student.

SPEEDING. Yes, some drivers do exceed 40 km/h, particularly on a few stretches. Exceeding the speed limit can be



seriously dangerous and rude. If seen, your license number could be reported to police.

OTHER PEOPLE SPEEDING. You are doing 40, but the driver behind you is clearly unhappy about it, tailgating to better convey impatience. How do you deal? Some prefer to pull over and let speeders go by. Others do not indulge this “un-Bowen” behaviour. Your call.

- ★ Important Insider Tip: If someone flashes hazard lights in your rear-view mirror, assume it is a volunteer firefighter or emergency services person in their own vehicle, asking you to make way. Please yield to first responders.

PASSING. There are no safe stretches to pass on Bowen Island, and it just isn’t done. What may happen, though, is the car ahead of you will sense your ... urgency—are you tailgating?—and pull over. The small-town rule applies: The car you edge out in a race to the ferry line-up will turn out to be that nice lady you met at the concert. Chill, enjoy the scenery. It’s the Bowen way.

SCHOOL BUSES. No passing. If you are driving across island during school-bus runs, allow an extra 10 minutes for patiently waiting behind the bus as students climb on and off while the bus completely blocks the road for safety.

HITCHHIKING. It’s a tradition. Hitchhike from designated “Bowen LIFT” pickup spots—or from anywhere at all. It is considered a high mark of courtesy to pick people up.

FORAGE: SOME ESSENTIALS

Here are some resources to help you deal with the essential systems needed to sustain a basic household on Bowen. Islanders tend to have a lot of wisdom and expertise on all these topics, so be sure to ask the people you meet, especially your neighbours.

WATER

Water quality and quantity vary across the Island, from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, and never more obviously than when dry or drought conditions prevail. Water conservation—and source protection—are major priorities on the Island.

Wasting water by watering lawns or washing vehicles during the dry months is considered a serious faux pas. Some areas use metering, rationing, and surcharges for overuse.

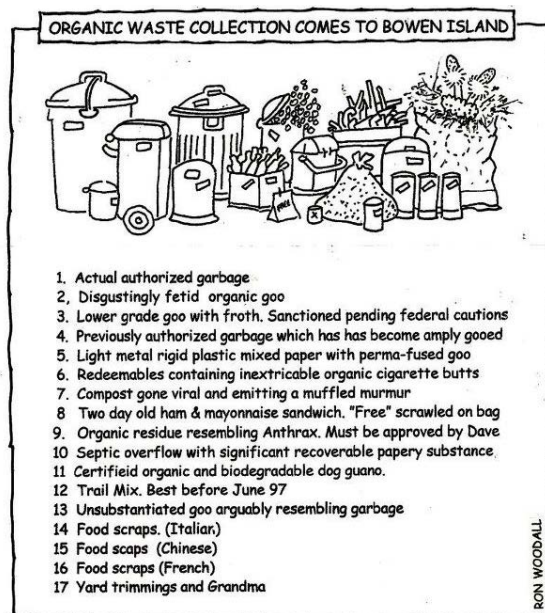
About half the population is served by municipally managed water systems. See the municipal website (<http://www.bimbc.ca/content/public-works-utilities-water-sewer-storm>). The Cove Bay system serves homes in and around Snug Cove. Some users also filter their drinking water.

Find out about your local water supply, how it’s governed, what the rate structure is, and how to monitor your own usage and prevent leaks (for which you could be financially responsible). Water quality and conservation is a communal effort.

SEPTIC AND SEWAGE

Only some areas in and around Snug Cove are served by a municipal sewage system. Everyone else is required to have a properly functioning septic system. Key piece of advice: It doesn’t maintain itself. You are strongly advised to have it serviced once a year to avoid unpleasant and costly problems.

WASTE AND RECYCLING



Bowen Island has well-organized municipal waste management services and practices—and you’ll find that people here have strong values about waste reduction and recycling. Get full details about waste pickup and recycling

at the Bowen Island Recycling Depot website (www.bowenislandrecyclingdepot.com/).

- ★ Insider Tip: Fasten your waste containers with bungee cords to thwart hungry animals and birds.

POWER

Roadside trees are an ongoing threat to Hydro wires. When outages occur (some years are better than others), fallen trees are often responsible. See "Troubleshooting" for advice on staying comfortable and safe during outages. (Or, you could try living off-grid, using a combination of wood heat, solar panels, and a generator.)

FOOD & GROCERIES

Some people do their major grocery shopping in "town" and pick up the extras on Bowen. But the truth is, you can eat like royalty without leaving the Island, and by buying local, you help support our local businesses.

Snug Cove General Store and the Ruddy Potato meet most needs, supplemented by excellent specialty stores.

Bowen Island punches above its weight in restaurants and cafés. Support them and enjoy.

