



The North Island

# EAGLE

Celebrating 'True North Island' Life

Sandra Masales



North Island  
REALTOR®  
250-902-9271

sandramasales69@gmail.com



Helping you is what we do.

Advance Realty  
4-7035 Market St.  
Port Hardy, BC

Issue #3 Volume #10

February 27, 2026

North Island owned & operated

**COOK  
WANTED**

250-949-7811  
sportybar@telus.net

**Sporty**  
BAR & GRILL

8700 Hastings St., Port Hardy, BC  
250-949-7811 www.sportybar.ca

**NORTH ISLAND**  
TREE SERVICE

Proud to Call the North Island our Home

**WINTER SALE!**  
10% off jobs over \$1,000  
until March 31, 2026

- Tree Removal
- Trimming & Shaping
- Lot Clearing
- View Enhancement
- Hedge Trimming
- Skidsteer Services
- Brush Chipping

Our service areas include Port McNeill, Sayward, Woss, Port Hardy, Port Alice, and surrounding communities.

Fully Insured,  
Certified Faller WCB

250-203-5324  
northislandtreeservice.ca

## Northisle accepted into minerals office

By Kathy O'Reilly

Northisle Copper and Gold's North Island Project has officially been accepted into BC's Critical Minerals Office.

"We welcome inclusion in the Critical Minerals Office and recognize this as an important catalyst for accelerating our North Island Project. Coordination with this office further supports our approach to building consensus through meaningful and efficient First Nations and stakeholder engagement. Through government support and improved coordination, we can unlock access to national and global partnerships, including Indigenous partnerships, local employment and enabling infrastructure," said Sam Lee, president and CEO, Northisle Copper and Gold.

"We appreciate the Province taking these projects seriously and ensuring there is a clear and fulsome process in place. Having a dedicated point of contact to support ongoing dialogue is important for our community as the North Island Project advances. We believe it is essential to balance

responsible economic development with protection of the local environment, and we look forward to continued engagement and discussions and welcome continued improvements in the administrative processes," said Quatsino First Nation Chief James Nelson.

"On behalf of the District of Port Hardy, a resource-dependent community, we welcome the support of the Critical Minerals Office in helping ensure Northisle Copper and Gold Inc. can move forward with early coordination as the project advances toward environmental assessment and timely permitting. Northisle's decision to engage early with the Quatsino First Nation and the District of Port Hardy demonstrates a strong commitment to respectful partnership and meaningful community consultation. We appreciate this proactive approach and look forward to continued collaboration as the project progresses," said Mayor Pat Corbett-Labatt. "The North Island has long been a resource-based region – fishing, logging and mining, and this project represents a mean-



Photo — Submitted

Sam Lee, President & CEO of Northisle Copper and Gold, talks about the importance of his company's acceptance into BC's Critical Mineral Office, while Jagrup Brar, British Columbia's Minister of Mining and Critical Minerals, who made the announcement, listens.

ingful opportunity for sustainable economic growth, local investment, and long-term regional stability," said Cor-

bett-Labatt. "Opportunities like this matter deeply to communities like ours. They support local families, strengthen

our economy, and contribute to a resilient future for the North Island," she continued.

Continued on Page 2

**CARSON**  
ROOFING  
and gutters!

Gutter Done!  
250-230-7663  
WWW.CARSON-ROOFING.COM

**HAAG**  
CERTIFIED  
INSPECTOR  
RESIDENTIAL BOUNDARY

Approved Contractor  
**JKO**  
Specialization Roofing

**BBB**  
ACCREDITED  
BUSINESS

- NOW Installing Gutters!
- FREE On-site Estimates
- 2-year Labour Warranty
- Licensed and Insured

michelle@carson-roofing.com  
carson-roofing.com 250-230-ROOF (7663)

## Northisle project chosen

Continued from Page 1

The Province has identified Northisle Copper and Gold Inc.'s North Island Project, Surge Copper Corp.'s Berg Project and Defense Metals Corp.'s Wicheeda Project to work with the Critical Minerals Office to support early co-ordination as the projects prepares for environmental assessment and future permitting processes. The Critical Minerals Office works with selected advanced project proponents to accelerate their permitting processes by helping co-ordinate First Nations and community engagement, identify regulatory requirements early, align permitting pathways and support readiness for future environmental-assessment and regulatory processes. This co-ordination supports projects in advancing through to operating mines through efficient processes and early preparedness without changing permitting standards or regulatory decisions.

"The Critical Minerals Office provides key services to help take promising projects and move them forward faster, ensuring that BC continues to rapidly grow the sector," said Jagrup Brar, Minister of Mining and Critical Minerals. "By supporting early co-ordination for projects like North Island, Berg and

Wicheeda, we are helping ensure communities, First Nations and project proponents have clearer information and stronger alignment as projects move into environmental assessment and permitting."

Northisle Copper and Gold has completed a preliminary economic assessment and continues technical and planning work as it prepares for the environmental-assessment process. Early co-ordination through the Critical Minerals Office helps identify requirements and timelines sooner, supporting efficient entry into permitting processes.

### Quick Facts:

- BC's mining sector supports more than 40,000 good-paying, family-supporting jobs.
- BC contributes around 50% of Canada's copper production and is Canada's only producer of molybdenum - a versatile, high-melting-point metallic element.
- BC produces or has good potential to produce at least 22 of the 34 critical minerals on Canada's critical-minerals list as of January 2026.
- By 2040, new and expanded critical-minerals projects in BC could represent an opportunity of as much as \$44 billion.

## New Executive Director for Literacy Society

By Trish Weatherall

Mount Waddington Family Literacy Society (MWFLS) is pleased to welcome Jessica Brown as its new Executive Director.

"We are very excited to bring Jessica on board," said Laura Kaminker, co-chair of the MWFLS Board of Directors.

"Her diverse skill set and her commitment to the communities of the North Island make her an excellent fit with the Literacy Society."

Jessica has her Education Assistant/Community Service Worker with Indigenous Focus certificate from North Island College and is finishing her Human Services diploma. She has completed practicums at K'ak'ot'lats'i School (Quatsino First Nation) and North Island Community Services, with an upcoming practicum at Foundry Port Hardy.

Jessica also runs her own business and has volunteered for many years in Port McNeill.

She has a wide range of skills, along with a deep commitment to community service, reconciliation, and lifelong learning, and is dedicated to fostering inclusive, community-centered programs. She lives in Port McNeill with her husband Scott and their son Charlie.

"I am so excited to step into this role and work alongside the dedicated staff and board to continue fostering lifelong learning and strong community connections," said Jessica.

