

The North Island EAGLE

Celebrating 'True North Island' Life

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Laura Masterman



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Photo — Robin Quirk, Robin's Eye Photography

Laying A Trap

Photographed from shore, a Humpback Whale trap feeds in Alert Bay. The technique involves the whale remaining stationary at the surface of the water with its mouth open for an extended period of time. Fish collect near, or in, the mouth of the Humpback to escape predation by diving birds.

New and familiar faces elected

By Kathy O'Reilly

The political landscape has changed somewhat on the North Island after the Oct. 17 election with new mayors in Port Alice and Alert Bay.

Port Alice

The Village of Port Alice has elected a new mayor: David Stewart. Stewart will be joined by Councillors Russell Murray, Sean Watson, Holly Aldis and Doug Worthington. Stewart, who garnered 58 per cent of the vote, defeated incumbent Kevin Cameron, with 19.3.

Alert Bay

In Alert Bay, the position of mayor was left vacant due to the retirement of Dennis Buchanan.

Continued on Page 2



Stewart vows to champion responsible growth

By Kathy O'Reilly

Port Alice has a new mayor.

Dave Stewart, who previously served three terms on Port Alice Council, was elected on Oct. 17. "I have lived in Port Alice for the better part of 45 years. I left for hockey and college in my early 20s and then returned and started work in the forest industry," Stewart said. "My wife (Natalie) and I decided that we wanted to keep our roots in Port Alice and three kids later, here we are," he continued. "Anyone that has lived in Port Alice, knows how great a community we have the privilege to reside in." The community is facing some challenges, however. "We have aging infrastructure that needs more than a little TLC. Budgeting for upgrades is always a challenge with a small tax base, but we will find a way."

Stewart says he will be a pro-growth mayor. "We saw how many tourists on mountain bikes and motorbikes visited our community last summer and I believe we will see more this coming year with the advertising of the North Island 1000 being so successful," he said. (The North Island 1000 is a route comprised of countless roads, trails and side trips that make for an epic tour of the North Island. Information is available at northisland1000.com.) A big priority for Stewart is having a place in town for visitors to stay such as a hotel and thinking outside the box when it comes to further development everywhere inside the village boundary.

"Visitors are constantly asking for good local hikes. If we had our own trail from town to the top of the mountain with a viewpoint, the opportunities are endless for mountain biking and hiking tourism related activity," Stewart said.

"The legacy I would like to leave behind is being known as a mayor who was receptive to ideas and accessible to everyone, whether we agreed or not. Most of all, I want to be remembered for listening to everyone's ideas and making the best decisions possible for the continued responsible growth of Port Alice."

Stewart is "looking forward to this next chapter".



Photo — Submitted

Dave Stewart, who previously served three terms on Port Alice Council, was elected Mayor on Oct. 17.



North Island election

Continued from Page 1

After the election, Samuel Cook was chosen by voters to lead the village for the next four years. He will be joined by Councillors Judy Cadrin, Lisanne Granger (incumbent), Veronica McGregor (incumbent) and Duncan Williams, who ran unopposed in the election.

Port Hardy

Port Hardy Mayor Pat Corbett-Labatt is returning for her second term, having been acclaimed. Joining her will be Councillors Janet Dorward (incumbent), Adam Ireton, Doug Kerr, David Summers, Brian Texmo (incumbent), and John Tidbury (incumbent).

Port McNeill

Port McNeill's council was in by acclamation and includes Mayor James Furney and Councillors Shelley Downey (incumbent), Janice Ellis, Bill McQuarrie and Leighann Ruel (incumbent).

Regional District of Mount Waddington

The Regional District of Mount Waddington will see a new director in Area C with Guylaine Longpré edging out Kathryn Wilkes (incumbent) in a close battle that saw Longpré garner 51 per cent of the vote and Wilkes earn 49 per cent. In Area A, Michelle Pottage was acclaimed, as was Area D's David Summers. In Area B, Andrew Hory, with 71.7 per cent of the vote, defeated Brent Schmidt with 28.3 per cent.

School District #85

Seven trustees were elected or acclaimed to Vancouver Island North School District #85 board. Lawrence Garrett and Carol Prescott were acclaimed in Port Alice seats.

