

# SAANICH VOICE ONLINE

June, 2013

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## Where Have All The Fishes Gone?

Author: Ed Johnson,  
Citizen Journalist

Eighty-eight year old Jack Lenfesty and his wife, Juanita have resided on the shores of the Saanich Inlet in the same home for over 60 years. Before that, their home belonged to Jack's father, W.N. Lenfesty, who operated one of Victoria's first sporting goods stores and used the house as a summer cottage. During that time, the Lenfestys have witnessed the gradual environmental degradation of the inlet; and in particular, the loss of a fishing resource that they once enjoyed.

Jack fondly remembers when his father "... could go a short distance from the shore any evening and catch dinner after just a few casts. Spring and Coho salmon were plentiful, but from the mid 70's this gradually disappeared until today when one is lucky even to bring up a few trapped prawns."

At first glance, the cause appears to be overfishing by an ever increasing human population. However, a baseline study initiated by the Government of British Columbia in 1994 suggests many more possibilities. Poor water circulation, fecal coliform contamination, metal and DDT contamination in sediments, climate change and fisheries management practices; even El Niño were mentioned.

Perhaps the biggest loss has been to the local First Nations communities, who had always relied on the abundance of fish and related seafood that the inlet provided. The report at that time noted that 12 of the 15 shellfish beaches on the Saanich Peninsula were closed due to fecal contamination - possibly from manure piles or failing septic fields.

Some local not-for-profit volunteer groups, such as SeaChange have decided to take matters into their own hands in an attempt to revive salmon populations by focusing on conservation and protection of eelgrass. This endangered habitat contributes to the spawning ground for salmon, herring, crabs, clams and other marine life.

Through education and advocacy with local communities (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), the volunteers at Sea Change hope to rehabilitate marine environments on the Saanich Pen-

insula. Sarah Verstegen, Operations Manager, is once again staffing the popular Tod Inlet Nature Float. "We hope to have the float operational in mid-June. On display will be aspects of the cultural and natural history of Tod Inlet. It can be reached by foot from Benvenuto Road, or by parking on Wallace Drive and walking the Tod Inlet Trail down to the water's edge."

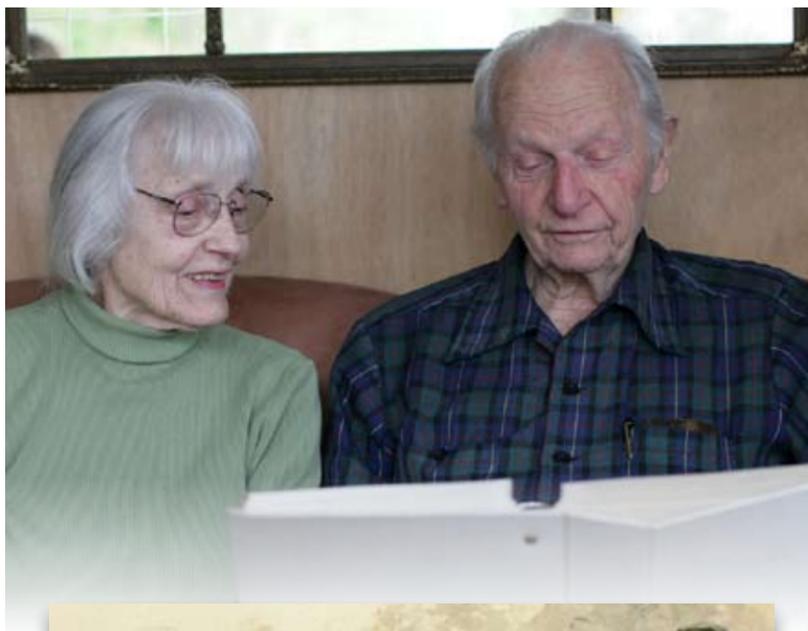
While SeaChange is hoping its efforts will see the varieties of fish returning to the Inlet, another effort was being trialed in Haida Gwaii. In October 2012, Canadian news media carried stories about the addition of 100 tons of iron oxide by an organization known as Haida Salmon Restoration Corp into the Gulf of Alaska, based on the theory that adding iron will cause a plankton bloom - providing more food for salmon; thereby increasing stocks.

Which begs the question, could adding iron to the Saanich Inlet help increase salmon stocks by increasing plankton and food for salmon?

