

CULTIVATE

INSPIRE • NURTURE • ELEVATE



LIVES SHARED &
LESSONS LEARNED

Shaping
Perspectives

A REAL
PAGE TURNER

Unfolding a
New Chapter

SIP &
SAVOUR

Perfectly Pairable
Bruschetta & Mojitos

Seven Dimensions of Wellness

We use all seven dimensions when designing our programs.



Physical: Programs that improve physical health and fitness make a direct impact on your ability to maintain independence. This includes all types of exercise, nutrition, sleep and stress management initiatives.

Emotional: Enhance emotional wellbeing in order to improve a person's ability to cope with challenges and increase awareness and agility in managing feelings. Examples include music, mindfulness, sharing stories, and creative writing.

Environmental: Interconnectedness with nature and our planet, and stewardship of both, are aspects of environmental wellness. Programs include nature-related workshops, gardening, beach clean ups, and recycling initiatives.

Social: Our happiness, health and even immune systems benefit greatly from social interactions. Programs that allow for easy interactions with others enhance our social wellness, such as theme events and bus trips.

Intellectual: Keeps our minds stimulated, curious and alert. Problem solving capacities are improved. Examples include puzzles, trivia, presentations, and educational opportunities.

Spiritual: Indicated by a sense of meaning, purpose and connection in our lives. Examples include meditation, nature walks, and yoga.

Vocational: Utilizes a person's skills to provide value to society and personal satisfaction. Examples include craft fairs, performing concerts, and leading community fundraising initiatives.

We are the proud recipients of the Beacon award, three times. This ranks us in the the top 25 communities in North America for the engaging programing that we offer. With our programs centered around the 7 dimensions of wellness we strive for engaging and empowered living!



Writing our Next Chapter

In this edition we explore what it means to write your next chapter. Read on for highlights on some of the inspiring ways that residents at BQB are redefining aging and writing their next chapter. What will your future hold?

**YOU ARE THE
AUTHOR OF YOUR
OWN STORY.
THE NEXT CHAPTER
BEGINS THE
MOMENT YOU
DECIDE TO TURN
THE PAGE.**





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Berwick Qualicum Beach recognizes that we live and work on land within the traditional territory of the Qualicum First Nation.

Cover photo by Rachel Kirk

ChatGPT is an advanced AI-powered chatbot that generates human-like text, answers questions, writes code, and brainstorms ideas. It uses Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT) technology to understand context and mimic natural conversation.



Ask ChatGPT How to live to 140

ChatGPT analyzed the data of centenarians from the “blue zones” and reached an unexpected conclusion. It’s not diet, exercise or genetics.

- The main factor for longevity is low level of chronic stress, the internal conflict between who you are and who you try to appear to be, and living in harmony with yourself.
- Stop “saving for later” – live today, don’t postpone life until you retire.
- Social connections are worth more than vitamins. Loneliness is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. People with strong social bonds live 50% longer.
- Find a purpose bigger than yourself, a reason to get up in the morning.

Blue Zones are specific geographic regions with the highest concentrations of centenarians (people living to 100+) and remarkably low rates of chronic disease. Identified by researchers Dan Buettner and National Geographic, the five original, validated areas are Okinawa (Japan), Sardinia (Italy), Nicoya (Costa Rica), Ikaria (Greece), and Loma Linda (California).



But what is AI?

Berwick Qualicum Beach resident Nestor Gayowsky offers some insight into Artificial Intelligence and what it might mean for our future.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the field of computer science focused on building systems that can perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence. AI ranges from narrow systems that do one task well (like speech recognition) to the long-term goal of more general, human-level intelligence.

For those who have used AI, it is easy to get the impression that the computer reaches into a huge database or encyclopedia, plucks out the information, and sorts it for use. Nothing could be further from the truth. Fundamentally, AI is a huge mathematical model, a branch of mathematics, statistical analysis and machine learning.

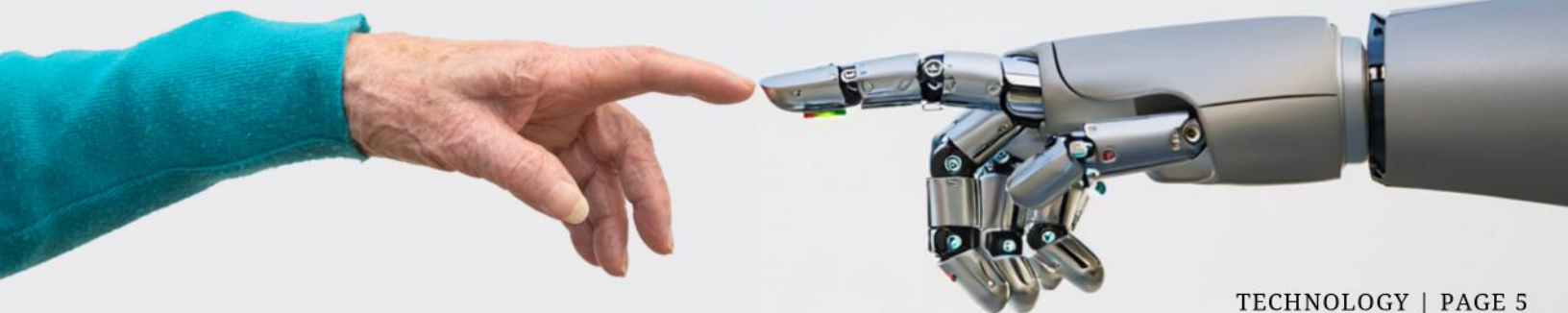
Modern AI is trained by exposing a mathematical model to large datasets. During training, the model provides an answer when asked a question, which is then checked against the correct answer. After many optimizations and iterations, the process encodes a statistical regularity, i.e., a correct answer. The result appears to be knowledge, but the process is fundamentally mathematical. In other words, it is not about “learning facts” the way a person does. The mechanism is different.