Kim Lefebvre and Kat Tjepkema were acclaimed in Port McNeill seats.

For Port Hardy, Jeff Field (521 votes), Fred Robertson (590 votes) and Christine Swain (446 votes) were elected.

Incumbent Leighton Wishart who has been a member of the board for 24 years, was not re-elected.

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NISS climbing wall reopens to the public

By Kathy O'Reilly

People are climbing the walls in Port McNeill again.

The climbing wall at North Island Secondary School (NISS) has reopened to the public.

Completed in 2017, the wall welcomed the public for about two years.

Public access ended when the only certified instructor moved away, said Port McNeill Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Chair Trevor Harder. Another certified teacher later moved to the North Island, allowing NISS students - but not the public- to use the wall. Harder was unsure of the timing.

In 2023, Harder began contacting the wall's founder, Greg Muirhead, to find out what reopening would require.

He said there was strong interest in restoring public access to the major community project, which had received tens of thousands of dollars from local businesses, organizations and individuals.

After repeated setbacks, progress began when Harder brought stakeholders together in the town council chambers.

Harder said the meeting included representatives from School District #85, NISS, town council and Mayor, the Port McNeill Rotary Club, local climbers and the owner of On the Rocks climbing gym in Campbell River.

The main barriers were insurance coverage and access to the school.

Harder explained that the school's insurance policy required a specific certification that was difficult and costly to obtain, even though commercial climbing gyms did not require it.

Operating under the school's policy would require that certification; the town's policy had different requirements. After a couple of months of discussions between the town's and school district's lawyers and insurers, they reached an agreement. Valid until 2030, with the intention to renew, it gives the town access to the gym through the Parks and Recreation Committee when no other activities are scheduled.

Everyone is welcome at the climbing wall.

Harder said the wall has three auto-belay systems rated for 22 to 310 pounds, plus plenty of harnesses and shoes for children and adults.

The smaller harness fit most children around 45 to 50 pounds. "Children below this weight are encouraged to bring their own harness to insure a snug fit."

Hours are Wednesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. and Fridays from 6:15 to 8:15 p.m. No experience is needed.

Volunteers will check that harnesses are worn correctly and ensure climbing remains safe and controlled.

Harder said five to six volunteers will keep sessions running smoothly and teach safe climbing practices rather than offer traditional lessons. Admission is free.

Harder described Friday's opening night as a great turnout, with 52 people signing up to climb. He thanked fellow volunteers Courtenay Lancaster, Logan Lavoie, Michael Peterson, Mikayla Rawson, James Rawson, Connor Cashin and Jaylene Lancaster for making it possible.

