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MARCH 2023						
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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2023

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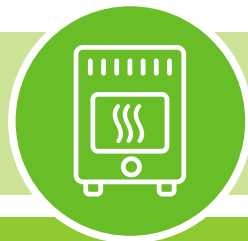
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**Incentive amounts available to First Nations through the Wood Smoke Reduction Program 2023*



qathet
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Let's Talk Trash.ca

WHAT IS WASTE?

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Make your break

When I lived up north, Spring meant the return of the light, and the dramatic sight of the ice breaking up on the river. Northern break up gives the humans who live there a dependable euphoria – deep feelings of renewed energy and hopefulness, shared by the whole community. The crossing between winter and spring is obvious. Bam. It's nice again. Let's celebrate.

On the West Coast, on the other hand, spring wades in through months of mud, and tricks us with rounds of crocuses and snow.

We can't depend on the weather to tell us when spring is here and that it's time to feel euphoric; instead, it's a community effort.

So I am thrilled to introduce the March issue of *qathet Living*: proof that the work everyone has been doing through the winter is about to bloom.

The qathet international film festival lands at The Patricia Theatre March 3, with a line-up that includes local and

international films (Pages 10 and 45), programmed by a society that knows us and our collective hopes and challenges well.

Quilting – the ultimate winter activity – comes out from behind the sewing machine this month with a handful of events, culminating in the Celebration of Quilts at Dwight Hall (Page 16) on March 25 and 26.

The real estate season ramps up again this month, and with it, *qL's* 2023 series charting our wild market (Page 23).

The region's actors have been rehearsing all winter to present a reprise of "Weed Lube" in early March, and "Halfway There" in later March – plus the top offerings from the Festival of Performing Arts will be on stage for the Grand Concert March 4 (Page 46).

And so much more. Spring means making a break from winter, and taking a break to enjoy yourself. **QL**

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

PIETA WOOLLEY



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ON THE COVER:

MaryAnne Hatch, Kathleen O'Malley and Diane Hatch are preparing for the Celebration of Quilts March 25 and 26 at Dwight Hall and the March 15 to 18 community Quilting Bee at the Town Centre.
Photo by Isabelle Southcott



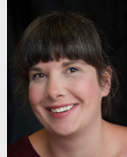
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One might think in a small isolated town like ours that it would be easy to meet people and know everyone, reminiscent of feel-good scenarios like *Northern Exposure* or *All Creatures Great and Small*. Alas, this is often not the case.

- Juliette Jarvis, **Page 52.**

”

MARCH'S CONTRIBUTORS



Professor Emeritus and award winning filmmaker **PEG CAMPBELL** is the Education Director and Programmer for the qathet international film festival and film society.. **See Peg's story, Film Fest Bring Meaning & Depth to IWD, on Page 10.**



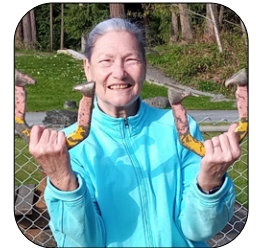
SHIREEN MORTON is a retired Kindergarten/ Grade one teacher. "Julie Kennedy, half of the Twin Kennedy singing group, is part of my Love circle and I want to share an update with you.". **See Shireen's story, Twin Kennedy, on Page 12.**



LEE MACKENZIE is an author and artist living and working in the Powell River Historic Townsite. **See Lee's story, Yes, the Old Courthouse is very Haunted Indeed, on Page 37.**



RUTH PERFITT was just 19 years old when she started at the block loaders in the wood room. From there she put her hand to many different jobs at the mill.'. **See Ruth's story, One Woman's Work, on Page 11.**



SYLVIA SHELDON Sylvia Sheldon moved to Powell River in 1977, and worked as a registered nurse. She is now retired and loves curling, golf and horseshoes. **See Sylvia's story, Horseshoe aficionados, on Page 35.**

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Life-long learning makes leaders

BY ISABELLE SOUTHCOTT

Every weekday morning starting in 2019, Shannon Behan woke up at 4 am to work on her PhD. At 6 am, she'd get ready for her day as Principal of Westview Elementary School. Then, she would spend two hours every evening and all day Saturday and Sunday researching and writing for her degree.

"I took breaks to go running, though," she smiled.

Goal-oriented, tenacious and driven. Shannon is an educator, mother, marathoner, friend, grandmother, daughter and sister. She's also only one of two School District 47 staff who have now earned a doctorate (the other is Superintendent Jay Yule.)

"I love what I do," said Shannon. "I am a goal setter (you should see what my New Year's resolution list looks like!) I chart papers on walls, chat while running. I love learning, and I try to always be looking ahead to what might be coming around the corner."

For her doctoral thesis, Shannon researched why so few School District superintendents in BC are female. About three-quarters of BC teachers are women, but fewer than one third of Superintendents are women.

"Doing the research was fascinating," said Shannon. "I spent at least an hour with the superintendents who participated in this study. The conversations were rich, genuine and honest."

One reason why some women were able to rise into leadership positions is that they had support with raising their children.

Some women leaders had partners who took on extra chores at home, others had family or partners with flexible schedules.

Indeed, Shannon completed her Masters degree when her children were four and six years old. She says that she and the father of her children were "mutually supportive of each other's goals and aspirations."

That was nearly 20 years ago. These days, she is free to pursue her biggest goals.

Most recently, Shannon became a board member of the BC Principals and Vice Principals Association, where

she works to support leaders throughout the Province of British Columbia.

"Being an administrator can be isolating," she said. "Gaining insight from a provincial perspective is so valuable."

Although she has wrapped up her academic career – for now – Shannon still starts each day early, doing what she loves.

Just after 7 am, you'll find her unlocking the doors at Westview Elementary.

"The teachers are working hard each and every day in their classrooms. They are a highly-motivated bunch of amazing people and they inspire me to be better and do better. I am privileged to be working amongst the people I work with!"

What shaped your goals, as a child?

Shannon • I was born into a large Irish Catholic family, where there was a fundamental and core understanding that education and learning is a lifelong venture, that hard work matters and building community is a precious gift. When I was 15, I spent a year in Northern Lapland on the edge of the Arctic Circle as a Rotary Exchange Student. That opportunity opened my eyes to a whole new world outside of Powell River.

How did you get to where you are today, career-wise?

Shannon • After graduating from UVic, my first teaching experience was in Taiwan. I returned home to BC and spent the next 25 years working as a teacher, counsellor and administrator in elementary, middle and high schools. When the School District wanted to expand the international program, I took on the role of Principal of the certified BC offshore school in Beijing, and helped expand the exchange student program here. Then, I took on the Principal position at Westview.

Do you have any mentors?

Shannon • I had some significant teachers/mentors throughout my formal and informal learning career. My mother, who moved here when she was 19, and raised a big family in a new country. My siblings and children who have worked and fostered careers in which they thrive, and careers they



have changed when the time was needed. I have some dear friends who are living the immigrant experience and I watch and learn with humility, from their experiences.

How do you blow off steam?

Shannon • I run, hike, bike, golf, and do yoga. Exercise for me, is about getting outside, moving the body, and connecting with friends. But what I love most is getting lost in the trails and solving all the worlds problems while doing so!

What does it mean to be a woman in leadership?

Shannon • Being a woman in leadership is a complex topic; one that I studied in depth while working on my Doctorate. My dissertation was an intensive study of female superintendents in the Province of British Columbia. We have a disproportionately lower number of females than males in the top jobs. But the reasons for this are complex: family responsibilities, perception of females in the workforce, the lateral vio-

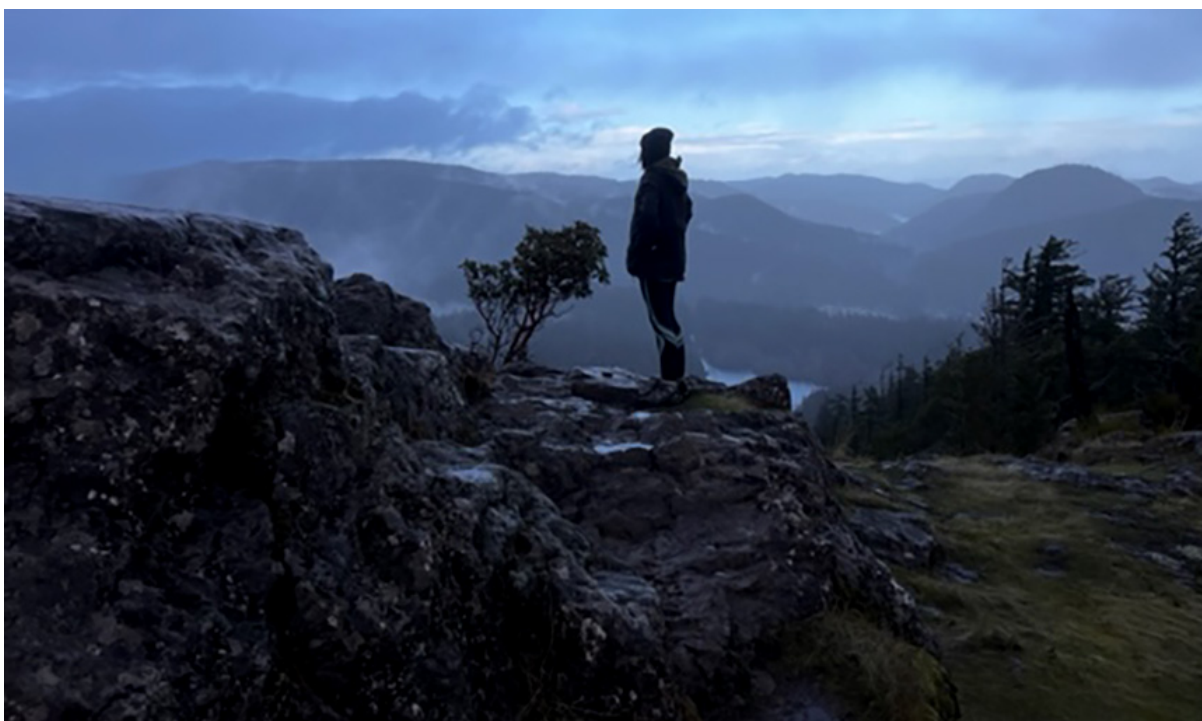
lence women experience in the workplace and more.

Advice for younger women?

Shannon • First and most importantly; be yourself. Take the time and figure out 'who you are' and know your core values. You have a voice, dreams, experiences and hopes that need to be shared with the world. Avoid trying to 'fit into a mold.' Take risks, set goals, believe in yourself. Surround yourself with people who want to see you succeed and do well. Also, find those who will hold up the mirror (figuratively) to you and, while championing you, will also give critical feedback. One of my favourite quotes that is often used by a key mentor is "If you're the smartest person in the room, you're in the wrong room." Find experiences and opportunities that challenge you, lift you up, change your thinking, while always staying true to your core values. The world is a complicated place and we need kindness, connection and creative thinking. You will define what the future holds.



SURROUNDED BY WHAT SHE LOVES: Above, Westview Principal Shannon Behan on a school pajama day, with Grade 5 students and some of their favourite books. Below, Shannon finds much-needed headspace in the quiet of the trails, going for a run.



“Be yourself. Take the time and figure out ‘who you are’ and know your core values... Take risks, set goals, believe in yourself. Surround yourself with people who want to see you succeed and do well.”

- Shannon Behan

Happy International Women’s Day

Each March 8, women around the world celebrate each other’s achievements and call for greater equality.

In this issue of *qathet Living*, we profile three women who are leaders in the workplace and in society: Shannon Behan (Page 6); Erin Seeley (Page 8) and σεῶακας Harmony Johnson (Page 9).

Other IWD stories are:

- IWD at the Film Fest • Page 10
- One Woman’s Work • Page 11
- Twin Kennedy • Page 12
- She Said: She Shed • Page 14
- Quiltstravaganza • Page 16

Erin Seeley

CEO of the YWCA of Metro Vancouver

Listening is leading

BY PIETA WOOLLEY

You might remember Erin from her first job behind the concession counter at the Recreation Complex, serving chicken nuggets to hockey fans. Or, from her time in the Academy of Music choirs, or on the volleyball and baseball teams, or from Girl Guides. To Erin, Powell River was her nest and launch pad; she was born at the old hospital in 1976, and graduated from Max Cameron in 1994 – the last year she lived here full-time before leaving to study at the University of Victoria, travel in Latin America, and later attend Simon Fraser University.

Now, Erin is at the helm of one of BC’s largest social services agencies: The YWCA of Metro Vancouver. Under her leadership, the agency provides housing for women and families, childcare, job skills, legal supports, mentorship, support for those who have experienced abuse, support for single moms, and much more.

“I lead from behind,” Erin said. “My skills are convening people, giving them skills and furthering the team and objective. I am pretty dedicated to the science of that. How do you connect, coach and mentor people and create an organizational structure where everyone can do their best?”

“We have three internal committees in our organization, all led by those with lived experience: a racial equity group, a gender diversity group and a truth and reconciliation group. It takes a big weight off my shoulders as CEO to avoid top-down decision making. I know that working this way helps advance



A STRONG START: Above, Erin Seeley was a sporty, community-involved kid growing up in Powell River in the 1980s. She says her roots here helped to take on an executive role (right) and “lead from behind.”



“This work is never smooth! It’s always messy. It takes a board that listens. You have to be willing to take risks, and to fail.”

social justice and creates systems of change.”

It’s not easy. Changing a large organization towards inclusive leadership can be gruelling, Erin reports. But for effectiveness and justice, it’s worth it.

“This work is never smooth! It’s always messy. It takes a board that listens. You have to be willing to

take risks, and to fail. Make sure your panels are really diverse. That can lead to differing opinions. The solution is to always default to values like respect and integrity, because sometimes discussions can get impassioned.”

“I always felt lucky growing up in a small community where my parents had good jobs [her father, the late Bob Seeley, co-owned and later worked at the GM dealership, and her step-mom, Kathy Northrup, managed Grace House.] I always knew we were fortunate. As I grew older, I learned how systems work against many people.”

From the tough love she received from Mrs. Halliday at Grief Point school, who made her challenge herself academically, to the generosity of the community scholarships that helped her chart her course, she credits this place for nurturing her, opening her eyes, and pushing her to be her best.



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Lead with your values

BY PIETA WOOLLEY

Tla'amin Nation's Harmony Johnson has dedicated her professional life to making change. Because so much has to change.

The consultant, who lives between Tsleil-Waututh Territory and Tishosum, has been behind some of the biggest moments in reconciliation in qathet, BC and across Canada. They include working on the Tla'amin treaty; recording elders speaking ayajuthem; leading policy work with the First Nations Summit and First Nations Leadership Council; shaping and launching the First Nations Health Authority; writing *Written as I Remember It* with her grandmother, Elsie Paul; and authoring "They Sigh or Give You the Look: Discrimination and Status Card Usage" on behalf of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs – in response to the handcuffing assault by police of Maxwell Johnson and his 12-year-old granddaughter in a Vancouver bank.

And so much more.

It was in 2020, when she and former judge Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond wrote "In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care," that she found her stride, she said.

"It let me unleash myself," Harmony revealed. "It really changed the trajectory of things for me."

Harmony grew up here, in a large family with plenty of close cousins. She graduated from



Brooks – among the first students to use ayajuthem as a second language as a credit for post-secondary. She went to Simon Fraser University for her undergraduate degree, and UBC for a Masters in Health Administration (where she now teaches).

As a consultant, Harmony says she only takes on projects that align with her values.

"Living in alignment with your values helps you feel settled in your own skin, and other people relate to it," she said. "It creates meaning for them too. Identity is a core value for me. And the core of my identity is being a Tla'amin person. I am dedicated to the perpetuation of a Tla'amin world view. I have a value of service, of being of service; for my work to have impact and meaning that I can see, that is tractable. Integrity: I do what I say I'm going to do, and when I don't, I say why. And I value reciprocity, relationship."

In 2021, Harmony co-chaired the Possible Name Change Working Group, as the Hegus asked her to. She says she was honoured to be asked.



BEING BOTH: Left, Harmony Johnson with her nieces, on the land. Above, Harmony as researcher, policy critic, and leader.

"I agreed, understanding that it was going to be challenging given the personal investment we all have. Maybe it was hubris on my part: I thought it would be fine. I teach reconciliation and decolonization. I am considered an expert. But I didn't realize how much it would test me, my intellect, and my heart. I didn't realize how much leadership it would take to coordinate the working group in the face of challenging public dialogue that was over the line. There was a lot of rhetoric on social media, in town halls, that undermined all of our dignity."

Ultimately, the working group recommended taking a break while the City and region address 11 recommendations that would allow the process to move forward again.

"We found a gap in factual knowledge, and that people in the region have been socialized to believe some things that are not true," Harmony said. "Stewart [Alsgard] and I led a process within the working group to develop agreement on a set of recommendations that put a pathway forward. I hope we can still follow it."

"We understand we are all here to stay. My hope is that we find a way we can all live here in the region with dignity."

Leadership, Harmony said, is really about kindness. That means supporting others to succeed, and speaking up when others are compromised. It also means embracing being challenged, and surrounding yourself with people who will help you grow.



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DIG DEEP ON MARCH 8: From left to right, *Holy Spider*, *Rosie* and *Violet Gave Willingly* are all screening as part of the qathet international film festival on IWD.

Film fest brings meaning and depth to International Women’s Day

BY PEG CAMPBELL

The qathet international film festival has programmed two exceptional features and one short film to honour International Women’s Day, on Wednesday, March 8.

These three films bring to light the resilience of women, and examine in artful and incisive ways the pressing issues of sexual, emotional and physical violence that women face from men, which are not protected enough by our government systems.

The locally-made short film *Violet Gave Willingly* gives us insight into the art making of Texada textile artist Deb-

orah Dumka while leading us skillfully into devastating family revelations.

Depicted in *Rosie* is the ongoing impact of the taking of Indigenous children in the ‘60’s scoop’ and the healing that can come from creating your own family.

Women in the sex industry face specific challenges, and *Holy Spider* looks at how our patriarchal mindset causes these women further injury and danger.

Screening at 1:30 pm are two films. The short *Violet Gave Willingly* is by Claire Sanford, with sound design by her sister Sophia Sanford, and featuring her mother, artist Deborah Dumka. All three will be in attendance, with

Claire via zoom and Deborah and Sophia in person.

Their Q&A will follow the screening of the Canadian feature film *Rosie*, by Cree-Métis filmmaker Gail Maurice, set in Montréal in the 1980s, about a young Indigenous girl who ends up in the care of her Aunt Fred, a woman who can barely take care of herself let alone a young child. It’s a true depiction of how the LGBTQIA+ community creates their own family within their friendships. The afternoon screenings are sponsored by The Tla’amin Nation.

At 7 pm, we will open the evening with a prayer and songs by Cyndi Pallen and the Tla’amin Spirit Sing-

ers. *Holy Spider*, from Iran, will then screen. Based on a true story, the film follows a fictional female investigative journalist who wants to crack the long-running case of a serial killer of sex workers, where the police have been slow to take action. This evening is sponsored by the Old Courthouse Inn.

