

SOAR



Inflight
Magazine for
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Airlines

ABORIGINAL IMMERSION

Hotel honours First Nations
arts and culture in the heart
of Vancouver

GREEN MEN NO MORE

Canucks agitators thank
fans with farewell tour

WINTER WANDERLUST

Crossing the
Bowron Lakes
without a canoe

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Unique Oceanfront Property: Just north of Campbell River, diverse 2.5-acre property in Browns Bay with 500ft of walk-on and high bank oceanfront, mature trees and expansive 270° views. Road access, electrical service, domestic water supply from a drilled well and shared license for a local creek, and an approved septic location. Moorage potential. **\$368,000**



Quatsino Sound Oceanfront: 4 acres in the Village of Quatsino with 300ft of easy access low bank shorefront. South facing with spectacular views. Roughed in driveway, private drilled well, electricity and telephone at the road. Approved area for septic installation. Boat access community on north-west coast Vancouver Island, known for excellent fishing. **\$132,500**



Campbell River Oceanfront: 2000sqft 3 bdrm home on .75 acre, 100ft of oceanfront with an easy trail to the beach. Recent upgrades include new vinyl thermal pane windows, an upgraded high efficiency forced air gas furnace, a new wood stove and 6-year-old roof. Private and captivating setting, with views across the active waters of Discovery Passage. **\$649,700**



Quadra Island Oceanfront: The complete package! 2800+ sqft., custom home, 3 bed/2 bath, 20' X 28' garage/shop, 20' X 24' guest cabin on 5 forested, south facing acres with 265 feet of shoreline. Quality craftsmanship, large vaulted ceilings and expansive oceanside decks overlooking Open Bay. Permission for future private moorage **\$779,000**



North-West Vancouver Island: Two waterfront properties.

Quatsino Sound, Sec 26: 38 heavily timbered acres, 1400ft of low-bank oceanfront.

\$229,999

DL202, Alice Lake: 17 lakefront acreages from 9.88-16.48 acres, 4000ft of diverse lakefront, rock outcrops, private bays and beach areas. **\$1,250,000**

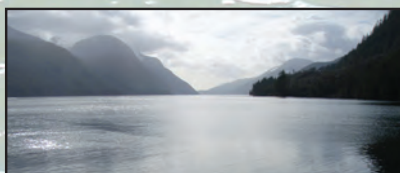


Round Island, Southern Gulf Islands: The best priced private island in the southern gulf islands! 7.5 acres, unspoiled natural beauty, fully forested. The shoreline varies from walk-on beachfront to unusual rock formations and higher frontage along the southern shore. Create your Island escape with this picturesque British Columbia jewel.

\$380,000



Echo Bay, Gifford Island: Diverse, forested 82 oceanfront acres, solid classic home with nice wood trim, floors and detailing, workshop, boardwalks and patios, generator shed. Deep water bay, due west exposure overlooking Cramer Pass. Near world-renowned Broughton Archipelago Marine Park, known for unsurpassed marine recreation and wildlife. Timber value! **\$345,000**



Tahsis Inlet Oceanfront Acreage: West Vancouver Island. This spectacular 186 acres property offers 5300ft of diverse shoreline, amazing views, power service and a road throughout the property. There is a substantial mechanical shop. Subdivision potential. Simply an amazing property with lots of opportunities! **\$594,000**



Kyuquot, Walters Cove: Prime west coast Vancouver Island, 5 offerings.

*2 dwellings, foreshore license **\$149,000**

*1100sqft home, new private moorage **\$199,900**

*older home, private moorage **\$184,900**

*2000sqft 2bdrm, full basement **\$199,000**

*6 bdrm home **\$199,500**



Central Vancouver Island Rural Retreat: 76 acre fully forested property overlooking Upper Campbell Lake, 30 minutes west of Campbell River. 1300sqft residence, one room cabin and storage buildings. Off grid independence with generator, solar power, Pelton wheel, drilled well, septic and propane heat. Moderate to steep topography.

\$298,500



Balaklava Island Acreage: 143 acres, 725ft oceanfront on Browning Passage. Fully forested, diverse topography with south west exposure, well protected. Deep water frontage would accommodate moorage. Boat access property off northern Vancouver Island, close to Port Hardy. One of only four private properties on the island. Zoning permits subdivision. **\$285,000**



Quatsino Oceanfront: North-west coast Vancouver Island. 5 acres, easy walk-on beach access, beautiful southeast exposure. Front half cleared, back section forested. Level topography, creek on SW corner. Electricity, telephone and water at lot line. Great recreational and fishing area and a historical boat access community. **\$109,500**

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Online booking sites? Buyer beware

Online booking sites are driving a significant shift in the way the travel industry works, and this is certainly true in the airline business. You might say that the new battle for hearts and minds in the travel industry is being waged online and I don't expect that to change any time soon. So do these booking systems really provide you with the best prices?

Well, there's an argument to say they don't. Most online booking sites employ what is known as screen scraping software. Simply put, screen scrapers reach out and pull publicly posted fares from websites such as ours. These scrapers don't always pick up on special fare prices or promo codes offered at the time of the search. In addition, our base fare always includes up to fifty pounds of free checked baggage, but this important detail isn't captured during the screen scraping process, and that can make a big difference when comparing prices. Many of these companies also charge administration

fees on top of the stated fare price that are not processed until a later date, thus creating a false impression of the total cost to the consumer at the time of purchase.

Some of the more aggressive companies actually steal our brand outright, creating domains that look a lot like Pacific Coastal. They purchase online ads that show up on your search results and, if you're not careful, you end up booking a flight through them instead of us. Ultimately, it's "buyer beware." In the final analysis, there are some ways to ensure you get the best available price from us at the time of booking. Contact your local travel agent, our Reservation Centre at 1-800 663-2872, or book directly online at www.pacificcoastal.com.

Thanks for flying with us.

Quentin Smith

MEET A PACIFIC COASTAL EMPLOYEE



Name: Clinton Coutts

Position: Re-fueller, Ramp, Cargo Agent

Based in: Bella Bella

Time with Pacific Coastal: 15 years

What is the mission or vision of your department? To deliver a safe, satisfying and memorable experience for our customers and co-workers.

What do you love most about your job? The physicality, the intensity, the adrenaline, the people (customers, co-workers and community), the laughs, the challenges, the solutions, the lessons learned, the teaching — so rewarding!

