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WHERE LAND, WATER & CULTURE MEET

CLUTESI HAVEN MARINA

On the shores of the Somass River, where eagles soar and black bears roam, a once-underused portion of Clutesi Haven Marina is being reimagined through community, culture and collaboration.

The City of Port Alberni, in partnership with Tseshaht First Nation and Hupacasath First Nation and in coordination with the Port Alberni Port Authority (PAPA), is transforming a portion of the culturally significant Clutesi Haven Marina into a vibrant vendor village with an Indigenous focus—breathing new life into the site and laying the groundwork for a more inclusive and prosperous future.

“This isn’t just about revitalizing a space,” says Port Alberni Mayor Sharie Minions. “It’s about reconnecting people to the water, to each other and to the rich Indigenous culture that defines our region.”

Though the marina is bustling during the fishing season, the surrounding waterfront space remains underused for much of the year.

The lands are owned by the City but managed under long-term lease by PAPA, which oversees daily operations and existing seasonal vendors—including a small but popular group of food trucks that have run successfully for the past few years.

As the project takes shape, the marina’s grassy area will become a welcoming public space. Modified shipping containers (or “seacans”) will serve as commercial kiosks for local entrepreneurs. A wooden pergola will be repurposed as a stage for community events, music and storytelling. Nearby, a large covered seating area invites visitors to linger, enjoy a meal from new or existing vendors and take in the view, the water and the wildlife.

At the heart of the space is a strong cultural presence. Vibrant artwork by world-renowned Tseshaht artist Gordon Dick weaves Indigenous identity into the landscape, offering both a visual anchor and a respectful reminder of the traditional, unceded territory on which we gather.

“We want people to come here and feel the spirit of this place,” says Dick. “To learn, to share, to connect. That’s what this project is about.”

This transformation was made possible through the First Nations–Municipal Community Economic

Development Initiative (CEDI), a national program co-led by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers. Port Alberni, Tseshaht and Hupacasath joined the program in 2022 as part of a three-year pilot project.

CEDI supports First Nations and municipal governments in working together on shared economic development goals. Through a combination of facilitated workshops, relationship-building and project planning, the program creates space for meaningful dialogue and collaboration.

“The relationships are just as important as the project,” says Hupacasath Chief Councillor Brandy Lauder. “We’re learning how to work together differently—more openly, more respectfully—and that will have a ripple effects beyond this one project.”

The team sees Clutesi Haven’s transformation as just the first step in a larger vision for the waterfront. Future plans include expanding access to the river, supporting more small businesses and making the area a year-round gathering place for residents and visitors alike.

“It’s exciting to see how much is possible when we work together,” says Tseshaht Elected Chief Councillor

Wahmeesh (Ken Watts). “We’re building something that reflects who we are—and where we’re going.”

The project also reflects a broader shift happening in Port Alberni. As the city continues to evolve from its industrial roots, there’s a growing focus on reconciliation, cultural expression and placemaking.

“Clutesi Haven is just one piece of a larger story,” says Minions. “We’re working toward a vibrant, resilient waterfront community—one that honours the past, embraces the present and looks boldly to the future.”

As the summer sun warms and the sounds of conversation and laughter return to the marina, it’s clear something special is taking shape at Clutesi Haven. This is more than a physical transformation—it’s a transformation of relationships, of opportunity and of what it means to truly belong.

And for the people of Port—and the generations yet to come—that’s a vision worth building.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/BCEDA

The City of Port Alberni, Tseshaht First Nation and Hupacasath First Nation won two 2025 B.C. Economic Development Awards for their collaboration on the Clutesi Haven Marina revitalization project.

The local partnership won the community 10,000 to 25,000 population category, as well as the People’s Choice award!



FISHING IN THE ALBERNI VALLEY

Photo Credit Chris Istace ZenSeekers

The Alberni Valley has been well known for its impressive salmon runs for many decades. It attracts anglers from all over the world.

Written By: Heather Thomson

From when the sockeye first start running in the spring to when the last coho, chum, or chinook clears Papermill Dam in the fall, anglers come here to try their luck at catching the big one. From Port Alberni, fishers can chase the schools all through the Barkley Sound and right into the mouth of the Somass River.

When I first moved to Port Alberni and wrote about salmon fishing for the AV Times from an academic understanding. The first major thing I wrote was my thesis on salmon reproduction for my honours Bachelor of Science. So, one day I got a call from Bob Cole. He passionately explained that I didn't know what I was talking about when it came to salmon. I explained my background, and he gently said that I now live in the Salmon Capital of the World, and I needed some education on the subject. He arranged for me to meet Jake Leyenaar – Port Alberni's fishing guru. The ensuing adventure taught me more than I needed to ever know about salmon fishing.

According to the Island Fisherman Magazine, Port Alberni earned its reputation as the Capital of the World because of its reliable salmon runs. Anglers could almost guarantee a fish when they dropped their lines somewhere in our 48-kilometre Inlet. It stated that fishers could start catching sockeye in late spring, and by mid-July the chinook and coho arrive, and fishing lasts until mid-September. "Many anglers fish chinooks in the morning, then sockeye in the afternoon," the article stated.

It is believed that as many as one-million sockeye pass through our waters every year, depending on the run. When you add to that the chinook and coho run, that number may double.

CEO of the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce, Jolleen Dick, had this response when asked what makes Port Alberni the Salmon Capital of the World.



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“The Alberni Valley is home to four species of salmon that have been stewarded by the Nuu-chah-nulth of peoples since time in memorial. It takes collaboration on management of the resource for everyone to enjoy, whether it’s for food or for sport. There are so many opportunities to dip a rod in the Inlet or a river.”

Both Hupacasath and Tseshaht First Nations have the aboriginal right to harvest in the Somass River system. According to James LaFlamme, Tseshaht Fisheries manager, the combined First Nation fishery in Port Alberni represents between \$5 to \$8 million, depending on the run. Combine that with the sportfishing industry, and it’s easy to see how important salmon are to the Alberni Valley’s economy.

Dick pointed out that a collaborative approach is needed in order to continue to benefit from the salmon fishing industry. Part of what makes the Alberni Valley strong in this sector is its focus on regenerating the populations of salmon. Enhancing our streams, lakes, rivers, and Inlet takes the whole community. The City of Port Alberni acknowledges “urban development and growth over the past century has put a strain on local marine species and habitat within certain streams and waterways.” For this reason and because it’s an “integral source of income, recreation, tourism, and food” for the community, the city has worked with local groups and individuals on urban stream enhancement and restoration projects, like Dry Creek, Kitsuksis Creek, and Rogers Creek. West Coast Aquatics also works to enhance our local streams. They work with groups like the Alberni Valley Enhancement Association and the Alberni Salmon Enhancement Society, which began the incubation and fry stocking on Rogers, Kitsuksis, and Beaver Creeks 1979. These groups support projects like the Jake Leyenaar Hatchery at McLean Mill, which releases tens of thousands of coho and chum fry every year.

Once known for the largest pink salmon spawning channel in North America, Robertson Creek Hatchery is now a coho and chinook salmon enhancement facility. It works together with local First Nations as well as commercial sein and gillnet fisheries to enhance salmon stocks in the area.

Many Nuu-chah-nulth Nations have their own hatcheries and enhancement projects, and all are dedicated to ensuring enhancement is a key focus in their fishery.

Every year, targets are set at an area round table that includes both the commercial and recreational fishery. The total allowable catch is set based on escapement into the Sproat and Stamp Rivers. Together, this collaborative effort is ensuring Port Alberni will have salmon for generations to come.

In addition to claiming the salmon capital fame, Port Alberni is also Canada’s Ultimate Fishing Town. This title cannot be disputed, because we earned it fair and square through a nationwide contest by the World Fishing Network in 2010. It came with a \$25,000 prize and bragging rights that may never end. To ensure everyone knew what we were, in 2012, the prize money

helped fund a large sign at the bottom of Johnston Road announcing this honour to the world.

A driving force behind this win was local fisher Carolyn Jasken. “I believe the designation can be summed up quite easily. It’s what binds us together and stood the test of time,” Carolyn stated. “Our pride in our history, culture, and roots were primary factors that led to the community achieving the designation. It highlighted our rich fishing culture that challenged all to reconcile at the harvest round table in order to collectively protect our cherished resource before reconciliation was a thing.” She added that it is time to build new infrastructure in order to diversify and support the industry’s growing needs in the community as an economic driver. So, what makes a community the Salmon Capital of the World? Well it’s an unwavering belief that it’s true and the dedication to work together to keep it that way.