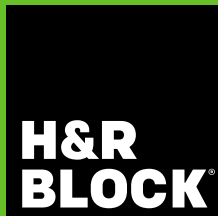
Bringing these issues to light through film connects our audience to what is going on locally and globally, and offers a way for our community to gather together to look at the challenges that face women, and celebrate their resilience in going forward to create a better world for us all.

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One Woman's Work

BY RUTH PERFITT

You might say I worked in my Grandfather's footsteps. My maternal Grandfather, Ray Olsen, was one of the first employees at the mill. The family lived around Powell Lake (Olsen's Valley) and he started with the mill in the grinder rooms. He and another fellow would travel by boat from Olsen's Landing down to the mill, often staying the week in town at a place on Poplar Street and rowing back up on weekends bringing supplies for the family.

Leaving high school in 1972, I heard the mill was hiring; my choice was to apply for work there rather than go to Vancouver to attend Langara College. Friends (Georgia Schindler, Maureen Whiting & Claudia Cote) joined the workforce around the same time.

The mill changed with the lumber and paper markets and my jobs changed with the mill as it closed down old and opened new operations. Lumber would go on the barges over to places like Japan and Australia. Huge paper rolls would be loaded directly from the mill onto freighters and barges bound for Vancouver and overseas.

I worked in the wood room first and later on the wharf. In the wood room I would grab a peavey to flip logs onto the rollers to take them to the edger to be cut to size. I was on the 32" and 64" block loaders, getting the slabs on the conveyor to the sawyers to cut them to the finished size. Tail sawyers like me would direct the slabs cut by the edger men. We worked amongst huge logs and huge saw blades.

The mill never shut because of the weather. There was no or little heating in the big buildings (doorways and openings had big canvas coverings to try to keep out any cold weather). Flap, flap, the snow, the rain, the cold wind would come in.

Just like my Grandfather, getting to work would be half the battle some-

Because I was willing and able, I put my hand to just about anything and it turned out that the mill was a pretty decent place to make a living.

- Ruth Perfitt

times and in the early days my Volkswagen bug would get me to work in the winter. From the parking lot there was a walk downhill and if you were working in the wood room that was across the yard. There was a little news and tobacco type shop run by a nice old fellow at the top of the hill where workers could get their smokes.

Another really cold place to work was when I was operating the front end loaders; they had no heating and I was constantly clearing the windshield in the freezing cold loading and unloading the barges and ships.

A lot of the sawdust or chips for pulp came in by barge, especially after the mill stopped producing lumber. Metal ramps were set up to get the loaders into the barge. The sawdust would be taken out and spilled into grates onto hoppers to take it up to the kraft mill at the top of the hill.

Sometimes because of scheduling or tides, drivers were pushed to get the sawdust off fast. The dozer boats were the hard ones. One time a driver came



WHAT SHE'S DRIVING: Front end loader, 1989. Ruth Perfitt said, "they had no heating and I was constantly clearing the windshield in the freezing cold."

Photo courtesy of the qathet Museum & Archives

down so fast out of the chip barge that the loader was hanging over the back-bumpers. Everyone hopped to it and rescued the driver and vehicle. Good thing the window was open a bit and he could get out.

Wages depended on the work we did; we played as hard as we worked. The schedule was a 5-day week with varied shifts; sometimes I would be called in to do an extra shift. The graveyard shift was not my favourite and nothing I could get used to. Offloading chip barges and dumping chips into the hoppers my eyes would try to close. In those days I played ball; ball fields abounded and like my Mom I loved softball, playing pitcher, first base or centre field. JP Dallos was our main field.

Paydays were always special and talk about a family affair: my cousin, Karen Olsen, worked in the pay office and I would sometimes see her when I went to collect my pay. We would all line up at the wicket to pick up our cheques every week and head over to the Rodmay for an end of week brew or two.

Over 35-years I held different jobs, first putting my hand to the block loaders and then the frontend loaders. The kraft mill would be smelly (part of it was at the top of the hill) and the pulp came down in big pipes. After I got my air brake ticket I would drive the trucks

up the Wildwood hill to dump sludge (all the waste paper pulped in water). Coming down the hill was no fun with air brakes and once the brakes failed and with my heart in my mouth, I was lucky to be able to pull over and wait for someone from the garage to come up and help.

Part of the job was regular maintenance on two trucks (one standard and one automatic) keeping everything tight, air pressure, oil checks, etc. and to keep them filled up from fuel tanks on site. I also put my hand to yard maintenance including gardening around all the buildings and roadsides.

Work relations were sometimes good, sometimes bad. We could put up with some bantering, but I have lasting bad feelings about some of the slanderous graffiti that was on some of the walls in the mill. Some men thought that the mill was not a place for women to work; all I could do was avoid them.

The mill would hold social functions, usually at Dwight Hall, to celebrate holidays like Christmas or New Years. And for my 25-year recognition there was a dinner out at the Vancouver Hotel - pretty fancy for this truck driver!

Because I was willing and able, I put my hand to just about anything and it turned out that the mill was a pretty decent place to make a living.



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Twin Kennedy pauses country career for chemo

BY SHEREEN MORTON

Looking forward to the next Twin Kennedy concert? Unfortunately, we are going to have to wait for their return.

Originally, Julie and Carli Kennedy were scheduled to return to their hometown just before COVID changed the world. The next plan was to entertain us this January. However, the music has temporarily stopped!

Many of you know Julie and Carli, and some of us are fortunate to have them as part of our lives. I had the pleasure of teaching them in Kindergarten and Grade One as well as being their neighbor at Lang Bay during their growing up years. Through these connections our families have become lifelong friends. We also have twin daughters and when the four of them are together, it is magical.

For those of you who are new to Powell River, I will give a brief background on the two talented musicians. Julie and Carli have been singing almost as long as they could talk. When they were five years old, they performed at a wedding. From then on music became a priority in their household with their dad Bruce on his guitar accompanying them and mom Jaymie taking them to music lessons at the Academy and out of town.

They performed at local venues such as Sea Fair, Blackberry Fest, Folk Fest as well as at a Variety

Can you help Julie?

Our community has always looked after its own, so I am reaching out to all of you in the hope that you may choose to show support through prayer or by sending healing energy, or in any way you feel appropriate in times of need.

If you choose to be of financial assistance to help with the overwhelming medical costs a GoFundMe has been set up at gofund.me/51c6dea5

~ Shereen Morton

Telethon with another local artist, Rob Carriere.

After graduating from Max Cameron high school, Carli and Julie got degrees from University of Victoria. In this period of time they taught music and learned a variety of instruments.

If you haven't seen the duet of Julie on fiddle and Carli on guitar, you might want to check it out on YouTube. It is quite amazing!

Our hometown gals now reside in Nashville as their music careers continue to grow. Song writing is one of their passions and most of the songs they record are their own. They tour across Canada and the U.S. with their favourite venue being their hometown of Powell River. They have never forgotten



their roots.

By now you may be wondering why I am authoring this article. As someone who holds these amazing young women in her heart, I wanted to share an update with you. Why did I state at the beginning that the music has temporarily stopped?

In December Julie was diagnosed with breast cancer. This has obviously been devastating for Julie and her loved ones. Fortunately, her doctor went into immediate action and Julie began chemother-



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NASHVILLE CAN WAIT: Far left, Lang Bay kids Julie and Carli Kennedy with their father Bruce and sister Katelyn. Above, known to the world as the country duo "Twin Kennedy," the sisters have paused their latest album release. Left, Julie Kennedy started chemotherapy for breast cancer in December 2022. For more about Twin Kennedy, see twinkennedy.com.

apy before Christmas.

Julie has a long road ahead of her and is facing this challenge with positivity and courage. She decided to share her journey in the hopes that it may be helpful to anyone who should ever receive such a frightening diagnosis. Some of you may be following her on Facebook. However, if you are of my generation, you may not use social media.

Julie has always brought joy into this world with her upbeat attitude and genuine smile and laughter. Now is the time when she needs support.



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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2023

She said: 'She Shed!'

Finding gratitude
in life's changes.

BY TRACEY BELLMANE

Sometimes you get married knowing you're going to build something together. A family – a life together. Sometimes you build a she-shed – together.

Picture a tiny Cranberry bungalow, filled with loud, rowdy, messy boys and a husband who had come from Down Under who was much like a child too. A party of five. A party? More like a rave.

Try to sew and write and craft in the chaos that is your family home with little curious boys with quick, sticky, touchy hands, asking constantly for snacks, drinks, can they sew on that machine too? That gas pedal looks like they could drive it really, really fast...

Something had to give before my nerves did. I dreamed a little dream.

That something was a shed. A shed I could escape to and sew and craft and write and read and do my thing. Since, as my husband was always happy to quip that I wear the pants in the family, the project was declared a go! A plethora of YouTube videos and a lumber delivery later and we were ready to get to work.

I gathered windows from Shop n Swap on Facebook. I recycled the old back door. Not the door the bear ruined breaking into my home, a different door with a window. I started a Pinterest collection of things I liked, of shed plans and a million other projects. Small "discussions" ensued. As always, I won.

I didn't realize just how much work building a shed was going to be. I was impatient and cranky but, as we got into the workflow, I would calm down. Go with the rhythm of the build, and sometimes actually listen to my husband.

Bless him, he put up with me, and the tiny build-

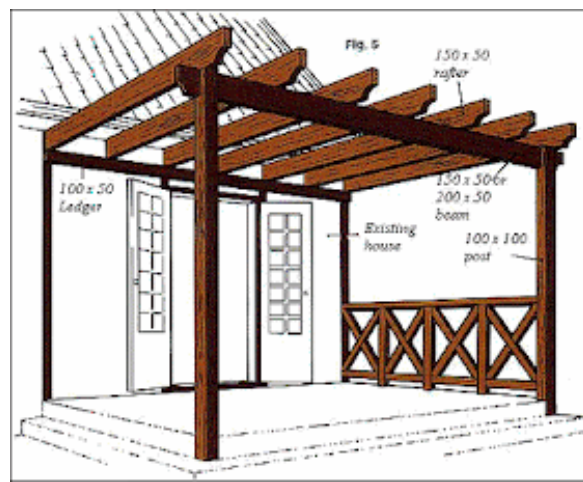


A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN: Above, Tracey Bellmane relaxes in her backyard she-shed—a retreat from the demands of parenting a trio of young boys. Above right, the shed's exterior, crafted from recycled building materials, and shed plans. Right, Hut builder extraordinaire (and "angel") Eagle Walz (left) helped Tristan Bellmane (right) complete the shed in summer 2022.

ing slowly came to life. I learned to use the nail gun and the dreaded chop saw. I never did take to the table saw, and that's an understatement. Learned to hook up the compressor, to put things away, nicely – everything in its place so you could get it all out again the next day.

Building a shed is a lot like building a relationship. It needs a good foundation, plenty of patience and an understanding that everything is going to work out okay. It would take as much time as it needed to get built.

Eagle Walz, master of the trail build and the hut build too, began to come and help. Angels come in all shapes and sizes. Underneath, Eagle determined, the shed needed more support, do you know you're a quarter inch out here? Let's fix that. And Eagle up on the shed roof putting down roofing shingles because I cry if I have to go up a ladder. The ugly cry. You know the one with all the snot and wetness and



“Building a shed is a lot like building a relationship. It needs a good foundation, plenty of patience and an understanding that everything is going to work out okay. It would take as much time as it needed to get built.”

- Tracey Bellmane

into liver failure in 2017 and tired easily, even after he recovered. There was talk of a liver transplant, but he was deemed too healthy for that and we basked in the surprise of him still being alive, being in Canada, being with me. Such a love story I could write...

The interior of the shed was whitewashed. I'm a reluctant painter, but wiping watered down wet paint onto the walls was more my thing.

Cherry hardwood for the floors and now decor that I could really call 'me.' Curtains from tea towels. My Schleich horse collection because I'm still that little girl that was so madly in love with horses but who now realizes how impractical it would be to have a pony at 55 years old/young/you know what I mean. Bits and pieces of me filled the she-shed.

Sewing in peace ensued. Bliss.

We had dreams to put a deck on the shed too, but we ran out of summer, out of good weather, out of time.

Ten days before my husband died of liver cancer he told me he had a dream; a dream that he was transforming into a raven.

Two days after he died, I decided to take the boys swimming. I had to decide between Inland Lake and Hammill Lake—I chose Inland. A beautiful sunny day with a light breeze on the lake tipping the chop with diamonds from the sun. As we walked out to the end of the dock, I could hear the mournful sound of a *didgeridoo* playing in the campground somewhere. What are the odds? Was Tristan sending me a message?

A loud call from above and I looked up to see a huge raven in an aspen tree. I watched it there until the *didgeridoo* music faded. The raven gave a last cheeky call before it lifted from the tree branches and flew off up the lake, its wings making that whumping sound that only large birds can make under flight.

I watched it until it was almost out of sight. I watched it until a query from one of the boys drew my attention back to the here and the new now.

“Are you coming in, mum?”

I nodded, turned, and dove head-first off the dock into the dark blue depths of the lake.

sobbing breaths you can't quite catch. Eagle was sent to save us from our over, or is that under-building ambitions.

One of the hardest lessons I've learned in life is that it's okay to say yes to offers of help. Yes, thank you Eagle.

The COVID pandemic raged on around us as we built our way through the cool, wet spring and then hot summer days, glad for the shade the newly built shed gave us in my desert of a back yard. We worked in 15 or 20 minute increments, then sat in lawn chairs and talked and drank iced tea and ate fruit.

We worked at Tristan's speed, because he went

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When the long arm is the law

March is National Quilting Month, and qathet is breaking out the fat quarters like never before. You can see quilts, watch quilts being made, make a quilt yourself, or get some of the skills to start you on your quilting journey.

Here, Nina Mussellam of the Timberlane Quilters Guild, explains the local quilt scene.

Tell me a bit about the Timberlane Quilters Guild...

Nina • We have recovered from the COVID-era gathering restrictions, and have a healthy membership once again. We are happy to finally get back to regular quilt shows.

We meet monthly for business meetings, meet weekly for stitch and social time, and plan monthly evening demonstrations or week-end workshops all taught by our local membership.

Our community quilts program happily produces about 30 to 40 lap quilts a year to gift to places such as the oncology department at the hospital or the Children and Family services. All our gifted quilts remain in the region.

What is the history of the quilt show?

Nina • Our last quilt show at Dwight Hall was in March of 2019 and was then put on hold due to the BC COVID rules. We hope that people will feel safe to come to our upcoming show March 25 and 26, and want to mingle with all our members. I think this is our 17th show and we have had them every second year since 1989. The first show was held in the Recreation Complex, and we've used a number of locations over the years, but we feel we have found our permanent home at the historical Dwight Hall. We are grateful to our Arts Council for the in-kind grant for the use of this historic building.

The people who love quilting really, really LOVE quilting. What's so entrancing about it?

Nina • I find I am still super enthused even after 35-plus years. I love to mix colours, fabric, patterns, and design my own work. The geometry exercises my brain. Time spent in my studio calms me down. It is proven that creative work in crafts or the arts is good for people's well being.

What can people expect to see at this year's show?

Anything strange or unusual? Significant?

Nina • Our members are not afraid of colour! Nothing bland, all exciting colour combos. Many are designed by the quilters themselves or they have adapted and changed a pattern in new and exciting ways.

March is also International Women's Day. How are quilting and women connected?

Nina • Well, for centuries women have been the principle people spinning and weaving the fabric for clothing or bed coverings. They have brought that skill to Canada as immigrants. The first materials were wools and linens, but by the 1800's cottons became more available to purchase as a finished product.

Stories are told about spending "egg money" at the general store to purchase muslin for quilts. Calicos and muslin



Quilt Events in March

Through March

Meghan Hildebrand Paintings

On display at Dancing Tree Gallery. Quilt-inspired paintings. "Lush with storytelling potential and symbols and clues, quilting offers a connection to local histories and the role women have played in activism, art and society."

March 11

Saturday Sewing Squad – "Free Form Curves"

11-2 pm at qathet Art Centre. This class will be an introduction into free hand cutting and piecing of curves (see square, above). All levels of sewers or sewists are welcome! Instructor – Nina Mussellam. Pre-register at qathetart.ca

March 19

Block Printing Workshop

2 pm-5 pm qathet Art & Wares. If you're interested, mark your calendars and email create@qa-w.ca or call the shop 604-413-6830 to reserve your spot! (and yes! You can print with fabric ink on fabric.)

March 15 to 18

Quilting Bee

11 am to 3 pm daily, Town Centre Mall. Quilting demonstrations and drop-in bring your own quilt. See ad on Page 17.

March 25 & 26

Celebration of Quilts

10 til 5 Saturday, 10 til 4 Sunday, Dwight Hall. See 100+ locally-made quilts, plus enjoy the tea room, shop, display, kids' workshop and much more. \$6 entry for ages 13+.

were collected in the 1900's when feed sacks and flour or sugar sacks were printed with designs to encourage the housewife to purchase a company's product. Scraps were traded by neighbours to patch clothing or bed coverings. Before women were allowed to vote, there were many quilts made with a silent message about a person's political opinion. Even today, calls go out for national quilt submissions with controversial themes.

If you don't know anything about the craft of quilting, what's something you should do to prepare to fully appreciate what you're seeing at the show?

Nina • Come with an open mind that there will be displays of traditional bed quilts, mingled with art quilts to hang on the wall.



IN STITCHES: Margie Facey-Crowther, right, and Rene Burke, above, sew together squares of fabric ready for putting into a quilt like the one above that will be among the 200 to be on display at this year's show.

Photos by Isabelle Southcott



“Before women were allowed to vote, there were many quilts made with a silent message about a person’s political opinion.”
 - Nina Mussellam



You Bee-long at our Quilting Bee

MARCH 15 TO 18



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**Bee located between Telus and The Source.*

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BEE COLOURFUL: The Timberlane Quilters Guild in action. Seated are MaryAnne Hatch and Dianne Hatch. Behind, from left to right are Donna Sand, Mick McClosky, Myrt Brewster, Moreen Reed, Kathleen O'Malley and Wanda Shorridge.


Over the years I have been told that it's not a real quilt if it a) is not hand quilted or b) is not for a bed covering. I argue that any quilt can be beautiful with hand-guided machine quilting, and it can be worn as a jacket or hung on a wall like a tapestry, and still be called a quilt.

You will see purses, table runners, cuddly couch quilts for TV watching or masterpieces that can be entered in a national juried art show.

There will be humor and touching messages hidden in the meaning of a gifted quilt. There will be lots of quilters available

around the hall to explain different techniques, answer questions and a demonstration table for children and families to learn about quilt block construction.

What kinds of quilts will be hung?

Nina • Many techniques will be displayed, such as patchwork, applique, free motion quilting, and our annual guild challenge. This year the theme was to portray something about her majesty Queen Elizabeth and use a particular fabric that was for the color platinum for her platinum jubilee. We are all eager to see this unveiled. 



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Calling all quilters: Bee time

You are invited to a community quilting bee at the Powell River Town Centre.

In honour of National Quilting Month, Lorelei Guthrie, General Manager of the Powell River Town Centre, has organized a quilting bee at the mall from March 15 to 18.

The community quilting bee will take place between 11 am and 3:30 pm at the mall in the vacant store space between Telus and The Source.