Where did you grow up and where is home now? I grew up in Vancouver and now live in the greatest places on the planet — Bella Bella (population 1,400) and Denny Island (population 75). This makes for a great commute to work as both places are only accessible by boat or plane. It's always an adventure when you start your day in a boat. I also continue to work with the Port Hardy base when requested.

Do you have family? Wife, mother, sister, children, grandchildren, dog and my PASCO family.

What are your hobbies outside of the job? Creating with different mediums — metal, wood, paint — plus mentoring and helping. I'm always working on my three homes, which are in YZZ (Trail), YZT (Port Hardy) and ZEL (Bella Bella).

Anything else you'd like to share? I try to live by the following values: laugh loudly, love honestly and live hard. I would like to thank the Smith family for their support in my continued endeavours at Pacific Coastal Airlines. Hope to see you on the tarmac!

OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Susan Lundy is a freelance writer, author and editor, who grew up in Victoria and now lives on Salt Spring Island.



Benjamin Yong is a freelance journalist and community news reporter based in Richmond, B.C. He enjoys writing about lifestyles, culture and cars.



Jennifer Blyth is a Victoria-based writer, photographer and editor who enjoys exploring BC with her two sons.



Montreal-born **Brian Kieran** has worked for several BC newspapers, taking him from England to Qatar.

Skiing is big business in BC

When the subject of tail art for Pacific Coastal Airline's planes came up, the company "found it difficult to sum all that is BC in a single image." Now each of the PCA's airplane tails features different icons. Here is the story of the skier.

BY SUSAN QUINN

Whether you're a first-time skier or snowboarder, in search of the best powder via heli-skiing, or a double black diamond expert, resorts all over British Columbia can deliver.

Skiing is a \$657 million business in western Canada, according to the latest numbers from the Canada West Ski Areas Association (CWSAA).

Over the past couple of years adverse weather conditions have challenged resorts in BC, but many operations have invested in snowmaking equipment that has allowed them to open in November despite light natural snowfall. Others have kept up with new technology, such as Magic Carpet people movers, and by adding services like tube

parks to provide variety for their on-hill customers.

"It is clear that investments in snow-making systems are helping many western Canadian ski areas achieve opening dates that would not be possible with natural snow alone," CWSAA president and CEO David Lynn said in his November 2014 message to members.

"We hope that our member resorts are able to capitalize on their natural assets, and snow-making technology, to achieve strong results over the 2014-15 season."


No matter where you decide to ski in BC, Pacific Coastal Airlines can get you close to many of the ski resorts around the province.

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QUICK FACT:

The Canadian Ski Council notes that 21.7 per cent of core alpine skiers — defined as people who ski at least 10 times a year — are between the ages of 45 and 54.

BONUS FACT:

Skier visits in British Columbia have more than doubled since the 1980s, according to David Lynn, president and CEO of the Canada West Ski Areas Association. In 2013-14, western Canadian ski resorts saw 8.6 million visitors. 



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Rudy Nielsen, President

AN EYE ON PRINCE GEORGE

ECONOMIC GROWTH AMONG THE PERKS OF LIVING IN PG

By JENNIFER BLYTH

Contrary to common perceptions, Prince George is a central, not northern community, and winters are not particularly cold. There's a thriving arts and culture community, four-season outdoor opportunities, and a dream house will cost a fraction of take-home earnings compared to many other Canadian cities.

Oh, and for those looking for a career change?

"Prince George is one of the top 10 places in Canada to find a job," says Melissa Barcellos, Prince George Economic Development Officer.

Centrally located in the heart of British Columbia, Pacific Coastal Airline's newest destination is in a prime location for business and industry with easy access to transportation and a variety of national and international markets — by road, air, rail and water.

Just 800 kilometres north of Vancouver and 740 km west of Edmonton, Prince George sits at the junction of major provincial highways 16 and 97, with Calgary and Vancouver each just an hour's flight away. In fact, with the third longest runway in Canada, the Prince George Airport (YXS) provides domestic and international air service for both passengers and cargo.

From a largely forest-based economy, Prince George has grown in recent decades into a city diversified across many sectors.

While its natural resource base remains strong, the city also supplies goods and services for a broad range of industries throughout BC, Canada and the world — a fact reflected in the top five employment sectors: wholesale and retail trade; health care and social assistance; manufacturing; construction; and accommodation and food services. Over the past decade, combined employment in these sectors has grown more than 19

The University of Northern BC overlooks Prince George below. Diversity has been key to the city's continued growth and success while residents appreciate the year-round outdoor opportunities

Photos courtesy Initiatives Prince George

per cent, contributing to the city's economic strength and stability.

"While we started as a forestry-based economy ... we're very well-diversified," Barcellos says.

Of the \$140 billion in capital projects planned for the province in the coming years, 50 per cent are in the northern part of the province, Barcellos says, noting that as the only large city in the region, much of the work force and project support will come from Prince George.

"Prince George is one of the top 10 places in Canada to find a job."

Not surprisingly, the city has enjoyed robust building activity, with non-residential permits making up the majority of construction permits issued.

Even within the natural resource sector, innovations are generating growth. The mining industry has become one of the fastest-growing sectors, while traditional forestry and forest products manufacturing have evolved to include new markets and opportunities such as bioenergy.

Education also stands as a major employer, adding to the region's cultural and economic diversity. The University of Northern British Columbia — Canada's "green" university — is a leader in research and education and includes, among its programs, the Northern Medical Program, a partnership with the





University of British Columbia medical program, Barcellos notes. The College of New Caledonia also provides educational opportunities to the residents of BC's northern interior, including an array of career training and diploma programs.

These opportunities are fueling the city's population growth. Currently home to about 98,000 people across the greater Fort George Regional District, that number has increased by about four per cent over the last five years with growth expected to continue.

And good news for those in the job market, Prince George consistently maintains a higher employment rate than the province of BC as a whole. High employment/low unemployment in recent years is also indicative of a resilient local economy.

And with affordable house prices, residents have more disposable income to spend on other things. The percentage of household income required to finance home ownership in Prince George is just 31.6 per cent compared to 82.2 per cent in Vancouver.