A lot of specialized hardware (computer chips and machines to run them) is needed for AI training. Both during the training period and when accessed by users, massive numbers of parallel mathematical operations are conducted. The data centres consume substantial electricity and generate significant heat. Communities that host AI data centres often face sharply increased water demand because many cooling systems evaporate large volumes of water each day, putting pressure on local supplies during dry seasons. They also experience major electricity load growth, which can strain grids, require new transmission infrastructure, or raise local energy costs. Together, these pressures can force municipalities to rethink resource planning, sometimes sparking debates over whether the economic benefits outweigh the environmental and infrastructure impacts.

AI has significant social implications. It is most likely to substantially automate routine, rules-based, and information-heavy work, especially when tasks follow clear patterns and outcomes that can be evaluated objectively. This includes clerical and administrative roles, basic customer support, bookkeeping, routine legal and medical document review, translation, and transcription. The reader of this piece may already have encountered various Chat screens.

Humans will remain essential in professions such as software development, journalism, law, finance, medicine, engineering, and education. Where judgment is required, accountability, creativity, and interpersonal skills are important. But do not bet on it. Jobs least likely to be replaced in the near term involve physical dexterity, complex social interaction, moral responsibility, or work in unpredictable environments, such as the skilled trades, caregiving, frontline healthcare, leadership, and hands-on technical work.

When all is said and done, even the experts who created AI do not really know where humankind is headed with this unusual invention that is making the world a topsy-turvy place.





Lives Shared and Lessons Learned

The staff at Berwick Qualicum Beach have been asked how their jobs working closely with elders has shaped their perspective on their next chapter.

How was your perspective shaped?

In my six plus years working with elders at BQB I have learned many things I plan to incorporate into my own planning for older age. For instance, 90 seems to be the new 60! While I am still happy to never try water-skiing again (that ship has sailed), I do have a much wider view on what kinds of things can be discovered at an older age: passions, talents, skills, even romance. At the same time, being open to using tools that support freedom, such as walking sticks, is also vital. Using free time to improve core strength and balance is important. Contributing to the larger community in some way is enriching.

It looks to me that there is an age when being close to family becomes much more important. While there are many new friendships and connections to be discovered in a retirement community, there are just times when family nearby makes a tremendous difference. I also have a new respect for the concept of ticking items from your bucket list. Live fully, travel, and enjoy loved ones while you can. Be curious. Be open. Age playfully. I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to contemplate my older years while having a blast at work at my current age!

-Denene, Gen X

Observing residents' enthusiasm, many skills, capabilities and participation in community events reinforces my belief that there is enormous resilience among aging people.

-Chris, Baby Boomer



Age is just a number. One's attitude has a real effect on how we participate in new activities and enjoy the changes aging presents. Aging is natural and relentless - enjoy the ride as best we can. The next chapter can be challenging with health issues related to aging but is no reason to stop living a productive and fulfilling existence.

-Wayne, *Baby Boomer*

Working here really opened my eyes to different aspects of aging and how wonderful it is for the residents to be in an environment that provides so many great options for them in daily activities and interactions. I think it's very important that they have their own space, but also so many beautiful spaces within Berwick to socialize and have meals with their fellow residents. I think a lot of seniors isolate themselves as they get older, but if more were aware of how fulfilling life could be and that they can still make new friends at any age, maybe more would choose to live in places like Berwick.

-Aeron, *Gen X*

The residents at Berwick have shown me how much you can do as life moves forward. No matter your age, there's still so many activities they enjoy or do to keep active. It has helped ease my nerves about what it can be like to get older. There are still so many things to do and experience. After retirement I wondered how people would stay busy. So many different kinds of hobbies or passions are available in the Berwick community. There's so much more to life than work. The residents have shown me how important it is to do other things, stay active, stay social. Thank you for that.

-Jayden, *Gen Z*

I believe aging is beautiful and should be enjoyed even if it can be difficult to navigate at times. I value all the thoughtful conversations I've had here.

-Ava, *Gen Z*

Working here has made me realize that even in their nineties people are still having fun and enjoying their days. The types of activities and new experiences residents participate in never ceases to amaze me. I think if I was out in the regular community, I wouldn't be aware of what someone in their eighties or nineties is capable of doing.

-Allison, *Baby Boomer*



CHILD'S PLAY

Children's theme boutiques have been popping up in Qualicum Beach. We checked out the new and the established, looking for the best places to select the perfect gifts.



The Qualicum Toy Shop, located at 5-211 West 2nd Avenue, was established in 1992 by Kay Strange, a widow looking for a safe place to bring her children to work if necessary. Shelley Ross purchased the toy shop from her mother when she retired in 2010.

When I entered the store for an interview, Shelley, surrounded by boxes, appeared to be getting as much joy opening cartons containing large trucks and construction equipment as a child would. She told me, "There is nothing better than giving a little boy a big truck or a fire engine."

Current trends are going back to basics: battery-free toys, games to spur the imagination, and other items that will keep children's interest longer. LEGO blocks, craft things, Playmobil, cars, trucks, dolls, and dollhouses are popular. They carry a wide selection of jigsaw puzzles for all ages, but sell a ton of puzzles for adults. Games for the whole family to enjoy on game nights are becoming popular, reminiscent of activities our parents did, games that teach patience and taking turns. One of her best sellers is the Yodo player, a screen-free, interactive device for listening to stories, music, and educational content.

When asked how she decides on what to purchase, she said, "I look for things that will last; quality over quantity. I choose Canadian first, but there isn't a lot made in Canada." Nothing gives Shelley greater satisfaction than helping a child find the exact thing they are wanting.

Shelley loves watching grandparents and great-grandparents involved because we all benefit from their knowledge. "When they feel they've found the right gift, they come back and tell me."

Gift wrapping and delivery are available. The website qualicumtoyshop.com has all the information you need.

I first entered the shop last Christmas and had no idea what to buy. Shelley took me around the shop and showed me several choices. I walked out with the perfect gift for all three of my great-grandchildren. I highly recommend stopping in for that perfect gift. You can be assured of high quality merchandise and great service.

by Heather Sanders



Trendy Kids

A shop that appeals to all the grandmothers and great-grandmothers at Berwick is a new children's clothing shop. Affiliated with 'Trendy Kids' on Primrose Street, the store opened last November at 145 Second Avenue, just steps away from Berwick between the Medicine Shoppe and Arbutus Fashions clothing store. Little tulle Princess dresses, fairy dresses with sparkles and wings that would delight any small girl. We mustn't forget the little boys with their stylish trendy items or the sweet baby clothes, items for newborns, soft toys and books.