"It's open for folks who want to come and observe or bring their own machines. We will have tables set up for them so they can come and join the hive," said Lorelei.

The quilting bee is more of a demonstration so those interested in the process can watch, see how it is done and ask questions.

There will be an assortment of finished quilts hung on the walls so people can view completed work.

Some members of the Timberlane Quilter's Guild will be working on very special quilts known as communi-

ty quilts, at the quilting bee. These quilts are made with donated fabric and scraps of fabric left over from quilters own projects that are made into blocks and sewn into beautiful quilts and donated to the community. Over the years, these quilts have been given to many, many people including patients at the hospital and Oncology, extended care residents, Grace House and fire victims. "We have contributed 255 community quilts since our last quilt show, said Moreen Reed, President of the Timberlane Quilter's Guild. "Our quilt show is a fundraiser to supply our members with batting and backing for the quilts they make from their stashes for community quilts as well as an opportunity to show off the amazing talent we have here!"

"We love the whole donation part of making the community quilts," said quilters Diane Hatch and Mary Anne Hatch. "After I retired, I wanted to give back to the community and this is the perfect way to do it," said Diane.



BEYOND the Classroom

Building student connection and lifelong skills through extracurricular activities

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

are an important part of the school experience for many students. Not only do they provide an opportunity for students to explore their interests and passions, but also they help to develop important skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and communication. As well, these activities beyond the regular classroom build confidence and self-esteem.

All School District 47 (SD47) schools are striving to provide a positive and supportive learning experience for all students. One way to do this is through building school community and connection with extracurricular activities, clubs, advisory committees, and school sport.

We know these activities are crucial to the social, emotional, and physical well-being of our students. Studies show that students who are ac-

tively involved in extracurricular activities have a greater sense of connection to their school community.

Students are provided with an outlet for self-expression, leadership development, and increased social connections.

SD47 is fortunate to have some incredible teams of educators, staff, and volunteers to run these important student activities.

Edgehill Elementary

Rippers Mountain Bike Club

The Edgehill Rippers Mountain Bike Club is for students in Grades 3 to 7 and promotes lifelong active living, bicycle safety, appreciation for the outdoors, and community building. The program averages between 10 and 20 riders, four staff members and two parent volunteers weekly. The club rides local trails as well as popular out-of-town trails such as Cumberland Trails on year end field trips. The benefits of this club are clearly seen through the increase in students' confidence, self-esteem and overall mental and physical health. Edgehill is proud of their volunteer staff members and parents who make this program possible. This program will continue to thrive as Edgehill secures continued funding for bike repairs and expenses for weekly rides like snacks, water bottles and transportation. Edgehill Rippers rip up the trails!

Student Leaders

This dynamic, multi-aged group discuss issues and plan school activities with the support of Edgehill teachers and Parent Advisory Committee. They have organized two major events so far this year, including the "Spooky Forest" in October and December's "Feast & Festival" which were both hugely successful. Edgehill's student leaders learn essential skills like collaboration, teamwork, problem solving, and planning. It

is amazing for students to see their ideas become reality and have an opportunity to experience leadership roles at a young age.

E.H.L. (Edgehill Hockey League)

On Mondays, the puck drops at 3 pm in the Edgehill gym for drop-in floor hockey. All students are invited, and they routinely have between 25 – 30 students ranging from Grade 2 to Grade 7 weekly. It's great to see the number of parents and guardians who are becoming regulars in the stands as well! Edgehill loves the fact that they have students who play hockey outside of school, students who have only played at school and many first timers who are just learning about hockey. The purpose is to get some exercise, improve skills, practice sportsmanship, and have some fun.

YOU CAN
HELP

If community members are looking to donate their used hockey sticks, Edgehill would love to have them!

Westview Elementary

Athletic Clubs

Westview offers a variety of school sport options including, volleyball, basketball, Ground Pounders (running club), and a mountain bike club. Athletics is a vibrant and dynamic aspect of Westview Elementary which creates school spirit, builds skills, and fosters healthy competition amongst their school and the community population.

Friendship (GSA) Club

Westview's Friendship Club is an elementary school version of a GSA (Gender and Sexuality Alliance). At the middle and high school level, a GSA provides a safe and supportive place for LGBTQ+ students and allies to create community. At the elementary school level, Westview's club addresses topics of family, identity, and respect. They constantly work to create a space for LGBTQ+ families, students, and allies to connect and hold space for each other. Their Friendship club is one of the many means for them to promote a safe, healthy school climate and an anti-bullying message.

Student Leadership

Students who participate in leadership programs benefit in their ability to be more productive, succeed under pressure, and effectively work as a team as well as increase their emotional intelligence, self-confidence, and diversity awareness. Throughout their time spent in leadership, students exercise collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity in caring relationships as they work to fulfill common goals to improve school community. Student leaders are respected by their peers and become important role models.



Texada Elementary

Rock-Climbing Club

Powered by parent volunteers, the Texada rock-climbing club hosts students after school. Students keep mind and body engaged as they try problem-solving techniques and support each other to master the climbs on the wall.

Texada Guides

Texada Guides engages girls from ages 6-15 in community-building activities year-round. Whether planning and embarking on trips, or playing Rummoli in the library, Texada Guides is a chance for students to share stories, laughter, and wisdom.



Henderson Elementary

Student Leadership

The intention of the Henderson Student Leadership program is to provide students with opportunities to engage in building school culture, plan and lead events in the school that raise school spirit and help students feel connected to their school and place. Students are always excited to attend meetings and are always looking for more ways to connect and create opportunities with students at the school. Henderson has two leadership bodies that make up the Leadership Program:

- **Henderson Student Council**

This group is comprised of Grade 6-7 students who are interested in planning and executing activities at the school. Any students who wish to be a part of the council will be allowed to do so. They have already planned activities such as a fun day, a dance, and other activities within the school.

- **Henderson Elementary Senate**

The senate is comprised of two representatives from each division in the school: one student selected by the teacher, and the other selected by a decision-making process in the class. The purpose of the senate is to receive feedback from all the students, and to allow students from all grades a say in what things they feel the school needs. The senate is working on a whole school mural project that will allow each year to create a display outside of the school.

Athletic Clubs

Henderson's main sport clubs are basketball and volleyball, where they see about 35% of their total student body participating regularly! These activities provide coaches the opportunity to work on team building skills with students as well as get them involved in healthy activities.

YOU CAN HELP

Henderson needs more volunteer sport coaches! If you are a local community member who would be interested in volunteering, please contact Henderson Elementary to find out more.



Kelly Creek

Kelly Creek Community School Association runs after school activities Monday to Thursday in the Kelly Creek gym. Each day consists of a different age group, games, and activities. All activities have a goal of getting their students active, sweaty, and having fun!



James Thomson

Beading

James Thomson is grateful to have Indigenous supported and gifted beading instruction take place in their school three days a week. The activity is led by James Thomson's Language Teacher, Alicia Point, and Tla'amin Nation member čεpθ (auntie/uncle) Brandi Marriott, who brings a wealth of knowledge and learning to their students. All students are welcome to join and build on their creativity, fine motor, and cognitive skills.



Yoga

Every Friday during recess, a group of around 20 students meet on their yoga mats in the gym to find balance and strength. Yoga is such a positive tool for young children's physical and mental health.

Student Council

Student Council at JT is a passionate group of Grade 5-7 students who are involved in student activities, recognition, and support. The group meets weekly and has successfully organized a number of school events and initiatives, including a Talent Show, a Flea Market, and a Halloween Food Drive.



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Brooks Secondary

Stu Cru

The Brooks Stu Cru works to create a positive school environment through fun activities and events at school. Students participate in many activities at Brooks including morning Tea and Toast where any student can get tea and/or toast before school. Stu Cru connects with students through many avenues, including new student tours, sponsoring spirit days, and school dances.

YOU CAN HELP

Stu Cru hopes families will encourage their children to participate in school spirit days! Also, donations of prizes for events or spirit days are always welcome and appreciated.

Interact Club

The Brooks Interact Club endeavors to bring students together to develop leadership skills while discovering the power of service above self. The club organizes student-driven projects that help the school and local community, while also supporting at least one international project throughout the school year. The Rotary Club of Powell River provides mentors and liaisons to guide the work of the "Interactors."

Mental Health Advocacy Group/ Wellness Lounge

Students in the Brooks Mental Health Advocacy Group are working to make changes for improved mental health in their school and community. By advocating for change, students are helping create connections and healthy supportive environments. Club members are trained as Wellness Peers to run a Wellness Lounge in the school. The Wellness Lounge creates a safe and welcoming environment for students experiencing loneliness, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. Students in the Mental Health Advocacy Group have plans to conduct mental health surveys and wellness circles, sponsor speakers on different mental health topics, and increase the number of days that the Wellness Lounge is open.

YOU CAN HELP

If you are able to make a financial contribution to help improve the look and feel of the Wellness Lounge, please reach out to Brooks Secondary.

Partners in Education

PIE Mountain Bike Clubs

These ambitious groups run in the Fall and Spring in both qathet and Comox Valley Regions. These clubs allow students who typically complete their schoolwork at home opportunities to meet other students with similar interests.

GSA Club

PIE hosted its first online Gender & Sexuality Alliance (GSA) meeting in February! They welcome all PIE student members and allies of the LGBTQ+ community to join.

School Sport

For the first time ever, qathet Region PIE students have been joining in district school sports. They are currently playing basketball, practicing twice a week, and had a team entered in the district tournament in February.



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Presented by: GEE DAN

Use the orthography below to write in how to pronounce each letter. Also see Dr. Elsie Paul's more precise descriptions at bit.ly/3cc8iU4.



**ʔAYʔAJUΘƏM?
YOU GOT THIS**

RANDOLPH TIMOTHY JR.

.....
_____ **ʔiʔčos** Spring

.....
_____ **ʔiʔčos ʔəpχ^w** Spring Break

.....
_____ **saʔtx^w** Woman

.....
_____ **ʔasəm saʔtx^w** Strong woman

.....
_____ **θaʔ^θəm** Spring Salmon

Toller Tales
JIGS AND ZUNGA
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DESIGNER SIGNS

A special thanks to Designer Signs for printing the thousands of stickers that have been handed out to local children during Jigs and Zunga visits to schools. Get a **FREE STICKER** and colouring sheet with each book purchased at *qathet Living*.

ʔayʔajuθəm orthography

ʔəʔamən | kómoks | χ^wεmaʔk^wu | & ʔohos

This orthography is based on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). This guide offers a simplified version of the sounds; for an authentic accent, listen at firstvoices.com. Most letters you'll see in ʔayʔajuθəm are familiar. Pronounce them as you normally would, with the exception of the vowels and "y," which are always pronounced:

a	ah
e	ay as in May
i	ee
o	oh
u	oo
y	y as in yell

ε	eh
ɪ	ih
ʊ	oo as in look
ə	uh
č	ch
č̣	popping c
ǰ	dg
ᵏ	popping k
k ^w	kw
ᵏ ^w	rounded, popping k
ɬ	Breathy L sound
ᵑ	popping p
ᵑ̣	popping q

q ^w	rounded q
ᵑ̣ ^w	rounded, popping q
š	sh
ʔ	popping t
t ^θ	t-th
ʔ ^θ	Popping t-th
θ	th
x ^w	wh (like in who)
χ	Hhhh
χ ^w	Hhhhwh
ʂ	tl
ʂ̣	popping tl
ʔ̣	glottal stop: uh oh



They like us. They really like us!

1. qathet real estate has retained its value

Compare January 2022 to January 2023, and homes here sunk in price by just 3% to \$552,976. Every other region in BC lost more value than we have (except Northern BC), with a provincial average of -16.1%.

2. We're attractive to out-of-towners

Since 2020, 711 local homes were bought by folks outside this region (about 235 in 2020; 185 in 2021; 291 in 2022). Most of them are coming from the Lower Mainland and other places within BC.

3. Get ready to strut your stuff

March – specifically Spring Break – marks the beginning of the real estate season. At the end of January, there were 121 homes on the market here, which is significantly higher than January 2022's 78. –PW

Real Estate in qathet

'Uncharted territory' in our 'microclimate'

What happened to real estate in qathet over the last three years, and what's coming next

BY PIETA WOOLLEY

One year ago – a century ago, in real estate terms – Chris and Teresa Reimer were feeling pretty content. Eight years before, the couple bought their first home, a “crack shack hoarder house” in Agassiz, and were reaping the reward for gutting and re-finishing the \$225,000 property – a two-year-long project they'd hammered and drywalled and painted themselves.

Finally, their three children had a solid, stylish home to grow up in. Property values in the Fraser Valley soared, as bidding wars became the norm. In fact, the Chilliwack market (where Agassiz is) was second to only qathet during COVID, for BC's wildest, skyward ride.

Chris and Teresa's vision, risk, hard work and the kooky COVID market meant they were sitting on a property inching ever closer to \$1 million. Little did they know they were on the very, tippy top of an enormous real estate

roller coaster.

That July, Chris and Teresa ripped the grass out and deck down, in preparation to finish the last of their home's renovations.

But in later July, their plans changed. The Powell River Ambulance Service offered Chris a job here in town. The paramedic had grown up in Cranberry, and the family always hoped to move back to qathet, if they could find jobs. Here was a job. He was due to start work here in just three months.

The couple's Agassiz real estate agent suggested they finish the renovations before listing their house.

“August was a sticky hot mess,” Chris recalled. “We got everything done in just under five weeks – the exact five weeks when the market dropped.”

By the time they listed their home August 29, the \$849,000 their agent had recommended was a price of the past. In July, that amount had seemed low enough to spark a bidding war. Five weeks later, it was far too high to attract buyers.



Rob Villani



Stacey Fletcher



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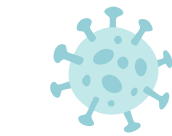
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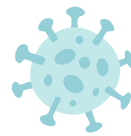


2020-2023: Charting our wild ride through "uncharted territory"

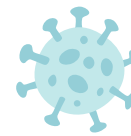
March 5, 2020:
First case of
COVID-19 community
transmission in BC
March 17:
BC declares a public
health emergency.
Social distancing
begins. Schools
close. Evictions
banned.



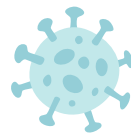
October 2020:
Bubbles and
masks begin.
Social restrictions
tighten through
the winter.



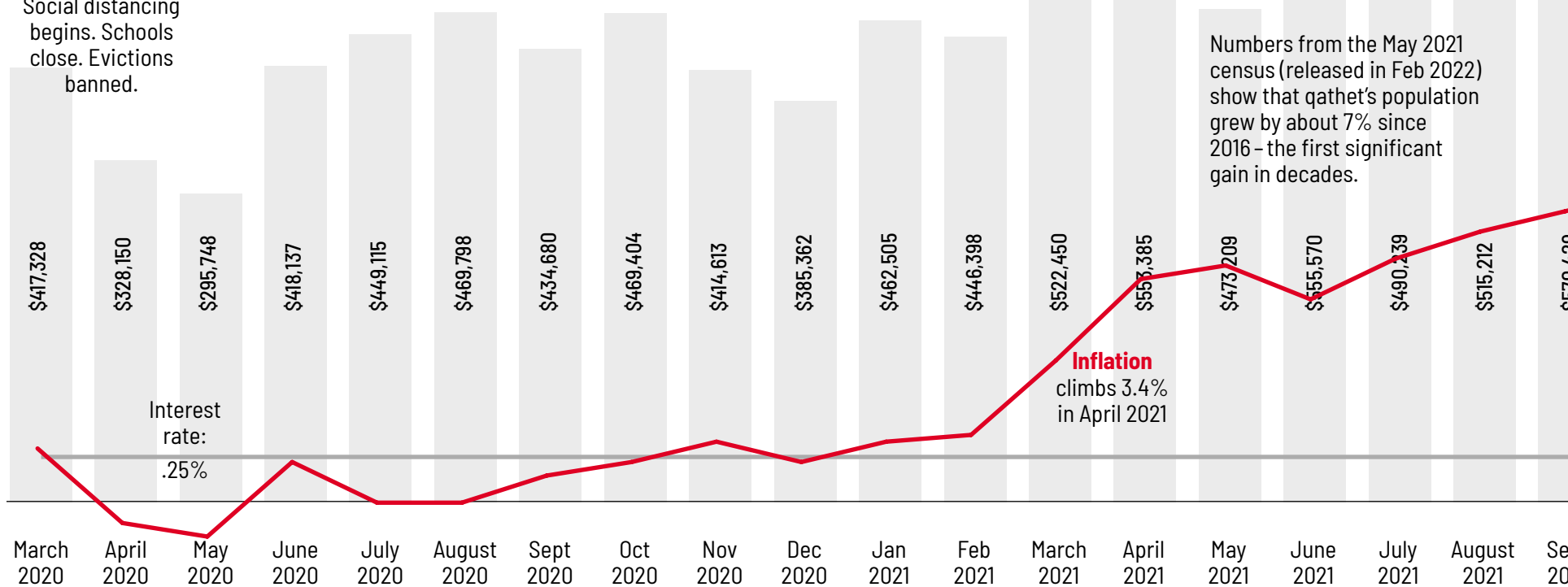
January 2021:
Vaccines begin to
roll out
Non-essential
travel is forbidden



Spring 2021:
Numbers spike
Protests begin



Summer 2021:
Most COVID
restrictions lifted
Vaccine Passports
program
announced



Numbers from the May 2021 census (released in Feb 2022) show that qathet's population grew by about 7% since 2016 - the first significant gain in decades.

"August [2022] was a sticky hot mess. We got everything done in just under five weeks - the exact five weeks when the market dropped."
- Chris Reimer

After the Bank of Canada boosted interest rates in September, Chris and Teresa dropped the price. Again. And again. And again. Five times in two months.

"We definitely lost some sleep," said Teresa. Finally, an offer came in subject to the sale of the buyer's house; for a month, they waited for that condition to

lift, but it never did. "Almost nothing was selling in Agassiz or even Chilliwack. We were questioning our choices. Nothing was going well."

The pressure weighed heavily on the family because, as Chris said, "this was our life savings."

With their house still unsold in early October and Chris' paramedic job starting, the family had no choice but to move to qathet. No appropriate rentals were available. So they moved into the basement of high school friends - the couple, their 15-year-old son, and 13-year-old daughter.

"We didn't want to buy a house here without knowing how much our house there would sell for," Teresa explained, noting that both markets were increasingly topsy-turvy through the fall. Where would prices land?

We'll leave their story here for now - with the Reimer family camped in their friends' basement, waiting for their Agassiz house to sell, watching the market here in qathet fall, but not as swiftly or deeply as in Agassiz.

Chris and Teresa are just two of the many locals and new residents who were tossed and turned by the real estate market since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic - whose impacts began exactly three years ago this month.

To kick off *qathet Living's* 2023 Real Estate series - which will run monthly from now through August, we're asking two questions.

First, what, exactly, happened in real estate here, over the last three wild years?

And, second, what's coming this year?

Beware of generalizations, especially if they're coming from out of town, said Neil Frost, the president of the Powell River Sunshine Coast Real Estate Board (he is also a local real estate agent and has been selling here for about 15 years). He described qathet as a "microclimate," a place with both lower-than-BC's-average priced homes and spiking desirability. Although sales and prices have softened since the height of 2022, Neil believes that qathet's real estate will never return to pre-2020 prices.

