

qathet

JANUARY 2024

# LIVING



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CENTURY OLD BAGPIPES • ZUNGA BUS • 12 THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2024

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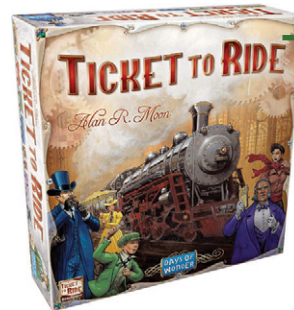
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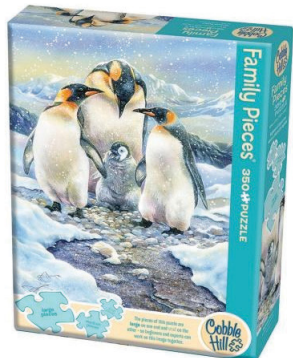
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REGIONAL DISTRICT

# 2024 Regular Meeting Schedule

## FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH\*

**10:30 am:** Planning Committee

**12:30 pm:** Finance Committee

**3:30 pm:** Regional Board

*\*Some exceptions apply. View the complete schedule at [qathet.ca](http://qathet.ca)*

## FOURTH WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH\*

**10:30 am:** Committee of the Whole

**3:00 pm:** Regional Hospital District Board  
(Jan., Mar., Apr., Sept., Dec. only)

**3:30 pm:** Regional Board

## NOTICE OF 2024 BUDGET MEETINGS

The qathet Regional District will meet to consider the proposed 2024 budget and 2024-2028 Financial Plan at the Finance Committee meetings from January through February, 2024.

The Regional Hospital District will meet to consider the proposed 2024 budget at the Regional Hospital District meetings between January and March, 2024. Meeting dates and times can be viewed on the Regional District website at [qathet.ca](http://qathet.ca).

For more information, please contact Linda Greenan, Manager of Financial Services, at [finance@qathet.ca](mailto:finance@qathet.ca) or call 604-485-2260.



The qathet Regional District holds Board and Committee meetings in the Regional District Boardroom at #103 – 4675 Marine Avenue, Powell River, BC.

**qRD Board and Committee meetings are offered via a combination of in-person, telephone, and virtual attendance. The public may attend meetings in person, electronically via Zoom, or by phone.**

Committee and Board meetings are recorded, and available for the public. Webcasts of meetings are available by visiting [qathet.ca/meetings](http://qathet.ca/meetings).

All meetings are open to the public unless a meeting or part of a meeting, is authorized to be closed to the public by resolution, in accordance with the *Local Government Act* and *Community Charter*.

Requests to appear as a delegation, and questions regarding attendance and scheduling can be directed to Michelle Jones, Manager of Administrative Services, at [administration@qathet.ca](mailto:administration@qathet.ca).

Additional meetings may be scheduled. Notices of any schedule changes will be made available as soon as possible and updated in the [qathet.ca](http://qathet.ca) events calendar. Notices of Special Meetings are issued separately from the regular meeting schedule.

Please check our website and the Public Notice Board located at #202 - 4675 Marine Avenue, Powell River, BC for any scheduling updates.

Watch meetings live, view agendas and minutes, and track voting at: [qathetrd.civicweb.net](http://qathetrd.civicweb.net)



@qathetRD



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**ON THE COVER:**

Photographer Jody Turner captured this close-up of a blue heron near the former Cranberry Bird Sanctuary, which is currently being revitalized as Cranberry Nature Trails and will re-open to the public soon (see Page 17).



# Gently into 2024

Every New Year's Eve, I set aside time to chat with my high school BFF about the year behind us, and the year coming up. We don't talk as often as we once did, before jobs and kids and health and adulthood got in the way. So these calls are sacred.

We help each other remember everything that happened to us in the past year, good and bad. And we ponder what we'd like to change in the new year.

Then poof—we forget our intentions until the next New Year's call. I am not a great planner or goal-setter. Normally, I am happy with a bit of reflection, and to go with the flow.

That said, the end of 2023 seemed particularly rough. So my resolution, for now, is to just enter into 2024 as gently as possible.

This issue of *qathet Living* honours

those who keep bringing loveliness into the world.

Passing on musical skills, caring for instruments, and keeping traditions alive is one way to do so (Page 6). So is re-imagining our landfill, the future for the mill lands, and the long-shuttered bird sanctuary in Cranberry (Page 17). Volunteering, either as a board member or in a hands-on role, is desperately needed in this community right now (Pages 27 to 31).

Writer Sheila Peters' story about Kristin Miller's memoir, *Knots & Stitches*, shows the power of a gentle—and tough—community of women to confront heartache through simply doing something together: quilting (Page 44).

Perhaps these stories will inspire you to bring a little gentleness into your 2024. **PL**



## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

PIETA WOOLLEY

# qathet LIVING

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“

When I was younger, volunteering is just what everyone did. I was involved in CGIT, 4H, Girl Guides—all organizations that train you to volunteer. That if you want a community, you have to be a community.

— Nicole Narbonne, **Page 27**

”

## SEPTEMBER'S CONTRIBUTORS



Former newspaper publisher **JOYCE CARLSON** handles publicity for the Rotary Club of Powell River and chairs qathet Festival of the Performing Arts committee. **See Joyce's story about Rotary on Page 12.**



**ROY AND RAYANA BLACKWELL** own The Boardwalk Restaurant in Lund, where they host an annual Robbie Burns Supper. Roy plays snare drum in the Clansman Pipe Band. **See Roy's story, Haggis, neeps n' whiskey, on Page 10.**



**GAIL FENNELL** is known for past success in badminton, tennis and golf, her store Yarncraft, and countless years of teaching, organizing, and playing Duplicate Bridge. **See Gail's story, Duplicate Bridge, on Page 43.**



During her 40+ years in Smithers, **SHEILA PETERS** published in almost every genre. Since returning to PR in 2019, she has enjoyed revisiting the places of her early memories. **See Sheila's story, Grief, friends, quilts, on Page 44.**



**JODY TURNER** was born and raised in Powell River. She is retired, and "likes taking photos of whatever catches my eye." **See Jody's cover image of the blue heron, and other bird photos on Page 17.**

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**ROYAL LEPAGE**  
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# Pipe dreams

A father away at war, a mining explosion, and a visionary hiring policy at the mill helped bring this set of exquisite, century-old bagpipes to Powell River.

They're a living legacy. You can hear them at Robbie Burns Day celebrations this month.

**BY ISABELLE SOUTHCOTT**

**B**agpipes brought Robert Farrell to Powell River. If he hadn't learned how to play them, chances are pretty good that the mill wouldn't have hired this injured worker.

Plus, his now-100-year-old pipes would never have become part of this community's storied musical legacy.

He did, though, and they have. Bob's bagpipes are now being played by Leeya de Villiers, a 14-year-old recruit to the Clansman Pipe Band (see Leeya's story, Page 8). You can see the century-old pipes in action this month, at two Robbie Burns Day events (see Page 10).

**The now-late Bob Farrell's bagpipes story begins in 1915.**

At the time, he and his sister and their mom lived with Bob's grandparents in Montreal, while their father was away fighting in the First World War. Bob was just six years old, and used the wartime to learn to play the pipes.

After the war, young Bob and his parents moved back to BC. His mother soon died of a miscarriage and Bob was sent back to Montreal to be raised by his grandparents.

After he finished school, he came back to Vancouver to work for the Britannia Mines. Bob played bagpipes with the Seaforth Highlanders infantry regiment, which had (and still has) a famous pipe band. In fact, it is oldest the continuously-active pipe band in British Columbia

At 20, a blast in the mine took one of Bob's eyes. Once he was out of the hospital, he found out he'd





**TEEN TITANS, IN TARTAN:** Left, a 15-year-old Robert Farrell with his bagpipes in 1924, in a Seaforth Highlander uniform. Above, Leeya de Villiers, 14, with the same set of pipes, in her Clansman Pipe Band uniform.

lost his job, “as they had no use for a one eyed miner,” said Raymond Sketchley, Bob’s son-in-law.

While receiving Workers Compensation Benefits, Bob rode a pedal bike from Vancouver to Atlin, near the Alaskan boarder, and then to Whitehorse looking for work. He found odd jobs but nothing steady.

On the way back to Vancouver, he went through the Okanagan and met Grace MacKenzie in Aspen Grove at her father’s ranch. They hit it off and stayed in touch.

Bob heard that the Powell River Company was looking for workers who could also play the bagpipes. Part of his interview was an audition for the mill’s pipe band.

“They had the pipe major there to see if they liked the way he played the pipes,” recalled Ray. “The pipe major said ‘Hire him! He plays better than a lot of the guys with two eyes.’”

In 1942, Bob married Grace. They had two children, Alan and Heather, and settled in Westview. Bob worked as a steam engineer and a crane operator in the mill. He also played the piano, accordion, mouth organ, and the trombone.

**Bob continued to play the pipes.** In the early 1950s, he competed in the Caledonian (Scottish) Games in Vancouver. This was one of Vancouver’s biggest annual events at the time, and attracted pipe bands from all across North America. Records going back to 1948 show the Powell River Company pipe band was a consistent winner.

In 1951, Bob Farrell begins to show up on the winners list. As an individual, he won second place in the Open Piping Marches and second in Jigs.

In 1953, a quartet from Powell River went to compete at the BC Pipers Association’s annual gathering. Ray recalls: “At the last minute, one member of the

quartet was hospitalized and they needed someone to fill that spot – so Bob did. The quartet won.”

Stories and photos of this competition were published in the *Powell River News* newspaper. The quartet player who’d been hospitalized had mixed emotions over what had happened as he’d really wanted to be there, but he was incredibly proud of how the quartet did without him!

Bob was on a streak that year, later winning first in open piping marches and first in Jigs at the Vancouver Caledonian Games.

Bob played bagpipes at many local parades and events too, including piping in the Haggis many times for Robbie Burns dinners.

“His family was the most important thing in the world to him,” said Ray. “The second most important thing to him was his pipes.”

Bob and his pipes could be heard on Easter Sunday in the 1960s when the United Church and the Anglican Church held a sunrise service on Valentine Mountain. “Bob would go ahead of everyone and pipe everyone into the service” said Ray.

When Bob died in 1990, he left his pipes to his wife, Grace. When she died in 1996, she gave them to John MacDonald, a school teacher here who’d been in the pipe band with Bob, to look after.

As Ray explains, pipes need to be maintained so the wood doesn’t crack.

Bruce Lister began playing Bob’s old pipes in the late 1990s, and then two years ago he returned them to the Pipe Band. The pipes were given to a young member to use: Leeya, who also has the pipes’ photo album.

Ray believes that Bob would be quite pleased to know that his pipes are still being played, a century after he learned on them – still firmly part of the Powell River Clansmen Pipe Band.



**CLANSMAN IN ACTION:** On November 11 at the Cenotaph, Leeya de Villiers plays Bob's pipes, far right.

## "They're loud. We're used to it." – Dad

Leeya de Villiers is a member of the Powell River Clansman Pipe Band. The 14-year-old enjoys highland dancing and playing the bagpipes and will do both at the Robbie Burns Dinner being held at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 164 on Saturday, January 20.

Leeya began playing the pipes when she was eight years old. Her two older brothers Aidan and Steffan played them, and brother Francois was playing the snare drum at the time. (Her younger sister, Kyla, 12, recently began playing the bagpipes, too.)

When she began, she started off with a chanter (a single pipe, not attached to the bag), as all beginners do. And then when fellow Clansman Pipe Band member Bruce Lister retired, she was given a set of bagpipes to play.

Those pipes are known as "Bob's pipes," (see previous page) but Leeya didn't know it at the time. All she knew was she'd been given a good set of pipes

to play.

One day, Ray Sketchley came into the Medicine Shoppe – the store that Leeya's father Dirk owns and asked: "Did one of your kids get Bruce Lister's pipes?" Dirk said yes and that is how they learned about the story behind Bob's pipes.

"They are excellent bagpipes," Clansman Pipe Major Ian Richmond says. "They have a lovely tone and are very steady." They are also very light.

Leeya practices outdoors when she can, and inside when she can't.

"Even though it's loud, we're all used to it," says her dad Dirk, who has listened to five of his children play the pipes so far.

The whole family enjoys the culture around bagpipes and highland dancing. "We've gone to the Highland Games in Victoria, Campbell River, and Coquitlam," said Leeya, who has won her class at the BC Pipers Mini Gathering for the last two years. – IS

## Learn to play bagpipes or drums Clansman Pipe Band

Clansmanpipeband.ca

We meet Tuesday evenings at the Brooks School band room, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

People can join any time and lessons are free.

It takes a year or more to learn to play the bagpipes (lessons offered privately per student's schedule) before joining the band, but drumming (bass, tenor, snare) is easier and drum learners can usually join quite quickly.

No musical background is necessary, but it helps, as does a sense of humour.

The band supplies the uniform and drums, and lends bagpipes until the student can buy their own. The cost of travel to highland games is covered by fundraising.

The band teaches students over the age of about eight years up to any age, and there are several youths and seniors in our band.

The band plays at a lot of local events including Canada Day, kathaumixw, Texada Sandcastle, Remembrance Day, etc.

The Clansman Pipe Band is categorized as Grade 5 meaning that it is considered to be a public performance band, not likely to win any international awards, but well suited to parades and local events.

We encourage anyone to check us out on a Tuesday evening, but they should contact us to let us know they are coming in case practice is cancelled or the location has changed.

Email Ann at [one.ann.snow@gmail.com](mailto:one.ann.snow@gmail.com) or Ian at [ianm.richmond@gmail.com](mailto:ianm.richmond@gmail.com).

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- Mel H



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# Meet the man who's piping in the haggis

BY ISABELLE SOUTHCOTT

**F**ifty years ago, a couple of Powell River middle school teachers recruited students to form a juvenile pipe band. An avid piper and teacher, the late George Thomson, was one of the founding members of the Powell River Highland Laddies.

"The original Highland Laddies was teens mostly," says Ian Richmond, Pipe Major, with the Clansman Pipe Band. In the 1970s, the band morphed into a primarily adult band, changed its name to the Clansman Pipe Band, and has been going strong ever since.

Ian moved to Powell River in 2005 with his wife Velma. He joined the Clansman Pipe Band the following year and shortly afterwards took over as the Pipe Major (band leader).

"I started piping when I was 14," said Ian who grew up in Ontario. "I originally wanted to play violin but my parents were opposed to me taking violin lessons. My dad was from Glasgow (Scotland) so I thought to myself, 'He can't refuse bagpipes.' They were fine with that as long as I paid for it myself."

Ian travelled to Detroit, Michigan, for advanced lessons and later played with various pipe bands including the City of London's pipe band and the City of London's Police, Pipes and Drums Band. He

"My parents were opposed to me taking violin lessons. My dad was from Glasgow (Scotland) so I thought to myself, 'He can't refuse bagpipes.'"

- Ian Richmond



**GREAT CHIEFTAIN O THE PUDDING-RACE:** Pipe Major Ian Richmond will "pipe in the Haggis" for both Robbie Burns Day events in town: at the Legion on January 20, and at The Boardwalk Restaurant January 25. To be clear, Burns' "great chieftain" is a haggis ... not the piper.

played with a Grade 1 competition band (the highest grade in pipe bands) for several years.

"There is a culture around piping and pipe bands. Pipe band and solo competition is at the core of piping," said Ian.

Last year, the Clansman band competed at the Victoria Highland Games and the Campbell River Highland Games. They won first in Victoria in the Grade 5 band and second in Campbell River in the same class.

"The bagpipes have only nine notes," explained Ian. "It looks like a simple instrument but it's actually very complex. I've been playing for 66 years, and I am still learning - it's a very challenging form of music."

As well as being the pipe major, Ian teaches bagpipe lessons to adults and children.

"I've taught all the De Villier kids," he said. "There is incredible musical talent in that family."

Aidan and Steffan de Villiers are so good that they have a standing invitation to join the Robert Malcolm Memorial Pipe Band, a prestigious youth development pipe band run by the Simon Fraser University's Pipe Band, said Ian.

The SFU pipe band has won the world championships six times in the Grade 1 division.

New pipers begin on a chanter, and it takes a couple of years of practice on that before they can move onto the bagpipes.

Playing the pipes is largely a matter of physical dexterity in the fingers. If you start young, you develop it and it stays with you.



## Meet the team:

### **Alana Rosenfeld, Registered Clinical Counsellor**

Alana works in an Integrated Health clinic offering Registered Clinical Counselling & Psychotherapy for youth (12+), adults, and couples. She provides therapy for anxiety, depression, trauma, stress, and relationships.

### **Tricia McTaggart, Registered Clinical Counsellor and Integrated Health Case Manager**

Tricia works in an Integrated Health clinic offering Registered Clinical Counselling & Psychotherapy for children (3+), teens, adults, and families. She provides therapy for anxiety, depression, trauma, PTSD, stress, and parenting/family challenges.

### **Kara Fogwell, Registered Clinical Counsellor and Clinical Program Director**

Kara works in an Integrated Health clinic offering Registered Clinical Counselling & Psychotherapy for children (3+), teens, adults, and families. She provides therapy for anxiety, depression, trauma, stress, parenting, and Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT).

### **Tarra Tipton, Registered Social Worker**

Tarra works in an Integrated Health clinic offering Registered Social Work Counselling for children (5+), adults, teens, and families. She provides therapy for anxiety, wellness planning, crisis intervention, and addictions.

### **Angela Voht, BA, Certified Mediator, Facilitator and Conflict Coach**

Angela supports couples, families & workplaces with mediation and conflict coaching in an integrated health clinic. Sessions will improve your communication & provide strategies to reduce conflict & generate deeper understanding for positive change in relationships.

### **Mara Jones, Clinical Herbal Therapist and Integrated Sleep Coach**

Mara works in an Integrated Health clinic offering custom herbal remedies and holistic nutrition. She offers sleep coaching for shift workers or anyone experiencing challenges with sleep, stress & fatigue.

### **JF Corbeil, Yoga Instructor**

JF offers individual Yoga treatment in a Integrated Health Clinic. He offers a holistic approach to therapy in collaboration with other healthcare providers. JF ensures a safe & supportive space to explore the endless benefits that Yoga can add in your journey to well-being.

### **Kyla Mazurak, Certified Meditation and Mindfulness Art Facilitator**

Kyla offers Group Meditation and mindful art classes to help manage symptoms of anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), in an Integrated Health Clinic.

### **Nancy Van Zyl, Pediatric Occupational Therapist**

Nancy is a private occupational therapist, certified in Ayres Sensory Integration® (ASI), offering services in an integrated clinic that supports both parent/caregiver and child.

### **Kye Taylor, Kinesiologist**

Kye works in an Integrated Health clinic offering Kinesiology Assessments including advanced level Body Composition Testing, rehabilitative exercises and fitness planning.

### **Chelsea Keays, RMT**

Chelsea offers trauma-informed Registered Massage Therapy for chronic pain, circulation, stress or relaxation, in an Integrated Health Clinic.

### **Christy "Conch" Kenschuh, Behaviour Interventionist, Social Emotional Tutor, and Youth Group Facilitator**

Conch offers support/intervention services within an Integrated Clinic. Her services can be covered by Autism Funding.

### **Ernalee Shannon, ADHD Holistic Coaching and Nutrition**

Ernalee specializes in working with children and adults facing challenges with ADHD and behaviour issues. She provides muscle testing/kinesiology assessments and natural health solutions to support managing meltdowns, impulsivity, and lack of focus.

### **Vanessa Coray, Corporate Wellness Consultant**

Vanessa collaborates with employers and leaders to foster a thriving work environment by tailoring VK Wellness' ENGAGE workplace well-being programs and VK Employee and Family Assistance Programs (EFAPs) as part of an Integrated Health Clinic.

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### BURNS SUPPER: LEGION

**When:** Saturday, January 20

**What:** Hosted by the Clansman Pipe Band, this event features bagpipes, burger, haggis, beer or wine, Highland dancing, Robbie Burns poetry & more. This is a fundraiser for the Clansman Pipe Band for band supplies and for travelling to highland gatherings.

