



## *Dear Mobile Sauna Supporters,*

As much as we talk about building saunas you might get the idea that we're simply enthusiasts of cedar boxes. This may be true in part, and we can truly appreciate the cedar section of a lumber yard, a old forest grove, or the amazing and artisan work on display in the Royal Museum's First People's gallery. Walking on the shore I see many abandoned cedar logs, and think what use they might have otherwise been put to. When I am out selecting lumber, I can spend hours looking at boards and imagining the elder trees they came from. I look for the dark, clear, tight grain. I am conflicted, because I know these come from the oldest trees I would wish to leave standing. Here they are,

trees sliced into boards destined to become someone's fence or patio. Sometimes it's emotionally difficult to use a particular board when building; the wood feels sacred. A ritual mask carving seems to ennoble the wood with a new kind of life; a fence or patio not so much. Are we giving this ancient wood fair appreciation with our work?

We are building more than cedar boxes. The walls and benches are really a communications medium, and it is the non-virtual social interaction that we are concerned with creating in our weekly practice. The Bauhaus Sauna Society eloquently expresses our sentiment that we are motivated by the vision of bringing people together. We are

*"a firm believer that the Sauna provides a form of social communication and melts away differences. The [sauna] provides a metaphoric point of origin ... as a condensed space of low hierarchies and interdisciplinary exchange. Much alike, the [sauna] is a medium to evaporate unnecessary etiquette in favour of naked truths."*

I hope you enjoy the newsletter, that it enriches your sauna experience if you sweat with us every week, and connects us with you a little if you don't. As always, it's your support that enables us to continue develop mobile sauna projects, improving the sauna sessions experience, and build on the strengths of this community. I would like to invite you to join us and make a contribution to the BC Mobile Sauna Society and support this amazing and unique social initiative.

*Sincerely,*  
**Karlis Kalmins,**  
**BC Mobile Sauna Society Director**



# A Year for New Saunas



It's been such a busy year it's almost hard to remember all the great sauna sessions we've had.

We started the year with the Saunatruck in residence backing onto Falaise park near Rupert skytrain station in deep east Vancouver. Our enthusiastic hosts kept the sauna hot every Sunday, with special sessions like a steamy sledding night on the hill behind the house after an uncommonly large snowfall. In January our friend Jen came by for a visit to produce a video segment on the sauna society for Shaw TV.

2013 saw premature ends to two amazing sauna residencies, so we came up with an idea that could solve some of the problems we'd been having with saunatruck access and bylaw issues. Our new tent sauna design could be set up in a carport, on a deck, or in a 10'x10' pop-up, and it's modular structure could be transported in a cargo van and set up in a few hours. Construction was started in George Rahi's shop, and after a very cold month we had our first test sweat in February in time for our book launch event for our publication, "Mobile Saunas". Karlis gave a small talk and

presented a slideshow about the book and about various mobile saunas around the world. The book can be ordered online from Amazon and our website. George and Robyn have continued to host weekly sauna sessions from their studio/shop near commercial drive.

Meanwhile, we were introduced to Blake McAndless who had been hosting epic sauna-less sauna sessions in Strathcona (one block from our original location). Everything else was in place: a backyard campfire, urban oasis backyard, fenced in parking, acoustic jams, wood fired bathtub, and an amazing hosting talent. We moved the saunatruck behind his house, set up the shower, and since then he's been hosting 2 sessions a week, on Sundays and Wednesdays. It's



BLAKE'S URBAN SAUNA OASIS IN STRATHCONA



OUR SAUNAVAN TUCKED INTO THE WOODS ON GABRIOLA ISLAND.

## BCMSS Gabriola

The 2001 saunavan trailer has a new residence on Gabriola Island. Megan Walker is presently hosting our regular sunday night tradition from this new snug forest location in the North end, Phase 4 area. Contact us for details if you're on or are planning a visit to Gabriola!

## Modular Mobile Sauna

George and Robyn have been hosting weekly sunday sessions near Commerical Drive with the new BCMSS tent sauna. Roomy and bright, in several hours it can be disassembled by two people and moved by cargo van to be reassembled in backyards, balconies, and most recently, a parking garage.



NEW MODULAR TENT SAUNA



amazing how this location combines the best elements of our last few years of residencies. Blake and his roommates are thoroughly enjoying the hosting experience, crafting their own tradition while at the same time the vibe will feel completely familiar to long time sauna regulars. Blake recently hosted a (hot) Boxing Day sweat and a New Years session to sweat in the new year and the BCMSS's 14 year anniversary.

As we were getting ready for the summer, BCMSS vice-president Adrian Sinclair and Andrea Curtis bought George Rahi's old camperized school bus for their event production business, and the decided it would be great to turn 8' of the 40' bus into a sauna. We got to work on a horse farm out in Tswwassen in May, and in June took the completed sauna with a crew of people up to Hollyhock on Cortes Island. The inaugural sweat was followed by a bunch of sauna missions during the rest of the year, including an installation at the dragonboat festival, an epic weekend at Basscoast in Merritt, an private 2-night event in Manning Park, another trip to Cortes, and a sweat on Burnaby mountain in support of the Enbridge pipeline protests. Transformation Projects continues to rent out their new bus and recently hosted an all-day sweat at Spanish Banks for



TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS  
SAUNABUS AT THE VANCOUVER  
DRAGONBOAT FESTIVAL

the January 1 polar bear swim.