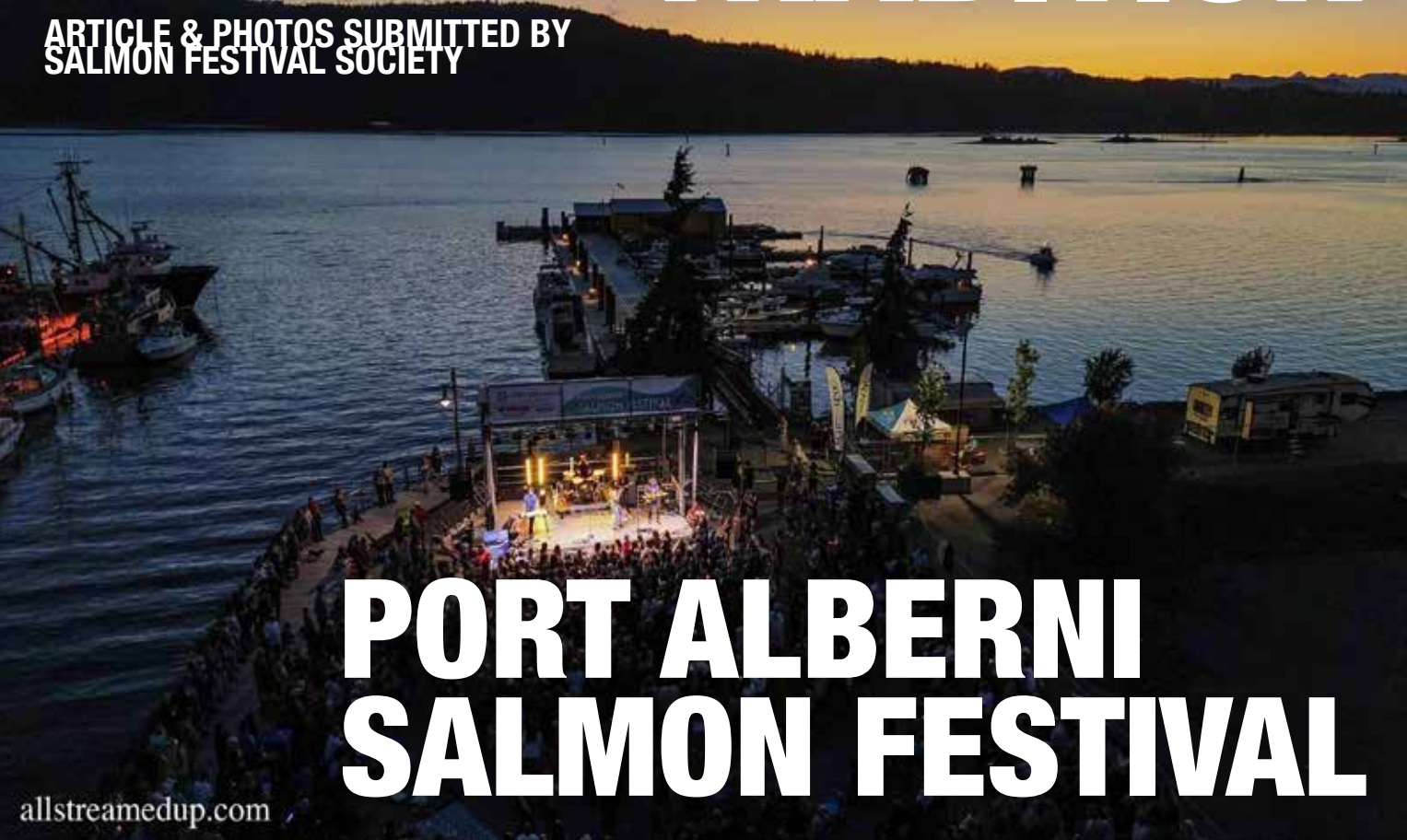


Photo Credit Chris Istace ZenSeekers



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PORT ALBERNI SALMON FESTIVAL

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If you grew up in Port Alberni, recently moved here, or have spent any time here over the Labour Day weekend—you likely know that the end of summer means more than just back-to-school shopping and the last few dips in Sproat Lake. For decades, Labour Day in the Alberni Valley has meant one thing: Salmon Festival and Derby.

The Port Alberni Salmon Festival and Derby has been reeling in anglers and families from across the Island and beyond for generations. What started as a grassroots gathering of passionate fishers has grown into one of the most beloved traditions in our town, celebrating everything we value: community, culture, and the mighty salmon.

The roots of the festival go deep—much like the Alberni Inlet itself. Port Alberni has always been known as one of the best salmon fishing spots on the west coast. The Derby was born out of that reputation, bringing together local fishers and out-of-towners to test their luck and skill on the waters. During the festival's heyday, as many as 4,000 people would hit the Inlet, lines in the water and hopes high.

Like any long-standing tradition, the festival has had to adapt with the times. Originally based at Clutesi Haven Marina, the event eventually shifted over to a different Port Alberni Port Authority facility, Tyee Landing. Between the new location and the Harbour Quay area, there's more access to space and facilities to keep the waterfront festival vibe going strong.

Like so many other community events, Salmon Fest hit pause. The festival wasn't able to happen in full form since 2019, mostly due to COVID-19, a dwindling lack of volunteers, and financial strains. The spirit of the event lived on in 2020, thanks to The Alberni Valley Tyee Club taking over the derby with the hopes that one day a festival would re-grow around it. Various community members stepped up over the past couple of years to offer events or live music at Harbour Quay at the same time as the derby, to keep the interest alive.

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In 2024, after almost half a decade away, a more formal effort was made to resurrect a Salmon Festival Society so the Port Alberni Salmon Festival made a full return—and not just a quiet one. Back at Tyee Landing, the festival relaunched with a renewed group of volunteers wanting to keep the spirit and tradition of the festival alive. Their efforts were a huge success and all weekend people could be found enjoying the festivities. Families strolling the pier, kids playing in the bouncy castles, people shopping, and old friends reuniting to swap fishing tales and make new memories.

It brought back some of the most-loved traditions of the old days while adapting to present day challenges like lack of funding and the continued trend of lack of volunteers. Still, the beer tent was hopping with local beverages from Twin City Brewing, Dog Mountain Brewing, Antidote Distilling, and Cherry Creek Cidery.

The live entertainment stage rocked all weekend, between the beloved Alberni's Got Talent contest, and Saturday's Aug 31st headliner, Cameron Whitcomb, a top 20 American Idol contestant with a significant fan base following and familial roots to Port Alberni. Tyee Landing was a gorgeous sight lit up by the 5 Acre Stage over a large crowd enjoying a summer evening together alongside the Alberni Inlet. What makes Salmon Fest so special isn't just the fishing, although that's a big part of it. It's the feeling it creates—the way it brings people together. Whether you're an avid angler, a family with kids, or just someone looking for a good time on the waterfront, there's something at the Salmon Festival for everyone. The Salmon Festival Society's mission is to make Salmon Festival an affordable and family-friendly festival that showcases and celebrates the finest food, beverages, music, and art of the Alberni Valley.

It's also about honouring where we live. The salmon is more than just a fish here. It's part of our identity.



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As the Port Alberni Salmon Festival heads into its next chapter, there's a lot of excitement—and a lot of gratitude. It's not easy keeping a tradition like this alive for decades, but thanks to volunteers, sponsors, and passionate community members, it keeps going strong.

The festival still relies on generous sponsorships from community partners to help make it happen. For 2025 Port Boat House has signed on as Gold Sponsors, and Alberni Power Marine and Breakers Marine have stepped up as Bronze Sponsors. They are shining examples of showing up for our community and we're really grateful for their contributions to keep the festival alive and growing year after year.

This year is no different and the festival is still looking for more volunteers, sponsorships, and donations big or small. You can also help spread the word to your friends, family, and neighbours about all the ways to support the Salmon Festival. Visit <https://salmonfestival.ca/>

The festival organizers have big plans for the future: more entertainment, more family-friendly activities, and maybe even bigger fish. But at its heart, Salmon Festival will always be about celebrating who we are as a town.