"Literacy has shaped my own journey as a learner, parent, and community member, and I'm honoured to help strengthen those opportunities across the North Island. I see literacy as a pathway to empowerment, connection, and reconcil-



Photo — Jessica Brown

**Jessica Brown is the new Executive Director at the Mount Waddington Family Literacy Society.**

iation, and I'm excited to support this work with our communities."

Contact Jessica for general society and financial information or to donate to the literacy society at [ed@mwfamilyliteracy.org](mailto:ed@mwfamilyliteracy.org).

"We're grateful to former Executive Director Charity Gillett for her leadership and support over the past two years," said Donna Merry, co-chair of the MWFLS Board of Directors.

"We wish Charity all the best in her new role as Training and Development Manager at Quatsino First Nation."

The Mount Waddington Family Literacy Society works with communities, schools and organizations to support literacy and learning for all ages on North Vancouver Island.

Visit the MWFLS website to learn about their free programs at: [mwfamilyliteracy.org](http://mwfamilyliteracy.org)



## DESIGN BUILD CONSTRUCTION

- 360 DESIGN SERVICES
- CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES
- CIVIL CONSTRUCTION SERVICES
- EMERGENCY RESPONSE
- GENERAL CONTRACTOR
- PREFABRICATION & MODULAR SERVICES
- ELECTRICAL SERVICES

**K'AWAT'SI CONSTRUCTION COMPANY**  
[WWW.KAWATSI.CONSTRUCTION.CA](http://WWW.KAWATSI.CONSTRUCTION.CA) (250)230-6990



# McNeill kicks off birth year celebrations with skating party

By Kathy O'Reilly

The Town of Port McNeill kicked off its 60th birth year celebrations with a skating party Feb. 18 at the Chilton Regional Arena.

"I am absolutely thrilled with the activities on the 60th anniversary of our incorporation. There was outstanding work done by Sunset School students and staff in increasing the day's smile ratios," said Mayor James Furney.

"Town of Port McNeill staff and volunteers as well as the Chilton Arena management and crew made sure everyone was welcome and had an opportunity to skate and indulge in birthday cake," Furney said.

"We had well over 300 people come through for a little share of hot dogs and big dose of community," he said.

"As we get into the spring, we will focus on a community gathering with a historical exhibit of our common history," Furney continued.

"There are ideas being tossed around for a street party for the last Saturday in May.

"Volunteers and ideas are warmly welcomed."

Sunset School visited in three intervals of groups of students, with about 75 students per group, plus teachers, support staff, along with family and friends to help tie laces, said Chief Administrative Officer Brenda Johnson.

Each group spent about 45 minutes skating, followed



Photo — Kathy O'Reilly

**Port McNeill Mayor James Furney, and son Seamus, 3.5, right, with resident Al Kollman took in the 60th Birthday skating party Feb. 18 at the Chilton Regional Arena.**

by hot chocolate, birthday cake, goodie bags, scarves, and hotdogs. "Everything you would expect to have at a birthday party," Johnson said.

Town staff served well over 300 hotdogs, handed out around 200 good-

ie bags, 150 scarves, and "there was not a crumb of cake left to be had (there might have been two pieces left)," she said.

"It was great to see a lot of locals stopping by and enjoying themselves while sharing some memories."



Photo — Kathy O'Reilly

Staff cooked up over 300 hotdogs at a 60th anniversary of incorporation skating party held at the Chilton Regional Arena Feb. 18. A community gathering with a historical exhibit is planned for later this year.



## District of Port Hardy 2026-2030 Financial Plan Presentation



Pursuant to Section 166 of the *Community Charter*, there will be an open meeting to present the proposed 2026-2030 Financial Plan.



SCAN ME

**Date:** Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Time:** 6:15 – 6:45 PM

**Location:** Council Chambers, Municipal Hall  
7360 Columbia St., Port Hardy, BC  
Or online via MS Teams

Register to watch the Financial Plan Presentation online by scanning the QR code or visit the District's public meeting portal at [www.porthardy.ca](http://www.porthardy.ca). Questions pertaining to the financial plan will be received after the presentation.

For more information contact:

Noramay Isaac, Director of Finance/ DCAO

Phone: (250) 949-6665 Email: [general@porthardy.ca](mailto:general@porthardy.ca)



**GUTTER  
SOLUTIONS**

## Services

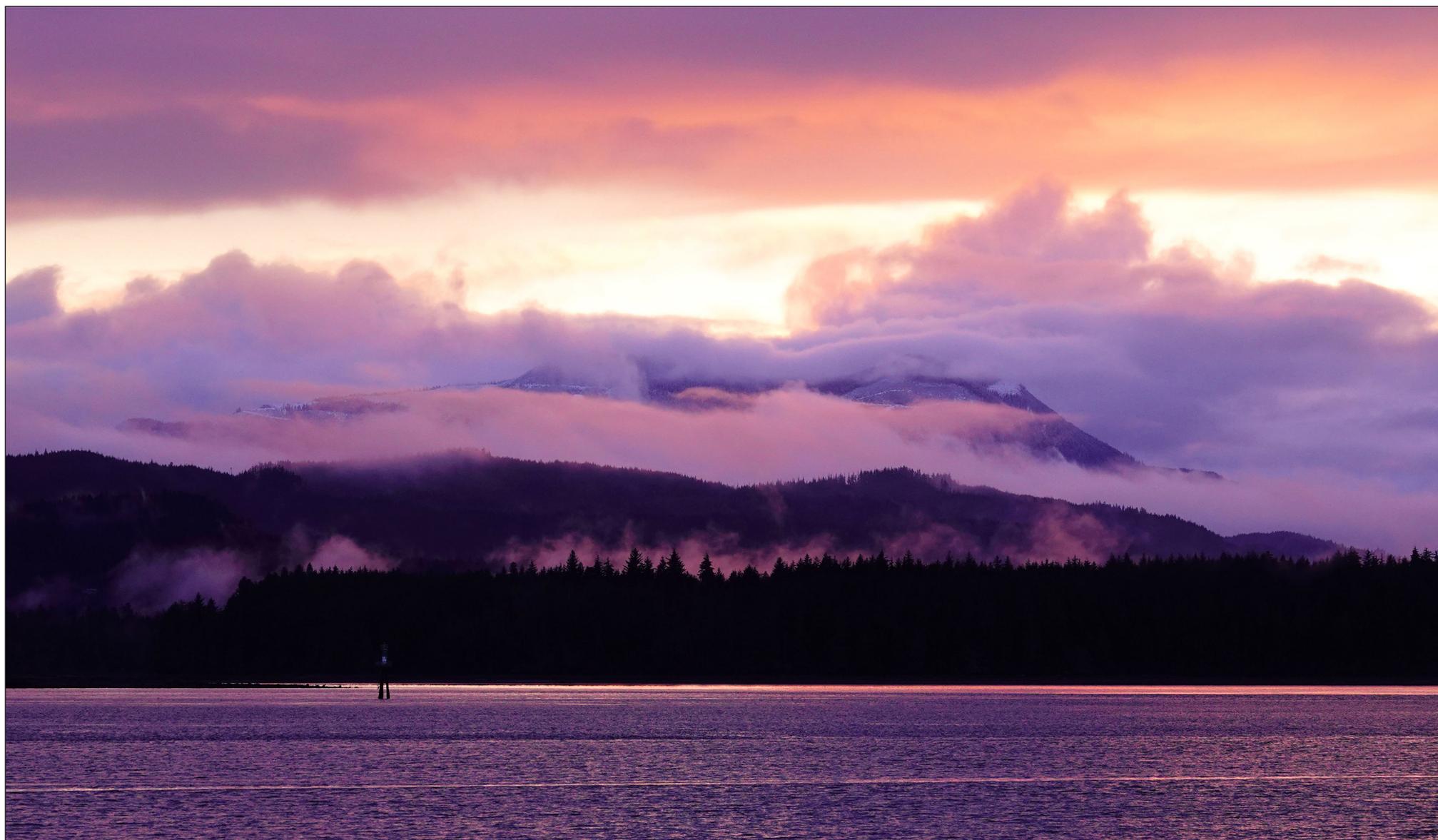
- Professional installations
- Gutter and eavestrough installation
- Downspout cleanouts
- Leaf gutter guards • Gutter cleaning
- Soft wash siding, soffit, and exterior gutter cleaning • Exterior windows