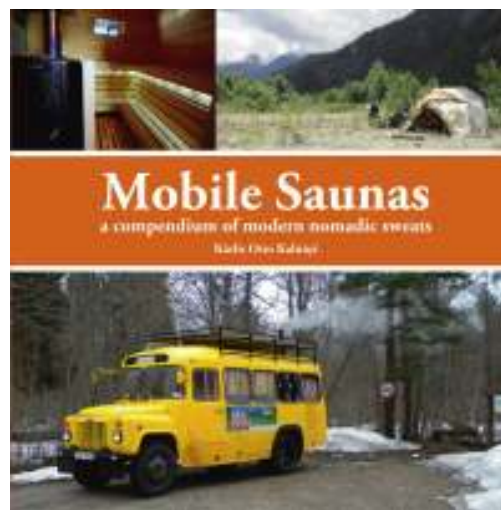
In June our enthusiastic Funkoree sauna crew built another "dirt sauna" this year. It's a dome of canvas over cedar and willow branches erected on the banks of the Elaho river outside of Squamish. I'm always a little surprised how much people enjoy rolling around in the sand and jumping in the river after a long night of dancing under the stars. Even with our comfortable saunas in the city, the dirt sauna experience is a tradition many have come look forward to every year.



RYAN'S BUSSAUNA INTERIOR

Our friend Ryan commissioned a custom sauna bus from us this fall. We first sweat with Ryan back in 2006, and have been bringing saunas to his summer staff events for the last few years. This year his winter staff afterparty featured his new bussauna next to a cozy spa zone in the company parking garage, and we set up the new sauna tent as well. The success of this 2-sauna indoor spa is inspiring us to work on new installation ideas for similar events next year.

With such an eventful and successful year, we've been planning lots of new projects and new missions, and we're all very excited about the year to come.



## More Mobile Saunas

It wasn't long after the launch event in February for our mobile sauna book that we began hearing about all new mobile saunas. The Surf Sauna is an amazing mobile barrel sauna in New Hampshire. Our friends in Bellingham built a new sauna in a old horse trailer in time for their Sh'bang festival in September. The mobile sauna book is available on Amazon.com and on our website.



THE SURF SAUNA IN NEW HAMPSHIRE USA



SH'BANG SHWEAT, A NEW MOBILE SAUNA IN  
BELLINGHAM

## Hot Stoves

Many times we hear the question, how are the saunas heated? Most mobile saunas use wood stoves, but since we run our saunas in the city, propane gas is our fuel of choice. It's readily available, there's no smoke to bother neighbours, and a 20lb barbecue tank will last for about 12 hours of sauna time with no refuelling.

Our original stove design from 2000 was crafted for us by an old biker mechanic; a welded steel box with an old drive shaft for a chimney and a 50 kbtu propane burner inside. Our next stove, built in 2005, included an exhaust manifold to capture more heat, and the fire box has more flame "headroom" for better combustion.

This year we built 3 new stoves. As before, there's a firebox and manifold of 1/8" steel. There's a

stainless heat shield wrapped attached with brackets around the stove. The gas burner and stove door are accessed from outside the vehicle, and the stove vents through the roof via a 4" chimney. Additional steel flashing covers the inside walls around the stove and chimney. The top of the stove is covered with selected granite river rocks which retain heat and can be splashed with water. As in previous designs we use a 50kbtu high-pressure cast iron propane burner with manual controls. We're happy with the new design; it works well, looks good, is adaptable to different saunas, but we'd still like to develop automatic controls.

Have a look at the stove the next time you come out for a sweat, and give a nod to our designers, welders and of course the volunteers that fuel and light the sauna stoves every week.



FIRST STOVE (2001, LEFT). CHICO FINISHES WELDING THE STOVE BODY (CENTER) NEW STOVE READY FOR INSTALLATION (RIGHT)

## Interested in getting more involved?

### Here are some ideas:

- Follow our website blog or [@saunasessions](#) on twitter, or "like" our website. Then you can stay up-to-date on our latest developments and share BC Mobile Sauna Society information with your friends.

- Support BC Mobile Sauna Society directly through a donation. Make a donation online at our website [sauna.saunasessions.ca](#)

- Volunteer your skills and time for fuel and towel runs, mechanical and construction jobs, fundraising, and developing new projects.

- Rent a sauna for your next special occasion and share a unique experience with your guests

- Help us reach the community in new areas. Build a sauna and start hosting your own regular sauna sessions.

- Come and join us for a sweat. Bring a good friend. The quality of our sauna experiences depends upon the people there and the moments we share. Contact us for current locations.

## Support the BC Mobile Sauna Society

The BC Mobile Sauna Society is a community-supported organization that believes saunas as a social practice enable health, authentic connections and dialogue. Our heartfelt thanks goes out to the supporters that are so essential in keeping the saunas hot. Your weekly donations at the sauna, or automatic monthly paypal contributions provide for costs of fuel and sauna upkeep. Our volunteers contribute their time for sauna hosting and administration. The BCMSS also provides rental sauna and spa services that allow us to reach new people, expand our services and develop new community experiences.

Your support is essential to ensure the BC Mobile Sauna Society continues to provide unique sauna community experiences. To learn more, please visit our website or contact us at:

Email: [bcmss@saunasessions.ca](mailto:bcmss@saunasessions.ca) Web: [sauna.saunasessions.ca](http://sauna.saunasessions.ca)

