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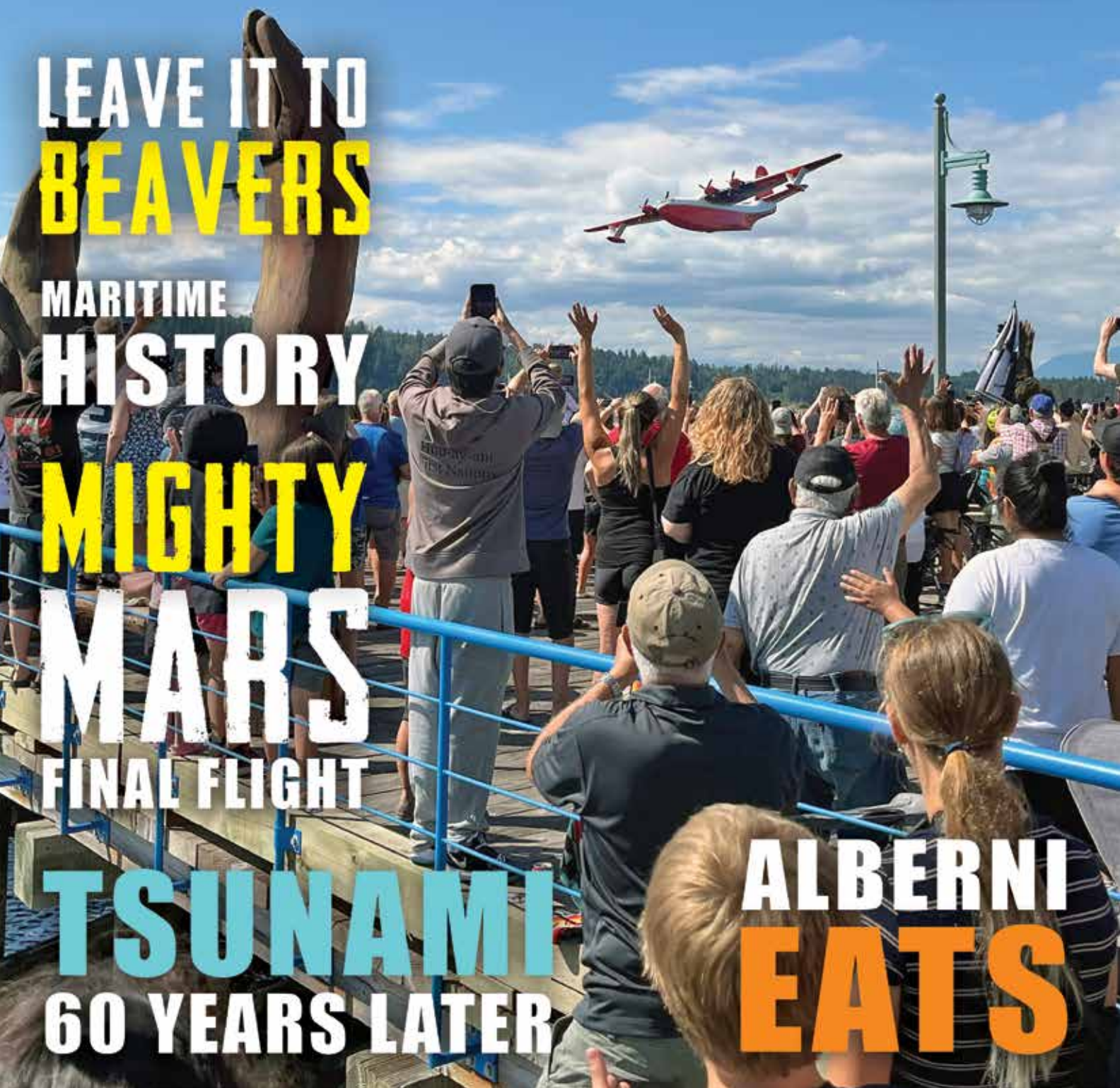
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CONTRIBUTORS

Megan Warrender
Founder / Publisher
megan@vibemediagroup.ca

Born and raised in the Alberni Valley, it has always been a passion of Megan's to showcase our amazing community.

Jenaya Tutte
Communications
communications@vibemediagroup.ca
 As a newcomer to the Alberni Valley, Jenaya enjoys meeting new people and engaging with businesses.

Cassie Prouton
Community Engagement / Sales
sales@vibemediagroup.ca
 Cassie is a natural connector, and loves working one on one with local businesses.

Heather Thomson
Writer
 A long time freelance writer with a passion sharing about the Alberni Valley.

Christopher Pouget
Cover Design
 Dad and maker of things.

Published by Vibe Publications Ltd.

Contributors
 Maritime Heritage Society, Alberni Valley Museum, Alberni District Historical Society, Alberni District CO-Op, The Fur-Bearers, Mary Clare Massicotte, Cover photo Heather Thomson.

Article Submissions
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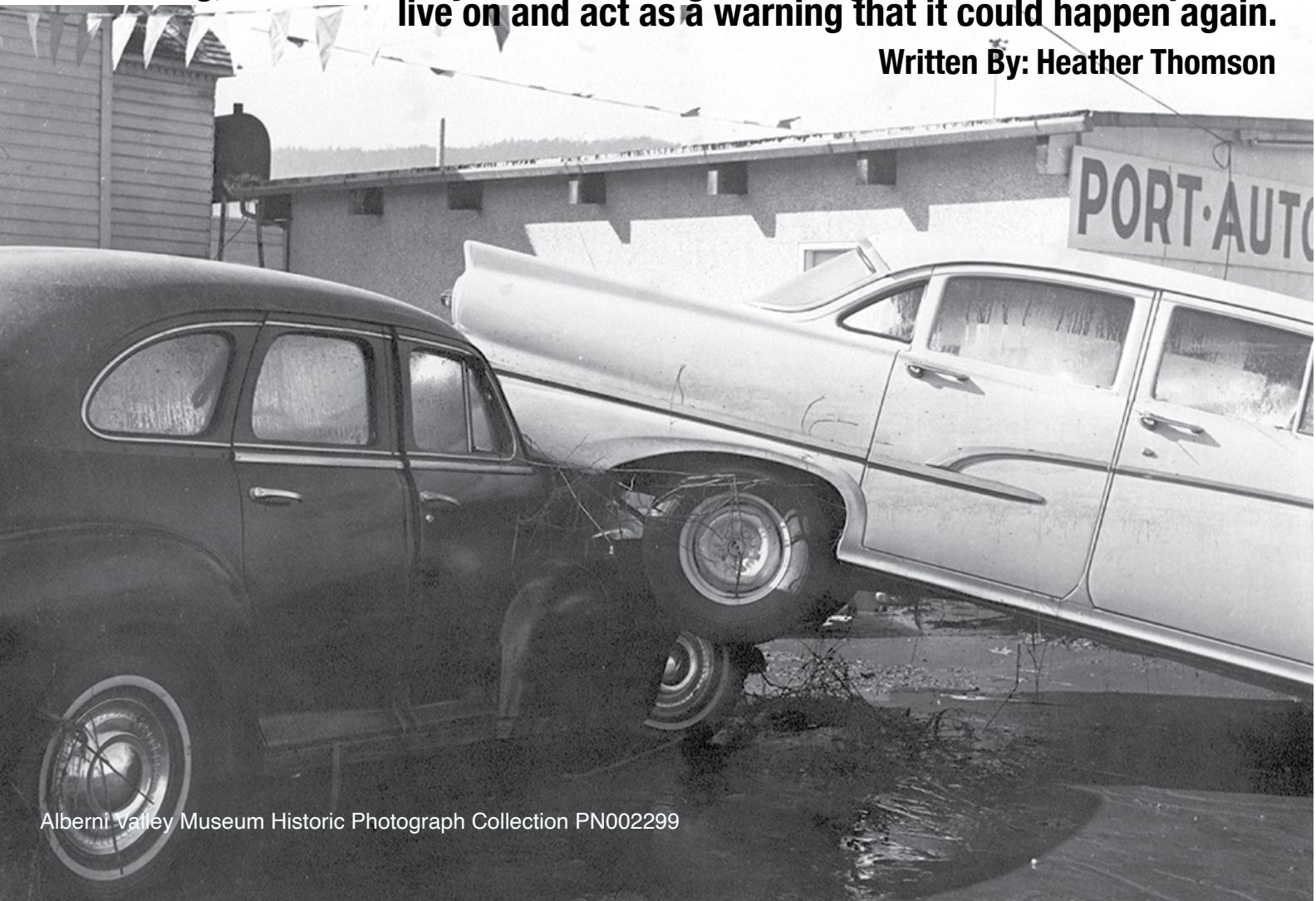
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1964 TSUNAMI HITS ALBERNI

March 27, 2024 marked 60 years since a tidal wave rolled into the Alberni Valley. Although the number of people who remember it firsthand is decreasing, the community will never forget that night. The stories and photos live on and act as a warning that it could happen again.