**250-230-4705  
250-230-4719**

[G7guttersolutions@gmail.com](mailto:G7guttersolutions@gmail.com)

**Based in Port McNeill**  
Serving the entire North Island

# editorial



*Photo — Robin Quirk, Robin's Eye Photography*

Some interpret purple clouds as signs of divine protection, spiritual awakening, or a reminder of the connection between life and the afterlife.



The North Island  
**EAGLE**  
*Celebrating 'True North Island' Life*



The North Island Eagle is published each Friday in Port Hardy, British Columbia, Canada, as a sole proprietorship located at Box 2167, Port Hardy, BC, V0N 2P0. The content of The Eagle is copyright and reproduction without the proper written consent is strictly prohibited.

— Our beautiful First Nation's eagle (kwikw) courtesy Nakwaxda'xw artist Davis Henderson  
 Cover eagle photo James O'Reilly  
 GST# 754836294RT000

**To advertise**  
**Call: 250-949-0337**  
**Email [publisher@northislandeagle.com](mailto:publisher@northislandeagle.com)**

*Follow us:*



**Kathy O'Reilly**  
 Owner/Publisher



**Kelsea Taylor**  
 Photography/Ad Design



# DISTRICT OF PORT HARDY NEWS & EVENTS



## PORT HARDY TURNS 60 – DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



This year, the District of Port Hardy proudly celebrates 60 years since its incorporation as a municipality. This Diamond Anniversary is more than a birthday—it's a chance to honour the people, stories, creativity, and history that have shaped our community, while recognizing that our history reaches far beyond 60 years. Watch for the release of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition (January-February 2026) of the District Connection to learn more about the events planned and how you can participate in the celebrations!



**Mark your calendars!** On October 17, communities across British Columbia will head to the polls for the Local General Election.

Information about the election will be made available through the District website, [porthardy.ca](http://porthardy.ca), as well as through the Municipal Hall. Stay tuned for important dates, deadlines, information for voters, candidates, and key election details.

### Thinking of running for office?

Being an elected official can be a rewarding experience. There are many reasons to run for office including becoming actively involved in the local decision-making process, having a desire to contribute experience and knowledge to the community or to address issues and lead change. Having a diverse range of voices at the table leads to creative and innovative solutions to the challenges faced by local governments today. If you are thinking of becoming an elected official, now is the time to learn more about what is involved. To help you decide we suggest:

- Attend a meeting of Council, watch the meeting recordings and read past meeting minutes
- Reach out a current or former elected official (EO) - Ask about the role of EO, responsibilities, the time commitment, and what it's like to hold an elected seat.
- Check out the latest and past editions of the District Connection to learn more about local government initiatives and services.

*Coffee with the Mayor*

March 13, 12:30 PM - 2:30 PM  
 April 9, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
 May 7, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

## HARDY HUSTLE

### 10K & HALF MARATHON

# MAY 31, 2026

### Hardy Hustle 10K & Half Marathon

Sun | May 31  
 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Choose between our scenic 10K or challenging half marathon and experience the energy of race day in Port Hardy. Feel the excitement, hear the cheers, and embrace the challenge as you walk, jog, or run your way to the finish line. Fees include race swag, post run snacks and a medal. Limited swag is available on a first come, first served basis. Don't wait. Register today!

### NOW AVAILABLE Q-ALERT: SERVICE REQUESTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!

Have you noticed a street light flickering? Perhaps you've recently avoided a car-consuming pothole while driving down the road? Or maybe your neighbourhood has a new outdoor swimming pool thanks to a blocked storm drain. Whatever the problem, submitting a service request with the District has never been easier!

Quick and convenient, Q-Alert is an online reporting tool residents can use to let the District know when a municipal service needs attention. How? It's simple:



1. Notice issue
2. Scan QR Code or visit [porthardy.ca](http://porthardy.ca)
3. Fill in key details about the issue/concern
4. Drop a pin for accuracy
5. Upload a photo for context
6. Click 'create request'

We take it from there, it's that easy! No need to wait until office hours the next day to call to report a concern. Plus, Q-Alert will keep you informed of the status of your request, and you will be notified as soon as it is completed.

Call 250-949-7505 to report an after-hours operational emergency.

## YOU'RE INVITED!

Port Hardy Emergency invites local youth and families to take part in the 2026 Emergency Preparedness Fair.

Join local emergency response agencies for a chance to help raise awareness on the importance of being emergency prepared.



250.949.6665  
 GENERAL@PORTHARDY.CA  
 WWW.PORTHARDY.CA

GRAND PRIZE...  
**POOL TIME + PIZZA**  
 REGISTER BY MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup>

## Hardy Half Pints Playgroup

Fri | March 6, April 17, May 1, 15, 29 & June 12  
 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
 Ages 0 - 6 | \$2/child

### Hardy Half Pints

Fri | March 6, April 17, May 1, 15, 29 & June 12  
 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
 \$2/child  
 Ages 0 - 5  
 Civic Centre

Join us for a fun and welcoming drop-in playgroup designed for little ones and their caregivers. Hardy Half-Pints offers a safe and engaging space where children can explore, play, and make new friends while caregivers connect with one another.