Laura McMahon is the friendly manager who is very enthusiastic about the quality of the items sold. While not all are necessarily made in Canada, all items are from Canadian companies and one UK company.

The owner of this shop felt there was a need in Qualicum Beach for babies and small children's clothing, and Laura states the shop is doing very well. A warm welcome awaits you as you browse the enchanting items!

by Maggie Sheehan

DISC-O BALANCE



Once upon a time there was a lovely young gal name Lara. She filled her days working at Berwick Qualicum Beach - much of her time spent in the Zoom Room instructing active living classes for the residents of BQB. Classes like Core and More, Line Dancing, or Head to Toe Fitness... the exciting list goes on. Sometimes a class starts with a joke and much laughter, like, Q. Why did the tomato blush? A. It saw the salad dressing!

One day she was thinking and contemplating and considering ideas for a new class and - behold! A vision came to her, Disc-O-Balance! That is it! Something completely new for BQB!

Wait! When I learned about this new idea, my question was, What is Disc-O-Balance? Let's ask Lara about this latest offering in the Zoom Room.

Q: What is Disc-O Balance?

It is a class designed especially for older adults. It combines fun movements with balance and stability work.

Q: What is a Disc-O Balance class like?

The class is done to disco music. Fun movements with balance and stability work (where the disc comes in) are taught and practiced. This helps build confidence, core strength, and improves coordination to prevent falls.

Q: What is a Disc-O Balance cushion?

The easiest way to describe it is that it is like a "WHOOPIE Cushion" - you remember those? It is a small, round, inflated plastic cushion that you stand or sit on or balance on your head. It is designed to improve posture, stability, and overall fitness.



More About Lara

Q: Where were you born?

Sydney, Australia

Q: How long have you been a member of the Active Living staff?

Over 6 wonderful years!

Q: What does an average day at BQB look like for you?

As a member of Active Living, my days are bursting with lively fitness classes, exciting bus adventures, and an abundance of smiles and laughter. When I create a fitness class, I blend my professional expertise, resident wishes, and my passion for wellness into a joyful experience.

by Janice Whaley

THIS YEAR, IT'S THERAPEUTIC GARDENING!

For those with itchy green thumbs, when is gardening not therapeutic?

The kick-off for Berwick Qualicum Beach's gardeners to participate in the 2026 Communities in Bloom B.C. Provincial "Friends" category came with the excitement of opening two Equinox self-watering planters.

These planters were awarded to Berwick at the 20th Anniversary and Awards Dinner for the "Friends" category held in Kelowna in October, along with a framed recognition of our 2025 "Focus on Food" entry. Don Alberg, as Superintendent of Public Works during the early competitive days of the town's participation in Communities in Bloom, attended the Kelowna event along with Lynette Twigge. Lynette is still with the town's Parks Department.

The Equinox Desert Planters encourage water conservation and environmental sustainability. Received at the end of the gardening season, the planters were put aside and unveiled as we prepared to enter this year's "Therapeutic Gardening" theme.

Each Berwick resident has their own idea of "therapeutic" gardening. Some love experimenting with different varieties of tomatoes, colourful annuals, a collection of small perennials or native flowers. Each resident may nurture this choice of "therapy" in the raised beds assigned at various Berwick outdoor areas, or on their own balconies.

Following a winter of record-setting high temperatures it was most therapeutic for one of our ardent gardeners when he could enjoy a rose that bloomed all winter as well as some early bulbs bursting with colour ahead of the usual time.

For Qualicum Beach, participation in Communities in Bloom competitively from 1999 to 2006 earned the town national recognition with success in many different categories. Two signs coming into the town highlight some of the major wins. One sign is on the central boulevard of Memorial down from the Rupert Road roundabout. The other is on Hwy 19A at the town boundary coming from Parksville. These signs give newcomers to the area an idea of the program that put Qualicum Beach on the map of Canada as a very special place, and inspires gardeners to indulge in whatever type of Therapeutic Gardening excites them the most.

by Marlys Diamond



To learn more about Qualicum Beach's Communities in Bloom, scan this QR Code!

Top Tips for Tip Top Tomatoes

Here at BQB we have some absolute gardening wizards who produce and share scrumptious fresh tomatoes of all sizes and shapes. We asked them nicely to reveal a few secret tomato container gardening tips with us, and they were kind enough to share! We've combined their suggestions, so choose your favourite tip to try. Happy gardening!

1. Plant early, avoid frost
2. Water plants daily, keep soil moist
3. Fertilize monthly or biweekly with manure
4. Dose plants with Epsom salts monthly
5. Remove suckers regularly
6. Tell them weekly how beautiful they are

by Ed Erickson and Ted Percy



MOUNT ARROWSMITH BIOSPHERE REGION



Connecting People to Nature

Biosphere regions (BRs) are learning places for sustainable development. They are sites for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems, including conflict prevention and the management of biodiversity. Today, 19 BRs exist in Canada and 3 in British Columbia. In Canada, BRs aim to contribute to the following objectives: conservation of biodiversity, climate action, sustainable development and reconciliation. The Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region (MABR) contributes to these objectives through conducting research, delivering education and facilitating engagement.

Conservation of biodiversity is an ongoing struggle within the MABR. We have seen species extirpated over time due to loss of natural habitats, and the wide-spread introduction of invasive species. As such, land acquisition is a top priority for the MABR to help secure areas that are both sensitive and biodiverse. This past year, the Hamilton Wetlands and Forest has been a priority land acquisition within the region. The RDN has an agreement in place with Mosaic Forest Management to purchase over 360 hectares of land that contains the Hamilton Wetlands and Forest for 28 million dollars. This land is critical for many local and migratory species, local water storage and is also candidate old-growth forest and essential wildlife habitat and corridor. The MABR assisted the RDN with fundraising for this land acquisition by launching a pledge campaign in 2025, which was the first of its kind run by the MABR, and ended up being extremely successful. The purchase of these lands will be finalized in late March 2026 and then a Management Plan will follow to ensure the lands are protected in perpetuity.

