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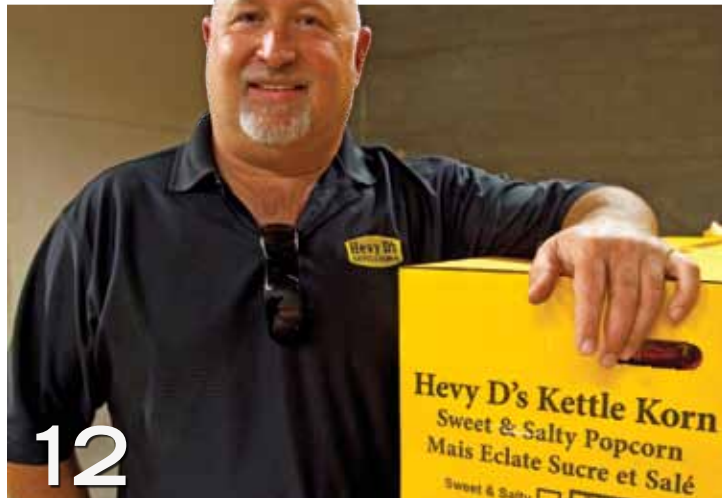
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paul'svoice



Randomness of fire Peachland heros

■ "Have you ever been forced to leave your home because of a threatening fire?" asked my brother Danny in a hurried call last January. Danny lives south of Calgary on what British Columbians would call the bald prairie. Before I could visualize anything remotely combustible there in the middle of winter, he blurted, "It was a grass fire that started when a hydro pole blew over—and it headed straight for us."

Inconceivably, the fire consumed three homes that day. One of them was his. My son Justin, who was living with Danny at the time, lost practically all of his possessions.

Eight months later, from downtown Peachland, I spotted smoke. Instinctively, we knew to hurry home and pack up, our urgency reinforced moments later by a call from friends who were travelling along the Connector and saw the flames heading toward our neighbourhood.

I witnessed the horror and reality of the 2003 fire and was later caught on the Kelowna side when the Glenrosa fire displaced many. Being from Alberta, I know the power of wind and believe me, that wind was mighty fierce and blowing the fire directly our way.

Empty-nesters and pet-free, our time packing up was a lot easier than most. As creative-types, our precious cargo was my musical and her novel. Photo albums, artwork and mementos were stuffed in with the necessities of passports and tax returns. We hastily packed a few clothes, holding out hope that our rapid departure would only bring the inconvenience of a few days living out of

a suitcase. Alas, I did forget my socks.

The Peachland fire is a story of both what did and what did not happen. Late that night, the temperature dropped, the rain came, and the wind shifted, blowing the fire back upon itself and ultimately over to the next hill. There, thankfully, it met with the Ponderosa Golf Course. Under construction, the course provided a firebreak, easy access for fire crews and, most importantly, little fuel for the hungry flames.

We can all be very grateful to and take a big lesson from the Ponderosa management. Their fuel mitigation efforts, thinning trees and cleaning out the dry undergrowth, saved Peachland.

I am both astounded and grateful for the firefighters' skill as they assaulted that blaze from ground and air, and contained it so quickly. My thanks extends beyond the crews to the many civic leaders and professionals who left their work and families to staff the Emergency Operations Centre, and who, together with countless volunteers, ensured the safe evacuation of 1,550 residents and a coordinated effort to fight the fire.

Thanks also to the many friends who offered and those that did open their home to us that night.

My colleagues in the news media also deserve kudos. They were on site and on air providing essential updates and underscoring the invaluable role they play in our society. As we watched and waited to see if our home would be taken, we were reminded by friends and family that what was important was that we were safe.

My heart goes out to those who did lose their homes, but we might all take comfort in the knowledge that what truly matters are not the things you can pack in a box.



John Paul Byrne
publisher

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FLOYDFEST

Okanagan music community helps one of its own

- When local musician Floyd Vedan was the victim of an assault that resulted in severe head injury, his friends rallied with a fundraiser they called FloydFest.

Organizers included Brad Krauza, Jimmy LeGuilloux, Paul Sexsmith and Mark Greenhalgh with help from Bernadette Johnson on the silent auction. "Floyd has touched many hearts out there," says Krauza. "We are all so happy he is on a good path to recovery. He still has a way to go, but with the money raised for him, he can have one less thing to worry about."

Dozens of BC musicians volunteered for the Sept. 6 event staged at the Kelowna Community Theatre. Approximately 700 people attended and FloydFest raised over \$10,000.

The Zamboni Brothers followed by and Andrew and Zach Smith performed in the lobby as guests bid on silent auction items. Tim Allen of Power 104 emceed the main program that included Just about Janis, Gary Turlock, Ten2Nine, Jane and Gord, Fields of Green, Theresa Bishop, The Flu, Leah West and the Cruzeros.

Following Floyd's thank-you appearance, Darby Mills took the stage with her impromptu band of Brad Krauza on bass, Jimmy LeGuilloux on guitar

and Steve Butler on drums. Although the four had only rehearsed twice, they pulled off an amazing performance.

Darby says she was honoured to play at Floyd's fundraiser. "When I first agreed to do it, I thought, if that ever happened to me, I would appreciate help to get back on my feet. To be able to help a fellow musician in this situation is a great feeling. He's one hell of a guy for all these people to be stepping up like this for him."

"This is overwhelming," says Floyd. "I feel so lucky to have friends that would do this for me. Two bands got back together, the Cruzeros and Ten2Nine, just for this event. Then there's Darby Mills who is Canada's best female singer ever in my opinion."

Floyd also expresses thanks to the staff at Kelowna General Hospital. "They helped bring me back to reality," he says. "It was scary in there, I was out of it for many days. They brought me around."

Floyd continues therapy and is grateful every day. "Being able to come home from an injury like this is a miracle. I've got a lot of healing to do. This has changed the way I live my life; it has changed it for the better." —Darcy Nybo

DRAINS OF DARKNESS

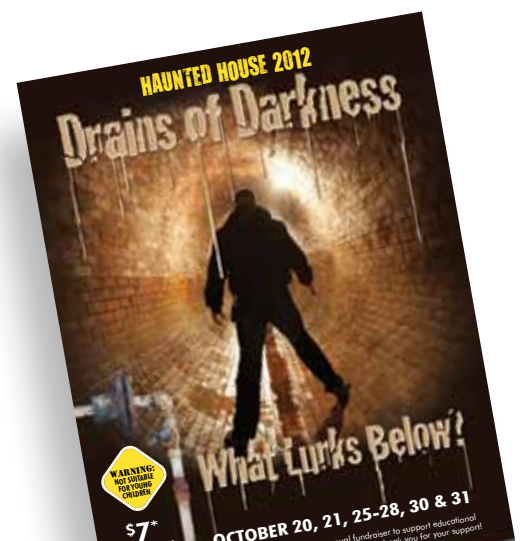
Haunted house returns

Prepare for another hair-raising run of Okanagan Science Centre's Haunted House. This year's event drags visitors deep into the dank abyss, exploring science and fear in an elemental form—water.

Get sucked in by a new theatrical scenario of environmental disaster and mystery with the help of talented actors and special exhibits. The science centre you thought you knew will be transformed to feature old, dark culverts, compromised research posts, abandoned cabins, and bone-chilling mountaintops. You might even learn something on your journey—between the screams.

Drains of Darkness: What Lurks Below is presented in two formats. The Junior Haunted House entertains and educates young visitors, families and the faint of heart with exciting hands-on (and lights-on) activities. There's plenty of opportunity to show off your best costume without worrying about the actors' tricks or scary scenery.

But the truly brave must experience the main event. Test your nerves and see if you can make it through all three floors of the Okanagan's most famous haunted house in one piece. You will never look at your water the same way again. More info at www.okscience.ca.