## DROP-IN PICKLEBALL

AT PORT HARDY RECREATION

SUNDAY	11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
MONDAY	11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
TUESDAY	11:00 AM - 1:00 PM 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
WEDNESDAY	11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
THURSDAY	11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
FRIDAY	11:00 AM - 1:00 PM 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

\$4 Drop-in | \$2 Paddle Rental  
 No session Jan 5, Feb 1, 13, 16 & 19, Mar 1, 3, 23-27  
 Schedule subject to change based on facility availability.  
 For updates, call 250-949-6686 or visit Port Hardy Recreation on Facebook

### Drop-In Pickleball

Sun - Fri | 11:00 am - 1:00 pm  
 Tues | 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
 Fri | 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm | ½ court  
 \$4/session | \$60/membership  
 \$2 paddle rental

Pickleball is a combination of badminton, tennis and table tennis that continues to grow in popularity. This fun activity is accessible to a wide range of players and accommodates participants at every fitness level. Drop-in or pay for a membership to play as often as you would like.

**No session March 1, 3, 23-27**

## SPRING BREAK CAMP

Start the morning with free play, then head to the pool in the afternoon for a fun swim session! All campers must be able to swim independently.

EVENT DATE	AGES	PRICE
MON - THURS MAR 23 - 26	6 - 10	\$80 PER CHILD

PORT HARDY CIVIC CENTRE

### Spring Break Camp

Mon - Thurs | Mar 23 - 26  
 9:00 am - 3:00 pm  
 \$80/child  
 Ages 6 - 11  
 Civic Centre

Spring break is coming soon! Campers will start the morning with free play, then head to the pool in the afternoon for a fun swim session. Its a week of activity for kids to enjoy over spring break!

**Campers must be able to swim independently.**

## PLAY WORKS

### Play Works

Wed & Fri | March 18 & 20  
 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm  
 \$8/child | Ages 5 - 12

The Civic Centre transforms into a free play zone with a Bouncy Castle, plasma cars, and plenty of space to run wild.



10K

All Ages  
 \$45/person  
 Code: SP26-CE02



Half Marathon  
 Ages 15+  
 \$85/person  
 Code: SP26-CE01

Register online: [app.univerusrec.com/porthardyrecreationpub](http://app.univerusrec.com/porthardyrecreationpub) or scan the QR Code.

For more information:  
 visit us at 7400 Columbia St.  
 call: 250.949.6686 ex 201  
 email: [recreation@porthardy.ca](mailto:recreation@porthardy.ca)



SCAN  
 HERE  
 TO  
 REGISTER!

# Free books, fun activities and local authors at Literacy Fair

By **Trish Weatherall**

Families and learners of all ages are invited to a fun, free day celebrating reading and learning in North Vancouver Island communities.

The Mount Waddington Family Literacy Society is hosting its 2026 Literacy Fair on Saturday, Feb. 28, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Sunset Elementary School in Port McNeill. Admission is free.

• Enjoy free games, crafts, story readings, and hands-on activities.

• Every infant, child, and teen who attends will receive a free book while supplies last.

• Meet local authors Lucy Hemphill, Karen Stewart and Erin Egan.

• Buy a book at a special Literacy Fair discount at the ShopRite Bookstore table.

• Come hungry for a light lunch by donation to support the North Island Sec-

ondary School girls' volleyball team.

• Get some Literacy socks to support MWFLS

“We celebrate many forms of literacy,” said Kelly Anderson, Literacy Outreach and Mother Goose coordinator. “Reading is important, but learning also happens through play, cooking, music, art, and family conversations. These experiences build skills in food, digital, and financial literacy.” For adults, literacy can mean building life skills such as using technology, improving math, or learning how to budget. These skills support employment, health, finances, and stronger communities.

Mount Waddington Family Literacy Society's program staff will be there to answer questions about participating in its free programs or volunteering including:

• Mother Goose on the Go – family program

• ONE-TO-ONE reading tutoring for children

• Fostering Literacy reading tutoring for children

• Adult Literacy programs and workshops on reading, writing, math, computer skills, food literacy, banking and budgeting, and more Local groups will be there with resources and activities, including:

• Gatehouse Community Association

• Immigrant Welcome Centre of the North Island

• North Vancouver Island - Aboriginal Infant Development Program

• School District 85 Early Years

• ShopRite at Home Bookstore

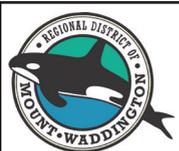
• Vancouver Island Regional Library

The Mount Waddington Family Literacy Society supports people of all ages across North Vancouver Island with free programs that build reading, learning, and life skills. Visit [mwfamilyliteracy.org](http://mwfamilyliteracy.org) to learn more.



Photo — Submitted

The Mount Waddington Family Literacy Society Literacy Fair is taking place Feb. 28 in Port McNeill at Sunset Elementary School. Local author Erin Egan was at the 2024 Literacy Fair and is back again this year.



REGIONAL DISTRICT  
OF MOUNT WADDINGTON

**PUBLIC VIEWING OPPORTUNITY  
2026-2030 5-Year Financial Plan**

A Public Viewing of the Proposed Regional District of Mount Waddington 2026-2030 5-Year Financial Plan and the Mount Waddington Regional Hospital District 2026-2030 5-Year Financial Plan will be held on **Tuesday, March 9, 2026** from **1:00 pm to 8:00 pm** at 2044 McNeill Road, Port McNeill, BC

Website: [www.rdmw.bc.ca](http://www.rdmw.bc.ca)  
Telephone: 250-956-3301  
Email: [info@rdmw.bc.ca](mailto:info@rdmw.bc.ca)

## Hunt on for hidden glass floats

Longing for some adventure?

North Island Glass Floats' Jim Witton and Brenda Trombley decided it was time to give back to those who have supported them “in our crazy addiction of glass floats”.

The couple have launched a Treasure Hunt on the three Port Hardy beaches. Floats have been placed/hidden at Thomas Point, Storey's Beach, and Carrot Park.

“We asked people to post their finds,

send us a photo to use with their permission (no names will be used) and come by our house to enter a draw for a larger float to be drawn March 2,” said Witton.