Because here in Port Alberni, when the salmon run, the whole community runs with them.
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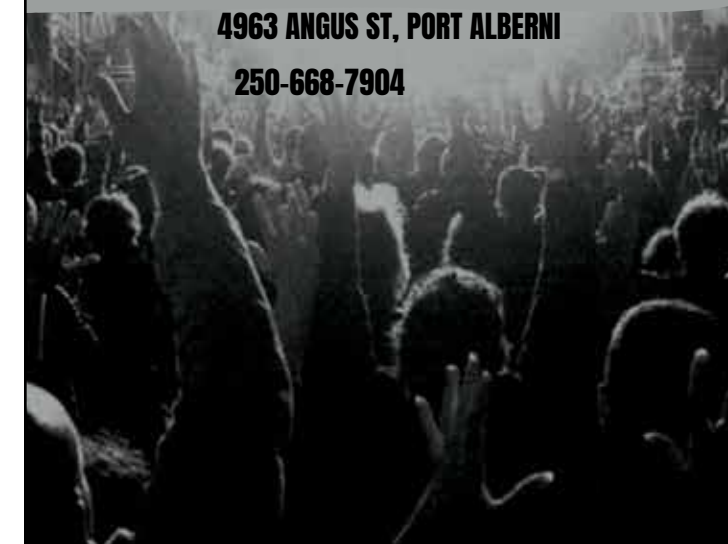


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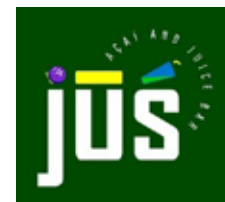
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TAKE A HIKE

Discover the Natural Beauty of Stamp River Provincial Park



Just a short 15-minute drive down Beaver Creek Road from Port Alberni, Stamp River Provincial Park is a hidden gem on Vancouver Island, perfect for campers, hikers, nature lovers, and anyone seeking a peaceful escape into the wilderness. Whether you're planning a quick afternoon adventure or a weekend camping getaway, Stamp River offers something for everyone, all set within a stunning landscape of lush forests, cascading waterfalls, and the tranquil Stamp River itself.

An Outdoor Paradise

The park is a haven for day hikers and nature enthusiasts, with well-maintained trails weaving through towering coniferous forests and running alongside the roaring river. The natural scenery is breathtaking in every season, and several trails lead to viewpoints overlooking the Stamp Falls, where the river dramatically drops over a series of volcanic rock ledges. Visitors can enjoy the soothing sounds of rushing water, the sight of moss-draped trees, and the refreshing scent of the forest.

For those looking to relax, the riverbanks provide the perfect setting. Bring a blanket and a picnic, or just sit and

listen to the water as it flows past—ideal for an afternoon of peaceful reflection. During the summer, calm sections of the river offer spots to dip your feet or even go for a quick swim to cool off after a hike.

A Spectacle of Nature: The Salmon Run

One of the most captivating natural events at Stamp River Provincial Park is the annual salmon run, which occurs from late summer into the fall. Thousands of Pacific salmon—primarily coho and sockeye—congregate in the pools below Stamp Falls before making their way upstream to spawn. This incredible display of endurance and instinct is made possible in part by a fish ladder, which assists the salmon in navigating the powerful current and rocky terrain of the falls.

Visitors can witness this awe-inspiring migration from multiple viewpoints along the riverside trail. Well-placed interpretive signs provide fascinating information about the salmon lifecycle, the fish ladder system, and the ecological significance of the event, making it an educational experience for visitors of all ages.



Wildlife and Safety

Where there are salmon, there are often black bears—drawn by the promise of an easy, protein-rich meal. While it's thrilling to know you're sharing the landscape with these magnificent creatures, it's important to stay bear-aware. Always keep a safe distance if you do encounter wildlife, and make sure to leash dogs at all times while on the trails. Carrying bear spray and making noise as you hike can also help reduce the chance of surprise encounters.

Year-Round Appeal

While the park is especially popular in the warmer months for hiking and salmon viewing, each season brings its own magic. In summer, the sun filters through the canopy of trees, illuminating the mossy forest floor and warming the riverside rocks—perfect for picnicking and casual swims. In autumn, the forest explodes with color, and the sound of leaves crunching underfoot adds to the sensory experience as the river swells with rain and salmon begin their journey.

Winter offers a more rugged and raw beauty. Though the trails can be wet and muddy, they reward the adventurous with stunning views of the powerful river, now running at full force through the narrow canyon and over the falls.

Fog often settles in the forest, giving it a mystical, almost storybook quality. Spring brings new life, with blooming wildflowers, increased wildlife activity, and the calming lull of a river beginning to slow after winter's thaw.

Camping at Stamp River

For those who wish to stay overnight, the park features a well-maintained campground nestled in the woods, providing a rustic but comfortable base for deeper exploration. Wake up to birdsong, the smell of pine, and the distant rumble of the river. Campsites are typically available on a first-come, first-served basis, and include basic amenities such as picnic tables, fire rings, and pit toilets. It's an ideal spot for families, couples, or solo travelers looking to disconnect and recharge in nature.

Whether you're seeking adventure, tranquility, education, or simply a change of pace, Stamp River Provincial Park delivers in every way. With its rich natural history, diverse wildlife, and breathtaking scenery, this park is a must-visit destination—just minutes from town, but a world away from the hustle and bustle of daily life. No matter the season, Stamp River is the perfect place to immerse yourself in the raw, unspoiled beauty of Vancouver Island.

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Friday, November 7th 2025 – 7:00 pm – Payadora
 Payadora is an award-winning world music ensemble that performs original and arranged songs, ballads, waltzes and tangos

Friday, January 23rd 2026 – 7:00 pm – Buzz Brass
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Saturday, April 11th 2026 – 7:00 pm
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WomeninBUSINESS



The CEO of Self: Emotional Intelligence Is the Quiet Edge Women in Business Are Finally Claiming!

By Jennie Potter

She mastered the funnel. She closed the deal. She nailed the keynote. But when she sat still for a moment—something felt off. Not broken. Not bad. Just... disconnected. It's a quiet moment many women in business know well. We're brilliant at building. We're capable beyond words.

But behind the scenes, some of the most powerful women I know still ask themselves: Why do I hesitate right before the leap? Why does visibility feel like exposure? Why do I feel like I have to earn my worth—even now?

These are not questions of strategy. They're questions of emotional alignment. And more of us are finally asking them out loud.

We've Built the Business. Now We're Building Ourselves.

There's a new wave rising in women's leadership—not louder, just deeper. A quiet revolution where emotional intelligence isn't a "soft skill"... It's the power move. The women I coach and collaborate with aren't lacking success.

They're asking better questions: What am I holding onto that no longer fits? What emotion is driving this decision? Who am I becoming underneath the pressure? We're not just pivoting brands or scaling offers.

We're recalibrating our internal setpoints—shifting the emotional thermostats that determine how much success, love, peace, and visibility we allow ourselves to receive. Because we've learned that real freedom isn't found in the next milestone. It's found in being emotionally congruent with the life we're building.

Emotion as Strategy

Let's name it: Women have been taught to override emotion in order to succeed. To hold it in. Push it down. Smile through it. Even when our intuition screams this isn't working. Even when our body says slow down. But there's another way. What if emotion wasn't something to manage—but something to mine?

What if we built our lives from the inside out? Women are waking up to the idea that unprocessed emotions aren't personal flaws. They're just residue from old

stories. Stories that can be cleared. Patterns that can be interrupted. And when they are, the shifts are often instant.


Suddenly you say what you meant to say. You launch without waiting. You raise the price, write the book, walk into the room like you belong—because finally, you feel it.

Celebrating the Quiet Work That Changes Everything

This is the work I see women doing every day. Not just building companies—but dismantling old conditioning. Not just chasing goals—but pausing to ask, Is this aligned with who I am now?

They are learning how to notice the emotional loop, clear the static, and choose a new path. They are making space for joy, intuition, and self-trust. They are creating success without self-sacrifice. It may not always look flashy from the outside. But it is powerful. It is revolutionary. And it is worthy of celebration. Because when a woman comes home to herself, the world shifts a little.


And when a whole generation of us does? Game over.