Written By: Heather Thomson



It was Good Friday of the Easter weekend in 1964 when a series of tidal waves arrived in the Alberni Valley in the middle of the night. At the time, the two communities were still known as Port Alberni and Alberni, and the tsunami had an impact on both communities. Most people were sleeping, and there was no warning system in place to pull them from their beds to safety. No one really knew what was coming until the first wave arrived. After that, word of mouth quickly spread across the Valley.

The waves were the result of a an earthquake off the coast of Alaska that measured 9.2 on the Richter scale and lasted four minutes and 38 seconds. It remains the largest earthquake to hit North America, known as the Great Alaskan Earthquake. The earthquake and tsunami caused 131 deaths, with 122 of those coming from the resulting tsunami. Remarkably, no human lives were lost in the Alberni Valley.

The earthquake caused two types of tsunami – a large tectonic tsunami and smaller sub-aerial landslide tsunami. Approximately 20 communities around the world experienced tsunami activity following the 1964 earthquake. The worst of these brought 67 metre waves to Shoup Bay, Alaska. It is still the largest tsunami recorded in North America.

Although the waves that reached our shores were not as hight, the narrow Alberni Inlet created a funnel effect as the wave came from the West Coast of Vancouver Island to our small logging communities at the end of the Inlet.

Today, we refer to tidal waves by the Japanese name, tsunami, which means “harbour wave.” They are created most often by underwater currents that are the result of an earthquake, underwater explosion, or volcano. Vancouver Island is susceptible to them because of its proximity to what is known as the “ring of fire” – an area in the basin of the Pacific Ocean where most seismic activity takes place.

A tsunami in 1964 was the result of the earthquake that caused a massive underwater slide at Port Valdez in Prince William Sound. This created movement of water under the surface that resulted in rolling waves

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Alberni Valley Museum Historic Photograph Collection PN09525



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on the surface. On land, this creates a series of large waves or surges in waves, much like a rising tide.

These waves vary depending on where you are in proximity to the earthquake and depending on the geography of where the wave hits. It was surging waves that hit Port Alberni and Alberni in 1964. Because the communities lie at the end of a narrowing inlet, the Alberni Valley was hit hard in 1964, whereas the west coast of Vancouver experienced surges in wave activity. When the tsunami reached the communities at around midnight there were two large waves, the first one was 2.44 metres and the second one about an hour later at 3.05 metres. The larger, second wave caused most of the damage. In total there were six waves ranging in size from 1.52 m up to 3.05 m.

To make matters worse, the community was taken by surprise until word began to spread. The radio started broadcasting information on what people needed to know to stay safe. Despite the lack of the technology

we have today, people began to learn what was going on, what they could and should do, and what to expect next. Neighbours called neighbours, friends and family reached out to their loved ones to make sure they were safe. The community with a heart pulled together.

According to The Great Tsunami of 1964 by J. Tardiff, “No one expected the tsunami to hit as hard as it did because we were in the middle of an island; but it’s because of our inlet that the tsunami did hit so hard. The narrow inlet amplified the size and intensity of the wave because as the inlet got smaller, the wave grew taller and faster.”

That second wave picked up houses, moving them to new locations and it flipped and relocated vehicles. It was followed by a series of four more waves, between 1.52 and 1.83 metres every hour and a half, with a vacuum effect between the waves that pulled the water from the mouth of the Inlet leaving the harbour empty and seabed exposed. When the waves finally stopped,

65 houses had been washed away and another 375 were damaged. In the end, the twin cities had suffered damages amounting to approximately \$5 million. It also knocked out power to the communities, and many days passed before the people began to understand the full magnitude of the event.

The losses to the community were great, but the communities pulled together to rebuild. It took time to fix the property damage, and thankfully no lives were lost. Eventually Alberni and Port Alberni began to rebuild and recover. In fact, many credit the aftermath of the tsunami for leading the two communities to amalgamation in 1967.

This year, the Port Alberni Maritime Heritage Society marked the 60 anniversary with a presentation to the community. In 1964 the community had no warning but things have changed. Since then, great efforts have been made to improve water flow from the Alberni Inlet with the addition of the Kitsuksis Dike and the

improvements to Dry Creek. The community also installed a number of tsunami warning sirens. You can hear them being tested at 1 pm on the first Wednesday of the month when the sound of a didgeridoo rings out across the Alberni Valley. If an actual tsunami was coming, the warning siren sounds more like an air-raid siren. Since we all live in an area susceptible to tsunami, it's important to know if you fall in the tsunami evacuation zone, to have a grab-and-go bag, and a plan for your evacuation. If you do live within the evacuation zone and you hear the siren it is essential that you head to higher ground. If you are not in the tsunami zone, it is recommended that you shelter in place so that the roads are less congested for the people who must evacuate and so that emergency personnel can move around as necessary.

Luckily, the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District has staff on its team who are dedicated to preparing for emergencies such as tsunamis. They regularly meet

and do tabletop exercises so that if an emergency hits our community the team will be ready to react. The tabletop exercises include people from various organizations and agencies across the province and within our community, staff from the City of Port Alberni, the volunteer and City of Port Alberni fire departments, the RCMP, BC Ambulance, to name a few. The ACRD also oversees the local Emergency Support Services team, which is a dedicated group of volunteers who step up to help people in need in our community during large and small emergencies. If you would like to volunteer, call the ACRD at 250-720-2700.

If you want more information about what to do in case of an emergency like a tsunami or earthquake or what to put in your grab-and-go bag and emergency kit, go to the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District's website: www.acrd.bc.ca.



Alberni Valley Museum Historic Photograph Collection PN18963

Alberni Valley Museum Historic Photograph Collection PN002299 Alberni Valley Museum Historic Photograph Collection PN002299
Cars on automobile lot after tsunami. In the top right of the photo is a sign reading: Port Auto.

Alberni Valley Museum Historic Photograph Collection PN04401 Three men can be seen surveying damage done by a Tsunami, many pieces of lumber have fallen on top of a car next to a building.

Alberni Valley Museum Historic Photograph Collection PN06511 Cars are piled on top of each other and are displaced in a now muddy Port Auto sales car lot due to the Tsunami of 1964. A white American sedan is tilted and sits on an Austin with its hood under the sedan. At far left, a car rests upright on its front bumper and is held in place by the building.

Alberni Valley Museum Historic Photograph Collection PN18963 Closeup view of the boat wedged between Rowlands and Reg David's displaced house on River Road following the 1964 Tsunami.

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Take A Glimpse into the Nautical History of the Hupacasath First Nations

Port Alberni's nautical history dates back to time immemorial with the Hupacasath First Nations, who travelled by canoe year round, using the water as their highway. The Hupacasath peoples travelled the Inlet, rivers, and lakes in the Alberni Valley to hunt, gather, or visit friends and family. Paddling was taught at a young age; there were different styles and shapes of canoes that had different uses. A canoe intended for the ocean was fit with a carved wolf's head to break through the choppy waters and keep it out of the canoe. They would also use the wolf's head at the front of the canoe as a reference, like a needle on a compass, which they combined with landmarks, to help navigate.

The Hupacasath peoples utilised sails and paddles. The sails were made from woven cedar, and in the afternoon as the wind shifted, they sailed back up the Inlet. Paddles were often made from vine maple or yew wood, and came in different shapes and sizes. Paddles used for transport were constructed to move lots of water with a wide blade, whereas whaling paddlers were narrow so they would move through the water quietly, and war paddles had a pointy end that doubled as a weapon.

Victoria Quay offers a glimpse into the nautical history of the Hupacasath First Nations with the phenomenal Nuu-Chah-Nulth Whaling Canoe Sculpture. The sculpture was originally housed in the Royal BC Museum in Victoria, before being transferred to Port Alberni's Victoria Quay. Tim Paul, who is from the Esperanze Inlet, north of Tofino, carved this sculpture under the direction of Ben Andrews in 1975. Carved from yellow cedar, this life size sculpture serves as a tribute to the seafaring culture of local First Nations. This powerful monument depicts the strength and ferocity of the whalers who ventured into open waters with spears and a wooden canoe to hunt a grey whale. Whale hunting was a dangerous job; it is said that whalers would prepare for 9-12 months, often going up into mountain caves and fasting in preparation. The Whalers Canoe exhibit depicts 8 men on the canoe with a steersman in the back directing and the hereditary chief at the front with a harpoon ready. After the whale was speared and killed, someone would jump into the water to sew up the mouth of the whale, preventing it from sinking, before towing it back to shore. Sometimes they would take the stomach of a seal, blow it up, and use that to help keep the whale afloat. The grey whale was seen as a gift from the Creators, and the entire animal was used. The whale meat was smoked, dried, and preserved to be eaten and traded, bones were used to create weapons and tools, and the blubber was smoked or dried.

