

## Friends of Lopez Island Pool: What *are* they up to NOW?

It has been three years since FLIP incorporated as a non-profit organization, revitalizing community pool interest going back 15 years. With each step toward building an aquatic center for Lopez we have offered a swim-related fun program for the community.

This summer we are collaborating with the Lopez Family Resource Center to offer “Wetsuit 101” on Saturday, June 25, at the MacKaye Harbor Boat Launch, from 10 AM to 1 PM. The one-day “Get Acquainted with Wetsuits” workshop is open to those over 18, and is limited to six participants. A limited number of wetsuits are provided, and wetsuits may also be purchased from Anacortes Dive Shop and BARE™ Wetsuits at a one-time class discount. Registration is \$40 through LFRC, 468-4117.

More fun is ahead each Sunday from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend as “Swim the Salish Sea” continues through FLIP’s 468 Club fundraisers. A combination of fun- and fund-raising, we invite open-water swimmers to collect sponsors on a flexible scale, depending on their swim level. Last year, swimmers of the Salish Sea raised \$3000 toward pool construction by swimming the equivalent of twice around Lopez Island! Lori Taylor, founding FLIP Board member added, “We never want to lose sight of what we are doing for Lopez. It is important to have FUN in the water!” 468 Club sponsor and swimmer information is on FLIP’s website, [www.lopezislandpool.org](http://www.lopezislandpool.org).

There will be a new emphasis over the next year to get others to swim with special projects, such as Wetsuit 101, a day at Fidalgo Pool for kids and parents, and Swim the Salish Sea. While grant funding will assist this year in getting Lopezans in the water, FLIP will never lose sight of their final goal, an indoor pool accessible year round for all. Robin Bergstrom says it clearly: “We will continue to chip away at the funding iceberg, focusing in this third phase on funding the land survey, institutional septic design, and Class A water system design.”

Most recent of FLIP’s accomplishments is the establishment of a legacy gift campaign, which has so far provided \$1 million for future maintenance and operation costs, relieving worries that this small community will not be able to afford the ongoing costs of pool operation. FLIP President Linda Barton explained the current funding situation in her own creative style: “We are like a sandwich. We have the bread on one side being the donated land, architectural design, zoning and county permits. The other slice of bread is the legacy fund set up for maintaining the pool in the future. Now we just need the middle. Which-- depending on how you look at it is a veggie burger with lettuce or a tuna with tomato.” FLIP would be happy with either sandwich.

Linda continued, “FLIP is profoundly aware of the unusual position it is in during these economic times. It is stunning to meet with FLIP advocates and see they are still optimistic, good humored, creative and passionate about the project. It is clear FLIP will always have fun, and one day a pool!”

May 13, 2011

E N D