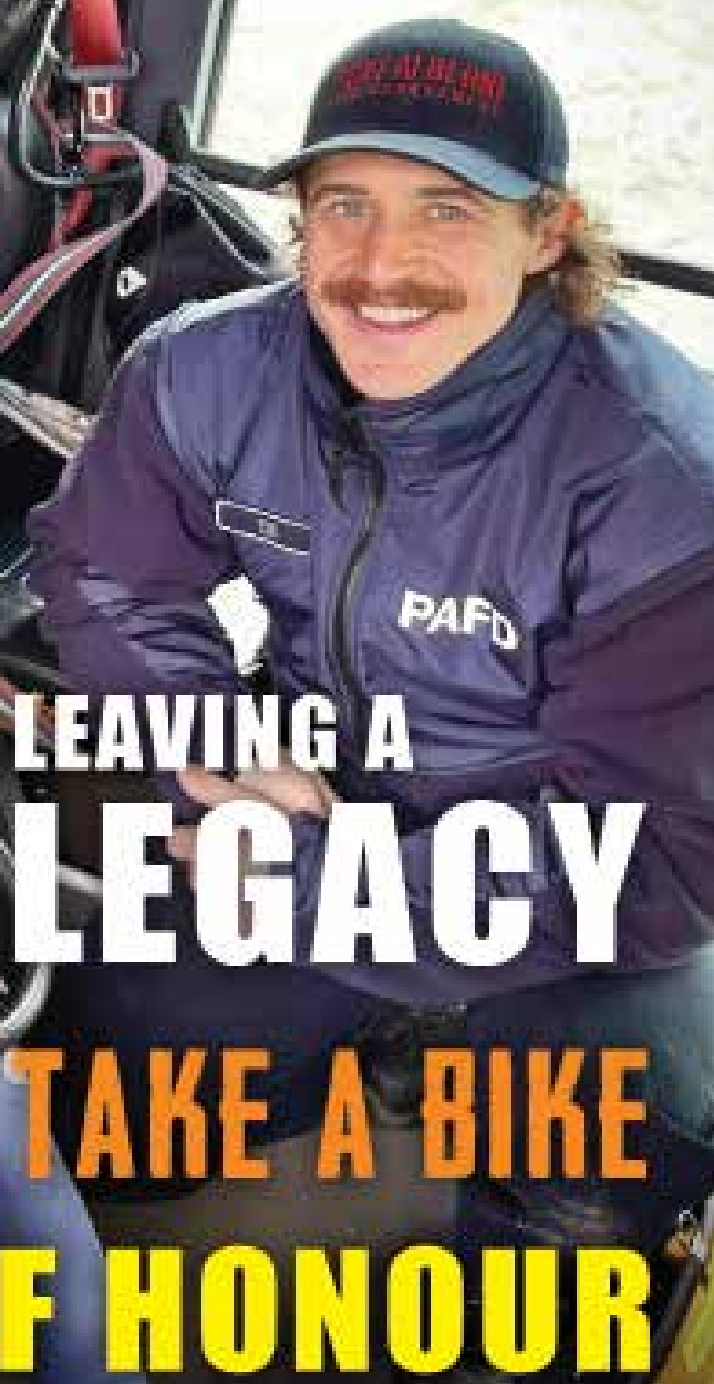


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HAPPENING THIS MAY AT THE CAPITOL THEATRE



NORTH ISLAND THEATRE FESTIVAL

North Island Theatre BC Mainstage Festival hosted by the Capitol Theatre and Portal Players Dramatic Society.

Happening May 20 - 26th is the Annual North Island Theatre BC Mainstage Festival Event sponsored by Theatre BC and hosted by Capitol Theatre and Portal Players Dramatic Society. Rivercity Players Campbell River, Courtenay Little Theatre, Nanaimo Theatre Group, Echo Players Qualicum, Portal Players Dramatic Society Port Alberni will all be performing at the event this May.

This festival is hosted by groups specific to the North Island Theatre zone. Theatre BC is divided into 10 zones throughout the province, each zone incorporates the community theatre groups within their area. Theatre BC is a group of like minded theatre professionals who coordinate festivals, workshops and tours.

Every year an annual adjudicated theatre festival is held in the spring, with the winning performance going to the Provincial Mainstage Festival held in July. Each year one of the groups takes a turn to host the event. Last year the event was hosted in Campbell River, with Nanaimo Theatre Group performing at the Mainstage Festival in Surrey in 2023.

The last time Port Alberni hosted the festival was in July 2019. Teresa Drew, President of PPDS said, "One of the years Port Alberni hosted the North Island Zone Festival, two separate clubs submitted the same play. Initially they thought it was going to be a problem, but in the end it was interesting to see how the two separate clubs came up with two very different interpretations of the authors work."