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Dan Wilson
B. Comm., R.I. (B.C.), AACI, P.App. Fellow, CRP
Managing Partner, Verra Group Valuation



Fall 2021:

Super-transmissible (but mild) Omicron variant arrives in BC. Record numbers of new infections.

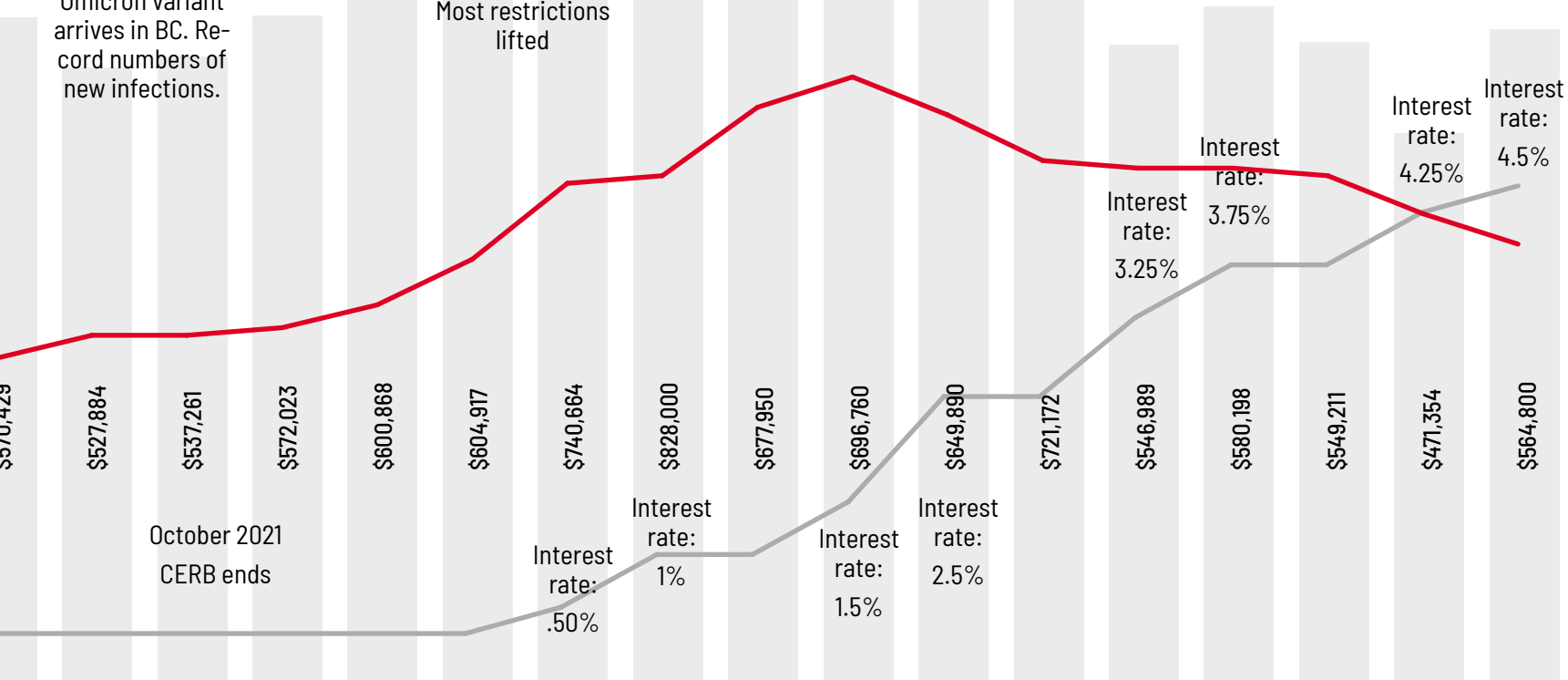
Spring 2022:

In BC, 3,000 dead from COVID. Most restrictions lifted.

Inflation was up 6.8% in 2022 – with food and fuel prices especially noticeable. Here in qathet, gas prices reached \$2.39 a litre. The PR Food Bank's standard bag of weekly basic groceries soared from \$48 to \$80.

Inflation peaks at 8.1% in June.

Grey bar = Average House Price in qathet
Grey line = Interest rate
Red line = Inflation rate



Next Bank of Canada Interest rate meetings:
March 8
April 12

Chart by qathet Living staff.

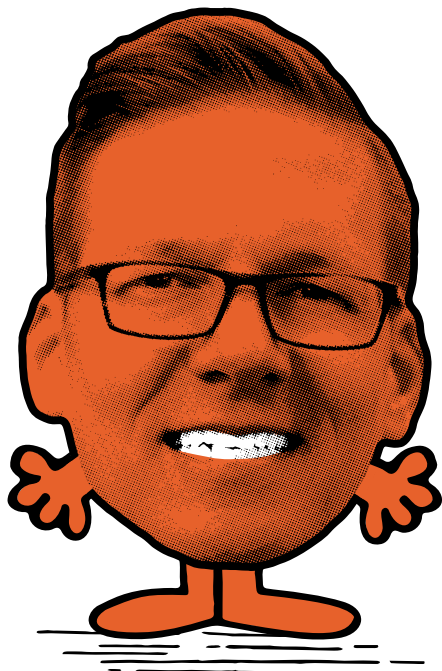
Source data from Canadian Real Estate Association and the Bank of Canada.

pt 2021 Oct 2021 Nov 2021 Dec 2021 Jan 2022 Feb 2022 March 2022 April 2022 May 2022 June 2022 July 2022 August 2022 Sept 2022 Oct 2022 Nov 2022 Dec 2022 Jan 2023 Feb 2023 March 2023

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A tale of two properties

It's nearly impossible to use statistics to get a good handle on what's actually happening here in terms of real estate prices, according to Neil Frost, president of the Powell River Sunshine Coast Real Estate Board. Sell a few more small fixer-uppers one month, and the stats look like house prices are crashing. Sell a couple of posh waterfront spreads, and the stats say prices here are shooting skyward.

A better measure, Neil said, is to find a benchmark home and watch what happens to prices over time.

Sadly, no one thought to do this during the early days of the pandemic. However, two examples from the past year show just how extreme this market was during the spring of 2022. Please be cautioned that these are outliers, rather than representative examples, showing the kookiest of changes in the market over the past year.

Both are Westview family homes built in the second half of the 20th century, on mid-sized lots. They're both in good shape.

In June 2022, one two bedroom

home sold for \$839,900, according to BC Assessment. By December 2022, the buyers listed it again - now for \$629,000 - a decline of \$210,000 under a year.

In March of 2022, one four-bedroom home listed for \$599,000 and was bought a month later for \$777,000 - \$178,000 over. Wow.

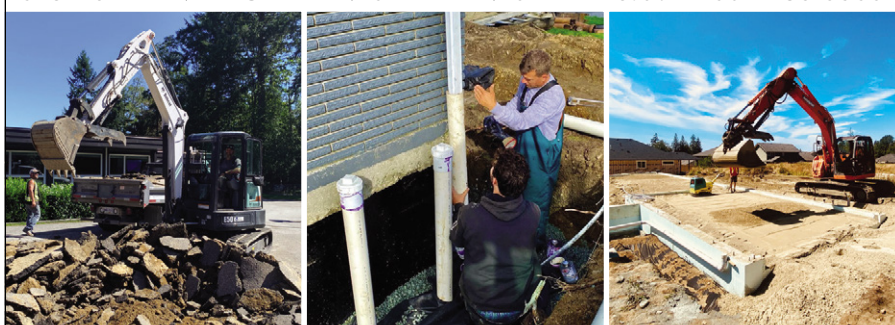
By February 2023, that same house was on the market again for \$655,000 (it has since sold). That's \$56,000 higher than its list price a year earlier, but \$120,000 lower than the purchase price.

"I would argue that they both sold high [in early 2022], one a little high and the other quite high," said Neil, pointing out that Spring of 2022 was by far the most frenzied real estate market here in memory. These wavy home prices are not evidence that the market is crashing here, but they are evidence that it was wild in early 2022.

"If you're looking for a home to be in, the market here is healthy and prices are going down - but it is my opinion they won't sink to pre-pandemic levels," Neil said.



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“There’s a lot of conflicting information about where real estate and the world economy is going to go,” said Neil. “Is the worst over? Or will homes go further down in price? Everywhere is going down, but not at the same rate.”

Your average family home here was reliably about \$450,000 just before COVID, he said. Those homes soared to \$750,000 at the peak, and currently lists for between \$650,000 and \$699,000 – though these homes will probably sell at about \$600,000 at this point. Some sellers are overly optimistic in their pricing still, he said (see sidebar).

“We are seeing prices retreat from the peak, but they’re still not down to 2021 prices. These [COVID prices] were numbers we’d never seen before. All of this is uncharted territory.”

That “uncharted territory” is due to a constellation of unusual events (see the graphic on Page 24): very low interest rates (.25%) throughout most of COVID; new pressure from Vancouverites and other urbanites bailing on their condos and telecommuting from satellite communities; booming inflation; plus intentional actions from Ottawa: turning up the heat on interest rates to slow the economy (they were at 4.5% as of press time), the ban on foreign buyers; and BC’s new three-day cooling off period. All of that – and more – resulted in quite a ride.

“June and July 2022 is when things changed,” said Neil. “Prices were at a peak. The peak. But July saw half the sales of the year before. There are still some incredibly high prices out there.

“A market that’s like wildfire is not sustainable. When it becomes out of reach for working people, it’s not sustainable. And the new interest rates have



KEEPING HIS COOL: Powell River Sunshine Coast Real Estate Board president Neil Frost has served as the spokesperson for the local industry throughout the three hot years of the pandemic. Prices are indeed cooling from the fever of early 2022 – which shouldn’t be a surprise, and certainly isn’t a tragedy, he said. Instead, it’s a sign of a healthy market.

pushed some people out of the market. Right now, sales volume is down and prices are softening. But this is still a desirable place to live.”

Indeed, 321 homes changed hands here in 2022, down from 2021’s bizarre 488 homes, but still much higher than pre-2020 sales. It’s hard to assess trends from January statistics (which is the opposite of a

“A market that’s like wildfire is not sustainable. When it becomes out of reach for working people, it’s not sustainable. And the new interest rates have pushed some people out of the market. Right now, sales volume is down and prices are softening. But this is still a desirable place to live.”

- Neil Frost

hot month for real estate), but 12 homes still sold here in the first month of the year (down from 22 in 2022). Lots of people still want to live here, and to move here.

It’s also important to remember that an overly-hot market isn’t good for everyone. With 2022’s ex-

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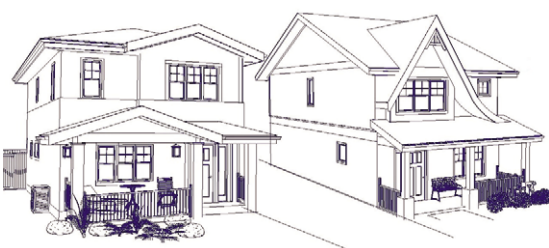
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“We’re very glad to be here,” said Chris. “If we had advice it would be: have patience, find a realtor you mesh with and understands what you want, and trust the process.”

- Chris Reimer

tremely high pricing, about 15 first-time homebuyers got into the market here, representing one in 20 local sales. First time homebuyers are usually younger people, who raise families here, work for decades, and spend in stores and on services—all qualities that keep qathet’s economy humming. As well, it’s hugely beneficial for the younger people themselves to get a foot-hold in the market. High prices, and now high interest rates, can prevent that.

Neil noted that a calmer market is ultimately good for both buyers and sellers. He isn’t sure what’s coming this real estate season, which typically lasts from March to August. As again, qathet is a “microclimate” and doesn’t always follow trends.

“I’m watching the Bank of Canada’s interest rates, what’s happening in Vancouver and the rest of the world. Overall, though, we’re insulated.”

As for a 2023 recession, again, Neil notes that its impact here is unknown.

“There are a lot of doom and gloom predictions about the world economy. How bad will the recession be? You won’t know ‘til you’re in it. But most of us still have jobs and houses. Life is pretty good for most of us. However, those on the fringes will likely feel it bad. We’ll see.”

Wild real estate isn’t impacting just us here in qathet, or even just in Canada. Across the globe, the pandemic hit real estate in similar ways, and economists are predicting similar patterns of increasing stability and recovery.

From the UK, *The Economist* magazine reports that, “From Stockholm to Sydney the buying power of borrowers is collapsing [due to interest rate hikes in several countries worldwide].”

That of course is true here too. The Bank of Canada meets again March 8, and may introduce further interest rate hikes. At press time, the Bank of Canada interest rate was 4.5%, the highest it’s been in this country since 2007—although experts are guessing those hikes will start rolling backwards soon.

The Economist also points out that when people can’t afford to move or even find homes to buy, employers can struggle to find workers. The ripple effect of an extreme and unstable real estate market can slow people’s spending and inflame a recession, and make a tense cost-of-living era more precarious for many people. The good news is, the worst seems to be over, according to experts, and they’re expecting 2023 and 2024’s real estate market to stabilize and even rebound.

In its first quarterly report this year, the Canadian Real Estate Association notes that provinces with the historically highest home prices—BC and Ontario—have experienced the biggest sales and price declines, as buyers are looking for more affordable markets (again, qathet is a “microclimate” of relative affordability.) But the CREA still expects half a million Canadian homes to change hands

The last time qathet’s median sales price was:

Under \$100,000 • February 2003

Under \$200,000 • January 2015

Under \$300,000 • May 2020

Under \$400,000 • February 2021

Under \$500,000 • August 2021

Under \$600,000 • December 2021

OVER \$700,000 • Just May & June 2022

Then:

Under \$600,000 • August 2022

Under \$500,000 • December 2022

* Source: BC Real Estate Association stats compiled by economist Ryan McLaughlin

this year—about the same as 2022 and on-par with pre-pandemic levels.

In BC, the CREA expects home sales will rebound slightly this year, and even more in 2024. And although CREA expects prices to decline by 7% in BC this year, they’ll rebound next year.

Is any of this helpful in assessing qathet’s situation? Not particularly. Compare January 2022 to January 2023, and median prices here were down just 3%—the smallest annual decline of any real estate region in BC, where the average decline was 16.1%. In other words, homes here are retaining their value (minus the spike in prices in the early summer of 2022) more than anywhere else in BC.

Instead, it’s probably most helpful to just hear human stories, real stories, to imagine how 2023’s market may go. And, more importantly, what that means for all of us.

For Chris and Teresa Reimer, the softened qathet market means they were able to buy here within their budget, and without a headache.

Their Agassiz home sold for just over \$700,000 in January. Here, they bought a Westview home, without a bidding war, in February. By the time this magazine comes out, the family of five will be moved in. Chris is working as a paramedic. Teresa is working as an administrator. Their younger two teens are going to Brooks, and their eldest child has moved here and is looking for a job in the service industry. They win, and qathet wins, too.

“I’m happy,” said Teresa. “It’s been an overwhelming and long process.”

“We’re very glad to be here,” said Chris. “If we had advice it would be: have patience, find a realtor you mesh with and understands what you want, and trust the process.”

Real estate in qathet & beyond: What has changed since March of 2020?

Prices

Although prices were rising steadily before the COVID-19 pandemic began (see sidebar, opposite), they exploded during the height of the pandemic.

In February of 2020 – just before the restrictions were first announced – the median price for a single family residential home in qathet was \$348,750.

A year later, they were just \$395,000.

But by February 2022, they were at \$560,000, shooting up to \$721,000 three months later, before cooling off.

By December of 2022, prices were back down to \$440,000 – still \$100,000 higher than before the pandemic.

Interest Rates

From May 2010 to March 2020, the Bank of Canada interest rate has varied from a low of 0.5% to a high of 1.75%. At the beginning of the pandemic, interest rates dropped to a historic low of 0.25% – where it stayed for two years, and when record numbers of Canadians bought homes.

But on March 1, 2022, the Bank of Canada began raising rates with each meeting. Over the course of the next 11 months, interest rates soared from 0.5 to 4.5%. The Bank meets again on March 7.

Cooling Off Period

Starting January of 2023, BC became the first jurisdiction in Canada to introduce a mandatory three-day gap between when a deal is made, and when it is finalized. The cooling-off period allows all buyers time to arrange for financing and get the home inspected – two crucial protections. In a hot market, those conditions often got dropped as buyers were desperate to secure homes.

If a buyer backs out after those three days, they owe the seller \$250 for every \$100,000 of a home's value – so \$1,250 on a \$500,000 home, according to the legislation.

Tax write-off for multigenerational renos

Also on January 1, Ottawa introduced this tax credit (up to 15% of \$50,000, or \$7,500) for renovations to an existing home that will accommodate family members. That could be a suite, a carriage home, or other build.

It must include its own entrance, kitchen and bathroom to qualify.

Multigenerational homes are the fastest-growing family type in Canada, with more than 1 million people living in homes with three or more generations under the same roof. Here in qathet, just 205 households are multigenerational, representing just 2.5% of the population.


Although \$7,500 won't go far in this construction economy, it is a potential write off on your 2023 taxes if you choose.

Foreign Homebuyer Ban

This Federal rule came into effect on January 1 of 2023, the latest effort to cool housing prices. Previously, several municipalities in BC were already part of a Foreign Buyers Tax program, which forced non-citizens buying here to pay an additional 20% of the price of the home they were buying into a provincial housing fund. qathet is not one of them (although Parksville, Lanzville, Qualicum Beach and Nanaimo are.)

Here in qathet, just one non-Canadian citizen bought a residential property in 2022, so this rule will likely have little effect here.

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Paramedic seizes the moment, moves his family back home

The Reimer Family recently moved to qathet from the Fraser Valley. Well, four of them did... one of them is moving back after more than 25 years away.

Dad Chris grew up here and moved away in 1995, leaving parents, sisters and many friends behind. Recently Chris' job as a Primary Care Paramedic with BC Emergency Health Services presented him with an opportunity to come home and serve his community.

Chris jumped at the chance, bringing wife Teresa, an administrative professional and their three children, Cash 18, Jacob 15, and Olivia 13.

The family has quickly joined the community, with Jacob joining 2781 BC Regiment Cadet corps and Olivia continued her tradition of dancing by starting up with Laszlo Tamasik Dance Academy. They look forward to exploring all the region has to offer.

Why did you choose to move to qathet?

Chris • We chose qathet because I grew up here and the ambulance service had a full-time position here that I had enough seniority to earn. It's been the goal for a

while now to come up here.

When? Where from?

Chris • We moved in October 2022 from Agassiz in the Eastern Fraser Valley.

What surprised you about qathet once you moved?

Chris • There weren't a ton of surprises really. My family is here and we've visited a minimum of once or twice a year for the past 20 years.

What made you decide to move to qathet?

Chris • Family ties and slower pace at work for me.

Where is your favourite place in qathet?

Chris • I have several, but our absolute favorite has to be my Aunt and Uncle's cabin up the lake. No cell signal, no Wi-Fi, just swimming, books, and good company. What more could we want?

What would make qathet a nicer community?