Be sure to check out the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Whaling Canoe Sculpture and the Welcome Totem Poles next time you're at Victoria Quay. It's a beautiful representation of local First Nations history and culture for the community to enjoy.



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ALBERNI VALLEY SHARES MARITIME HISTORY

Article Written by Heather Thomson

The Alberni Valley is what it is today partially because it lies at the end of the Alberni Inlet, offering potential only a deep-sea port can. When settlers first arrived here, they saw the advantage a deep-sea port could offer the area. And so our marine history began to form.

Close to 150 years later, our connection to the water is still strong. Port Alberni has an active port and many people wander down to watch as workers load and unload large freighters or check out the fishers coming in with their catch. It's never boring on Port Alberni harbourfront. In 1989, a group of Valley residents realized how important it was to preserve this part of

the history of this area. And so the Port Alberni Maritime Heritage Society was formed. Their goal was to work with the Alberni Valley Museum and Archives and the community to preserve and share the maritime history of this area.

Although the non-profit society operates mainly behind the scenes, it's hard to miss their main attraction – the Port Alberni Maritime Discovery Centre. The centre is located on the waterfront in Port Alberni. It is constructed from an actual coastal lighthouse, and it is like no other museum you will find. It's not alone on the site – just to the left is the Hutcheson Gallery where various exhibits are shown throughout the year. The lighthouse was built in 2001, and the gallery followed four years later.

You can walk down to the lighthouse all year to get a little closer to the water, and, if you're lucky, spot some marine life. It's not unheard of to see whales in the water just off the platform that houses the lighthouse.

Open mainly in the warm tourism season, the picturesque red and white lighthouse offers visitors a peek into the maritime history of the area. Between the centre and the gallery, a number of different displays and exhibits are shared with the public each year. This ranges anywhere from finding out all there is to know about tsunamis and underwater detection of earthquakes to historical shows and even demonstrations on building a dory!

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In the summer months, the Maritime Discovery Centre is a true place of discovery as it hosts youth activities. The fun-filled events are designed to teach youth the history of the area, but sometimes it's in silly ways, like being a pirate for a day.

Earlier this year, the City of Port Alberni announced that the Maritime Discovery Centre was getting a facelift, thanks to funding of \$10,000 from the Alberni Valley Community Forest Corporation. So if you're thinking of booking a tour of the centre in the future, that's good news because the investment will improve your experience. The upgrades, which are estimated to be close to \$85,000 in total, will include new interpretive signs.

If you are interested in learning more about the Maritime Heritage Centre, or if you want to book a tour or participate in the summer camps, go to www.portalbernimaritimeheritage.ca for more information.

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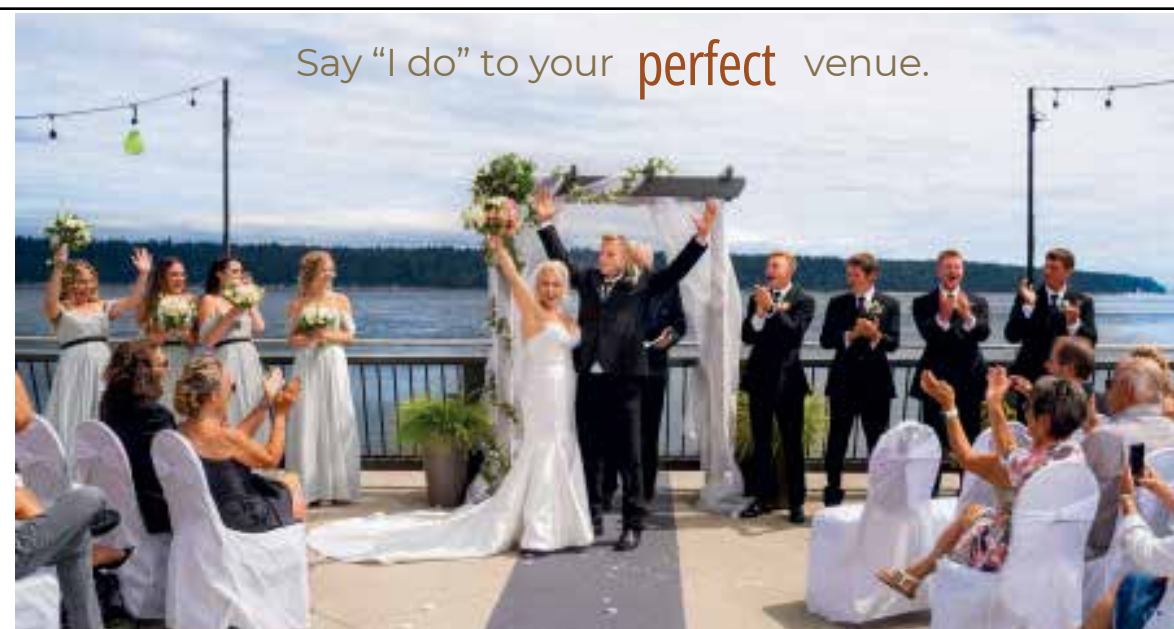
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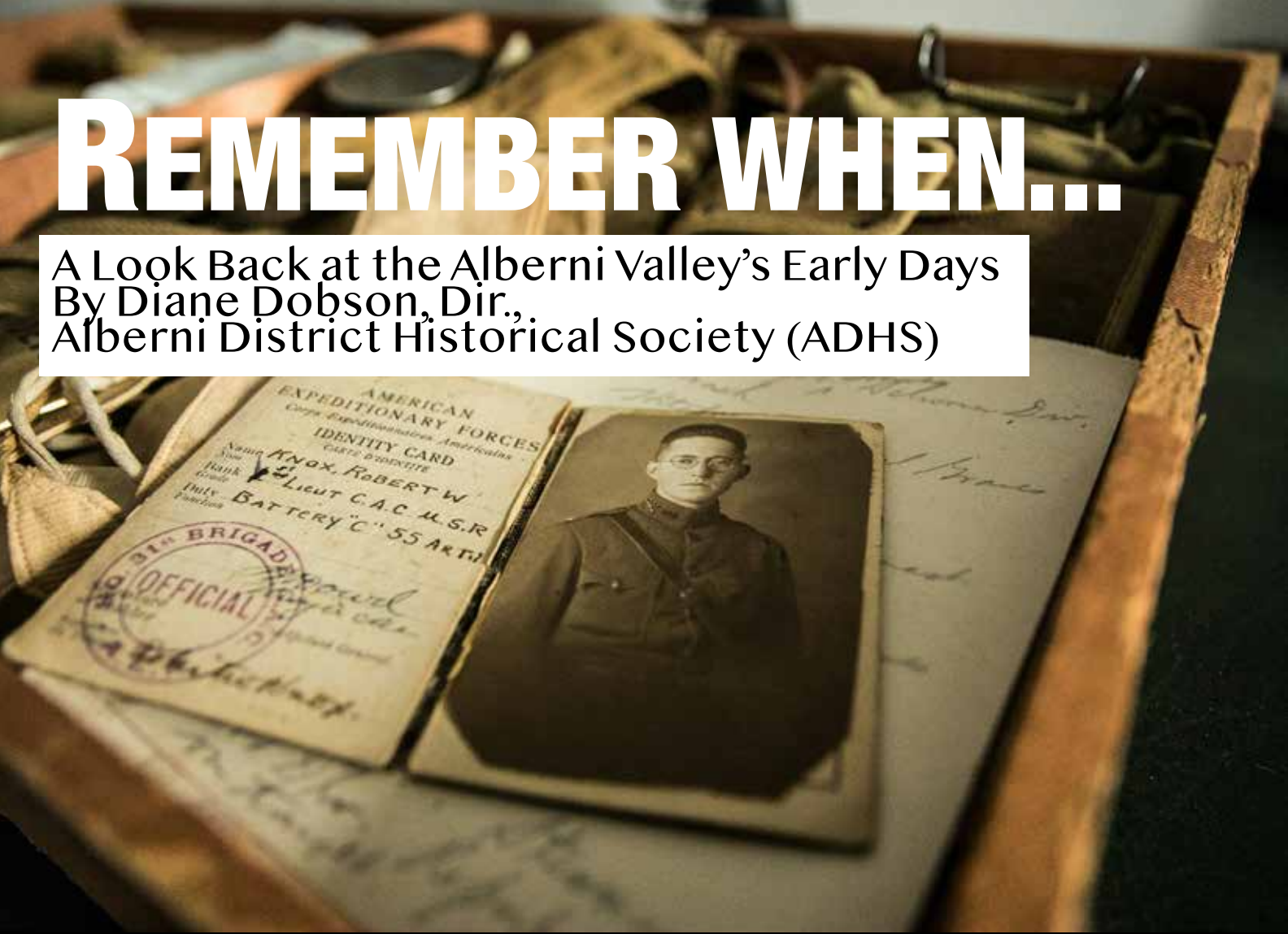
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A Look Back at the Alberni Valley’s Early Days
By Diane Dobson, Dir.,
Alberni District Historical Society (ADHS)



The ALBERNI HARDWARE STORE - remember those creaking wood floors?