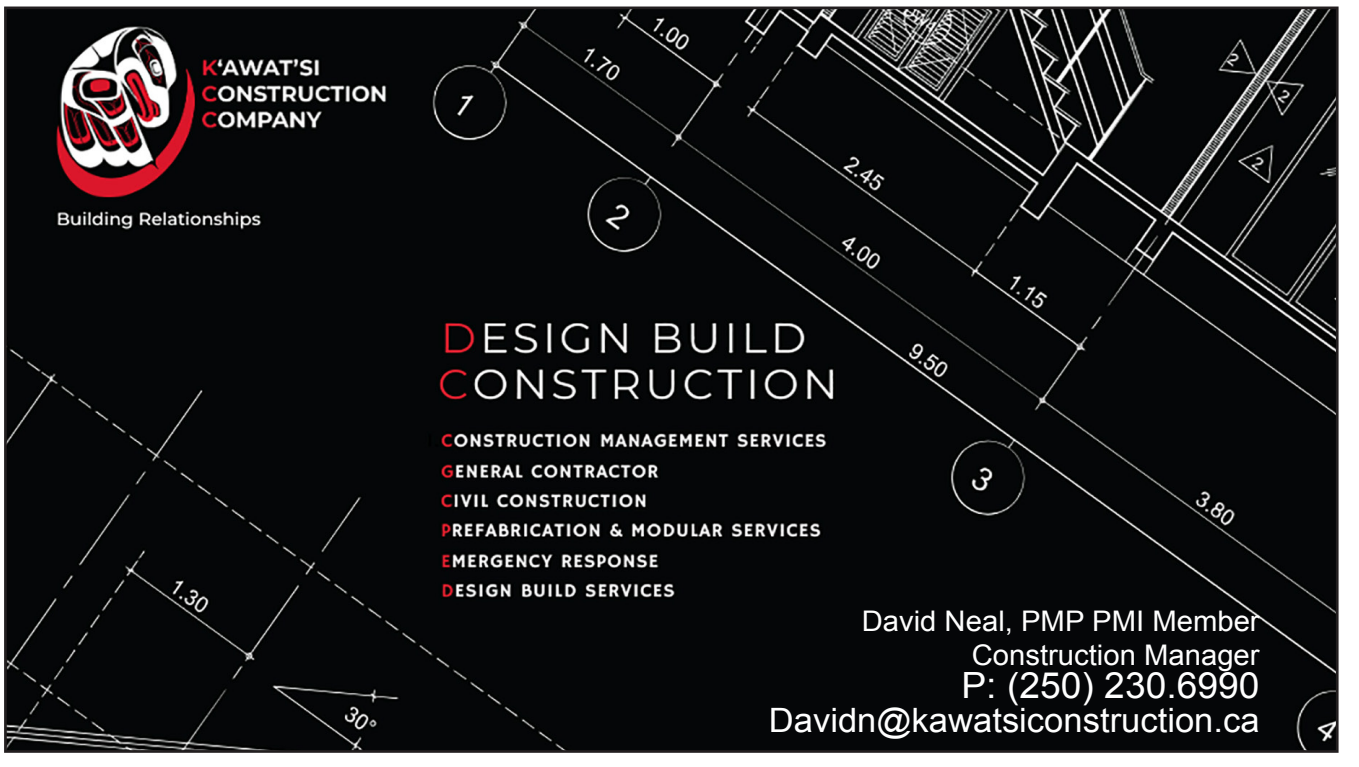
Harder is excited to expand the North Island's climbing community. He and other climbers are developing an outdoor climbing area near Keogh Lake and would welcome help with trail maintenance, route cleaning and route development.

To learn more or volunteer, email trevorjharder@gmail.com.



Photo — Submitted

The climbing wall at North Island Secondary School in Port McNeill reopened to the public Friday, Oct. 16 with 52 people signing up to climb.



editorial



Photo — Robin Quirk, Robin's Eye Photography

A Great Blue Heron hidden in the trees.

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Diamond Dinner brightens Festival of Lights future

An evening of diamonds, dazzling dresses and community generosity has helped brighten the future of Port Hardy's annual Festival of Lights.

The Rotary Club of Port Hardy's Diamond Dinner, held Oct. 17 at Seven Hills Golf and Country Club, raised more than $3,000 in support of the community's holiday light displays.

Originally established by the local Masons, the Diamond Dinner was revived by Rotary this year, bringing back an evening of elegance, entertainment and fund-raising. The event proved popular, with 76 of the 80 available tickets sold.

From the moment guests arrived, the evening was designed to make them feel special. Dressed in their finest, attendees were welcomed by formally dressed gentlemen who provided coat-check service, along with a sparkling beverage to begin the festivities.

The beautifully decorated venue provided an elegant backdrop for an evening of friendship and celebration. Guests enjoyed gourmet hot appetizers served throughout the evening, complemented by cold appetizer and dessert stations, while music provided the perfect atmosphere for socializing.

Adding to the excitement were lively games and a reverse draw featuring 16 jewellery prizes.

Anticipation built throughout the evening as names were eliminated from the draw, culminating in the presentation of the grand prize, a stunning pavé and cushion-cut diamond necklace, to Olann Thornett.

With the prizes awarded, the music picked up and guests took to the dance floor to finish the evening in style.

Rotarian Cora Nelson, who played a leading role in organizing and decorating the event and also spearheads the annual Festival of Lights, was delighted with the response.

"The women arrived looking so beautiful in their dresses," Nelson said, describing the evening as a tremendous success.

Beyond the glamour and excitement, the evening had an important purpose: helping maintain and replace the lighting displays that transform Port Hardy's downtown during the Christmas season.

"We always need new lighting. The winter storms wreak havoc every year," Nelson explained.