Outside Snug Cove, you can buy local and specialty foods at Alderwood Farm, Home Farm Gardens, and the Ruddy Kitchen.

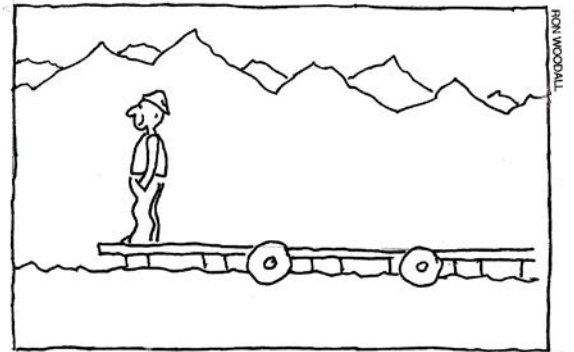
For details, check the directory in Bowen Online (www.bowen-island-bc.com) or Bowen Finder (www.bowenfinder.com).

Stong's, a Vancouver grocery store, has been making weekly deliveries to the Island for years. Order online, and groceries magically appear in your kitchen. Many families swear by it. Other delivery services are now becoming available, too.

In season, superb farmers' market and tailgate sales, at Bowen Island Community School (BICS), are Saturday morning "must-do's" from May to October.

Buy directly around the Island anytime. Island-grown products vary widely, from tree fruit and honey to vegetables, eggs, and meats. See the *Bowen Green Guide*

(bowengreenguide.com/2014/04/16/sources-of-local-and-or-organic-food-on-bowen/).



Celebrating 500 days without leaving the island

FIREWOOD FACTS

For some, there are only two seasons here: Wood Burning and Wood Gathering. (However, true firewood geeks are in perpetual gathering mode, with an eye always peeled for legal windfall to buck up.)

Your objective is to have on hand at least one full season of dry firewood, laid in well before chilly autumn evenings begin around mid-September. Depending on how else you may heat, you will need from 2 to 4 cords (a cord = 4 x 4 x 8 ft split) to see you through until April.

Which woods are best? Fir, alder, and hemlock are desirable; cedar less so. Cedar makes good kindling, but burns too quickly for a sustained blaze. Maple, a hardwood, is an excellent burn but can be hard to find on the Island, since the deer eat maple seedlings in the wild.

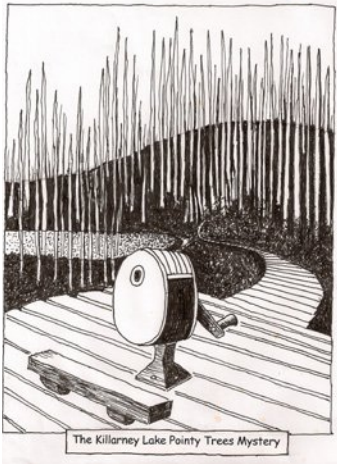
Firewood sources come and go. Check the Phone Book, or ask your neighbours or our online community. And look for roadside trucks filled with split firewood for sale.

- ★ Safety Tip: Get your chimney cleaned every year. Chimney fires are not rare; however, chimney sweeps can be. Check the Phone Book or ask for recommendations on the Forum (www.bowen-island-bc.com/forum) or Bowen Island Everything Else (www.facebook.com/groups/610305329091844/).

Glean some excellent information about wood fires and wood stoves from Metro Vancouver (www.metrovancouver.org/services/air-quality/projects-initiatives/Pages/wood-stove-exchange.aspx). And check when the next "Burn It Smart!" workshop is coming to the Island.



BEFORE YOU GOT HERE: CONNECTING WITH HISTORY



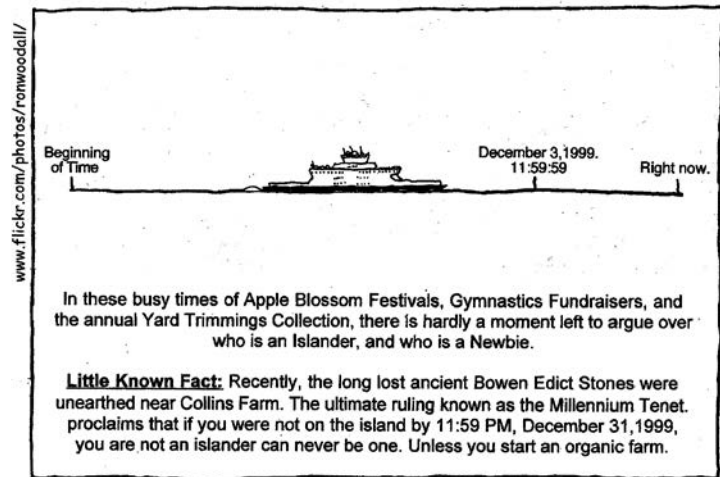
Learning about our history is a real treat. Required reading for new residents starts with Irene Howard's *Bowen Island: 1872–1972*. Buy it at the Museum and Archives or Phoenix, borrow a copy from a neighbour, or check it out at the library, where a wide collection of locally focused books can also be found. (No one has penned a post-1972 history, though.)