**Tickets:** \$25 at the Legion, at Tourism Powell River, and at Powell River Outdoors. Cash only.

### BURNS SUPPER: BOARDWALK RESTAURANT

**When:** Thursday, January 25

**What:** Hosted by Boardwalk owner and Clansman drummer Roy Blackwell. Whiskey tasting presented by Blue Collar and Scholar. Doors open at 5:30. Soup, supper and dessert \$39, whiskey tasting an additional \$25.

**Reserve:** By contacting The Boardwalk: 604-483-2201. See Page 42.

## Haggis, Neeps n' Whiskey: What is a Burns Supper?

BY ROY BLACKWELL

A Burns' supper has been celebrated since just after the death of Robert Burns by friends and acquaintances to remember the great poet. Since then the custom has been to celebrate the life and works of Robbie Burns on the anniversary of his birth, January 25.

The evening often starts with the guests piped in by a solo piper or pipe band. The host (or hosts) in highland tartan, greets everyone and acquaints the uninitiated to the stars of the evening: Burns, whiskey and haggis.

It is usual to have single malt scotch served for the many toasts and addresses given that evening. Those who would rather not should try a glass of red wine (white wine does not pair well with the foods served), beer, or a soft drink, Irn Bru being Scotland's second national drink. A nice cup of tea never goes amiss.

The usual first course is a soup, with scotch broth or cock-a-leekie being good choices. This is followed by the first toast of the evening. The life and works are remembered and often one of Burns' poems is recited and a glass is raised to "The Immortal Memory."

Now is time for the culinary star of the show, The Haggis! "The chief-

tain o' the pudding race" is piped in on a decorated platter with a bottle or two of whiskey and "The Address to the Haggis" is recited to the applause of all gathered.

After "The Address to the Haggis" and before supper is served, The Selkirk Grace is recited. Although not written by Burns, it was certainly recited by him. It goes, "Some hae meat but canna eat, And some wad eat that want it, But we hae meat and we can eat, Sae let the Lord be thankit."

Supper is served that always includes haggis and it's usually accompanied by "neeps and tatties", mashed turnip and potato. This is followed by a traditional dessert - tipsy laird or cloutie dumpling being two fine examples.

"A Toast to the Lassies" is then offered whereby the virtues of the fair sex are humorously celebrated, followed by "A reply from the Lassies" which often celebrates the lack of virtue of the gentlemen attending.

The evening carries on with music and poetry, sometimes amusing tales, and dancing, and ends with everyone singing Burns' most famous "Auld Lang Syne."

Thus the evening is concluded with a swirl of kilts and dresses and a good evening being had by all.



Literacy Week January 21-28

# Curiosity, Critical Thinking & Imagination

In celebration of this year's Literacy Week, gathet School District is shining the spotlight on Teacher-Librarians.

These professionals are passionately dedicated to ensuring our students develop a lifelong love for learning through literacy.

Teacher-Librarians play a pivotal role in cultivating a reading culture within our schools, fostering curiosity, critical thinking, and imagination in each student.

## The Book ADVENTURE



### Get involved

## gathet School District's Book Adventure is back!

Launching this month in all the schools is **The Book Adventure** for Grade 6 and 7 students who are on their way to Brooks Secondary!

This fun literacy initiative will be going on from January through April.

Pictured above are 10 of the 30 books that are part of this Reading Adventure for students and their families who want to get a head start.

Stay tuned for more information from your school librarian.

## Ever wonder how school librarians choose books?

School libraries aim to provide a wide range of materials that are current, relevant, and authentic to engage students in the free exploration of information and literature.

When selecting materials, teacher-librarians consider their current collections and identify any gaps, curricular needs,

and requests of students and teachers.

They consult recommended lists and also Focused Education, a provincial body that evaluates educational resources.

Teacher-Librarians also work to build collections that represent Indigenous ways of knowing and reflect the diversity of our world today.





### Calico Clark, District Literacy Coordinator

- Calico has enjoyed working as a classroom teacher and literacy coach in elementary classrooms in Canada and overseas. She taught at Henderson Elementary before taking on the role as district literacy coordinator.

## Calico's top tip for at-home literacy development:

*Talking is key to becoming a skilled reader.*

Parents can do some simple things to build their child's vocabulary and oral language including:

- Naming things they see on car rides
- Talking about and naming items in grocery stores
- Be intentional about using sophisticated words in conversation
- A child's ability to hear individual sounds in words is fundamental to learning to read. Parents can ask their child to say the individual sounds they hear in words:

Cat = /c/ /a/ /t/

Chip = /ch/ /i/ /p/

School = /s/ /k/ /oo/ /l/

- As children begin to read longer, multisyllabic words, parents can encourage them to break the word into parts by looking at the base word, prefixes and suffixes:

unbelievable: un + believe + able

beginning: begin + (n) + ing



### with Eubie Edwards

- Teacher-Librarian of three years at Brooks

**How has the definition of literacy evolved in the digital age, and what skills do parents need to cultivate in their children to navigate a technologically advanced literary landscape?**

**Eubie:** Drastically. To be successful in today's world, it is essential for high school students to develop multiple digital literacy skills in addition to traditional literacy. They need to learn strategies to efficiently locate information in the online world, techniques to assess whether that information is reliable, and then skills to filter through it for exactly what they need.

#### A quote that inspires Calico:

"Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror."

— Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop



#### Mirrors:

Children can see themselves and their own experiences in the book.



#### Windows:

Children can learn through the book about other people, places, things, and experiences.

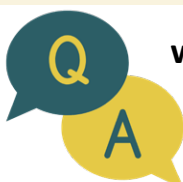


#### Sliding Glass Doors:

Children can enter into the "book world" through their imagination.



The team that rotates between library responsibilities at Texada school: Left to right, Mrs. Wyatt (Grades K-2 Teacher), Ms. Bella (Principal), and Mrs. Baker (Grades 3-7 Teacher).



### with Diana Calderone

- Teacher-Librarian, Grade 2/3 Teacher, Primary PE teacher, and volleyball coach at Henderson Elementary
- 15 years in the field of education

#### How do you get students excited about library time?

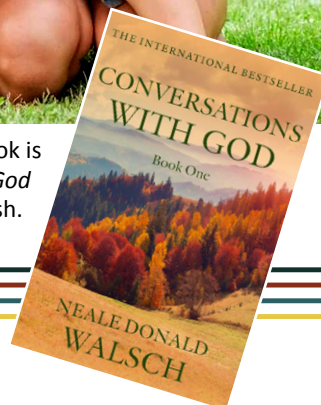
**Diana:** Our school library at Henderson provides students with a comfortable and inviting atmosphere to view, read, and sign out books. Students are read aloud to, read to each other, and read independently. I get them excited about books by being excited about books myself. I listen to their interests and regularly expose them to a diversity of fiction and non-fiction books and topics. My goal is to ensure there is something for everyone in our library, and that students look forward to their library time!

#### What's a good way for parents to incorporate literacy into daily routines?

**Diana:** A good way for parents to incorporate literacy into daily routines is by playing games that involve literacy with their children. These can include common board games such as Monopoly, Scrabble, Clue, Game of Life, and digital games like online Jeopardy or Kahoot (games we play in our library). Additionally, there are many excellent online apps, such as Kids National Geographic and CBC Kids, that engage children in reading and research.



Diana's favourite book is *Conversations with God* by Neil Donald Walsh.



#### Tips from our literacy professionals at Texada Elementary...

"Bedtime reading is a great way for parents to incorporate literacy into a child's daily routine. Getting cozy and exploring a book before bed also reduces screen time, which leads to better, uninterrupted sleep too!

"If your child isn't excited about reading, try to find any reading material you can that might get them engaged – graphic novels are a great entry point for many readers, especially intermediate elementary students. It helps to model reading at home too, so consider a family reading session without screens.

"Reading can happen anytime, anywhere. There are great tools that parents can use (such as Common Sense media) to check for age-appropriate content or Libby (with a library card) to access audiobooks. Books and content are more accessible than ever, and as our reading has changed, so have the many grabs for our attention. Being able to focus on content for a sustained period of time is best done without additional distractions. Teaching children to identify those distractions can help them focus their attention on their tasks at hand.

"When creating initiatives to promote literacy, it's important to remember that all students have different interests. We strive to bring in books for everyone, appreciating the diverse interests of our students."



### with Jessica Adam

- Teacher-Librarian and reading intervention teacher at **Westview Elementary School**
- Teaching for 21 years

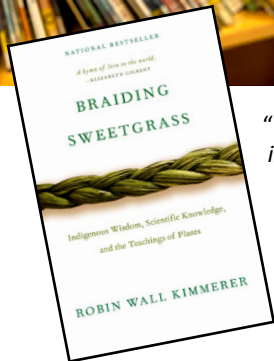
#### How does the school library contribute to fostering literacy development?

**Jessica:** Teacher-Librarians work closely with educators, students, and families, connecting them to information and literature in a variety of ways. Individually supporting students to find books of interest at their level, supporting the school community with things like online research, technology tools for learning and healthy digital use, as well as providing classrooms with book collections to support their curricular learnings. Within the library space, librarians focus on creating safe and welcoming spaces that build curiosity and excitement for learning. This fall, the Westview library hosted the Powell River Public Library writer in residence, Johnny McRae, showcased a student created cultural display for Diwali, and engaged learners in the hands-on investigation of some vertebrate and invertebrate artifacts borrowed from the Royal B.C. Museum.

#### What do you recommend doing if your child is not interested in reading?

**Jessica:** This can be difficult to see, but not to worry – it may just take some creativity!

- If your child is not connected with books perhaps build reading into your connection together.
- Make space in your day to read and have conversations about reading – before bed, over a campfire, while driving or waiting for the ferry.
- Model reading and the use of books for learning – such as cookbooks and craft books.
- Experiment with different genres and formats – audiobooks, podcasts, graphic novels, historical fiction, dystopia, books in verse, picture books, novels, and poetry.
- Choose to read books by authors with other books your child could branch into or continue in a series.
- Choose books to share that lend themselves to rich conversation and beautiful emotion.
- Spend time in a library together.



“The book that has had an impact on me recently is *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. I read it over a long period of time during COVID, jumping between print and audio. I listened while walking local trails, fascinated by the beautifully woven words connecting science, Indigenous knowledge, and our relationships to the earth. It was the right book at the right time for me.”

– Jessica Adam

“My mom introduced me to *Lord of the Rings* over my fifth grade summer break. While I skipped most of the chants and songs, I found the creative force of mythology and language to be incredibly powerful. It made me believe in hope as one of our most redeeming features as a species. Despite the odds, perseverance and the belief in goodness can accomplish great things. As an adult, this may feel a bit naive, but it’s still something I want to fall back on: hope for humanity. The good side of humanity. And how I want my actions to fall more on the side of good and pleasant and beautiful and kind than the opposite.”

– Ashley Nordman



### with Ashley Nordman

- Teacher-Librarian, **Edgehill Elementary School**
- Six years teaching, including three as a librarian

#### What was one of your best literacy initiatives?

**Ashley:** Our Diverse Book Adventure last year was the result of me bringing an idea back from a Professional Development workshop in Vancouver. It was the spark for a lot of creative and collaborative discussion and implementation in bringing a multitude of grade 6/7 students to Brooks to celebrate their reading initiatives, orient to the space and mingle with peers interested in similar topics. It was such a success that we are doing it again this year!

#### What role does the school library play in supporting literacy development?

**Ashley:** I consider my role as librarian to be one part detective. Kids will pick up what they WANT to learn about, so I make sure I learn each of the student’s interests and curate our collection to match and support them. I’m lucky enough to see every student in my school weekly, so I feel privileged in their trust to support them in their literacy goals. The feeling of handing over “that” book to an eager student is the best feeling I could ever describe.

#### How do you support struggling readers?

**Ashley:** I love removing the pressure of reading by having them read aloud to a pet, a baby, or a plant. Many times, struggling readers lack confidence and are

shy to ‘perform’ for others whom they regard as more capable. Take all that away with a special stuffed animal or anything similar. Even a goldfish could be a great investment in helping them love and care for something else through sharing their voice and words.

#### How do you promote a love of reading and writing to students beyond the classroom?

**Ashley:** Words are magic. Words are powerful and healing. I speak about this all the time in my classroom, the library, and in life. Our words are the force for change in the world and connecting student voice to a cause they care about is one of the most impactful ways I’ve seen a shift in the way kids interact with language.

It may be as simple as wanting to convince a parent that they deserve a dirt bike, or that the gym floor in their school is too slippery to play safely. Perhaps they wish to advocate for a crosswalk where a friend was injured. Maybe they have a really funny tutorial that the whole class would appreciate.

I think that finding the joy and purpose in why we as humans created this thing called language will connect with even the most reluctant learner; it is in our nature to communicate and build upon ideas. In short, I’ll just keep talking and writing about it.



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## 1. We're getting really trashy, and everyone is watching

What was once a toxic landfill with a notorious incinerator in the middle will re-open as the **Resource Recovery Centre** this summer, pictured here under construction. Even though it hasn't opened yet, the qathet Regional District project has already received an award from the Union of BC Municipalities – Excellence in Asset Management, 2021.

Just up from Willingdon Beach, the site will facilitate a one stop for recycling, organics and waste collection and diversion, helping to bring our region closer to our goal of Zero Waste as outlined in our Solid Waste Management Plan.

The 6.4 acre project includes a reuse and recycling building, scale house, education and workshop area, site office, waste diversion outlet and enclosed transfer station for residual solid waste and organics. In addition, eight acres of remediated land adjoining the RRC will be returned to public use as greenspace, active transportation corridor, and overflow parking near Willingdon beach.

It's not the only good news garbage story.

By March 31, the **City of Powell River will start collecting compost (organics) from all homes** – building on a pilot project that has been delivering the service to part of the City for years.

# 12

## New things to look forward to in 2024

Sure, there is lots of bad news out there. But here in gathet and elsewhere, seeds that were planted by visionaries over the last few years are blooming.

BY PIETA WOOLLEY

### 2. Hometown hockey takes centre ice

First, on March 26 to 30, the **Powell River Regals, our Senior AA hockey team, will host the Provincial Coy Cup tournament.** The Regals were founded in 1955, and were in the Coy Cup Finals for the first time in 1961-62. The team won the Cup in 1967, 1969, 1970, 1993, and 2010 (the tournament was also hosted at The Hap that year).

The team is currently under the general management of Tod English and head coach Rick Hopper.

Second, **the Powell River Kings are under the new management of the Birch Group.**

“The goal is to make Powell River a marquis team in the BCHL, and to keep the team in Powell River,” said president Stephen Seeger, Sr., in a December press conference. At the same time, he revealed that the Birch Group had replaced the team’s coaches with NHL star Glenn Anderson, who will be both General Manager and head coach for the Kings.

Will the Kings society agree to let the Birch Group buy the team? Will Glenn’s skills push the Kings into a more robust standing? Will the community fill the stands and support their team? These are all questions for 2024.

### 3. Rent relief

When you drive along Joyce near the hospital, you can’t help but notice that **Veyron Properties’ immense**

**141-unit apartment building has popped up** seemingly all at once. The project will open this fall, and instantly change the rental landscape of this region, by adding significantly more units all at once.

The Campbell River-based company’s units are big and diverse. Half the units are two bedrooms plus a den and two bathrooms – a family-sized apartment – and 20 units are “micro-suites,” 340-square-foot subsidized homes that are made to be affordable. The rest is a mix of one and two bedroom units.

This isn’t the only major change in the dire rental scene, though.

In December, **Powell River City Council approved a permit for a new 40-unit rental apartment building** in a vacant space next to Iguna’s Restaurant. It was proposed by Crowne Pacific Development Group, also a Campbell River-based company.

The **province’s new rules about short-term rentals** (such as Airbnbs) go into effect in May, which may open up more long-term rentals here.

Also, the **province’s proposed legislation that forces local governments to allow multiple units on all single-family lots** may be passed this year.

We can also expect to hear more about the proposed **Benchlands** development in Cranberry. The project is by Couverdon, based in Nanaimo. It may or may not have a rental component, but it will certainly offer higher-density housing, which will also hopefully take some of the pressure off.



**ONE BIG BUILDING:** A rendering of the Veyron Properties 141-unit rental building on Joyce near the hospital, to be completed in fall, 2024.

### 4. Take us to our (new?) leaders

Campaigns and elections will mark 2024 – our first post-COVID choosing of potentially-new leadership.

**The BC provincial election is October 19**, and the campaign period officially starts September 21. Here in Powell River-Sunshine Coast, our long-time NDP MLA Nicholas Simons has announced he won’t seek re-election. A new NDP candidate will emerge from the woodwork at some point. So will candidates for BC United, the Green Party, and others.

**Tla’amin Nation will also have an election** this fall for hegus, executive and legislators.

Although most of us don’t get to vote in it, on **November 5 the USA will have a presidential election.** It



**WHO’S THE NEXT NICK?:** MLA position is up for grabs here

is likely that President Joe Biden will run again for the Democrats, and former president Donald Trump for the Republicans ... but both candidates must make it through nominations at their party conventions first.

There is so much good news inherently in all elections. It’s a chance for citizens to talk deeply about the issues that impact them and how government may (or may not) help, and a chance to participate.

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**ONE STEP CLOSER AFTER 150 YEARS:** On October 27, hegus John Hackett welcomed BC Premier David Eby (above) for *yixmetstam tiskwat*, a ceremony offering Provincial protection – environmental and social – to Tla’amin’s original village site as the future of the mill site is settled. *Photo by Pieta Woolley*

### 5. The Mill / tiskwat site will be resolved

Ownership, taxes, industry and justice: what will happen to tiskwat / the mill site? That’s been a core community question for at least 40 years, as the 361-acre site has bounced between owners and survived multiple curtailments. In 2021, the mill’s current owner, Paper Excellence, announced the mill would be curtailed indefinitely. In August 2023, it was permanently curtailed.

The mouth of the Powell River, tiskwat, is also the site of the original Tla’amin village. The future for this area was not settled in the 2016 treaty.

Instead, it is part of a specific claim negotiated with Canada (a separate process from the BC Treaty Commission), which was started 20 years ago and just got traction in November 2023. Specific claims are normally settled with a cash pay-out, rather than a land transfer (a Tla’amin Nation offer to buy the mill in 2022 didn’t go through).

Also in November 2023, Premier David Eby came to tiskwat for a special signing ceremony called *yixmetstam tiskwat*, or “We Will Take Care of tiskwat,” a Memorandum of Understanding between Tla’amin Nation and the province, guaranteeing protection of the site while its future is decided. At that ceremony, Tla’amin Hegus John Hackett announced that Tla’amin’s intention is to acquire the site.

The last time it was assessed, in July of 2022, BC Assessment valued the entire mill site at \$124 million. However, the buildings were worth more than the land: \$116.5 million, versus just \$7.2 million. Assessments are critical, because they help determine how much the mill will pay in taxes to the City.

### 6. Rare total solar eclipse

Now is the time to get your specialized eyewear, because the next time a total solar eclipse will be visible from here isn’t until 2044 – in 20 years. The last one visible from Canada appeared in 1979.

On April 8, the sky here will darken so it looks like dusk, starting at 10:44 am and lasting til 12:16 pm. The eclipse will be visible for nearly 90 minutes, peaking at 11:29 am with near-total darkness.

qathet is outside of the ultimate path of this eclipse, but it will still make for exciting viewing – especially in this region, where our very dark skies encourage celestial-watchers.

### 7. Your values in your forests

On the evening of December 5, the BC Ministry of Forests hosted a public open house at the ARC, to present a new tool: Forest Landscape Planning. This region is one of just four across BC trying this new way of engaging Indigenous Nations and the public with how forests are managed. The others are in Quesnel, Northern Vancouver Island, and south of Burns Lake.