FLOYDFEST PHOTO BY LEW MACDONALD; SCIENCE CENTRE PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

GARAGE SALE BENEFIT

Cash for women's shelters

Broker/Owner Wade Webb, manager Steve Gray along with a committee of sales associates and staff from Royal LePage Kelowna came together to present three cheques totaling over \$11,900 to local branches of the Kelowna Women's Shelter, New Opportunities for Women (NOW) Canada, and the Elizabeth Fry Society.

The funds were raised through the 4th Annual Royal LePage National Garage Sale for Shelter, a one-day charity garage sale where members of the community are encouraged to join in and de-clutter for a cause. The funds will be used to support women and children by providing housing, counseling, childcare and crisis management. One hundred per cent of all revenue generated by the garage sale supports local women's shelters and helps fund long-term solutions to end family violence.

"Royal LePage professionals are tireless in their efforts to create safer homes and safer communities through the Shelter Foundation," says Phil Soper, president and chief executive of Royal LePage.



KELOWNA WOMEN'S SHELTER CHEQUE PRESENTATION



PAUL DUFFIELD SWIMS 10 VALLEY LAKES IN ONE DAY TO RAISE AWARENESS FOR YMCA STRONG KIDS CAMPAIGN

ONE MAN, 10 LAKES, ONE DAY

English Channel training swim helps local kids

Local swimmer Paul Duffield set out to swim 10 Okanagan lakes in one day—a challenge he successfully completed on Sept. 22. Starting at 6 a.m. in total darkness, he first crossed Shannon Lake in West Kelowna off his list. With the support of his wife, Angelique, he travelled through the region swimming at eight other lakes: Rose Valley, Wood, Kalamalka, Swan, Tuc el Nuit, Gallagher, Vaseux and Skaha before he finished the 15 hour day by crossing Gellatly Bay on Okanagan Lake at 8:53 p.m.

Paul is a member of the OMSC Lake Monsters team, currently training for an attempt to swim the English Channel in the summer of 2013. With the Lake Monsters, Paul recently swam a 35 kilometre relay across the Salish Sea from Davis Bay to Nanaimo, a swim which took the team almost 11 hours.

"With the Salish Sea swim behind me and the team's ultimate goal of swimming across the English Channel 10 months away, I was looking to set myself a new challenge," says Paul.

"The day was not about setting any time or distance records but raising awareness, and hopefully some money, for the Lake Monsters' YMCA Strong

Kids campaign, while giving me the opportunity to swim surrounded by some of the region's amazing scenery."

Friends and teammates sent Paul good luck messages throughout the day, which helped him to keep going. "It was great to see everybody following my progress on Facebook," he says. "Their support was amazing. It helped to make the long day lots of fun."

The Lake Monsters hope to raise \$6,000 over the next year, which will enable more than 20 kids with financial barriers to participate in YMCA leisure programs.

For regular updates on the swim team's training, or to learn more about the YMCA Strong Kids Campaign, check Paul's blog at www.NothingGreatIsEasy.com.

To make an online donation, go to <http://campaign.ymcas-strongkids.ca/paulduffield>.





AN ACTOR'S LIFE FOR ME

■ It's only coincidental that Kelowna Actors Studio will be putting on Disney's *My Son Pinocchio* as part of this season's offerings. Most people of a certain age can still sing at least two bars of *An Actor's Life For Me* from the original *Pinocchio* movie and, although that childhood fascination for treading the boards may have faded from most of us, it continues to propel Kelowna Actors Studio (KAS) co-founder Randy Leslie on a career that has spanned almost 30 years.

Randy is the driving force behind Kelowna's only professional dinner-theatre troupe. He has spent the past decade producing, directing and acting in a string of musical and dramatic hits at the Ellis Street theatre.

The 47-year-old began his career in Toronto turning pro at the age of 20. In all, he has performed more than 60 roles ranging from Don Quixote to Max the Producer, and he can hoof it as well as act. Among his theatrical specialties are coaching improv comedy and voice, script writing, choreography and directing.

Randy never did finish theatre school. He'd already made a career working in the craft and performing in both the Big Smoke and

Ottawa. But like a lot of highly talented people he felt the need to give something back and began training young performers and background people in the ways of live theatre.

Many of his students have gone on to study at prominent schools like The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Los Angeles, the Julliard School in New York and Sheridan College in Toronto.

Here in Kelowna, KAS has established the Kelowna Actors Studio Foundation—a non-profit organization to promote and enhance education in the arts here and ultimately to build a nationally recognized theatre school in Kelowna's Cultural District.

The KAS facility covers 11,000 square feet including the 230-seat dinner theatre; training and rehearsal spaces for actors, singers and dancers; set construction and storage areas; a kitchen, licensed bar and office space. The company now trains more than 150 students per semester.

Another extension of KAS is the new Mandatory Expression Theatre Company. Although Kelowna patrons love musical theatre, Randy and KAS are adding a new dimension to their offerings with cutting-edge drama

like Tony Kushner's 1993 Pulitzer play *Angels In America*, which deals with controversial gay themes.

During his public appearances, Randy rarely lets the opportunity pass to promote all branches of the arts in Kelowna and his energy and effort has not gone unnoticed. In 2009, the city honoured him with the prestigious Angel of the Arts Award.

How did the boy from Toronto's east end, end up in Kelowna?

After a hugely successful career in performance, production and theatre management, Randy left the St. Lawrence Centre after 13 years to head west as the executive director of the Rotary Centre for the Arts. With a year under his belt he realized he had enough of a feel for Kelowna and the type of audience here to try something he had always wanted to do.

"I could see the audience here loved musical theatre," he says. "I had this dream that I wanted to combine top quality productions with a solid educational program and when the possibility of acquiring this space opened up, I couldn't say no."

The result was the creation of Kelowna Actors Studio—now in its tenth season.—Bruce Kemp

Skydiving as art

Stretching the cultural envelope

by Gillianne Richards

■ A red blob splattered across a green canvas. That's how I'll look if things go wrong today. I am plummeting from 11,000 feet over the Okanagan Valley with nothing but a Russian man strapped to my back. If we can land without looking like a Jackson Pollack painting across the Vernon airfield, I'll have another notch on the belt of my amazing cultural experiences.

Hold on. I'm skydiving. What the heck does that have to do with culture? At first glance I didn't make the connection, neither did my already accommodating editor. But when I asked the team at Okanagan Skydive, they were quick to defend their craft. "Sky-diving has an amazing sub-culture," pipes Calvin Johnson, a jumping veteran, as he packs parachutes for the dive. The energy in the room ignites. The paradigm of what I think culture is cracks open.

The word culture is defined by broad strokes and doesn't seem to have one hard meaning. In general, it relates to groups of people who share common behaviours and language linked to the pursuit of something creative. Canadian culture embodies all things quirky and creative we do as Canadians. If Calgary's Testicle Festival and Windsor's Pumpkin Race can be seen as part of our culture then surely those who ride the skies are legitimate links to it too.

I ask the owner of Okanagan Skydive, Bret Chalmers, what he thinks. His exuberance and love for life cloaks him with the air of a child-like superhero. He also looks a little like actor Ralph Fiennes who played a villain in the Harry Potter series. If he puts on a mask and tells me to leave the plane in a seething English accent we can perform a one act

battle between Hermione and Lord Voldemort though the skies. Says Bret, "I've never known any other activity where grown men and women can act like five-year-olds on a playground again. The people you jump with are your family. It's a community. We trust each other with our lives. You find these like-minded people anywhere in the world who will welcome you with open arms, who look after you. It's part of our culture and an amazing way to see the sights and get to know the culture of another country."

In a way, they're flying ambassadors.

Not only has Canadian skydiving made its mark on the world with innovative techniques, Bret also points to the creative side of his craft.

"It's about the way that you're able to fly, the planned jumps with a common goal, other ones that are totally free. Sometimes we play a game of tag up there. There's also artistic dancing." Much of the practice seems to be about pushing the limits of human potential, another component of what culture's all about.