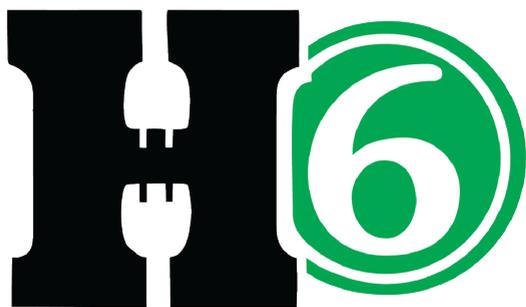
“We are not disclosing how many floats were hidden, but lots.”

The response to the hunt has been incredible.

“Everyone has thoroughly been enjoying the hunt and floats are still being found daily.”



Glass floats have been hidden on Port Hardy beaches.



## Electrical Services LTD

FRS #: 000236055

Contractor Licence #: LEL0208438

• Residential • Commercial • Silver Label  
inspections for Mobile Homes

Since 2019 in Port McNeill



**CALL OR TEXT  
(250) 902-8072**  
[h6electrical@gmail.com](mailto:h6electrical@gmail.com)

# Wounded Warriors raises funds for mental health

By Kathy O'Reilly

The Wounded Warrior Run began its journey to Victoria on Feb. 22. The trek began Feb. 21 with the arrival of the runners and their support team in Port Hardy.

"We got into the hotel, dropped our bags, and went over and were welcomed by Chief (Calvin Hunt) into his shop," said Kevin Whiteside, a member of the Canadian Armed Forces for 28 years and current base commander of CFIB Esquimalt, at a welcome dinner at the Port Hardy Royal Canadian Legion.

"To be here on the traditional lands of the Kwakiutl people was truly an outstanding way to start this run," Whiteside said.

"The quietness and the tranquility are unbelievable. For those new runners joining us for the first time, it's going to be an opportunity of a lifetime."

"We have a tradition on the run of talking a little bit about our personal connection to the work and why we do this," said Dr. Tim Black, a leading trauma and group counselling specialist who currently serves as National Clinical Director for Wounded Warriors Canada.

"I've been doing this for 33 years. It was 30 years ago in 1995 as a young man when I first moved to Vancouver and Burnaby that led me to this path," said Black.

"I was involved in a domestic assault situation that I broke up, and I was stabbed and almost murdered. Part of my passion for doing this work, and being involved in Wounded Warriors, is that I suffered for a long time and I had no idea what was going on and felt kind of crazy. There was obviously something wrong with me and I didn't want to tell anybody," he said.

"When I found out what it was (PTSD) it was like this lightbulb went off in my head."

Wounded Warriors is here to serve the people who serve us.



Photo — Kathy O'Reilly

**Wounded Warrior Run participants posed for a photo with the Canadian Rangers at Port Hardy's Royal Canadian Legion Branch #237 Feb. 21 before embarking an 800-kilometre trek down island to Victoria Feb. 22.**

"The organization has been founded to honour the fallen and help the living. Everybody here understands this because they have either done it themselves, or are currently doing it, serving the communities to try to keep people safe, to rush into danger when everybody else is kind of losing their s\*\*t," Black said.

"For me, the big thing is I don't want people to suffer unnecessarily. When you come out of dealing with the black hole of what you've gone through, it's a hard road out. Doing it alone is almost impossible."

All Wounded Warrior programs are no cost to user.

"We are a national charity. We do not carry profit forward. We have to spend all

of our money every year," he explained.

"This run, that you came here all together to help support, serves the people on the island. The money that is raised here, stays here."

The Wounded Warriors left Port Hardy in pouring rain and fierce wind on their journey to Port McNeill, Sayward and Woss and then on to Victoria.

Wounded Warrior Canada is dedicated to serving ill and injured Trauma Exposed Professionals and their families. The relay-style run has become the largest fund raiser for Wounded Warriors Canada on Vancouver Island.

The 2025 event raised over \$165,000, with the 2026 events aiming for \$250,000.

**The North Island Eagle... because everyone needs some good news**

To have your business be part of our positive message call 250-949-0337 or email [publisher@northislandeagle.com](mailto:publisher@northislandeagle.com)



The North Island  
**EAGLE**  
Celebrating 'True North Island' Life

[www.northislandeagle.com](http://www.northislandeagle.com) Facebook: @northislandeagle



**Our February giveaway!**

**Outdoor package includes:**

- 30L dry bag
- Thermos
- JB Fields socks
- Stanfield toque

**\$300 value!**

[www.macandales.com](http://www.macandales.com)

8640 Wollason Street, Port Hardy  
250-949-8442 [macandales.com](http://macandales.com)

**MACANDALE'S**

Serving the Coast since 1978

# lifestyles & leisure

## The return of the Sea Otter - once eradicated from island

A beach walk is soothing to the soul, so many wonders to see and experience. The sun, sounds, sea, and air are deeply restorative, where each wave and tide brings a fresh sense of possibility. With the pureness of salt air invigorating our lungs and the gentle crunch of shells and pebbles underfoot, it reminded me of Longfellow's poem "The Secrets of the Sea"... as we strolled along the shore. The poet explores how the ocean is a mirror to the vastness of human experiences, and after almost eight decades of life one's experience ledger is brimming. Filled with cherished memories, and a shared sense of anticipation and mystery exploring British Columbia's outdoors.... what gift from nature will tomorrow bring? The morning's spectacular sunrise was amazing enough for a kindly couple walking hand in hand along Hardy Bay.

Then, Nature provided Chris, Rosie and I with a poignant reminder of the ocean's boundless wonder drawing our eyes to a nearby "Sea oTer" lazily floating in calm waters in absolute contentment. Sunlight glistened off its thick velvet-like fur; a remarkable mammal with a charm and influence that extends far beyond its captivating appearance.

Sea Otters are a keystone species, playing a vital role in



maintaining the balance and sustainability of nearshore marine ecosystems, in ways I never could have imagined before writing this article.

To our pleasure, Sea Otter sightings are becoming increasingly more common along the green shallow shores of North Vancouver Island. We never tire watching these expressive mammals playfully tumbling through kelp, their teddy bear faces, curious dark eyes, and dexterous paws evoke images of a mythical sea-going Koala ... animals deeply connected to their surroundings.

Known by some as the "old man of the sea" they were once eradicated from Vancouver Island's cold nutrient-rich waters. They have however, rebounded from near extinction along our northern coastlines. Thanks to conservation efforts in 1969-1972, "eighty-nine" sea otters from Alaska were reintroduced to Kyuquot

Sound on Vancouver Island's west coast. The success of this program is seen today in playful antics of otters rolling through kelp, grooming their luxurious coats, using rocks to crack open shellfish. To many they are a cherished symbol of the region's coastal identity, as they float effortlessly on their backs. Their presence brings both joy, intrigue, and perhaps apprehension to some as a sea-food competitor.