What it means is, the province is hoping for much more input into how forestry happens here. That input will be collected over five phases, which are rolling out here this year.

Sadly, the project doesn’t currently cover the Powell River Community Forest or the Western Forest Products Stillwater Division – where most locals spend their time mountain biking, paddling canoes, or hiking in the backcountry.

However, if the FLP is expanded after the pilot project, Community Forests and other tenures may be included.





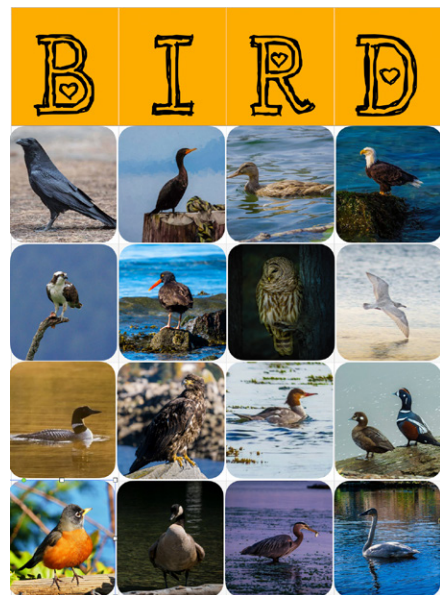
## 8. Cranberry Nature Trails will open again

This year marks 50 years since the Nature Trust of BC started acquiring land on the shore of Cranberry Lake.

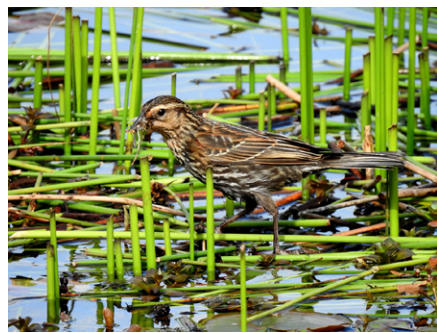
The gated 4.1 hectares, on Mansion Avenue between Park and McGuffie Avenues, was first opened as Cranberry Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, under the leadership of bird enthusiast Clyde Burton (as memorialized in the 2021 book *Clyde the Birdman: A Memoir* as told to Heather Harbord). The land is still owned by the Trust, but is managed by the City of Powell River.

But for the past four years, the City's parks supervisor Mike Kaban has been quietly revitalizing the area with staff and volunteers from the BOMB Squad. The new Cranberry Nature Trails may open as early as February. It features a 1.3 km looping rough-surface trail that was last used back in the 1980s for casual recreation and wildlife viewing. For the safety of the wildlife, no pets will be allowed.

Meanwhile, Tourism Powell River is capitalizing on growing interest in bird-watching by teaming up with a neighboring visitor center to create Bird Bingo cards, set to launch soon.



**BIRD IS THE WORD OF 2024:** The re-opening of the Cranberry Nature Trails will be a highlight this winter. Photos of the female red-winged blackbird (above right) and the trumpeter swans (right) were captured adjacent to the former bird sanctuary, by Jodi Turner. Bird Bingo, above, is a project of the Tourism Powell River.



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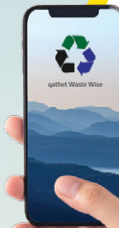
[The Peak](#), 32 Lakes, [TAWs](#), and [Brooks Secondary School](#)

- Appetizers & beverages available when doors open and during intermission.
- Cash bar and silent auction.
- Proceeds to outdoor and environmental education equipment.



## Look for the qathet Waste Wise app

The custom mobile app will notify and deliver service reminders, alerts and all the information you need about solid waste and recycling, making it easier than ever to stay connected and informed.



## JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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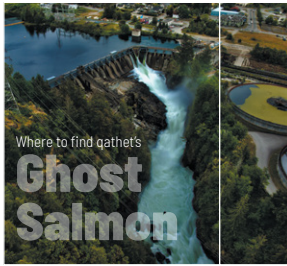
Garbage Day: A B C D E

Garbage and Recycle Day: A B C D E



## Friendly tips for post-holiday recycling:

Boxboard and cardboard should be flattened & bundled no larger than 8" thick x 30" wide x 30" tall. Please don't put glass, styrofoam, oversized cardboard and soft plastic/overwrap products in your blue bin or recycling bin. **If you do, it won't get picked-up.** These items are only accepted at the recycling depot.



NATIONAL TRUTH & RECONCILIATION DAY SEPTEMBER 30...  
 The ghost salmon is a mythical creature that is said to be the spirit of a salmon that has been killed by a dam. It is believed to be the only salmon that can pass through a dam. The ghost salmon is a symbol of hope and resilience for the Tla'amin Nation.



habitat for sockeye, starting now.

The funding was announced December 1. At the same time, DFO announced that “\$1,028,750 over the next four years [will

go to...] the shísháhlh and Tla’amin Nations to help restore and enhance kelp forests along the Sunshine Coast.”

qL LJI reporter Abby Francis wrote about the project in 2022, as part of her larger series on salmon (see images, above).

### 10. Mall overhaul – rumours to be confirmed or denied

At press time, *qathet Living* was on tenterhooks waiting for the official announcement from Powell River Town Centre about what major retailer will be taking over the north area of the mall.

Unfortunately, we missed making that announcement. But the point is, in early 2024 the region will be able to confirm whether the biggest rumour in town – whether Winners is coming – is

true. And whether Bar Burrito Fresh Mexican Grill is actually coming – as the chain announced it would back in May.

### 11. The return of sugar and Ozempic

Not since the Great Toilet Paper Shortage of 2020 have we seen empty shelves like these. On September 28, 138 Public and Private Workers of Canada (PPWC) Local 8 workers walked off the floor at the Port of Vancouver’s Rogers Sugar refinery. Rogers Lantic is the largest sugar distributor in Canada. By November, the company asked for mediation to end the strike. As of mid-December, holiday baking was less sweet, as sugar became a rare commodity – even here, where the one-bag limit at some stores was swiftly replaced by no bags at all.

When will the strike end? Hopefully, as soon as justice reigns.

At the same time, the type 2 diabetes drug, Ozempic, was also in short supply – but for a very different reason. In 2023, it became a popular weight-loss aid, prescribed by doctors to treat obesity (including many folk here in

qathet).

Similar drugs Trulicity and Mounjaro were also in short supply. The manufacturers of all three drugs are expecting to be able to meet demand by early 2024. However, Health Canada advised doctors to lay off prescribing the drugs to new patients, until supplies catch up.

What surprise supply chain hiccups will greet us in 2024?

### 12. Another year of annual events

Blackberry Fest, softball season, the qathet International Film Festival, the Farmers Markets, Carols by Candlelight: these beloved yearly happenings and many, many more will come ‘round again, making 2024 as dear a year as those before.

This year is also a Summer Olympics year, happening in Paris (and on our TVs) July 26 – August 11, and the Paralympics August 28 to September 8.

To make sure our events keep coming around, consider making 2024 your year to get involved as a board member or as a volunteer (see Pages 27-30). **CL**

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# Cut Free

City Council put the brakes on the Zunga Bus in late December, citing high costs and limited use in a cash-tight time. The debate will be revived in January, and the bus may be back.

But should Zunga come back under its current funding model?

And why did support drop off for this award-winning service?

BY PIETA WOOLLEY | LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

## The Basics

The Zunga bus ran every day from 11 am to 6:30 pm, in Westview only. Rides cost \$2.25 per person. Call or use the Zunga Bus app to book a ride (see zungabus.ca). It offered door to door service.

This on-demand public transit service started as a pilot project of the City back in 2021.

Initially, Zunga was funded by the City's Climate Action Reserve Funds and rider fares, but soon most



**BUS STOP:** The yellow Zunga Bus was ubiquitous around Westview since 2021. It offers about 38 rides per day, on average, between 11 am and 6:30 pm, for \$2.25 each person. *Photo courtesy of the City of Powell River*

of the budget was coming out of the City's general revenues and Climate Action Reserve Fund; rider fares are subsidized slightly more than the BC Transit bus (see Page 20).

However, unlike other public transportation, the Zunga Bus isn't funded by BC Transit—which is mostly paid for by the province (which is, of course, still tax dollars.)

Except for a one-time \$100,000 grant from BC Transit in 2023, Zunga is funded entirely by the City and rider fares.

Starting in May, BC Transit is piloting a similar on-demand service—subsidized by the province—but chose Kelowna to do so rather than Powell River.

## Why Zunga Matters

On-demand public transit is hot right now. It's been tried recently in dozens of cities from North Bay, Ontario to Okotoks, Alberta, and studied by the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA).

In May 2022, CUTA released a toolkit for cities considering on-demand transit, noting that it "is typically applied in areas with lower transit demand or areas where there are lower densities of population and employment, ... areas with circuitous and disconnected road networks which impede the efficient use of fixed-route transit service, and areas where demand for transit service is lower during specific time

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periods (e.g. evenings and weekends).”

In other words, on-demand is designed as a solution for communities exactly like this one.

At the same time as the Zunga Bus has been tried out in Westview, Tla’amin Nation and qathet Regional District have been considering whether an on-demand service would be a good fit for public transit outside the City limits.

Currently, buses make their way to Tla’amin Nation five times each week-day, at 7:50 am, 11:13 am, 2:33 pm, 6:21 pm, and 10:51 pm, once on Saturday at 10:1 pm, and not at all on Sunday. Service to Lund, Stillwater, Saltery Bay and Texada Island is much more infrequent.

The public had a chance to give feedback on the Rural On-Demand Transit Feasibility Study in October 2023, and a final report will be coming out in early 2024 (see qathet.ca for more), which will offer guidance on whether on-demand should be tried in the regional district.

Cities everywhere are hoping to get more people choosing transit over cars for both environmental and social reasons. That’s true for Powell River as well.

More than 70% of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions produced in this region come from private vehicles, according to the EcoCity Footprint, a 2018 qathet Climate Alliance report.

But most importantly, Zunga users have been describing why this particular service fills a need, since the service was first evaluated. In a 2022 report, several local users were quoted describing why Zunga works in ways that both conventional transit and taxis do not. Many of the voices were people with disabilities, seniors, retail workers, and parents without cars.

## What happened at City Council

On December 21, two days after a vigorous debate about Zunga Bus’ future at Committee of the Whole, it was decision time. Councillors had a staff report outlining three possible options: end Zunga when the current funding cycle ends (December 31); extend funding of \$52,800 to keep Zunga to March 31, to allow more time to let users know service is ending; or amend the five-year financial plan to pay for another year of Zunga, for \$213,000.

Councillor George Doubt (wearing a red Santa hat, red sweater, and his signature fluffy white beard) moved that the bus end service as of December 31.

Skipping ahead to the vote, George, Mayor Ron Woznow, and councillor Jim Palm voted to end service. Councillors Rob Southcott, Earl Almeida and Trina Isakson voted against George’s motion to end the service.

Councillor Cindy Elliott was on an airplane without WiFi during the vote and couldn’t participate.

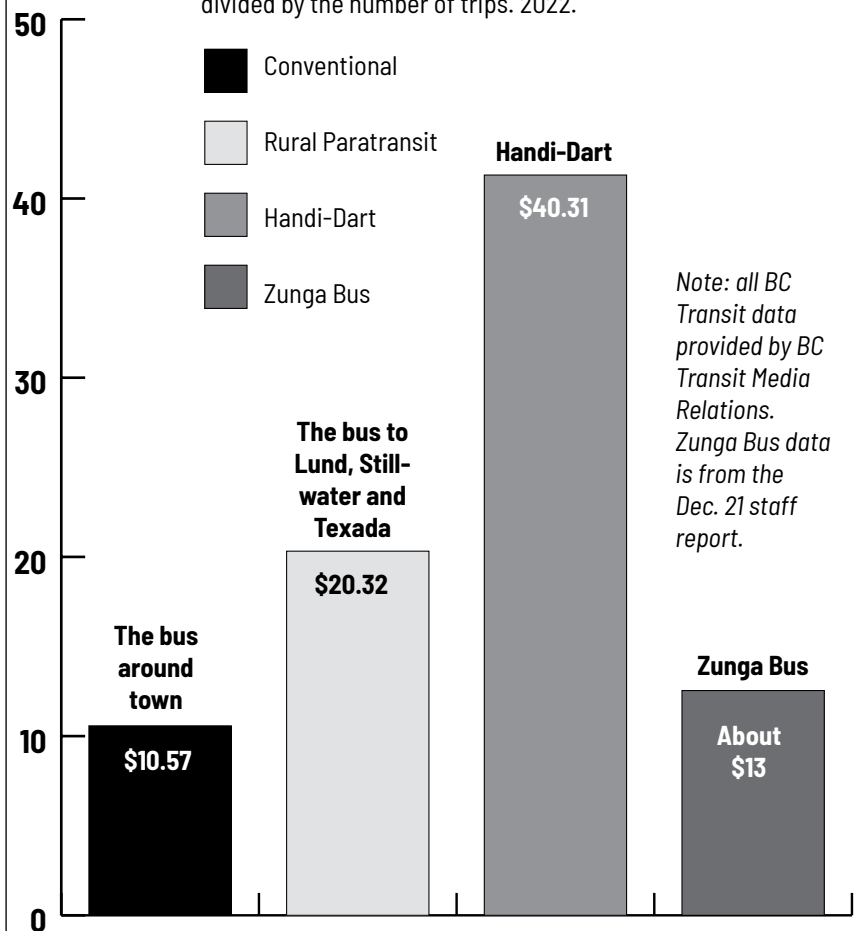
With a 3-3 vote, the funding will simply run out December 31, and the service will end.

But the interesting part of the meeting happened in between George’s motion, and the final vote.

Mayor Ron Woznow put the blame for the end of Zunga bus squarely on the shoulders of BC Transit. The agency ordinarily picks up 47% of public transit costs, with the remaining 53% being shared between local governments and transit users (fares). But BC Transit has not agreed to fund Zunga here; in fact, in early 2024, its first on-demand pilot will start running in Kelowna rather than Powell River.

## Cost to the taxpayer per trip

Total cost of the service, minus total fare revenue, divided by the number of trips. 2022.



Note: all BC Transit data provided by BC Transit Media Relations. Zunga Bus data is from the Dec. 21 staff report.

## All transit is heavily subsidized

For \$2.25 per trip, you can take the bus within the City, the bus to Lund or Stillwater, the Handi-Dart (if you qualify), or the Zunga Bus. But how much that trip is subsidized varies wildly (see above).

BC Transit splits costs with municipalities, with 47% coming directly from the province, and 53% shared

between the local government and user fares.

In Metro Vancouver, TransLink also gets revenue from a fuel tax (12.5 cents per litre of gas) and parking metres – neither of which would likely be popular additions in qathet, given the already higher-than-elsewhere cost of gas here.

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Club of Powell River

“This is another example of the province down-loading onto Powell River,” said the Mayor. “The province [BC Transit] decided not to put the money into Powell River but to send it to Kelowna. It would have been logical of them to come here. But they didn’t.”

However, Ron went on to suggest that if people care about the service, it’s something they should be prepared to fundraise for, rather than looking to the City to fund.

“We have volunteers, nonprofits and a couple of capable individuals who feel strongly about this,” said Ron. “Let’s encourage them to raise the money. There’s no justification to burden our citizens with a huge tax increase.”

George noted that it’s not fair to taxpayers in Wild-wood, Townsite and Cranberry to pay for a service that doesn’t serve them. (In 2021, the City planned to expand Zunga to other neighbourhoods, but find-ing drivers for the existing service was difficult, so that plan was shelved.)

Trina noted that it’s cruel to suddenly end the ser-vice in just 10 days, with no notice so Zunga users can make other plans. She also reminded Council that the Zunga Bus will be up for discussion again in January, for the draft financial plan.

Earl noted that council recently voted to increase funding to BC Transit in the City by \$185,000, and no one wrote in to complain or applaud.

Jim said he received several emails about the Zu-nga Bus since the Committee of the Whole two days previous.

“A lot of heartstrings are being tugged this way and that way,” he said. Jim noted that the City’s budget is already under pressure by a 34% increase in Regional District taxes to the city; the Resource Recovery Centre will be adding about \$1.6 million in expenses to the City mid-year.

“We just have to say sorry, until we find a new source of wealth in this community, we cannot pro-vide that service. I hope BC Transit comes to the table in the next two years ... but we’ve got to hold the line right now.

## There is hope that Zunga may continue

Three “maybes” are just ahead, which could bring the Zunga Bus back into operation sooner rather than later.

First, at City Council on December 21, the coun-cillors determined that Cindy Elliott can request a reconsideration of George’s motion. If Cindy votes against ending funding, the councillors could con-sider keeping it running either just through March, or for all of 2024.

Indeed, just before *qL* went to press, councillor Cindy Elliott requested a special council meeting for January 2, to reconsider both the Zunga Bus vote and the Cold Weather Shelter vote (funding for which was also denied at the December 21 meeting, when she was on an airplane.)

So it’s possible that by the time you’re reading this, the Zunga Bus may be running again.

Second, the City of Powell River’s 2024-2028 Draft Financial Plan is up for debate in January. Funding for the Zunga Bus will be part of that discussion.

Although City Council hasn’t seen estimates for how much property taxes may increase in Powell River, about \$2 million must be cut from the City budget, to bring tax increases back into the single digits, the Mayor said.

As councillors pointed out during the debate, ex-tending Zunga Bus through 2024 alone would repre-sent an increase of \$213,000 in new spending on top of that \$2 million.

The third “maybe” is that BC Transit will come to the table quickly with a funding model for on-de-mand transit.

After the meeting where councillors voted to end Zunga Bus funding December 31, former councillor CaroleAnn Leishman was livid. She has been a long-time advocate for the Zunga Bus in particular, and cli-mate-friendly transportation alternatives in general.

“It’s so disappointing to see the cancellation of a transit service happen with no warning to the public or to the users who have come to rely on this ser-vice,” she said.

“That’s just poor governance. Hopefully Council can take a second look at this decision in January and reconsider because this loss of service is a blow to seniors, families, people with lower incomes, peo-ple with conditions that prevent them from driving themselves, and is setting our community back in terms of climate action and giving people more op-tions for leaving their cars at home.”

CaroleAnn noted that the vote would have swayed in favour of keeping Zunga, had Cindy been at the meeting.

She also noted that if Zunga served every neigh-bourhood in Powell River – which was the plan in 2021 until staffing challenges got in the way, and something the province asked Powell River to pur-sue, when it extended the \$100,000 grant for Zunga in 2023 – some councillors may have voted differ-ently.

In the meantime, CaroleAnn is lobbying BC’s min-ister of Transportation Rob Fleming, BC’s Minister of Environment George Heyman, and MLA Nicholas Simons to encourage BC Transit to get on board with funding on-demand transit everywhere, including Powell River and gathet.

“That’s the hope,” she said.



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# Citizens speak out: Should the Zunga Bus stay or go?

## Stephen Miller: It must go

For 16 years, Stephen Miller was the President and CEO of Easter Seals BC & Yukon. As head of that charity, he was always wary of donations that came in specifically to fund new or expanded projects.

“We wouldn’t just accept it. We’d ask ourselves what happens at the end of the year, when that money isn’t there anymore. Then we have to cut the service, and suddenly people look at the charity as cutting things, so it brings a negative for that charity.”

Now Stephen is the chair of the Townsite Ratepayers Society (TRS). When the City found Provincial funds for an on-demand transit service pilot, he said, staff and council should have asked the same question: what gets lost when the funding runs out?

“You’ve always got to be thinking about what happens when a grant ends,” he said in an interview at his home.

In a letter to council on behalf of the TRS, Stephen outlined why the Board of Directors believes the City should stop funding the Zunga Bus.

Because it only serves Westview, he said, “this service has created a disparity by serving only one neighbourhood.”

In other words, Townsite residents pay for it (as do residents of Cranberry and Wildwood, he pointed out), but they don’t benefit from it.