Likely to place the city in an even more prominent position is its hosting of the largest multi-sport and cultural event for youth in the nation, the Canada Winter Games, Feb. 13 to March 1. As Barcellos says, "Canada's eye will be on Prince George." ■

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Winter Wanderlust

ACROSS THE BOWRON LAKES WITHOUT A CANOE

By PATTI SHALES LEFKOS
Photos by BARRY HODGINS

I open my eyes at dawn as light sparkles through the frosty windowpane and a xylophone of icicles. Outside is a blanket of fresh snow. For a moment I am disoriented. *Where am I?* I hear the *thunk* of a hatchet splitting kindling, logs being jammed into a cast iron wood stove. Ah — I am in a log cabin at Indian Point on the fourth and final day of a ski tour. And that is my husband lighting the fire. God love him.

The thermometer tacked above my head reads -26°C. I yank a woollen toque over my ears and decide to let my husband get the place to at least -10°C before I venture out. I fish in the foot of my sleeping bag for a few more layers of clothes. Soon I hear the welcome hiss of a propane radiant heater. Now I will get up.

Each year we do a multi-day, cross-country ski trip with our Australian pals Chris and Deb. This year Deb defiantly declared, “Let’s go somewhere flat.” That’s a tall order for a BC ski touring holiday, but we found the perfect solution: the Bowron Lakes.

Found in the Thompson Nicola region, 144 km southeast of Prince George (Pacific Coastal Airline’s newest destination), Bowron Lake Provincial Park is known for its rugged, glaciated Cariboo Mountains, deep lakes, waterfalls and abundant wildlife.

Most outdoor enthusiasts consider an excursion around the Bowron Lakes’ 116 km canoe circuit — a chain of lakes, waterways and connecting portages — in summer when visitors can enjoy lazy swims and tranquil sunsets viewed from comfortable group campsites. For me that means too many people, insects and slithering reptiles.

We chose to connect with the stillness of its lakes and grandeur of the surrounding mountains for four days on touring skis. I envisioned gliding easily over the trails of forested portages or windswept powdery

lakes, and overnighting in cozy cabins, not a single snake or chatty canoe group in sight.

Day one began with a breakfast meeting at The Bear’s Paw Café in Wells with our guide Dave Jorgenson and assistant guide and chef Kate Sulis, a local Registered Massage Therapist, who was replacing Dave’s wife, Cheryl, who had a bad shoulder. Or maybe Cheryl had seen the weather forecast.

Dave demonstrated how to pack and drag the Canadian Tire plastic sleds we would pull behind us for the next four days. Then, fuelled by Kate’s homemade cranberry-peach-chocolate chip muffins, we plunged

lakes, then meandering over gentle portage trails between frozen stands of pine and cedar. We spent the first two days heading out from Kibee to Indian Point Cabin, Indian Point lagoon, then up the north arm of Isaac Lake to the base of Wolverine Mountain and on to the Moxley Creek Cabin. For the last two days, we retraced our tracks, pushed by the wind, the sun warming our backs.

The rewards of our strenuous effort were not restricted to the privilege of being in this pristine landscape. The food was glorious, too. My personal favourite: canned salmon



“The rewards of our strenuous effort were not restricted to the privilege of being in this pristine landscape. The food was glorious, too.”

into the woods for the first portage. My first time pulling a sled and it’s easier than I had anticipated.

For the next 96 hours, we lived and breathed blinding, cheek-biting blizzards that knifed through layers of merino wool and Gortex, alternating with a Sahara-like sun reflecting off the shimmering surface of the icy lakes.

The first day, we travelled in ceaseless snowfall over two portages across Kibee Lake. Here, we’d be staying overnight in trapper cabins dating from the 1920s. Now a wildlife sanctuary, the park is renowned summer and winter for sightings of moose, deer, mountain goat, caribou, black and grizzly bear, beaver and otter — but we saw none on this trip.

Averaging about 10 km per day, we alternated leaders, breaking trail through knee-deep snow across long, windswept

smothered in coconut milk created from powder and boiling water and kept steaming hot in a thermos until it was poured over brown rice. At night, Chris rationed out tots of wine from stainless steel bottles, and Dave officiated a group attack on an *LA Times* crossword. We cuddled in our sleeping bags on raised platforms, struggling to stay awake until at least 8:30 p.m.

The final downhill switchback was as icy and winding as an Olympic luge run. One by one we glissaded the slippery 100 metres, sleds flying, collapsing in a happy heap at the registration centre. It was a perfect finale. ■

To Get There

Pacific Coastal Airlines flies daily, except Saturdays, between Prince George and Victoria International Airport. Visit www.pacificcoastal.com for more details.



YVR celebrates the grand opening of the A-B Connector, an expansion and upgrade to the domestic terminal, featuring new gate capacity, an expedited baggage system, seismic upgrades and a wide range of new retail and service options.

Photo courtesy YVR

YVR OPENS EXPANDED DOMESTIC TERMINAL

Vancouver International Airport celebrated the opening of its expanded Domestic Terminal, the A-B Connector, Jan. 13.

Featuring new gate capacity, an expedited baggage system, seismic upgrades and new dining and shopping options, the new \$213 million expansion is the first major infrastructure project completed as part of YVR's 10-year gateway strategy announced in 2012 to keep YVR competitive and an economic generator for B.C.

The upgrades and expansion were made to the original areas of YVR's 1968 terminal. The A-B Connector provides improved passenger navigation and flow, increased gate capacity and hold-room space, new security and safety enhancements and seismic upgrades to ensure a more comfortable and efficient experience. In addition, an expedited baggage system connects bags between international and domestic flights more quickly.

YVR's award-winning sense of place is visible throughout the A-B Connector with a design that celebrates BC's Interior. The space is anchored by the contemporary art piece, The Rivers Monument, by BC First Nations artist Marianne Nicolson.

ITA LEVELS FIELD FOR BC TRADESWOMEN

BC's Industry Training Authority has introduced a first-of-its-kind resource for trades employers.

Leveling The Field – A Best Practices Guide to Employing Women in the Trades has been developed to help employers with their

overall hiring practices by creating a positive work environment for new apprentices, and to serve as a tool for employers who are increasingly adding tradeswomen to their teams.

By 2022, BC is expecting more than one million job openings, 43 per cent of which will be in trades and technical occupations. More and more women are considering the trades as a valid and dynamic career choice.

The guide comes from province-wide consultation with more than 800 employers and apprentices, and with special input from 15 employers/industry associations. Areas of focus include recruitment and hiring, orientation, developing and maintaining a safe and welcoming workplace, and retention. The Electrical Joint Training Committee helped participate in its development.