As playful as they appear, Sea Otters spend much of their day foraging when they are not grooming or caring for young called cubs or kittens. They are highly adapted to ocean life, possessing the densest fur of any animal in the animal kingdom; one hundred thousand hairs per square centimetre, a density that is absolutely essential for thermal insulation in chilly northern waters. To maintain insulating properties otters must spend five or more hours a day grooming their



Photo — Christine Patterson

**Sea Otters have rebounded from near extinction along northern coastlines thanks to conservation efforts in 1969-1972.**

fur! Without constant care, the delicate hairs would mat, bridging cold water to skin bringing with it hypothermia and death.

I was surprised to learn Sea Otters, unlike most other marine mammals, lack a thick layer of blubber, and rely exclusively on their luxuriant fur to keep warm.

Sea Otters live ten to fifteen years or more and most spend the entirety of their lives at sea; only rarely do they haul

out onto land. They even give birth in the water! Their ability to thrive in cold sea environments is due to unique evolutionary adaptations, primarily focusing on advanced thermo-regulation. They are the only "marine mammals" that rely exclusively on dense fur and an extremely high metabolic rate to maintain a core body temperature of approximately 37.8°C.

They also have two and a half to three times the lung ca-

capacity and oversized kidneys of similarly sized mammals. Likewise, webbed feet, armpit pockets for rocks, and whisker sensitivity that can detect food are also features adapted to a life at sea. Neat, eh!

Sea Otters are incredibly social and often gather in large groups called rafts, sometimes numbering in the hundreds! Gatherings are thought to be restful opportunities providing safety in numbers.

**Continued on Page 9**

## NOW OPEN 6 DAYS A WEEK

NEW OWNERS | NEW PRODUCT | NEW SERVICES | NEW HOURS

SUNDAY 10AM - 4PM  
MONDAY 10AM - 5PM  
TUESDAY CLOSED

WED. & THURS. 10AM - 5PM  
FRIDAY 10AM - 6PM  
SATURDAY 10AM - 6PM



Walk-Ins Welcome  
Scan to book your appointment



# The Sea Otters' recovery story is one of both hope and caution

## Continued from Page 8

Whatever the purpose, a raft of otters are playful, yet surprisingly quiet with only a few whistles grunts, clicks, and coos as they play, enriching their social and ecological roles in their own distinctive way.... Not to mention our viewing pleasure as we watch their entertaining, inquisitive antics.

Otters are known for using tools, a behaviour that sets them apart from most other marine mammals. Using a paw with nimbleness, they take a rock or other hard object out of their armpit pocket and use it to crack open shells and crustaceans; whilst calmly floating on their back, revealing a remarkable level of intelligence and dexterity. They will then replace the rock back in the pocket for safe keeping, then eat their shelled food. Some researchers have noted some otters will use the same rock tool for years! Amazing, eh!

Central to the otter's daily existence is its insatiable appetite. Sea otters must consume up to a quarter of their body weight (adult sea otters typically weigh between 14 and 45 kg) each day to fuel their high metabolic rates! Their diet is diverse and includes sea urchins, crabs, clams, snails, and mussels. By preying on sea urchins, (which can devastate kelp forests if unchecked), otters help maintain the balance and biodiversity of coastal marine habitats. The foraging activities of sea otters are unwitting sea gardeners, their efforts cultivate nursery grounds for countless marine fin fish species!

Females will give birth to one "pup" annually and rearing of young are intimate and tender processes for sea otters. Their gestation period is about six months. Pups are born with a thick woolly coat that traps air and keeps them buoyant. Remarkably, they cannot dive at this stage and mothers are sole provider and must devote themselves entirely to their offspring; feeding, grooming, and teaching essential survival skills. When a mother needs to

dive she sometimes wraps her pup in kelp so it doesn't drift away while she is submerged. The strong maternal bond in the Wild Kingdom ensures the next generation is well-prepared to navigate the complexities of the otter's marine world.

As pups mature, they gradually take on full responsibilities of independent life. They learn to dive at about eight to ten weeks old, to hunt and escape predators, skills practised first in the safety of their mother's embrace and later perfected in the wider world of the kelp forest. Juvenile otters stay with mom for about a year or longer and are especially playful during this time. It is enjoyable entertainment to watch them engaging in mock battles and games that serve both as exercise and as crucial training for adulthood. This period of development is critical, given the challenges and dangers of the North Island coastal environment. The success of offspring nurturing is well evidenced in the dramatic increase from 89 otters to the numbers we see today over the course of 53 years.

The history of the Pacific Northwest Sea Otter is marked by hardship and then triumph through successful conservation interventions. From the late 1700s into the 19th century, the species suffered catastrophic declines from an estimated 52,000 due to the fur trade. Prized for their exceptionally soft and valuable pelts, Sea Otter populations were hunted to near extinction throughout much of their range. By the early 20th century, only a few small, isolated colonies remained in the Pacific Northwest; a once-abundant presence reduced to scattered remnants on the brink of vanishing forever.

While conservation efforts to restore otters to historical levels initially faced skepticism and logistical challenges, Sea Otter populations have bounced back to an estimated 8,000 today. As otters returned, kelp forests at the mercy of sea urchin predation during the ot-