Furthermore, Stephen wrote, expanding it isn’t something the City can afford, and therefore the Zunga Bus



**WE CAN’T AFFORD THIS:** Townsite Ratepayers Society President Stephen Miller. It’s not fair to charge taxpayers in every neighbourhood for a service that just serves Westview.

should be axed – especially given the City’s current budget problem.

According to the TRS’ calculations, the City lost \$670,025 over three years on Zunga Bus.

Stephen added that private on-demand services are legal in this region now (such as Coastal Rides, see Page 25). If people want an on-demand service and are willing to pay for it, the framework is in place.

“We’re looking at a 9% property tax increase,” he said.

“That’s ridiculous. We’re already one of the highest-taxed municipalities in BC. We need to start cutting non-essential services.”

And Zunga Bus is, Stephen said, a non-essential service.

## Matt Staley: It must stay



**WE CAN’T AFFORD TO NOT HAVE THIS:** Injured Afghanistan Veteran and Zunga user Matt Staley. If you saw who used the Zunga Bus, of course you’d fund it, he said.

Matthew Staley moved to qathet in 2020, one year before the Zunga Bus started up.

He came here to heal from three things: PTSD from his time as a war-rant officer in Afghanistan; alcoholism from his time post-army (both of which he addressed at the Sunshine Coast Treatment Centre); as well as to recover from treatment for polycythemia vera, a kind of blood cancer that gave him severe clots in his legs.

It’s been nearly four years. Now, he lives with his high school sweetheart and his therapy dog Fisher. And, he offers other people in recovery his help, through life coaching, and running meetings.

“Community is massive in my world,

and I want to be part of this community because it took me in and accepted me at my weakest,” he said.

Matt, who lost his drivers license in the aftermath of when he came back from war, was one of the Zunga Bus’ first customers.

He started using it to get to medical appointment and meetings.

“I was pretty busted up when I came here,” he said, noting he could barely walk, and using the bus wasn’t manageable for him due to his PTSD.

“Zunga helped me cope. It gave me the ability to be independent again safely.”

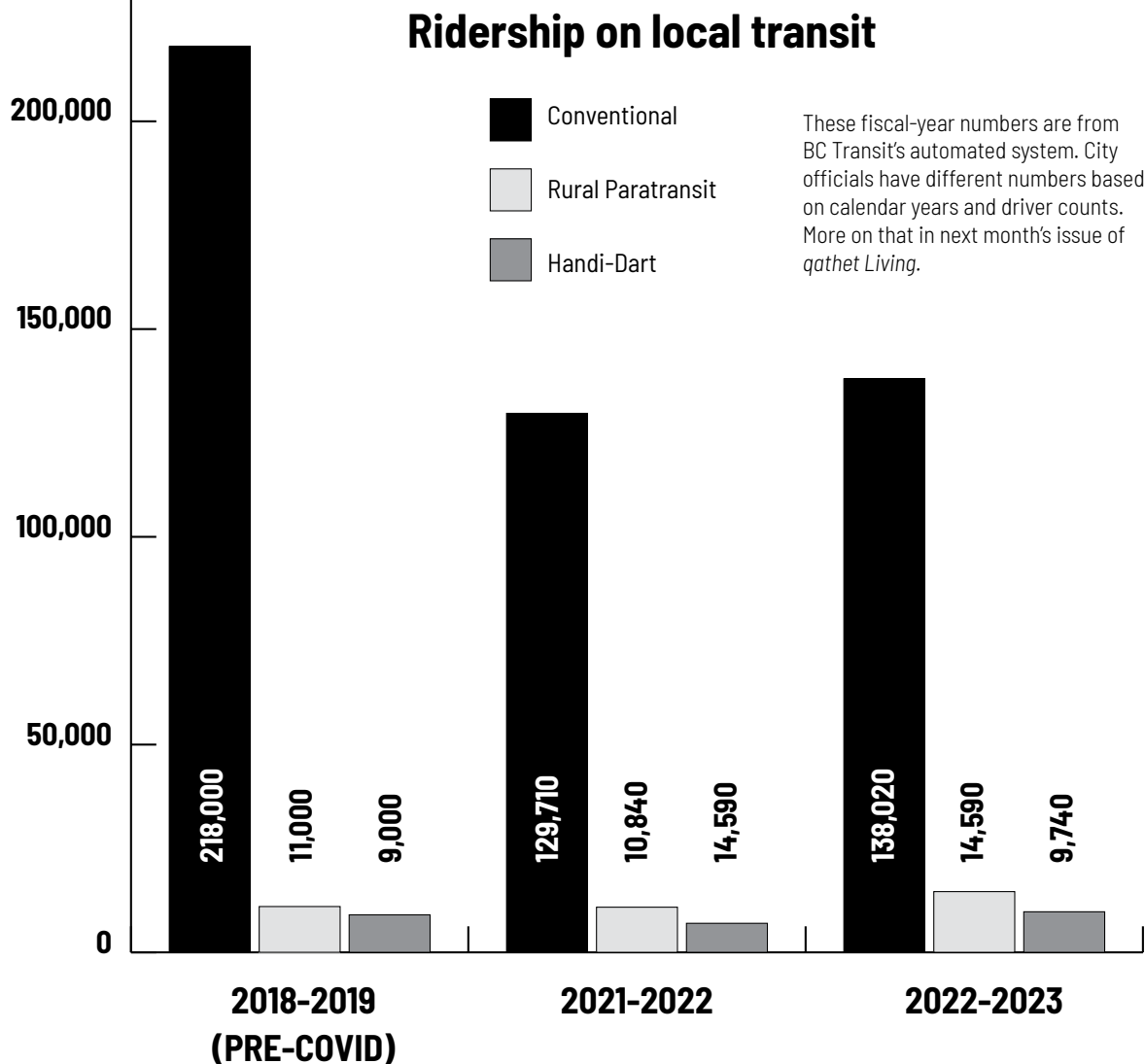
Now, he uses Zunga Bus to get to work and volunteer. Although he has a learners license again and will be driving soon, Matt is a vocal supporter of Zunga.

“I’ve gotten to know so many people on Zunga,” he said. “These guys became part of my day-to-day. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to know when someone is hard up. Zunga lets people lug their groceries back to their family without breaking their back. It lets some families go down to one vehicle, or get rid of their vehicle, now that everything is so expensive.”

Moms and dads traveling with kids and groceries, and the elderly: taking the regular bus often requires “an in-human effort” for some.

“I don’t want the service to be thrown out because people don’t understand it. If you don’t understand it, try it out.”

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## What happened to all the City's bus riders?

BY PIETA WOOLLEY | LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

The last full year before COVID, 2018-2019, Powell River's City buses took people on about 600 trips per day (see above – the black bars representing “conventional transit.”)

Four years later – and after COVID's worst – people were making just 378 trips a day. Bus usage, in the City, fell by just over 40%.

The same was not true for buses that serve the outlying areas. Like City buses, they saw a dip in usage during COVID, but buses to Lund, Stillwater and Texada bounced back and more by 2022 – with a 33% jump.

HandiDART, too, recovered usage post-COVID, with a modest increase.

The fares are the same: \$2.25 each.

Zunga ridership, at about 11,000 trips per year, doesn't account for much of the nearly 90,000 trip drop in usage.

In fact, this isn't a local quirk. Transit use was down in 2022 by almost exactly the same amount – 41% – across Canada since before the pandemic, according to a recent report by Statistics Canada.

The report notes that there are just fewer com-

### BC Transit's three types of funded bus in qathet:

#### Conventional Transit

Buses that follow scheduled routes through Westview, Grief Point, to Townsite / Wildwood and tishosem.

#### Rural Paratransit

Buses that follow scheduled routes to outlying areas: Lund, Texada, and Stillwater (and to Salt-ery Bay by request).

#### HandiDART

On-demand bus for mobility-challenged registered users only.

\* Note: all data on this page is from BC Transit media department.

muters now, as more people are working from home – although that doesn't explain the entire drop, of course.

When fewer people take the bus, the cost per trip goes up – as the same number of buses run no matter how many people ride or pay fares.

The chart on Page 20 shows cost to the taxpayer per trip in 2022-2023 (all levels of government, not just the City.)

For City buses, taxpayers subsidizes each ride by \$10.57. For trips to the outlying areas, taxpayers subsidized each ride by \$20.32. And for HandiDart – the BC Transit-run on-demand service – taxpayers subsidize each trip by \$41.31.

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# qathet's get-around gang

BY PIETA WOOLLEY | LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

How can you commute, shop, care for kids and elders, and socialize, if you're not walking, cycling or driving your own car?

The good news is, there's lots of choice. The bad news is, we still haven't cobbled together an environmentally-sustainable, affordable transportation system to consistently move us around the region and beyond.

## FOR WHEN YOU'RE GOING SOMEWHERE MORE COMPELLING THAN YOUR OFFICE:

Former CFL guard Jesse Newman (BC Lions, Calgary Stampeders) started Sunshine Coast Shuttle after he returned to his hometown nearly a decade ago, and started volunteering with qPAWS.

His fleet of seven-passenger SUVs and a 21-passenger van and new 15-passenger van can take adventurers, and their gear, not only into the

backcountry, but also around town. Summer is his busy season.

"I have no trouble finding drivers," said Jesse. "I used to drive for the School District, and it's a great group to snag excellent drivers from. They don't work in the summer."

Jesse is thinking about offering a regular scheduled service, rather than just charter.

Photo by Motive Media

## BC Transit Powell River

Public service funded by fares, the province of BC, the City, qathet Regional District, and Tla'amin Nation. Administered by BC Transit.

**Advantage:** Cheap and consistent. You can go from Saltery Bay to Lund and everywhere in between for \$2.25, and to Texada for \$8, including the ferry fare. Kids 12 and under travel free. The HandiDART system, also \$2.25 a ride, offers door to door service for people with mobility challenges.

**Disadvantage:** Service outside the City can be spotty. For example, in the winter, the #14 bus to and from Lund operates just Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, with two trips north per day, and two south. Within the City limits, the buses can be infrequent. They leave a gap in service between the late evening and early morning. HandiDART operates 8 am to 4 or 5 pm weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm Saturdays, and not at all on Sundays.

**Learn more:**  
[bctransit.com/powell-river](http://bctransit.com/powell-river)



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## Zunga Bus

Public on-demand service funded by fares, occasional grants, City revenues and the City's Climate Action Reserve Fund. Administered by the City, but unfunded from now through March.

**Advantage:** Cheap taxi-like service. For \$2.25, Zunga offers door-to-door service via a booking system. You can call or use the app to arrange a ride.

**Disadvantage:** Extremely limited availability. Zunga Bus runs from 11 am to 6:30 pm, seven days a week – only in Westview. And with Council's decision on Dec. 21, the pilot project is cancelled at least through March.

**Learn more:** zungabus.ca

## Sunshine Coast Connector

Private bus service between Earl's Cove and Langdale ferry terminals. Funded by fares and the occasional government grant. Based in Sechelt.

**Advantage:** This is the only ground service that will get qathet humans to Vancouver. The only other options are private car, flights, or boats. A non-refundable, one-way ticket is \$60 (plus the cost of the ferry, and potentially connecting public buses on either end). As of 2021, BC Transit has permanently extended the link between Saltery Bay and Powell River, so you can take connecting buses all the way from Lund to Downtown Vancouver.

**Disadvantage:** Service is extremely limited. The Connector ran for eight days over the holidays in December, with one trip in each direction per day. The bus doesn't run when there's snow or ice on the roads.

**Learn more:** sunshinecoastconnector.ca

## Powell River Taxi

Private taxi service owned and operated locally.

**Advantage:** You can call for a ride anywhere on the mainland of the Upper Sunshine Coast. PR Taxi has recently extended its hours to 1 am weekends.

**Disadvantage:** Service has been limited over the last few years as this company – like many others – struggles to find enough drivers.

**Learn more:** powellrivertaxi.ca

## Coastal Rides

A private, on-demand, Uber-like service based in Sechelt. Currently serves the Lower Coast, Comox Valley, Campbell River and Fort St. John, with limited service in qathet.

**Advantage:** Door-to-door service. Book a ride through the website. Offers private, shared, group, and accessible rides.

**Disadvantage:** The operator hasn't been able to find drivers here who have been willing to provide consistent service.

**Learn more:** coastalrides.ca

## Sunshine Coast Shuttle

A locally-owned and operated private charter company offering rides into the backcountry and – newly – around the City and the region.

**Advantage:** This service will get you, your buddies, and your bikes just about anywhere. They will also re-supply you when you're in the backcountry, and more.

**Disadvantage:** Cost-prohibitive as a replacement for a private vehicle.

**Learn more:** sunshinecoastshuttle.ca



**FILLING HOLES IN THE SYSTEM:** Coastal Rides owner Ryan Staley with one of his vehicles, at BC Ferries Langdale terminal. On his first trip to Sechelt, Ryan spent hours at this terminal, with other stranded travellers, waiting for the public bus to arrive. Bus service, he said, has improved since then.

## Driver shortage stalls service

BY PIETA WOOLLEY  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

**W**hen Ryan Staley started Coastal Rides back in early 2020, he was the main driver. Like a local Uber, he used his own vehicle and a ride-hailing app to drive folks around the Lower Coast at possibly the worst time to start a company ever: the beginning of COVID.

But the former Vancouverite and transit user was determined to make it work. And it has. Coastal Rides has expanded on the Lower Coast, the Comox Valley, Campbell River, Fort St. John, and in a limited way, here in qathet.

What's holding it up here? Finding gig drivers who are willing to put in the time to develop a customer base.

"It takes someone who can be patient and provide the trips when it's not busy enough for it to be worthwhile – yet," said Ryan. "But they need to be consistent for the service to take off. Once it's busy, it's great for the drivers. They get paid really well."

Currently, the one qathet driver will take on longer trips – for example, downtown to Lund. The driver on Texada provided service for two years, Ryan said. Now they're looking for drivers on Texada again.

Ryan is watching the City's Zunga Bus closely, and has reached out for possible collaborations.

Ride-hailing, he believes, is a critical piece of the future of rural transportation.

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# You can't get there from here

Want a public bus to Vancouver? BC's system for funding regional transit just doesn't work here. So it's time to look for other solutions, say our reps.

BY PIETA WOOLLEY

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Ever since Malaspina Coachlines died here, the dream was this: a BC Transit bus that ran regularly from downtown Powell River to downtown Vancouver. Fares would be affordable, service would be predictable, coaches would be accessible for those with mobility challenges, and costs would be shared between the province, local taxpayers, and fares – same as any other BC Transit bus.

It's what bus advocates Rae Fitzgerald and Diane Wolyniec fought for, when they gathered 5,000 names on a petition back in 2021.

But after years of the qathet Regional District (qRD) board and staff trying to coordinate efforts with the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD), the chair of the qRD told *qathet Living* no bus is on the horizon yet.

"We have tried so many times to pull together the players," said Clay Brander. "I do think there's a solution out there but it will require the qRD, SCR D, BC Transit, BC Ferries, and possibly a private contractor coming together to figure out a solution."

The problem with a BC Transit-funded solution is, if a bus is going to go through more than one jurisdiction, every part of that jurisdiction has to agree to fund it through their property taxes.

As Clay explained, for this Powell River-Vancouver bus to work, the residents of Area A on the Lower Coast – those who live closest to the Earl's Cove ferry and don't currently have (or pay for) any transit at all, would have to pony up for a regional bus that would primarily serve Powell River residents. Clay doesn't blame them for refusing.

Indeed, the residents of Area A are not that into it, said the chair of the SCR D who is also the Area A representative. Leonard Lee noted that his constituents would face a 14% increase on their property taxes if they want transit – as much as they currently pay for

parks.

"Area A residents live in widely dispersed communities well off the Highway 101 corridor," Leonard explained. "Without a collector service it would not be well used and a collector service would definitely mean joining the existing transit service."

He pointed out that locally, BC Transit has discussed a Pender Harbour-Sechelt connection for decades, aimed at serving those in Area A. But after several formal discussions and a pilot in 2011, the service was cancelled due to abysmal ridership numbers.

Leonard notes that a regional link between Powell River and Vancouver is certainly needed, given there is no service at all for most of the year.

"A private / public service with appropriate subsidies would likely make it a viable year around service and I think taxpayers would support paying the subsidy," said Leonard. "Many other areas in BC need similar service arrangements to replace things like the old Greyhound services."

The MLA for Powell River-Sunshine Coast, Nicholas Simons, agrees that the current BC Transit funding model will never result in a bus here. Therefore, the province has an obligation to find another solution, instead of abandoning this region with no regular transportation to Vancouver.

"It's at this point that other ideas need to be pursued, because this option after being tested shows it doesn't work," said Nick. "It's not viable for so many reasons; ferry reliability on the Langdale route chief among them."

That could come in the form of an alternate funding structure for rural regional BC Transit. Or, it could come in the form of a dependable subsidy to private operators, such as Sunshine Coast Connector or Coastal Rides.

"It would make sense for government to provide support to rural bus operators for all the reasons: economic, social, and environmental," said Nick. "Now other options must become a priority."

|| [pieta@prliving.ca](mailto:pieta@prliving.ca)

# Got time?

BY PIETA WOOLLEY

Theatre Now should be celebrating 30 years on stage this month; it launched in January of 1994.

Instead, board president Nicole Narbonne is wondering if it is dead.

Just four “dyed-in-the-wool” Theatre Now volunteers showed up to the AGM this past fall. That’s after an extremely successful production of *Halfway There* in March 2023. Most board positions and volunteer roles sit empty.

The inclusive, ambitious non-profit is far from alone, gasping for new blood. At least three other local groups are (or were) facing a scary future, in the absence of both new board members and on-the-ground volunteers (see the next pages).

It’s a trend all across Canada. What was a growing problem before COVID has been exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic, according to Volunteer Canada. Based on a survey a year ago, two-thirds of non-profits are facing a critical shortage of volunteers, and one-third have had to reduce services because of it.

Is it fear of illness? Did people just get out of the habit? Is it due to the financial stress from the housing and inflation crisis?

To Nicole, in spite of these very real facts, a lack of volunteers is still an unexplainable situation.

“When I was younger, volunteering is just what

everyone did,” said the Wildwood resident, who grew up on the Niagara peninsula in Ontario – in a town of 5,000 people with seven churches. “I was involved in CGIT, 4H, Girl Guides – all organizations that train you to volunteer. That if you want a community, you have to be a community.”

It’s a philosophy she took with her as she followed her then-husband to mining towns across Canada, raising their kids and making her way into the social scene in Northern Ontario, Yellowknife, Baffin Island, Tumbler Ridge, Fort McMurray, and Texada Island. She threw Christmas parties, organized library programs, started theatre companies, and wrote columns. Some places, there were volunteer

bureaus that helped connect agencies that needed work done with humans willing to offer their time and skills. Elsewhere, local governments offered recognition and awards for local volunteers. But no matter what support was or wasn’t there, Nicole recalls, people volunteered.

Now Nicole, 66, like many long-time volunteers in this region, would like to pass her responsibilities on to younger folks. Where are they?

“Everybody has jobs, kids, houses and bills,” she said. “They’ll all still be there whether you’re volunteering or not. Gather up your family and volun-

teer together!”

Maybe with changing economic and social times, changes in what non-profits can offer is just inevitable?

“I want to hold on to the society we have,” said Nicole. “I like it.”



**NICOLE NARBONNE:** “If you want a community, you have to be a community.”

A lack of volunteers is changing many of qathet’s backbone organizations, including **Theatre Now** (this page), the **Sunshine Music Festival** (Page 28), **Skookum Food Provisioners Cooperative** (Page 29) and the **Powell River Kings** (Page 30.)

Is this just the way it is, now?

Or will this crisis encourage new people to step up?



**DOWN MEMORY LANE:** Some of Theatre Now’s inclusive, multigenerational productions include *Treasure Island*, *Halfway There*, *Robin Hood & the Babes in the Wood*, *Snow White & The Seven Dwarfs*, *3 Jacks and a Jill*, and much more.