A theater adjudicator is someone with a strong theater professional background who attends the festival, with the intent to judge the performances, looking for authenticity

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of the authors reproduction of the player, set, costume and sound design and stage direction. After the performance the adjudicator will investigate the decision making process that leads to the overall production quality of the performance. He will ask the actors supporting questions as to why they choose to perform the character in that way. Once all the plays have been performed, the adjudicator will make the final decision as to which group will go on to the Mainstage Festival this summer in Chilliwack. As well during the festival many awards are given for Best Actor, Best Production, Best Soundscape, and much more.

PPDS will be entering in Martin McDonough's 'The Pillow Man.' The performance will be directed by Nicole Foster. The performance will feature a four person cast, including Darien Edgeler as Detective Tulpolski, Cydney Pedersen as Katurian, Brendan Rice as Detective Ariel, and Scott Lemkay as Michael Katurian. Plus many behind the scenes crew members including Branden Chase as stage manager. "The Pillow Man performance will be bolstered by local artists to help create a sinister and mysterious stage performance," said Scott Lemkay, cast member.

Tickets and information are available at www.AttheCapitol.org, tickets are also available at the theatre box office Mon & Thurs @ 4-6pm and at the door the night of the show.




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The beauty industry is reported to produce at least 120 billion pieces of packaging each year. Much is not recyclable as components are too small or consist of multi-layer/multi-component plastics that don't have a recycling stream. What's worse is almost nine out of 10 cosmetics products from leading brands contain micro-plastic particles that pose a risk to the environment and human health. Glass bottles are a great option because they are recyclable but they are even better when you refill and reuse them! Choosing refillable products isn't a compromise for an inferior skincare experience. Clean beauty technology has come a long way to be both non-toxic and effective at treating your skin concerns.

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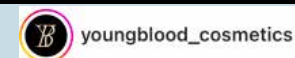
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TAKE A BIKE

ARTICLE & PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY DAVE OSBORNE

The City of Port Alberni has an ever-growing Alberni Trail Riding Program which provides mountain bike programs for children, youth and adults. The Alberni Valley is a growing cycling community with a variety of great trails to discover. Currently there are three major mountain biking networks in the Alberni Valley; Coombs Candy Network – Located behind the Coombs Country Candy Store on Highway 4, Maquinna and Rogers Creek Trails – with various entrances with access behind EJ Dunn and Maquinna Elementary as well as off of the Log Train Trail on Burde Street, and Sproat Lake Trails – access from the gravel road on Faber road or behind Cougar Smith Bike Park. Additional trail networks can be found on the app Trail Forks. The City of Port Alberni will include a multiple page trail map spread in the Spring & Summer 2024 eLeisure Guide which will be outlining these networks for new

and existing trail users to explore.

As the Recreation Programmer my role is to create, plan and oversee recreation programs as well as the staff who facilitate them. Within my portfolio I get to oversee the Alberni Trail Riding Program which began in 2021 and has been a popular program for many riders in the Alberni Valley. Since then, we have seen fantastic growth in the programs we offer as well as the staff who instruct them. Currently we have 8 instructors and 1 volunteer who lead sessions, camps and events from March-October.

Our goal is not only to facilitate exciting rides on a variety of trails, but to help riders develop foundational skills that will improve their overall knowledge and abilities on a bike! To support these riders and their development we have three

skills related programs. We recommend youth beginners start in one of the Groms programs to gain an understanding of foundational skills.

Groms: 5-12 years (Beginner)

Shredders: 7-13 years (Intermediate)

Senders: 9-16 years (Senders)

These riders can partake in programs that fit their skill range in various programs spring to fall.

1. After School Rides – 2 hrs (skills and development focused)
2. Pro Day Camps (Full Day 9:00am-4:00pm or Half Day 9:00am-12:30pm) with focus on skills, drills and fun games and activities
3. Summer and Spring Break Camps (Full Day 9:00am-4:00pm or Half Day 9:00am-12:30pm) with focus on skills, drills and fun games and activities. During select weeks, campers are joined by local amateur and professional riders who teach a workshop session, sign autographs and hang out with the young riders for the afternoon!
4. Semi-Private (Youth) and Private (Adult) Lessons - Work with an instructor to learn the skills you are eager to learn or practice. These sessions can be 1 on 1 or small group training sessions with 2-4 riders
5. Group Lessons (Children, Youth & Adults) – Perfect for 4-10 riders looking to learn new skills and discover exciting trails in a group setting.

Although our focus over the past two years has been mainly children and youth, we have recently expanded our programs to include adult specialty programs for adults who are eager to learn new skills and meet other riders with similar riding interests. Adults would benefit from any of our speciality programs, group rides (women's) or private lessons. This is an area we are aiming to improve programming in the future to provide more options for adults. Here's a list of upcoming adult sessions this spring & summer!