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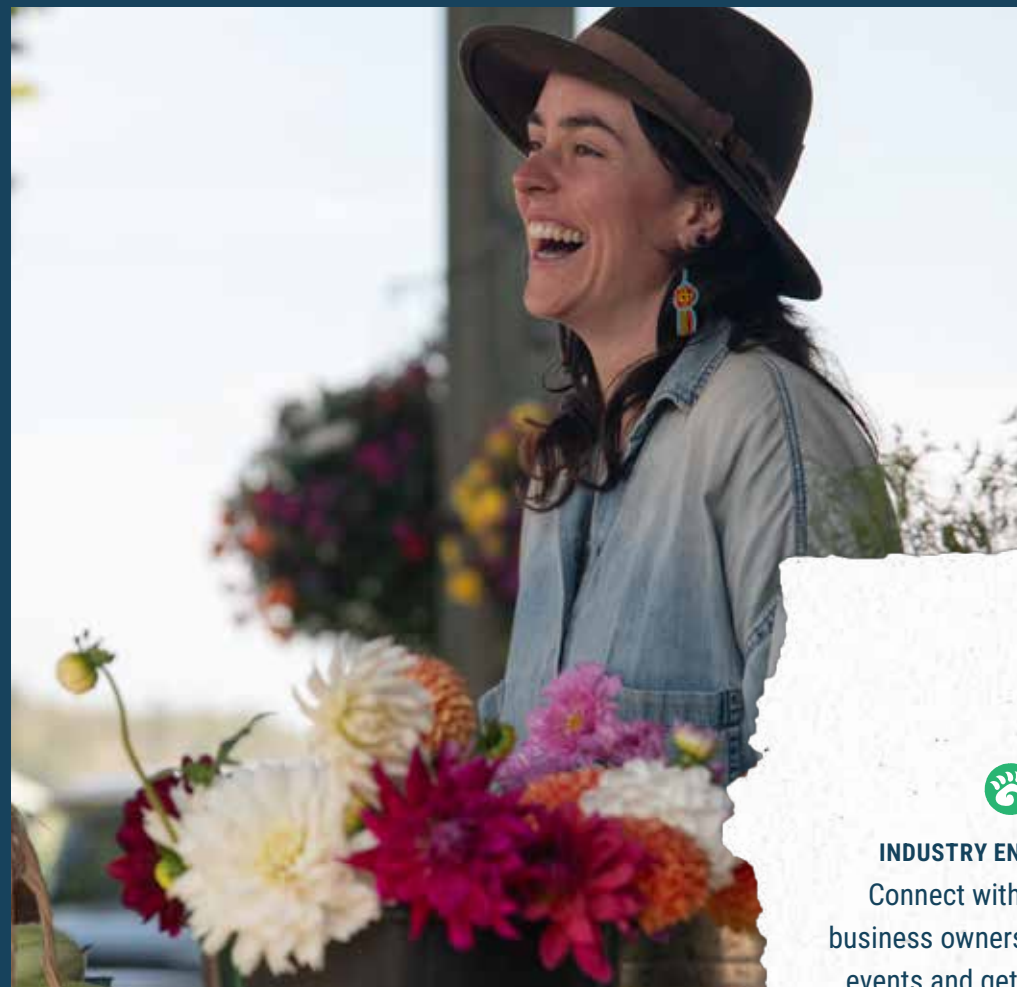
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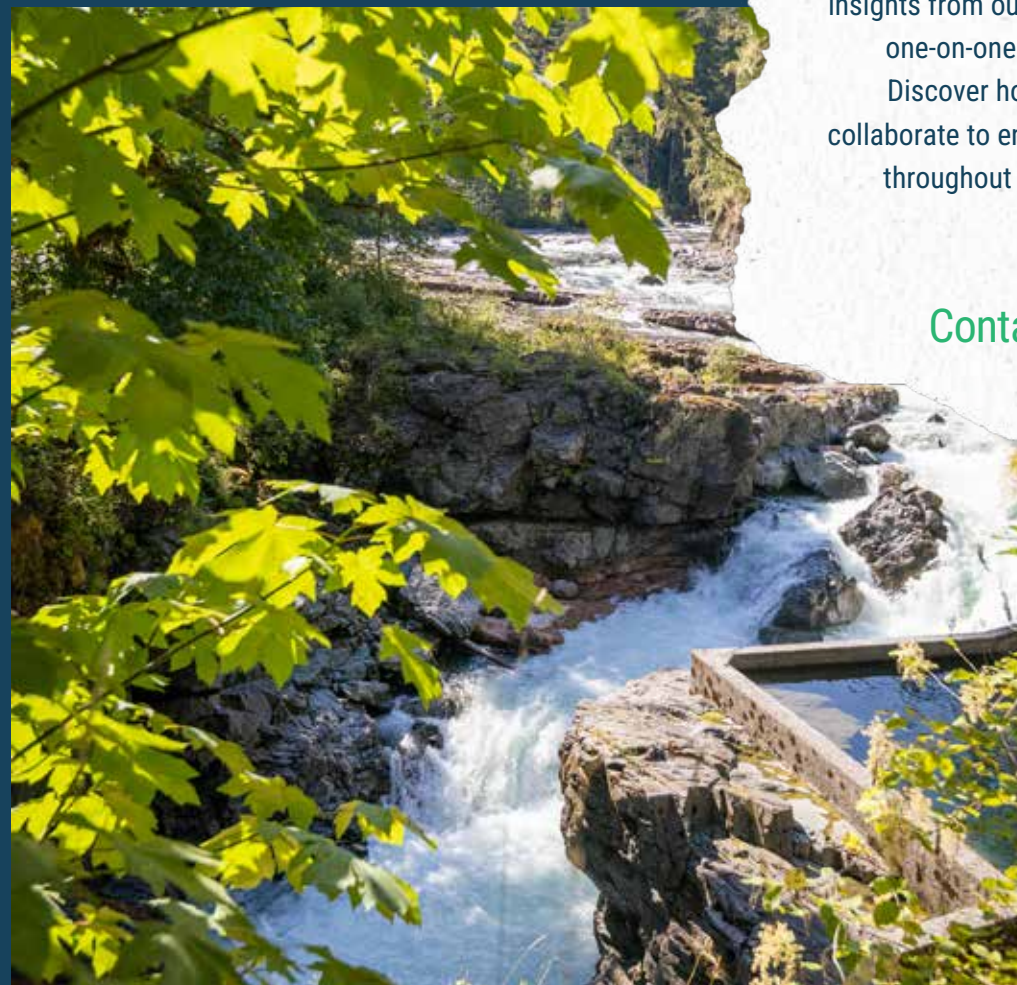
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alberni Women in business



ALYSSA ALARIE Sandy Paws Pet Salon

I'm a dog groomer offering personalized care and convenience for pets and their owners. I bring over eight years of grooming experience and am currently working toward my Master Groomer certification. As a newer face in the Port Alberni grooming community, I'm excited to build lasting relationships with local pet owners and their furry companions. I specialize in full grooming services for dogs of all breeds and sizes, and I aim to make the experience as stress-free as possible by offering pick-up and drop-off options. I'm passionate about making pets look and feel their best, all while ensuring a calm and comfortable environment. I was the Reader Choice Award Winner of Best Dog Groomer in Port Alberni this year! Whether it's a simple nail trim or a full makeover, I take pride in delivering quality, care, and convenience.

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OLESIA MATSAI Tattoo Artist at Mudge Barber & Tattoo Co.

Hi, I'm Oli (short for Olesia, pronounced Ollie), originally from Ukraine. I started tattooing in 2016 after moving to Prague, inspired by a tattooed friend and my lifelong love for art. With a background in fashion design and years spent painting and drawing, tattooing felt like a natural evolution. My style blends dark florals, geometric elements, and illustrative textures, combining bold lines with touches of realism and fantasy. I focus on detail and always aim to create something unique for each client. After years in big cities, my fiancé and I opened Mudge Barber & Tattoo Co. in Port Alberni, drawn by its beauty and strong sense of community. You'll find a welcoming, creative space in the back of the barbershop—perfect for both first-timers and seasoned tattoo lovers.

@olesia.m.tattoo • 3092 Third Ave • mudgebarberco.com



KRISTA WELLS Noteable Music

Krista is the co-owner of Noteable Music, a welcoming, community-centered music store, and manages its thriving lesson center where students of all ages explore their musical creativity in an inclusive and supportive environment. In addition to her work in piano and voice education, Krista is a dedicated therapeutic practitioner who provides compassionate support to trans youth, their families, and individuals navigating grief and loss. With a unique blend of empathy, humour, creativity, and clinical insight, Krista fosters healing spaces where people feel seen, safe, and empowered. Her dual roles reflect a deep commitment to nurturing well-being—whether through artistic growth and expression, emotional resilience, or personal transformation. Outside of her professional work, Krista enjoys gardening, visiting beaches, and spending time with her two teens and the family pets.