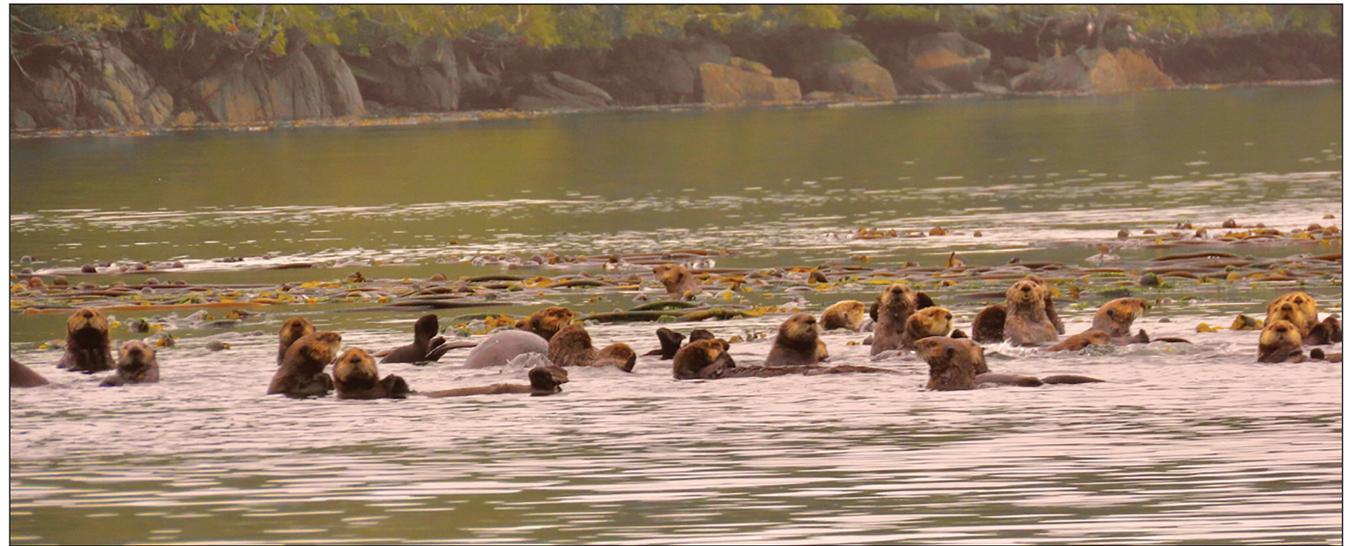


Photo — Christine Patterson

## Sea otters are incredibly social and often gather in large groups called rafts.

ter's absence, began to thrive once again, quadrupling kelp bed size in short order, highlighting a positive and significant ecological effect of the otter's presence. The otters' choice food source is sea urchin, and once predators populations of undersea vegetation were kept in check, the flora grew robustly, creating new lush underwater forests with a return of diverse marine life. Remarkably, healthy undersea habitats are essential not only for fish and invertebrates but also play a role in protecting coastlines from erosion! Another side benefit of renewed shore flora is the sequestering of carbon, contributing to climate resilience. Who could have envisioned the return of a coastal mammal would have such a positive domino ecological effect? Interesting, eh!

Sea Otter reintroduction has also fostered broader ecosystem changes. For example, while the return of otters to regions near Vancouver Island has led to a decrease in revenues of shallow water crab and other shellfish sectors, it has increased diversity and abundance of revenues from other commercially viable fish sector species. Researchers have documented that healthy kelp forests facilitated by otters provide nursery grounds for Salmon, Lingcod, Rockfish

and other fin fish species.

Researchers at the University of British Columbia have reported that coastal ecosystems, when otters are present, are more productive economically in the broader sense, equating a reduction of invertebrate harvesting is offset by an increase of fin fish catches and tourism opportunities with a combined net revenue increase of up to \$50 million annually! The presence of frolicking otters has even benefited seabirds, whose food sources are now more abundant in restored marine flora environments. These examples highlight how reintroduction of natural species and natural behaviours can trigger cascading ecological effects, that in the case of otter reintroduction has enhanced the overall productivity and stability of coastal environments.

Today, the distribution of the Pacific Northwest Sea Otter is a contrast reflecting both successful recoveries and ongoing vulnerabilities. Growing populations are thriving in British Columbia yet, modern threats, oil spills, entanglement in fishing gear, disease, and the ever-present pressure of a changing climate, continue to challenge their survival. It is reported Killer Whale predation is also a threat.

While the sea otter's story is one of both hope and caution,

the Pacific Northwest population of 8,000 is still far below historic levels of 52,000. Because of ongoing risks to their survival, the Pacific Northwest Sea Otter is designated as a species at risk in Canada. Legal protections, habitat conservation efforts, and public education campaigns are essential to their continued recovery. Still, the presence of Sea Otters in Hardy Bay signals a viable

healthy coastal ecosystem, and their fate is intertwined with that of a pristine marine environment communities must sustain. Protecting Sea Otters is not just about saving a single species, it is about safeguarding the integrity and diversity of the Pacific Northwest's oceanic heritage.

Isn't nature grand

*Safe travels,  
Gord*

## Rotary Club of Port McNeill

50/50 tickets on sale



**NOW LIVE!**  
**On line auction**  
**Feb. 28-March 7**

**Bidding now open!**



**Look for details on our Facebook Page!**





# Who you gonna Call?

North Island Business Directory

FIDELI PEDORTHIC  
Port Hardy  
250-949-7060

## Shoe & Boot Repair

Logging - Meindl - Blundstone - Birkenstock & More

9:30am - 2pm Tuesday - Saturday  
Market Street next to Credit Union



## STRYKER ELECTRONICS LTD.

Communication & Navigation Equipment  
Marine Electronics & Supplies  
Refrigeration  
SALES · SERVICE

Tel: (250) 949-8022  
Fax: (250) 949-8077  
E-mail: [info@strykerelectronics.com](mailto:info@strykerelectronics.com)  
[www.strykerelectronics.com](http://www.strykerelectronics.com)  
Toll Free: 1-888-839-8022

6710 Hardy Bay Rd  
Box 169, Port Hardy  
B.C. V0N 2P0

Accepting Corporate Bookkeeping Clients



[danielle@dkfbooks.ca](mailto:danielle@dkfbooks.ca)  
**250-902-7027**  
[dkfbooks.ca](http://dkfbooks.ca)

BOOKKEEPING SERVICES LTD

4-7035 Market Street, Port Hardy

Who you gonna call? 

Want to promote your business?

Call: 250-949-0337 

or email: [publisher@northislandeagle.com](mailto:publisher@northislandeagle.com)



# LET US FLOOR YOU

MIKE BROWN  
7070 Market st  
Port Hardy, B.C.  
250.902.7050

[mike@bsfloors.ca](mailto:mike@bsfloors.ca)  
[www.bsfloors.ca](http://www.bsfloors.ca)

The North Island Eagle... 

because everyone needs some good news 

To have your business be part of our positive message call 250-949-0337 or email [publisher@northislandeagle.com](mailto:publisher@northislandeagle.com)



The North Island **EAGLE**  
Celebrating 'True North Island' Life

[www.northislandeagle.com](http://www.northislandeagle.com) Facebook: @northislandeagle



# PLEASE RECYCLE

"WHEN TIMES ARE GOOD, YOU SHOULD ADVERTISE. WHEN TIMES ARE BAD, YOU MUST ADVERTISE."



**MELAN CONSTRUCTION LTD.**

[info@melanconstruction.ca](mailto:info@melanconstruction.ca)



[www.melanconstruction.ca](http://www.melanconstruction.ca)

# It's time to book ahead for the new year!

William Melan: 250-618-7410

# classifieds/marketplace

## Boats

14-foot Glastron fiberglass boat, seats four, 40hp Suzuki, 40hp trolling motor, four life jackets, downriggers, hand-held marine radio and more. \$5,000.