Who remembers going into that cluttered old building where you could find anything from clothespins to pitchforks? Alberni Hardware Store was a mainstay on 1st Avenue. In those early years, Hamley’s Grocery Store and Good Eats Cafe flanked the hardware store. In existence since 1908, the store was owned by Charlie McNaughton. In 1932, a retired travelling salesman, Edgar MacKenzie, bought it from Charlie.

According to an AV Times article (April 3, 2000), “In those days, 1st Avenue was a Saturday night meeting place. The loggers would come to town, get a meal at the Good Eats Cafe, visit the steam baths, billiards or the Port Theatre.” These men also bought their supplies from Edgar who would remain open till 2 or 3 AM on Saturday nights.

At this time, Alberni Hardware was half the size that it would become. The store was the only one in town with

a paved sidewalk out front. When Edgar decided to paint it red, he did so because he had the right ... he had paid for it himself.

Keith MacKenzie worked in the store as a kid until he joined the air force. On returning home in 1942, he was working full time and, before long, took over the management. The business was built on neighbourly ways, according to Keith. 70% was on charge accounts. People paid off their bills when they could with no interest and remained loyal customers for decades. “I’ve seen customers go from grandfathers to fathers to sons. Yes, we’ve had lots of loyal customers,” commented Keith.

People were loyal too, because of the high level of personal service. If you couldn’t find that piece you desperately needed anywhere, Keith was known to find it in the store’s cavernous basement or he would create



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PN02941 – c 1976
Looking north on First Avenue from Argyle Street. Somass Mill in the distance, Alberni Hardware on left. Lily White Laundry and the Kingsway Hotel are on the right.



it himself. That basement, by the way, was a treasure trove in itself. You might discover Javex bleach in brown glass jugs and Wisk laundry detergent in a screw top steel container along with many discontinued items.

The MacKenzie family has seen many businesses come and go over the years while theirs had managed to remain healthy. Definitely all in the family with Keith at the helm, his son, Ken, and grandson, Keith Jr., they worked together to keep it that way. Merchandise was a jumble, cascading off the shelves and, still, Keith MacKenzie knew exactly where everything was... you just had to ask.

1st Avenue, as mentioned, was the main street in the early years. That changed when fire struck. It was in the 50's. Neighbouring businesses burned down. Alberni Hardware, luckier than most, only suffered cracked front windows. It remained while many others moved up to the



AVTimes Feb 7, 1977
more modern business core on 3rd Avenue.

Keith Sr. claimed the most profitable years were during the 60's and 70's. The town was booming and times were good. The secret to Keith's success, he maintained, was the fact that he stuck to selling a heavy line of hardware and nothing else. Still, the store carried stuff that was old and obscure, that no other hardware store carried - stuff like old-fashioned wash boards and other new 'old' stock like buggy whip holders and a two-man falling/bucking hand saw.

Staff learned right off the bat that helping people was of prime importance in the store. Keith maintained that solving problems was their mainstay and set Alberni Hardware apart from the others. It might be a plumbing job someone was struggling with or a simple but hard-to-find bolt. They did their darndest to help the customer out. Sometimes people would come in just to chat. Keith liked it that way and was never in a rush to shuffle them out - just another outdated but delightful aspect of the old Alberni Hardware Store.

All good things, it seems, must come to an end. Such was the case here after almost a century in business. The little shop and its cozy, small town atmosphere came to an end in 1999. Alberni Hardware moved to a new \$1.5 million building on 3rd Avenue. As far as Keith was concerned, 'down home, friendly service is still where it's at.' At any rate, that oiled wooden floor of the old store was to be missed - besides that, it was easier on the feet!

All research courtesy of the Archives (ADHS)
Photos courtesy of the ADHS and the AV Museum

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Photo Credit Mike Doughty
"The Arrival"



Photo Credit Briden Spence
"Farewell Morning"



Photo Credit Diane Blake

MIGHTY MARS final flight



Photo Credit Pam Craig



In August, Coulson Aviation gave us a second chance. In addition to many practice runs around the lake and a few test flights, the Alberni Valley and the rest of Vancouver Island were given the gift of one last flight of the Hawaii Mars. It was our chance to really take notice, offer a silent thanks, and say goodbye.

Written by Heather Thomson

Some chose to watch as she took off for the last time from the waters of Sproat Lake, others gathered along the Alberni Inlet to watch her leave the Valley, still more gathered all along the east coast of Vancouver to witness her path to her final resting place in Saanich. No matter where you were, you will always remember it. You were part of history.

That's because the Mighty Mars plays such an important part in B.C.'s history. For decades they flew firefighting missions across the province and beyond. Although we in the Alberni Valley consider it our plane, it really isn't. It belongs to all British Columbians. And so it seems fitting that it now resides in an aviation museum where everyone can enjoy it and learn its history and stories.

If you live in the Alberni Valley, chances are you have a memory of the Martin Mars Water Bombers. Some are deeply rooted from years of watching them fly over the Valley, others from working for the company that owned them at the time, while more may be recent as newcomers only got to admire them sitting at the base on Sproat Lake after they stopped flying.

I first heard the water bombers when I moved to Port Alberni in 1997. I rented a small apartment in the basement of a house on Stirling Arm. One day I heard a deep rumble like nothing I have ever heard before, and seconds later I heard a voice from upstairs yell "the bomber is coming." I went outside and witnessed the most impressive plane I've ever seen slipping off the surface of Sproat Lake. I had only been in the Alberni Valley a matter of days, and I had no idea how rich the history of the Might Mars was. It didn't take long to figure it out.

Whether they were just practicing or off on a firefighting mission, these planes never failed to captivate us. Their engines would rumble overhead, and people dropped everything to go out and catch a glimpse of the red and white planes overhead.

Lindy James grew up with the water bombers flying overhead. He remembers when they would fly over the

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Sproat Lake Provincial Park and dump water on the people on the beach. He said it is memories like that and hundreds more that make the flying tankers special to the people of the Alberni Valley.

On August 11, thousands of people gathered to watch the Hawaii Mars' last flight. Sproat Lake was packed with boats ready to watch its final take off. Along the waterfront in Port Alberni people waited patiently for the distant rumble of her engine. The event brought a community together through shared stories and memories.

Young and old spoke of the pride they felt knowing their plane had saved numerous communities. They spoke of watching them on Sproat Lake and running down their docks to chase the bomber. Others spoke of how time seemed to stop the minute the rumble of the engines could be heard over Port Alberni.

"That sound," one man said as the Hawaii Mars finally came into view over the Somass Estuary. "There's nothing quite like that sound."

Behind that sound was a crew flying her home. Pilot Peter Killin was among them. He said when the five crew members headed out to the plane that afternoon, they weren't expecting hundreds of boats to be there to see them off.

"The more I think about it, the deeper the importance of it sinks in," Peter explained. "They were there because they loved that plane as much as we did."

He said the RCMP guided them out, and it was a bit challenging at times. He tips his hat to the people on the lake though, saying they knew what the crew needed in order to take off, and they made sure it happened.

Steve Kendall decided he would watch the Hawaii Mars leave Sproat Lake, where he spent many years working with the team on the flying tankers.

"Watching the Hawaii Mars depart Sproat Lake and the Alberni Valley for the final time was felt by many throughout the region. These marvelous aircraft have been a fixture of Port Alberni for over 60 years, and made a huge impact on communities and forest lands throughout Canada, U.S., and Mexico," he said. "Everyone would run outside their homes, waving as she thundered through the Valley. We will never forget that sound. And when she lifted off for the last time, never to return, it was as if we lost a best friend or close relative, and I believe many of you felt the same way. I occasionally remind myself of a famous Dr. Suess quote, 'Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened.'"