The Bowen Island Museum and Archives (www.bowenmuseum.ca) houses a huge collection of photographs (many online) and artifacts from days gone by, and mounts charming exhibits every year with themes around “booze cruise” days or the 60s when hippies and rednecks ruled. In Davies Heritage Orchard, Bowen Heritage (www.bowenheritage.org) maintains the Orchard Museum, offering an authentic glimpse into summers here during the steamship years and early cottage era.

LIVING LIGHTLY: GREENER OPPORTUNITIES

If there is one overriding value here, it's love of nature and a deep desire to conserve it. That translates into a culture where most try to consume less, reuse, and recycle, and respect the natural world. Expertise abounds in the community, with more than our fair share of sustainable living experts. (Of course, you can take a huge step towards a smaller footprint by riding the ferry without your car.)

For guidance on all such matters, consult the excellent and comprehensive *Bowen Island Green Resource Guide* (bowengreenguide.com). It's produced by Bowen in Transition, an energetic local sustainability group that's part of an international network. The guide is a gift to the Island—a collection of instructions and tips on local food and gardening, house and home construction and maintenance, transportation, and waste reduction.



TROUBLESHOOTING: WHAT TO DO WHEN ...

When the ferry isn't running, the power is out, and the roads are impossible, you will know why the words *isolation* and *island* stem from the same root. What to do? Reach for this guide and reach out to your neighbours.

WINTER AND SNOW

Overall, most trouble happens in winter.

In October, detach your garden hoses, and stow some car blankets to stay warm in the ferry line.

It's often a few degrees colder on the Island than in Vancouver, so even though it's only rain in town, it may be snowing here.

Strata roads are not cleared by municipal snow ploughs. Private arrangements are made—confirm with a neighbour what happens in your area and what to expect when it snows.

Equip yourself: Use snow tires, have a snow shovel on hand, and a scraper/brush in your vehicle.

Consider buying ice guards (Yaktrax or crampons) for your shoes or boots to help walk up and down steep hills that could be icy.

COPING WITH A POWER OUTAGE

Some actually enjoy occasional outages as a candlelit break from the norm; others fear and loathe them. And frankly if you don't have a wood stove, or can't pump water to flush toilets, it can be utter misery. With any luck everything will flick back on in a few hours (but don't assume that).

Check BC Hydro (<https://www.bchydro.com/power-outages/app/outage-list.html>) or call 1-888 POWERON (1-888-769-3766) to report an outage.

Buy several flashlights, lots of batteries (for regular use, too), and several LED camp lanterns so you can see when the lights go out.

Find an old-fashioned phone that plugs directly into the wall jack; your portable landline system won't work when the power is off. If you must, use a generator, but be prepared for the noise.

If you have a propane-fuelled stove/range, light it by hand without electricity. If not, you can prepare simple hot meals on a bbq or camp stove (outdoors!), or on the top of an airtight wood stove indoors.

Open your fridge and freezer as little as possible during the outage to keep things cold. Use picnic coolers outside for frequently used items instead. And prepare by filling any gaps in your freezer space with containers of water; the extra ice will buy you some time.

If you have a cell phone or tablet, log onto a Facebook group and see how everyone else is doing and what they know.

Buy a complete pre-packed emergency kit (for earthquakes as well). Some recommend kits found at Costco or through St. John's Ambulance.

Chances are, the power will stay on in Snug Cove, and you can head down there for a hot meal if you need a break.

COPING WITH UNWANTED WILDLIFE

Mice, ticks, skunks, the occasional raccoon, and garden-munching deer can all be included in the array of pests that may blight your life from time to time, as they can

anywhere. But the common Norwegian rat is the most serious pest you will contend with.

While many remember a rat-free past on the Island, these extremely damaging vermin are here now, and it is your sacred civil duty to do your part to control them.

The Building Centre has a range of products and free advice. Ensure that anti-rat devices are placed out of reach of pets.

Food-waste compost can be an attractant; know what you are doing (or take advantage of weekly organic waste pickup, especially recommended for cooked food and meat/fish scraps).

Damage to cars by rats is distressingly common—they eat wiring, ruinously. Cayenne pepper, liberally sprinkled under the hood, is said to be an effective deterrent. A closed garage is best, but few homes on Bowen Island have them.