250-281-2281

LUND WC-14 boat c/w 9.9 Johnson motor, trailer, seats, oars, rod holders, NAV lights and more. Asking \$7800.00.

250-956-3300

3288 Bayliner, twin 4-cylinder diesels. \$25,000.

250-306-4417

## Canoes

Inflatable Aquamarine deluxe 350 canoe ultralight. \$1,000.

250-230-5290

## Fishing

3 Hardy Silex Steelhead reels in mint condition, 1 new. Serious inquiries only.

250-949-7630

11ft3in. Lamiglas steelhead fishing rod. Mint condition. \$225 firm.

250-902-8413

## Furniture

McLary antique wood and coal stove for sale \$1,200. Good condition.

250-702-2727

## Miscellaneous

Washing machine, GE commercial grade, with all original paperwork. In very good condition. \$350.

250-949-8655  
leave message

Arrow canopy, from a Ford Ranger, fire red, 6 foot long, 2 feet high and four and a half feet wide. Excellent condition, no scratches. Asking \$600.

250-884-4286

Generator, Firman 3650 watt, never been used, \$800 OBO.

250-949-6292

## Services

Local 3D printing in Port McNeill.

403-620-0033

## Coming Events



Connection  
Comraderie  
Community

Are you looking to add  
more purpose, and  
excitement to your day?

Thursday's at 7:00 PM  
Port McNeill Old School

## Services

PALMISTRY, TAROT AND PSYCHIC READINGS with Roxanne. Clear and concise help in all areas of your life. Sessions available by phone or in person (Malcolm Island). Healing-Search.com

604-902-3881

Red seal journeyman electrician looking for small, residential jobs. 30+ years experience. Reasonable rates. All quotes are free. Call Jesse.

236-255-2238

## Services

Electric yard art and landscaping services. Specializing in outdoor feature lighting, water ponds, custom garden fountains and waterfall features, underground sprinkler systems, drainage pipes, fencing repairs, raised garden beds, greenhouses, walkways, landscaping maintenance and waste removal. Consultations and design quotes are free.

236-255-2238

## Tires

4 matching winter tires for 16-inch rims. Used one season. 235/65R 16 103H. Tubeless steel-belted radials. \$300.

250-974-8336

2 tires and rims for a boat or travel trailer. 205/75/R14. In good shape. \$120.

250-949-7678

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Types of Dog

Word Search



R O T T W E I L E R E E T X  
S H E P H E R D S L U P F A  
C F N B S C C E G E E A C E  
N W Y O F M H A H F T U L T  
G R E R Z U E I D C E T W A  
O E S I V B M A H N S X E N  
D X P J F O L Q F U U N S R  
L O T E R R I E R K A O I N  
L B N A I T A M L A D H H P  
U C O L L I E E B T D T U E  
B R E F F I T S A P M T T A

BULLDOG  
PINSCHER  
DALMATIAN  
PASTIFF

BOXER  
SHEPHERD  
BEAGLE  
TERRIER

ROTTWEILER  
CHIHUAHUA  
COLLIE  
HOUND

## North Island Reflections



Surf Scoters are “molt migrants,” meaning that after nesting, adults fly to an area where they can molt their flight feathers during which they become temporarily flightless. During spring migration, they congregate in massive numbers to feed on herring spawn. Adult males have a distinct velvety black plumage with two white patches—one on the forehead and one on the nape—resembling a skunk’s markings. They are heavy birds that need to run along the surface of the water while flapping vigorously to get airborne, often creating a “whoop whoop” sound. Photo by Robin Quirk, Robin’s Eye Photography. If you have a photo you would like to share with our readers please email [publisher@northislandeagle.com](mailto:publisher@northislandeagle.com).

*This week's Reflection sponsored by ...*

**McWILKIE'S**  
- PORT ALICE MARINA -  
PORT ALICE MARINA • 1-833-629-4554

**WEEKLY SPECIALS!**

**MONDAY: CLOSED**

**TUESDAY | 4PM-8PM: 20% OFF PITAS**

**WEDNESDAY | 4PM-8PM: 20% OFF BURGERS**

**THURSDAY | 4PM-8PM: 20% OFF • AGES 65+**

**FRIDAY | 4PM-8PM: KIDS EAT FREE**

**SATURDAY | 12PM-8PM: 20% OFF SALADS**

**SUNDAY | 12PM-8PM: 20% OFF WRAPS**

**LOCAL • FRESH • MARINA EATS**

*Follow the Sasquatch!*



Helping you is what we do.™

**Royal LePage Advance Realty**  
4-7035 Market Street, Port Hardy, BC

**250-949-7231**

## FEATURE HOMES OF THE WEEK

**801 Nimpkish Heights Road, Hyde Creek \$989,000** MLS® #1022167



**Huge price reduction!**



Want a ton of space for your family or for a home based business? This home and property has everything you could want. For the family, currently set up as a 5 bed plus den, 2 bath home. For a business, this was previously set up for a gallery with tiled heated floor and 29 skylights. The potential for B&B or hobby farm is great as there are areas that could be closed off from the main house. The 2.15 acreage is covered with rhodos and other perennials, fruit trees, berries, greenhouse and raised beds with herbs and veggies.



**Ronnie (Veronica) Sam**  
Cell: 250-527-0036



**Johan Olsen**  
Cell: 250-209-9667

**7312 Pine Drive, Port Hardy \$364,000** MLS® # 1026691



This three-level townhouse offers 3 bedrooms plus 2 additional dens. The open-concept main floor connects the kitchen, dining, and living areas. The layout includes 2 bathrooms and a finished basement with second living area, media room, or cozy hangout zone. Outside enjoy a covered back porch, fully fenced backyard. A detached single-car garage provides secure parking and storage. Recent upgrades include a heat pump and updated lighting. This property offers space for families, professionals, or a perfect investment property.



**Sandra Masales**  
Cell: 250-902-9271

## Are you thinking of selling? Now is the time!

If you are considering selling your home, now is the perfect time to make your move.

With a significant shortage of homes on the market, your property could be in high demand, potentially leading to a quicker sale and competitive offers.

Buyers are actively searching and with fewer homes available, your listing could stand out more than ever.

Take advantage of this opportunity to maximize your return and work with one of our Realtors® to navigate the process smoothly.

**Don't wait! The market is calling for homes like yours!**

**Sold this Week: 38 Clark Drive, Port Alice - 2141 Camosun Crescent, Port McNeill**

To view all our listings go to [porthardyrealestate.net](http://porthardyrealestate.net)



**Melanie McRann**  
Cell: 778-886-5219