Photo Credit Briden Spence
"Farewell Morning"



Photo Credit
Heather Thomson

farewell MIGHTY MARS

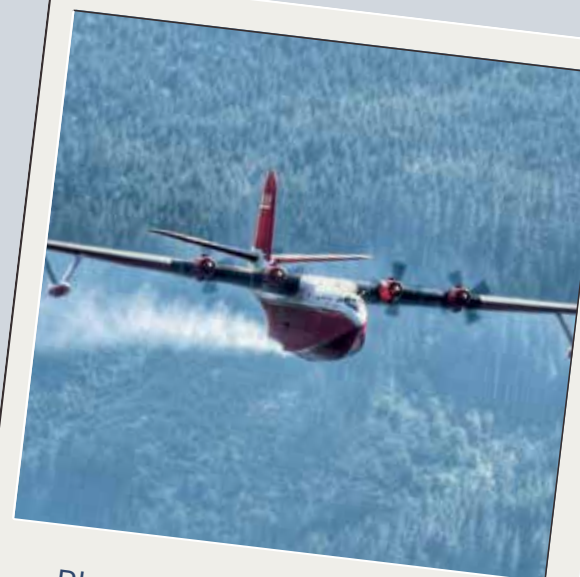


Photo Credit Dawn Auffery

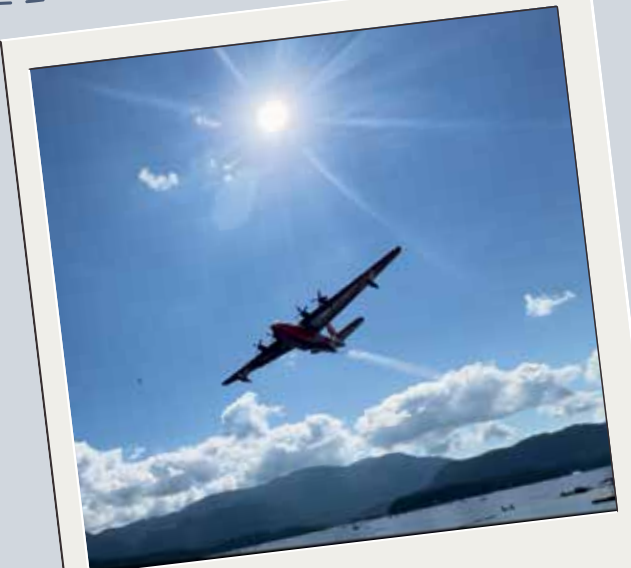


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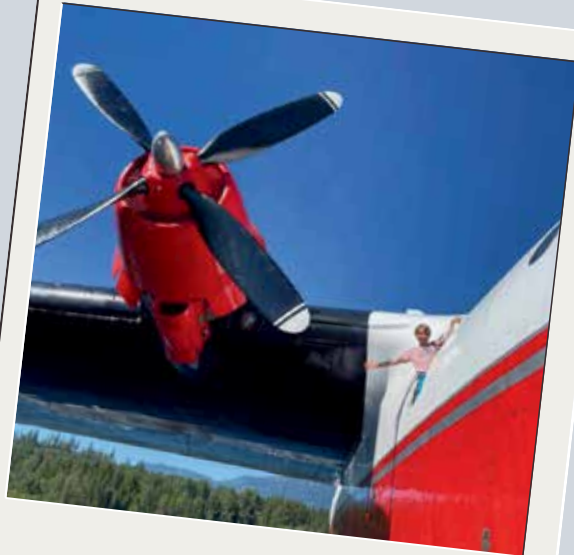


Photo Credit Stephanie Beer

MIGHTY MARS final days



Photo Credit Steve Kendall



Photo Credit Kayley Pitts



Photo Credit Christina Kailer

Steve started working at Flying Tankers as a labourer in September 2003, not long after the devastating Kelowna fires. He was hooked immediately, and his dedication and strong work ethic drove him to take a correspondence course in Aircraft Mechanics in 2004, receiving a diploma, and in 2005 started an apprenticeship.

“Some of the most memorable times included my first detached operations in 2006 when we were sent to Knewstubb Lake, approximately 90 miles from Vanderhoof and were based out of Nechako Lodge. Looking back, this was a special mission, as this was to be the last time Hawaii and Philippine Mars ever flew together on a firefighting mission, and was also the last fire she ever flew on,” Steve remembers. “That fall it may have completed some pre-purchase flight testing, but was to never fly again. On the return trip home, I got the opportunity to sit in the right seat and fly the massive Mars through the mountains of Knight Inlet. It has been said the aircraft felt heavy to fly, I can certainly attest to that.”

In the spring of 2007, Coulson Aircrane purchased both Mars aircraft, numerous support equipment, and started the season off with a 45-day contract with the B.C Forest Service. Steve remembers all of the missions he went on and will always hold them close to his heart.

“It was a very special program to be a part of – a fantastic crew to work with,” he said. “And for that I am very grateful.”

Peter said leading up to the final flight, his goal was to do it justice. He knew the expectation was that everyone would get to see the Hawaii Mars before she left, but that was difficult. They are not allowed to fly over built up areas, making even flying over Sproat Lake difficult these days. Given the restrictions he had, Peter plotted out a route to Saanich that would take the Might Mars over many of the forestry towns it once protected, giving people a chance to say goodbye.

“And so we flew up the Somass making some noise and did a couple of passes in the Harbour, and we were on our way,” he said. “The final flight didn’t seem like enough, but building up to that the Alberni Valley had quite a show.”

He explained that for three weeks they tried to go past everyone’s houses on the lake. They also managed to fly over the Alberni Valley a few times. He realizes it is never enough, but they did their best.

He said as they approached Comox, he called the tower and got special permission to approach along the runway, much to the delight of the people there. They then flew along the edge of Vancouver Island and Powell River.

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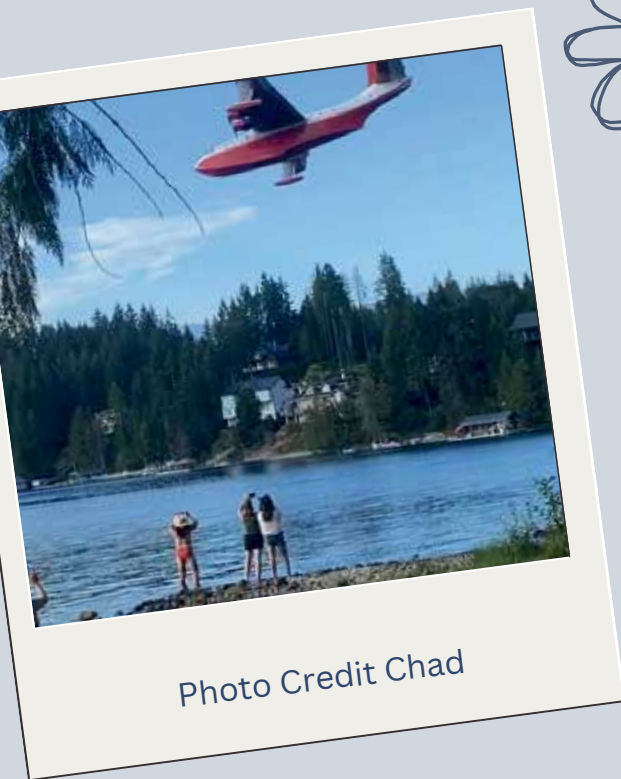


Photo Credit Chad

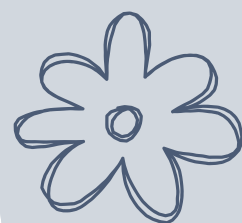


Photo Credit
Janice Pawuette

MIGHTY
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final
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Photo Credit Briden Spence
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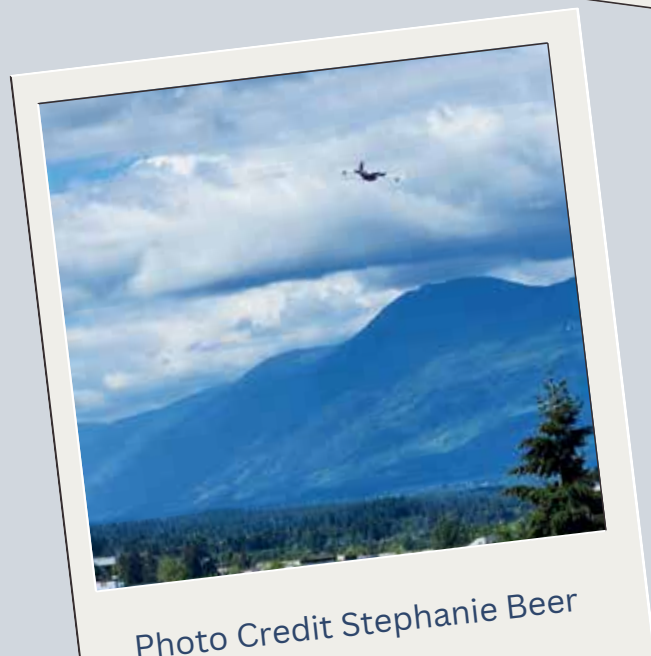


Photo Credit Stephanie Beer



Photo Credit Rob Frolic

"And of course we flew over Campbell River where I live," he said. "I had to show off a little bit."