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**CARE FOR THIS FEST RUNS DEEP:** Above, then-teenagers Lisandre Gendron-Boilart and Ayana Morgenstern enjoy the famous festival corn in the sun. Right, the festival in action.

## Sunshine Music Fest is having a scary Vancouver Folk Fest-like moment



BY LISANDRE GENDRON-BOILART

**A**s someone who grew up going to the Sunshine Music Festival every year, it was the annual end-of-summer tradition, and all my friends and I eagerly awaited Labour Day weekends. The bitter-sweet moment of turning the last page on the book of summer, wondering what the new year would bring, comforted by the familiar, steadfast icons of the festival like the corn booth and big tent.

The festival has been witness to many children growing up, graduating high school, returning as university students, and eventually bringing their own young families to enjoy this event. And it goes deeper: many people who adored the festival as children are now joining the team.

Many of my childhood festival friends are now returning as volunteers, coordinators, vendors, and musicians, keeping this event that is so near and dear to our hearts alive and thriving for the next generations to enjoy.

Everyone is feeling the pinch, the cost of living has been rising every year, leaving many of us feeling overwhelmed at trying to keep our heads above water. Our festival, and many others around the Sunshine Coast and Lower Mainland, is feeling it too. When we returned in 2022, we saw an increase of over 12% in operational costs compared to the last event in 2019 prior to the pandemic. This increase has significantly impacted our budget, and we will need support from the community during our fundraising efforts this year.

In early 2023, the Vancouver Music Festival (VMF) announced that after 46 years, they were forced to cancel the event as they did not have the resources and funds to continue. It came as quite a shock

### Can you help the SMF?

This year is proving to be a significant cross-road for the Sunshine Music Festival, and we are making a desperate call to our community to help us ensure this festival can continue to take place. The positions we are looking to fill include :

- Grant Writer/Fundraising
- Website Manager
- Hospitality Lounge Coordinator
- Merchandise Booth Crew
- Marketing
- Board members
- Billeting Hosts (AirBnBs, RVs, rooms, etc)

Please reach out to festivalp resident, France Gendron, at [zemyna63@gmail.com](mailto:zemyna63@gmail.com) for more.

to our province, and the VMF society saw an overwhelming show of support and a rush of new blood to keep the festival alive.

We have a great core rebuilding and restructuring to adjust to this post-COVID world, but it is not happening fast enough, and we are realizing that we are quickly nearing a similar situation to the VMF.

The forerunners with many festivals under their belts are retiring and making room for the new generation to step in, but we are not keeping up with the turnaround.

In order to survive and thrive, the festival needs more people to step in on the organizational side of things to help fill these gaps. It is *our* turn to keep it going.

### Tea & Tarot Readings

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Call 604-483-3901 or email: [thetownsite@shaw.ca](mailto:thetownsite@shaw.ca)

# The mission: critically important. The volunteers: perilously missing.

BY AMBER GOULD  
AND NICOLE NARBONNE

**S**kookum Food Provisioners Cooperative has worked to improve food security in the qathet Region since its inception in 2010.

Through member-led workshops on food growing, composting, seed saving, and more, the cooperative has empowered individuals and our community with increased food growing and food security awareness.

Skookum's initiatives include member cider press rental; the Gleaners program saving substantial amounts of food from wastage; and group bulk food buying from Rancho, enhancing access and affordability of dried goods in our community.

Our cooperative has a large membership of around 300 people.

Despite its on-the-ground success, Skookum may not survive, as we are having trouble with both board retention and membership involvement.

During COVID, Skookum maintained a small board, keeping things running in the background. Attracting new board members has been difficult

### Can you help Skookum?

Skookum Food Provisioners Cooperative has a need to fill important positions such as President, Chair, and Secretary plus additional director positions in membership engagement, technology, communication, etc.

The organization is also hosting a pre-AGM membership connector on January 25, 7pm, at the Birch Tree Café. All welcome.

To learn more, contact [skookum@skookumfood.ca](mailto:skookum@skookumfood.ca).

since the pandemic, as has recruiting active volunteers.

Skookum's board currently comprises five dedicated Skookum member volunteers, who have been working to sustain essential programs such as the apple press rental and Gleaners. However, challenges in delivering workshops and events have been noted as we do not currently have capacity to



**EDUCATION & ENTHUSIASM:** Skookum Food Provisioners Cooperative, pictured above at Seedy Saturday, provides hands-on support to locals working towards food sustainability and resilience in the region.

organize and implement these.

The future of Skookum hinges on recruiting new board members and member volunteers, ushering in a "fresh start." With hope to fill up to seven board director positions through our current membership base, we believe this could revitalize Skookum and its important mandate in our small community.

We believe that in times of ecological and economic uncertainty, the focus on a food security mandate in the qathet region remains crucial to our community's well-being. Skookum could play a pivotal role in addressing

community needs and fostering resilience.

The question arises: Should Skookum regroup with renewed vigor, or would assimilation by another community association be a more viable path? The cooperative faces a pivotal juncture, and the community's input is essential in determining the best course forward.

As Skookum Food Provisioners Cooperative stands at this crossroads, the spirit of collaboration and community engagement will be the guiding force in ensuring a sustainable and vibrant future for Powell River's food landscape.

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## Kings finds a hopeful balance in non-profit leadership and private management

One of the biggest non-profit societies in the region, The Powell River Kings Junior A Hockey Team, was seriously close to shutting down last year. In a unique arrangement, the private Connecticut-based Birch Group has come in to manage the team. However, a volunteer board is still the "owner" — one of the only non-privately owned teams in the BCHL.

Some changes Birch Group has made already: hiring former NHL superstar Glenn Anderson as both general manager and head coach (and demoting the two former coaches); investing in a renewed training program and equipment for players, and communicating to the community the desire for the Kings to remain in this region, and become a more competitive team.

Here, former Kings acting president (and current billet coordinator) Aaron Reid explains the difficulty of going big, when you're a non-profit.

### Why is the Kings a society? Was it always so?

**Aaron** • The Kings were originally brought into Powell River in 1988 by a group of local businessmen. In the late 90s, those businessmen wanted to move away from ownership and the Powell River Kings Hockey Club Society was formed in 1997 as a way to keep the team here in qathet.

### Why did the Kings decide to not sell to Birch Group?

**Aaron** • The sale moving forward was not a decision made by the Powell River Kings Society.

The team requires human and monetary resources that are more than volunteers with families and work obligations of their own can meet.

There is a process within the league that must be followed for a sale to proceed and the sale stalled out during that process. Due to League confidentiality, I cannot disclose any more information on that.

### What was challenging about running the Kings entirely as a non-profit society?

**Aaron** • There seems to be a deep misunderstanding within the community of the actual costs involved in trying to maintain a BCHL team here.

The travel costs are sky high. We have to pay ferry and hotel any time we play an away game. We do not have the ability to drive through the night to come back home like the other teams do.

There are confidential mandates from the BCHL that are being implemented over the next few years that make operations even more challenging for small market teams. The goal is to make this league even more of an elite league and there are substantial costs and resources that go along with that.

The team staff was putting a lot more time and effort in than they were getting paid for and the Society just didn't have any further resources to up their wages and/or add more staff. We weren't even keeping up to the league minimums at that time.

The Society depends greatly on volunteers to staff the



**BEYOND BILLETING:** Kings billet coordinator (and former acting president) Aaron Reid, with one of her billets, Adam Mendelson. Volunteers have kept the Kings afloat — a situation that was no longer tenable.

games and help with fundraising.

The board of directors of the Society are all volunteers. Joe Mastrodonato has worked diligently since the team came in 1988, to keep things afloat. He would like to be able to take a break. Volunteers provide game day security, game day production crew, camera operators, penalty box and scorekeeping crews, ticket window sales, drive buses, program sales, beer service, 50/50 sales, Frisbee toss sales, ticket taking service and attendance at the door, and also sell the Dream Lottery tickets and put together any other big fundraisers for the team like the Dream Auction and Dinner.

### What is changing with Birch at the helm?

**Aaron** • With new management, and, in the event of a sale of the team, the team still needs volunteers for those positions to keep the team going.

In my opinion, the biggest threat to non-profit societies right now is the lack of volunteers. There is a tradition of the same people stepping up and they are getting burnt out and/or aging out.

With families struggling with the cost of living in the modern age, it's getting harder and harder for younger people to step into those roles. There just isn't enough time in the day.

I doubt it would be considered, but it would be interesting if the government offered an income tax deduction tied to volunteerism.

### Has the Kings model of letting a business manage it been successful so far?

**Aaron** • As I am no longer a Society member and am now a staff member of the team, I'm not in a position to answer this one.

However, I can say that I know the team would not be operating right now in any capacity if this group hadn't come in. The Society just didn't have the financial capability to keep things afloat. 🙌

# ROTARY AWARENESS MONTH

## Offering shelter and much more, from Texada to Ukraine

BY JOYCE CARLSON

Serving the community since 1955, the Rotary Club of Powell River has completed many local and international projects over the decades with its group of dedicated volunteers who live by the motto “Service Above Self.” It is one of 46,000 clubs around the world, which total 1.2 million members.

The Rotary Wheel is attached to many projects including the Rotary Pavilion at Willingdon Beach, Westview Viewpoint, Willingdon Beach Campsite, playground equipment, a dog park, Festival of the Performing Arts, and huts on the Sunshine Coast Trail.

Brooks Interact also carries out local and international projects through the school-based club.

### LOCAL PROJECTS

#### Pair of gazebos

A major local project last year was the construction of a gazebo at Palm Beach. In addition to raising funds for the structure, the Rotary club was able to access matching funds from District 5040 which encompasses 49 Rotary clubs, Rotoract and Interact clubs in communities from Prince Rupert to Richmond. A second identical gazebo is being erected in Van Anda on Texada Island.

#### Read-to-Me Program

Every year, Rotary orders and delivers a book to every kindergarten student in the qathet region. Money to purchase the book comes from Lotto BC and this is one of many projects funded by the Great Grocery Plus raffle that is taking place this month. Each book is placed in a reusable bag with the Rotary logo on it that can serve other purposes once the books are brought home for school.

#### Bike Safety Rodeo

Last May, 114 youngsters attended the annual Bike Safety Rodeo, learning to ride safely through instruction of rules of the road. Helping Rotarians were members of the RCMP and qathet Regional Cycling Association. Every participant left with a prize including new bikes, helmets, and other accessories.

### INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

#### Medical equipment sent overseas

Most recently, Rotarian Dr. Pavel Makarewicz arranged to have a laparoscopic tower from qathet General Hospital donated to our Rotary club. It was shipped to Vancouver, free of charge by City Transfer, to the Rotary Help Network. It will be placed in a container and shipped to Ukraine.

Also, headed to Philippines, are several pieces of medical equipment, in-



**SERVICE ABOVE SELF:** Rotary members and Friends of Rotary are from left Art Lloyd, Chip Paquette, Ben Fairless, Don Logan, Fraser East, Dan Devita, Jan Gisborne, Frieda Hamoline, and Kelly Keil at the new gazebo at Palm Beach. Another one will be built in Van Anda in 2024.

cluding a motorized wheelchair and special mattress, used by club president Jan Gisborne’s husband Stan before he died. She discovered it was impossible to make it available to someone in Canada because of certain regulations.

#### Puzzles support mothers’ school

For several years, Rotary clubs on the Sunshine Coast have supported a mothers’ school in the slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh where 25 mothers learn, and then each commit to teach five children.

Through the Amarak Society’s project, these youngsters, who are among the most vulnerable children in the world, move on to government schools, then universities and college, breaking a long line of family illiteracy. Others then take their place at a mothers’ school. The schools also re-

duce child labour, prostitution, and early marriage of girls 10 and 11 years old.

To assist with ongoing funding for this project international director Bente Hansen has spear headed the puzzle endeavour. They are for sale from Rotarians and other outlets.

#### Shelter Box initiative

Our club purchases Shelter Boxes annually and this year, based on increased needs, bought three of the boxes that cost \$1,200 each.

They contain a large tent that can house up to 10 people, cooking utensils, small tools, water filters, solar lights, blankets, and mats. The box itself, when emptied, can be used to safely store personal items. Shelter Box Canada determines where they are needed for disasters like earthquakes, flooding, and conflict. **PL**

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## WHAT'S UP



**VICIOUS VIPERS:** Special Olympics floor hockey champs Andrew Swindlehurst and Tanya Norman are ready for the Kings, with their Comox Valley-based team.

### Get ready for the ultimate battle: Vipers vs. Kings

Mark your calendars for 2 pm Sunday, January 14 when Team BC's Comox Valley Vipers take on the Powell River Kings in the gym at Brooks Secondary School for an exciting game of floor hockey.

This game will be a hard fought battle to prepare the Vipers for what's to come next month when they compete at the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games in Calgary, February 27 to March 2.

The game between the Vipers and Kings is something they try and do every year as a fun fundraiser for our local Special Olympics, says qathet resident and Vipers player Tanya Norman. "It's a great way to test our skills and give us competition before heading to the National Games in Calgary at the end of February."

Everyone is invited to come out and meet the players and cheer them on. Admission is by donation with proceeds going directly to Special Olympics in Powell River to support local programming.

Besides Tanya, another local athlete, Andrew Swindlehurst, is also a member of the Vipers (both pictured above). Together they will represent our community at the 2024 Special Olympics Canada Winter Games in Calgary as members of the composite team.

Special Olympics helps people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities to try new sports or join sports teams that they enjoy. The programs run by Special Olympics include swimming, bowling, club fit, curling, bocce and golf. Volunteers and coaches are always welcome and needed.

## The Next Economy

With the mill officially closing last year, the big question many of us are wrestling with is "what's next?"

What can we learn from how other rural communities facing similar challenges are transforming their economies?

A global leader in this field is Dr. Amanda Cahill, founder and CEO of an Australian non-profit called The Next Economy. She and her team work deeply with local communities to chart practical ways to manage economic disruptions, for example, transitioning away from coal mining. Foundational principles of this work are right relations with the local Indigenous peoples, leveraging place-based strengths, finding ways forward that work for everybody, circular economy, low carbon, social justice, biodiversity, and more.

Fortunately, Amanda will visit qathet this month. Please mark your calendar for Wednesday January 24, 6-8 pm. In a free public talk, Amanda will share inspirational stories from communities across Australia and around the globe. She will also shed light on emerging trends to help us explore the opportunities and challenges here. For more details, see the event listing on Page 40.

– Kate Sutherland



**WITH MOXY IS HOW IT'S DONE:** Entertaining performers Cuero Piano Trio will return as part of their BC tour to perform a special concert to celebrate the 80th qathet Festival of the Performing Arts in 2024.

### Festival of performing arts turning 80 – will you perform this year?

Thousands of amateur performers have participated in qathet Festival of the Performing Arts which first happened in 1945.

In spite of name changes over the years, the philosophy of the festival has remained the same: to provide an opportunity for people of all ages to share their talents with audiences and to receive adjudications to enable them to improve.

Top performers annually are recommended to the Performing Arts BC provincial festival which this community hosted first in 1997 and again in 2015.

Many festival alumni have gone on to careers in music, dance, and speech arts.

Since 2003, the Festival has been organized by the Rotary Club of Powell River and has many community members who help with various components.





**LITTLE HOMES FOR HOSPICE:** In March, local artist-made birdhouses will be auctioned off to raise funds for the Four Tides Hospice Society. Above, a threesome by Robert Mackle. Right, by Jim Wiens.

## Bird houses raise funds

Do the birds in your garden need a place to nest this spring? Our fundraiser for Four Tides Hospice may have that unique hand-crafted home they'll love! Local artisans spent months creating wonderful whimsical birdhouses for auction in early March—nesting time! This month, from the 16th to 27th, peek at some of them in Artique on Alberni Street. The big show will be at Townsite's Crucible Gallery



in February when the birdhouses will flock together and charm you into picking the perfect one for your garden. All sales will support a Sanctuary Garden at the Four Tides Hospice House. Stay tuned for auction details.

~brownie Brown

On February 28, 2024, the Festival begins for the 80th time, making it the longest-running cultural event in the region.

It concludes with the Grand Concert on Saturday, March 9.

A celebration concert on Tuesday, March 5, will take place at Evergreen Theatre featuring Cuero Piano Trio, a classical trio based in Vienna Austria. The event is a collaboration between the festival and Pacific Region International Summer Music Academy.

Sessions for band and instrumental, dance, choral and vocal, jazz ensembles, strings, and piano are held at Evergreen Theatre, Powell River Academy of Music, and Max Cameron Theatre.

Online registration for entries closes on January 30 at [events.solarislive.com](http://events.solarislive.com). A complete program will be uploaded to the site once registration has closed.

– Joyce Carlson

## Correction: What we now know about the Roxy Theatre

One of the truly amazing benefits of living in our small town is the action generated when our collective memories of shared history are stirred up!

We have more than enough 'old-timers' amongst us to be corrected when something 50, 60 or even 70 years ago has been brought up and needs to be clarified.

There have been reminders from the community

that Willingdon Beach might have formerly been known as Michigan Landing, but since settlement, Westview has always been Westview; that the Patricia opened in 1913, with the new building opening in 1928.

In the wake of last month's "Blast from the Past" about the Roxy Theatre, we got a few more reminders—the first being that the photo we ran was not actually of the Roxy, but rather of the Patricia. It's an easy mistake to make, as both theatres ran concurrently in living memory.

Long-time residents and historians reminded *ql* that the abrupt hiatus in operations for the Roxy and the Patricia in 1961 was caused by Manager Al Hammil's resignation due to poor health, leaving owner Myron McLeod with no one to deal with day to day operations until he'd recruited Mr. Reid and then George Girard a few months later.

They also recalled that the Roxy ceased operations permanently in 1969 and the Patricia has never ceased operations.

The Roxy Theatre may have stopped being entertainment central for Westview in 1969, but it's successive re-incarnation as the Roxy Restaurant under the ownership and management of Gus and Georgia Malamas until Fred Stutt's tenure from 1992-1995, and the subsequent ownership of Mike, Voula and Telis Savvaidis and change of name to Snickers since 1995 has ensured that the little building that could, is still the life of the Marine Avenue party.

Thank-you to the keepers of the shared memories for the reminders! 🍷

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## Raw responses to logging practices

To the editor,

I wanted to thank you, once again, for the quality and choice of material in your publication. Specifically, this time, Stephanie Reed's letter (*November 2023*) on our current logging practices. I am currently talking about advocacy in class with my students where they reach out for responses from various entities regarding a marine debris project we have currently completed. This letter served as a great example of advocacy (in a slightly different format). I often use your content/stories in my class. Thank you.

– *Graham Cockledge*

Dear *qathet Living*,

Heartfelt thanks to you for publishing Stephanie Reed's "A Letter from the Slash." It is so important voices like hers are heard. She expresses the profound grief that I and so many others feel about the loss of familiar forests, and names so clearly the consequences for the web of life as we approach planetary tipping points.

It is also so important that we acknowledge the perspectives and needs of people who work in the forestry sector and the generations that have been proud of their work in logging, falling, pulp and paper and more. My grandfather ran a pulp and paper operation in Maniwaki, Quebec and growing up I was proud to be descended from hewers of wood – for their strength, courage and savvy.

We need to find a way for everyone to be part of how we move forward. What are the ways to meet the needs of people who work in the forestry sector while also ensuring that the biodiversity and resilience of our forest ecosystems are not just maintained but restored?

In this New Year, I would love to join with others to have this conversation locally.

– *Kate Sutherland*

To the editor,

One of my favorite hiking and biking trails is called "Howling Wolf" which runs from Cable Trail to W8 Trail. This is an abandoned railroad line and it runs along the edge of a gentle shallow valley. The valley is filled with an abundance of growth divided by a little year-round stream wandering quietly through it. A wood grove that is one of a few examples of a forest struggling to become a true "Living Forest." But, you guessed it, it is scheduled to be completely cleared, cut down just as it is gaining its small foothold on life.



### MAIL BAG

We welcome feedback from our readers. Letters may be edited for length.