The MABR strives to connect people to both nature and community. Please visit our webpage to view our events and we hope to see you in the upcoming year!



Visit their
website for
upcoming
events

Dungeons & Dragons



Every day at BQB residents can be seen playing bridge, euchre, cribbage, mahjong, various board games as well as jigsaw puzzles and more. How about trying something else? Dungeons & Dragons perhaps?

There is one resident, maybe only one, Christine Selzler, who is quite familiar with this game. Christine became interested in it at university and began playing with likeminded students until graduation, when each went their own way.

Christine has maintained her interest and enjoyment of the game and still plays online for two and a half hours every Wednesday with a group of seven, based in various parts of the country. What did I learn about Dungeons & Dragons? It sounds simple enough, "a popular fantasy tabletop-playing game."

However, like any game, it has rules and procedures to follow. A group of six people is ideal, plus one more, the Dungeon Master, who sets the challenges for the group to work on and accomplish. Each player chooses a character (perhaps a fighter or a wizard or bard) and roleplays them as much or as little as they wish. The more the game is played the more one becomes familiar with it. Age is no barrier to enjoying this game - you just need to bring curiosity and imagination.

Christine took the time to give me a lot more information about the characters in the game and the way it is played and the adventure it becomes.

If anyone is interested in learning more, Christine is happy to talk about Dungeons & Dragons.

by Tess Cormack



RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT:

Marlys Diamond

*M*arlys Diamond's life is akin to a beautifully woven tapestry, crafted with meticulous care and intent. Her conversations offer a glimpse into a life driven by passion and marked by a legacy of success within her community.

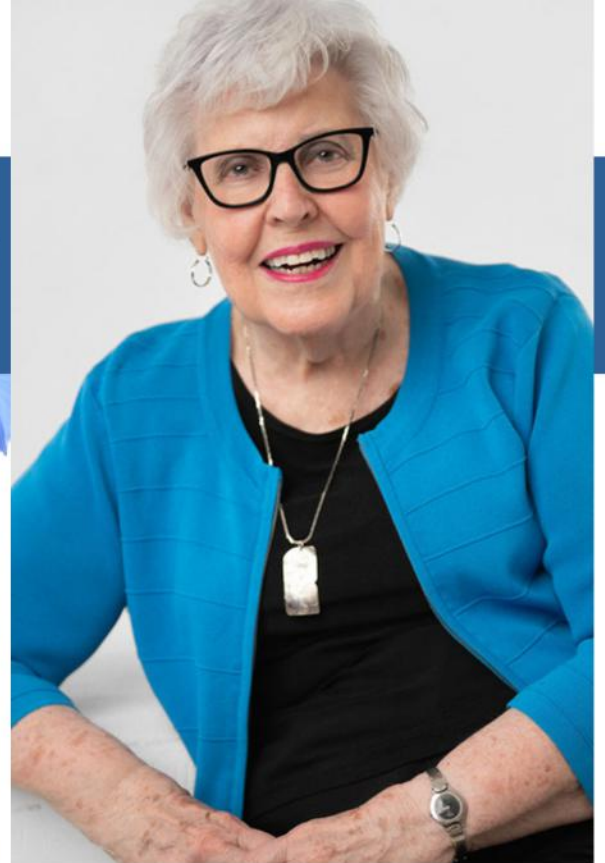
Since 1986, Marlys has dedicated herself to her community in ways many might not achieve in a lifetime. A vacation to Vancouver during Expo 86 became a pivotal moment, leading her and her late husband, Jack, to settle in Qualicum Beach. An initially sweltering vacation redirected them to Vancouver Island, where they eventually purchased land in the Regional District of Nanaimo, now part of Qualicum Beach.

While establishing their home, Marlys developed a keen interest in the history of The Old School House (TOSH), a heritage building once threatened with demolition. Thanks to community efforts, TOSH was saved and transformed into an art gallery in 1988. As Administrator from 1989 to 1995, Marlys tirelessly elevated TOSH's profile, collaborating with local businesses, artisans, and groups. Creative fundraisers, such as Garden Parties and "Art in Bloom" with the Mid-Island Floral Arts Club, laid the foundation for the cultural hub TOSH is today. This role was just the start of her mission to make Qualicum Beach renowned.

Marlys also ventured into local politics, enhancing her community impact. Serving two terms as a town councillor, she acted as Protective Services Liaison and worked with community volunteers from Citizens on Patrol and Emergency Services. As Health Liaison, she participated on boards like the Eagle Park Board and the Mid-Vancouver Island Health Advisory Committee, advocating for health services. Her political journey is a testament to her dedication, filled with collaborations that reflect her enduring commitment.

Communities in Bloom (CIB) is another initiative dear to Marlys, where she has worked for over twenty years to beautify towns and build community spirit. Under her leadership, Qualicum Beach gained national and international acclaim. This success allowed Marlys to collaborate with Dyce, Scotland; Sequim, Washington; Parksville; and Cumberland; inspiring them to enhance their local landscapes. A notable achievement with CIB was an art trade that integrated historical pieces into local settings, like the coal mine cart at the Qualicum Beach Train Station, honouring the Cumberland mines. She also played a significant role in the Canadian Horticultural Society's centennial celebration, encouraging vibrant displays of red geraniums.

Beyond CIB, Marlys has championed local initiatives like Broom Busters and various garden clubs. At Berwick Qualicum Beach, she remains active, recently helping to establish Berwick's Pollinator Pathways to support local pollinator health.



After retiring from council, Marlys took leadership roles in the Eaglecrest Resident's Association (ERA), serving as Vice-President and President. Her presidency included advocating for improved healthcare services through the Federation of Oceanside Residents' Associations (FORA), contributing to the establishment of the Oceanside Health Centre in Parksville. She has also been an active member of The Perfect Storm Group (PSG), addressing the doctor shortage in the area.

Marlys continues to advocate for a senior care facility that allows locals to age in place. For her, progress is about moving forward and addressing community needs.

Before her time in Qualicum Beach, Marlys worked with the Alberta Forestry Association in Edmonton, creating the 'Forever a Tree' program for schools. In 2012, she received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, acknowledging her significant contributions to Canadian society.