However, renowned ocean sci-

entist and Order of Canada recipient Dr. Tim Parsons, who lives on the shore of the Inlet in Brentwood Bay threw cold water on that idea. He says, "Regardless of the merits or lack thereof of the Haida Gwaii experiment, you cannot take what was done on the coast and discuss Saanich Inlet in the same context. Saanich Inlet is not iron limited. All coastal regions have lots of iron because of the proximity of the coast. It is the ocean waters off the continental shelf of the Gulf of Alaska, that are iron limited and so the iron was dumped two hundred miles off the coast and did not mix with waters on the shelf."

In the meantime, Jack and Juanita have only memories and photographs of the once pristine Saanich Inlet, which they first called home in the early 1940's. Copies of Jack's old photographs (shown here) are of Jack's father, W.N. Lenfesty, and friends who regularly fished the inlet with little Jack in tow, sometimes even catching salmon from shore.



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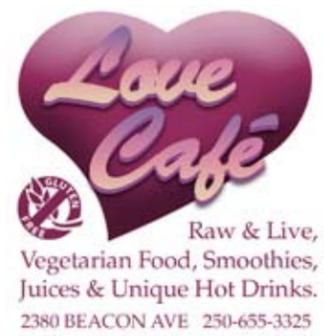
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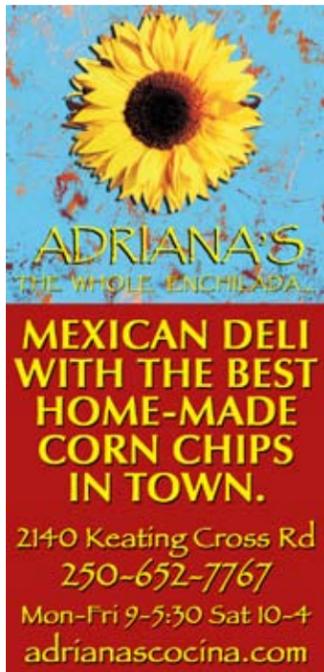
What is Saanich Voice Online? It's YOUR community paper; by you and for you. Saanich Voice Online is entirely published by local residents, covering local stories at the ground level from the "citizen journalist" perspective. Our mission is threefold. 1) We are devoted to being a news source for the many communities of the Saanich Peninsula as well as a resource for local businesses that have an interest in a fiscal, socially and environmentally responsible world. 2) To publish regional stories through interviews and investigative citizen journalism about smart growth, local governance and stories of human interest with a commitment to checking sources and facts. 3) To preserve our region as the precious jewel that it is through expanded discussion and citizen engagement. We hope you will contribute your own photos, stories and ads. For questions or comments, please visit our website. Saanich Voice Online is a registered and incorporated company.



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## Red Barn Market: Island Raised - Island Grown

Author: Lois Theaker,  
Citizen Journalist

The Red Barn Market was hopping on a warm afternoon in May. "Fine weather really brings people out to the store", says owner/manager Russ Benwell. With a smile, Russ noted that the previous day had been "the best sales day of the year."

So besides great weather, what else draws customers to the Red Barn?

Russ believes it starts with their philosophy, 'Island Raised - Island Grown'. "Being from Vancouver Island and a company that is all Vancouver Island owned, we want to support Vancouver Island first where possible."

Which begs the question, how do they manage to keep a consistent sup-

ply of local products?

Russ acknowledges that produce is always the toughest commodity to keep in stock using only local suppliers. For a good share of the year, much of the produce is imported, but "...during the summertime, we encourage the local growers to see us. We like to support them first and utilize the growing season."

Throughout the store, there are local grocery items in staple and niche areas (i.e. gluten free). All their poultry is from Duncan and their beef is primarily from Quist Farm, also in Duncan. When supply allows, their pork comes from Metchosin. "There's only so much pork grown here," Russ says. He adds that sometimes, as with beef, it has to be supplemented from farther afield when there's a shortage.

The Red Barn likes letting customers know when they are buying local. "A really neat piece of our business is that we identify any Red Barn products with a black tag. So when you look in our deli cases, anything with a black tag identifies it as made in our smoke house, or an island

grazed product or a product that we have made in-house. That is a big differentiation between the Red Barn and a traditional grocery store. People really know where their food is sourced."

Russ says even when hiring staff they embrace the philosophy of 'Island Raised - Island Grown', by hiring from the area. "Staff is a key piece of our business. They make the atmosphere that we have - which is fun. It is an outing when you come to Red Barn. You can have a sandwich and a coffee, and catch up."