After training we hop in a small aircraft piloted by a grey-haired maverick. I'm pretty sure he hums the theme to Top Gun as we take off. Circling

higher I take in the incredible views from the window and breathe deep. Then I hear the door open, gather all the courage I can find, and with the help of my tandem guide, get launched into the great wide open.

Bret's selling art in the form of a unique experience. One that demands you look fear in the eye, tilt your head up and have faith you will survive this day. If only I could frame something like that to look upon as I head out the front door each morning.

During the free fall my fear becomes exhilaration. I'm locked in the awe of a thousand symphonies, a hundred dances, a single masterpiece that is this moment. Bret soars around me snapping pics that capture a thrill so great my heart's torn between bursting from the beauty of sunlight bouncing off lakes and valleys and the waving white tips of the Monashee Mountains, and having a mild heart attack right there in my jumper-alls. Not from the terror of dying, mind you, but from thundering through a rush of life. Whether it can be classified as part of our culture or not, I can say from experience that to skydive is an art worth cultivating. **OL**

Gillianne (goofy grin) free falling with Nick the Russian.



A close-up photograph of a middle-aged man with a grey goatee and blue eyes, smiling at the camera. He is holding three white bowls filled with popcorn. The popcorn in the two top bowls is white with a light orange tint, while the popcorn in the bottom bowl is a vibrant orange. The background is dark and out of focus.

The Fo

Okanagan
entrepreneurs are
making it big.
What's their
secret?

Barry Stecyk, founder
and owner of Hevy
D's Old Fashioned
Kettle Corn.

PHOTO BY DOUG FARROW

By Natalie Appleton

under's Effect

A dark-haired man stands over a vat of melting sugar. With each turn, the metal tub tosses an enticing scent into the air. Around the corner, a dozen 50-pound sacks of corn sit on the floor. Barry Stecyk's black heels crunch on stray kernels. Walking through the Hevy D's Old Fashioned Kettle Korn factory, housed in a row of commercial bays near Coldstream, Barry looks up. Darren Hickson, the bear-like company namesake and vice-president, pulls a pen from behind his ear. "Dover called." Barry smiles and nods. "Good," he says. "That's good."

The call is about a deal, says Barry, founder and owner of the Vernon popcorn company that's competing with the likes of Frito-Lay and holding its own. He's been getting a lot more of those calls lately. Major grocery chains want to carry Hevy D's and Asian, Texan and Mexican firms want to wrap their labels around his gourmet popcorn.

But it wasn't always that way. In 2005, Darren told his brother-in-law Barry about his recipe for a sweet but salty popcorn he thought people might like. Soon they were in business. "It's been five years of a tough grind and shattered dreams," says Barry. "You hear stories about the businessman on his last knee. Well, this is one of those stories."



"An unlikely entrepreneur hub" is how the *Financial Times* described the Okanagan Valley in June 2011. In the UK, mused the writer, business thrives where people don't. Think factories and bleak, concrete housing towers. Here, however, the landscape is painted with lakes, mountains, vineyards, and sun. Somewhere along the way the Okanagan became not just Canada's Napa but maybe a sort of Silicon Valley, too.

Since 2009, two Okanagan communities—Vernon and Kelowna—have been named most entrepreneurial city in British Columbia by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Its report, *Communities in Boom: Canada's Top Entrepreneurial Cities*, considers government tax breaks and business owner's optimism in addition to the number of start-ups and entrepreneurs.

It's Robert Fine's job to help steer and then tout these results. As executive director of the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC), Robert networks with entrepreneurs and politicians to make greater Kelowna a business-friendly area.

He says the Okanagan's old identity did the advertising for its new one. "This has become a hub for entrepreneurs because talented and successful people want to live here."

That becomes truer every year. According to Statistics Canada, both the population and the number of entrepreneurs have been on the rise for a while. The most recent available census data shows that between 2001 and 2006, Kelowna's population increased almost 11 per cent while the city's self-employed jumped from 11,685 to 13,755. In Vernon over those same five years, the population grew by seven per cent and the number of people working for themselves jumped by 315 to 4,200.

Not all of these entrepreneurs are outsiders who have recently moved to the region. Some grew up in the Okanagan and had perfectly good day jobs or a place in the family business when they decided to take the biggest risk of their lives.



Faith

The Bigsby kitchen looked like a bone-yard. Shards of wood shaved by knives lay everywhere, in mounds on the counter, in wet clusters in the sink and as flakes frying inside a waffle-maker doctored to bake the western birch.

"It used to take us four hours to make one piece of cutlery when we first started," says Terry Bigsby. He's now the president of Aspenware, a Lumby company that makes compostable wooden cutlery.

In addition to the shavings and several pairs of burnt oven mitts, Terry was joined in the kitchen by his father, Bob, and Claus Gerlach, all three shop teachers, and Mike Allen, an English and French teacher.

The foursome found themselves at the Bigsby home tinkering with firewood from the family farm after Claus saw a German television special about disposable wooden cutlery.

"You gotta see this," he'd said.

Terry, whose Woodlinks course at

Vernon Secondary School taught students how to make something out of wood and then sell it, watched the tape. Soon their team flew to Germany, met the inventor, declined his handsome price tag and returned home empty-handed. The group decided they'd would be better off making their own cutlery, and making it even better.

But there was no design, no press, no recipe. They had nothing but a kitchen, some wood scraps and eight hands. It was 1997.

"If someone would have told me it's going to take \$10 million and 10 years to do this, I would have said, 'Jump in the lake,'" says Terry, who now heads Aspenware full-time. He raises his hand and, starting with his

thumb, counts the hurdles of forming this company. Money is first. "We started with nothing," he says. "Zero."

In 2008, Terry appeared on CBC's *Dragon's Den* to entice the television investors. His cutlery got some great exposure, but everyone was "out," as they say.

Aspenware struggled with start-up cash, and it battled—still battles—technical matters. They needed a mold, more molds, a plant. The spoon needed to be smoother. The knives needed to cut steak.

Each time Terry felt like throwing a fork in the fire, he looked 20 years beyond the blackened shreds in front of him and saw Aspenware on tables. "This will change the world," he says, of

PHOTOS BY DOUG FARROW

the biodegradable flatware that rises from slash piles. "It's healthy. It's sustainable. It's everything plastic isn't."

Today, Aspenware's assembly line carves 50,000 utensils an hour, each a perfect, laminated two-ply piece of veneer bound with an edible adhesive, a model for which the company holds two patents. With his product now selling in stores like Home Outfitters, Pharmasave and Save-On-Foods, Terry dreams of Aspenware replacing plastic at every fast-food restaurant on the continent.

At Vernon Vipers games he sees kids sucking blue sno-cone ice onto their tongues with Aspenware spoons, and he smiles. "We could have given up years ago," says Terry, but he's thankful the group persevered.

"It's healthy. It's sustainable. It's everything plastic isn't."



Media exposure showcases the Okanagan's natural attributes, even in times of tragedy. For weeks in the summer of 2003, Canadians saw footage of fires. Viewers felt terrible, but they also felt awe.

"Even more people came in," says Robert Fine.

If those new residents couldn't find work when they got here, they created their own. And if they made it, so did someone else.

Another of Robert's theories about why the Okanagan has such a high concentration of entrepreneurs suggests the founding of one company spurs business for another, and another, and so on.

"Small business success breeds more business success," he says, adding when outsiders move into the

Okanagan and open shop, friends and colleagues catch on to the idea of relocating too. "They attract the people they do business with."

Dominoes fall. The café serves a new regular. The printer designs a new sign. The tech shop on the corner connects new servers.

It was like this with what has now become Kelowna's technology community. Two years after launching a snow-laden virtual playground for kids, online entrepreneurs Lane Merrifield, Dave Krysko and Lance Priebe sold Club Penguin to Disney for \$350 million. More than 300 people still work at the Kelowna operation on Dickson Avenue, on the same side of the road as the Centre for Arts and Technology, Enquiro Search Solutions Inc., a Thai restaurant and a new coffee shop.