They flew south along the east coast of the Island. All the way he was amazed by the number of people gathered to watch their flight. Ladysmith took them by surprise. It wasn't part of their plan, but when they saw the big gathering and celebration on Transfer Beach, they had to make sure to put on a show for them.

Peter had a hard time describing how it felt when the Snow Birds joined them in Crofton. Although that was a special moment, the company that pleased him the most was having Goose along for the trip. It was important that it joined the flight, like it did so many before that as the bird dog. "For 17 years I got to fly the Mars, and it was an adventure," he said. "There were good times and bad times, and I will never forget any of them."

When they made their final landing in Saanich, it was a quiet end to the story. "There wasn't any blubbing. We just closed it up like it was just another flight." It was later that he started to realize just how much that flight meant to people. He heard their stories and felt their connection to the plane. To him, it felt special to be part of something so meaningful to so many people.

Rob Frolic grew up on Sproat Lake watching the Mighty Mars fly over. He decided to make the trip to Victoria to witness the Hawaii Mars' final landing. "Being in Victoria for its final flight was something I had to do to help me with some closure," he said. "[Both of] the Mars aircraft have been a part of my life, growing up and through my adulthood. It feels like losing a part of your family." He said knowing they will no longer be on the shoreline, in the water every summer, or in the air ever again is heartbreaking. But he will always have so many memories of those planes flying overhead and hearing the engines roar.

"It's a bittersweet moment," he said. "I know they are going to places that will take care of them and people will be able to experience them up close, like I have been able to do so many times. It's just not the same as being in the water or overhead."

The Hawaii Mars is now at its new home at the B.C. Aviation Museum in North Saanich, leaving behind only memories. For me, I will never forget when I got to fly in the Hawaii Mars. I was a journalist then, and I had an opportunity to go up on a media flight. It was remarkable and definitely a highlight of my career. After our flight, Steve Kendall brought my father out to the Mars, and he got to see inside. It was so fun seeing it through someone



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else's eyes. My father had no connection to the Mars, but he was in awe of it. He couldn't get enough. Now all the people like my father, as well as people with memories of the flying tankers, will be able to see the Hawaii up close at the B.C. Aviation. She may never fly again, but her days of amazing people are far from over.

As for her partner, the Philippine Mars, she will hopefully take to the lake this fall. Peter said their plan is to have her on the lake as soon as possible for test runs and eventually flights. Peter stresses that nothing is final, as it will depend on their success in getting her running again, their timing for the test flights, and the weather. He said the plan is in the works to fly her to a lake 150 miles outside of Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona. She will then be taken apart and trucked the rest of the way to the museum. Peter estimates the flight will be approximately eight to nine hours.

Although Peter does not know the exact plan yet, he promises residents of the Alberni Valley "she won't leave quietly. It's been humbling and an honour, and I am proud to be part of this," Peter said. "It's been a real adventure, but I still have one more to go. Then I can retire and go flying in my own plane."



Being a part of the Co-op is about more than just shopping locally — members know it's also about investing in the greater community.

A cornerstone of the Alberni Valley since 1928, the Alberni District Co-op has nearly a century of service under its belt. And as a member-owned cooperative, it's made many significant contributions to the local community, all thanks to the support of its members. Every dollar spent at the Co-op, stays in Alberni and helps them support initiatives that make the Alberni Valley an amazing place to live.

The Alberni District Co-op supports the community in a variety of ways, including providing funding from its ADC Investment Fund and through partnerships and sponsorships with local groups and organizations. From supporting local soccer and hockey teams and larger community events that Alberni residents have loved for generations, such as Funtastic, Five Acre Shaker and various fall fairs, community comes first at the Alberni Co-op.

The Alberni Co-op takes pride in supporting such a wide range of initiatives. If you're a local organization or group looking for funding, Alberni Co-op accepts new requests through their website year round. Apply online today!

The ADC Fund is an application specific program hosted once a year for larger projects enhancing the local community. The ADC Investment Fund plays a crucial part in how the Co-op gives back but represents only a portion of the support given out annually.

Whether it's funding sports teams, arts programs or essential services like the Port Alberni Shelter and the Kuu-us Crisis Line, Co-op members' support makes it all possible.

Members enjoy a rewarding partnership with the Co-op! Through the cooperative system, members not only receive a portion of the profits each year but can feel confident knowing all funds stay within the community.

The Alberni District Co-op is always welcoming new members. If you want to make a difference in where your dollars go and help support your community, consider joining the Alberni District Co-op. Whether it's funding sports teams, supporting the arts, or helping feed families in need, every contribution makes an impact.

Become a member of the Alberni District Co-op today! Members earn cashback on gas, home heating fuel and liquor purchases made at any Alberni Co-op location! Memberships are a one-time fee of only \$10, sign up in person at our Administration or online. Find more information about the ADC Community Investment Fund online here and follow the Alberni District Co-op on Facebook for contest alerts, community updates and more!

Article submitted by Alberni District CO-OP

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Human behaviour significantly impacts how beavers move through nature

Article Submitted by Lesley Fox,
The Fur-Bearers

They're known as nature's engineers, helping to keep freshwater on the land and playing a big role in supporting biodiversity – and you can spot them right here in the Alberni Valley. Beavers are found throughout our area, including in the Burde Street ponds, Kitsuksis Creek, and even Sproat Lake.

One of the significant ecological benefits of beavers is that they keep freshwater on the land. Their dam-

building activities create and maintain wetlands—large ponds that are crucial for maintaining water quality and flow.

In Port Alberni, where seasonal rainfall can lead to significant fluctuations in water levels, beaver dams help mitigate the impact of floods. By slowing down water flow and creating reservoirs, beaver ponds reduce the speed and volume of water moving downstream, which can lessen the risk of flood damage during heavy rains. This natural water retention also reduces the impact of droughts. One recent study even showed that areas around beaver dams stayed greener during wildfires than areas without them! Wetlands created and maintained by beavers are essential for numerous plant, insect, and animal species and increase biodiversity. These ponds also attract birds, amphibians, mammals, and fish. Salmon, in particular, benefit from the slow-moving water of beaver ponds, which provide ideal spawning grounds.

Scientists have also found that beavers play a crucial role in sequestering carbon. The wetlands created by beavers are recognized as carbon sinks, and their dams help trap organic material, reducing the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere. In Port Alberni, where natural landscapes are central to both our environment and economy, the importance of beavers cannot be overstated.

In addition to their ecological benefits, beavers carry significant cultural importance for many Indigenous Peoples. They often appear in stories and teachings, frequently as creators. Beavers are symbols of hard work, determination, and persistence. They live in family groups and work together to maintain their dams and lodges, teaching humans about cooperation and teamwork.

Beavers are more than just rodents—they are vital contributors to the health and resilience of the Alberni Valley. Their ability to create and maintain wetlands supports a diverse array of species, aids in water management, and helps combat climate change. As Port Alberni continues to grow and evolve, the presence of these industrious community members will remain a key factor in preserving the natural beauty and ecological balance of the area. You can learn more about beavers, their importance, and how we can keep infrastructure safe from damming activity at TheFurBearers.com.



Removing attractants can keep black bears and everyone in Port Alberni safe and healthy!



Remove bird feeders when bears are active.



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Find an attractant checklist and more information on coexistence at TheFurBearers.com/attractants.



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Local Bestselling Author Jennie Potter Releases Transformative Book 'Stuck No More'



****Port Alberni, BC**** — Jennie Potter, a local author and Future-Self Coach, is making waves both in her home in Port Alberni and internationally with the release of her latest book, **Stuck No More**. Following the success of her bestselling book, **Self-Sabotage No More**, Jennie continues her mission to empower individuals to break free from the emotional and psychological barriers that keep them from living their best lives.

Jennie Potter's journey is one that resonates deeply with many who have struggled with self-doubt, fear, and limiting beliefs. Growing up in a small beach town in Crescent Beach, BC, Jennie faced years of self-loathing and self-sabotage before finding her path to healing and empowerment. Her personal journey led her to become a counsellor, a certified John Maxwell coach, a healer, a sought-after speaker, and an author whose work has already touched countless lives.

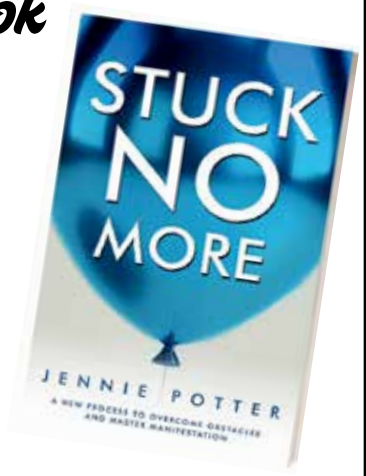
Stuck No More is the culmination of years of research, personal growth, and professional experience. Building on the foundation laid in **Self-Sabotage No More**, this new book delves deeper into the processes of manifestation with faith, alignment, and intentional living. It introduces readers to the innovative concept of AFFIRMATIONS, a tool Jennie developed to help individuals release what is holding them back and create the life they are dreaming of.