The funds raised will help ensure that the Festival of Lights continues to bring warmth, colour and holiday cheer to the community.

The Rotary Club of Port Hardy extends its appreciation to the Masons for establishing the Diamond Dinner tradition, to the many volunteers and supporters who helped bring the evening together, and especially to the women whose enthusiastic participation made its return such a success.

With a successful revival now behind them, the Diamond Dinner has once again demonstrated that a little sparkle can make a meaningful difference in the community.



Photo — Submitted

Diamond Dinner MC and Rotarian Janet Dorward, right, presents the grand prize - pavé and cushion-cut diamond necklace - to Olann Thornett.



PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PERMISSIVE TAX EXEMPTION FOR YEARS 2027 & 2028

The Council for the District of Port Hardy is proposing the following tax exemption for the years of 2027 and 2028:

Roll No. 12056.000 North Island Crisis and Counselling Centre Society: Lot A, Section 36, Township 9, Rupert Land District, Plan VIP30434, civically addressed as 7053 Market St., Port Hardy, BC – under section 224(2)(a) of the Community Charter states as follows: land or improvements held by a charitable, philanthropic, or nonprofit corporation. Estimated taxes forgone for 2027 is $8,000 and 2028 for $8,715.

Noramay Isaac, Director of Financial Services/DCAO
District of Port Hardy
Phone: (250) 949-6665
Email: general@porthardy.ca

lifestyles&leisure

Award winning filmmaker to lead horror workshop

By Kathy O'Reilly

Something super spooky is on the agenda Halloween weekend.

The North Island Film and Media Society is hosting a workshop in Sointula Oct. 30 to Nov. 1 featuring award-winning filmmaker and script supervisor Stephanie Rossel.

Rossel has been making films for 40 years and is a script supervisor whose credits include Deadpool, Juno, 50/50, Tully, When We Rise, and collaborations with Robert Altman and Gus Van Sant. She has written and directed award-winning shorts and co-founded the Comox Valley International Film Festival. A dedicated educator, Rossel delivers accessible, practical training that empowers rural and emerging filmmakers to tell their stories confidently.

"This will be a hands-on, step-by step course that takes participants through the process of making a narrative short film, from writing the script to completing a final film," said Executive Producer Logan Alexander.

"We will focus on the horror genre and take a dive into how to tell a scary story. The emphasis won't be on blood and gore, but more an exploration of shot angles, tone and story structures which elicit suspense, surprise and sometimes fear," Alexander said.

"In the end, we'll have a completed, festival ready film, which we will all have created as a team."

Open to ages 16 and up, the workshop welcomes everyone from complete beginners to experienced filmmakers. The cost is $100 which includes two lunches – even a spooky one provided by Coho Joe's.

To register, email: northislandfilmmedia@gmail.com.



Photo — Submitted

The North Island Film and Media Society is hosting a workshop in Sointula Oct. 30 to Nov. 1 featuring award-winning filmmaker and script supervisor Stephanie Rossel.

North Island Film Festival expands into film and media society

Exciting things are happening for North Island filmmakers!

Following the success of the North Island Film Festival, the festival is now part of the North Island Film & Media Society (NIFMS), a community-focused organization dedicated to supporting and developing film and media opportunities across the North Island.

While the North Island Film Festival will continue to be a major part of what the society does, the broader mandate includes three key pillars: film festivals, accessible filmmaking education, (and the third pillar is a yet to be announced surprise).

One of the core values is making filmmaking education more accessible to North Islanders, creating opportunities for people of all experience levels to learn new skills, collaborate, and tell their own stories.

From Oct. 30 to Nov. 1, they will be hosting their first filmmaking workshop funded by IATSE Local 891 (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees) in Sointula!

"We're thrilled to have the support of IATSE Local 891 in helping us bring more filmmaking education opportunities to our North Island communities," said Logan Alexander.

This workshop is just the beginning.

"We're planning more filmmaking workshops throughout the spring, with opportunities to explore different aspects of filmmaking, develop technical and creative skills, and connect with other local filmmakers," Alexander said.

"Our goal is to continue building a welcoming, collaborative filmmaking community where North Islanders have access to the skills, resources, and opportunities to bring their stories to the screen."