1. Intro to Mountain Biking (Beginner to Novice Riders) – A session designed to equip new riders with basic skills to get them on the trail and continue their interest in bikes!
2. Berms, Turns & Steeps (Novice to Intermediate Riders) – A session designed to take those foundational skills further and start to work on situational manoeuvres and improve skills on tougher terrain.
3. Women's MTB Rides! Group rides for women who are interested in learning basic mountain bike skills, meet new friends and discover some of the trails we have in the Alberni Valley.

In addition to providing programs and camps, we also host

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our annual AV Jump Jam in partnership with Send Air. Send Air is an airbag bike park with various sizes to progress riders' skills located in Nanoose Bay. In September 2022 and 2023 we have partnered to host the event which has seen close to 100 riders of all ages and skill levels join with their friends and families. Other community groups and organizations have also joined in on this event to help make it so special. Gyro Club – Provided free hot dogs and refreshments. Port Alberni Community Policing and 529 Garage brought their radar gun to track riders speed as well as register bikes to limit bike theft. The Jumping Slug Community Cyclery helped repair bikes for free as well as gave out lots of great swag! We also hosted games, activities and crafts for families to enjoy while watching the action.

This past two years we have seen great developments in our programs with participation from all skill levels and ages which includes riders developing into coaching staff. We are really excited to keep these programs growing and include new opportunities and events to increase participation.

To learn more about the Alberni Trail Riding Program check

out the eLeisure Guide at playinpa.ca as well as [playinpa/mtb](https://www.instagram.com/playinpa).

You can also follow us on social media for all program and service updates!
 Instagram - @playinpa
 Facebook – City of Port Alberni Local Government

The Alberni Valley also has a local cycling organization, ROAV!

ROAV (Riders of Alberni Valley) is a non-profit cycling organization with passionate members and directors who enjoy a variety of cycling disciplines. ROAV has recently gone through elections which has seen the appointment of a new board of directors, changing the structure of the organization including its overall objectives.

The organization is motivated to maintain progress and be able to provide quality access to trails of all skill levels for members of our community. The immediate goals with ROAV are to secure land access agreements with the landowners of

popular trail networks, continue work regarding the creation of an adventure sports park, offer trail building workshops, host events, host group rides and foster strong relationships with community members and organizations.

Over the past 4 months ROAV has seen a 500% increase in memberships which shows there is a motivation and excitement for cycling in the Alberni Valley. Community members are eager and passionate about their two wheeled sport and are hoping to see progress in the near future. Since ROAV is a non-profit organization we function from memberships, donations and sponsorships.

Signing up for membership supports the following; Rider insurance, Director insurance, Development of new trails, Helps maintain existing trails, and enables event and program opportunities.

ROAV is currently looking for feedback from the riding community through a survey. If you are interested in assisting in the future developments of ROAV, we genuinely appreciate the feedback. Access to this survey can be found here <https://forms.gle/cHnxBrJ3EPwhm7Z6>.

As we progress, more opportunities to get involved with trail maintenance days, events and partnerships will arise. Please stay tuned on these opportunities through our Instagram and Facebook Page (@Riders of Alberni Valley). Are you looking for ways to get started or connected more into the cycling community? Our local Bike store (the Jumping Slug Community Cyclery) has fantastic service, product and is very knowledgeable about everything cycling. They also have a great pulse on what is going on in the cycling community and are a great resource to point you in the right direction in your riding aspirations! You can also join one of the amazing programs offered through the City of Port Alberni, or become a member of ROAV just visit www.roav.ca! We are excited to continue to grow cycling in the Alberni Valley!



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The Hupačasath First Nation is located on the West Coast of Vancouver Island in Port Alberni in British Columbia. Hupačasath, which means "people residing above the water," consists of an amalgamation of three distinct tribes: Muh-uulth-aht, Kleh-koot-aht and Cuu-ma-as-aht (Ahahswinis)



www.hupacasath.ca

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ADC COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

The Alberni District Co-op has been supporting its community since its incorporation in 1928! We care about the communities where we live, work and play. For nearly 100yrs we have stayed locally invested and community minded and strive to support as many local events and organizations as possible. In 2022, we were elated to introduce our ADC Community Investment Fund in addition to our Community Donation and Sponsorship Program to support larger community programs and organizations that provide a necessary service in improving the quality of life within our community. The ADC Community Investment Fund opens once a year to applicants to apply for their upcoming initiatives. In 2022 - over 25,500

were presented to local applicants; Alberni Valley Community Foundation \$3,000, Port Alberni Maritime Heritage Society \$5,589, Port Alberni Backpack Program \$7,500, Wholesome Meals on Wheels \$10,000. In 2023 - over 37,500 was presented to local applicants; Portal Players \$5,000, Special Olympics \$5,000, Port Alberni Maritime Heritage Society \$5,000, Port Alberni Shelter Society \$5,000, Back Pack Program \$7,500, and Wholesome Meals on Wheels \$10,000. Over the past two years nearly \$55,000 has been donated back to local organizations that support the betterment of our Alberni Valley Community. We look forward to seeing what 2024 holds for organizations and their upcoming projects.