BIG WHITE OPENS 2015 WITH BIGGEST SNOW DAY EVER

Big White Ski Resort, Canada's largest ski-in, ski-out resort, enjoyed its biggest snow day ever in the first week of 2015 with 56 centimetres of fresh powder falling in just 36 hours.

"This coincided with what we like to call the Australian invasion," says Michael J Ballingall, Senior Vice President of Big White Ski Resort. "We had over 400 'Aussies' checking-in on Sunday to spend one to two weeks at Big White. One of our returning families — the Drydens — were sailing on Port Phillip Bay in Melbourne, Australia in 38 degrees and then on the last plane to get into Big White, all within 48 hours, and waking up to 56 centimeters of new snow!"

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The poet and the prizefighter

GERRY FURNEY'S FOUR DECADES AS MAYOR MADE PORT MCNEILL A BETTER PLACE



Gerry Furney is a creature of habit. For the past three decades he and his pal Bill Velie have been meeting daily at Tia's Café for morning coffee and raisin toast.

For the past four decades Gerry has worn the same mantle ... mayor of Port McNeill.

That habit places the 81-year-old in the history books: BC's longest serving municipal leader with 47 years on council, 38 of them as mayor; and, Canada's second longest serving mayor. He stands in



THE KIERAN REPORT

with BRIAN KIERAN

line behind John Hamlyn, the 82-year-old mayor of Crow Head, Newfoundland, who has reigned for 51 years, and ahead of Hazel McCallion, the retired 93-year-old mayor of Mississauga, On, in office for 36 years.

Furney hung up his gavel in November and I caught up with him in December at Tia's Café to talk about his "legacy" — even though you'd never catch Furney using a \$10 word like "legacy" to describe the community he was instrumental in shaping over a period of 60 hardworking years.

Port McNeill may not realize it just yet, but Gerry's retirement will leave behind a pair of caulk boots not easily filled. That said, I suspect if he had seriously considered another term in office, his devoted wife Carmel would have booted his Irish butt all the way back to County Cork.

The great-grandfather of Vancouver Island grassroots politics — and poet laureate of the working stiff (he published his first book of poetry, *Popcorn for*

"We established a nicely balanced community and the town has a reasonable land bank so we can still grow ... as long as we don't get too big for our boots."

— Gerry Furney

Breakfast, at 77) — he arrived in BC in the mid-1950s as a 21-year-old adventurer from Ireland via England, Europe and New York. He found a job in a Port McNeill logging camp and the only way to get there was by boat. He was given a one-way ticket on board the S.S. *Catala* berthed at the Union Steamship dock in Vancouver.

What Furney found when he arrived were "conditions about as primitive as you could imagine," he recalls. There was no road south to Victoria, no bridge over the Nimpkish River, no houses to speak of, no stores, no phones, no nothing.

"I was living in a bunkhouse with about 120 other loggers who were mostly all immigrants like me. I soon found out that the job of a 'chokerman' was the lowliest job in the woods and also the most dangerous."

In the early '60s, Furney started his own fuel and explosives distribution business.

"If it burned or went boom we sold it."

He was also the founding president of the Port McNeill Chamber of Commerce, where a vision of a permanent community took shape.

In those first years, he got a lot of help from Cominco, which operated the Old Sport copper mine under Merry Widow Mountain. The company wanted its staff to have a sense of permanence and it developed about 20 home sites. Port McNeill began

taking shape.

"We estimated we could build a community of about 1,000 people. In its heyday when the mines were still functioning we were up to about 3,000."

Today, the town is home to 2,600 souls, and forestry continues to be its mainstay.

"At the chamber we had a mantra — 'We can make a community of this place.'"

That determination has resulted in "a fairly stable community," Furney says. Unlike other resource towns in BC, Port McNeill has not experienced booms and busts. "We never BSed ourselves into believing we're something we're not. We never tried to grow beyond our means."

Through the '60s and '70s the community grew at a measured pace. "We did not allow ourselves to get over-built. Our capacity — food store, hotel, restaurant, school, small hospital — was based on common sense, not wishful thinking. We established a nicely balanced community and the town has a reasonable land bank so we can still grow ... as long as we don't get too big for our boots."

"The fact that there are two hairdressers here may not sound like much, but it is two more than we had 30 years ago."

What kept this resource town icon coming back election after election to serve his community? Simple: Furney may have the soul of an Irish poet, but he has the heart of a political prizefighter. And, he was never better than when he defended Port McNeill's resource based way of life from assaults by the higher purpose nabobs of urban BC who often abandoned resource towns in the name of progress.

When Port McNeill's new mayor, Shirley Ackland, was sworn in she said it was "a day in history ... We've been very fortunate to have had a mayor for as long as we have ... putting us on such a good foundation. We hope we do you proud." ■



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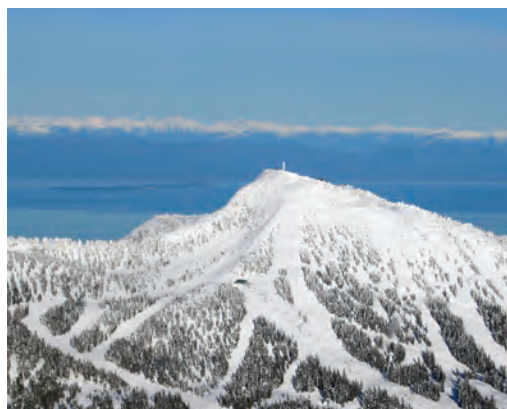
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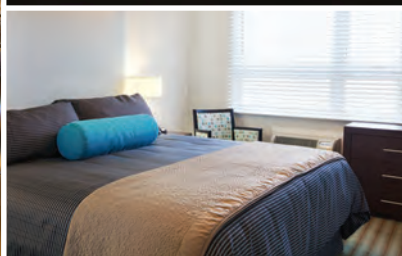
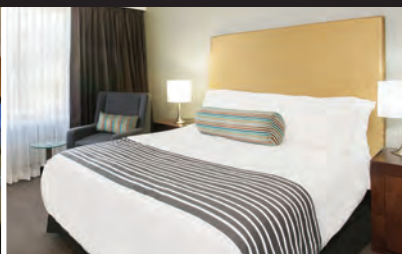
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If you are not quite ready to say goodbye to all of the wonders of winter our Ski resorts offer up Western Canada's best champagne powder coupled with long hours of sunshine for exhilarating spring days on the slopes.