250- 724 - 6683 • 4545 Gertrude St • noteablemusic.ca



ATHENA JEFFS Heart to Heart & Phoenix Acro Cheer

Growing up locally gave Athena a true love for this community . She is inspired to help port alberni grow. By opening Heart to Heart Diagnostics - an additional option for health care testing, and Phoenix Acrobatics and Cheer - an additional option of recreation for port alberni's youth. She believes both businesses provide variety and accessibility to PortAlberni residents. Athena has big dreams for both businesses and is thankful for every individual who helps make the dreams possible by supporting her ventures

hearttoheartdiagnostics.ca • phoenixacrobatics.com



ALISON ANDERSON Marigold Montessori School

With over 20 years of experience working with children across cultures, communities, and abilities, this school is the heart of my lifelong passion for child-centered education. I grew up attending an alternative school in Victoria, studied and taught abroad, and worked in both Montessori and Indigenous learning environments. These experiences deepened my belief in respectful, inclusive education that follows the child's natural curiosity. After earning my Montessori teacher training in 2005 and Early Childhood Education Certificate in 2024, I was ready to open Marigold Montessori School. To create a place where children thrive, families feel supported, and wonder is part of every day. Opening this fall, Marigold Montessori School will run Tuesday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., offering a nurturing Montessori curriculum for pre k and Kindergarten.

www.marigoldmontessori.com

NICOLE UZELMAN PAACL Executive Director

Reflecting on my journey with PAACL, I'm deeply grateful for the incredible mentors and colleagues who have supported and inspired me—from my early days as a support worker to my current role as Executive Director. This path has shaped me both personally and professionally, and I'm proud to be part of an organization committed to providing person-centered supports and services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. At PAACL, diversity, inclusion, and growth aren't just values—they're the foundation of our work. It's been especially meaningful to lead alongside a strong team of women who uplift one another and contribute to lasting change. As we continue to serve our community, I'm honoured to celebrate the vital role non-profits play—not only in delivering services, but as dynamic, values-driven businesses that help build a future where everyone belongs.

paacl.ca





SUSAN BEHEM Clean It Up

Driven by a deep passion for creating calm, organized spaces, Susan is the force behind Clean It Up, a trusted name in residential and commercial cleaning services in Port Alberni. Whether she's transforming a busy family home or refreshing a professional workspace, Susan brings care, consistency, and heart to every job. Her dedication is reflected in the loyal client base she's built and the heartfelt feedback she receives—messages that inspire her to keep growing the business while giving back to the community she loves. As a proud mother of three, Susan balances entrepreneurship with motherhood, spending her free time exploring adventures and creating lasting memories with her children. With Clean It Up, Susan isn't just cleaning spaces—she's helping families and professionals breathe a little easier every day.

250-206-2623 • ciu.residentialcleaning@gmail.com



JENNIFER KLASSEN
Santosha Wellness & Beauty

Jennifer Klassen is the heart and hands behind Santosha Wellness & Beauty, a sanctuary for holistic skincare and soulful self-care built on the belief that true beauty begins within. A passionate advocate for slow beauty and intentional living, Jennifer sources organic, high-vibrational products that support skin health without compromising the earth. The wellness services offered at Santosha blend natural skincare rituals with intuitive massage and energy work to create deeply nourishing experiences for body, mind, and spirit.

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CHERYL MACLEAN Investment
Advisor & Insurance Broker

Locally owned and proudly serving the community for over 28 years in the financial services industry. I'm passionate about what I do—helping individuals, families, and small businesses when they need it most. Whether it's disability, life, critical illness, or retirement planning, I provide tailored financial solutions that bring peace of mind. I also offer group benefits to support and protect small businesses and their employees. What sets me apart is my hands-on, personalized service. I work directly with insurance companies on your behalf—especially during the claims process—so you can focus on what truly matters: your health, your family, and your recovery.

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WomeninBUSINESS



DENAYE MELENIUS Realtor ®

My name is Denaye Melenius (née Mercer) and I am a local Real Estate agent in the Alberni Valley. I was born and raised in the Valley and have been in Real Estate for over 5 years now. I absolutely love sharing my passion for the valley and helping my clients buy, sell, & invest in our beautiful piece of paradise. I offer modern, personalized real estate services and I pride myself in providing the highest degree of loyalty and care for my clients. Alongside my real estate business, I am an active community member and busy mother of teens. In my free time you will usually find me outdoors enjoying all that our Valley has to offer. If you have ANY questions at all regarding Buying, Selling or investing in Port Alberni, I would love to be of service to you, or anyone you know needing Real Estate services.

778-977-5806 • denayemelenius@gmail.com • denaye.ca



CASSIE PROUTEN Vibe
Publications

Cassie Prouten is a passionate community connector and dedicated advocate for local businesses in Port Alberni. Cassie thrives on building genuine relationships and supporting local entrepreneurs by helping them share their businesses. Her love for community, and small business shines through every issue of Valley Vibe. Outside of work, Cassie leads a full and active life—she enjoys mountain biking the local trails with her family and finds joy in raising chickens at home. Her balance of creativity, connection, and hands-on living makes her a truly inspiring woman in business. Cassie's warm personality, dedication, and drive to see others succeed have made her a valued and well-loved presence in the local business scene.

778-421-6055 • sales@vibemediagroup.ca • vibemediagroup.ca

SANDIE SCOTT D'Sign Guy & Gal

I am a transplant to Port Alberni 15 years ago when I met and married one of Port's finest bachelors. Seven years ago, we started with D'Sign Guy & Gal and it has kept us busy ever since. We are a custom sign shop offering digital prints and cut vinyl. We sell signs, sandwich boards, banners, company vehicle logos, lit sign facings, channel lettering, digital sign boards and stickers of all sorts. At times we are challenged by "crafty" projects such as replacing decals on scale trains or BMX bikes. We have met so many wonderful people and look forward to helping you achieve your projects. We design or you send us your print ready graphic design. Let us sign you up!

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JESSICA MCGREGOR The Peak 93.3

Jessica McGregor is a dynamic force in both the business and nonprofit sectors. As an Account Executive at The Peak 93.3, she brings a keen understanding of both radio and digital marketing to local businesses and organizations, helping to grow their brand and expand their reach. Jessica also serves as President of the Salmon Festival Society, where she helps drive one of the community's most cherished annual events. In addition to her corporate and nonprofit work, she is the proud Owner of Western Coast Clothing, a modern Western Clothing brand that is making waves all over Canada with their fashion-forward Western Trends. Through each of her roles, Jessica exemplifies innovation, community connection, business growth, and a strong entrepreneurial drive. Reach out to Jessica today to book a complimentary marketing strategy session.

250-465-9848 • Jessica.mcgregor@pattisonmedia.com • www.westerncoastclothing.ca





HANNAH POTTER Social Media Manager & Content Creator

With a heart rooted in community and creativity, Hannah Potter is passionate about helping small businesses thrive. As a dedicated social media manager and content creator, her mission is simple: to grow your business in a way that authentically reflects you. She's driven by a deep respect for local entrepreneurs and the unique value they bring to their communities—because behind every small business is a real story, a real passion, and real people. Her journey has been one of growth—both personally and professionally—as she's built her business on authenticity, connection, and results. Whether you're launching, rebranding, or ready to scale, Hannah brings a mix of insight, energy, and heart to every project. She's here to serve, support, and celebrate your wins—big or small. Your business deserves to shine online—and Hannah is here to make that happen, your way.

carmanahmedia@gmail.com



LISA CLYDESDALE Clydesdale Automotive

Lisa was born and raised in the beautiful Alberni Valley with a deep love for the outdoors. Lisa has two children, and a husband who together they own and operate Clydesdale Automotive for the past 13 years. When Lisa isn't helping run the business, she loves to spend her time hiking, swimming and dancing!

250-720-3836 • 5047 Southgate Rd. • clydesautomotive.ca

WomeninBUSINESS

JENNIE POTTER Best Selling Author

Jennie Potter is a Recalibration Coach, bestselling author of Self-Sabotage No More, and international speaker. She helps women identify and release emotional blocks, sabotage beliefs, and subconscious limits so they can realign with their highest potential. Jennie leads clients to release hidden sabotage and rise into the most aligned, empowered version of themselves. She lives in Port Alberni with her husband, Dave Potter, owner of Totem Tree Service.