★ Insider Tip: Tick-borne Lyme disease is a risk of spending time outdoors. Try this resource for prevention advice: canlyme.com/lyme-prevention/. Tuck in your shirt, tuck your pants into your socks, and wear a hat. And don't forget to check yourself and your dog after a woodland walk.

APPLIANCE REPAIR

Most stoves, fridges, washers, and dryers can all be fixed by our own island services. However, if you have an "LG" brand product, you will need a service call from Vancouver. (This may also apply to Kenmore appliances, too.)

IT'S THE LAW: ON TREES, BURNING, DOGS

TREES

You are free to cut or limb trees on your own property. However, if you wish to remove or alter a tree on municipal property, a permit is required. Check the municipal website for guidelines (www.bimbc.ca/content/public-works-permitting-0).

For arborists and tree-cutting specialists, consult the Phone Book, the directory at Bowen Online under "Tree Services," or just ask a neighbour.



HUH? SEMI-SECRET CODES

There are many more, but these are the more common or more intriguing acronyms and initialisms.

- BAA = Bowen Agricultural Alliance
- BBC = Bowen Building Centre
- BCC = Bowen Children's Centre
- BCF = BC Ferries
- BEARS = Bowen Emergency Amateur Radio Service
- BIAC = Bowen Island Arts Council
- BICS = Bowen Island Community School
- BIGC = Bowen Island Golf Club, or Garden Club, or Gymnastics Club
- BIHORA = Bowen Island Horse Owners and Riders Association
- BIM = Bowen Island Municipality
- BIMS = Bowen Island Montessori School
- BIMTAC = Bowen Island Municipality Transportation Advisory Committee
- BIPL = Bowen Island Public Library
- BIRD = Bowen Island Recycling Depot
- BIT = Bowen in Transition
- BIYC = Bowen Island Yacht Club
- BOB = Buy on Bowen
- CAWES = Coast Animal Welfare & Education Society
- CRC = Cape Roger Curtis
- CSA = Community School Association
- EBL = English Bay Launch
- EDC = Economic Development Committee
- FAC = Ferry Advisory Committee
- FOBILS = Friends of the Bowen Island Library Society
- HSB = Horseshoe Bay
- IDLC = Island Discovery Learning Community
- IPS = Island Pacific School
- KEB = King Edward Bay
- KKN = Knick Knack Nook
- LUB = Land Use Bylaw
- NERP = Neighbourhood Emergency Response Person
- OCP = Official Community Plan
- PAC = Parent Advisory Council
- SKY = Seniors Keeping Young
- TBCA = Tunstall Bay Community Association
- USSC = Union Steamship Company

BURNING

Absolutely no open burning is allowed from April 15 through to October 15. Burning permits are required for yard burns and machine burns. Call the Bowen Island Volunteer Fire Department at 604-947-9324 to apply for a permit.

DOGS

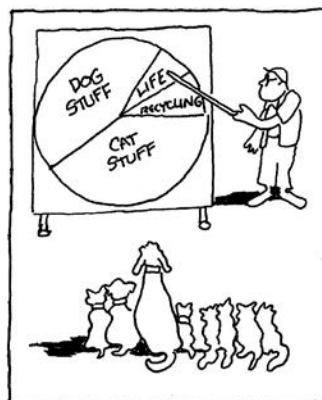
Bowen Island is a great place to be a dog. Services abound, from well-stocked pet stores to off-leash boarding, training and grooming services, and freelance dog sitters and walkers. It's all here, including an on-island veterinary service.

If your dog, despite your best efforts, is lost or wandering, the Coast Animal Welfare and Education Society or CAWES (www.facebook.com/CawesBowenIsland) will help in the search by spreading the word. Also check the Forum and Facebook Bowen Island Everything Else, for any news.

If you find a lost dog, check the municipal website for steps to take (www.bimbc.ca/content/bylaw-services-department).

You don't need a dog licence but make sure your dog wears an identifying tag with your name and phone number. And keep your pooch leashed in public areas, including Snug Cove and area, and in parks.

Visit the enclosure in Crippen Park for supervised unleashed canine capering.



Island of Pets

Please note dogs are not allowed on the major public beaches in July and August (Deep Bay, Tunstall Bay, Bowen Bay).

Bowen Vet offers 24-hour emergency care (604-947-9247).

Welcome, Neighbour! A Newcomer Guide to Our Island is a living document produced by the Bowen Island Municipality Economic Development Committee with suggestions from community members and organizations.

Additions, updates, and corrections for our next edition are welcome. Please send to bim@bimbc.ca.

Links are current at the time of publication.

Welcome, Neighbour! A Newcomer Guide to Our Island and the *Bowen Island Community Profile* are available in print and online from the Municipality. Print-on-demand multiple copies of both publications are available for businesses and organizations at cost from the Office at Artisan Square.

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