Email your comments to [isabelle@prliving.ca](mailto:isabelle@prliving.ca), or mail an old-school letter in the post to **qathet Living, 7053E Glacier St, Powell River, BC V8A 5J7.**



Will we ever stop? Unfortunately we seem unable to do so as long as we continue to put ourselves before Nature and ignore the damage we are doing on all fronts. Can we practice some restraint in destroying what little we still have left in nature? Can we take a step back and see what we are doing to nature and to ourselves?

Have you ever walked in a forest that had never seen a road, that had never been subject to logging or mining or any other intrusion by man, that was truly unspoiled by modern man's hand? If not, you have truly missed a wondrous opportunity to experience one of the true wonders of this earth; innocent unspoiled nature.

– *Jerry Eskes*

To the editor,

'A Letter From The Slash' was beautifully composed and entirely depressing. I was left with the following thoughts: We "choose" not to help ourselves by failing to recognize and acknowledge the vital life-support systems which trees provide. We will continue to dramatically shrink the forest canopy to the point of no return. Finally, we will all look around and ask each other, "Now what?"

– *Steve Perkins*

## No bus to Vancouver? That's Victoria's fault.

To the editor,

RE: No Public Bus to Van, still (*November 2023*)

It has become painfully clear that the Sunshine Coast Connector (SCC) solution to providing bus service between qathet and Vancouver is a dismal public/private partnership failure.

When the BC Transit/SCC agreement was announced in May of 2021, SCC owner Dmitry Tyunin said the service will operate five days a week, on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, year-round. The service launched on June 28 of that year.

That summer ridership was strong and the service grew in popularity. Once the tourist season was over, ridership dropped and SCC suddenly cut back on service days.

Now they only offer seven days of service over Christmas and a few days a week from May 15 to September 15. With that schedule and the price of a ticket from Langdale to Earls Cove set at \$60, any growth in ridership would be surprising.

The SCC operator makes it quite clear that he will not increase the frequency of his schedule without a considerable subsidy. There is a BC Transit solution to this problem, and it has been developing for some time.

Contrary to what your article states, the qRD did make a concerted effort to do its part to make the service to the Lower Coast possible. Prior to June 28th, 2021, the #12 Stillwater bus would only go to Saltery Bay for ferry connections on demand. As of June 28th, the Powell River schedule featured two trips a day, five days a week in order to make Vancouver service possible. The qRD made the commitment then and is keeping it today.


BC Transit's 2022 Future Action Plan for the Sunshine Coast included a new route to Earls Cove to better serve residents in the north end of the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) and to close the gap in the qathet to Vancouver service. The SCRD had budgeted for the service to start in September of this year. At the last minute, BC Transit told the SCRD that the province would not be providing their share of the funds to operate the service, thereby scuttling the effort.

The local governments on both ends of the coast have done their job to see Vancouver/Powell River bus service realized. The problem lies with our provincial government. BC Transit gets its marching orders from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. It is MOTI that should be feeling the heat.

– *Tim Larsen*

*Editor's note:* See Page 26 for more on this story.

# January Clearance!



604 485-9493  
in the Town Centre Mall



**LAKETOP FUN:** Skating, hockey and sledding on the frozen surface of Cranberry Lake used to be a popular winter pastime here. Warmer weather means that's unlikely this winter.

*Photo courtesy of the qathet Historical Museum & Archives*



# Skate-worthy freezes on Cranberry Lake are rare now

**S**kating. It ranks high on the list of Canadian stereotypes, along with eating maple syrup and over apologizing. These days, it's unlikely you'll tie on a pair of skates and head to the nearest pond for a fun afternoon – the average January temperature in Powell River is now 4.8 degrees Celsius after all, according to the Government of Canada. There was a time, however, that come January, Cranberry Lake was the place to be, and it was all because of skating.



## BLAST FROM THE PAST

MARY WILLIAMS

People have been skating on Cranberry Lake for well over a century, but it was in the mid 1900s when it reached the peak of its popularity. The *Powell River News* in the 1940s was full of mentions of skating parties held on Cranberry Lake. While they were usually arranged by students on break from school, a number were arranged by adults and retirees as well.

In 1947, skating at Cranberry Lake was so popular that Cranberry Commissioners (Weaver, Ford, and Brooks) ordered an exterior light be installed on the nearby community hall, “for the convenience of skaters” as the *PR News* put it. It was hooked up a short while later, and switched on whenever there was deemed enough ice for skating.

Skating outdoors on a lake has its perils as well. It wasn't uncommon for the newspaper to mention accidents on the ice; how some skaters were a little too adventurous and received a dunking. Most of these dunkings were a result of skaters venturing too far, too soon in the cold snap (*PR News* 1943). When that happened, those who got dunked often warmed themselves up by a campfire onshore before heading home (*PR News* 1947).

While Cranberry Lake rarely freezes enough to be the mecca for ice skating it once was, it used to be the place to spend an afternoon on a cold January day. Now its popularity lives mostly in winters past. ❄️

### Go where the readers are.

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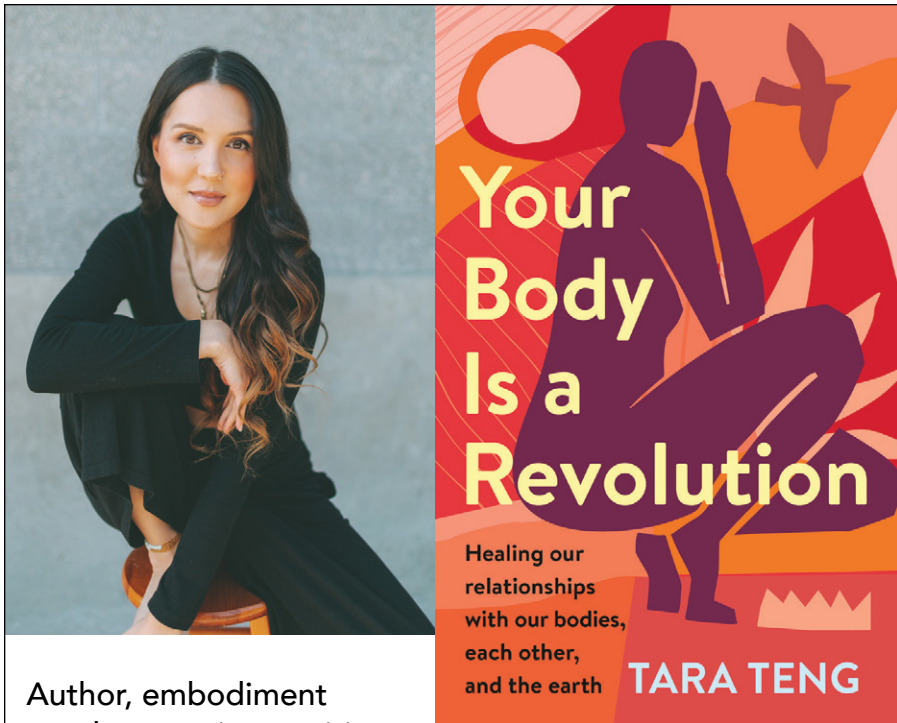


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Use the orthography below to write in how to pronounce each letter. Also see Dr. Elsie Paul's more precise descriptions at [bit.ly/3cc8iU4](https://bit.ly/3cc8iU4).



## ʔAYʔAJUΘƏM? YOU GOT THIS

RANDOLPH TIMOTHY JR

.....  
\_\_\_\_\_ **ᵀεχεθot** To warm oneself by the fire

.....  
\_\_\_\_\_ **λəmɣəm** Heavy mist, almost rain

.....  
\_\_\_\_\_ **ʔajiyitč** I am feeling good

.....  
\_\_\_\_\_ **ʔεᵀəm** Blanket

.....  
\_\_\_\_\_ **qoqaɸku** Fish Soup

## ʔayʔajuθəm orthography

ɸəʔamɛn | kómoks | χʷɛmaɸkʷu | & λohos

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](https://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
ᵀk	popping k
kʷ	kw
ᵀkʷ	rounded, popping k
ɸ	Breathy L sound
ᵀp	popping p
ᵀq	popping q

qʷ	rounded q
ᵀqʷ	rounded, popping q
š	sh
ᵀ	popping t
tᵀ	t-th
ɸ	tl
θ	th
xʷ	wh (like in who)
χ	Hhhh
χʷ	Hhhhwh
κ	kl
ᵀκ	popping kl
ʔ	glottal stop: uh oh

# Great friends and patience helped construct a life here

**P**riscilla and Nate Muth have been married since 2015. They have three children aged three to seven, two gentle giants covered in fur, and a few felines of average size and indifferent temperament.

Nate likes to hunt and Priscilla likes to crochet. They both enjoy spending time in the outdoors exploring and their children like to ask, “When are we going home?”

Since they had their first child, they have opted for Priscilla to stay home with the kids and for Nate to continue working in the trades and running their company, Muth Construction.

## Why did you choose to move to qathet?

**Nate** • We moved here for our children. They have good friends with good values here and we get to spend time with all their lovely parents, too. Our friends here are more than just acquaintances; they are family, and they have made us feel very welcome over the years that we visited before moving.

## When? Where from?

**Nate** • We moved here in Sept 2023 from our previous home in 150 Mile House, about 10 minutes south of Williams Lake.

## What surprised you about qathet once you moved here?

**Nate** • The over abundance of town bears.

## What made you decide to move to qathet?

**Nate** • A friend here expressed a sentiment every time we visited, “Welcome Home.” Those words really struck a chord.

## Where is your favourite place in qathet?

**Nate** • Five Crowe Ranch (not on a map)

## How did you first hear about qathet?

**Nate** • That’s a longer story. Short version, Priscilla and I, along with some friends, made a last minute trip here just after we met in 2014. When we got back to Langley, where we lived at the time, Priscilla mentioned for the first time possibly moving here. Priscilla has been familiar with qathet for a lot longer than me as she lived in Sechelt for several years.

## What would make qathet a nicer community?

**Nate** • Larger parking spots.

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

**Nate** • Facebook pages for small areas to communicate. For example we had a chat group in 150 Mile where everyone would post lost pets, found pets, cattle on the loose, traffic issues, community events, fireworks displays, real estate listings, construction and maintenance services, really anything that could benefit the local area.



**FROM 150 MILE TO THE 101:** Priscilla and Nate Muth, with their children Beau, Thea and James.

*Photo by DevinMoore.Photography*

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

**Nate** • The biggest challenge to getting here was just trying to find a place to live. Limited inventory in the real estate market was a major challenge. Owning several animals made renting impractical, not that there are very many rentals available, either. Neil Frost was a huge help to us and worked with us for the last five years or so in our search for a house.

## If you were mayor of Powell River what would you do?

**Nate** • Panic! We have no political aspirations. Politicians are in an unenviable position where no matter what they say or do, someone will not be happy with them.

## What are qathet’s best assets?

**Nate** • The people. The land and the sea are just dirt and water without them.

## What is your greatest extravagance?

**Nate** • Eating out. Zabb Dee kitchen has this delicious green curry. And Old Man Pho is great too. Coastal Cookery makes for a nice evening out, and Costa Del Sol is a favourite for lunch on a sunny day sitting out front.

## Which talent or superpower would you most like to have?

**Priscilla** • Super strength!  
**Nate** • Super speed. (Ironic because I don’t remember the last time I ran.)

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## BUSINESS AFFAIRS

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### Rentals ring a Bell for Diversa

The **Diversa Collective** is making arrangements to take over **Bell's Event Rentals**. The social enterprise is run by **Mike Lang**, **Lorelei Reed**, and **Ryan Lang** (no relation) – three entrepreneurs with diverse abilities – with help from inclusion powell river facilitator Keely Sills. The collective started in March offering video production, DJ services, and event planning. They're now in the process of buying out Mary Bell's rental business, and have staged event equipment in the front of the Alberni Avenue storefront that used to house Manic Mary's escape rooms (next to Artique.) The collective offers free (or very low cost) services and training, to those with disabilities, and also provides services at market value for the rest of the community. Lorelei completed a two-year program in event planning, so can help people organize what they need. Mike, who has long provided DJ services to qathet, says the collective can provide most of what a wedding or event might need, from planning to music to tablecloths to tents. One of the collective's first projects was creating four videos for Disability Month for inclusion's Employment Services program, featuring employees at local businesses. Those videos can be viewed on the Diversa Collective YouTube channel. "We're always looking for more business and jobs in events," said Mike.

### Another vape shop

A new vape shop has opened at 4566A Marine Avenue, across from Fits to a T. Sumant Saini moved from India to Powell River to run the **Vape Shack**, and is manager and part owner. Sumant says he is happy to offer alternatives to tobacco. He says he likes the store's location and his new community's sunsets and lack of heavy traffic. He hopes when he's settled to bring his family from India to qathet. The soft opening of the Powell River store began in December. Call 778-710-2019 for more information.

Vape products with nicotine became legal in Canada in 2018. The vape industry bills itself as a harm reduction service, and Health Canada says vaping is a less harmful option for people who are already smoking if they quit smoking. However, Health Canada also runs youth vaping prevention programs and vape stores are not allowed to admit those under 19 or advertise where young people could see the ads.

### Bear necessities for quilters

**Spools End** quilt shop is moving and expanding its lineup of vintage items. With the closure of The Little Barber, the Marine Avenue space next door to **Gail Cepka's** existing shop came available. "I like the location and the landlords," Gail said. With this move, she gets to keep both, as it's in the same building, but adds a second display window and almost double the space. That means she can move some of the vintage items that she currently has crammed in a back room. Though she's keeping the "Spools End" name for the quilting supplies and fabric store,

she's adding "**Vintage Rabbit: Clothing, Bears and Other Curiosities**" to the window on one side of the store. The bear reference is to Gail's collection of hand-sewn teddy bears that she creates out of old fur coats. Spool's End is open 11-4 Tuesday to Saturday.

### Twist for knitters

**Great Balls of Wool** has closed its Marine Avenue storefront and moved into **Roisin Sheehy-Culhane's** studio in Lund. The owner of the knitting and yarn shop says she's looking forward to new beginnings and will be scheduling classes and drop-in workshops. For information, call 604-485-4859.

### Not in Kansas (or Florida) anymore

When **Kahla Murchie** was a little girl growing up in Florida, she would put all her stuffed animals in chairs in front of her easel to play teacher. This desire stemmed from her own time in school; she had epilepsy at a young age, but the teachers did not notice and treated her badly for not "paying attention" in class. Her teachers did not realize she was having hundreds of "absence seizures" causing her to stare blankly during lessons. When she grew up and found out what was wrong, she told herself she would become a teacher that was dedicated to actively getting to know each child's strengths. Many of those around her said that with epilepsy she would be unable to obtain a university education, but when she stopped having seizures she felt it was a gift to help her reach her full potential. She followed that dream, getting her degree from University of Central Florida. Then she visited Canada during COVID and got caught in lockdown, during which time she fell in love with qathet. She started working in a daycare here and learned of the high demand for quality care. So she has launched **The Lollipop Guild Learning Center** (from the Wizard of Oz song) providing full day care, Monday to Friday from 8 am until 5 pm for children ages 3-5 years old. The daycare is to be located in the United Church hall at the corner of Duncan & Michigan. The centre will offer "an active and exciting program with passionate Early Childhood Educators" including Talia Jorgenson and Paige Hodgins, says Kahla. For more information, email [LollipopGuildLC@gmail.com](mailto:LollipopGuildLC@gmail.com).

### qSD daycares to open spring 2024

Expressions of interest for partners to operate **qathet School District's** two new daycare buildings have been extended until January 8. Visit the district's page at [sd47.bc.ca/\\_ci/p/5971](http://sd47.bc.ca/_ci/p/5971) to fill out an application. The district hopes to have the daycares, built by money from the province, up and running by September 2024. Each location, at Edgehill and Kelly Creek schools, is to offer 28 daycare spaces.

### Another tour

Tourism Powell River has selected a new slate of directors for 2023-2024: **Jock McLaughlan** is president and Ann Nelson will serve as past president and treasurer. Christie Mitchell is vice president and Eagle Walz is secretary. Directors are Isabelle Southcott, Kat Richards, Keith Laughton, Gerry Childress, Russell Brewer, and Nina Mussellam.

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**Fill your January with colour**

Wildwood artist Lisa Hau teaches The Language of Colour: Foundations of Colour Theory, a workshop at qathet art + wares January 14. If you can't make it, but still want to fill your eyes with hues, check out her website: lisahau.com.

# January in qathet



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## JANUARY EVENTS

# 2-4

**Film • Wonka**  
7 pm, The Patricia

# 5

**Friday**

**Powell River  
Regals vs. Mid-  
Island Steelmen**  
7:30 pm, Hap Parker

**Film • Migration**  
1:30 pm & 7 pm,  
The Patricia

# 6

**Saturday**

**Epiphany**  
Orthodox high holiday  
**Powell River  
Regals vs. Mid-  
Island Steelmen**  
7:30 pm, Hap Parker

**Film • Migration**  
1:30 pm & 7 pm, The  
Patricia

# 7

**Sunday**

**Tree Mulch**  
10-1 in the parking lot be-  
low Mother Nature. Bring  
your tree or have it tagged  
on the road by 8 am. See  
below.

**Film • Migration**  
1:30 pm & 7 pm,  
The Patricia

# 8

**Monday**

**Back to School  
after Winter Break**  
Spring Break: March 16 to  
April 1–including Easter  
Break.

**Film • Migration**  
7 pm, The Patricia

# 9

**Tuesday**

**Film • Migration**  
7 pm, The Patricia

# 10

**Wednesday**

**Last day to see  
“Present” exhibit**  
qathet Art Centre show  
featuring a plethora of  
works from local artists to  
view or buy.  
noon-6 pm.

# 12

**Friday**

**Kings vs  
Alberni Valley**  
7 pm, Hap Parker

# 13

**Saturday**

**Villa vs Westcastle  
International  
Academy**  
1:30 pm, Timberlane.

**qathet Pride  
AGM & mixer**  
1 pm, Cranberry Seniors  
Centre

**Tara Teng presents  
Your Body is a  
Revolution**

2 pm, Library. Former  
Miss Canada and somatic  
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presenting her new book  
about healing our rela-  
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each other and the earth.  
For information contact  
Mark at mmerlino@prpl.ca.  
See ad on Page 36.

**Kings vs  
Alberni Valley**  
7 pm, Hap Parker

# 14

**Sunday**

**Special O Team BC's  
Comox Valley Vipers  
vs. the Powell River  
Kings (floor hockey)**  
2 pm, in the gym at Brooks.  
See story on Page 32.

**The Language of  
Colour: Foundations  
of colour theory  
with artist Lisa Hau**

2 pm, register via qathet  
Art & Wares. Artist Lisa  
Hau has a passion for  
colour that she wants  
to share with you. Using  
hands-on colour mixing,  
participants will learn how  
colour is mixed using light.  
This workshop is designed

to expand the creative  
work of artists, designers  
and craftspeople through  
a greater understanding of  
colour, but is still accessi-  
ble for absolute beginners  
to colour theory. This  
workshop will use acrylic  
paints. Check in store for  
full materials list.

# 15

**Monday**

**Community  
Spaghetti Dinner**  
Powell River United Church  
on Duncan at Michigan.

# 16

**Tuesday**

**Hospice Volunteer  
Training begins**  
Learn more at  
fourtideshospice.org

# 20

**Saturday**

**Celebrating the  
Healing Power  
of Quilting**  
2 pm, Library. Local author  
Kristin Miller presents her  
new book *Knots & Stitches*,  
a touching memoir that  
underscores the power  
of quilting and camarade-  
rie in overcoming life's  
challenges. For infor-  
mation contact Mark at  
mmerlino@prpl.ca. See  
story on Page 44.