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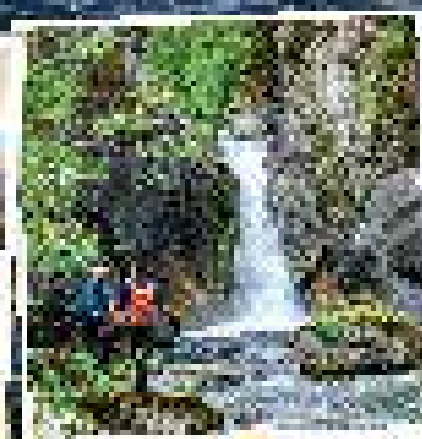
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HISTORY OF THE FIRESTATION



A SERVICE OF HONOR

John Miguez, Anthony Selva, Nico Reynolds, Chief Mike Owens, Deputy Chief Travis Cross, Ryan Turner, Ret. Chief Larry McGifford, Ret. Chief Tim Pley, Ret. Chief David W. "Rusty" Phillips, Ret. Chief Pete Geddes (Photo left to right)

Written By: Megan Warrender

Up until 1965 Port Alberni and Alberni only had volunteer fire departments and firefighters. Following the amalgamation, in 1965 Port Alberni moved to a paid and funded fire department. "Port Alberni was booming during this time, with the forest industry and mills in full steam and new families moving from all over the country. The new City of Port Alberni decided it was time to take things seriously and have a funded fire department," said retired Chief David "Rusty" Phillips. Phillips, a long time resident and one of the original eight paid firefighters who was hired up from the volunteer pool, reflects on his many years in service. Phillips served from 1965 starting as a firefighter, then fire inspector, duty fire chief and then from 1975-1995 fire chief until he retired. "It was interesting times - there were so many factors with going

into the amalgamation and a growing need in our community. It was a great time of change for our community."

The first fire station was located on 5th Ave and Argyle Street, right behind the RCMP building at the time. It consisted of eight firefighters, a fire chief and volunteers; five of the new hires came from other fire departments across Canada, and three were local hires from the volunteer pool. The first paid Fire Chief was Morris Smith who came from Kitimat and served as fire chief from 1965 to 1975.

Over time the fire department was trained and took on more roles; high angle rescuers, confined space rescues, water rescues, vehicle rescues, and others. Which led to the

Photograph shows firemen in suits posing in front of a building with two large cars. On the front of the matte below the photograph is written: PORT ALBERNI FIRE DEPARTMENT, 1912 - 20TH ANNIVERSARY - 1932. H. J. WALKER, C. FAWCITT, S. TOMS, F. J. HARRISON, CHIEF H.S. FOWLIE, A.T. WALKER, F.W. CARSON, D.T. JONES, H. A. HANSON. Also at the front of the matte is written: CLEGG - STUDIO, PORT ALBERNI, B.C. (Photo below) Photo from Alberni Valley Museum Archeives PN00390



department being considered as, "Fire & Rescue." Phillips takes great honor in the department being referred to as the Fire & Rescue Department, "your fire department is who you call when things hit the fan. In every situation and disaster, we are who you call, not just for a fire." Port Alberni continued to grow, which increased the need for new equipment and eventually a new fire hall. In 1967 the fire hall was moved to its present day location on 10th Ave.

Larry McGifford, was a part of the fire department from 1974 until he retired as Fire Chief in 2008. "When I started in 1974, I came into a department that had a young but very experienced crew, we quickly became a family that we relied upon. Constantly encouraging each other to be better all the time." In the 1970's the firefighters were required to know the city very well, with constant in-service training to be able to know the streets and the buildings on a moment's notice. "Before computers were introduced into the fire trucks, there was a big map on the wall, and we had to know where everything was," remembers McGifford. Phillips recalls his time on the job, "as a firefighter we knew our community intimately, and all the people in it."

