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Clean water is not a luxury

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Sometimes we get nostalgic for the ‘good old days’ when there were fewer cars on the roads, moms stayed at home in their aprons raising the kids, while those kids could safely ride their bikes around the neighbourhood, or even across town without a second thought. But hearken your thoughts even farther back, when your grandmother, or great-grandmother, had to do the laundry by hand; washing sheets and towels by rubbing them against a washboard and running them through a wringer before pegging them out one by one on the clothesline that sagged between the back porch and the fence.

Now, let your mind drift back another century and you can see mom in her bonnet tossing the contents of the chamber pot out into the street each morning, then huffing her way into the town square with a yoke on her back to the community well to fill her buckets with water for the morning’s chores. See how far we’ve come? Well, most of us have.

While the residents of the Senanus area are not packing buckets of water from the community well, many of them have been trucking in water for years. And for more than 20 years, the residents there have been asking Central Saanich council to help them fix their water problems — they are even willing to pay for it themselves. This council has moved forward and received a grant to help pay for the cost of running water to the area where wells have been infiltrated by salt water, making it, if not unhealthy, at the least unpalatable. And, as we frequently see on the Peninsula, if an area threatens to become serviced, alarmists shout “development” and try to put a stop to it.

In this day and age, the availability of clean water in an organized municipality is not just a privilege, it is a right. Strict zoning bylaws will keep development at bay. It’s time to put the chamber pot away and bring the area into the 21st century.

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