Throughout her various roles, Marlys remains true to her core values: community, healthcare, and the environment. She is a woman whose life and work continue to inspire future generations. Working with volunteers who have a passion for special projects gives her joy and a sense of community. It's just in her DNA!

by Kelly Poppy

\$100,000 + RAISED



THE KEY

PRINCIPLES TO

Giving Back

The residents of BQB have truly exemplified the spirit of community engagement and philanthropy through their diverse initiatives aimed at giving back. By organizing events such as fashion shows, vendor markets, and knitting group activities, they have not only fostered a sense of camaraderie and creativity but have also managed to raise an impressive sum of over \$100,000 since opening in August 2019. This remarkable achievement highlights their commitment to making a positive impact on the community and supporting various causes. Their efforts serve as an inspiring example of how collective action and innovative thinking can bring about substantial change and benefit those in need.



CREATIVE WAYS WE HAVE RAISED FUNDS FOR CHARITY



Knit & Knatter, Holiday Vendor Market, Human Fruit Machine, Mock Casino Night, Published Book Sales & Fashion Show



FUNDRAISING RECIPIENTS

Society of Organized Services, Manna Homeless Society, Haven Society, Hands & Hearts Food Program, Oceanside Stroke Recovery Society, Forward House, Nanaimo & District Hospital Foundation, Mt. Arrowsmith Salvation Army Food Bank, Oceanside Hospice, Alzheimer's Society of B.C., Arrowsmith Search & Rescue and North Island Wildlife Recovery Association





ART & MUSIC



UNFOLDING A NEW CHAPTER

by Barbara Skocdopole

This story is about joining the Berwick Qualicum Beach ukulele band *Strings and Sings*.

When my family and I first toured Berwick Qualicum Beach, it felt like coming home when we walked in the front door - warm and welcoming and beautiful. I was excited and confident about my decision to move here and we began the process of downsizing and selling my home.

By moving time of course, that cautious little voice in my head was talking louder about being the new kid on the block, and fitting in, and feeling shy about joining my new neighbours for meals and activities.

My first week here, I approached a table for six in the Bistro where there was one seat still open - and so began my entry into Strings and Sings. The whole group at the table were members of the band. As well as being welcomed, I was invited to a rehearsal with them after lunch - just to check it out, of course!

When I entered the rehearsal room, there was a soft din of noise: chatting, laughing, setting up music stands and tuning ukuleles. While I was busy trying to find a quiet place to sit along the back wall, another band member invited me to sit with her so I could sing along. And by the end of the rehearsal, I began to realize that the band actually travelled by bus and performed together from Victoria to Campbell River!

While I was busy stepping backwards and telling our Active Living Manager who leads the band that I wouldn't really want to perform, she was gently inviting me to just enjoy singing at rehearsals. She assured me that "there are no auditions and band members can't be fired."



I have to say, I was pretty determined about not performing. By the time I had my own music binder and a new band shirt to wear, that little voice in my head was jumping up and down and shouting, "There's not a snowball's chance in hell that we're going to wear that shirt and go out there to sing in public!"

Well, we all know now how that turned out! I love being in the band and travelling and performing together. There is a sense of belonging and friendship and purpose in it, and such joy for us and for our audiences.

Being part of Strings and Sings also opened a door for me here at Berwick: to explore other new activities and to relax and enjoy getting to know new people. There are so many stories here, and such a wealth of skill and wisdom and kindness in the people who live and work here.

A new chapter unfolding that I never imagined.

PS: Ball drumming in the Zoom Room looks like fun! I may just go check that out. They can't possibly do that in public, right?

AUDREY DOWLER

Fiona, a sweet little tabby cat, met me at the door of Audrey's suite on the third floor. Entering the bright music room with floor to ceiling windows overlooking the courtyard, Audrey ushered me into a comfortable chair while she perched on the stool of the grand piano, Fiona happily winding herself in and out of our legs knowing she would be part of the conversation, and indeed she was. She is a loving companion whose antics delight her owner.

Reminiscing about the past, we discovered we were born in the same year in the so-called dirty thirties. Audrey remembers growing up in the Depression in Regina and going to a one room school. All of the local families were struggling to make a living. She went on to graduate from the University of Saskatoon and is a postgraduate of the University of Minnesota. After marrying her husband, George, Audrey led a full life on a farm raising three children and continuing with her first love, music. She taught choirs and orchestra, and worked in area schools teaching music.

Aged fifty and the family grown, George and Audrey retired from their jobs in Canada and went to work for the United Church in Kenya, where they lived happily for eight years, Audrey teaching English in a school and a hospital.

Returning to Alberta and the farm sold, they lived for the next thirty years enjoying travel and, of course, music. After her husband died, Audrey made the move to Vancouver Island to be near her daughter, and took the next step, moving into Berwick at aged ninety. "The best thing I could have done," says Audrey. "There are so many interesting things to do." The list is long: Aqua Fit with her daughter, local walks, visits from old friends, playing bridge, attending talks. But Audrey admits her favourite is being a member of the Strings and Sings group and playing the ukulele with them. Piano duets offer residents a chance to enjoy hearing her favourite melodies. Audrey was a model in the last fashion show, she enjoys theatre trips, garden tours and she recently held a glue gun for her first time at a craft afternoon where she made a sunflower to grace her door. "I have never made anything like this," she says. "It is fun to try something new."

"When I arrived at Berwick," she says, "I looked on it as a new chapter in my book of life, and possibly the last chapter. Now it seems that it was just new pages in a new chapter, and perhaps many more chapters to come. Each day I am grateful. I am so happy here. I should qualify my definition of happy. It means true contentment, feeling that way despite many sorrows, griefs, losses, disappointments and poor health. I am content because I am surrounded by people who not only care about me but love me. Loving them back is my privilege. That is what makes each chapter and every page in my life worth living."