Chris • A lack of primary care physicians is a clear missing piece of the puzzle for sure!



GEE IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK HOME AGAIN: Chris Reimer grew up here, and brought his family back with him after 25 years away: (from left to right) Cash, 18, Chris, Teresa, Jacob, 15, and Olivia, 13. Learn more about the family's wild real estate ride in the story starting on Page 23.

What aspect of your previous community do you think would benefit qathet?

Chris • Agassiz threw a heck of a fall fair, complete with baking contests, etc. A return to that would be awesome here. Sea-fair was always a big time of year here, and I'm sure I'm not the only one who misses it. I haven't experienced Blackberry Festival yet though, so I'm reserving judgment totally.

What challenges did you face in trying to make a life for yourself here?

Chris • The Real Estate market is a big hurdle. That held us up significantly. (See their story, starting on Page 23.)

What are qathet's best assets?

Chris • Assets have to be the outdoor adventures to be had! Hiking, fishing, paddle boarding, the list goes on. Even if all you can do is drive, the views are still stunning.

What is your greatest extravagance?

Chris • Extravagance...hmm. I think our upcoming renovations would probably have to be on that list. I want to make us the best home we've ever had and I'm excited for it to be here.

Which superpower would you most like to have?

Chris • The talent I wish I had was to heal with a simple touch, even though it would eventually put me out of a job! 🦹‍♂️



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What makes this region sing? **Volunteers.**

The International Choral Kathaumixw is a project of the Powell River Academy of Music, founded on the model of artistic excellence promoting cultural diversity, acclaiming members of Tla'amin Nation while welcoming and embracing cultures from around the world.

The festival takes place July 4 to 8 this year and is filled with concerts, common song singing, choral & vocal solo performances, conductor's seminars and social events. It is a place to learn from each other and from world-renowned choral personalities.

Kathaumixw is a Coast Salish word gifted to the festival by the Elders of Tla'amin Nation—whose Traditional Territory we share. Since the first festival (1984), the International Choral Kathaumixw has taken place biennially, except for a break during COVID.

Dal Matterson

Dal came to Powell River in 1956 and was Chairman of the International Choral Kathaumixw from inception in 1982 through the 1984 to 2000 festival years. Jim Donnelly followed as Chair from 2002 to 2014 and Tom Koleszar from 2016 to 2020.

How did you start working with Kathaumixw?

Dal • Don James had successfully taken local Academy choirs to festivals in Europe. In 1982 on a hike together, he suggested that we organize an international choral festival in Powell River. Almost in the same sentence, he asked if I would be chairman. I said yes.

What attracted you to this organization?

Dal • Our youngest son Mark was singing in the Academy Apprentice choir and I enjoyed singing in the Powell River Chorus. It seemed a natural fit.



What part of the work is the most satisfying?

Dal • By far, the town's support. The managing abilities, people and construction skills that presented themselves were amazing. It seemed that we only had to hint at a need and people came forward. One of the pleasant surprises was how many languages were available in town. There wasn't one language that we were not able to supply to assist foreign language choirs. The other wonder was the richness of personal and cultural connections.

What part of the work do you find the most challenging?

Dal • Communications at the time were by phone, Mill Tel-ex, and mail. There was no email and one had to accommodate time differences and language. Information mailouts

KATHAUMIXW'S BACK: Above, for the first time in five years—since 2018—Kathaumixw is back this July 4 to 8. For newbies to this region, there's really no way to describe the spectacular scale or the wonder of qathet's premier musical event; you have to see it to believe it. Left, Dal Matterson was the international event's first chairperson.

were sent out over the years to choirs, it seems, throughout the world.

Obtaining Canadian visas was often an issue. Many odd hours were needed to confirm to foreign Canadian Visa Offices that the festival actually existed and describing how the choirs would be cared for, transported and housed.

What do you wish other people knew about the work Kathaumixw does?

Dal • The skill, confidence and acumen of the Powell River Academy staff.

Had you been involved in nonprofit work before? What got you started?

Dal • I was a Scout leader, a member of the local health council until its demise, then a member of the Powell River Hospital Foundation. I was vice president and later, president of the Foundation for several years. I also wanted to support the community.

How has Kathaumixw changed your life?

Dal • It helped me expand personal connections. I went on two invited visits to Kiev and one to Tashkent in Uzbekistan. I received a Lescaobot Award from the federal gov-

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ernment for contribution to the arts community.

Do you bring any unique skills to this organization?

Dal • I had participated in many Electrical Engineering Conferences in North America and was Co-chair for one in Vancouver, so I had a notion of what it should take to get a project like Kathaumixw off the ground.

What would you say to other people who might be thinking about volunteering for Kathaumixw

Dal • It's a wonderful way to meet people from around the world and help to make the town come alive with music.



Steven Cramaro

Steven has been Chair of the International Choral Kathaumixw Organizing Committee since 2021, after moving back from Victoria. He has volunteered on and off in various roles throughout his undergraduate studies. You may also know Steven from his work as Brooks' junior band teacher, and conducting the Powell River Community Band.

How and when did you start working with Kathaumixw?

Steven • I first volunteered in 2016, assisting Cathy Reckenberg who was volunteer stage manager for James Hall. In 2018 I took on the role as stage manager for the Evergreen Theatre. In 2021 I was honoured to accept the position of chair of the volunteer Kathaumixw organizing committee.



FIVE-DAY FRENZY: Choirs are coming from as far away as Phillipines to sing, but also to enjoy the qathet region. If you can volunteer to help make the magic happen, contact the Academy of Music office at 604-485-9633 or info@kathaumixw.org.

What attracted you to this organization?

Steven • Growing up in this community, I have always wanted to give back to those who supported and offered me musical opportunities, and now that I am in the position to do the same, the role of Kathaumixw chair was the perfect fit.

What part of the work is the most satisfying?

Steven • I have participated and volunteered over the years with Kathaumixw, Vocal Jazz Summit, Townsite Jazz Festival, and numerous festivals in Victoria. The most satisfying part is seeing all the work of the volunteers and the enjoyment of the participants.

What part of the work do you find the most challenging?

Steven • I don't know yet. Having postponed our festival due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I have yet to see a complete

festival as chair of the organizing committee.

What do you wish other people knew about the work Kathaumixw does?

Steven • I feel a lot of people already know about the work Kathaumixw does as it has been a part of our community for a long time. In addition to the performance festival, we have an educational part of the festival as well. All of the choral conductors meet everyday to discuss music, conducting and rehearsal techniques.

Had you been involved in nonprofit work before? What got you started?

Steven • I have been involved with many not-for-profit groups as a participant, never in an organizational role.

How has Kathaumixw changed your life?

Steven • Having billeted choristers in the past, it was a great experience meeting new people from different parts of the world and showcasing the qathet region to our out-of-town guests. Over the years there have been really great choirs come through and the level of musicality and musicianship has been astonishing. Off the top of my head the New Zealand Secondary School Choir and the Austrian Graz Choir have really made an impression on me.

Do you bring any unique skills to this organization?

Steven • Organizational skills and knowledge of how a festival works through the eyes of a music director/educator. As a teacher you attend festivals with a group of students, and recognize different approaches or how to do things differently.

Have there been benefits from volunteering with this organization that you didn't expect?

Steven • Definitely new friendships. Working alongside current festival organizers who I knew as a child, now working more closely with them as peers.

What would you say to other people who might be thinking about volunteering for Kathaumixw.

Steven • Do It! Contact the office, it is a fantastic organization, International Choral Kathaumixw is a fantastic community event. Ticket sales begin April 11. 🎧

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WHAT'S UP

Queens: we are the champions

Family Day long weekend was a busy and exciting time at the Hap Parker Arena. The Queen's Cup, Powell River Minor Hockey (PRMHA)'s annual female hockey tournament, included three home teams, The Powell River Queens in the U9, U11, and U15 divisions and was also attended by eight out of town teams from the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island.

Highlights of the weekend included the U15 Queens playing in, and winning, the IIHF (International Ice Hockey Federation) Global Girls Game

against the Sunshine Coast Blues, the U11 Queens going into overtime and a shoot out in a very exciting bronze medal game and the U9 Queens playing in their first games against other girls teams this season!

Our Queen's players all worked very hard, played amazingly and were fantastic representatives of PRMHA. A special congratulations to the U15 Queens who went undefeated in all their games and won the Queen's Cup.

- Julie Venselaar

Read-To-Me with Rotary

Rotary Club of Powell River has undertaken providing books to Kindergarten classrooms in the qathet region for the past three years.

The project was suggested by Rotarian Monica Peckford when she remembered her children receiving a book when they were in hospital.

"That is how the idea flourished and our club supported it," she explained.

Each year a book is selected along with bags with Rotary's colours of blue and gold featuring the Rotary wheel logo.

As part of Literacy Month in January, a total of 215 bags and books, including ones in French, were prepared and delivered to Kindergarten classes in School District 47 and independent schools.

"The books by author Robert Munsch had a price of \$26 each, but they were purchased in bulk for half price," said Peckford.

Because of COVID, the distribution for the past two years was handled by the schools. This year, Rotarians were able to deliver the books and bags, and some read to the youngsters when the deliveries took place.

Funding for the literacy project comes from Rotary's annual Great Grocery Plus raffle as it is eligible for gaming funds through BC Lottery Corporation.

In year two, some funds were also received from Rotary District 5040 which includes the Powell River club.



"The Rotary Read-To-Me program is so well received by our kindergarten students," said Jennifer Kennedy, principal of Kelly Creek Community School. "They loved having a Rotarian guest to read to them in the classroom and receiving the book bag, and the storybook."

"With literacy being such a large focus for our school and district, Read-To-Me was the perfect complement and so appreciated. We are thankful for the support of Rotary in our school."

- Joyce Carlson

Joyous Pride in qathet: Community Conversation

qathet Pride invites you to explore what's possible for the future of Pride in this beautiful part of the world. As

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LGBTQIA2S+ queer community, friends, family, and allies, how we can build on the foundation created so far to meet more needs, have more fun and grow a truly joyous, welcoming, safe and inclusive community for all?

In 2012, teenagers created the first (correct us if we're wrong) public Pride event here. Today, queer teenagers tell us Pride is still needed – that they encounter daily slurs in school, and wonder how it will be to graduate and lose access to the Gay-Straight Alliance.

Other queer folks too tell us Pride is important: for meeting others, for the deep wellbeing they feel in queer space, for solidarity in the face of the challenges of being fully true to one's identity.

We live in a supportive community for the most part, yet some folks are still shy and cautious to step into their true selves.

As businesses, community groups, and the wider community, what do you see we can do to support and learn and work together? Are safe spaces needed? Is sensitivity and awareness training needed?

So we ask: What would you love to see here? – in terms of events and ways to meet other queer folks, and also in terms of welcome, support and understanding from the community as a whole?

If many hands (and hearts) make light work, what's possible here? Please bring your wonderful self (even if you can't think of anything!) to join us for a community conversation, Joyous Abundant PRIDE in qathet, Saturday, April 1, 2 to 4:30 pm Town Centre Hotel. Secret dreams are so welcome, and also questions, reflections or frustrations that

can open important conversations.

This is a facilitated event. Being on time will help us work in small groups – so everyone can be heard – identifying themes and priorities as a community that the board of qathet Pride Society can help us work towards.

Imagine: Your pride in self, and mine, and yours and yours and yours too, walking together side by side, happy, gay proud, in love with life and humanity. Join us: dream big, get excited, be heard.

- John Hewson

"Blast from the Past" changing hands again

Over the past four years, *qathet Living's* column "Blast from the Past" has been produced by Joelle Sevigny of the qathet Museum and Archives. Joelle has decided to move on with her career and we wish her well in her pursuits.

The museum will continue with a monthly submission of "Blast from the Past." The historical connections will remain with some nuances that will become apparent in future issues. For the March issue of *qathet Living*, I, the chair of the board, submit some memories from the past.

I remember standing as a young boy on the corner of Alberni and Marine at Christmas time. While our dads solved the problems of the world, I gazed at the displays in the Muir's hardware store or Simpson Sears. I knew that catalogue inside and out.

I remember early mornings at the arena for hockey

practices when upon arrival an eerie mist hung over the ice surface. It was ominous how quiet it was but slowly the building came awake as we young hooligans arrived as our parents dropped us off.

I remember lying in bed at night and hearing Easthope engines in the fishboats going pop-pop-pop as they made their way to the fishing grounds.

Recently I was thrilled to view artifacts housed in the museum basement. The mission was to measure all the artifacts for a state-of-the-art storage system we will install in 2023.

The installation of this storage system will facilitate better access to the museum archives thus allowing us to rotate displays more often. They don't just collect dust in our basement. Our goal is having more people enjoy the many historical artifacts at the museum.

- Bill Vernon, President

Oops! Corrections:

As most of the "Blast From The Past" column that appeared in the February 2023 *qathet Living* comes directly from the eulogy which Professor Dr. Keith Thor Carlson wrote and his father John Carlson read at Eva Mosley's funeral on April 6, 2009, this column should have been attributed accordingly. The qathet Museum and Archives Society apologizes to Dr. Carlson for this error.

In the same issue, *qathet Living* also failed to properly credit the wedding photograph on Page 12. It was shot by Staci Lee Photography • stacilee.ca. Our apologies to Staci. 🙏

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If you have a one or two bedroom rental suite that will become available please contact the museum at **604-485-2222** or email the details to info@qathetmuseum.ca



SOME OF THE CREW: The Powell River Horseshoe Club – always looking for new members – poses beside the pits at the Rec Complex. Everyone is welcome.

Horseshoe aficionados courting new members

BY SYLVIA SHELDON

Jim Hoffman says he started throwing horseshoes when he was 12 years old. He remembers going on vacation to Alberta where the family farm had a horseshoe pit beside the barn. He thought the game was a “prairie” thing.

He and his dad enjoyed it so much that on return to Powell River his dad checked it out and discovered that there were four pits down by Willingdon Beach. There was even a Seafair horseshoe tournament.

Then in 1984, the Complex had some land available if the Horseshoe Club was willing to clear the blackberries and build the horseshoe pits.

Jim remembers mixing and pouring a lot of cement. The municipality donated the sidewalk forms, the mill donated the fencing and with a lot of sweat and a grant of \$7,950 from New Horizon Branch of the National Health and Welfare department, a playing area with 12 pits was built.

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Paige Nahornoff says when she and her husband Andrew Harrington lived in Vancouver, they would see people playing horseshoes and always thought about it. When, as young adults, work relocated them to Powell River, they saw an ad in the paper, and called up Lorraine Hubick who gave them such a warm welcome they immediately joined the club. It has been great fun but unfortunately work is again relocating them and they hope to find a horseshoe club on Vancouver Island.

Serge Dube says he also started playing as a young adult but in Victoria. When he moved to Powell River he walked by the Complex, saw the horseshoe pits and joined the club. For him it is the socializing and tournaments. In tournaments you are placed into groups with players of similar handicaps. Because of that you generally meet the same players and start developing great out of town friends.

Carol Skrodolis says she ran the concession inside the Complex for the horseshoe club. One night they were short a player and asked her if she would play. She was 57 at the time. Carol loved playing so much the next year she quit the concession, joined the club, built a pit in her backyard and reached out to club members for tips on techniques.

Practice paid off as she starting winning in and out of town tournaments, winning Vancouver Island Ladies "A" division six times between 2009 and 2018. Carol also won BC Championships in the Ladies "A" Division in 2013. She said she plays for the fun and laughs but truly loves challenging herself.

Carol is our club president and is looking forward to seeing new faces this year. She says Sunday drop-in is a fun day where everyone is welcome to come



AFFORDABLE AND AVAILABLE: The Powell River Recreation Complex has been home to this region's horseshoe pits since 1984.

and give it a try. Thursday evenings is the organized team league.

Dave Antle says when he retired he was looking for something to do and as he knew some horseshoe players he thought he would try it and found it was exactly what he wanted. He enjoys the league games but also looks forward to tournaments and being challenged.

Horseshoes, anyone?

If you would like to try out the sport, the horseshoe pits are located at the upper level of the Complex and are open to the public.

Starting in April there will be Sunday morning drop-in at 9am. Young children are welcome, but must be accompanied by an adult. Starting in May we play Thursday evenings at 6:30 .

This game is one that can be started at a young age and played well into the golden years. You do not need to know how to throw horseshoes before you join, and you do not need to go into tournaments. The only requirements are to laugh and have fun.

Contact Carol for more: 604 413 0823.

I was walking with my friend Margie Woloschuk who told me about what fun she and her husband Glen have playing horseshoes.

Sunday morning was not an option but Thursday evening worked so I said why not give it a try. Upon arrival someone presented me with some horseshoes, Betty Blacklock arranged the play, Serge gave me some basic instructions and the rest is history.

Now on Thursday evenings I can be found walking to the Complex with a backpack containing a set of horseshoes and a water bottle.

Do not think you will find a more affordable sport to play. I started playing at age 59 and several years later I am still "perfecting my game" so to speak.

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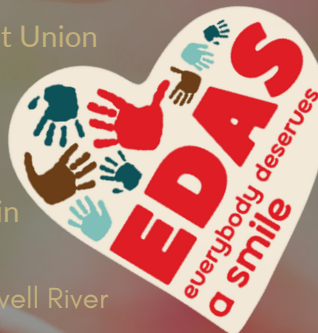
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Experts confirm: Yes, the Old Courthouse Inn is very haunted indeed



BY LEE MACKENZIE

In the wee hours of the morning when the rest of us were snug in our beds, a small group of investigators was awake – wide awake – at the Old Courthouse Inn in Powell River’s Historic Townsite.

They waited in the semi-darkness, speaking in whispers, straining to catch sights or sounds.

They watched small devices designed to flash, to beep, and to indicate the presence of ... something.

SEE FOR YOURSELF: In person: The Old Courthouse Inn (above) is hosting a paranormal investigation weekend in April (see below). Online: see the new episode by the Paranormal Roadtrippers on YouTube.

Drawn for many reasons known only to each person, they signed up for a weekend event with the Paranormal Roadtrippers.

Kelly Belanger is the owner of the Old Courthouse Inn. “The Paranormal Roadtrippers have been here twice before,” he said “and we just discussed things. We talked. And I asked them if there was such a thing as an interactive weekend where guests would come and have fun with the investigative process. So we organized one.”

Debra James couldn’t wait to sign up. Debra is a travel counsellor at the Sechelt Visitors Centre. “When I heard about the Paranormal Roadtrippers event, I said ‘Book me! Book me!’ And everyone was saying to me ‘Oh, you’re really brave.’”

Mike Merle is one of the founders of The Paranormal Roadtrippers and hosted the investigation part of the weekend. Mike loves the Townsite. And the Old Courthouse Inn is a favourite.

“Powell River is actually very special to me. I have

PARANORMAL WEEKEND AT THE OLD COURTHOUSE INN

When: April 21 to 23

What: A weekend-long Interactive Paranormal Investigation event. It includes two nights with a professional investigator, equipment, breakfasts each morning, dinner Saturday night and two nights stay in the Courthouse Inn.

Contact: reservations@tochi.ca

a lot of family in the area. Many summers, spring breaks, and holidays were spent here when I was growing up. I remember seeing the Courthouse Inn when I was young. And everyone would say ‘Oh it’s haunted, haunted, haunted.’ It IS haunted. I can confirm that.”