Stay tuned for more workshop announcements and opportunities to get involved with North Island Film & Media Society.

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Photo — Robin Quirk, Robin's Eye Photography

Triple Take Off

Highly adapted to an aquatic environment (e.g., all toes are connected by a web), cormorants are awkward on land. When standing or perching they assume an upright posture. Under good lighting, as seen above, its dark plumage displays a striking glossy green and purple-bronze sheen. Immature birds lack iridescence and are dark brown, grading into slightly lighter brown on the underside.

Hardy presents new Halloween Festival

By Kathy O'Reilly

Enjoy a frightfully fun day for the whole family! Wander through eerie vendor booths, grab a bite of some wickedly good food, and test your courage with hauntingly fun Halloween games like the Witch's Broom Relay, Zombie Obstacle Course, and Monster Mash Race at the Port Hardy Halloween Festival Oct. 31 at the Civic Centre.

The festivities kick off with a Sensory Friendly Hour from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. offering a quieter, more relaxed experience before the festival opens to the general public from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"Typically, we do an Autumn Festival, but September and October were so busy that we opted for a Halloween Festival instead," said Community Outreach Coordinator Sara Klatt.

Visitors can enjoy a variety of vendors, including the Wonton Man serving up delicious eats and Funtastic Sweets offering candy and freshly spun cotton candy!

Comedian OGR-Scintilla will take the stage at 12:30 p.m., bringing plenty of laughs to the Halloween celebrations.

Of course, it wouldn't be Halloween without costumes! Attendees are encouraged to dress in their Halloween best for a chance to win some fantastic door prizes. Thanks to the generous support of ENGIE, CUPE 401, and the Port Hardy Lions Club, admission is free.

Interested vendors can register online or in person at the Recreation Centre.

"We invite the whole community to join us for a frightfully fun day filled with costumes, treats, entertainment, and Halloween excitement," said Klatt.



Fort Rupert Curling Club hosts clothing swap event

By Kathy O'Reilly

Looking for a chance to refresh your wardrobe?

You will want to attend the Style Social being hosted at the Fort Rupert Curling Club by its special events committee.

"Ladies love a good clothing swap, so we thought to make it an event," said committee member Jen Hunchuk, adding it's a great time for ladies to clean out their closets and support a great cause.

Tickets, available at Eventbrite, are $25 - plus a bag of gently used clothes, shoes, accessories, etc. Donations are required one week before the event.

The fee gets attendees 10 tickets to pick up some new-to-them clothes and enjoy charcuterie snacks.

"We are selling 60 tickets, so far we are at halfway."

The evening of fashion, food and connection takes place Nov. 7 from 7-10. All proceeds go towards the curling club.

"People are to make arrangements with us for drop off pick up before the date, so we have time to set the curling rink up boutique style!"

Tickets are available on Eventbrite.

Author with McNeill roots presents cookbook

By Kathy O'Reilly

Looking to expand your culinary repertoire?

The Bookshelf at ShopRite at Home is hosting a presentation and book signing with author Sabrina Currie of her cookbook 'West Coast Kitchen Garden' on Thursday, Nov. 5 at 5:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be available.

Sabrina, currently a Campbell River resident, attended culinary school, is a sommelier and has photography training.

Her hobbies include foraging, fishing and supporting fresh and sustainably earth grown goods.

This has led to some amazing work and collaborations with local and national companies that share the same ethos. She has been honoured to work with farmers, fishers, whole food-based companies and makers, photographing, promoting and writing about their work.



Photo — Submitted

The Bookshelf at ShopRite at Home is hosting a presentation and book signing with cookbook author Sabrina Currie of her cookbook 'West Coast Kitchen Garden' on Thursday, Nov. 5 at 5:30 p.m.

Fresh out of high school in Port McNeill, Sabrina attended culinary school and worked for a few years as a sous chef. The pay and hours weren't a great fit when she became a mother and she retrained as a medical lab assistant.

"I always knew I wanted to get back into food somehow, but needed to wait until my kids were older," Sabrina writes on her website.