250-897-4848 • jennie.potter@hotmail.com • www.jenniepotter.com



PHEONIX The Vibe Vault

My name is Pheonix, and I'm the creator of The Vibe Vault—a bohemian, festival-inspired thrift shop born from a deep love of the extraordinary. What began in 2022 as a simple thrifting side hustle soon became a creative awakening. I fell in love with spending my days searching for out-of-the-ordinary pieces that felt enchanting and one-of-a-kind. I began dressing in a way that lit me up from the inside out—turning style into a ritual of self-expression. Slowly, I started to believe in my artistic eye. By 2023, I was making a living selling handpicked treasures online. The following year, I began designing jewelry, upcycling clothing, and dreaming even bigger. In 2025, I worked my first market and festival—in Mexico! That trip made everything clear: I wanted to open my own festival shop. Now, in partnership with West Hump Gear Exchange, we're bringing that dream to life—opening our first creative space in Port.

250-258-3198 • Unit 112 - 5405 Argyle St • thevibevault.ca



CAMILLA RUSHTON Notary Public Robbins Notary

I offer non-contentious legal services as part of an exceptional team at Robbins Notaries. Notaries in BC offer assistance with Wills, Powers of Attorney, Representation Agreements, Health Care Directives, Residential Real Estate Purchases/Sales/Mortgages, including a variety of notarizations (travel consent letters, statutory declarations, affidavits, and more). I am also on the Board of Directors at Sage Haven Society, which offers local housing and support for women and children. I have been looking for a place to lay my roots, and Port Alberni has welcomed me with open arms. My passions are exploring nature, going on adventures with the dogs, helping others, and constantly learning. With a focus on community and helping others, my personal and professional passions can merge by working for Robbins Notaries in Port Alberni.

778-421-8955 • 3245 Third Ave • portalberninotary.ca



AMANDA & TANYA VAN DEN BROEK Island Tropics Tanning

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250-723-2171 • 4574 Elizabeth St. • FB IslandTropicsTanning



ROSANNE DOIRON Realtor ®

Born and raised in Port Alberni, I'm a proud Valley local whose journey has always been about passion, perseverance, and people. I spent 40 years in the beauty industry—14 of those as a successful salon owner—helping women feel confident and empowered. Now in my fourth year as a licensed Realtor and certified Senior Real Estate Specialist (SRES®), I bring that same heart and dedication to real estate. Whether it's a first-time buyer, a growing family, or a senior resizing, I'm with my clients from day one—and often well beyond. I love every minute of what I do. Real estate isn't just about property—it's about guiding people through big life transitions with trust and care. For me, it's not just business—it's about Connecting Hearts and Homes.

250-723-5666 • 4201 Johnston Rd. • rosannerealestate.ca





MEGAN WARRENDER Valley Vibe

Raised in the Alberni Valley, Megan is passionate about showcasing why Port Alberni truly is the best place to live. Starting the Valley Vibe and Neighbourhood Welcome program eight years ago. Over the years, Megan has been involved in the community both on a business and personal level. Megan has a deep passion for connecting our community, and showcasing the people, business and sights all around us everyday that we might miss. “Every magazine feels like a treasure hunt, rediscovering the history of our community and showcasing great people.” Megan continues to expand her company into the rest of B.C. and share her passion with everyone on her team. “My goal is for the people within their communities to be excited about where they live.”

megan@vibemediagroup.ca • vibemediagroup.ca

TERRY DEAKIN INEO

Terry Deakin has been a proud Port Alberni business owner for nearly 27 years. A self-described Socialpreneur, she operates five social enterprises under INEO Employment Services and is a shareholder in Alberni Valley Media, home of The Scoop on Port Alberni. Deeply rooted in the community, Terry has raised her family here and is now passing her passion for purpose-driven work on to her daughter and granddaughter. Her commitment to economic, social, and environmental well-being is reflected in everything she does. Terry currently serves as President of the Arrowsmith Rotary Club, Past President of the Chamber of Commerce, and is part of the committee advocating for Port Alberni to become a Host City for FIFA 2026. Her personal journey through addiction and recovery has fueled her passion for community building and personal development, inspiring others to rise from challenge to purpose.

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PIONEER WOMEN OF THE VALLEY

A LOOK BACK ON THE EARLY DAYS OF THE ALBERNI VALLEY

All research courtesy of the Alberni District Historical Society (ADHS)

Did you know that October is Women's History month? We, at the Archives, wanted to put a spotlight on some of the Pioneer women, who usually came from a very different way of life, but settled in and helped to forge our own community. With this article, we honor them.

What did they think when they first arrived? The Albernis, as it was in those early days, was virgin forest and wilderness. Many of the pioneer ladies had come from gentle, civilized homes in eastern Canada or the British Isles where the amenities of living were theirs.

Some joined their menfolk to live in primitive log cabins, to help push back the virgin forest and bring lush fields and farms to life. Many bore children in isolation. Others, perhaps a little luckier, lived in the new townsite. At least, they may have had others nearby for company. Still, amenities were scarce and living in a tent until a home was built was typical.

These pioneer women brought with them more than they ever imagined... in a word, 'civilization'. With their indomitable courage, spirit and faith, they were instrumental in developing the town as we know it today.

Local writer and historian, Meg Trebett, in her book, 'Pioneer Women of the Alberni Valley', provided insight into these women. She put it best when she said, "They hung curtains at the windows of log cabins." Let's have a look at some of them.

ALEXANDRINA McKENZIE

In 1882, Alexandrina arrived here. The year before, her husband, Kenneth, had come to take up land on Stamp River. He built a 5-room log house, one large enough for the six children - Annie, Maggie, Hector, Simon, Douglas and Donald. Recently arriving from Ontario, one can only imagine what Mrs. McKenzie thought about this new life although she, assuredly, didn't have time to ponder it.

The Somass River was their only highway for the first few years until the Beaver Creek Trail was built. They travelled everywhere by water. By canoe, the family



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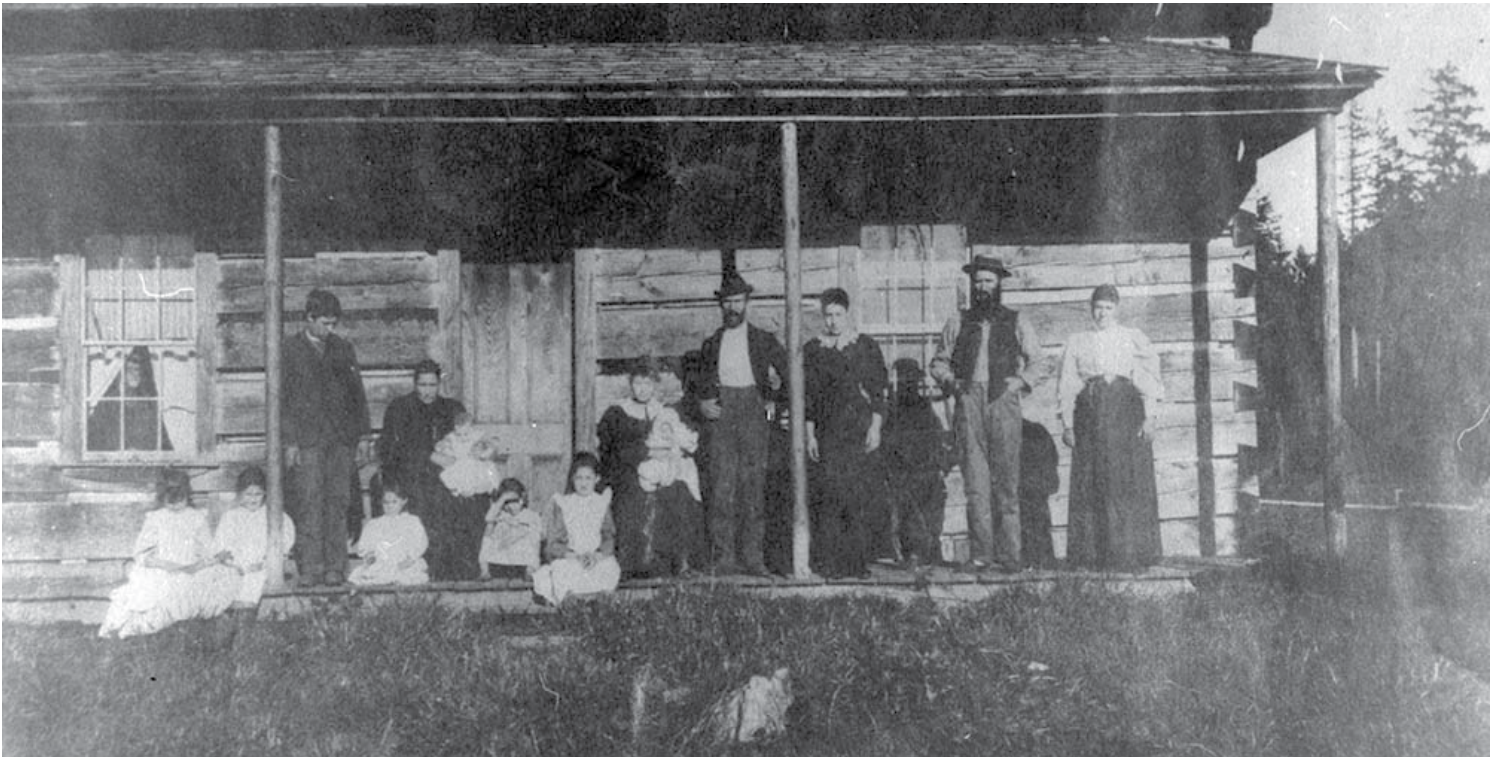
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brought supplies from Alberni. Perhaps there was the odd visit while in town for a cup of tea and a little socializing – I sincerely hope so.