Audrey continues to keep up with technology, and at age ninety-three she wears an Apple Watch, enabling her to keep in touch with friends and family. She has six grandchildren and one great grandchild. She will often ask Siri for information as she continues to strive for knowledge. Audrey tries to learn a new word every week — here she pauses, laughs and tells a joke:



There is a funeral taking place in a church for a local man. A member of the congregation asks the man's widow if he can say a word. "Of course," she says, and he climbs the stairs to the pulpit. There is a long pause and silence, then the man utters one word: "Plethora." He turns and walks down the stairs. The widow smiles and says, "That means a lot."

Audrey has a great sense of humour and has recently added stand-up comedy to her repertoire. She enjoys conversation and laughter with fellow residents. "Everyone has an interesting story to tell," she says.

On a more serious note, I asked Audrey what she feels about the world in 2026. "If you don't have hope you can't live," she says. She is very positive about the future. "Love your enemies and learn not to hate." Audrey gained wonderful advice from her mother who said, "You will be as happy as you make up your mind to be."

When in Kenya she was called "Makena," which in Kikuyu language means a happy person. Fiona agrees as she races around the suite chasing a laser pointer. It was a privilege to get to know Audrey a little better, she is an asset to Berwick for sure.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

ANDREA

THE CHAPTERS PAST AND PRESENT

By Carol Gemgembre

Since moving into Berwick Qualicum Beach, I have had the pleasure of meeting many talented residents and staff members. One of them, Andrea Watson, recently presented two lively workshops titled “How to Belt Out Showtunes.”

As a teenager, Andrea studied ballet, tap and jazz dance, along with piano and voice. She also worked in the kitchen at the Calgary Winter Club to earn money for ski trips and ballet shoes.

In her twenties, Andrea cooked and tended bar to pay for her ballet studies in Kelowna and Banff. She had a lengthy career as a teacher of dance and figure skating, as well as organizer and choreographer of many community events and festivals throughout BC.

Following a major health challenge, Andrea was a marketer, before returning to her love of cooking. In 2005, she earned her Red Seal Certification in Culinary Arts and has since worked at resorts and lodges in Alberta and BC.

Today, Andrea leads the Bistro, where she values the team’s commitment to the preparation of interesting and nutritious meals. She also enjoys mentoring Red Seal apprentices and is continuing her own education through online university courses.



“By doing what you love, you inspire and awaken the hearts of others.” -Satsuki Shibuya

What is a Passion Project?

Berwick loves to build a sense of community and family through empowering staff and residents share passions, talents and experiences. Staff are given time and support to develop and share their passions, whether it be presentations about travels and adventures, card games, mason bees, or almost anything! In this case residents very much enjoyed Andrea providing them with an opportunity to expand their understanding of both singing and their connection to this multi-talented staff member.

ANDREA’S TIPS ON BELTING OUT SHOWTUNES:

- Warm up your breathing: use a straw to create bubbles in water
- Sing the sounds, not the words: practice modifying vowels
- Don’t be afraid! Let it out, everyone sounds weird!



THE LOUNGE SET

LIT & WIT

Recently, I found myself on an unexpected adventure: shopping for pajamas. Now, this was not by choice. My wife of 67 years had finally issued an ultimatum: “If you fall ill during the night, I’m not phoning 911. Just look at you - you look like a homeless person in that outfit you wear to bed!”

Personally, I didn’t see the problem. For fifteen years, I’ve been sleeping quite comfortably in an old pair of swimming trunks. They’re practical, durable, and still in good condition. They don’t tug or ride up, and they’ve withstood everything from sea water and sand to the hot tub and sauna at the civic centre. But suddenly, they’re deemed unacceptable, and I’m told I need “proper pajamas.”

Here’s an interesting bit of trivia: the word pajamas comes from two Hindi words: pa(y) meaning “leg,” and jamah meaning “garment.” The British adopted it around 1880, during their colonial days in India. So, technically, I was wearing functional leg garments all along! Still, in the interest of marital harmony, I surrendered to the gentle but persistent static in my ear and set off to the nearest men’s store. “Good morning, sir. How can I help you today?” the young salesman greeted me. “I need a pair of pajamas,” I said. He frowned, as if running a complex algorithm in his head. After a pause, he replied, “Sir, I don’t think we carry those, but I’ll check with my manager.”

A few minutes later, he returned. “Sorry, sir. No pajamas.”

I was astonished. “No pajamas? This is a men’s clothing store! Surely men sleep at night too - we’re not Neanderthals!” The salesman smiled politely. “I can offer you a lounge set, sir.”

“A lounge set?” I asked. “What on earth is that? I want to sleep in my bed, not sit on a couch looking fashionable!”

That was the end of my patience. I stomped out and headed to another store.

There, I met a salesperson who could have sold me a pink dress with red buttons and made me feel good about it. She was that persuasive. Ten minutes later, I walked out with an expensive lounge set, and the faint satisfaction of knowing my wife would finally approve.

That night, I slipped into my brand new lounge set. I slept terribly. I was too worried about creasing the fabric.

But I did find one small consolation: should I ever end up in an ambulance in the middle of the night, I’ll be the best-dressed gentleman on the way to the hospital.

BY JOHAN MURPHY



The History of **GREENLAND** A Medieval Mystery

By Ewan Cotterill

You might think that the Inuit residents of modern Greenland are the descendants of that Arctic island's original inhabitants. You would be wrong.

The first wave of Thule Inuit arrived on the northwest coast of Greenland, from what is now Arctic Canada, sometime in the 12th century C.E. As they slowly expanded southward down the coast, they came in contact with a group of communities that had been flourishing for over two hundred years. The people they encountered were Scandinavians, originally from Iceland and Norway.

Somewhere around 950 C.E., a Norwegian outlaw exiled to Iceland, Eric the Red, had voyaged west and discovered a habitable strip of land that separated the ice cap from the sea on a large, hitherto unknown, island. By Scandinavian standards it was quite liveable. During this era, the climate of Europe and Scandinavia was quite a bit warmer.

Deciding to start his own colony on this uninhabited island, he returned to Iceland to recruit settlers. To make the prospect more attractive, he initiated what was probably one of the world's earliest marketing schemes. He labeled his new land Greenland.

By the 13th century the population of Greenland had reached an estimated 10,000 people, scattered along the southern and southwest coast. They had their own diocese in the Catholic church and a resident Bishop. They were a part of an established trade network extending throughout Scandinavia and eastern America. Eric the Red's son, Leif Erikson, had established several semi-permanent posts in America that provided furs and wood for the Greenland colonists. L'Anse aux Meadows in modern Newfoundland was one of them.