"That became a bit of an anchor for us," says Robert. In Disney's shadow, other gaming and technology firms are popping up and even relocating.

The face of the Okanagan, once stamped with manufacturing, forestry and agricultural industries, is different now. The first crack appeared when Kelowna's Western Star Trucks shut its doors to 1,400 employees in 2002. In the fall of 2008, Lavington's glass plant and Spallumcheen's RV

factory shut down; nearly 400 people lost their jobs. During those six years and beyond, several more businesses have shut their doors, mills are running with fewer staff and many of the survivors have stopped hiring.

"The economy has really changed the Okanagan," says Ken MacLeod, a man who lives and breathes business. He's a business consultant, runs his own group of companies, chairs the Okanagan chapter of a club for executives (TEC), is president of the Vernon Chamber of Commerce and, long before he felt the Valley's pull, was once president and CEO of Canadian Tire. "People have been coming here for years for the lifestyle. Before the bust, it wasn't difficult to make money in this community. You just had to work hard."

Not anymore. MacLeod says the shift in the economy has forced a lot of people to become business owners, and a different kind of business owner.

"Some of them will do well and some of them will lose their shirt."

Facing page:
Terry Bigsby, president of Aspenware.
Below:
Aspenware production in Vernon plant.



Charity

Barry Stecyk and Darren Hickson started selling their sweet and salty gourmet popcorn under the blue awning of Walmart in Vernon. They worked the farmers' markets too, shovelling Hevy D's Old Fashioned Kettle Korn into little white bags as quickly as they could. Licking their lips, customers asked where else they could get it. Soon, grocery stores wanted shipments.

"We got to a place where it was like, go big or go home, and that was a really scary place to be," says Barry. Houses were on the line. More than \$1 million was needed to build the factory, hire staff, buy bags for packaging and fuel the trucks to drop the popcorn off.

They decided to go big.

In the beginning, Hevy D's fell victim to wrongdoers, made some mistakes and tumbled into the red, but the company did raise a lot of money for charity. Barry was running a business, a new business in the snack industry, but Hevy D's has always been committed to giving.

One hundred per cent of the proceeds from that entire first year in the Walmart parking lot went to 50 different Vernon causes. Hevy D's went on to send cash to Haiti after the hurricane, sponsor a concert for

Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan, and offer some of the proceeds of a special candy cane flavour to the BC Children's Hospital.

"If we can use our popcorn to raise money and help people, we will," says Barry, a former nurse whose family owns a care home for the mentally challenged in Vernon. For his charitable contributions the BC Country Music Association named him Humanitarian of the Year in 2011.

Amidst the fundraising, Barry has simultaneously been promoting emerging musicians, most notably with a Vancouver Province column featuring new artists and free music. It started with a benefit performance for the armed forces and led to free song downloads inside popcorn bags—a twist on the toy-in-a-Crackerjack-box approach.

"We pride ourselves on being ahead of the curve," says Barry, who will soon release a Hevy D's mobile application so popcorn and music lovers can discover new talent. "Marketing is number one on the list."

Though it's obviously working—the company makes about 75,000 bags a month for sale in stores ranging from Urban Fare to Overwaitea Foods across Canada—Hevy D's marriage of popcorn and recording artists isn't just a marketing technique. Barry loves music, and he loves seeing the little guy make it.

Last fall he was in an elevator in Vancouver's Shaw Centre, on his way to the 25th floor where business tycoon Jim Pattison was about to offer distribution for Hevy D's Old Fashioned Kettle Korn. The light reached 24, then 25. A bell dinged. The metal doors opened. Pattison was standing on the other side, holding out his hand.

Barry remembers the weight of his tongue. It took a moment, but he managed to speak and later signed the deal. "I can now say we've made it."



Some have an idea but not a business plan. Some have a product but not a customer. Some pay more in rent than they could ever make in a month. Some just don't want to work hard. Or they ask people to pay too little for that thing they've been toiling away at for weeks or even years, and they try to do too much, to be everything to everybody.

"I've seen a lot of failures," says Ken MacLeod, looking out the window of a coffee shop on Vernon's 32 Street, the stretch of Highway 97 where the sun bleats across the hoods of semi-trucks on their way south to Kelowna or Vancouver, or north and east, to Calgary. It costs Okanagan companies a lot to ship their product to



the rest of Canada and beyond—if they can find customers outside the Valley. And that's assuming they have enough skilled labour to make the product in the first place.

Despite that, or perhaps because of that, Aspenware president Terry Bigsby says there's a good business atmosphere here. "There's camaraderie. People want to work together to make things work."

For Aspenware, which has been scouting sites for a second plant in Ontario, location is a catch-22. "We're not in the middle of the fibre belt, but we're in the middle of a culture of people who know about wood. We can afford to truck our wood, not forever, but a long way and still stay profitable. You make some decisions."

Making tough choices and understanding everything about your business are just



two steps on the ladder to success, says Ken. Today's entrepreneurs in the Okanagan have to be good at branding, marketing and competing. "Now people have to be better business people, much more in tune to their business. The ones that survive are the ones that are really in tune with their market."

There are survivors, and then there are virtuosos; those who want to own a business and those who have to. It's in their blood.

Facing page and above:

Hevy D's Old Fashioned Kettle Korn president, Barry Stecyk at Vernon headquarters.

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Help

"Move that bus," said Ty Pennington. The crowd hushed. Hearts pounding, they stepped closer to the screen, some sipped nervously at their drinks as they waited. Almost all of the three dozen Waterplay Solutions Corp. staff gathered at Kelowna's Hotel El Dorado on March 6, 2005, had had a hand in building the water park about to be unveiled on TLC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.

The camera panned through the new home of the Harris family whose sextuplets had seen Hurricane Ivan punch through their ceiling. Now, one of the boys was in the backyard. He clapped and his three-year-old body toppled on its way to the playground where his brothers and sisters were ducking, blinking and laughing as water squirted their ears and sprayed their faces.

"Truthfully, it was kind of emotional because it gave the kids something pretty unique and cool that most kids wouldn't have access to in their backyard," says Jill White, owner and president of Waterplay, a Kelowna company that has built more than 3,000 spray parks around the world. The Harris's backyard park, which featured spraying bees, flowers and rings, was one of the more rewarding projects; so was the

spray park the company made for a wheelchair-bound girl on a 2011 episode of the show.

Jill, who bought Waterplay in 2004 and has since helped the company become a global leader, is more at ease discussing that night at the El Dorado, the employees who were there, or the finish on a weld than her own work as an entrepreneur.

"I don't like to talk about myself," she says. "I like to talk about the team."

Jill grew up in a house where talk at the dinner table was often about business. She was born a Thorlakson, a Tolko Industries forestry empire Thorlakson. In adulthood, after working for the family company, and elsewhere in accounting and in advertising, Jill heard about a Penticton-based spray park company whose owners were looking to sell.

She flipped through the catalogue, looking at the bright beams and hoses fashioned after animals.



It was a business, but it was creative. It was decision time. She could continue to do what was as familiar as home, or she could go out on her own. Her mind was made up.

"The personality of the company really seemed to match me," says Jill.

Waterplay grew. The company hired fabricators to do more building in-house. It moved into a 12,000 square-foot building and quickly filled the new premises—despite reservations among old employees. Jill says Waterplay's success since then is because of her team, although her definition of team is a little different from other CEOs.

"There's never going to be an executive washroom or parking lot. I'll be the one unloading the dishwasher as much as anyone else," says Jill. "I think the culture is something I'm most passionate about and most protective about."

Employees have taken to her egalitarian approach. In December 2011, after tallying staff input, *B.C. Business Magazine* named Waterplay the province's second-best manufacturing company to work for. This is success. **OL**

"The personality of the company really seemed to match me."