FEST-OF-ALE

After a refreshing day outside, there is plenty to draw you inside, including this year's 20th annual Fest-Of-Ale Craft Beer extravaganza April 10th and 11th in Penticton. Not only does this two-day event feature live entertainment, exceptional local food combined with samplings of everything from the palest of ales to the darkest of stouts, but since its inception it has also raised over \$502,660 in net proceeds gifted back to qualifying charities. Learn more at www.fest-of-ale.bc.ca.

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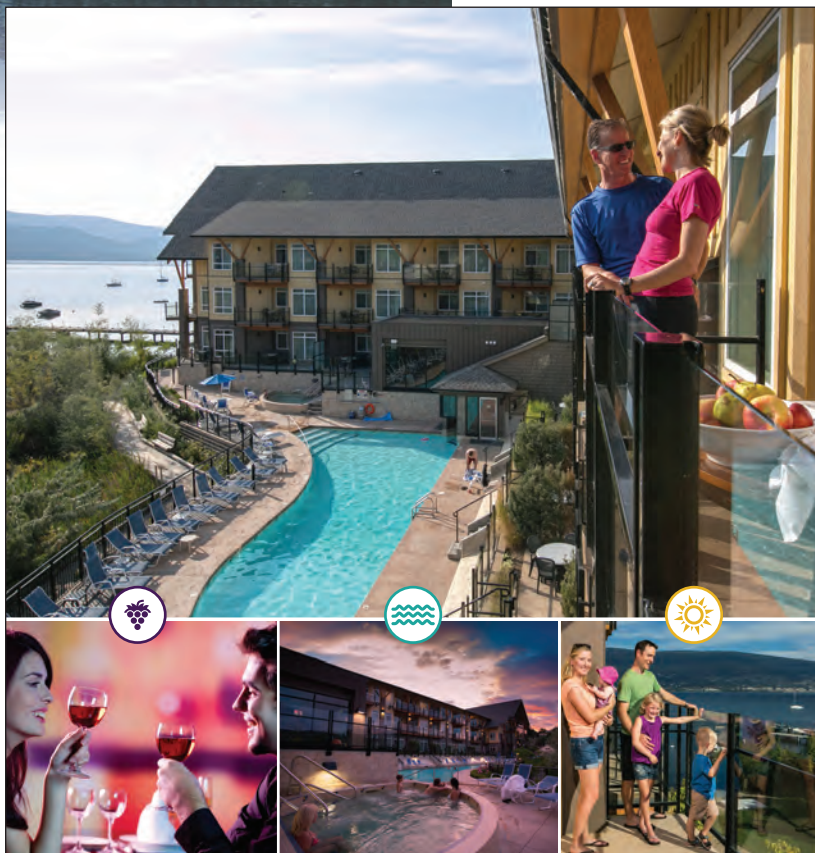
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OKANAGAN SPRING WINE FESTIVAL

Celebrating Spring would also not be complete without sampling some of the regions finest new wine releases and there is no better place to do that than at the Okanagan Spring Wine Festival. This 10 day event often referenced to as the "Bud Break" Festival, is not only the perfect occasion to sample what's new but a great time to rub shoulders with some of our outstanding Wine Makers as they take the time to celebrate the hard work of last years harvest and the harvests of many years gone by. This year's festival is April 29 – May 10th with events taking place throughout the entire region. For more information go to: www.thewinefestivals.com/about/owfs/festivals-and-events.

Need a little body pampering and rejuvenation? The Thompson Okanagan has destination and day's spas that will help scrub, scrape, steam and massage you into your summer skin. With offerings such as the Austrian inspired Sparkling Hill's Kur Spa; Sunmore Ginseng Spa marrying eastern and western traditions; and the variety of offerings in between you can find your best self here.

Whether two days or two weeks the Thompson Okanagan will help you set the tone for a great start to spring and summer. 



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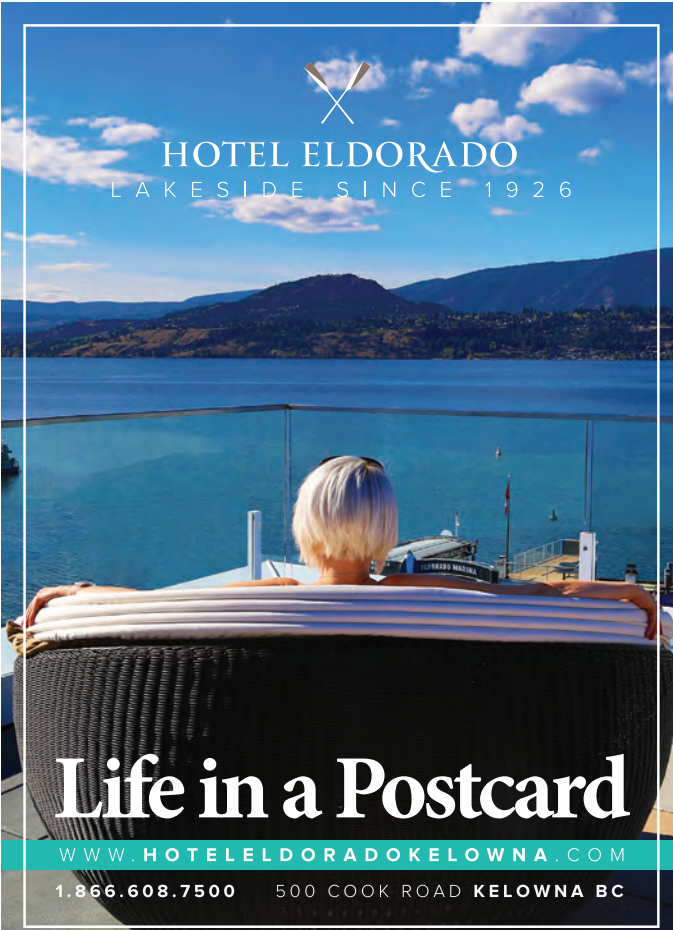
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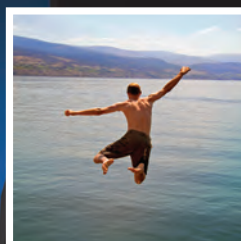
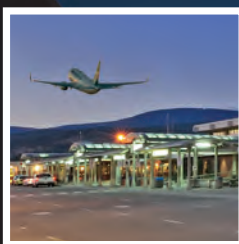
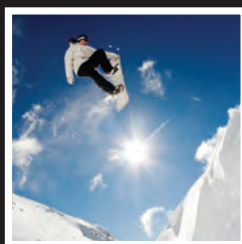



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ABORIGINAL IMMERSION

VANCOUVER ARTS AND CULTURE HOTEL
IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN CANADA

By SUSAN LUNDY
Photos by CRAIG MINIALLY
at Aura Photographics

The totem, called Dreamweaver, punches into the skyline of West Pender Street in Vancouver, hugging the edge of a longhouse, built — incongruously yet spectacularly — onto the rooftop of Skwachàys Lodge.