Fruit trees, berry bushes and a vegetable garden were planted in short order. Alexandrina was constantly vigilant of the deer ready to raid her garden. Fish was readily available from the river but that led to another problem. The pigs they raised ate the salmon washed up on the riverbank leading to unsavoury fish-flavoured pork.

When needed, Mrs. McKenzie was always ready to help a neighbour. She was also interested and concerned for the wellbeing of the First Nations women and children. She often found time to sew clothing for the youngsters.

Alexandrina, unfortunately, died young, at age 43, leaving her husband and large family. She is buried in the little graveyard off Beaver Creek Trail, the predecessor to Greenwood Cemetery.

SARAH NICHOLAS

Another figure who became legendary was Sarah Nicholas who trekked with her four children over the

Horne Lake Trail in 1886. This last leg followed an arduous voyage from Australia. They were coming to join husband and father, Peter, in the house he had built for them.

The trek along the trail was perilous. Youngest son, Alfred, diagnosed as a ‘blue baby’ was unhealthy and had to be carried the distance. The child was destined to die young. The family, led by two guides, trekked through the day and, as darkness fell, continued, cold and exhausted, over the mountain into the valley.

That night they sheltered from the rain in the area of the present-day golf course. Sarah was so unprepared for such a gruelling journey. In fact, she had dressed in her finery and the children were decked out in their best shoes and clothes. Unfortunately, Peter had failed to mention the west coast weather and wild terrain.

When they arrived, their shoes were worn through and clothing in tatters. Still, the reunion was joyous but Sarah was known to have said that had she known what she was coming to, she would have stayed in Australia!

Sarah Nicholas lived a long and happy life, living until age 86.



PN00782 1900 - 1910 Photo Credit Alberni Valley Museum
Three generations of Nicholas family in front of log cabin. L-R: Johanna, Kate, William Jr. standing, Ada, Sarah, Mrs. Peter Nicholas, holding baby Lillian, Clara, Berth Nicholas Woodward holding Ernest Woodward Jr., Ernest Woodward Sr., Henrietta Nicholas, William Nicholas (brother of Peter) and Lizzie Nicholas, his sister, who later became Mrs. James Hills.

PN01339 – 1909 Photo Credit Alberni Valley Museum
Ernest and Bertha Woodward (nee Nicholas) with son Alfie - born 1906.

JANET HILLS

A mile or so from the McKenzie farm was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hills. Like other families, Janet and children joined Henry in 1886, the year after he had a home ready for them. In time, the family would number 10 children.

Mrs. Hills is remembered for her competence as a homemaker and services as a midwife. She had trained her family to care for themselves when she would set off on horseback down the trail to preside over birthings anywhere she was needed. As the road improved over time, Janet could be seen driving her horse and buggy to town delivering eggs or, more importantly, delivering babies.

Janet Hills, along with Mrs. McKenzie and others spearheaded the opening of the valley’s first school, Beaver Creek School in 1887. Property for it was donated by Charles and Marie Bishop.

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AGNES McNEILL

In 1899, Jim McNeill acquired land six miles north of Alberni. Fellow pioneers turned out for a bee to build him a log house. While this was going on, his wife, Agnes, and the children lived in the settlement. While there, Agnes gave birth to another daughter. They soon moved into the new home.

Jim worked on construction and was away for days at a time. Agnes and her children looked after the farm and the oxen, cows, pigs and chickens.

Agnes McNeill had a dedicated interest in education. Her years on the school board involved a continuing struggle to keep the Beaver Creek School, where her children attended, open.

FLORENCE BIRD

In 1890, a young lady named Florence in England, met and married a young machinist, George Bird. The couple immigrated to Canada and, eventually, settled in New Alberni. A couple of years later, George opened and operated a small sawmill on the waterfront.

According to writings by Jan Peterson, the story is told of Florence’s determination to have plumbing installed in her house. She proceeded to purchase toilet, sink and bathtub before the house was plumbed. Apparently, these items remained on her back porch for some time ... a symbol of things to come. I do hope this lady was rewarded.

The Bird family were members of the All Saints Church in Alberni. Both Florence and George were instrumental in having it built and could be seen, every Sunday morning, walking the two-mile trail to worship in it.

There are many other pioneer women, too many to mention, the likes of Mrs. Bayne, Mrs. Bishop, Mrs. Guillod and Mrs. Watson who contributed towards the development of churches, schools and the hospital in the valley.

These women really were the civilizing force. To all of them, we owe our thanks.



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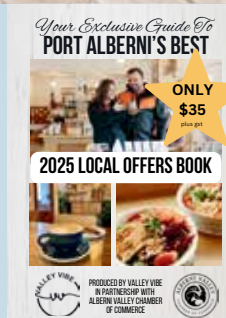
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Who We Are

&

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Fishing Over the Years in the Alberni Valley

For thousands of years the Hupačasath people have owned, used, and occupied their traditional territory on Central Vancouver Island. The Hupacasath are comprised of three distinct tribes, the Muh-uulth-aht, Kleh-koot-aht and Cuu-ma-as-aht (Ahahswinis).

Hupačasath has benefited from the salmon resources for thousands of years. Traditionally the Hupačasath were a sea-going people and utilized all sea resources down the inlet and through Barkley Sound and beyond and continue to do so today. Hupačasath traditionally fished in the Tsuumaas (Somass) River and the Barkley Sound.

The area of the Hupačasath territory is approximately 232,000 hectares plus their interest

in the Barkley Sound and offshore. This territory, on the wetter west side of Vancouver Island contains some of the most valuable forest, fish and marine resources in the world. The lakes and rivers contain all five species of Pacific salmon as well as steelhead and trout. Estuaries, forests and fields contain a wide variety of berries, shrubs, tubers, and grasses that are used by the Hupačasath as foods, medicines and traditionally for clothing, utensils and a wide variety of other uses.

But we have been at a disadvantage where the fish processors make more money than the fisherman. And the commercial fishery became more and more challenging to get into, which lead the Hupačasath to develop a company that involves

more of our people in the fishery and the process.

The Hupačasath Fisheries department has been monitoring the Salmon returns to the Alberni Valley for many years. Their Salmon escapement program has evolved over the years and now has a high definition video of every fish passing through the Sproat and Stamp River fishways. These escapement estimates are essential for the management of this vital resource. Recently the fisheries department has expanded their salmon assessment program to include juvenile salmon work. During the winter months the Hupačasath Fisheries crew spends many nights on lakes in around Port Alberni and across the Island conducting Acoustic and Trawl Surveys. These surveys are used to determine the health and

abundance of juvenile sockeye in nursery lakes.

All the information that the Hupačasath Fisheries department collects is used to ensure that the Salmon stocks are sustainably managed. The 2020 season DFO is predicting very low sockeye returns (less than 200,000) to Sproat and Great Central Lakes. The Chinook forecast remains similar to 2019 returns with 91,000 expected to return to Robertson Creek.