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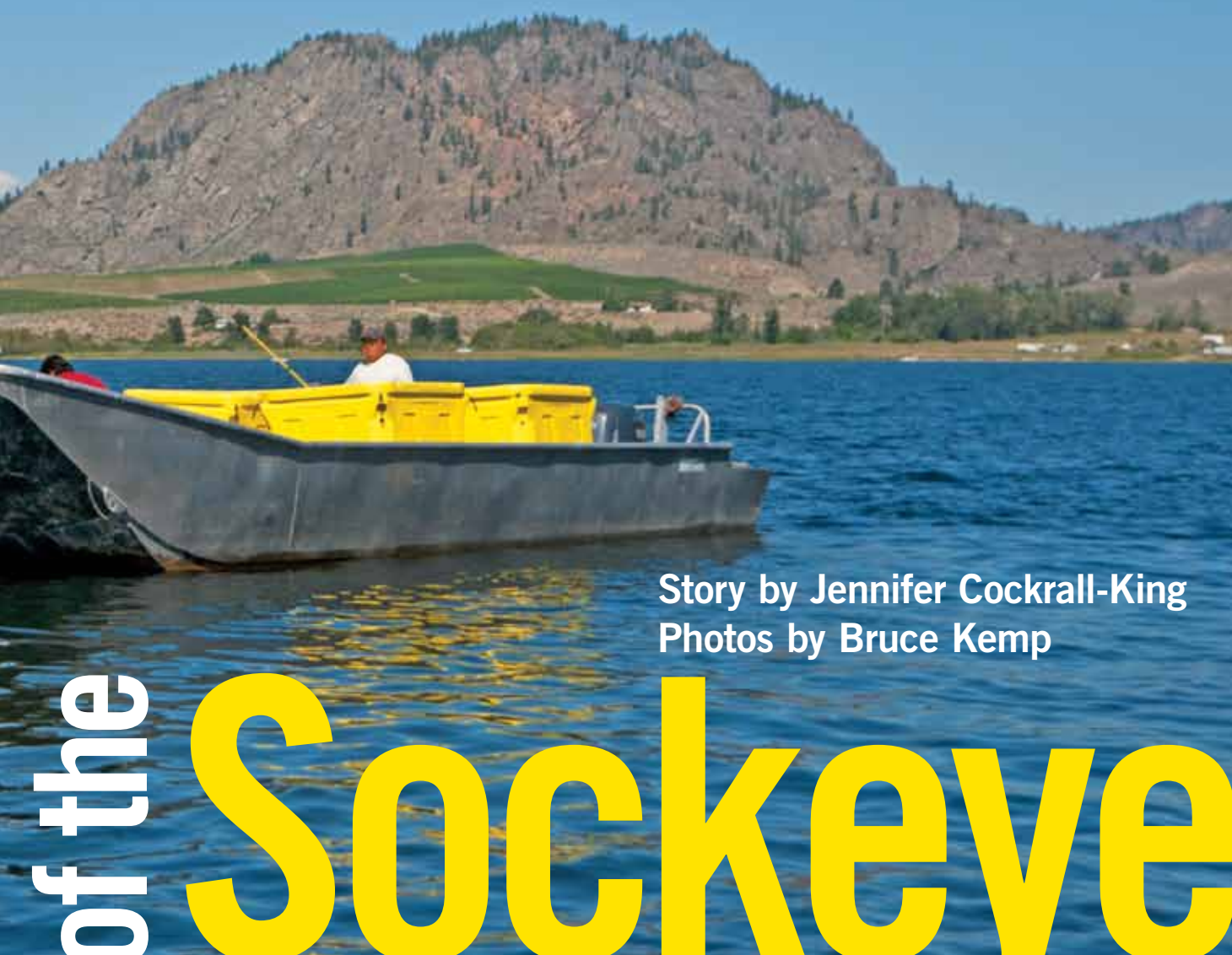
Cross-border effort
proves humans
can repair some
of the damage
we've inflicted on
the Earth and our
fellow creatures

A crew of four well-muscled men work steadily, arm over arm, pulling up the nets pinched between a 38-foot purse seiner and a low-sided packing boat. One of the fishermen plucks a rogue carp from the net and tosses it back into Osoyoos Lake. As the bottom of the net gets closer to the surface, the water boils and a tangle of shiny, green-grey fish with a hint of red blush along their sides emerges in the narrowing gap between the boats.

It's a very small haul—30 sockeye salmon or so—but still a chorus of cheers erupts from the boats as the fish are shuttled from the net into huge plastic holding pens filled with ice. Other catches have been much more bountiful, with hundreds of fish, and other days have yielded thousands. But each net wriggling with sockeye is a triumph. When the population returning to the Okanagan lakes chain reached a critical low in the mid-1990s, no

Story by Jennifer Cockrall-King
Photos by Bruce Kemp

of the Sockeye





Previous page:

Fishing for sockeye salmon in Osoyoos Lake.

Above (clockwise):

ONA fisheries biologist Richard Bussanich; pick-up boat; Casmir "Cash" Tonasket (L) and Andrew "Oly" Clarke (R).

Facing (clockwise):

Purse seiner on Osoyoos Lake; John Hall (L) with the author (C) and ONA observer Colette Louie (R); ONA fisherman Louie Baptiste.

"We're still trying to break the record of 5,800 fish in one day"

one was sure that the Okanagan sockeye run could be brought back. Yet the fish have finally, miraculously, returned to Osoyoos Lake, in quantities that have exceeded even the most optimistic projections. Enough that throughout August 2011 and 2012, it was possible to operate what Fisheries and Oceans Canada calls a "demonstration fishery" (a trial commercial opportunity for First Nations in upstream locations or near the end of the salmon stock's spawning migration, to explore whether economically viable fisheries can take place in areas that have not previ-

ously been commercially harvested).

"We're still trying to break the record of 5,800 fish in one day," says John Hall, back on shore under the tarp-covered shed functioning as a makeshift fishing camp and field office for the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA). John, a hunter and a fisherman, is a member of the Osoyoos Indian Band. He has a wide smile that takes over his entire face, the creases around his eyes trenched through five decades of laughter and squinting against the Okanagan sun. He remembers as a teenager fishing with uncles and cousins in the Okanagan Valley for Chinook, brook trout and even sockeye. The sockeye in those days,



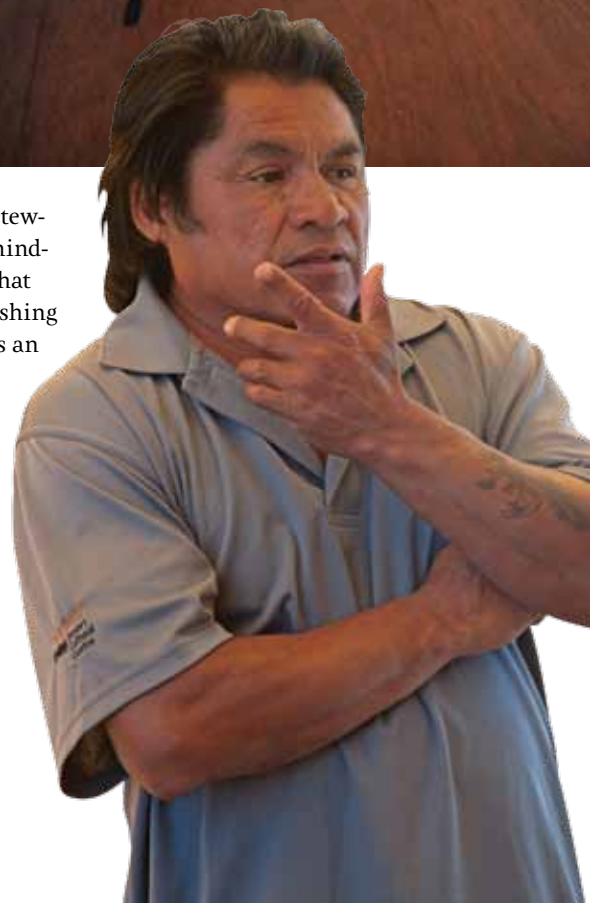
he says, were twice as big as the three-to-six-pounders they catch today. But he's just happy the fish are returning.