"Affirmations"—a concept Jennie has pioneered to combine affirmations with choice, emotion, heart, vision and faith. These powerful tools help readers not just think about their goals but also embody and move toward them, creating a deeper connection between mind and body, deleting the inner critic and giving voice to the inner encourager.

In addition to affirmations, Jennie introduces the "Magnetic Balloon Method," a unique technique designed to help individuals visualize and release their emotional blocks. This method has already garnered praise from readers and clients alike for its simplicity and effectiveness in helping people manifest their desires and move past obstacles that once seemed insurmountable. As a resident of Port Alberni, Jennie is particularly proud to share her work with the local community.

Jennie's books are not just about overcoming obstacles—they are about thriving and living a life full of purpose and joy. Whether you are struggling with self-sabotage, feeling stuck in your current circumstances, or simply looking for ways to enhance your personal growth, **Stuck No More** offers practical, actionable steps to help you move forward.

Jennie's work is a testament to the power of faith, vision, and the belief that everyone has the ability to overcome their past and create a future they love. As she continues to inspire and empower others through her writing, speaking and coaching, Jennie remains dedicated to her mission of helping individuals unlock their full potential and shine as the light they were made to be.

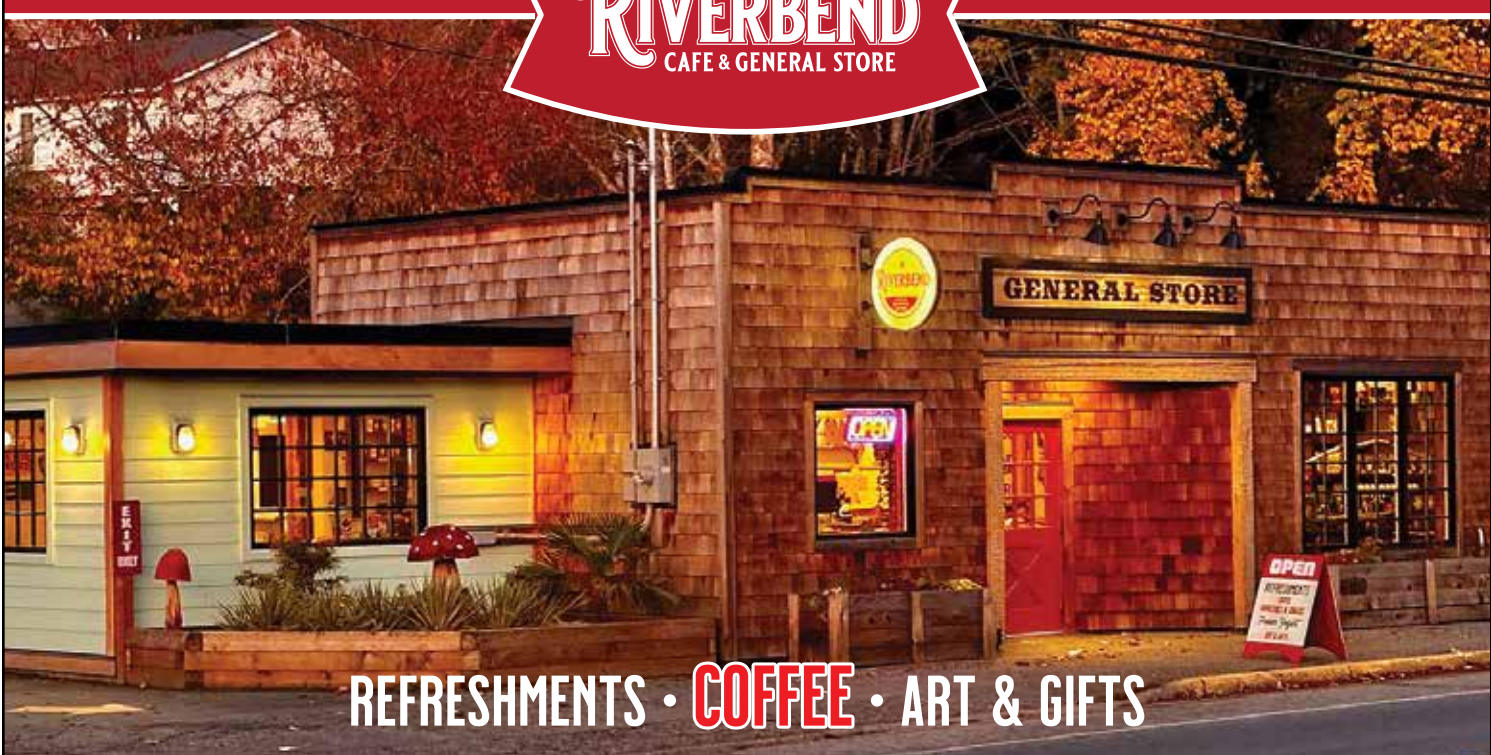


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For more information on Jennie Potter and to access her free resources, her community, her books, and her coaching programs, visit www.jenniepotters.com go to amazon.ca to order your copy!

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PAGO GRANNIES

Written By: Heather Thomson

Almost 20 years ago, Stephen Lewis came to Port Alberni to speak about his experiences in Africa as Envoy for the UN. His stories about the women and children there changed the way many in the packed auditorium thought about the how the HIV/AIDS pandemic was affecting people in Africa. He spoke of how his reaction to what he saw was the driving force behind the creation of the Stephen Lewis Foundation in 2003. The formation of this foundation, and a rather unique idea from his daughter, lead to the creation of the Grandmother to Grandmother Campaign.

In the audience that day were a number of grandmothers from Port Alberni who decided they wanted to form a local chapter of the Grandmother to Grandmother movement. In December 2006, they held the first meeting of the PAGO Grannies. The name was chosen because PA is short for Port Alberni, and Go is the Zulu word for grandmother. "HIV/AIDS was impacting people in Canada, but there

was no comparison between their lives [in Africa] and ours," explained Robin Forrest, co-chair of the PAGO Grannies. "After what we heard, we couldn't just do nothing anymore."

She explained that when parents die from the pandemic, it is the grandmothers who take over care of their orphaned grandchildren. Grandmothers in Africa often end up looking after multiple children with little support and few resources. The Stephen Lewis Foundation works with community-level organizations, like the PAGO Grannies, to create change in Africa by providing care to women, orphaned children, grandmothers, and people living with HIV/AIDS. Since 2003, it has funded more than 1,600 initiatives and partnered with 300 community-based groups in the 15 countries hit hardest by the HIV/AIDS.

The Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign began as a few groups of committed Canadian grandmothers and

has evolved into more than 240 grandmothers groups across Canada. It now includes 10,000 grandmothers and grandmothers in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Their goal is to support African grandmothers who are caring for millions of children orphaned by the pandemic.

The local group is focused on fundraising and raising awareness. Their symbol, a circle of grandmothers and grandmothers, is a tribute to how they work together to achieve a common goal.

"Our group is small compared to many of the others and most of us wear many different hats, still since we formed, we have raised \$156,000," said Clara Cauduro, co-chair of the PAGO Grannies. "When we started, HIV was running amuck in Africa, and only grandmothers were left to help. As grandmothers ourselves, and a similar age, we could understand what this must be like and wanted to help." She explained that the local group does not do any big fundraising projects. The money they raise is through many small efforts, but it adds up. The goal of the PAGO Grannies has always been to raise \$10,000 annually so they could continue making a difference in the lives of others and ocean away.

"We also became ambassadors and helped create awareness about what was happening in Africa," Anna Cole said. She was a founding member and is still one of the 41 women involved in the PAGO Grannies.

Cole added that, although so much is known about how HIV/AIDS is spread, it continues to be a problem in Africa do in some part to misconceptions. Many of these old beliefs lead to the spread of the disease that is otherwise controllable.

The moto of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign is "We will not rest until they can rest." This belief is growing ever stronger. The grandmothers' movement amplifies the voices and expertise of grandmothers in Africa, and shows the world that leadership by older women is critical in reclaiming hope and rebuilding resilience across communities.

You can learn more about the Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign at <https://grandmotherscampaign.org>. To find out more or get involved with the PAGO Grannies, go to www.pagrannies.ca.