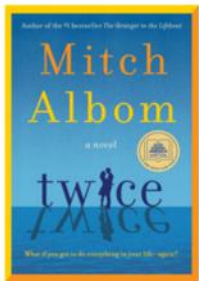
Then, towards the middle of the 13th century, disaster struck. Extreme volcanic activity in Asia had initiated a major climate change that saw average temperatures reduced by up to 7 degrees throughout Europe, Scandinavia and America. This period called the "Little Ice Age" would last until 1850.

If that was not enough, in 1347 the Black Death reached Europe. It is estimated to have reduced the population of Europe by as much as 60 percent over the next ten years. The trade networks, upon which Greenlanders were dependent, were devastated. The increasingly cold climate was having an additional impact on agriculture and livestock. Contacts between Greenland and other parts of Scandinavia became less and less frequent. Soon they stopped altogether. The last recorded event in Norse Greenland was that of a marriage that took place in the Church at Hvalsey, the ruins of which still stand, in 1408 C.E.

One hundred and fifty years later, an expedition was sent from Denmark to re-establish contact with the Norse settlements. They found no one. Ruins of buildings and abandoned farmsteads, churches and graveyards, but no people. The colony had disappeared.

The disappearance of the Norse from Greenland became one of the greatest mysteries of the Middle Ages. To this day, while there have been many theories about what happened to these people, there have been no concrete answers. The whole truth remains a mystery.





TWICE by Mitch Albom

Reviewed by Amy Graham

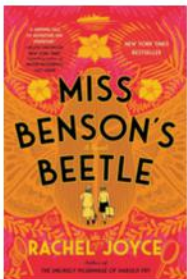
The story begins in the Bahamas, where Alfie Logan is being interrogated by a casino detective after winning over two million dollars at the roulette table in an impossible way. Instead of denying cheating, Alfie presents a notebook, his life story, and invites the detective to read it.

In the notebook, Alfie has written to an unknown "Boss," and he reveals that when he was eight, he discovered an extraordinary gift: by saying the word "twice" he could undo any moment in his life, change his decisions and live it again. However, the do-over comes with strict rules: only he remembers the original timeline, he can only redo a moment once, and some things, like death, cannot be reversed.

As Alfie grows up, he uses this power for everything from avoiding embarrassing moments, to recklessly flirting with danger, even flirting with fate itself. Eventually, he tries to use it to win the heart of his one true love, Gianna Rule. Over time, he learns a harsh limitation: if he "undoes" love, that person can never love him again.

Through a life of repeated do-overs, Alfie repeatedly seeks perfection. But the more he tries to rewrite his past, the more he realizes some truths can't be improved: love, mistakes, and the passage of time are inevitable.

"Twice" becomes an exploration of regret, choice, and the desire for a second chance. Through Alfie's endless attempts to perfect his life, the story reveals that even with the power to redo every moment, some experiences – love, loss, and the lessons that shape us – remain beyond our control. In the end, the novel suggests that true meaning can be found not from rewriting the past but accepting life as it is and finding peace in the moments we cannot change.



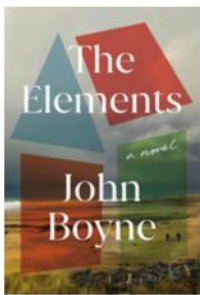
MISS BENSON'S BEETLE by Rachel Joyce

Reviewed by Maggie Sheehan

Listening to an audio book can come with some difficulties. If one is distracted, one may find oneself hearing but not absorbing, so it was with much joy I listened to Juliet Stevenson read this quirky, fun book written by Rachel Joyce. Juliet Stevenson is a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company in Britain and an acclaimed actor of stage and screen, so her portrayal of Marjorie Benson, with an educated, quiet, well-modulated voice, and the loud, high-pitched, cockney accent of Enid Pretty and the other quirky characters in the book was a joy to listen to. But I digress. Back to the story. Marjorie Benson has longed to search for a golden beetle she heard about as a child in 1914. This beetle is only found in New Caledonia in the south seas. Leaving her teaching job, Marjorie hires Enid to be her companion and assistant on this journey.

Marjorie, in her slightly outdated, dark, subdued clothing, and scatterbrained Enid, in a tight fitting pink suit and high heeled pom-pom sandals, make a strange duo but they become firm friends as the story unfolds. There are many twists and turns, and humour, grief and trauma follow the pair in their adventures. I laughed out loud and then quietly sobbed as I followed the story. The ending was somewhat unexpected but satisfactory.

If you are looking for an uplifting story, read this book or better still, listen to the audio version. You won't be disappointed.



THE ELEMENTS by John Boyne

Reviewed by Marva Blackmore

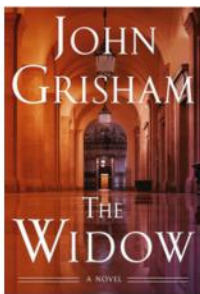
The Elements by John Boyne weaves together four interconnected narratives, each representing a different perspective on crime. Each story is connected to the last by common characters. And they all have a common theme.

The first story is told by a woman who has enabled a sexual crime. She has come to an unnamed island off Ireland to escape the people who know about this famous crime and to heal.

The second story is told by a former inhabitant of that island, a few years later. He left the island for London, where he can be himself, a gay painter rather than a soccer star. But things don't turn out as planned. He becomes an accomplice to his friend's sexual crime and stands trial for it twice.

The third story is told by a member of the jury in the first of those trials. She is a doctor and is also the perpetrator of sexual crimes.

The final story is told by a child psychologist who had interned with that doctor. He had also been one of her victims when he was 14. The Elements is a book you won't want to put down.