The words stick in his throat when John recounts how the sockeye stopped running in numbers large enough to continue the annual fishing tradition. "There's a whole generation that didn't have a chance to fish," he says as his eyes well up suddenly in the heaviness of this loss.

ONA fisheries biologist Richard Bussanich is nearby at his "desk"—a portable Rubbermaid table that functions as his field office at the fishing camp. While the return of the salmon is the result of a combination

of science and improved environmental stewardship, Richard credits the steadfast reminders of many First Nations' communities that something had to be done about the vanishing sockeye in the Okanagan lakes. Sockeye is an important traditional food source and part of the cultural life of the Sylix-speaking communities of the Okanagan Nation Alliance on both sides of the border. "There was an Okanagan elder, Albert Saddleman, who would show up at high-level government meetings as early as the 1970s," says Richard. "And he'd just ask simple questions like 'When will we bring the fish back?'"

While the crisis hit a critical point in the mid-1990s, the decline of sockeye





Above: Purse seiner and pick-up boat fishing for sockeye salmon on Osoyoos Lake.

Facing (clockwise): ONA observer Colette Louie; fresh caught sockeye salmon; Colville Federated Tribes fisheries biologist Ryan Benson (L) with ONA fisherman John Hall (R).

Overleaf: Pick-up boat handler with fresh caught sockeye salmon.

stocks in the Okanagan was a problem that had been decades in the making. Nine dams had been built in the Columbia River over the last century, seriously impacting the number of Okanagan smolts (the pre-adult stage of salmon as they lose their camouflage dark vertical bars in preparation for ocean survival) that survive the 1,000-kilometer journey south to the Pacific Ocean. Hundred of thousands, if not millions of fish go out, says Richard, but the majority get chewed up in the turbines in the Columbia River hydro-electric projects. Those that do make it to the Pacific will feed 100 to 200 kilometres off shore. Any that make it beyond that to international waters risk being caught by unregulated ocean fishing operations. After three to four years at sea, spawning instinct drives the monumental migration back to the Okanagan, a trip even more perilous and challenging than the seaward swim.

By 1995, there were only an estimated 5,000 Okanagan sockeye. "And 2,500 of them were female," says Richard, point-

ing out the precariously small gene pool from which any future stocks could be rebuilt. But it was one of the few remaining sockeye runs in the entire system. "The Okanagan is the only natural area left in the Columbia," he says. "And there's a natural section near Oliver—the only natural section left in the Okanagan chain." The idea was that perhaps it was enough to rebuild the sockeye stocks.

Between 1998 and 2003, Richard says, "plans to create the plan to plan" were envisioned. It required trans-border coordination to create fish ladders at dam sites, hatchery programs, monitoring stations, studies to see how the sock-



eye would interact with kokanee (the landlocked salmon who remain in the fresh water of the lakes for their entire life cycle) and extensive habitat restoration. The ONA, with its seven member communities on the Canadian side of the border and the Colville Federated Tribes to the south, spearheaded the project and coordinated with government agencies in the US and Canada through its ONA Fisheries Department.

The 2003-pilot project for the Reintroduction of Sockeye Monitoring Program in Skaha Lake was successful enough to launch the 12-year Sockeye Reintroduction Plan in 2004. By 2005, an important multi-year agreement

with the Chelan County Public Utility District was struck to improve fish travel and monitoring along the Columbia River in the US. The long multi-pronged process of habitat restoration, a hatchery program in Skaha Lake, improvements to fish passages along the route, and a general stewardship component required coordinated efforts on both sides of the border to re-naturalize the migration route as much as possible.

Perhaps quicker than anyone had thought possible, the sockeye have made it back in heartening numbers. In 2010, an astonishing 297,000 sockeye returned to Osoyoos Lake—three times the number forecast. Recreational fish-

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ing for sockeye was opened for a several weeks that summer. Licensed anglers were allowed two sockeye per day.

In 2011, the stocks were plentiful again. Recreational fishing licenses were issued. The ONA started a small demonstration fishery to take sockeye from Osoyoos Lake, distributing fish into ONA communities as well as selling commercially to restaurants in the Valley. Chefs like Stuart Klassen at the Delta Grand Okanagan and Rod Butters of RauDZ Regional Table were thrilled to have a fresh, local source of sockeye for their wine country menus.

In 2012, the number of returning sockeye was high again. As Richard flips through his notes, he reports that 325,000 sockeye were counted making it through the fish ladders at Wells Dam, 150 kilometres south of Osoyoos. But the August heat pushed up the temperature in Osoyoos, killing over 48,000 sockeye in the south and central part of the lake.

Though this still left 184,000 sockeye in the north part of the lake, more than enough to open the demonstration and recreational fishing and provide breeding stock, the die-off drove home

the point that the sockeye runs eventually need to extend north, ideally returning back into the colder waters of Skaha and Okanagan lakes. Yet there is finally a sense of cautious optimism about the long-term sustainability of this traditional Okanagan food stock.

And as the sun sparkles off Osoyoos Lake, a dozen recreational fishermen are enjoying a lazy mid-day session on the water. The ONA runs a research boat where Casmir “Cash” Tonasket and his assistant Andrew “Oly” Clarke do a “rod count” and a catch count at the top of each hour. The purse seiner is back out for another haul, one of the last of the season, and only if the fish cooperate.

“As of today, we’ve harvested 59,000 fish in 2012. We’re now saying, ‘Stop,’” says John on the second last day of fishing (September 1). Conditions have been ideal in the past few years and have bolstered stocks, but the ONA is not ready to jeopardize what is still a tenuous future for Okanagan sockeye. Instead, the plan is that for many years to come, Okanagan sockeye will just be available as a seasonal product on our tables, appreciated not only for its taste but also for its miraculous return. **OL**

Fresh local sockeye

Here’s how three inventive Okanagan chefs are presenting Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) sockeye on their menus.

Stuart Klassen, executive chef at the Delta Grand Okanagan Resort and president of the Okanagan Chefs Association, is a huge supporter of this local, sustainable, high quality fish, and the ONA initiative to bring local sockeye back. Klassen bathes the salmon fillet in a rice wine and butter sauce and perches it on a bed of eggplant, bok choy and braised lentils, with a local farm vegetable in a soy-mirin sauce. He’s also a fan of putting sockeye salmon “bacon” on his special event menus.

Chef Rod Butters uses ONA salmon year-round on his ultra-local menus at RauDZ Regional Table. It features in his signature sockeye salmon BLT with anise toast, black fig chutney, pancetta and heirloom tomatoes.

ONA sockeye is also cured in-house for the potted smoked salmon on the restaurant’s cold plate appetizer.

Chef Jeff Van Geest of Miradoro Restaurant at Tinhorn Creek Vineyards adds a Latin twist to ONA sockeye in his sockeye salmon ceviche, served with Thorp’s organic cucumbers, Sicilian olives, espelette pepper aioli, polenta crisps appetizer. As an entrée, ONA sockeye is presented with a rich romesco sauce, grilled scallions and squash fritters.

Home cooks can purchase ONA salmon through Codfathers Seafood Market in Kelowna.



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AUTO

PREVIEW

Special advertising section



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Bluetooth® wireless mobile phone interface with steering wheel-mounted controls, and an audio system with MP3 capability. With five different trim levels to choose from, there are plenty of additional options—even a hybrid version.

Looking for the perfect family car? Check out the sporty TSX and TL sedans. The TSX earned the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's top safety pick for midsize cars in 2012. If a luxury sport utility vehicle better suits

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Want the best of both worlds? Check out the versatile ZDX—a sporty crossover with noise cancellation, a sleek leather interior, power lift gate and 2+2 coupe styling, this one's as tough to define as is fun to drive.