One of the most memorable fires in Port Alberni happened at the Barclay Hotel in 1976 on Christmas Eve. *Firemen fought the blaze for more than four hours after receiving an initial call*

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at 1:10am, according to Chief Rusty Phillips. Initially tenants and employees had attempted to put out the fire, which started in the area of a deep fryer in the kitchen, with small fire extinguishers. The fire department was subsequently called in and managed to douse that blaze but then discovered that the flames had spread, via a heating duct, into a false ceiling. Firefighters headed to the upper floors of the building to make sure there were no guests left in their rooms, but before they managed to get out, ceilings and walls were beginning to collapse and there was intense heat coming through from places no one expected, according to Phillips. Two firefighters had to exit through upper floor windows in order to escape the inferno. Minor injuries were sustained by two firemen, both of whom were sent to hospital. One was suffering from smoke inhalation and the second had a chipped finger. Phillips said his entire crew of 21 men and three vehicles attended the fire. Two vehicles returned to the firehall shortly after 5am on Christmas morning according to Phillips, while the third remained at the site spraying water over the smoldering remains through all of Christmas Day. The department determined that all of the guests in the hotel had escaped unharmed. By 4am Christmas morning, The Barclay, a favorite pub and gathering place, was only a fiery, tangled ruin. (Alberni District Historical Society, document from Tues. Dec 28, 1976 Alberni Valley Times.)

Over the years the advances in technology have made response time and dispatching quicker, record keeping easier, and communication more reliable. From hand written journals, file folders, and maps on the wall in the early days, to the first computer, a 286 AT which was introduced to the fire station in the 1980's. Record keeping has always been an important role at the firestation; the first program implemented was called 'FDM' the Fire Database Manager program. This upgraded record keeping for dispatches, being able to generate reports quickly, and highly improve the communication between shifts. Communication is essential within the fire station, originally on a crew two firefighters held portable radios, now today every firefighter has access to their own radio. Radios make it so firefighters are able to communicate on the way to calls, so every crew member is prepared and knows what to expect is essential in planning for safety.

Up until this time the firehall included the location for the ambulance dispatch, where one crew member staffed the



(Picture above) Front view of the Port Alberni Fire Hall at the corner of Bute St. and 10th Ave. A man is partially visible beside a red fire car (appears to be a converted station wagon) to the left in the photo. Two fire trucks and two ambulances are parked half outside the garage. Photo Alberni Valley Museum PN13115 circa 1970.



(Picture Right) Pictured Captain Scott Burrows. Photo Credit Sharlene Patterson, 2024.

alarm room around the clock, until 1992 when BC created a province wide ambulance service and left the fire hall.

In 1998, The Fire Hall underwent a seismic upgrade. "It took three years to make this happen," recalls Retired Fire Chief Pete Geddes. Geddes was with the Fire Station from 1973 until retiring as fire chief in 2000. "The building went through a big undertaking to make sure it was earthquake ready." The seismic upgrade took two years to complete. Looking back, McGifford was proud of the staff, especially during the time of the upgrade. McGifford said, "the station was upside down, but we responded to calls just the same. It went to show the amazing work force and people we worked with."

A huge advancement happened in the early 2010's, when

on board computers were implemented in the fire trucks; the Mobile Computer Aided Device. This allowed for dispatch to send over GPS routes, pull up blueprints, investigate hazards and increase awareness of the upcoming situation, all while on route to the fire. "This drastically changed the way we were able to respond," said DC Cross.

Being involved in the fire station brings a huge honor. McGifford served the community for 34 years, and he says, "being a firefighter is the best job in the world, I felt honored to be able to join the Alberni Valley Fire Department in 1974 and advance in management through the years to retire as Fire Chief."

Travis Cross, our current Deputy Fire Chief, began as a



Photo Credit Sharlene Patteron

firefighter in 2005. As he looked back on his journey in the service, he still recalls his first day as a firefighter, “I remember walking into the hall feeling excited to be a part of something in our community, and helping to keep our community safe. To be one of the people who responds to emergencies and help others is a service I can be proud of.”

Every shift in the fire station consists of a four person unit, as well as during day shifts a Chief, Deputy Fire Chief and a Chief Fire Prevention Officer. Each firefighter is on four days on, four days off shift rotation, each consisting of two days and two nights. At the beginning of every shift when a firefighter reports for duty the crew does a transfer of information from the previous shift, making sure the crew is aware of any important information. Then every firefighter is responsible to do a personal protective equipment check, so they are ready to go on a call at a moments notice, as well as vehicle and equipment checks to make sure everything is in proper running order. Then it is the Captains responsible to set the plan for the day; from physical training drills, skill training (fire, rope rescuers, etc.), hall maintenance, equipment maintenance, personal development and scheduled inspections. Which can all change at a moment's notice when the bell sounds.

The firestation contributes to the safety of our community buildings by operating a “Company Inspection Program.” This allows the firestation to educate and inform property

owners (typically commercial and large multi unit residential buildings) around BC Fire Code, and what areas of precautions that need to be taken to avoid the risk of fire, and better protect people in the event of a fire in their building.

The firestation actively takes part in the safety of our community members with hall tours, fire extinguisher training classes, child car seat classes, public education around fire safety, and smoke alarms. You can stay up to date on upcoming educational days by following the Port Alberni Fire Station facebook page.