This marked the first sign that our experience would be special. Once we stepped through the hotel's front door into a world of First Nations art, we understood we'd discovered a one-of-a-kind accommodation, perfect for anyone seeking a great downtown Vancouver location combined with an authentic Aboriginal culture experience.

Located at the crossroads of Vancouver's Gastown and Chinatown, the boutique-style accommodation is Canada's first Aboriginal arts and culture hotel. It opened in September 2014 and has been enjoying rave reviews and huge word-of-mouth success.

My husband and I arrived at Skwachàys Lodge last October with a full agenda: brunch with our daughters, who live in Vancouver, a little shopping, and a Canucks game at Rogers Arena, happily just a block or two away from the hotel. However, once shown to our exquisite room, we wished our schedule were a little lighter.

To create the rooms at Skwachàys Lodge, six world-class Vancouver interior designers collaborated with six Aboriginal artists. The result is 18 distinctly themed rooms, featuring original carvings, paintings, fabric, art, custom furniture and décor.

Our room, the King Salmon Suite, was created by Porada Design and artist Richard Shorty. It pays homage to salmon, which play a central role in the life and culture of coastal First Nations. Shorty's tribute to the salmon run is captured in his painting "Spawning Salmon," which is the first image you see as you step into the room. Cast in Plexiglas and set against a backlight, the striking piece of art stretches across the entire headboard wall and, illuminated, basks the area in a warm glow. The room's finishes are earthy and neutral, making use of rich red tones, light fabrics and wooden furnishings to represent nature's surroundings. It has all the comforts one expects in an upscale accommodation — fluffy bathrobes, plush linens, comfy king bed, 43" Plasma HD TV — but the richness of the art makes it unique and even more appealing.

Our daughters wait in the comfortable sitting area (which includes a single sofa bed) as we drop off our bags, and we all traipse outside onto the balcony (a





Skwachàys Lodge offers guests an experience immersed in Aboriginal arts and culture that supports local Aboriginal artists

little too cold to enjoy the patio seating) and gawk at the totem running up the side of the building.

The hotel's architect, Joe Wai, preserved the heritage building's century-old brick façade and designed a traditional northern longhouse to sit atop of it. The totem, a "story pole" carved by Francis Horn, Sr. called Dreamweaver, is 40.5 feet tall and rises high above the Vancouver roofline.

Back downstairs, we admire art in the Urban Aboriginal Fair Trade Gallery, and pore over massive books filled with remarkably well-priced original First Nations art and prints, trying to decide on just one to purchase. (We chose a Shorty, apropos of our stay in the King Salmon Room.)

Adjacent to the gallery is a beautifully designated common area, with tables, comfy lounging chairs, snacks and beverages. The furnishings are works of art in themselves, including a stunning hand carved table, and the entire room is ringed with First Nations paintings and sculpture.

Owned and operated by the Vancouver Native Housing Society — a registered charitable organization — Skwachàys Lodge is described as a "new, sustainable model for supportive housing."

In addition to the 18 rooms and street-level gallery, it includes 24 Aboriginal artist live/work studios. One hundred per cent of profits from the hotel operation and the fair trade gallery subsidize the studios and further the VNHS mandate to "improve the well-being of Vancouver's urban Aboriginal people."

During a tour, we are shown the basement, which, during the next stage of development, will transform into a working studio where hotel patrons can watch the artists at work. One the top floor, we discover the peaceful, artful area where guests can take part in traditional Aboriginal cultural experiences such as a sweat lodge and smudge room. There is also a small conference room.

"The rebranding and conversion of the lodge now completes our vision," said Dave



Eddy, CEO of the Vancouver Native Housing Society in a press statement. "The success of the hotel and gallery will enable us to provide an authentic cultural tourism experience and create revenue necessary to subsidize rent and enhance the lives of the Aboriginal artists living in the residence.

"This is a truly dynamic and sustainable solution for housing that provides a positive social impact for some of the most marginalized members of Vancouver's

population."

Rates at Skwachàys Lodge start at \$149 a night — a price that allows visitors to affordably immerse themselves in Aboriginal culture amid a stunning, modern, urban setting, in a great location.

We packed up, carefully placed our new art into our truck, and headed home with definite plans to return.

For more information, visit online at skwachays.com 



The tour is the perfect opportunity to give one more “big thank you” to all the fans and meet many of them face-to-face.

PCA helps Green Men agitate one more time

By BENJAMIN YONG

Anyone who has even remotely followed hockey in the last five years will have heard about the two spandex-clad super fans known simply as the “Green Men.” Rising to fame during the legendary Vancouver Canucks Stanley Cup run of 2011 — and most frequently seen causing shenanigans next to the opposing team’s penalty box — the duo of Force (Adam Forsyth) and Sully (Ryan Sullivan) are bidding adieu to their own fans in a farewell tour from Jan. 10 to March 13.

Pacific Coastal Airlines (PCA) is flying the Green Men to hockey games — in various leagues like the Western Hockey League, British Columbia Hockey League and the Vancouver Island Junior Hockey League — in 10 cities throughout the province to raise money for kidney cancer research at the Canadian Cancer Society.

“We’ll be heading to Victoria (and Colwood) for a game, then Cranbrook, Comox, Campbell River, Powell River, Trail and Prince George. We’ll also do a couple of games in the Lower Mainland in Langley and Vancouver,” says Sullivan.

At the games, he and Forsyth will entertain hockey-goers and irritate the opposition, while collecting donations during autograph and photo sessions between periods. But why kidney cancer research?