If you're not quite ready to buy your dream car yet, check out Harmony Acura's selection of quality used vehicles. The cream of their crop, Acura certified pre-owned vehicles have been carefully inspected, detailed, and brought to current maintenance levels set out by the manufacturer. With financing options available through Acura's financial services, the luxury you expect from Acura is within reach sooner than expected.

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Back row (L-R): Bill McCluskey, sales consultant; Jason Mann, sales consultant; Dan Satchell sales manager.
Front row: John K. White, sales consultant.



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AUTO PREVIEW



Anthony's Subaru

Fun-seekers rejoice: Anthony's has your ride. Subaru's 2013 XV Crosstrek is the perfect combination of cool and utility—a compact crossover with off road capabilities. The XV Crosstrek comes standard with 17-inch aluminum alloy wheels and voice activated Bluetooth, and with Subaru's full-time symmetrical all wheel drive, best in class clearance of 221mm, and a fuel rating of 48 mpg, you're free to go wherever the road takes you.

Anthony's Suzuki Subaru has an excellent selection of cars, trucks, SUVs and vans, all inspected by their certified technicians. Accessorize your ride or pick up replacement parts from the extensive inventory in the parts department, or book it in for some TLC—their knowledgeable staff is at your service. See them at 2670 Highway 97 North, Kelowna, or www.Anthonys.ca.

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Posh

Step through the doors of elegant Posh Jewelry in the heart of Kelowna's Cultural District and be instantly welcomed by gleaming jewels, unique design and staff who embody everything the boutique stands for: beauty, charm and that *je ne sais quoi* not found anywhere else in the Okanagan.

Trendsetting Lucite baubles by New York designer Alexis Bittar, sumptuous Jamie Joseph statement rings of precious gems, glittering Mizuki diamonds and Shaesby designs, handcrafted silver talismans by Pyrrha, and the popular Pandora charm bracelet collection can all be found sharing space among the carefully curated

selection of jewellery and designer handbags. The first shop to bring Pandora to the Okanagan, Posh offers a unique service to its clientele: every charm you purchase or are given is recorded and a Wish List option is available for that subtle hint.

Posh is also the only place in Canada you'll find some of these dazzling pieces of wearable art by Mizuki and Shaesby, a strategic move by owner Kate Morgan who opened the boutique as a passion project in 2003 to share her love of the beautiful and unique.

"Jewellery makes me feel good and I want to share that feeling," says Kate. She and her right-hand girls Rhianne Barile and Lisa Tupman are just three of the

reasons to visit Posh where the personal level of service is as exquisite as the jewellery they sell. Another of Kate's firm beliefs is that a business is only as good as its staff, and she couldn't run Posh without Rhianne and Lisa—a sentiment her clients would agree with. Frequenting the boutique is like stopping by to visit friends, only with a sparkly outcome.

Location matters as well. Posh is part of downtown Kelowna's revitalization, infusing the city with a fresh new vibe that's attractive to residents and visitors alike. Trendsetting in the trendiest Okanagan region, Posh is a must-visit at 1393 Ellis Street, Kelowna. Online visit www.poshjewelry.ca.



Elegant backdrop for stunning jewellery at Posh in Kelowna's Cultural District.

JC Bradley

While diamonds are forever, Richard Pierson says the tides are changing at JC Bradley's. New lines like Pandora, Thomas Sabo and Simon G are now in our showcases with new (yet familiar) hands on deck. "My daughter Chantelle has cut her teeth in our industry," he says. Now she's following in her father's footsteps, something she has talked about since she was a little girl, keys in hand and unable even see over the showcase.

Chantelle is a dynamic, fashion forward young lady who has achieved her graduate jeweller diploma, is currently obtaining accreditation as a



graduate gemologist and certification in jewellery design through the Gemological Institute of America.

"We are here to share people's special moments with them, from the purchase of an engagement ring to appraising a family heirloom. We're proud to cherish these moments with our clients." With the Pierson's vast knowledge of the jewellery world they will be sure to make your next piece the perfect one. Stop by the store in the heart of Vernon's Village Green Mall or 380 Alexander Street NE in downtown Salmon Arm.

Enderby Jewellers

Just one visit and you'll know why they call it the secret store: Enderby Jewellers is considered one of the best-kept secrets in the Okanagan. Owner Judy Dangel's customers tell her the store has an amazing selection for such a small community. "It's like three businesses under one roof," she says, "with treasures in every corner."

Strong on tradition, Enderby Jewellers originally opened on October 10, 1947 and is now celebrating 65 years. Judy herself worked for the store's second owners for 10 years before deciding to purchase the business; that was 21 years ago. Countless satisfied customers later, she still offers everything you'd expect to find in a fine jewellery store including a wide selection of timeless gold pieces and eternal gifts like Canadian diamonds.

"Diamonds symbolize a special moment or a special journey in our lives," says Judy; "we purchase diamonds to remember." Whether to celebrate a milestone or seal an engagement, she and her long-serving staff take both pride and pleasure in helping their customers find just the right stones in the perfect setting, whatever the occasion may be.

Although they're rightfully proud of their history, Enderby Jewellers certainly isn't stuck in the past. Judy recently updated her storefront and logo, and she carries plenty of fun new products like Pandora and the wonderfully creative Kameleon—sterling silver settings with

interchangeable pop-out jewels for a customizable look—along with Steelx's line of stainless steel pieces for men and women. She has also recently added the sleek and beautiful line of Bering watches to the store's selection of Bulova timepieces.

To make any item extra special, the store's engraving department has a variety of machines and can add your personal touch to precious metals, wood, acrylic, glass, coated or painted metals, ceramics, leather, tile, plastic, cork, anodized aluminum, stainless steel, brass and more. Business signage and name tags, glassware for your head table or special event, jewellery (including the insides of rings)...the possibilities are endless. They can even add a logo or a photo.

Bring in your own piece to be engraved or select the perfect item in-store. Along with jewellery, Judy also carries a full line of giftware from all the best lines: Bradford Exchange, Derek Alexander, ESPE, Willow Tree, Bunnykins, Speed Freaks. You're sure to find the perfect gift for every occasion whatever your budget, and with Christmas shopping just around the corner it's a great time to check out pieces from Jim Shore and Thomas Kinkade.

Online at www.enderbyjewellers.com or call 250.838.7123. Better

yet, visit Judy and her staff at 608 Cliff Avenue in Enderby. Wherever you are in the Valley, it's worth the drive to Enderby Jewellers—the secret store with treasures in every corner.

Hagemann Jewellers

Established in 1993, Hagemann Jewellers is not your run-of-the mill jewellery store. Known for his meticulous attention for detail, Rainer Hagemann has more than 30 years experience as a goldsmith and certified European watchmaker. Trust him to restore your treasured antiques, re-set or redesign your piece, or create something new and unique to your own specifications.

All work is done on premises, where along with quality custom design, restoration and repair services for jewellery, they repair and service timepieces, including grandfather clocks.

Hagemann Jewellers also offers a complete selection of fine jewellery and watches. Visit their showroom to see their elegant collection of Canadian diamonds, platinum and estate jewellery. You'll find them at 3119–30th Avenue, in the heart of downtown Vernon, or call 250.545.1528.



From left: Judy Dangel, Lillian Ternier, Sherri Halvorson and Germaine Smith at Enderby Jewellers.

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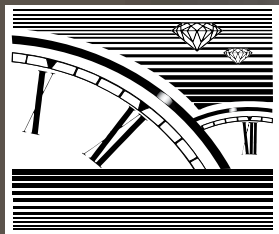
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Pandora

Pandora started out in Denmark as a small business run by a pair of goldsmiths nearly 30 years ago. Today the company is the world's third largest jewellery manufacturer. With stores in 28 countries their popular charms grace the wrists of women everywhere. Lyle Hance began opening the company's Canadian concept stores in 2009, including one at Orchard Park in Kelowna in June of 2012.