With four cashiers moving at full speed, a customer asked if anyone was serving ice cream. A cashier smiled as she said, "It's self-serve today" and quickly had someone there to serve the ice cream. The cashiers often have a joke and seem to know many of their customers.

Russ explains, "There are a lot different pieces of our business that you won't find at a big, conventional grocery store."

Continued online at:  
[www.SaanichVoiceOnline.ca](http://www.SaanichVoiceOnline.ca)

## Afternoon Tea With Jane Austen

Author: Judy Barlow,  
Citizen Journalist

If a cup of tea is just your cup of tea, then here's a cup of tea you won't want to miss out on.

Whether you long for a nice cuppa or just enjoy dress-up, the fourth annual Jane Austen Tea Party provides an afternoon retreat from the stress of daily living. Relax in the ambient surroundings of an English country garden. Bask in summer sunshine or linger in the shade. Stroll through lush gardens or tour an on-site winery. Whatever you want - it's your day.

Hosted by the Starling Lane Winery and Heritage Farm, the Jane Austen Tea has drawn a sell-out crowd for the last three years, many donning period costumes. "People like to dress up in period costumes," says Josephine Hoskins, one of the event organizers. "Probably about 80% come in costume. Or they just come in pretty summer dresses and hats. It's not required though. They just like it."

But it's not just about pulling a vintage dress out of your tickle trunk and sipping tea donated by the Silk Road. Everyone involved in the fundraiser is volunteering their time, expertise and resources to make it a go-to gala; a magical recreation of an idyllic summer day in the romantic era inhabited by Jane Austen's iconic characters.

Upon arrival, guests are greeted with a glass of punch and seated at fresco under the trees at tables set with heritage linens and charming vintage bone china and silver.

While a live ensemble plays period pieces, songstress Elizabeth Bennett strolls among the tables singing musical numbers from the past. Those who want to know the future can consult tea leaves with a wandering seer. British actress Kim Hicks chats with guests in the guise of a Jane Austen heroine and performs vignettes from Jane's novels as she too moves from guest to guest.

The Jane Austen tea began as an experiment - a fundraising idea to cover some of the costs of major renovations for the Prospect Lake and District Community Association facilities. This is where Josephine Hoskins (Victoria Vintage China Rentals) comes in.

Josephine had always loved beautiful bone china and brought quite a bit with her from England. When her daughter wanted to use vintage china at her wedding reception Josephine bought enough at local thrift stores to serve 200. "Then some of her friends wanted some too, so we started to rent it out. Now we have enough for 200 - 250 people," she adds. But it's not only china she rents. It's not uncommon for someone to come for china and leave with carpets and furniture.

With a rueful look she glances around at piles of dishes, rolled up carpets just returned from an event, and a vintage pram. "It's all over the place. It takes up a lot of space ... It really



was my daughter's idea, but when I looked into it I saw that they were doing quite a bit of it in Britain and I knew that it could be successful... Young people don't want the china in their homes, but they do like it so they're happy to rent it for their weddings and showers."

So Josephine had a handle on the serving pieces, but where to hold it? Enter Jackie Wrinch (Starling Lane Winery) and her exquisitely landscaped heritage farm and winery.

With Josephine's china, and Jackie's venue, the event proved to be a huge success, so much so that they later expanded it to two days.

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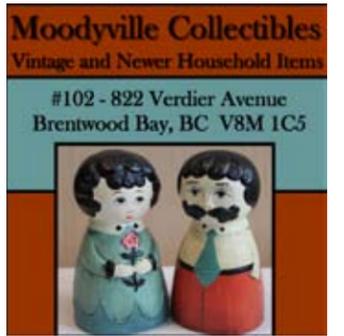
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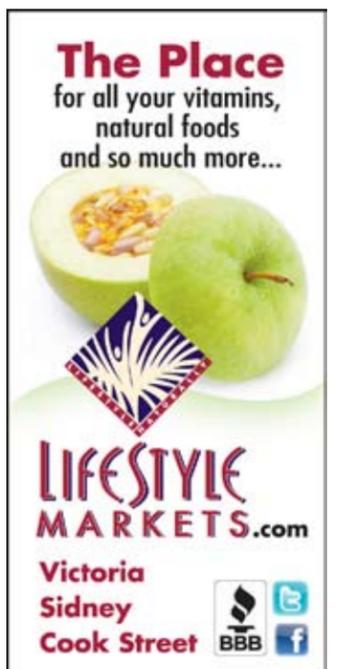


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