“It’s what my grandfather passed away from, almost a decade ago. So it’s kind of a tribute trip, as well,” says Sullivan.

It’s not the first time the pair has attended a non-NHL match. A few years ago, a team in Powell River invited them to a game. Pacific Coastal Airlines provided transportation, which is how the partnership between the two parties was first established.

The Green Men have come a long way since they went to their first playoff game.

“During that year, we attended every Stanley Cup game and travelled alongside the team going down to Boston and Nashville. This has become a super fan phenomenon. It’s insane how big it’s gotten; we’ve got a quarter of a million followers on social media now.”

Things haven’t been all smooth. Sullivan says in Boston, they got kicked, shoved and had beer thrown at them. During Game Five in Nashville, a complaint from the Predators’ general manager led to the assigning of a 300-pound security guard in the seat next to them. The NHL tried to ban them at one point from attending games and touching the glass. The surprising result was 8,000 fans organizing a “Save the Green Men” rally.

After the playoffs, the Green Men were inducted into the ESPN Hall of Fame, recognizing individuals who take sports fandom to the next level. In 2012, Sullivan wrote a book titled *Behind the Green* that documents their wild ride to stardom. Last spring, a





radio talk show called Green Men Radio was launched on TSN 1410.

“It’s your ultimate sports and random talk show. We talk a bit about everything: the CFL, NFL and even the dating scene in Vancouver.”

With all this popularity, one might wonder why Force and Sully are calling it quits.

“You can only look good in spandex for so long,” says Sullivan, laughing.

He says they’re both in their late 20s now, and focused on work outside of hockey. The two met in Toronto in 2008 during a practicum through the journalism program at British Columbia Institute of Technology. Forsyth, originally from Surrey, works in media, while Sullivan, born in North Vancouver, is currently focused on the on the sales and marketing side of media.

“We’re both getting deeper and deeper into our careers. If we can’t give 100 per cent, we’d rather go out with dignity than go out half-assed.”

Sullivan says this farewell tour is the perfect opportunity to give one more “big thank you” to all the fans and meet many of them face-to-face.

The complete farewell travel tour schedule can be found on the Green Men’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/canucksgreenmen.

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Gem of the valley

CRESTON VALLEY WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT AREA IS WORTH
VISITING — AND PROTECTING

By JASON RODHAM

Take the scenic route — you'll be glad you did. Wetlands in the Kootenay region are paradise for birdwatchers, outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers of all kinds.

After touching down in the Pacific Coastal Airline destination of Cranbrook at the Canadian Rockies International Airport, drive one-hour west to the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area (CVWMA). Or, fly to the PCA destination of Trail and drive east. This hidden gem is nestled in a natural floodplain between the Purcell and Selkirk mountains, just south of Kootenay Lake. Its sprawling 7,000 hectares are connected by a network of small lakes, lush marshlands, shrubs and forests.

Wildlife is the CVWMA's crowning jewel. It's home to more than 300 types of birds and 80 other animal species. Millions of breeding and migrating birds pass through the area each year as they travel along the

pacific flyway. It's also the last stronghold for northern leopard frogs in the province.

Amazing biodiversity makes the area an ideal place to learn more about nature and the outdoors. A wide variety of educational programs and events are hosted for schools and the public out of its interpretive centre.

"The CVWMA provides a great economic benefit and attracts visitors from around the world," says volunteer Patricia Mitchell. "The people of Creston love the place. Not only birders, but also people who just want to get out and go for a walk or do some canoeing in lovely surroundings. Young people in the community take advantage of the summer programs for kids."

Top marks are also awarded to the CVWMA for its environmental value. A recognized Wetland of International Importance, it's a nationally Important Bird Area and Important Amphibian and Reptile Area. Flood prevention, water purification and carbon storage are all natural services the ecosystem provides.

That's why Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has taken an active role in conserving the CVWMA. The national conservation


organization committed to protecting wetland and associated habitat has restored some of the aging infrastructure at the CVWMA and continues to partner with the province and surrounding communities to ensure its long-term sustainability.

"It's the focal point for the community," says Brad Arner, manager of provincial operations for DUC in BC. "It's important for tourism, and the residents are all very proud of that. It's used and appreciated by many people, and we are excited to be part of something that they love so much."

Tanna Patterson has been visiting the CVWMA since moving to the area in 1980. She and her family enjoy many different activities at the CVWMA, from hikes to kids' in wildlife programs, the osprey festival and other events held at the wildlife centre.

"With the majority of Canadians living in cities, we need places such as the CVWMA more than ever."

This natural oasis is worth seeing for yourself. Extend your next visit through Cranbrook to include a stop at a place locals call the gem of the valley.

It's beautiful British Columbia at its best. 



A guided canoe trip around the CVWMA. Canoe excursions are led by CVWMA naturalists. The CVWMA is the last known stronghold for northern leopard frogs in British Columbia. ©Ducks Unlimited Canada



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CAMPBELL RIVER
Pacific Salmon
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& Auction

Feb. 7
 Takes place at the Eagles Hall.
 FMI: 250-923-0939

Trivia Night for the
Campbell River Hospital
Foundation

Feb. 21, at 7 p.m.
 16th annual event hosted by Campbell
 River Ambulance Paramedics at the
 Campbell River Sportsplex.

COMOX VALLEY
Island Agriculture Show
Feb. 13 & 14

At the Native Sons Hall,
 360 Cliffe Ave., Courtenay.
 FMI: www.iashow.ca

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Feb. 19 to March 15
 Celebrating local cuisine with more
 than 20 Comox Valley restaurants,
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 FMI: www.discovercomoxvalley.com/
 dine-around-the-comox-valley-2015

HAIDA GWAI
The Haida Gwaii Film
Festival 2015

March 6 to 8, March 14 & 15
and March 21 & 22
 Short, medium and feature-length
 films showing at Queen Charlotte,
 Skidegate and Masset.
 FMI: www.haidagwaiifilmfestival.ca

KELOWNA
Canadian Culinary
Championships
Feb. 6 & 7

Featuring high-level competition
 among chefs from across Canada.
 FMI: goldmedalplates.com

POWELL RIVER
Horizon Business Awards,
Auction and Dinner
Feb. 7, at 6 p.m.