Built in 1938, the Old Courthouse Inn was gener-



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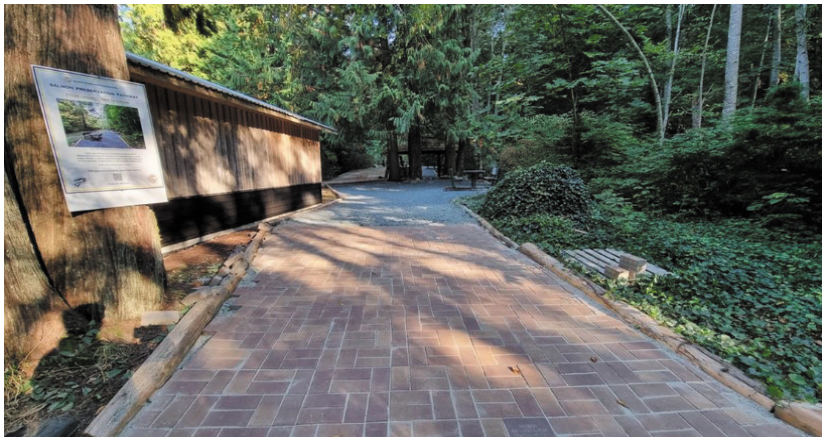
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THE EXPERT GHOST HUNTER: Mike Merle, a founder of the Paranormal Roadtrippers, stands in front of the Old Courthouse Inn ready to use technology as well as intuition to investigate energies and experiences.

ally known as the Provincial Building. Along with a courtroom there were rooms for the judge, lawyers and the police. There were jail cells and offices for forestry officials, the government agent, and public works employees.

After government services were relocated in 1974 the building had various other lives including becoming lodgings and now a heritage hotel.

Throughout its history the courthouse and provincial government building accumulated history, stories, and experiences as well as unexplainable phenomena...and that is what attracts those fascinated by the paranormal.

Mike remembers his own growing fascination with ghosts and mysterious happenings from the time he was a little boy.

“When I was about eight something happened that I will never forget. I came home from school early because I was feeling sick. We were living in the Lower Mainland and I was alone in the house until my parents came home.”

While Mike rested in his bedroom something attracted his attention. “I saw a man walking down the hall. He was wearing pioneer clothing, like from 1860’s or 1870’s. He had a cotton, brown, buttoned shirt, trousers with suspenders, and a hat. He walked down the stairs and the hallway. I thought I was the only one in the house.”

Mike says he panicked and phoned the house next door where an RCMP officer and his wife lived. The Mountie was at work. “But his wife came right over,” said Mike. “She came bursting in like a police raid. She was carrying a can of pepper spray. She went everywhere in the house. But all the doors and windows were closed. No one was there. Nothing was disturbed. When I told my parents they said ‘Don’t be stupid.’ But I can still see that man. I know what I saw.”

Soon he was reading everything available in his elementary school library that involved ghost stories, creepy mysteries, and the paranormal. Another experience that paved the way for the eventual Paranormal

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THE INNKEEPER: Kelly Belanger – owner of the Old Courthouse Inn welcomes guests and says he has known for years there are energies or spirits in his heritage hotel – but they are friendly.

Roadtripper happened a few years later when he went to stay with family in Winnipeg one summer.

“I noticed that my cousin’s family didn’t lock their doors. When I asked him about that he said ‘Not to worry. I have friends who look after the house.’”

The lovely old Victorian house had a basement that held the laundry area and cold storage. Mike’s bed was on the main floor. The first night when he tried to go to sleep he heard something unexplainable. “There were heavy, loud footsteps coming up the rickety wooden stairs from the basement,” he said. “Then the footsteps went all over the kitchen. The door to the basement slammed and the footsteps went back down. And it kept on happening.”

Mike had to go check it out. He went into the kitchen and heard the footsteps pounding up the stairs again. The door opened.

“The steps were loud and went right past me, through the kitchen, back to the stairs. The door slammed and I heard steps go back down. When I asked my cousin about it the next day he was not concerned at all. He just said to me, ‘Yes, I told you my friends look after the house.’”

The incident was fuel to Mike’s curiosity. He began watching television shows about ghost sightings and unsolved mysteries. Everything in the media about the paranormal was on his list.

Then came the night of the Ouija board.

“If you are open and inclined to believe in ghosts or spirits then I can say the ones at the Old Courthouse Inn are happy ghosts. And they aren’t planning on leaving anytime soon.”

- Debra James

“I was hanging out with my friends. We played in a band. I was the drummer. We were just normal kids. Then one night someone brought out a Ouija board. Two of us were doing it and the third guy was just nearby. The guy working the board with me said to the third guy ‘What’s your worst fear?’ Then the piece on the board started to move and you know what everyone says ‘Hey you’re moving it. No I’m not, you’re moving it.’ The board spelled out ‘white pit bull’. I thought ‘Wow, that’s pretty random.’”

“Then we headed for 7/11. It was a hot night and we wanted a cold drink. Out of nowhere this white pit bull charges us. It split the third guy off from the rest of us and was lunging at him, barking. We managed to chase the dog away. But I can still describe my friend’s face. He was terrified. Filled with absolute fear.”

The introduction of the Ouija board changed Mike’s focus from just experiencing to trying to communicate. A couple of weeks after the pit bull incident the friends were using the Ouija board again, and a new friend was there with them. They were in the rec room and alone in the house.

“The new guy had been drinking. We weren’t, but he was a bit drunk and making fun of the Ouija board. He said ‘Go ahead. Scare me.’”

“Immediately there was a huge BOOM, BOOM, BOOM on the door. I thought ‘Oh God...’ but I went and opened the door. I know people always say this, but we felt a cold gust of wind rush into the room. We couldn’t see anything, but over by the window the curtains rippled. Imagine someone walked by and let their hand drift across the curtains, disturbing them as they went. That’s exactly what it looked like.”

“Needless to say, we stopped for the night. But I said to the friend who asked to be scared ‘Be careful what you wish for.’”

“Anything can be used as a spiritual connection device,” Mike explains. “When you are trying to make conversation it doesn’t matter what the tool is. But I have noticed that when you start talking there is no caller ID. You really don’t know who you are speaking with. So respect is key. Respect the history of the place and the person. Respect all the people involved.”

Eventually, Mike found groups of paranormal event investigators and began to learn. “I have an inquisitive and investigative mind. I want to know. So all of this was a natural progression into what I

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A Thought For The Day

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HOW GHOSTS PLAY: Debra James, a travel counsellor with the Sechelt Visitors Centre, left her necklaces in the Old Courthouse Inn’s Room 6 before going for dinner. When she returned, she reports that they were tied together in little slipknots. That wasn’t the only spooky thing to happen during thier stay in Room 6.

do now.”

He teamed up with Sandra who was also an investigator and photographer and together they founded the Paranormal Roadtrippers. They chose the name “Roadtrippers” because they range throughout BC and the Pacific Northwest.

When they set up an exploration like the one at the Old Courthouse Inn they bring technology with them. “One of the devices we use is called a Rempod,” Mike explains. “It’s what’s called a ‘proximity sensor’. It creates a dome-shaped sensing field. When something breaks that barrier it goes off.

“Then there is the Flux 2. It’s like a triangle with sensors that are something like the signals in your tv remote,” Mike says. “The remote sends an on-demand signal to the TV. But the Flux 2 sends a constant signal. And again, if something breaks the barrier the device goes off and we know something has passed by.”

Roadtrippers confirm the description of dropping temperatures or sensations of cold indicating the presence of something. “When we feel that,” he says “it almost always happens that we see or hear things, and people even get touched.”

Debra was hoping her weekend investigation adventure would bring some evidence of ghosts or spirits. “I wanted to see something. I wanted to see images, or maybe see things move. See people.”

When she and a friend arrived they were given Room 6 which used to be government offices. “I wanted the room that was the most active,” she said “so I was glad.”

Just before going for dinner, Debra was looking around at the art and furniture in the Inn’s hallways. “I saw a cupboard and it had a sign that said ‘Do Not

Touch’. I know I wasn’t supposed to, but I looked inside. I didn’t see or feel anything, but I learned later that something in that closet is well known for causing problems.”

And a problem or, at least, a mystery is what she got. Debra wears two necklaces. One is a stone pendant, and the other a crystal – each on its own leather strip. Shortly after looking in the cupboard she and her friend went down to the basement room for the video presentation arranged by the Paranormal Roadtrippers. She looked down to check her necklaces and got a surprise.

“My necklaces were, well, all twined up” she explained “Not twisted but intertwined with carefully done knots. There was no way in this human world...they were like little slip knots all the way along. I couldn’t possibly have done it myself and also I couldn’t get it undone.”

With some help the necklaces were finally untangled enough for her to get them off and undo the knots. “The ghosts were clearly playing with me,” she said. “It wasn’t scary, it was just ‘oh my gosh!’”

After the presentation she and her friend Sally went to their room.

“Sally was working on her computer and I was sitting on the bed,” said Debra. “And I saw the corner of the bedsheet lift right up like somebody was getting into the bed. It just lifted right up. I reached over and flattened it down again, but then it happened again on the other side. I didn’t feel afraid I just thought ‘Oh, give me a break.’ Then just after that I felt a hand brush against my face.”

One of the most unearthly experiences in the Paranormal Roadtrippers’ travels is what’s called an EVP. “That’s for Electronic Voice Phenomenon,” Mike explains. “We have hundreds of audio clips of EVP’s.”

Sometimes they hear a word, a phrase, a name. The communication can be an indistinguishable sound, clear English, or even words in a foreign language. “And sometimes you can go on an investigation and get skunked,” says Mike, laughing. “Either there is nothing there or they just don’t want to talk to you.”

While Debra and her fellow amateur investigators were at the Old Courthouse Inn someone clearly did want to talk. The group had Kelly’s permission to go into the manager’s suite. The electronic voice phenomenon equipment was set up and Debra put on the headset.

“I could hear a man and woman talking to me. They were speaking sentences but I couldn’t tell too much what they were saying. But then the man’s voice clearly said ‘Kelly’ so I said, ‘Kelly, they want to talk to you.’”

“I will admit at the beginning I was a skeptic,” said Kelly. “I was on the fence. I already knew there were entities of some sort in the building, but it’s just the way things go. I had some experiences and also heard stories from guests. And on the last night I thought oh why not? Come in and investigate in my quarters.”

Kelly put the headset on and settled down to listen. Then something happened.

“A friend of mine passed away recently, crossed over,” he says. “I had the headset on, listening. And then I heard her voice. Loud and clear. It was her voice and I clearly recognized it. She said my name and then she said something that was connected exactly to things we had talked about only between ourselves.”



TOWNSITE IS A HOT SPOT: The Paranormal Road Trippers travel around BC investigating rumoured-to-be haunted spots. You can find videos from both their qathet investigations – the Old Courthouse Inn and the Rodmay Hotel – on their YouTube channel.

Kelly says he wasn’t afraid, but was deeply shocked.

Debra says Kelly was taken totally by surprise. “He literally tore the headset off,” she said. “He just threw it aside and left the room.”

The Paranormal Roadtrippers say it is very meaningful to them to share their experience and investigation techniques, but also to help others embrace the idea that maybe, just maybe, there truly is something “more”. And as they pursue their science, they pay close attention to the history of the area, the structures, the buildings, and the people.

“We approach every situation with genuine respect and an intention to be helpful. Is there a person or some energy that has just been trying to communicate? Can a mystery be solved? Is there a message from the afterlife that someone is trying to tell us?”

“I pulled the headset off. This was not make believe. It was real.”

- Kelly Belanger

Our mission statement is simple: History has a voice, and we want to listen.”

It’s no surprise that they encounter many people who think the whole thing is a load of rubbish. “That’s okay,” says Mike. “I will never debate with someone like that. Why waste your time? I won’t bite. I just say ‘Well, it’s just what I do.’ The paranormal is still a very taboo subject for many people. But I can say that I have noticed this: almost everyone who strongly declares that it’s all just garbage will often say a bit later “But then there was this one time...”

As for Debra, she can’t wait to sign up for the next weekend event. “I’ve always known there are spirits and ghosts,” she said. “I could feel them, pick up on them. I would definitely go to this event again. First of all the breakfasts are fabulous. But I also really liked the camaraderie. All of us in the group just felt right away that we were all together on this.

“If you are open and inclined to believe in ghosts or spirits then I can say the ones at the Old Courthouse Inn are happy ghosts. And they aren’t planning on leaving anytime soon.”

We’re moving.

(So book your appointment now!)

After eight amazing years on Alberni Street, we’re looking forward to a much bigger location, with amazing neighbours, and more parking! Our new home will be at **4552 Willingdon Avenue**, located in the same building as **Bliss Spa & Suites** and **Sublime Fashions**!

Our last day at the Alberni location will be Saturday, March 18th. We will tentatively be closed for two weeks for the move. Our first scheduled day in the new location will be Tuesday, April 4th.

We suggest scheduling your upcoming appointments soon, as we are expecting to be busier than usual due to the two-week closure.

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Marquis make room

Phil and Tess Marquis are making room for your stuff with a new storage facility just south of the city. Marquis Mini Storage Ltd is a new heated storage facility, next door to Sunshine Self Storage. Phil originally owned the property that houses Sunshine Self Storage, but sold a portion of it to the Koleszars, who built Sunshine while Phil went back to work contracting for Telus. Now Phil has turned his attention to developing his properties, first resurrecting commercial buildings in Courtenay, and now building a storage facility at 3074 Stevenson Road. It boasts two 30-foot x 100-foot buildings. Long term plans are to put up to 10 buildings as a multi-use mini industrial site on the 3.5 acre lot. Two and a half acres are logged and much of the underground service prep and drainage have been built for future expansion.

The storage units are insulated with near indestructible R-Seal insulation, with heated floors that quickly dry out even when damp goods enter. Easy garage type door access means you can back your truck right up to the unit, rather than having to drag your stuff through a hallway, making it easy to park motorcycles or small water craft. Units are available in 5'x10', 10'x10', 10'x15' or 10'x20' configurations.

Demand is high and many units are already booked, even though it opened just in mid-February. Building 1 is nearly full and Building 2 is to be commissioned later this month.

To book a storage unit, call 604-223-9411 or email marquisministorage@pm.me. But you can also do it all online with their automated booking and payment system at marquisministorage.ca.

First Aid shop coming to mall

Kelli Turner, the force behind a host of new businesses based out of Finn Bay near Lund, is bringing his medical expertise to the Town Centre. He is leasing a spot next to The Source and Telus in the mall.

Powell River First Aid Training opens April 1, offering first aid classes for everyone from babysitters to first responders. Kelli says he has trainers who will do most of the classes, and he himself will teach first responder and EMR classes.

The first aid business is an extension of a growing handful of companies that Kelli runs out of his Finn Bay headquarters. Access Point Marine Services offers marine transportation with six different boats including a 40-passenger water taxi. Canadian EMS

does repatriation of people who get injured or sick when out of country and has 10 ambulances doing first aid for the film industry out of Burnaby. Waterway Environmental Services does environmental cleanup, with headquarters in Kamloops (for inland waterways) and Lund (for coastal services) and the new Canadian Drone Works, which assisted in river cleanup after the floods at Merritt, and also does overhead and undersea work, assisting with raising and cleaning up sunken vessels on the coast.

Tile your home, or castle

Mike Sutherland, a recent transplant from Saskatoon, and Jenny-Lee Lessard, who was born and raised here, have created a mobile business that does residential and commercial tile installation, maintenance and repairs. Home and Castle Tile welcomes all tiling jobs from new construction to renovations.

Mike has been tiling for 13 years and moved here over the pandemic when his mentor went back to Poland. He has since worked for a couple of other companies, but Jenny and Mike realized how well they worked together on various other jobs and decided to branch out on their own.

"We like to say, 'You get elegance and style with Home and Castle Tile,'" Jenny said.

You can reach them at 604-578-0080 or email Home.CastleTile@gmail.com.

FCU a top employer

First Credit Union has, for the second year in a row, been named one of BC's Top Employers. The program recognizes employers that lead their industries in offering exceptional places to work. This award celebrates the credit union's ongoing efforts to foster a healthy and engaged workforce. First Credit Union stands out based on a supportive work atmosphere, responsive health, financial and family benefits, as well as opportunities for training and skills development, and community involvement.

Vic carpenter to build up qathet

Craig Turney is a Red Seal carpenter who was operating out of Victoria for the past three years but has now brought his business to qathet.

"I've done a lot of work for non-profits, community groups, and First Nations – and would love to continue doing similar work here," said Craig.

Some of Turney Carpentry's notable past projects include: building showers for the unhoused community in Victoria, renovating an old pizza shop into a supervised fentanyl consumption site and building tiny homes for Indigenous resurgence projects.

To see more of Craig's work, visit craigturney.ca or call 250-884-0116.

Tla'amin buys (one) Fuller's woodlot

Thichum Forest Products has purchased Woodlot License 1671 to advance their strategic position and forestry objective of acquiring tenure and forestry management in areas of Tla'amin Nation.

Tla'amin Timber Products, in its capacity as general partner of Thichum Forest Products has reached an asset purchase agreement with GDF Ventures Ltd to acquire Woodlot License 1671.

WL-1671 is an area-based provincial Crown forest tenure near Duck Lake. The woodlot supports an annual harvest cut of 4,715 cubic meters per year.

"Doug Fuller, the previous holder of the license, demonstrated a high level of pride and ownership in this woodlot," said Adam Culos, general manager of Thichum Forest Products.

"This tenure acquisition and natural resource management opportunity within our territory strongly supports our strategic direction. Our vision is to develop an interpretive forest on this site, in which we can pass down knowledge and best practices throughout generations, as we look to improve on current management practices in the BC forestry sector. Thichum looks forward to new forestry practices and innovative approaches on this site as we put our quadruple bottom line commitment into practice."

The term on the new licence begins immediately.

Thichum, which means "deep into the woods" in *?ay?ajuθəm*, was established in 2007 and is a subsidiary of Tla'amin Management Services LP.

Doug's brother, Ron Fuller, owns an adjacent woodlot, LW-0029, closer to the Myrtle Point Golf Club, from 2 km to 5 km on Duck Lake Road. Ron says he has no plans of giving up logging anytime soon.

The business of paper-mache

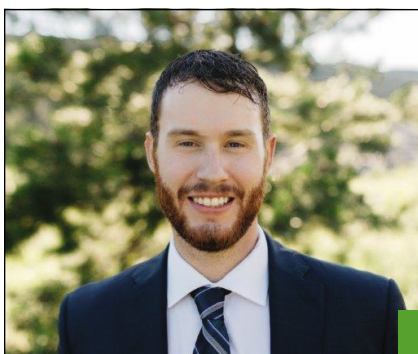
When Christian Borrego and his 10-year-old son moved here from Vancouver, he got asked to make a piñata for a birthday party, and "it became apparent that there was a lack of real piñatas to celebrate in town. Before this, the last piñata I made was back in Mexico when I was a kid."

Father and son have launched a business project creating paper-mache piñatas and the results are remarkable art.