"As a creative outlet, I started posting my food and recipes on Instagram and then I decided to make a website for my content to live. Soon, a local magazine, Edible Vancouver Island, reached out and I began doing regular articles, recipes and photography for them. Next, local food brands started asking if I would do photos for them," she writes.

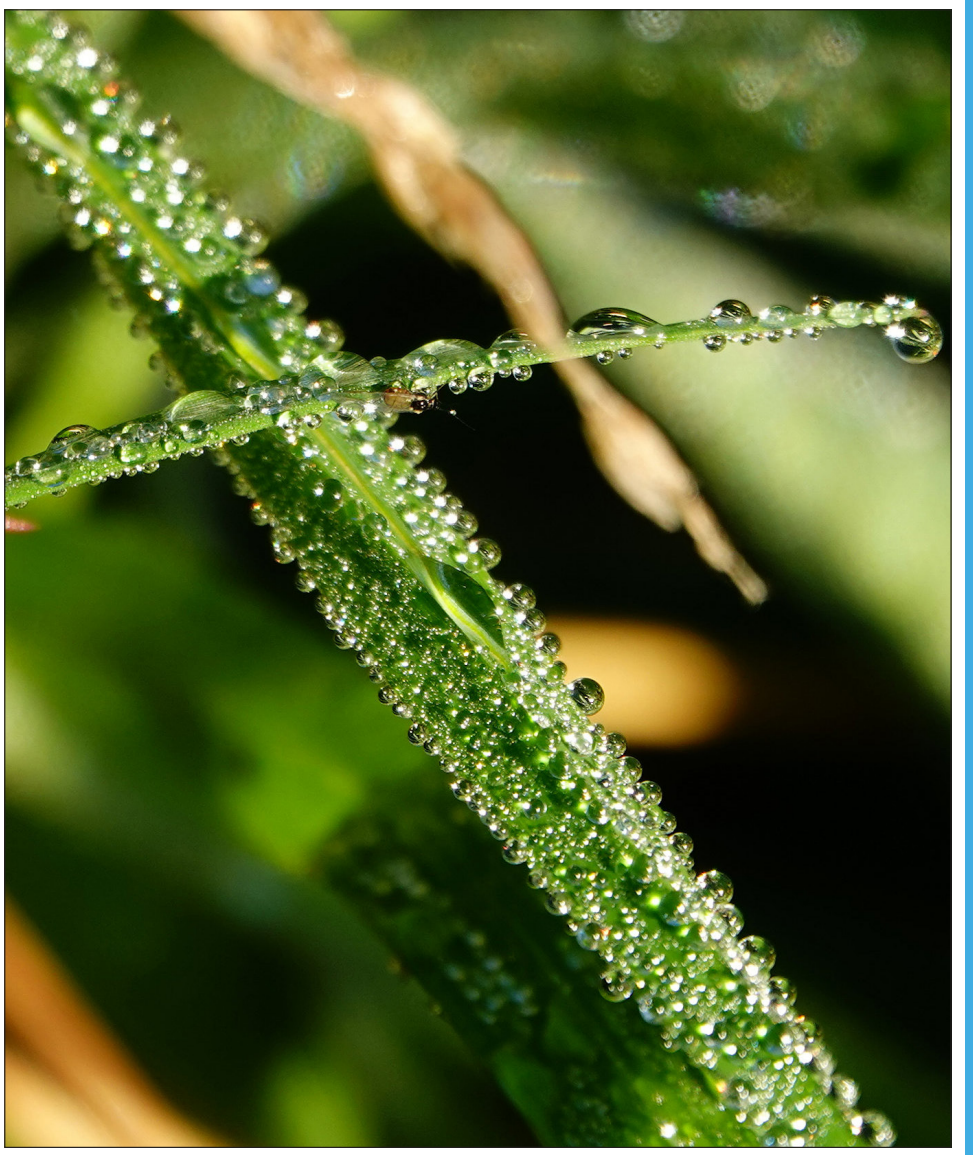
"I did these jobs as a sideline to my 'day job' working in the hospital lab but last year, I realized my side hustle was earning more than my 'day job' so I decided to make the leap to full-time content creator," Sabrina said.

"I love to make food look crave-worthy, and I am passionate about local foods and makers, so I tend to develop close, long-term relationships with the companies I work for."