Chief Mike Owens, has been Chief since 2019, he believes in the balance between tradition and progress. “As we grow we continue to move forward in technology, procedures, personnel, and continue to create a more diverse workforce.”

Today we understand more about the stresses that the firefighters face everyday. Now more than ever high importance is placed on creating a healthy culture with work, life, and balance. After every call the crew does a debrief in house, and if more is needed there are support programs in place. “I witnessed more trauma during my first week on the job than I had in my whole life,” said DC Cross. “The bell rings at a moment's notice, there is no time to prepare for what you might see, we go running into

the unknown," said McGifford, "and our goal is to get home safely everyday." Tim Pley, was with the firestation from 1990, until retired as Fire Chief in 2016, to this day Pley still recalls fires from his days on the job, "A house fire on Keeha Drive, which started as a stove top fire and quickly moved into the attic. What I witnessed in this house fire was the importance of resources coming early to a fire, and the difference it can make."

Over the last few years, the call volume in our community has increased about 2.5 times. In 2013, PAFD responded to a total of 1,137 calls whereas in 2023 they responded to 2,823 calls; so far in 2024, call volumes are up 20% from the same time last year. A decade ago medical calls represented less than 50% of the total call volume but that number has increased to 68% in 2023. Geddes shares, "how important it is to listen and understand the role of the fire department in our community." From when the bell rings at the firestation, the firefighters are out the door in under 80 seconds and on their way. And yes, they do still use the fire pole. "We train everyday, every shift. We never stop learning," said DC Cross. As the demands increase it is important to remember how to support our local fire department. If you see a firetruck coming with sirens on, please remember to pull over to the nearest shoulder and stop until they pass, if you are unable or don't have time to pull over, just stop in place. "It is important to remember that when you see the firetruck coming, we are

responding to someone's worst day and please be mindful of that," DC Cross reminds us.

It is important to be aware of fire safety around our homes; make a home escape plan, plan it and practice it regularly. Pley instills the importance of fire prevention, "taking the time to plan fire prevention in your home, and community will prevent unnecessary loss. This is the responsibility of every individual as well as the local government."



(Picture above) Port Alberni Firestation circa 1942
Photo Alberni Valley Museum PN22828



(Picture above) From left to right. Retired Chief David "Rusty" Phillips, Retired Chief Tim Pley, Chief Mike Owens, Retired Chief Pete Geddes, Retired Chief Lawrence McGifford. "What an aboutte honor it was to be apart of this reunion, and being apart to capture just a glimpse of the history of the Port Alberni Fire Station and the amazing crew that was apart of it over the years."
- Megan Warrender, Publisher and Founder.

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FAVOURITE PLACES IN THE ALBERNI VALLEY



My favourite place is Spruce Lake because I like to jump in and splash.
Evan, K.

My favourite place is the lake because the lake is where we go on the boat. I love to go tubing.
Mikayla, St. J.

My favourite place is a secret beach in the forest behind our house. I like to catch frogs and fish.
Ethan, K.

My favourite place is Blue Lake because it has waterfalls and waterfalls are cool. I love waterfalls.
Isaac, St. J.



My favourite place is the beach. My dad says it's a beautiful view. I like to play in the sand.
Thomas L., St. J.

My favourite place is the lake because I like to swim, play, play, and have a good time.
Tanner, St. J.

My favourite place is Spruce Lake where I get to spend time with Mommy, Daddy, and my siblings.
Ethan, K.

My favourite place is where I get to see my grandma, my grandpa they are so special to me.
Ethan, St. J.

My favourite place is Spruce Lake because we can see the water and beautiful trees.
Iris, St. J.

My favourite place is Spruce Lake because I like to go on the water.
Matt, St. J.

My favourite place is Port Alberni because we can play at the park for a long time and spend time with my family.
Ethan, K.

My favourite place is my house because we can spend time with our family like having a fire.
Theodor, St. J.

My favourite place is the Grand Tower because it was the first place we visited when we came to Port Alberni one year ago.
Dylan, St. J.



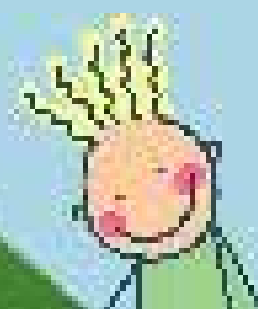
My favourite place is the beach because our family likes to have picnics and go swimming.
Youssef, St. J.

My favourite place is the pool because I like to go swimming.
James, St. J.

My favourite place is Blue Lake because we go swimming every summer. We can also play on the beach.
Michael R., St. J.

My favourite place is Spruce Lake because we can see the waterfalls, tubing, fishing, hiking and play at the beach together.
Iris, K.

My favourite place is the new boat where we can go tubing and go tubing.
Dylan, K.