Piñatas start at \$40 for a basic star, and can include designs ranging from hearts to clowns to fish to pirates and more. They also do custom orders.

Christian, a visual artist, says the business helps fuel his son's creative endeavours.

To find out more, or order your own piñata or art, visit localpapermache.wixsite.com/localpapermache, email localpapermache@gmail.com or call 778-865-5519, or visit fb.com/localpapermache. You can check out Christian's other art at cborregoart.com



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Climate woes sap tree flows

In eastern Canada, March and April are maple months – when you can indulge in a sugar shack brunch and celebrate the sweet flow of syrup. Here on Texada Island, Katrin Glenn and her family have produced Big Leaf Maple syrup on Rock Island Farm on and off since 2012.

But when they pulled the plugs off the trees mid-February, nothing came out.

“The trees took a hit from last year’s drought,” Katrin explained (pictured right with her partner in life and syrup Kelly Hughes and dog Georgia.)

BC’s Big Leaf Maples have also been hit this winter with Erysiphales fungi, a mildew infection that may be impacting their sap production.

Finally, Katrin said, the temperature hasn’t varied enough to get the sap running. For a good sap year, you need fluctuations.

“Everyone who makes syrup on the coast is truly disappointed – from Washington to here.”

What makes the lack of production particularly disappointing is that it was so good last year. In 2022, Katrin and Kelly processed 11,000 litres of sap into 220 litres of pure maple syrup, and sold out within weeks on Texada and in Powell River.

The product represents so many hopes for this region: alternate commercial uses for the forest; local, sustainable food; local manufacturing; and tourism.

Next year, they’ll try again.



March in qathet

March 1

St. David’s Day

March 3

UN World Wildlife Day

March 7

Purim

Full moon

March 10

Last day of school before Spring Break

March 12

Daylight Savings Time starts

March 13

Commonwealth Day

Friday, March 17

St. Patrick’s Day

March 20

Spring Equinox

March 21

New Moon

March 23

Ramadan Starts

March 27

Schools open after Spring Break

April 2

Palm Sunday

April 6

First day of Passover

April 9

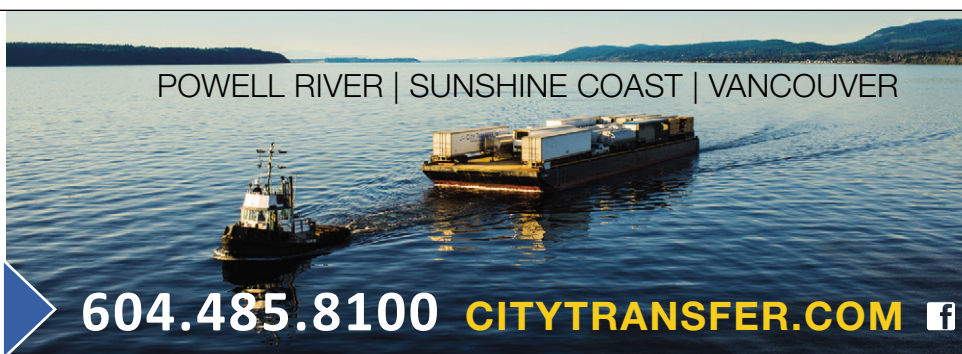
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Saturdays

Uptown Market

10 til noon, outside the CRC on Joyce Avenue.

Sundays

Farmers Market

12:30 to 2:30 pm, at Paradise Exhibition Grounds (inside the quonset hut).

Sunday, March 5

Community Clothing Swap

2 to 5 pm, Powell River United Church. Join us for this FREE Community Clothing Swap featuring hot soup made with love

and rescued food items by local Soup Group!

Saturday, March 11

Seedy Saturday

10 to 3 pm, Recreation Complex. Seedy Saturday is a day of seed swapping and information sharing for community groups, gardeners and farmers. The idea behind this event is to promote regional food self-sufficiency by growing a community network of growers and seed savers. Swap or buy seeds and other garden stuff, see workshops, visit the children's table, eat food, bid in the silent auction, and chat with other enthusiastic gardeners.



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ARTS TO SEE & DO

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Resurface - Conrad Sarzynick Exhibition

qathet Art Centre. Viewing hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays - noon to 5 pm.

Through March

Caroline Jobe show

Qathet Art & Wares

Saturday March 4

Crafternoon at the Library

2 to 3:30 pm. All ages drop in, with artist Jenny Allen Taves.

March 13 to 17

Spring Break Comic Camp with Sean Karemaker

Morning camp for ages 7 to 10, 10 am to noon. Afternoon camp for teens 11+, 1 to 3 pm. Contact Sonia to register: szagwyn@prpl.ca. See ad on Page 38 for more.

March 19

Block Printing Workshop

2 pm-5 pm qathet art + wares. If you're interested, mark your calendars and email create@qa-w.ca or call the shop 604-413-6830 to reserve your spot!

March 15 to 18

Quilting Bee

11 am to 3 pm daily, Town Centre Mall. Quilting demonstrations and drop-in bring your own quilt. See ad on Page 17.

March 9, 2023

qathet Art Council - Annual General Meeting

6:30 pm, Zoom

March 11

Saturday Sewing Squad - "Free Form Curves"

11-2 pm at qathet Art Centre. This class will be an introduction into free hand cutting and piecing of curves. All levels of sewers or sewists are welcome! Instructor - Nina Mussellam. Pre-register at qathetart.ca

March 31

qathet Studio Tour Registration Deadline

More information at qathetart.ca. August 26 & 27 for the event.

March 25 & 26

Celebration of Quilts

See more on Page 16.

March 26

Urban Sketchers Meet-Up

2 pm. Contact qathet Art & Wares for location (changes each month). create@qa-w.ca or 604-413-6830

April 11

qL Pet Photo Contest Deadline

See ad on Page 47.

FILM & FILM FESTIVAL

March 3 to 12

qathet international film festival

For more, see qathetfilm.ca. All films screening at The Patricia Theatre.

Friday March 3

Exile

Opening Party 6 pm – Auditorium naming, Food & Cash bar. Film at 7 pm. Director in attendance. Filmed on location in qathet Regional District, this is a heartfelt movie about trying to reform and atone for your mistakes..

Saturday March 4

Corsage

1:30 pm. Royalty and the pedestal-prison of womanhood is the theme of this film, imagining the home life of the Hapsburg Empress Elizabeth of Austria in 1877, the year of her 40th birthday.

Triangle of Sadness

7 pm. Top prize winner at Cannes. A preening, obvious satire of contemporary hypocrisy, where an influencer couple join a luxury cruise for the super-rich.

Sunday March 5

The Territory

1:30 pm. This documentary about Brazil's Indigenous Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau people trying to defend their land is essential viewing. The Brazilian rain forest is like the Wild West.

Until Branches Bend

7 pm. One day a young woman working at a peach factory finds a beetle inside a peach and brings it to her boss, who suggests they ignore it. Authorities shut it down and she gets blamed by the townspeople.

Monday March 6

One Fine Morning

7 pm. A widowed young mother is raising her daughter alone, while also caring for her sick father. She's dealing with the loss of the relationship she once had with him, while fighting to get him the care he requires.

Tuesday March 7

Aftersun

7 pm. The best film of the year by a first-time writer-director, it's a subtle and complex investigation of post-divorce parenthood; a heartfelt tale to keep us smiling, nodding in recognition, and then fighting back tears.

Wednesday March 8

Rosie

1:30 pm. Rosie is an adorably infectious coming-of-age story set in Montreal. Orphaned and alone, Rosie, a precocious English-speaking Indigenous girl, is dropped at the doorstep of her foul-mouthed, artist, and Francophone, Aunt Fred. Short film *Violet Gave Willingly* screens before *Rosie*.

Holy Spider

7 pm. Twenty years after a serial killer murdered 16 sex workers in Mashad, Ali Abbasi has made a fictionalised account of his capture and trial.

Thursday March 9

Triangle of Sadness

1:30 pm. Top prize winner at Cannes. A preening, obvious satire of contemporary hypocrisy, where an influencer couple join a luxury cruise for the super-rich.

Decision to Leave

7 pm. This tale of a married detective torn between infidelity and moral duty follows the emotional trajectory of two characters: the wife of the deceased man, and the detective who becomes fascinated by her.

Friday March 10

Rebellion

1:30 pm. An unlikely bunch of grass-roots activists changed the face of climate-change protest forever. It's 2018, and a former organic farmer decides that saving the planet can only happen by disrupting the economy.

Klondike

7 pm. A hard look at the war in Donbass that depicts the severe impact of the conflict on the region's civilians – in particular, the innocent women to whom the film is dedicated.

Saturday March 11

Back Home

1:30 pm. Twenty years after the suicide of her brother, Nisha's search for specialized medical treatment leads her to someone who was a good friend and she finally has the chance to truly know him through his chosen family.

Moonage Daydream

Closing Party 6 pm – with DJ Minerva. Food & Cash bar. Film – 7 pm. Told through sublime, kaleidoscopic imagery, personal archived footage, unseen performances, and anchored by David Bowie's own music and words, we're submerged in the unique world that is "Bowie".

Sunday March 12

Exile

1:30 pm. Filmed on location in qathet Regional District, this is a heartfelt movie about trying to reform and atone for your mistakes.

March 12

Oscars Party

For more, see qathetfilm.ca.

March 13 to 16

Women Talking

7 pm nightly at The Patricia. In 2010, the women of an isolated religious community grapple with reconciling a brutal reality with their faith. With Claire Foy, Rooney Mara, and Frances McDormand. Directed by Sarah Polley.

Upcoming in March at the Pat

Ant Man or Shazam

See [qathetfilm](http://qathetfilm.ca) for more.

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Friends, love & laughs star in *Halfway There*

After a three year break from the stage, this local community theatre group is grateful to be able to once again entertain their friends and neighbours with this hilarious production by one of Canada's best known playwrights, Norm Foster.

Want to laugh until your sides ache? Want to cry until your heart breaks? *Halfway There* is a slice of sweet Nova Scotia pie with a dash of Maritime salt, served in an east coast set that is the mirror image of one of Powell River's favourite west coast diners.

The town of Stewiacke, NS is famous, at least locally, for being halfway between the North Pole and the equator (now you know the reason for the title). Just like in Powell River, there's no such thing as a secret in Stewiacke. Not when the gossips meet for coffee every day at the local diner.

Vi (Nicole Narbonne), Rita (Angie Davey) and Mary Ellen (Tricia Andrews) are as close as best friends can be. They have always been there for each other, with every joy, challenge and disappointment that has come into their small town lives. The three women meet daily at Junior's diner, sharing joy, laughter and tender moments of female bonding.

Their best friend and the youngster

HALFWAY THERE

When: March 23 to 25, 7 pm nightly. March 26, 1:30 pm.

What: Theatre Now presents the Norm Foster play, *Halfway There*.

Tickets: \$25 adults, \$20 seniors. More info at theatrenowpowellriver.ca

of the group, Janine (Jennifer Hillier) works as a waitress at the diner. Janine is younger, better travelled and should we say "more worldly"? She is ready to find out what real love is, with the help of the questionable common sense and opinionated moral support of Vi, Rita & Mary Ellen.

When Sean (Jeremy Buhay), a heart-broken doctor, moves in to take a temporary job at the clinic, the first people he meets are these four local women, each with issues and attitudes of their own. As Sean learns more about the town and its people, he learns more about himself, and in the end, Sean gives the four friends a new perspective of people "from away".

This feel good theatrical experience will have you smiling long after you leave the Evergreen Theatre.

~ Nicole Narbonne

LIVE MUSIC & THEATRE

March 3 to 5

Weed Lube: A Slippery Slope

7 pm nightly, Forest Bistro. An original play by the Townsite Actors Guild - second run after a sold-out run in the fall! \$20, tickets at Forest Bistro or BaseCamp. Bar and tapas open at 5 pm. Featuring Wes Brown, Andrew Kalder, Stephen Miller, Stephanie Miller, Michelle Morris, Barb Oliver, Kelsey Roosenmaallen, Kathy Szajfeld and Tina Thompson.



Wednesday, March 22

Cranberry Hall presents: Quinn Bachand's Brishen

7 pm, Cran Hall. Tickets \$25 advance, \$30 at the door. BRISHEN is Romany for "bringer of the STORM", and this award winning four piece band will bring thunder and lightning in their original euro-gypsy western swing sound. Musicianship, charm, virtuosity meets vibe! You won't want to miss it! Tickets at BASECAMP, on Eventbrite or via e-transfer to info@cranhall.org (note BRISHEN in subject line).

Thursday, March 23

PRISMA tickets go on sale (for the general public).

See ad on Page 18. PRISMA is June 12 to 24.

March 23 to 26

Halfway There: Theatre Now

Evergreen Theatre. Tickets for sale at Nutcracker, Sunny Deli, Personal Touch, Farmer's Gate and Eventbrite. Show times are 7 pm March 23 to 25, with matinee March 26 at 1:30 pm. \$25 general admission; \$20 seniors. See story, left.

Saturday, March 25

John Gogo with Duke & Goldie

7 pm Forest Bistro

April 11

Tickets go on sale for Kathaumixw

Kathaumixw is happening July 4 to 8. See ad on Page 15.

April 13-15

Townsite Jazz Festival

See townsitejazz.com and ad on Page 55.

April 14

Hotel California: The original Eagles tribute.

Doors 7 pm. Evergreen Theatre. See ad on Page 22.

April 21

Spring Cabaret

7:30 pm, James Hall. \$30. See ad on Page 15

April 25

Early Morning Rain: The Songs of Gordon Lightfoot

With John McLachlan and Marc Atkinson. 7:30 pm, Max Cameron. \$25, tickets at *The Peak*, Academy of Music and 60 minutes prior to the door.



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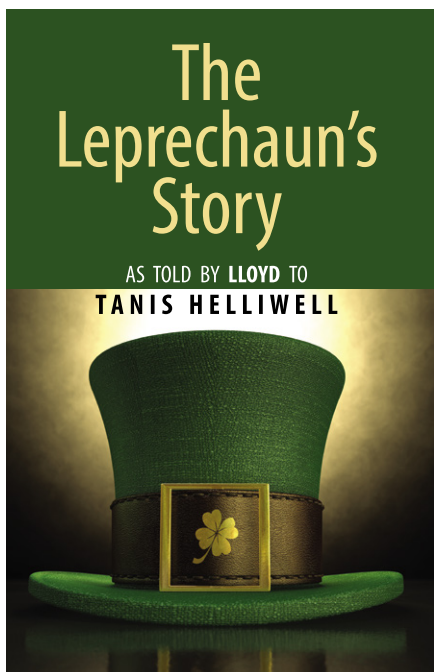
the owl & bear
herbs and curiosities

Flowers and colours everywhere, I am so glad that March is here.
~ Anamika Mishra



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CHARMED: Tanis Helliwell's newest book, *The Leprechaun's Story*, is available at www.Amazon.ca and at Pocket Books new location beside Kelly's on Marine.

So You Want the Goal?

Excerpt from The Leprechaun's Story.

BY TANIS HELLIWELL

There was a young man. Let's call him Hamish for the sake of our story, but it might as well be Lucie or Sam. And our young man, Hamish, was out walking one day in a field just outside Sligo in the west of Ireland. That's the old part of the Emerald Isle where leprechauns and other nature spirits still live.

And young Hamish was one with his head in the clouds. Such a dreamer he was, but was he good at manifesting those dreams? Not at all! In fact, in his entire young life, he'd never managed to get any of his dreams. And why would that be, you may ask? Simple. He didn't have his feet on the good earth.

Now, I'd been watching Hamish since he'd been a young 'un and I'd taken a liking to him, weak though I am for young humans, and I'd decided to lend him a hand. So, when I saw him wander off the path and get himself stuck in the bog ...you see what I mean...I decided to introduce meself.

"Hamish," says I, "I've got a mind to help you."

Meeting me gave him quite a start as I'm only about three feet tall and, with me lovely big ears and feet, it's obvious I'm a leprechaun. He was struck dumb, so my solution was to keep talking.

"Lad," says I, "Your dreams are great, but you can't get a thing in the world unless you ground yourself on the good earth."

LEPRECHAUN LAUNCH

When: 7 pm, Friday, March 17: St. Patrick's Day

What: A book launch of this "adult fairy tale" by qathet author Tanis Helliwell.

Where: Library.

"And how would I do that?" says Hamish, speaking in a shaky voice.

"'Tis easy, if you follow my advice 'cos, if I say so myself, I'm an expert in the matter," responds I. "First, and this is important, you choose one dream to hold on to. Something that warms the cockles of your human heart."

"Then, are you still with me, lad?" I asked, as I could see his mind wandering again, "you take a practical step towards getting your goal and visualize getting it in your mind."

"And then I get my goal?" asks Hamish, perking up.

"Well, yes and no," answers I. "For sure my strategy will work, but you might have to take many PRACTICAL steps (I say for emphasis) and keep up visualizing the SAME goal (more emphasis)."

"Right," says Hamish, keen to get started, "Thanks for your help, little man. I'll do as you say."

"Perfect," responds I, happy to have done a good deed for a human. "Your first goal is to get yourself out of the bog."

A leprechaun always gets the last word.

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Enter our Pet Photo Contest and you could win fantastic prizes from Mother Nature! Submit a photo of your pet - dog, cat, gerbil, horse, pet chicken or whatever - in the great outdoors. Send the image, along with a brief description, to contest@prliving.ca. Deadline is April 11.

Winners will be published in the May "Pet Issue" edition of *qathet Living* magazine.



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August 26 & 27, 2023
Registration Deadline:
March 31, 2023
qathetART.ca



What an incredible honour it has been for the team at Miklat Recovery Society to receive the **Chamber of Commerce Not-For-Profit Excellence Award** for 2023.

We are forever grateful for this recognition. We know we couldn't have achieved this award without the hard work of our board members, staff, volunteers, clients, and the many citizens of the qathet region and beyond who have supported us in so many ways from the very beginning. Thank you one and all!

Films
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7 PM



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Weekly

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SPORTS & FITNESS

Friday, March 3

Kings vs. Victoria
7 pm Hap Parker

Saturday, March 4

Kings vs. Victoria
7 pm Hap Parker

PR Villa vs. Cowichan Axis
1:30, Timberlane Park

Monday, March 13

Registration opens for the Spring Active Living Guide
Recreation Complex & beyond. See ad on Page 47. powellriverprc.ca

Friday, March 17

Kings vs. Cowichan Valley
7 pm Hap Parker

Saturday, March 18

Kings vs. Cowichan Valley
5 pm Hap Parker

Saturday, March 25

RCMP vs Firefighters: Charity Hockey Game
7:15 pm, Hap Parker. \$5 per ticket. All proceeds go to the Powell River Professional Firefighters Society. Tickets available at the Fire Department (on Courtenay Street) and the RCMP Detachment (on Barnet Street.)