**Robbie Burns Day  
at the Legion**  
See story on Page 9-10.

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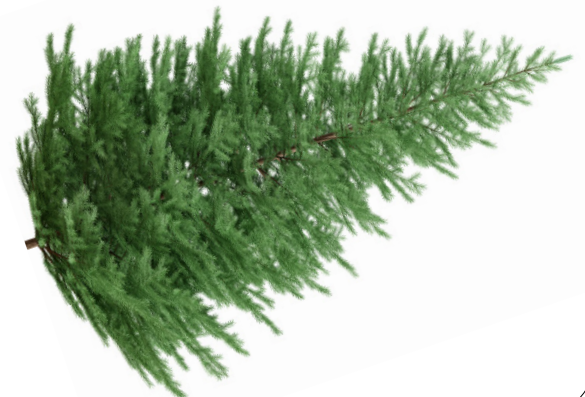


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### Special Olympics Christmas Tree Mulch Fundraiser

On Sunday, January 7, Special Olympics volunteers will be mulching trees from 10 am to 1 pm in the parking lot below Mother Nature. Tags will be available by donation at 7-11, Mother Nature and Top Shelf Feeds (\$5 suggested minimum donation). Trees need to be placed visibly on the road side by 8 am on January 7th. Trees can also be dropped off during the mulch hours. All proceeds go to Powell River Special Olympics BC athletes.







**THE TAROT GANG:** On January 21, Teresa Harwood-Lynn, Caitlin Bryant, Angie Davey and Janet Southcott will be at Herderson House to read your cards (and see into your future) at the annual Townsite Heritage Society fundraiser. A 15-minute reading is \$20 for members and \$25 for guests. The event runs 1pm to 4 pm. Book at [thetownsite@shaw.ca](mailto:thetownsite@shaw.ca) or call Linda at 604-483-3901.

**21**

**Sunday**

**Family Literacy Week Begins**

See qathet School District spread on Pages 11 to 13. Through January 28.

**Townsite Heritage Society's Tea & Tarot fundraiser**

1 to 4 pm, Henderson House Living Museum. See photo on Page 41, and the ad on Page 28.

**Edward Norman Organ Accompaniment for a Silent Film**

2 pm, James Hall. \$25, tickets through The Academy. See ad on Page 53.

**23**

**Tuesday**

**Powell River Garden Club**

6:45 pm at Cranberry Seniors Centre, corner of Manson and Cranberry St. All welcome.

**24**

**Wednesday**

**The Next Economy**

6-8 pm, Library. Doors open at 5:30. Australia's Dr. Amanda Cahill shares inspiring stories of local communities transforming their economies, with Q&A. See Page 32.

**25**

**Thursday**

**Robbie Burns Day at The Boardwalk Restaurant**

See story on Page 9-10, and the ad on Page 42.

**Skookum Food Provisioners Cooperative Open Forum Membership Engagement**

7 pm, Birch Tree Café. All welcome. Join in the conversation. A pre-AGM connection for board recruiting and membership direction conversations.

**Full moon**  
Wolf moon

**26**

**Friday**

**Tech Savvy OpenArt.ai**

4 pm, Library. Learn about the generative art platform OpenArt.ai and discover some of the possibilities that artificial intelligence is opening up for artists and art enthusiasts. To register, email Mark at [mmerlino@prpl.ca](mailto:mmerlino@prpl.ca)

**Kings vs Nanaimo**

7 pm, Hap Parker

**Clanna Morna Traditional Celtic Folk**

7 pm, The Wishing Well. \$15 to \$25.

**Skaboom! - youth dance party**

5 pm, Carlson Loft. See Page 47.

**Skaboom! - 19+ dance party**

7 pm, Carlson Loft. See Page 47.

**27**

**Saturday**

**Watercolour Workshop with Noelle Blue Moon**

2 to 5 pm, The Wishing Well. Organized by qathet

Art & Wares. See more at [qa-w.ca](http://qa-w.ca).

**Kings vs Nanaimo**  
5 pm, Hap Parker

**28**

**Sunday**

**Walter Martella & Karina Inkster with Terry Martyniuk**

2 pm and 7 pm, Cran Hall. Spotlight on Community series. An hour of classical, jazz, and tango music on accordion, piano, and percussion. Preview of the Accordion Festival, with some surprises and reveals. Tickets \$15 at Nutcracker & Magpie's and both times on Eventbrite.

**30**

**Tuesday**

**Festival of Performing Arts registration deadline**

Last chance to sign up to participate in the 80th Powell River Festival of Performing Arts. See ad on Page 23 for more. And story on Page 32.

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# EVENTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN FEBRUARY & BEYOND

## February 2 & 3

### Piano Heist

See ad on Page 30.

## Friday February 2

### Regals vs Lumby Lumberjacks

7:30 pm, Hap Parker

## Saturday, February 3

### Regals vs Lumby Lumberjacks

7:30 pm, Hap Parker

## February 9

### Love Now:

#### A Valentine's Dance Party

8 pm, Carlson Community Club. Featuring local DJs Claudia Medina / NeoNSkye / Riki Rocket. Bar - no minors. Advance tickets \$15 at Carlson Club, Townskate, Armitage. \$20 at the door.

### Medusa

7 pm, Cranberry Hall. A re-imagined Western string quartet, Medusa is Georgia Hathaway, Lea Kirstein, Marta Sołek, and Saskia Tomkins, whose dynamic arrangement style cross-pollinates the sounds of Middle Eastern, Scandinavian, Celtic, Appalachian, and Eastern European music. Tickets (\$20/\$25) available at Nutcracker, Magpie's and Eventbrite.

## February 9 & 10

### Banff Mountain Film Festival

Max Cameron Theatre. See Page 17.

## February 9 to 11

### Rocks of Ages Curling Bonspiel

At the Curling Club

## February 10

### Lunar New Year

Year of the dragon

## February 11

### The Music of Burt Bacharach

2 pm, James Hall. See ad on Page 53.



**PIANO HEIST:** Armed with the music of the greatest composers, songwriters and performers of the past 400 years, and the technology of the 21st century, Nico Rhodes and Patrick Courtin deliver everything from classical piano raptures to bombastic boogie woogie, from romantic piano ballads to 80's keyboard synth battles in their show Piano Heist! What ensues is a mishmash of theatrical wonder, comedy, audience participation, heartfelt stories, a pinch of history, and a world of musical madness. Max Cameron, February 2 & 3.

## February 14

### Valentine's Day

Secure your sugar now

## February 15 to 17

### Beanstalk production of Beauty & The Beast Jr.

At the Evergreen Theatre.

## February 19

### Family Day

A day off for most workers. Most students also get the Friday off, making it a four-day weekend.

## February 28 to March 9

### 80th Powell River Festival of Performing Arts

Hosted by the Rotary Club of Powell River

## March 1 to 9

### qathet Film Festival

See qathetfilm.ca

## March 2

### Comedy Night: Class of 2024 Dry Grad Fundraiser

Dwight Hall. Tickets available at Massullo Motors, qathet Living, Pacific Cannabis. \$60, five comedians. Ryan Williams is the headliner.

## March 8

### Shield Maiden

7 pm, Max Cameron. Tickets available at the Peak, Academy of Music, at the door 30 minutes prior

## March 26-30

### PR is hosting the Coy Cup, the BC Senior Mens AA Provincial Championship. Games

Final on March 30.

## March 16 to April 1

### Spring Break

Easter is included this year.

## March 27

### Cran Hall Presents the electrifying Daniel Champagne

7:30 pm, Cran Hall. This Australian musician is a rocketing star that is not to be missed. Eventbrite tickets already live; printed tickets at Nutcracker and Magpie's (\$25/\$30).

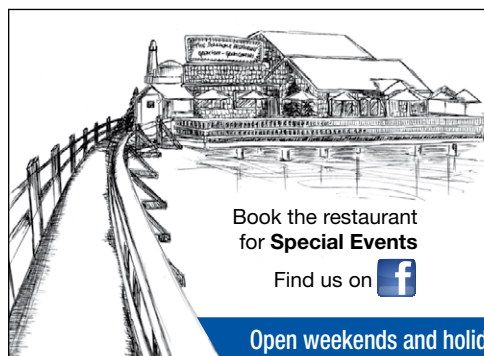
## April 11 to 14

### Townsite Jazz Fest

## April 20

### Chamber of Commerce Business Awards

See ad on Page 52.



Visit Lund for fantastic food and a relaxed atmosphere, all year.

We're taking a break from Jan 1-12, and will re-open Jan 13.

Don't miss our **ROBBIE BURNS DINNER!** Thursday, Jan 25

Doors open at 5:30. Dinner at 6 pm \$39. Scotch tasting \$25.

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## Help Skookum Stay

January 25 • 7 pm • Birch Tree Café

Skookum Food Provisioners Cooperative is in danger of collapsing. You can help by joining the conversation during this Open Forum Membership Engagement session. Everyone is welcome.

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## Duplicate Bridge

# Good company and a brain work-out for 60 years

BY GAIL FENNELL

**T**hirty-one years ago, in June, 1993, Dave Harper and I became owners and operators of the Malaspina Bridge Club.

The previous leaders were George and Kay Joneson, who organized the club for almost 29 years (for a total of 60 years in 2024). George died, and Kay wanted the club to carry on, so asked if we would take it over. We said yes.

Immediately, we changed the name to the Powell River Duplicate Bridge Club. We had already signed up to participate in a weekend teacher's seminar in July in Washington. By passing an exam, we became qualified American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) Bridge teachers.

In addition to changing the name, I immediately bought the computerized scoring program. Dave purchased a small, very expensive laptop, and we were on our way. Although I remember how to do the scoring manually, there is no comparison to the simplicity, time efficiency, and accuracy of the computer. Later that year, I passed a lengthy exam to receive my ACBL Director's certification.

I held my first series of lessons at our home where Ellie Lynn brought her two granddaughters. Doug and Carole McCormick also attended, along with her parents, and a few others.

Dozens of beginner classes followed. We increased our table count to as many as 13 from about six the club had slipped down to. In addition, most of the participants from the many home games around town also came for at least one set of lessons.

Earlier in 1993, we had made arrangements to host Powell River's first Sectional Tournament in July. Compatriots on Vancouver Island convinced us to give it a try. George told us it would never be successful, but then he died just before it took place.

We called it a reunion of the Malaspina Club, and I personally sent out invitations to every participant we could think of who had previously played at the club. They came from Vancouver and Vancouver Island.

It was a smashing success! Over 100 players attended. We continued to host this Sectional for nine more years until the new management of the Inn at Westview decided they could make more money hosting a summer wedding than catering to the group of money-conscious Bridge players.

During those years, Tony and Vivian Thickett took charge of unmatched hospitality. When I resigned from organizing the event, they took it over, and tried several locations and different times of the year, but nothing was quite the success of those first years at the Inn. Our tournament was put to



**KEEPERS OF THE BRIDGE:** Tony and Vivian Thickett (left) took on organizing the Duplicate Bridge Club in 2008 after Gail Fennell and Dave Harper (right) retired. Photo courtesy of Gail Fennell, 2003.

rest, and replaced by one in Campbell River.

A couple of years after Dave retired, he and I decided to take long, warm winter holidays away from home, so in 2008, we turned the club over to Vivian and Tony, freeing us from the responsibility.

When COVID hit in 2020, the club closed down completely until May, 2022.

The Thicketts left their affiliation with the founding organization, the ACBL, and continued as a more social gathering, a distinct contrast from the competitive club we were back in the 1980s when we and they first made

our way to the Malaspina Bridge Club.

Beginning in October 2022, Dave and I were invited to host the game on Thursdays while the Thicketts organize it on Tuesdays.

My goals remain simple. After a couple of years of staying home, I wanted a place for people, especially those who are living alone, to meet, enjoy each other's company and attempt to keep mentally fit while playing the challenging game we all love, Duplicate Bridge.

We need places to go and people to be with, in our attempt to age gracefully. I can hardly believe it has been 30 years! 🍷



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# Grief, friendship, and the wild north coast:

**Kristin Miller's memoir reveals the  
quilters' stories beneath the quilts**

BY SHEILA PETERS

**A** 45-year friendship brought Kristin Miller to Powell River in 2017. She was looking for a place to land after a long-term relationship ended, and her friend's offer to split the purchase of a Wildwood home was a "perfect solution."

Her new book, *Knots and Stitches: Community Quilts Across the Harbour*, loops back to and in some ways echoes the beginning of that friendship.

Nearly 50 years ago, Kristin had been working as an occupational therapist in Nanaimo when she took up quilting. She found she enjoyed it and brought quilting with her when she moved to Prince Rupert to join a boyfriend, soon to be husband, in 1979. A chance en-



**THE AUTHOR-QUILTER:** Kristin Miller lives in Wildwood. She will be sharing stories from her book, *Knots & Stitches*, on January 20 at the Library.

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**QUILTS AT THE CENTRE OF THIS COMMUNITY:** Opposite page, Kristin Miller, in striped shirt, quilts outside with friends on a rare sunny day in 1993. Rupert Harbour is in the distance. This page, from above left, Lorrie Thompson, Linda Gibbs, and Margo Elfert's cabins, on a wintry day at Salt Lakes in 1987. Kristin's skiff is tied to the dock. Five friends made a baby quilt for Tlell Elvis in 1979, starting a tradition of communally-made quilts that has endured for 45 years. In 1983, Clara Scott holds her daughter Yavonnah to receive her quilt from Lorrie Thompson. This 1984 photo with Dolly Harasym, Ghislaine de Saint Venant, and Dave Hinzie shows that occasionally men joined in the quilting projects.

Photo courtesy of Kristen Miller  
knotsandstitches.ca

counter led them to Salt Lakes, a tiny community across the harbour where they bought a ramshackle cabin for \$3,500.

"We kept our tiny apartment in Rupert and played house at Salt Lakes, spending romantic candlelit evenings at the cabin, then going back to our real life in town. We imagined settling down in this slipshod paradise, but as it turned out, I ended up living there alone."

After much trying, Kristin got pregnant, but nearly died from the complications of an abdominal pregnancy. After surgery, she was told she'd be unlikely to have children, information that completely changed the image she had of herself. Her faltering rela-

tionship and deep feelings of loss led her to move alone to the cabin.

"I wanted to get away from everything," she said.

Get away she did, to a leaky cabin without plumbing or electricity, accessible only by water. And the waters of Prince Rupert harbour can get very treacherous. Learning the boating skills needed to make that crossing and doing the chores necessary to stay warm and dry consumed much of her emotional and physical energy. The knowledge she needed came, in part, from the other women who lived there.

"Lorrie (Thompson), Linda (Gibbs), and Margo (Elfert) were my three friends at Salt Lakes and were tremendous friends to each other. Their cab-

ins stood three in a row, directly opposite mine, on the far side of the cove." The most important kind of support they gave, she said, was by treating her as normal, not a tragedy.

As she slowly healed, some of the women asked her for help finishing a baby quilt.

They weren't sure how to connect the individual squares, which were not all the same size. Kristin's relaxed approach gave them the confidence to sew strips around the smaller squares and fit them together in whatever way seemed to work.

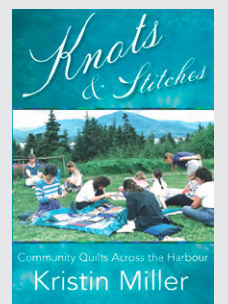
She then showed them how to make "pass-the-medallion" quilts: one woman made a central panel and subsequent borders were attached by other

## KNOTS & STITCHES AUTHOR EVENT

**When:** January 20, 2 to 3 pm at the Library

**What:** Kristin will be showing slides of the people, quilts and boats as she tells the story of *Knots and Stitches*.

**Find a copy:** Books will be available there and can also be purchased at Pocket Books on Marine or through Chapters and Amazon.



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“These robust, vigorous women might not fit the stereotype of the dainty, ladylike quilter, but their quilts embodied warmth, love and caring in a practical as well as symbolic way.”

Kristin Miller,  
in *Knots & Stitches*

quilters.

There were no rules and the quilts became more and more creative, sometimes with applique and three-dimensional forms added.

“They were all beautiful,” Kristin said. Often made from whatever materials were at hand in some of the women’s more remote locations, the very fabric of the quilts spoke to their makers’ creativity and resilience.

Over the next years, many women joined in to make dozens of quilts. Quilts for babies, quilts for weddings, and, as the women aged, quilts to comfort those who were ill and the families of those who had died.

“These robust, vigorous women might not fit the stereotype of the dainty, ladylike quilter, but their quilts embodied warmth, love, and caring, in a practical as well as symbolic way,” she writes.

Kristin began recording their stories as part of a project to display and document the work they had done. A visitor to their quilting show at the Prince Rupert Museum in 1992 invited Kristin to write a research paper, which she presented at an international conference in 1993.

“If you’re writing about the quilts, you have to write about the quilters.”

“I thought about turning it into a book back then and ended up with fifteen or twenty so-called chapters. But the project became so big with about 100 quilts and a 100 people involved, I stowed it in a box. But when I reread those chapters a couple of years ago, I thought they were really good and decided to take up the project again.”

And they are good.

The characters, the adventures, the feasts, the parties, all come to vivid life in her book. Anecdotes about some of her dating adventures are equally entertaining. But throughout she writes respectfully of the relationships she and others had.

“That was one of the guiding principles of my writing: Don’t write anything hurtful,” she said.

She found she wanted to tell the story of her own pain and loss at not having children of her own. “I think I needed to do that,” she said.

That decision makes *Knots and Stitches* a candid memoir as well as an important addition to the history of the north coast. These adventurous women lived precariously in the tiny communities across Prince Rupert Harbour and on small islands beyond.

Like Kristin, they found themselves teaching each other how to survive and thrive in the challenging marine environment with its big tides and big weather. But as they aged and their families grew, most of them left those rigors behind and moved south, many to this gentler coast.

Most of these women are still linked and are still making quilts together. Kristin certainly hasn’t slowed down, especially after she progressed from the treadle sewing machine and wood-stove-heated flatirons of her Salt Lakes days. “I’ve made at least 500 big quilts of my own,” she said.

The friendships connect her still. She shares a house with Lorrie, her old friend from Salt Lakes. They have brought the warmth and connections formed all those years ago and are now stitching themselves into our community. **PL**



**QUILTS ACROSS THE DECADES:** Mia Edbrooke, who received her own baby quilt in 1986, received one for her son, Levi in 2019. Below, Kristin Miller, left, Jane Wilde and Lorrie Thompson are still stitching quilts together.

Photos courtesy of Kristin Miller





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# After 50 years on stage, it's all about the dance floor

BY PIETA WOOLLEY

It has been eight years since David Neal played with his beloved Vancouver-based dance band, Skaboom! Eight years of raising kids, living in Westview, and designing and installing lighting systems into theatres (including the Max Cameron and Evergreen Theatres, plus the Orpheum, Queen Elizabeth Theatre, and Vancouver Island theatres.)

The voices of his 10-year-old twin girls have been haunting the 68-year-old, though: “Dad, we haven’t seen you play since we were two!”

So on January 26, David is pulling Skaboom! back together for two shows at the Carlson Loft. The 5 pm show is for kids. The 7 pm show is 19+.

The band has entertained dancers for 28 years, starting in 1987. Most members are coming up from Vancouver. It’s all coming back to them. Of course it is; together, they’ve played more than 1,000 gigs and over 80 at Vancouver’s Commodore Ballroom. They still hold the record for selling the most beer there in one night.

“One of my greatest achievements is I’ve made thousands of people dance to ska,” said David in an interview at Rocky Mountain Pizza & Bakery. “I am not an amazingly gifted musician. But I can play guitar and write fun songs. I feel blessed to be playing again with the great musicians in Skaboom! I love playing in this band.”

David grew up in the poorer part of East London, the birthplace of the rage-y, political punk scene. A shy theatre kid, he played tenor sax in a teen punk band.

“I loved the energy of punk,” he said. “But the gigs got too aggressive. Too wild. Too many fights. Too much blood – on and off stage. Many people came to punk concerts to fight.”

England, at the time, was increasingly multicultural, thanks to liberalizing immigration policies that prioritized welcoming members of the Commonwealth.

One of David’s friends was newly from Jamaica. His father, a bass player, introduced David to reggae and ska.