ALBERNI DRUG & ALCOHOL PREVENTION SERVICES

ARTICLE WRITTEN BY HEATHER THOMSON

If you ask someone who has used the services of ADAPS Youth and Family Services, you will hear descriptions like remarkable, supportive, dedicated, progressive, caring, thoughtful, knowledgeable, accepting... That's just kind of how it is for ADAPS. Most people would rather not think about the fact that the Alberni Valley needs youth and family services like they have at ADAPS. But every community does, and the Alberni Valley is fortunate to have an organization that is ready to take on any challenge that comes their way.

ADAPS has been operating in the Valley since 2005, although the organization is not new, they have been offered under a slightly different name since the 1980s. In the past decade, ADAPS has seen remarkable success and expanded its service to a point where its name no longer offers people a true idea of what they do for youth and families here. Originally focused on preventative services for youth who struggled with alcohol or drugs, ADAPS now offers a variety of services focused on the growth and development of children and youth. Exactly what that looks like depends on the person who walks through the door.

"Our name touches on only a fraction of what we do," explains Debra Hamilton, ADAPS's executive director. "We work tirelessly behind the scenes to make a difference for the lives of young people in the Alberni Valley. Even when you think we are not involved, we probably are on some level."

ADAPS is a non-profit, charitable society offering preventative services that address social, health, and environmental factors and their effect on youth and family wellness. With the belief that they must focus on "resilience and wellness for children, youth, families, and community," ADAPS offers extensive education, intervention, and treatment programs in the Alberni Valley.

The ADAPS team values the intrinsic worth of everyone they work with and respect that they have their own lived and living experiences. In March, the Province of BC announced ADAPS was chosen to host a Foundry in the community. This will greatly expand the services they can offer youth. "We understand that life can feel isolating at times, but we are a safe place for youth and parents to go," Hamilton explains.

"People aren't all one thing. They are a combination of their lived experiences – life gets messy, and we are here for everyone."

The stigma is often that organizations like ADAPS only deal with marginalized youth. The team has that focus, and they convene youth-supporting and youth-led advisories and promote youth engagement. They run social events and youth peer support training. The team at ADAPS understands that parents are experts of their families and youth are experts of their own lives, and that sometimes makes the inclusion of both an essential part of the services ADAPS offers. Growing up has always been a tricky balancing act, and these days it is even more difficult to keep things in balance with increasing complexity in youth lives. ADAPS is seeing an increase in mental health concerns, and youth are experimenting with substances at earlier ages.

As the Alberni Valley changes, so does the needs of the community. ADAPS prides itself on responding to this changing community. They collaborate with the community to ensure rich and dynamic services for youth. They do this by promoting experiences of belonging for youth and families in the community, integrating the Circle of Courage framework so youth are present and have a voice. ADAPS is a forward-thinking organization that works hard to create maximum programming on tighter budgets, stagnant government funding, and increased operational costs so that it can still fully step up when the time comes.

The services ADAPS offers are as varied as the people who come through their doors. The main programs include SAIP (Sexual Abuse Intervention Program), Youth and Family Substance Use Counselling, Indicated Prevention and Intervention, CREW (Community, Resiliency, Experience, Wellness), Intensive Support and Engagement (ISE), Youth Wellness Counselling, harm reduction, overdose alertness, Gender Journeys, peer support training. The team is made up of eight skilled youth and family services professionals. "The broken and the strong come here – they come together and separately," Hamilton says. "So much strength comes through our doors. Sometimes it takes all of that strength just to show up, but when they do, we are here for them. And in return, we get to witness youth who are thriving after finding a place here where they can feel safe."

Although it is difficult to wrap up by the numbers, in 2023, 332 youth were referred to the core programs (ISE, Counselling and Prevention), 117 group sessions were delivered, 1,835 received counselling sessions, 452 youth, parents, and service providers participated in the events, education, and

Benjamin Moore
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WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES FOR YOUTH & FAMILIES IN THE VALLEY

awareness programs. ADAPS operates out of three separate offices, but they have a dream of someday housing all of their services under one roof. "With inflation, our costs for rent, utilities, transportation, food, and staff wages have increased and funding and donations are not keeping pace," explains Brent Ronning, chair of the board that governs ADAPS. "We are also seeing the province divert funding from non-profit organizations and increasing funding for government-based services. Youth and families need a choice to access quality services in the community as well."

Much of the work ADAPS does requires a relatively low profile in the community. That's a challenge, because people don't support organizations they don't understand or even know exists. ADAPS needs more support from the community and often doesn't have the time to ask. In the past couple of years, ADAPS has been the main beneficiary of the funds raised at

the Haunted Mill event. The support shown through this event goes a long way, but more donations are always needed. "We offer such a range of services and programs that any youth would be able to find something to connect with," explains Youth Services Manager Stacy Neary.