LEARNING & CONNECTIONS

Wednesday, March 1

Free business social – Psychological Safety in the Workplace
6:45 pm, The Arc Community Event Centre. VK Wellness in partnership with City of Powell River BC, Chamber of Commerce, and Coastline Collab. Psychological safety at work is the experience of trusting your environment, including your leadership and others in the employee group. It is a key factor in employee retention, engagement, wellbeing and reducing missed time at work. Join Kara Fogwell, RSW, RCC, and Vanessa Coray, B.Comm, B.Ed, in this workshop discussing the concept of psychological safety, why organizations are becoming socially responsible, and why these experiences matter for employees. Register at bit.ly/3lcHuQb

Saturday, March 11

Spirit Orcas in Powell River
2 pm at the Library. Join two Special Olympic long distance swimmers Aly and Dixon as they share the story of their 25km swim in the Great Bear Rainforest. For info mmerlino@prpl.ca

Friday, March 17

The Leprechaun's Story – an adult fairy-tale
7 pm at the Library. Local author Tanis Helliwell presents her latest book, where Lloyd, an Irish leprechaun, invites us into his world of friendly goblins, inept elves, and clever leprechauns. For info mmerlino@prpl.ca. Also see Page 47.

Saturday, March 18

Tech Savvy – Book Building Tool
2 pm at the Library. Learn about the user friendly book building tool available for free from Ingram Spark, one of the world's leading book and ebook printers and distributors. For info mmerlino@prpl.ca

Friday, March 24

An Introduction to Ayurveda
7 pm at the Library. Author and Ayurveda practitioner Todd Caldecott will discuss the theory and practice of Ayurveda – including diet, yoga, meditation and herbal remedies – and will present his book

Ayurveda: The Divine Science of Life. To register mmerlino@prpl.ca

Tuesday, March 28

An Introduction to Brain Health
1:30–3:30 pm at the Powell River Seniors Centre. Allison Korte from the Alzheimer Society of BC will give an introduction to brain health and dementia and will share strategies on brain training to help maintain and improve your memory. To register mmerlino@prpl.ca

Friday, March 31

My Life in Applied Anthropology – A Memoir
7 pm at the Library. Order of Canada recipient Michael Robinson will present his entertaining memoir about his community consultation work with Indigenous peoples to safeguard traditional resources. For info mmerlino@prpl.ca

Thursday, March 23

Financial Clarity in Uncertain Times: Make sure your financial goals are attainable
4 pm – 5:30 pm, Library. Join financial experts Scott Kovacs & Katryna Lawry for smart investments, debt reduction, taking full benefit of available government programs, setting short/long term goals, investments, RRSFs, TFSAs, homeownership and more. Snacks and refreshments will be provided. Register at firstcu.ca

Tuesday, March 28

Compassionate Friends monthly meeting
7 pm, 4675 Ontario behind Save On. For grief support following the death of a child. See ad on Page 53.

April 1

Joyous, Abundant PRIDE in qathet
2 to 4:30 pm Town Centre Hotel. This is a facilitated event. Identifying themes and priorities as a community that the board of qathet Pride Society can help us work towards. See more on Page 33.

Congratulations to us!



We were honoured that *qathet Living* was presented with the **Business Excellence Award** at last month's **Chamber of Commerce Business Awards**. We were delighted just to be in the company of such wonderful businesses as fellow nominees Big O Tires, Costa del Sol, First Credit Union, IRIS, Quality Foods, River City Coffee, Service Vocal Training and Valley Auto Repair.

We were also delighted that our fearless editor, **Pieta Woolley**, was chosen as **Employee of the Year**. We simply couldn't agree more.

Picture above is the *qathet Living* team at the February 4 awards gala, from left, Sean Percy, Angela Richard, Isabelle Southcott, Pieta Woolley, and Suzanne Wiebe.

qathet Living has come a long way since putting out our first issue from the the basement of Isabelle Southcott's home in 2006. She said it on awards night, and we'd like to repeat it here: This magazine is possible only because of the support of the businesses who advertise in its pages - and they do that because of you, our dear readers. We vow to keep making it worth your while.





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Congratulations, hard workers!

On February 4, for the first time since early 2020, over 300 of qathet's business community leaders gathered to recognize each others' success. And the risk, perseverance, smarts and lots of work that have led them there.

The president of the Chamber is former Powell River mayor Dave Formosa, and manager is Kim Miller. Administrator is Sarah Thomson.

Directors are Paul Galinski (Infinity Multimedia),

Peter Harvey (Sea Panda Productions), Paige Anderson (Laszlo Tamasik Dance Academy), Lisanne English (Taws Cycle & Sport), Jeremy East (Westview U-Vin/U-Brew), Nanette Kapitan (Western Forest Products), and Matt Behan (Royal LePage).

The general public nominates businesses for these awards, and winners are chosen by an anonymous panel of judges.

26th annual Chamber of Commerce: BUSINESS AWARDS WINNERS

Home-based Business

Winner: Ever Red Fresh Designs
 Runner-up: Perfect Fit for Brides & Grads

New Business of the Year

Winner: 460 Realty
 Runner-up: The VK Wellness Initiative

Entrepreneur of the Year

Winner: Steve Brooks, Townsite Public Market
 Runner-up: Diana Paloma Rodriguez, Iguanas Mexican Grill

Agricultural Award

Winner: Windfall Farm
 Runner-up: Powell River Farmers' Market

Customer Service

Winner: The Chopping Block
 Runner-up: FreshCo Powell River

Customer Service - Hospitality

Winner: Dairy Queen Powell River
 Runner-up: River City Coffee Roasters, Bakery and Urban Eatery

Not-For-Profit Excellence Award

Winner: Miklat Recovery Society
 Runner-up: Powell River Salmon Society

Forestry Sector

Winner: Bob Marquis Contracting Ltd.
 Runner-up: Powell River Community Forest Ltd.

Aboriginal Business

Winner: Tla'amin Convenience Store
 Runner-up: jehjeh Media

Sustainability Award

Winner: First Credit Union
 Runner-up: Sunshine Disposal & Recycling

Tourism Award

Winner: PRISMA Festival & Academy
 Runner-up: Jimmy Jack Charters.

Small Business of the Year

Winner: Afterglow Hair Lounge
 Runner-up: Two Wheel Tech

Employee of the Year

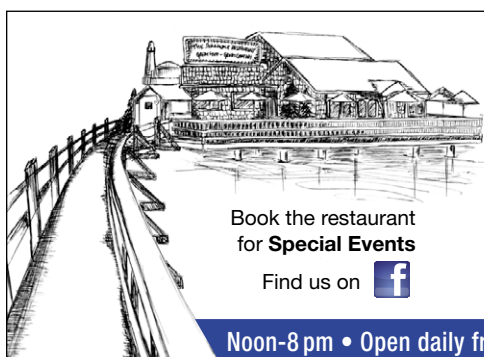
Winner: Pieta Woolley, *qathet Living* magazine
 Runner-up: Tyler Woods, Aero Services Ltd

Employer of the Year


Winner: Melanie Jordan, Sunshine Coast Health Centre
 Runner-up: Sean Lawry, Big O Tires & Coast Auto Centre

Business Excellence Award

Winner: *qathet Living* magazine



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TAKE A BREAK

Creating community

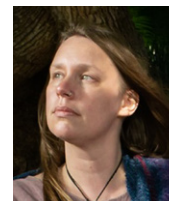
“He who cannot howl will not find his pack,” is my favourite line by Charles Simic. Finding our people, cultivating friendships, and feeling a true sense of community, can be elusive at the best of times.

Toss in barriers like transportation struggles, physical limitations, social discomfort, financial restrictions, let alone discontinued or paused public gatherings, and we might go long periods without the comfort, inspiration, and companionship of good company.

Difficulty making friends as an adult is joked about, youth today speak of challenges connecting in-person as opposed to online, and even introverts need periodic interaction. I’ve been noticing ways folks are finding each other, howling for their pack if you will, and navigating their way to new connections.

Knowing our own interests helps greatly for finding groups or clubs with like-minded members. There’s truly a surprising array and many will host exhibitions, open houses, classes, or talks as a soft way of introduction. Everything from amateur radio enthusiasts to mushroom foragers, aviation aficionados to the 4H club, even life drawing, language learning, or informal improv. Read event listings, peruse library posters, search the internet, or watch for pop up road signs; chances are there is a group with common interests welcoming the curious, the new, or experienced members.

One might think in a small isolated town like



RETURN TO REVERENCE

JULIETTE WOODS

ours that it would be easy to meet people and know everyone, reminiscent of feel-good scenarios like *Northern Exposure* or *All Creatures Great and Small*. Alas, this is often not the case. Some have spent decades here without forming friendships, others came during lockdown, returning residents sometimes find old friendships aren’t rekindled.

Initiated by just one person, local women have begun meeting Mondays at coffee shops as a direct remedy. Their only goal is to foster connection.

It might come through volunteering at a niche event like the Momento Mori Festival, entering a pie in the Fall Fair, or offering a workshop on something we ourselves enjoy.

My husband and I attended a special screening with a cult following at the Patricia. The atmosphere was delightfully quirky, some came in costume, and there was an air of familiarity much greater than at a typical movie, even among those who didn’t know each other. It made me think of how community might come unexpectedly or is created through unusual means.

Just yesterday I reached out on Facebook looking for fleece to process and spin, now I get to meet not only local farmers, but make sheep friends too.

Juliette Jarvis offers sacred living programs online, devotional arts, and divination sessions. Find her at www.SelkieSanctuary.com and www.3FoldBalance.com

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TAKE A BREAK

**MARCH CROSSWORD
PUZZLE**

The answers are all in this issue somewhere!

Across

- 1) Statham group leader's not kidding
- 3) Peacock's monniker (2 words)
- 5) Tourism winner
- 7) Location for soccer or horseshoes
- 8) Forestry winner, storage owner
- 11) Storage space, or leave something
- 13) Stitching artist (nicer than sewer)
- 14) Courthouse's other guests
- 17) Squeezebox
- 19) Paper-mâché for smashing
- 20) Play's slippery drug slope
- 21) Cool real estate board prez
- 22) SD47's yummy homeschool acronym
- 24) A man's home, or chess move
- 26) Play's other slipperiness
- 28) YWCA's (and qathet's) Seeley
- 32) Matching spring day
- 33) Small business of the year
- 34) Business excellence winner (abbrev)
- 35) Soccer team
- 36) Townsite fest's music

Down

- 1) Zunga's "dance" partner
- 2) Close counts with these
- 4) Leprechaun writer
- 6) Edgehill mountain bikers let it ___
- 9) Westview principal Behan
- 10) Not-for-profit winner's house
- 12) Choral organizer matters
- 13) Art tour visits this
- 15) Do this to find your pack
- 16) New resident's lifesaver job
- 18) Julie Kennedy's challenge
- 21) Less empty, or logging bros
- 23) Hotel California's band
- 25) Ag winner
- 27) Quilting together is a buzz
- 29) Halfway There's hometown
- 30) Choral coming together
- 31) Johnson, or music combo
- 34) Film Fest acronym

Tarun and the staff at Dairy Queen Powell River thank the Chamber of Commerce and the customers who nominated us for the **Customer Service - Hospitality** award.

We're delighted you appreciate the service you receive at Dairy Queen and we'll keep working hard to make it the best.

And if you're wondering how a fast food place won such a prestigious customer service award, stop by and experience it!

Open 10-10 daily and until 11 on Friday & Saturday

You need not walk alone

The Compassionate Friends offers support in the grief and trauma which follows the death of a child; no matter the age or cause.

The Compassionate Friends of Powell River meets at 7pm on the 4th Tuesday of each month at the Hospice Society Office, 4675 Ontario Ave, Unit C (behind Save-On-Foods)
Contact us at powellrivertcf@gmail.com
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Last Word: The peacock of Cranberry Lake

He was a good bird

BY ISABELLE SOUTHCOTT,
WITH GAIL AND GERRY SCHOLEFIELD

Thirteen years ago, a magnificent pair of peafowl arrived at Gail and Gerry Scholefield's property on Cranberry Lake. The male, Gabriel, scouted the area before bringing his hen, Heloise, to settle with him. The following spring, she made a nest in a flowerbed close to the Scholefield's house where she laid a clutch of five large, white eggs.

Heloise was a diligent mother, successfully hatching all five of her fluffy, brown chicks. At the same time, she and her little ones, free ranging in a natural environment, were at risk.

Sadly, Heloise and one of her young were killed by a predator. Gabriel dutifully assumed the duties of a single parent.

As time went on Gabriel himself and three of the surviving chicks were lost to raccoons, bears, bobcats, cougars or dogs. The Scholefields nicknamed the sole survivor Blue Boy. My children, Matthew and Alex Southcott, who lived part-time with their father next door to the Scholefields, called him 'Big Bird.'

By day the peacock of Cranberry Lake explored and patrolled the four neighbouring properties – Southcotts, Scholefields, Illes and Goggins, peering into our homes, perching on our window boxes and balconies, and stopping for snacks along his route. Always curious, he made it his business to check new arrivals including chicks, puppies and piglets. When it was time for a nap he rested in fruit trees, dozed on an arbor, or on top of a pickup truck. Often he woke to chastise obnoxious motorcycles, back-up-chirping garbage trucks and delivery vans.

At dusk he amazed us by helicoptering from patio to rooftop where he launched to his nest in the Scholefield's giant fir tree. From his lookout, he sounded the alarm, alerting everyone within earshot to trespassers.

To those who shared his domain, he was our peacock. He was present for birthday parties, potluck dinners, a Garden Wedding and a Celebration of Life. When he made a surprise appearance, parading his resplendent tail feathers, we enjoyed the delight on the faces of our guests. If they spoke to him,

he cocked his head and gave them his full attention.

Big Bird/Blue Boy was a wild peacock. He belonged to no one and everyone. He'd hop up on the roof and peak into the skylight. He'd perch on the picnic table and look in the windows. He lived a solitary life and for the most part, he seemed happy but come spring you could hear him calling for a mate.

His distinctive love call punctuated the darkness at all hours of the day and night. I always felt a little sorry for him, and wondered if he was lonely.

Our peacock was regal, he was handsome, and he was proud. When he strutted his stuff and fanned out his gorgeous colourful tail, he was a sight to behold.

Last summer my father and stepmother came for a visit. It was a warm, summer evening and I set up the picnic table by the lake near the big, old weeping birch. We were halfway through our meal of fried chicken and potato salad when Big Bird, out for his evening stroll, walked in front of the table. He paused, looked, and waited for me to pay him a compliment before continuing on his way.

My 94-year-old father was quite taken with this impressive peacock. He'd met Big Bird/Blue Boy over the years but in this setting, on this night, the presence of this majestic creature looking like he owned the property made quite an impact.

"Having a peacock here makes this place look like an estate," he said.

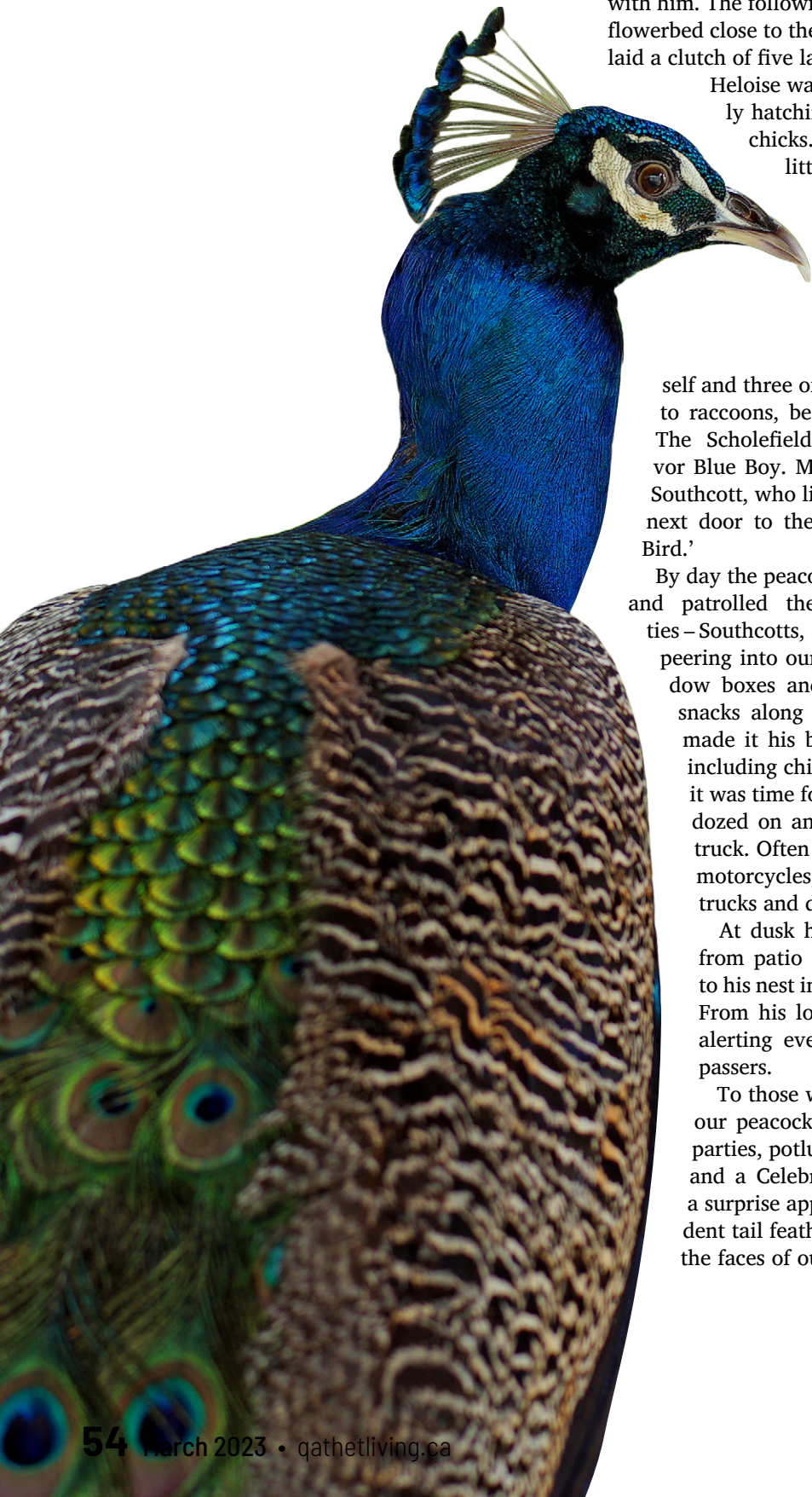
I have a vase full of peacock feathers Big Bird left behind over the years. Some say they're lucky; others say they're unlucky. For me, these feathers serve as a reminder of a beautiful peacock who chose to share his life with us.

Sadly, this past Christmas Eve, Big Bird died at the age of 10 years on the Scholefield's property not far from where he was born. While that is the life expectancy of a wild peacock, Gail and Gerry believe he succumbed ultimately to the cold. The Scholefields were away at the time and remain truly grateful to their dear friends who helped to take care of final details in their absence.

"Blue Boy loved to warm himself in the sun so the thought of burying him in the frigid ground just didn't seem right. We are thankful to the staff of Westview Veterinary Hospital who sympathized and arranged to have him cremated," said Gail.

On a warm day this coming spring, friends and family will gather to sprinkle his ashes in the same flowerbed where he entered this world.

We all miss him terribly while feeling blessed for the many years he watched over our neighbourhood, bringing such joy and radiant colour to our lives. **CL**



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