Her background growing up in a fishing family in Port McNeil with two grandmothers whose passion was gardening inevitably led her to a love of growing great food and creating wonderful recipes. She shares that creative joy in her cookbook.

Copies of Sabrina's book will be available for purchase and signing. All are welcome, but a phone call or email to Linda Ash for a catering count would be appreciated. linda@shoprite.ca

North Island Reflections



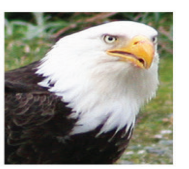
Raindrops cling to grass. Photo by Robin Quirk, Robin's Eye Photography. If you have a photo you would like to share with our readers please email publisher@northislandeagle.com.

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Canoes

Sportspal 14-foot, square stern canoe. Weighs 47 pounds. Custom rod holders, side motor mount, and outriggers. Asking $2,000 firm.
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Fishing

Vintage Daiwa sealine Model SL24RS 7-foot fishing rod with 7 eyes, two of them are broken. Comes with an Alvey fishing reel, nine-inch spool, Model number 925-A52. $100.
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Alvey knuckle buster fishing reel. Has a five-inch spool. $40.
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11ft3in. Lamiglas steelhead fishing rod. Mint condition. $225 firm.
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Fishing

Vintage aluminium p.f. lueger, Pakron, model number 3178 fishing reel with a 5-and-a-half-inch spool. Works excellent. $50.
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For Rent

Twoceans Coal Harboour, 2 Bedroom townhouse. Stove, fridge, washer, dryer, microwave. Clean quiet rural location. Professional working singles or couples. References required. $1,400 + hydro Oct. 1.
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Furniture

Massage chair. Paid $3500 for it. Want $2000. Like new.
250-284-3261

Power recliner, approximately five years old, seldom used, brown. Like new. Paid $1,300 will sell for $450.
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Lost

Lost in Port Hardy area, key and fob for GMC.
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Miscellaneous

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2 running boards from F150, good condition, $50.
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Sporting Goods

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Tires

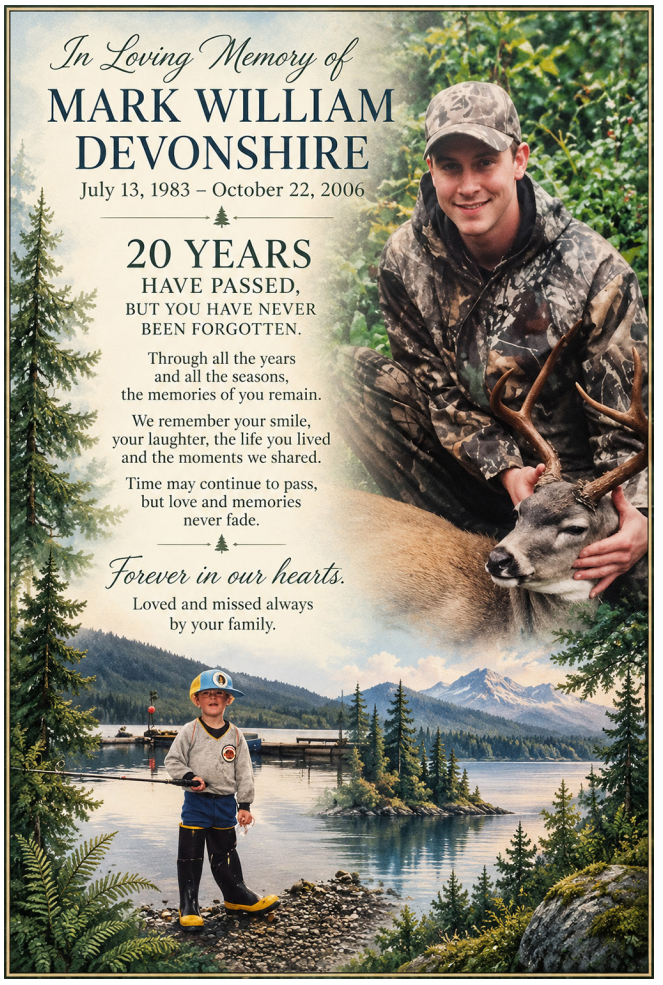
4 Altimax tires – Arctic, M+S, with snowflake. 265/75R-16. Radial, tubeless, 6-ply tread, balanced, on rims, no leaks, and at least 50% tread life left. Came off a 2007 Nissan Xterra. $50 each.
250-949-0118