Hupačasath strives to harvest salmon in their territory in a sustainable way to ensure that the salmon runs are robust for future generations and they have expanded their role to provide the stock assessment science necessary to effectively manage the salmon stocks moving forward.



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THE ULTIMATE FISHING TOWN

Photo Credit Chris Istace ZenSeekers

A friendly rivalry between Port Alberni and Campbell River over the title of Salmon Fishing Capital still sparks a hearty debate among anglers. “I have a brother-in-law in Campbell River and I tease him all the time,” says Bob Cole, a lifelong Port Alberni angler and boating enthusiast.

The two Vancouver Island fishing destinations have much in common. Both are seaports and forestry towns that originated as Indigenous settlements going back millennia, rich cultures borne of a close relationship with the sea. Both towns are famous for salmon fishing and especially for big springs, chinook or “smileys” when over 20 lbs. Both have tyee clubs. Campbell River’s is known for its annual rowing derby going back to 1925. Alberni Valley Tyee Club was founded seven years later, though its derby has always been open to power boats.

There are some distinctions, of course. Alberni Valley, Alberni Inlet and Barkley Sound offer not only great salmon fishing but an unrivalled variety of recreational fishing opportunities, saltwater and freshwater. Fishing has long been integral to local culture and traditions. In 2010, the old rivalry took a decisive turn. The World Fishing Network held a contest for Canada’s Ultimate Fishing Town. Among 160 entries, Port Alberni won by 30,000 votes. Cole doubts a resident population of 25,000 could have swayed the result without a lot of support from outside the community.

Catch numbers alone tell the story. “We catch between six and eight times the number of salmon they do out of Campbell River,” Cole said, citing combined results of numeration, creel surveys and flyovers. “I don’t think it’s been any lower than five times.” Another factor favouring the Central Island is ease of access.

Port Alberni is known on the B.C. coast as a small-boat-and-trailer destination, a relatively short drive from other Island centres, in contrast with more distant salmon fishing opportunities on the west coast. For as long as there have been people living on the Central

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Photo Credit Chris Istace ZenSeekers

Island, there has been fishing. Proof of this lies along the shore of Sproat Lake — Kleh-koot in the Nuu-chah-nulth language — where petroglyphs 10,000 years old depict various fish, reflecting their importance to first peoples.

Immigrants in the 19th and 20th centuries were also drawn to fishing life. Memories of those social ties are credited with helping to revive the Port Alberni club after a brief hiatus a few years ago. There was a strong desire “to have what we grew up with,” says Carolyn Jasken, club president. “It used to be a real social hub down at the marinas. We used to have dances, banquets, dinners,” Jasken recalls. “The social aspect was the biggest.”

The Somass/Stamp river watershed plays a key role. Due to the rivers’ short length — 24 kilometres in all — fish populations are more concentrated. Great Central Lake and Sproat Lake, two of the largest freshwater bodies on the Island, along with many smaller lakes — Elsie, Gracie and Sumner to name a few — that offer trout fishing in abundance.

“We have more salmon kilometres than any salmon river in North America because it’s such a short river system,” Cole said. Port Alberni is known as a small-boat-and-trailer place — a fairly short trip from other

Island centres — in contrast with far-flung west coast salmon fishing destinations on the Island. Part of the appeal is ease of access to the outer inlet and beyond.

“In Port Alberni’s favour, the best thing we still have is Robertson Creek,” says Doug Lindores, who operates Slivers Charters. “And people have been instrumental in building small streams with coho.”

Robertson Creek Hatchery, located on the Upper Stamp River, has substantially boosted the rivers’ natural production and helps to sustain commercial, First Nations and recreational fishing opportunities.

“We have few or no restrictions because the returns of fish are much larger,” Cole says. On the inside waters of the Salish Sea, anglers typically face more fishing restrictions, he notes. There are unique factors that lend substance to the capital claim. As one example, Cole cites nearby Nahmint River, which still has a steelhead fishery and “where you used to see the real monster chinook, the six- and seven-year-olds.” A theory holds that the Nahmint chinook stock withstood the last ice age, unlike chinook elsewhere. “By DNA, they found that the fish from the Nahmint River repopulated all the rivers from here to Alaska,” he explains. “That’s a pretty amazing story. They’re quite iconic in many



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Nahmint Bay is closed to fishing to protect the stock, but they have made substantial progress on restoring productivity, transplanting broodstock in the lower river. Further down Alberni Inlet lies Barkley Sound, though, which offers superb fishing year-round.

David Murphy grew up fishing in Port Alberni. His father once managed Clutesi Haven Marina. He fondly remembers fishing “as a 14-year-old, in a tin boat, catching a 42-pounder in the harbour.” “Everyone had a boat. The whole town fished. It’s what you did,” he recalls.

Murphy has made fishing his career as a guide and lodge operator. Though Murphy Sportfishing Charters operates primarily on the outer west coast now, Murphy returns for summer steelhead in Port Alberni. “There’s probably more steelhead in the Stamp than all other Vancouver Island rivers combined,” he said. Salmon fishing has changed over the decades. Declines in ocean productivity widely believed to be the result of climate change and increased competition for habitat from ocean ranching have affected local fishing over the last 30 years, Murphy says.

Fishing reports vary from season to season with some saying 2019 was better than 2020. In Campbell River’s favour, fishing last summer was the best seen in 20 years, Murphy notes.

And Port Alberni? The tyee club managed to pull off one of the few fishing derbies held along the coast during a summer when others were cancelled due to pandemic concerns. To be on the safe side, the derby ran without its usual dockside festival. Tickets were still sold out.

Jasken sees plenty of room for improving the event in future and to this day the Salmon Festival is held every Labour Day weekend, always making it more inclusive and fun, reinforcing the Ultimate Fishing Town brand that we spearheaded a decade ago. Because we truly believe we are the Ultimate Fishing Town.

Article Written by Michael Youds,
Spring 2021 Valley Vibe

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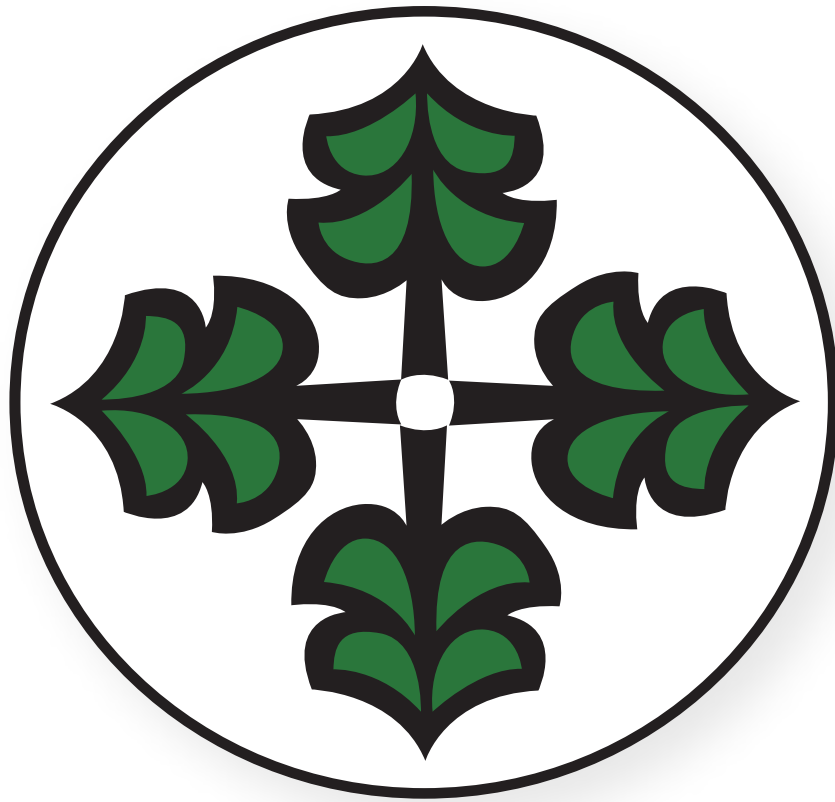
Technical Support & Maintenance



Valley Edge Consulting.io

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SHAPE THE CITY, SHARE YOUR VOICE

Connect the Quays | Somass Lands
Master Planning | Budget | Official Community Plan