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WCGH FOUNDATION LEAVING A LEGACY



The West Coast General Hospital Foundation plays a pivotal role in the behind the scenes part of health care. It plays an essential part in providing the best health care for all those who work, live, and play in the Alberni Valley. But they could not do what they do without support from the community in return.

When you head to the hospital you know where your care will come from. But have you ever thought about what is happening behind the scenes to help make it all come together?

The Foundation was incorporated in 1990 as a not-for-profit charitable society whose mission is to raise funds in support of the Port Alberni's West Coast General Hospital and Westhaven long-term care home. We proudly support care provision at the hospital and are well known for assisting with the purchase of major equipment. More recently we have expanded our supports to include partnering on projects and supporting staff education and practice improvement initiatives. Our goal is to improve the quality of care at our local hospital.

Through donor funding, the West Coast General Hospital Foundation can support the purchase of the most urgently needed medical equipment and the latest technologies. It also helps fund capital infrastructure and patient care initiatives, giving our physicians and medical teams the vital tools they need to provide and enhance the compassionate, critical health care they provide.

"Without donor funding, the purchase of new state-of-the-

art medical equipment may not be possible," said Erin Williams, General Manager of the West Coast General Hospital Foundation.

In the 2022/2023 fiscal year, generous donors in and around the Alberni Valley raised \$160,000. This provided funding for the purchase of a new Stryker Video Tower for West Coast General Hospital's operating room and an adjustable IV Start Chair for the medical imaging department.

"The Foundation ensures that West Coast General Hospital has the medical equipment it requires to provide new and innovative care that is reflective of current best practices," explains Kelli Walsh, site director at West Coast General Hospital. "The donor funding also makes our essential health care professional staff feel appreciated, as it supports them in being able to work in more efficient and novel ways. The partnership between Island Health and the foundation is essential and so appreciated. Through this collaborative partnership, we can ensure health care services are available for our community."

"In addition to the donations, we also raise money through the operation of the West Coast Café, located within the Health Square of the hospital. We also own and operate Alberni Lifeline Monitoring and 80% of profits support the work of the Foundation in the community," said Williams. So you might wonder why a foundation needs to raise money for medical equipment and services and why this isn't provided by the government through public funding. Hopefully this will clear things up. The answer is that it allows us to get the extras that aren't always covered by the government.

Did you know?

Donations build upon government health care funding to help support priority equipment, education, research, facility enhancements and/or other projects in our hospitals and surrounding communities.

The Island Health Authority is generously supported by a network of health care foundations.

Foundations rely on donations from grateful patients, families, businesses, and organizations to support health care within Island Health.

Each foundation is made up of a volunteer board of directors and is staffed by professional fundraisers and support services.

How can you play an important part in supporting the work of the West Coast General Hospital Foundation to the benefit of your community now and into the future?

Give once: Make a one-time gift to support health care in your community.

Give monthly: Donate monthly to meet the ongoing needs of our hospitals and health centres.

Host a fundraiser: Celebrate a special occasion while raising funds to support health care in your community.

Planned giving: Your gift will leave a legacy and help transform health care in the present and for generations to come.

Donate shares: You can donate stocks, bonds or mutual fund shares instead of giving cash, further extending your tax savings.

Sponsor an event: Show your support to healthcare in the community by sponsoring our events throughout the year.

Become a volunteer: We recognize the decision to volunteer comes from personal motivation within oneself and when seen as a genuine act, has a powerful effect on others that tends to inspire.

For more information on how to get involved with any of the above, please reach out to Erin Williams, General Manager of the WCGH Foundation at erin.williams@islandhealth.ca or at 250.731.1370 ext. 48148.

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What does the Community Safety & Social Development Department do?

Article submitted by Mary Clare Massicotte City of Port Alberni Manager of Community Safety and Social Development

Our department addresses safety concerns through Bylaw Services and the Community Policing program, and social issues through social development initiatives. Some of the issues that are prevalent in our community are: affordable housing, people who are unhoused, mental health and substance use, and social disorder.

The City's Community Safety & Social Development Department handles a wide range of issues. The key areas of focus within the department are: Community Policing and Crime Prevention, Bylaw Services, Community engagement for social supports, and Encampments.

What is the vision and mission of social development?
Our vision is to have a thriving and sustainable municipality that fosters a high quality of life for all residents, where the well-being of all citizens is respected; and the community is safe and clean.

Our mission is to collaboratively and proactively address the needs and aspirations of our diverse community by implementing strategic initiatives that promote inclusivity, safety, respect, and social harmony.

We are fortunate in Port Alberni to have a robust social safety structure that includes First Nations, non-profit organizations, societies, and government agencies that aim to achieve desired community safety outcomes, and we are grateful for their continued support.

How do you advance social development?
The City of Port Alberni does not deliver social programs, own or manage social and/or affordable housing. The City's role is an administrative one of convening, facilitating, and coordinating the social services community to promote and implement programs and policies that contribute to the overall social progress of the community.

Can you give me an example of how social development works?
In April 2024, the City partnered with the Alberni Clayoquot Health Network, and Island Health – Mental Health and Substance Use to develop a workshop to identify gaps in services for five key sectors: Children & Youth, Community Safety, Housing & Homelessness, Mental Health & Substance Use/Healthcare, and Social Services.

Led by a facilitator, the workshop participants (36), circulated

through five different sector tables to discuss: What is working well now? What is not working? What are the opportunities? What are the barriers to those opportunities?

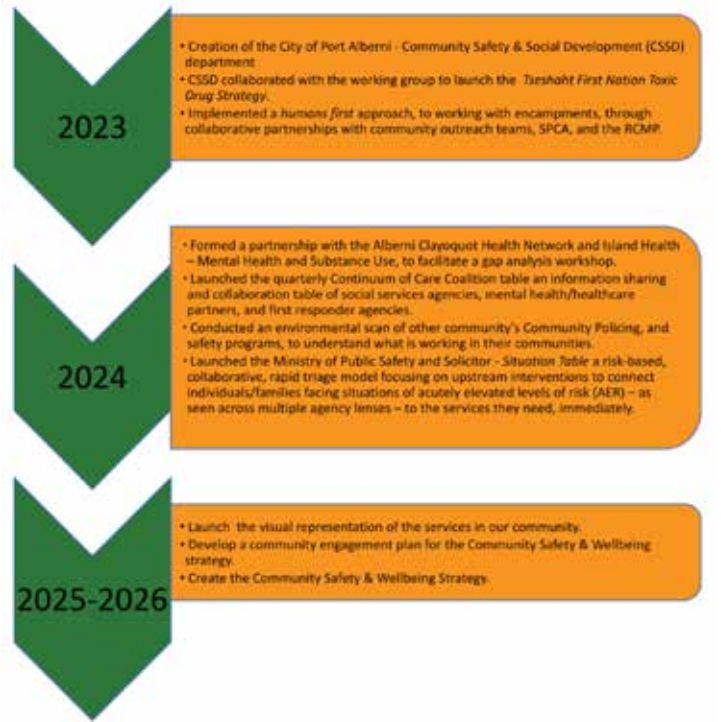
Following this roundtable discussion, a report was shared along with the following identified priorities to move forward community collaborations and support:

SHORT-TERM:
Launch the Continuum of Care Coalition table, Conduct an agency tour – treasure hunt with a passport and stamps, and Formalize networking – to learn about who does what.

MEDIUM-TERM:
Develop a visual map for the Continuum of Care - Services Update BC211 quarterly, Develop an engagement strategy to include peers in work and apply for funding to have standardized peer training and support.

MEDIUM -LONG TERM:
Advocate for integrated case management between services, and advocate for multi-year funding versus annual grants.

LONG-TERM:
Create system navigators/navigation to support individuals with accessing community services, collaborate on funding opportunities, and create a co-op for administration (i.e. grants) including a point person to conduct grant research and apply for grants.



What does the Continuum of Care Coalition table do?
The main goal of the table is to share information and research, and collaborate on common issues to eliminate gaps in our community on a quarterly basis with participation from local agencies and services, peers (people with lived/ living experience), first responder agencies, and mental health/healthcare professionals. At the first meeting in April of 2024, we began the work of a Continuum of Care mapping exercise, to map out the services that exist in the Alberni Valley to determine where the priorities, gaps and needs for services for the future.

What is the long-range plan for the City?
The goal is to work with the Coalition table, and the residents of the Alberni Valley, to engage people in the development of a Community Safety and Well-Being Strategy. This is a plan developed in consultation with the residents of Port Alberni to address key priorities and align community efforts with clear responsibilities and timelines.

The City of Port Alberni's Community Safety & Social Development department serves as the coordinating body to drive actions supporting the strategy and promote collaboration among community partners. This involves coordinating service delivery, fostering engagement, and enhancing connections across agencies and systems.

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**6
NOV**

**23
NOV**

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**7
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**18
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