4 matching winter tires for 16-inch rims, used one season, 235/65R 16 103H, tubeless steel belted radials. $300.
250-974-8336

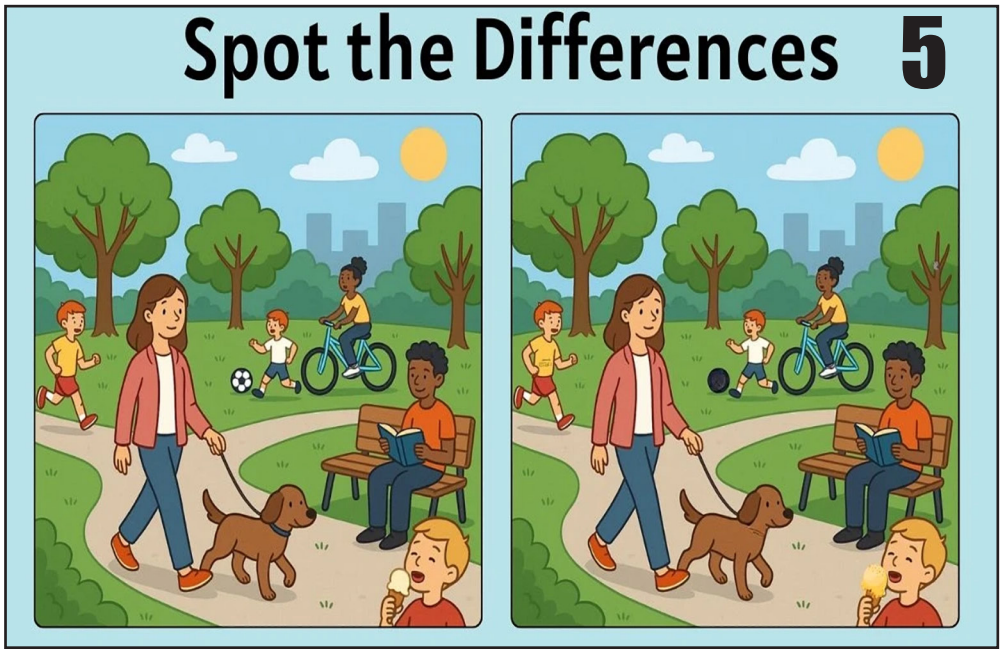
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Royal LePage Advance Realty Ltd is excited to introduce our newest Real Estate professional to our team! Laura will proudly serve communities across Northern Vancouver Island and beyond.

Laura would love to share her story with you here.

Having grown up on Northern Vancouver Island, this place has always held a special place in my heart. From our beautiful coastlines and forests to the welcoming communities and outdoor adventures that make island living so unique, I feel fortunate to call this place home and raise my family here.

With more than 20 years of experience in the finance and insurance industries, I've built my career around helping people, building lasting relationships, and guiding them through important life decisions. I'm excited to bring that knowledge and expertise into Real Estate and continue doing what I love — connecting with people and helping them navigate life's big moments.

As a wife, mom, and outdoor adventurer, I understand that home is about so much more than a property. It's where families grow, memories are made, adventures begin, and new chapters unfold.

Whether you're buying your first home, selling a longtime family property, or making a move to embrace a new adventure, my goal is to make the process as comfortable and rewarding as possible. I believe in honest advice, personal service, and treating every client with the same care and respect I would want for my own family.

I'm proud to begin this new chapter in a community that means so much to me. I look forward to meeting new people, strengthening local connections, and helping others find their place to call home.

Laura Masterman
Real Estate Professional
Royal LePage Advance Realty Ltd
(250)-202-0396
laura@lauramasterman.ca

SOLD — 556 Coal Harbour Road, Coal Harbour, 62 Clark Drive, Port Alice

To view all our listings go to porthardyrealestate.net



Sandra Masales
Cell: 250-902-9271



Johan Olsen
Cell: 250-209-9667



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