The 20th annual awards evening at
 Dwight Hall recognizes local business
 accomplishments in 14 categories.
 FMI: office@powellriverchamber.com
 or 604-485-4051

Powell River Film Festival
Feb. 17 to 22

Featuring documentaries, dramas,
 shorts, student and local films,
 at the Patricia Theatre.
 FMI: www.prffilmfestival.ca

PRINCE GEORGE
Canada Winter Games
Feb. 13 to March 1

Canada's largest multi-sport and
 cultural event for youth.
 FMI: www.canadagames2015.ca

Prince George Education
& Career Fair

March 10
 Tickets \$5 at the door or free from
 12 to 3 p.m. with pre-registration.
 Prince George Civic Centre, 808
 Canada Games Way. FMI: info@
 educationcareerfaairs.com

Prince George Chamber
of Commerce Annual
General Meeting

March 26, from 5 to 7 p.m.
 FMI: 250-562-2454 or admin@
 pgchamber.bc.ca

TRAIL
Ongoing

Pacific Coastal Airlines launches new
 non-stop service between Trail and
 Kelowna, daily Sunday through Friday.
 FMI: www.pacificcoastal.com

Slopes for Hope
Feb. 22

Third annual fundraiser for the
 Canadian Cancer Society at Red
 Mountain Resort. FMI: www.
 slopesforhope.ca

VANCOUVER
Dine Out Vancouver
Festival
To Feb. 1

Featuring culinary events and
 experiences at hundreds of restaurants
 throughout the city.
 FMI: www.dineoutvancouver.com

Outdoor Adventure &
Travel Show 2015
March 7 and 8

Explore B.C. event at the Vancouver
 Conference Centre.

Her Majesty Queen Noor
March 10, at 7 p.m.

Hosted by the Vancouver Board of
 Trade's Women's Leadership Circle at
 Queen Elizabeth Theatre.
 FMI: boardoftrade.com/WLC

VICTORIA
Canadian Health &
Wellness Innovations
Conference
Feb. 23 to 25

At the Victoria Conference Centre.
 FMI: www.ifebp.org

GottaCon 2015
Feb. 27 to March 1

Victoria's seventh annual gaming
 convention comes to the Victoria
 Conference Centre.
 FMI: www.gottacon.com

WILLIAMS LAKE
20th annual Business
Excellence Awards
March 14

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 & District Chamber of Commerce
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 FMI: www.williamslakechamber.com



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Q&A

Alex Shorten

President, Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch

Based in Vancouver, Alex Shorten has combined extensive experience in private practice with 24 years of corporate experience in senior legal and management positions, working with major North American forest products, construction and parking management companies. Raised in Regina, Sask., Shorten was called to the Bar in British Columbia in 1973. His practice includes business law, mergers and acquisitions, competition law, forestry and construction law, and he has spoken at numerous conferences in Canada and the US. An active volunteer for many years, Shorten continues to mentor law students and provide advice to recently called lawyers. An avid sports fan, Alex enjoys spending time walking on the beach with his wife Catherine and their dog.

Q: WHAT IS THE MANDATE OF THE CANADIAN BAR ASSOCIATION AND WHAT WILL YOUR ROLE BE AS HEAD OF THE BC BRANCH?

A: The goal of the BC Branch of the CBA (CBABC) is to be the primary resource and voice for its members in all issues affecting its members. As president, I am proud to lead our voluntary organization in BC. Today our Association represents almost 7,000 lawyers, judges and law students in BC and 38,000 nationally. We are the essential ally and advocate for all members of the legal profession and we are committed to enhancing the professional and commercial interests of a diverse membership and to protecting the independence of the judiciary and the Bar.

Q: WHAT DREW YOU TO A CAREER IN LAW AND IN PARTICULAR TO YOUR AREAS OF FOCUS, INCLUDING WORKING WITH THE NORTH AMERICAN FOREST PRODUCTS AND CONSTRUCTION SECTORS?

A: I became interested in going to law school when I met some law students while I was at university earning my Bachelor of Arts degree. I took several years off to earn enough to attend the law school at the University of Saskatchewan at Saskatoon. When I graduated I was not quite sure what type of law I wanted to practice so for the first few years I worked in different areas such as criminal law, family law, construction law and corporate practice. My interest in working for Forest Products and Construction companies came as a result of accepting legal positions to work as in-house counsel in Vancouver for large companies in these industries. Eventually, in addition to practicing law, I became an executive responsible for the law departments and other areas. I attended board meetings and committee meetings in areas such as audit, pension plans, environmental, marketing and strategic planning.

Q: HOW DOES THIS EXPERIENCE ASSIST IN YOUR ROLE WITH THE CBABC?

A: I have been fortunate to be on the CBABC executive for almost four years and a member of CBA for over 40 years. My executive and supervisory work with corporations along with my legal work and my knowledge of CBA has given me a number of tools that I use in my role as president of CBABC.

Q: WHAT HAS BEEN THE ASSOCIATION'S GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT IN RECENT YEARS?

A: The *Agenda for Justice* is a series of legislative reforms and recommendations aimed at improving access to justice for all British Columbians. Based on the CBABC's extensive research and previous submissions to government as a collaborative partner, we presented a guideline of low and no-costs ways to improve laws and administer justice. More recently we unveiled the CBA *Legal Futures Initiative* — a comprehensive national narrative that explores ways to transform and deliver legal services differently in Canada. Both initiatives are exciting and continue to inspire change, and encourage dialogue beyond our membership with aim of improving the legal system overall.

Q: WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING THE CBABC?

A: Access to justice is one of the biggest challenges affecting our legal system, and impacts everyone in BC – our members but most importantly, the public. When the courts are clogged due to lack of legal aid funding and money to support court services, we all pay the price. Funding to aid unrepresented litigants and underserved courthouses are two of the main issues the CBABC advocates for in this Province. *We Need Legal Aid* is a campaign we have championed to government for the past few years and we will continue to pressure for change so businesses and families can once again benefit.

Q: ANYTHING ELSE PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE CANADIAN BAR ASSOCIATION AND ITS WORK HERE IN BC?

A: We hope the public understands that our work for our membership also helps the non-legal community. Our professional development sessions help lawyers maintain and upgrade their skills. Our advocacy work on changes to legislation and legal process always has an aspect that provides value to citizens, lawyers and the legislative process. I would also like the public to understand that lawyers do thousands of hours of non-paid volunteer work on behalf of clients, the public and their communities in pro bono work (non-paid legal work), work for charities and for non-profits for their communities all over the province. ■

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