“You’d go to a ska concert, and everyone, all different ethnicities, would be up dancing together. Racism was not welcome at a ska gig. The energy was super-high, like punk, but fun – no fights.”

In 1980, he moved to Vancouver with his band,



The Villains. Famously, at a sold-out show at Gary Taylor’s Rock Room, he and two other members of the band were arrested and held on immigration charges: for working without a permit.

The band mostly survived until 1986, and completed 14 national tours. Drugs and alcohol – never David’s thing – were destroying his bandmates.

He founded Skaboom! with John Beatty of Big Medicine. The band would last in various forms for the next 28 years, from 1987 to 2015.

And now, 2024. The original members who are coming up for the Carlson Loft gig are Rachel Cameron on keyboards and vocals; Chris Grant on bass, his brother Leigh Grant on drums; Graham Howell on sax, and Kevin Lee on trumpet. David is on guitar and vocals.

Kevin has recently retired from teaching band at Surrey’s Semiahmoo Secondary. He knows our local Brooks band teacher Paul Cummings from many band competitions. Paul will be featured on trombone.

“I am genuinely happy to have this chance to perform for both the kids, and the adults. It is a wonderful opportunity for me,” said David. “I’ve met a lot of great people here in Powell River over the past eight years. I now know their names; I know their stories. I care for them. I will be very happy to see all the people who have welcomed me, and been there for me, and see them dancing on the dance floor.”



**DANCE REVOLUTION:** Above, David Neal is getting his band, Skaboom!, back together. Above left, the original members of Skaboom!, circa 1990. Left, Skaboom! on vinyl. Photo above by David’s son, Charlie Neal

## SKABOOM!: FOR KIDS & ADULTS

**When & Where:** January 26, Carlson Loft. 5 pm show for kids and teens, 7 pm show for 19+

**Tickets:** For the 5 pm underage show (doors at 4:30 pm), buy them at Westview Elementary School for \$2, as a fundraiser to the PAC. For the 7 pm adult show, \$30 in advance at Townskate, Carlson Club and Armitage. \$35 at the door.

“One of my greatest achievements is I’ve made thousands of people dance to ska. I am not an amazingly gifted musician. But I can play guitar and write fun, silly songs, and I can keep bands together.”

– David Neal

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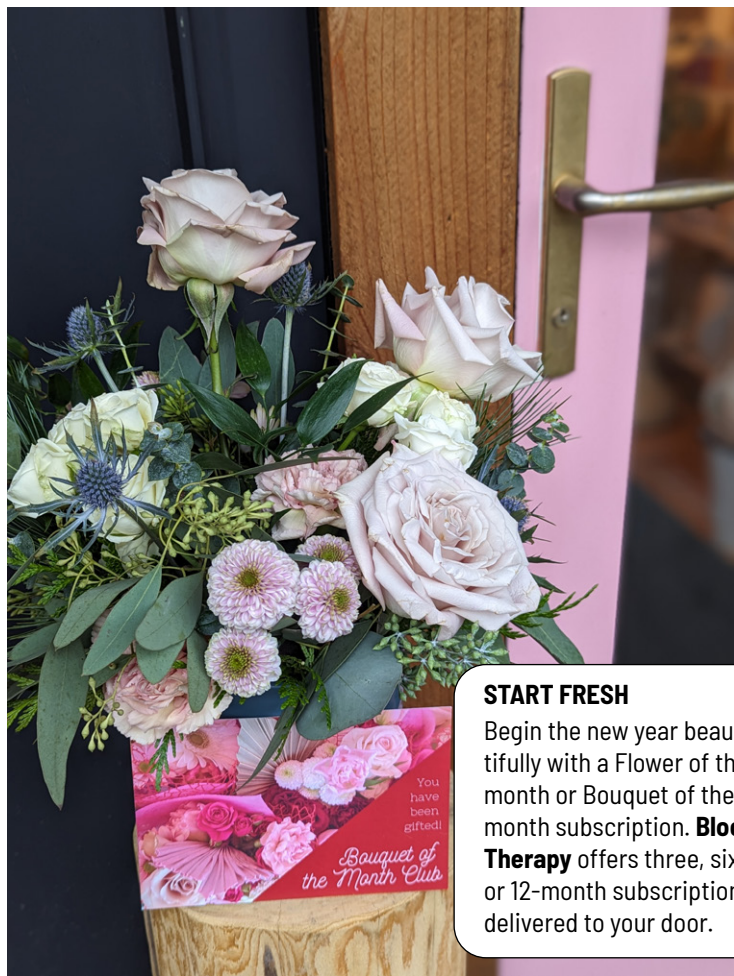
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This pearl and scallop necklace is indicative of the style from Wild Abandon, a Vancouver Island company that creates jewelry inspired by nature. Find earrings, anklets, necklaces, rings and more from this brand at **Mother Nature**.

### SILVER DOLLAR

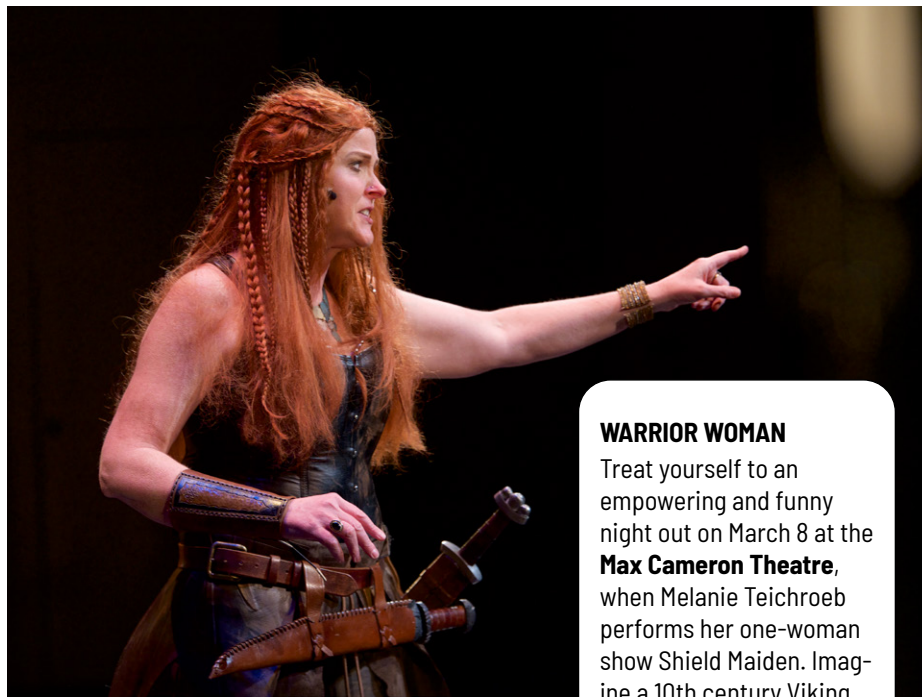
This necklace is made from amber beach glass, found on the beaches of qathet, and a metal sand dollar, on a 22" sterling silver satellite chain. Because each piece is made with real beach glass, each one is unique. Find yours at **Found Stone Jewelry~Art~Décor**.





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## Go Big



### WARRIOR WOMAN

Treat yourself to an empowering and funny night out on March 8 at the **Max Cameron Theatre**, when Melanie Teichroeb performs her one-woman show *Shield Maiden*. Imagine a 10th century Viking TED Talk on what it means to be a Viking warrior woman. As the warrior endeavours to engage new recruits, she inadvertently reveals her own tragic and violent personal history. She empowers women to reclaim the warrior archetype in our modern world, with laughs along the way. (You can also still get tickets to the Feb 2 or 3 shows for the musical madness of *Piano Heist*.)

### BEHIND DOOR #3

Make wood heat luxurious, with the Stuv 30 wood stove. It has three doors. A loading door allows the quick and easy add-on of logs and the occasional BBQ. The full glass door offers a spectacular view of the fire as it warms the atmosphere. The full door radiates comforting warmth throughout the night. Check one out today at **Cadam Fireplace and Stove Centre** on Duncan Street.

### STABLE DESIGN

Marlon utility boats, available at **Two-Wheel Tech** are built for exceptional dependability, with welded hulls, heavy duty extruded center keel with four formed in bottom strakes. Comfortable rear side seats give extra seating and stability. The wide beams give added room and stability so you feel safe with the kids or bringing in the big one!



### BIG SCREEN, GET SEEN

It's 2024 and its time to go large! Get a 27" iMac all-in-one computer at **PR Macs** and enjoy the squint-free lifestyle.



### UNDER PRESSURE

Keep your yard, home and vehicle clean with a power washer from **Thunder Bay Saw Shop**. The X-Stream pressure washers, available in a variety of configurations, are powered by reliable Honda and Kohler engines.

# When you're feeling cool



## LEGIT KNIT

This limited-edition authentic Cowichan-knit tam was made from Vancouver Island wool that was hand spun and hand knit by a Quw'ut-sun elder. At deadline, there were just a few left in stock at **Tla'amin Convenience Store**, but they also have a selection of toques, mittens, and children's sweaters in the same style.



## THE RIGHT FIT

Get jeans that fit. These are part of Buffalo's "Authentic" collection that offer rich textures and long lasting denim with just the right amount of stretch. Pictured here are relaxed straight driven men's jeans. Find your fit at **Armitage Men's Wear**.



## (JA)CKET TO RIDE

Enjoy your next ride in a little more comfort with a Terrain jacket from Thor. Made with rip-stop, abrasion resistant panels on the sleeves and shoulders, it has roomy zippered pockets, a durable water resistant coating, zip-off sleeves and a comfortable collar. Try yours on today at **Big O Tires/Coast Auto**.



# THE LUST



## WHAT THESE BOOTS WERE MADE FOR

These boots aren't just stylish - they're also waterproof - perfect for our rainy west coast winters. These Taxi brand boots from **Fits to a T** have full-length and partial zip closures on the inside, a plush padded footbed and supportive sole, so your feet stay dry and comfortable.

### HECHO EN MÉXICO

Celebrated in exclusive cocktail bars, restaurants and nightclubs, the iconic Don Julio 1942® Tequila is the choice of connoisseurs around the globe. You can find it at **Capone's Cellar**. Produced in small batches and aged for a minimum of two and a half years, Don Julio 1942® Tequila is handcrafted in tribute to the year that Don Julio González began his tequila-making journey.

# When you're feeling cozy

### WHICH CAME FIRST?

Add the great green dragon figure to your collection. The light in the egg cycles through various colors. In the dark, the light up egg creates an amazing silhouette of the dragon head, while lighting up the rest of its body. Find this, and similar collectibles, at **Oceanside Entertainment** on Marine Avenue.



### CALL OF THE WILD

This wolf sculpture, hand carved in soapstone by Debra Bevaart of Lund's **Tug-Guhm Gallery & Studio**, is (sadly for you) already sold, but it's representative of her work turning blocks of stone into seals, otters, whales, bears, eagles, and other wildlife. The gallery is her working studio as well as representing over 50 local artists.



# LIST

### DECORATION FOR ANY SEASON

**Paperworks** carries beautiful Kitras glass art pieces, such as "The Tree of Winter" which shows us that times of rest and introspection bring forth renewal and the knowledge that life's best warmth comes from cultivating love, friendship and family.



### PRETTY IN PURPLE

Decorating with natural crystals is a contemporary way to add a touch of class and sparkle to a home or business, and this amethyst cluster with polished edges is mounted on a black coloured metal base to make it easy to show off. Find this healing stone at **Oceanside Entertainment**. Amethyst crystals are said to help get rid of nightmares, calm an overworked and over stressed mind, dispel negativity, and create a peaceful environment.

### HEAD HUGGER

Pollen wool toques are made from 100% washable itch-less wool for comfort and durability, and the stretchy knit provides a snug fit. They roll up once for added warmth over your ears. The natural lanolin content repels water. Get your toque at **Pollen Sweaters** in Lund or at Marine Traders in Westview.



### TEA TIME

Cozy up your winter with a diverse range of Canadian teas from **Tourism Powell River's Visitor Centre**, featuring flavors like Wild Blackberry, Huckleberry, and our exclusive Northern Lights blend - each cup promises to add warmth to your chilly days

### COZY VACATION

**Simply Bronze** recognizes that not all vacations are hot - sometimes you just need a soft and comfy sweater! So sweaters are 20% off during January. This half zip provides relaxed coziness with its oversized fit and ultra-soft fabrication.





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## TAKE A BREAK

# Find your rhythm and thrive through change

Not long ago, living a rhythmic lifestyle was a natural phenomenon. Weather throughout the seasons dictated the timing of activities, chores, garments, harvests, even where housing was established. People ate what was in season or had been intentionally preserved. There were night time rituals and day time routines. Times of plenty and times of ration.

Here in the Western world during this modern era, store shelves are stocked year round with out-of-season fruits. The Internet affords a variety of goods at our fingertips.

Homes and cars are climate controlled, shielding us from stinging rain or blistering sun. We can be busy at any hour of the day.

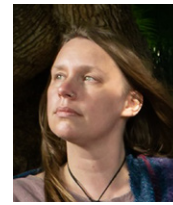
The benefits are obvious, and perhaps some of the drawbacks too, such as a lessened quality of rhythm. Not routine, but rhythm in response to our environment.

Routines are static – 8 am alarms, noon lunch hours, 3 o'clock pick up, supper at 6, meatless Mondays, cribbage Thursdays, bath, pajamas, teeth, story, bed. They make things fit, keep lives tidy and orderly.

Rhythms are smokehouses full of salmon, full moon gatherings, waking with the sun, resting on heavy menstrual days, returning to closeness after distance from our beloved, sniffing the ever changing morning air, knitting in the Fall and skinny dipping in the Summer. There is movement of schedule. Things are done “when it’s time.”

Rhythm brings us medicines of intimacy, connection, flexibility, and a greater capacity to respond to unexpected changes. Red K Elders (find her art if you haven’t already!) recently wrote, “When someone or something dies, the warp and weft of life is momentarily cleaved, and there is an opportunity to reach through into the void and grasp something new. That tear in the fabric of life can be re-woven or re-stitched in an entirely new way.”

If you have ever seen a weaver at work, you’ll know



## RETURN TO REVERENCE

JULIETTE JARVIS



there is certainly routine, but also great rhythm, and the metaphor here of being able to create something new and medicinal out of even life ripping events is the sort of gold more easily found when we have practiced living in response to life’s own timing of events. That isn’t to say hardships hurt less, but our intimacy with timing helps us know when it’s time to grieve and when it’s time to re-weave our life.

We can rely on the rhythms of action followed by rest, joy after sorrow, movement after stagnation, and have more experience in creating new patterns when something just isn’t working.

Be it shifting to honey during a sugar shortage, making space for adapting to sudden news, changing plans when smelling snow in the air, or finding our way through a windfall of life changing events, may our rhythmic muscles beat strong with good medicine. 🐿️

*Juliette Jarvis is a best selling author offering sacred living programs online, devotional arts, and divination sessions. Find her at [SelkieSanctuary.com](http://SelkieSanctuary.com)*

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# TAKE A BREAK



## Across

- 3) PR's "other" old theatre
- 5) Bus on the ropes
- 6) Wind thread
- 8) Contractor from 150
- 11) Has Bob's bag
- 13) How to help
- 17) Scottish instrument
- 18) Sockeye to return to this lake
- 19) Cranberry wildlife
- 21) Mass transporter
- 23) Collective doing Bell's rentals
- 25) Bus, or survey level
- 29) Literacy coordinator
- 30) Westview librarian
- 33) Card game too far
- 35) Music Fest, Coast
- 36) Special O snakes
- 39) Old hockey royalty

## Down

- 1) Strong foodies
- 2) 141-unit apartment
- 4) Ska explosion
- 6) Ride to hike or space
- 7) Tla'amin leader
- 9) Cover bird
- 10) Burns dinner
- 12) Smoke alternative
- 14) Diabetes weight-loss drug
- 15) Small home, or Tim
- 16) Westview librarian
- 19) Poet, or insults
- 20) "Heist" instrument
- 22) Tla'amin's bread
- 24) Spin on service
- 26) Original ride hail
- 27) Young hockey royalty
- 28) Theatre when
- 31) Sun block
- 32) Pucksters not shy about this tourney
- 33) Float, or Farrell
- 34) Brooks librarian
- 37) New "dump" (acronym)
- 38) Provincial rep (acronym)

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## A Thought For The Day

"Giving is the secret of prosperity."



~ Bahá'í holy writings



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T R E T M R W S Y Q W Y I R R E J U H S Q W W N O  
E N N P C A C D I O T S O A C J S T O I O I N Z B  
P O S W H N A I M V F W V W N R E F E T Y T S O R  
A H N T N B I N A A E I Z Q E B N L P D J C I W A  
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# Turn your 2024 dreams into goals

What do you want to do this year?  
What are you planning to do?

These two slightly different questions can have hugely different outcomes.

Dreams and goals may sound the same, but in fact they are quite different.

We've all heard Benjamin Franklin's famous quote: If you fail to plan, you're planning to fail. This quote came to mind as I worked on a list of what I would like to accomplish in 2024.

I'm a planner. I need to map out my goals and figure out how I'm going to get there. I need to know what actions I will take to achieve my goals because I'm a firm believer that success doesn't happen by accident. January is like page one of a brand new book—every year, page one gives you the opportunity to write a new story.

While many people are busy working on their new year's resolutions this month, I'm working on something similar, but different, my plan for 2024.

My plan includes many things, such as what I want to do and when; what I want to accomplish and who I need to help me along the way.

You see the older I get, the smarter (I hope) I get.

Those of you who know me, may have guessed that my plans include my dogs. Training (for me and the dogs), showing, dog sports, breeding and just enjoying my three amazing Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers. But that's just one area of my life that I'm making plans for. I'm also planning my business life and social life. And of course, now that I'm in my sixties, my retirement.

I'm excited and scared at the same time. Change involves

risk and that makes me uncomfortable, but still, I forge ahead.

Having goals and a road map of how to get there is a useful tool for many things in life. When I was in Toastmasters, I'd often mind map my speeches because this made it easier to stay on track and helped keep me from digressing and going down a rabbit hole. I'd glance at my mind map

to see the next word or diagram I had jotted down, and then I'd be able to build a bridge from where I was to where I wanted to go. I've found that keeping the end in mind is helpful.

Dreams and goals are as different as night and day. Goals are

actual plans that you intend to reach; they are clear, achievable, tangible manifestations of our dreams. Dreams, on the other hand, are something you create in your mind. They can be ever-changing thoughts; they don't require the same laser focus that goals require. Some people say the difference between a dream and a goal is a deadline.

So, while I'm busy working on my plan for 2024, I'm also looking ahead to 2025 and beyond because some of my long-term goals require short term action.

Because I'm still a paper person when it comes to many things in my life, I use a day planner. I like to hold a magazine in my hand. I enjoy reading a paper copy of the newspaper, and I love to snuggle on the sofa with a good paper book. I use an online calendar some of the time, but prefer my old-fashioned day planner over iCal.

In the end, it doesn't matter what you use to plan your goals, the important thing is to plan them. Don't just dream them and leave the outcome up to chance, because if you do, they won't materialize and you'll wake up 20 years from now wondering why you haven't achieved your goals. **PL**



**LAST  
WORD**

**ISABELLE SOUTHCOTT**

# Thanks for supporting the 2022 Stuff the Trailer & Pallet Challenge

Presented by **95.7 Coast FM** and sponsored by **Fresh Co, City Transfer & Designer Signs** in support of the **Powell River Action Centre Food Bank**, this revised annual event raised more than \$62,500. Corporations and individuals were invited to purchase a “pallet” of food for the Food Bank, and **119 pallets** worth of food were donated, exceeding last year’s haul. Thanks to all those donors listed below for your generosity!



The following people and businesses donated at least \$500 - one pallet – or more:

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plus many more anonymous donors  
who in total contributed more  
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*A special thank-you to qathet Living  
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