"ADAPS finds it challenging to engage the community in what we're doing because of some of the misconceptions of our services, and we can't put money into marketing ourselves because we need all of the resources we have on the front line," Hamilton says. "Somehow we have to shine a light on what we do while not forgetting we also have to show up for the people who need us."

If you are interested in learning more about ADAPS or donating, you can go to their website (www.ADAPS.org).

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Wash them twice if needed with refreshed, soapy water. We love adding the Mint Floor Wash to hot water for cleaning - it's a concentrated formula that is tough on dirt and odours and can be used to clean a variety of areas throughout your home. This amazing cleaner is available to buy locally at Pinto Goods.

The next step is crucial and you need the proper cloth for the job. Make sure this cloth is a microfibre window cloth, then using the hottest water you can stand, go over the windows at least once (but ideally twice). We love the Norwex Window Cloth for this step - shop it locally and support your favourite Norwex Rep!

Don't feel like you have to get all of your windows done in one day. Pick a room to start in and aim to get that room's windows completed over a weekend. Enjoy checking each room off your list and you'll be done in no time, basking in your streak-free windows!

Less is more! Our environment plays an important role in our mental wellness, and keeping a clean home, whether that's your bedroom, kitchen or yard, has a variety of health benefits, including improved mood and decreased anxiety. Start off by going through each room and eliminate the pieces that no longer make you happy. Whether they're broken or simply don't work with your current decor, be ruthless and just purge. It can be hard at first but it really does get easier as you go. The aesthetics of a neat and tidy home can enhance your mood and set you up for a great day!

Begin in your bedroom. "If you want to change the world, start off by making your bed" - Admiral McRaven. Making your bed helps to establish a sense of order and organization in the room where you begin your day - and sets the tone for the remainder of it. Beyond fluffing pillows and straightening the blankets, making your bed each morning carries numerous benefits for your mental, physical and emotional well-being.

As for the clutter on your dresser and nightstand, ask yourself: 'does this serve me?' If the answer is no, get rid of it. If it's in good condition - sell or donate, if not - recycle or garbage. It truly feels good to let some things go. It won't happen overnight but if you make that first small step, it will have a domino effect of big impacts.



DECLUTTERING

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ALBERNI VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Leaving A Legacy

The Alberni Valley Community Foundation was formed following a presentation by Lionel Wace, from the Okanagan Foundation, made at the Timberlodge in 1995. "Terry Whyte and Reverend Oliver Howard had arranged this meeting and I was fortunate to attend as representative of the Industrial Heritage Society. I liked the concept and accepted a position on the Board under the mentorship of those two individuals," said Hugh Grist, "We formed a Society the following year and started to raise funds." Vancouver Foundation had a matching \$25,000 for each of two years providing, The Alberni Valley Community Foundation did most of their investing through them. "We approached M&B who gave us \$10,000 for each of two years and then asked many businesses for \$150 each and had no trouble reaching the \$15,000 goal each year. So by 1998 we had a little more than \$100,000 and started making small grants in 1999."

The Alberni Valley Community Foundation is one of 191 members of Community Foundation of Canada (CFC),

probably the fastest growing sector of philanthropy. What makes a foundation different than other charities? The money received by the Foundation is not given directly to local charities, but invested. The returns on investment are then distributed within the Valley. During the last year, six deserving students received bursaries managed by the Foundation, seven charitable societies received grants from their permanent endowment funds and of course there are many groups who received discretionary funding last year.

Another area the Alberni Valley Foundation operates in the Valley is through The Vital Signs, which was first started by Waterloo Foundation and adopted by CFC as a national program, who provide the foundation with much of the information used in the publication. "We thought it would be a good idea in 2015 to publish our own to help us decide where to direct funds and increase our visibility in the community. It turned out to be a tremendous success and we have tried to produce one every two years," said Hugh Grist.

Written by Megan Warrender,
with Hugh Grist AVFC Chair

Established in 1988 The Alberni Valley Gaming Association (AVGA) successfully operated Dob City Bingo Hall in Port Alberni for many years, benefiting many nonprofits and charities in our community. In September 2007 the AVGA expanded its footprint and went on to own and operate Chances Rimrock Gaming Centre. In March of 2022, the AVGA sold the facility and business to the Coulson Group of Companies. Through the endowment fund held by the Alberni Valley Community Foundation, proceeds from the sale will continue to benefit the charitable sector of the local community for years to come. (From a media release in December 2023.)

"This will dramatically increase the investment income to the Foundation, and provide long lasting benefits to the charities in our community" said Chair Hugh Grist. The Alberni Valley Community Foundation uses their investment income each year to support local projects around the Valley. Charities apply once a year to be included in the annual distribution of funds. For more information please visit www.albernifoundation.ca

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