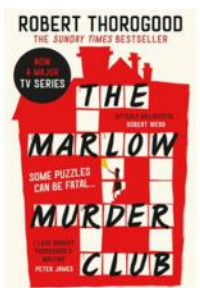


THE WIDOW by John Grisham

Reviewed by Donna Walsh

This is the story of Simon Patch, a small town lawyer who is struggling with debt and personal problems until a wealthy elderly widow asks him to draft a new will for her, which will replace another recently drafted one prepared by a different lawyer. He is also tasked to manage her financial affairs. She has recently inherited a small fortune from her husband. When she dies after a car accident, it is deemed to have been a murder, and the lawyer who drafted the most recent will, from which he stands to benefit, is charged with her murder.

The story relates his efforts to prove his innocence. It is a bit of a change from Grisham's usual plots which generally feature a lawyer defending an accused client. I found it quite engrossing, and a change from the usual format. Grisham's books are always very readable with lots of plot twists, and The Widow is no exception.



The Marlow Murder Club by Robert Thorogood

Reviewed by Varick Ernst

Who would break into a cottage, shoot the owner dead with a large antique pistol, ignore all of the priceless paintings and instead make off with a single picture frame? This was the dilemma confronting three amateur woman sleuths. One, Judith, a retired archeologist and crossword puzzle solver. Two, Becks, the pretty, prim and proper wife of the local vicar. Three, Suzie, the village dog walker.

Add DS Malik, a rather stuffy but insecure police officer to the brew! Two murders (actually three) bring them close as they unravel the clues and unsettling evidence that abounds.

The Marlow Murder Club is a fascinating, charming, but intricate read. In other words, pay attention or you'll miss the twists and turns. It manages to entertain as it depicts village life gone terrifyingly bad, and the brave heroes who set about making it right again (for now!). This is the first of a four-book series (so far!).

SIP & SAVOUR

LET YOUR TASTEBUDS EXPLORE



Crisp, Fresh & Perfectly Pairable Berwick Bruschetta



Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 Tbsp minced fresh garlic
- 26 oz. roma tomatoes, diced (about 7-8)
- 1/4 cup finely shredded parmesan cheese
- 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar, or more to taste
- 3/4 tsp kosher salt, then more to taste
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped basil ribbons
- 1 (14.5 oz) loaf hearty french bread sliced into 1/2 inch thick slices (about 12 slices)

Directions:

1. For tomato mixture: Heat olive oil in a small skillet or saucepan over medium-low heat. Add garlic and sauté until it just starts to turn golden, about 1 minute.
2. Pour into a large mixing bowl. Let cool while you chop the tomatoes and basil.
3. Pour tomatoes into bowl with cooled oil mixture. Add parmesan, basil, balsamic vinegar, salt and pepper. Toss mixture well. Serve right away over toasted bread (spoon some of the juices along with it). Garnish with more parmesan if desired.
4. To toast bread*: position oven rack a few inches below broil and preheat broiler. Align bread slices on an 18 by 13 inch baking sheet. Broil first side until golden brown, about 1 minute (don't walk away! Keep an eye on them as they will brown quickly), then flip slices to opposite side and broil opposite side until golden brown.

*Drizzle with a balsamic reduction before serving!

"Sip Happens! Pair it with Bruschetta."



Mojito Cocktail

- 6 mint leaves
- Lime (cut into wedges)
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1.5 oz white rum
- Ice cubes
- Club soda



1. In a cocktail shaker, add mint leaves, lime wedges (reserve one) and sugar. Muddle for 20 seconds. (If you do not have a cocktail muddler, you can use the back of a wooden spoon.)
2. Add rum and fill halfway with ice, shake for ten seconds.
3. Pour contents into a glass and top with club soda. Garnish with reserved lime wedge.



Mark your Calendar

BERWICK QUALICUM BEACH EVENTS

May

- 14** Strings & Sings Concert at 2:00pm
- 20** Mid Island StoryTellers
- 31** Qualicum Family Day

June

- 09** Strings & Sings Concert at the Nanaimo Legion
- 18** BQB Players Performances
- 19**

July

- 01** Canada Day Street Dance
- 08** Butterflies and Memories Event
- 12** Qualicum Beach Days: Free Shuttle

August

- 03** BC Day
- 26** Berwick Qualicum Beach 7th Anniversary
- 28** Oceanside Hospice Golf tournament

September

- 13** Grandparents Day
- 19** BC Culture Days Onsite Event
- 30** National Day for Truth & Reconciliation

October

- 05** Active Aging Week: See RDN schedule for on-site events
- 14** Open House
- 31** Trick or Treating at BQB

November

- 11** Remembrance Day
- 13** World Kindness Day: *Look for us giving out treats in town*
- 25** Holiday Vendor Market

December

- 09** Holiday Colouring Contest closes
- 18** Strings & Sings Christmas Concert
- 31** New Year's Eve Celebrations

You are invited!

We invite you to join us for any of these upcoming events. For more information or to register for the events please call:

250-738-6200

To register to receive our monthly calendar please email

berwickqualicumbeach@berwickrc.com

All Events are RSVP

CONTRIBUTORS



These contributors turned over a new leaf, dedicating their time and expertise to create a snapshot of the lifestyle and topics they are passionate about. We are grateful to showcase some of the novel ideas from the talented people who live and work at Berwick Qualicum Beach. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition - you've truly written a chapter of excellence!

Resident Contributors (in alphabetical order):

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Featuring: Vern Black, Marian Boyd, Nancy Carter, Bob Cummings, Audrey Dowler, Bill Foley, Carol Foley, Margery Hamilton, Lynne Haupt, Lois Hayward, Jim Heinrichs, Marilyn Holfeld, Lucette Kirbach, Fran Mattimoe, Jean Merritt, Kate Mitchell, Sandra Odendaal, Marillyn Peterson, Stuart Proudfoot, Christine Selzler, Barb Skocdopole, Barb Stoddart, Bill Stoddart, Pam Toth

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Featuring: Wayne Bass, Resident Services; Allison Booth, Housekeeping; Ava Carpenter, Housekeeping; Chris Connolly, BAT Car Driver; Jayden Henderson, Housekeeping; Aeron Kline, Food Services; Christina Leaman, Food Services; Michael St. John, Housekeeping; Deanna Reid, Food Services; Andrea Watson, Food Services

Special Thanks to Our Photographer: Rachel Kirk

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BERWICK

EMPOWERED LIVING



WRITE YOUR NEXT

Chapter

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