Pandora is an unabashedly feminine store, aiming its gold and silver pieces at women of all ages and, of course, the men who love them. "We sell to younger children, mothers, grandmothers," says Hance, "and it is easy for men to buy from us too." The beautiful little charms are the perfect gift to celebrate special moments in their lives.

While best known for its charms, Pandora is also popular for its romantic, high quality jewellery lines. With more than 3,000 designs in all, they have something for every woman's style, her every mood, and for every occasion. Build a classic yet contemporary bracelet featuring a variety of silver, gold and Murano glass. Select from the "Stories" collection of matching earring, bracelet, ring sets and watches. Or choose the new 18k gold "LovePods," featuring brilliant-cut hand set diamonds. Mix and match to your heart's content; even in the budget-friendly selections, the quality of each Pandora piece shines through. "All of our products are handmade," says Hance. "Some companies mass produce their products, but at Pandora it's very labour intensive. Up to 40 expert hands touch each piece."

Hance says Pandora jewellery was initially put into small stores, little mom-and-pop operations and gift shops, and when Pandora wanted to branch out into concept stores, he saw an opportunity. Having lived in Kelowna, he's pleased to be back and, as he puts it, "making Kelowna and area a little more charming."

Just as Pandora started as a family business in Copenhagen, Hance keeps family ties in his stores. "It really is a fun business," he says. "And as you get more good people on board, it continues to be

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fun.” His 105 employees are continually upgrading their skills. But for Hance, business success isn’t just measured in revenue and opening new shops; it’s also measured in giving back to the community. “We do a lot of corporate sponsorship,” he says. “Pandora has been a big supporter of breast cancer research for many years. We support the local community wherever we go—we feel that is important.”

Drop by Pandora’s Orchard Park location, or visit www.Pandora.net for more information. You can also follow them on Facebook and Twitter. There’s even a Pandora app for mobile devices, featuring the latest information on new lines and releases.



Indulgences

We all deserve a little indulgence and what could be more indulgent than one-of-a-kind, handcrafted jewellery? Susan Scott works in sterling and fine silver, copper and brass incorporating gemstones, pearls and Swarovski crystals in her unique designs. She loves doing custom work, conceptualizing and creating the perfectly individualized look. Studio hours are 10 to 4, Tuesday through Saturday, or by appointment. Indulge yourself at 13216 Henry St., Summerland.



Susan Scott says we deserve a little indulgence.

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The Gregory's team (L-R): Melissa, Heidi, Greg, Joan, Bev.

Okanagan Jewellers

JK Schmidt Jewellers

In 1976, J.K. Schmidt and his wife Marianne opened a small watch repair shop in downtown Westbank. Today, JK Schmidt Jewellers is one of the largest independent jewellers in Western Canada. That's more than 36 years of trusted service.

Now a third generation of jewellers is carrying on the family tradition. "We pride ourselves on customer service," says Stephanie Schmidt, "from repairs to custom designing fine jewellery." That dedication shows: the store has received numerous customer service awards and is regularly voted best jeweller in the Okanagan.

The diamond leader, JK Schmidt Jewellers has the right diamond for any occasion in their Canadian Ice Collection. They carry the classic favourites like Gucci, Movado, Bulova, Corona, and Custom Gold, along with fashion forward silver jewellery like Elle and the popular Pandora.

Their goal is to offer their customers a vast selection to meet every taste and every

budget. "Our friendly and knowledgeable staff are always there to help with your purchasing choices in a non commission environment," says Jennifer Schmidt. If you can't find exactly what you're looking for, they can custom-make a piece to suit including message bands, family rings, name necklaces and more.

In addition to jewellery and timepieces, JK Schmidt Jewellers carries exquisite giftware lines—Waterford, Vera Wang, and Royal Doulton. Visit them at 2477 Main Street in West Kelowna, or find them online at www.jkschmidt.ca.

Gold Dust Jewellers

The most exquisite piece of jewellery you can picture is within your reach at Gold Dust Jewellers. Visit this bustling store in downtown Penticton and you'll see what locals already know.

Behind the glitter is master goldsmith and owner Don Nguyen. You can

see his amazing craftsmanship in a showpiece necklace on display in the store. Fashioned as a working zipper, this creation sports 1,360 diamonds, each set in place by Don's practiced hand.

"It's stunning," says Lois, a longtime employee. "It's a definite red carpet piece."

Don's mastery, combined with a full retail line of jewellery, means local shoppers have no need to head to Vancouver if they're looking for a high-end piece. The Nguyen



Don Nguyen creating fine jewellery at Gold Dust Jewellers.

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family takes pride in having something to fit everyone's taste and everyone's budget.

As the South Okanagan's exclusive dealer of Canadian Maple Leaf Diamonds, Gold Dust showcases some of the world's highest quality stones, mined in the Northwest Territories. Each gem is laser-engraved to certify its Canadian origin.

The full-service store is a member of the Canadian Jewellers Association and offers custom cleaning, all aspects of repairs—on-site—and custom design. With the most up-to-date computer design and wax mold cutting CAD machines, Gold Dust Jewellers can duplicate any design requested.

Helping Don behind the workbench is his sister, Thao, and nephew Justin, who is apprenticing with his uncle.

"The minute you come in, you feel you're at home," says loyal customer Bonnie Save-Jones. "It's just like you're family."

You'll find Don, his family, staff and exquisite jewellery at Gold Dust Jewellers, 317 Main Street, Penticton.

La Roca Watch and Jewellery

Family owned and operated La Roca Watch and Jewellery has been proudly serving the Valley since 2000 and has been voted best jeweller in the Okanagan by the readers of *Okanagan Life*. Specializing in watches and unique jewellery, La Roca offers rare and collectible pieces to clients around the world.

Owner Ted Risko has been a professional watchmaker for over 30 years. An avid collector of watches, vintage pieces

and coins, Ted enjoys the intricacies of repairing timepieces and the satisfaction of offering quality items to the discerning client.

Along with providing expert repairs and restorations, La Roca carries a wide selection of fine timepieces including Ball (famous for setting the universally recognized standard of railway time), and Rotary, Tissot and Momentum, all Swiss legends with reputations for durability and functionality.

But La Roca isn't just about keeping accurate time. La Roca also carries a variety of exclusive jewellery collections. If unique style is your trademark, the selection of artistic enamelware by the sought after Austrian jeweller Frey Willie is a must see. And for sentimentalists looking to remember special people and occasions, see the Chamilia twist on the traditional charm bracelet. They also have a full line of engagement and wedding bands in both traditional and contemporary designs in gold, platinum, tungsten carbide and titanium. Visit La Roca at 2915 Pandosy Street in Kelowna.



Ted and Lidia at La Roca Watch and Jewellery.

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by Michael Botner

Kelowna wine history

Kelowna is the birthplace of Okanagan Valley winemaking, home of BC's first commercial winery and a must-visit for modern wine tourists

■ Kelowna features an array of intriguing wineries in three distinct areas—the west-facing lakeshore and slopes of Okanagan Lake; East Kelowna Bench, which straddles Mission Creek in the agricultural heartland of Kelowna; and downtown Kelowna where the focus is on making fine wine from grapes grown elsewhere in the Valley.

As the birthplace of Okanagan winemaking, Kelowna boasts a rich historical perspective to complement the great wines and winery visits. Father Charles Pandosy, an Oblate priest from France who ventured west to Washington State then north along the Okanagan Fur Brigade Trail in 1859, is credited with planting the region's first grapes. Attracted by the broad stretch of tillable land about mid-point along Okanagan Lake, Pandosy established a mission near Mission

Creek, the first non-native, non-fur trading settlement in the BC Interior, and sent for vine cuttings from Oregon.

Fast forward to 1925 when Charles Casorso, a son of Giovanni Casorso who arrived from Italy in 1883 and worked as an agricultural specialist for the missionaries, planted a vineyard of the labrusca persuasion on a 35-acre property in Rutland. In 1930, his two brothers, Pete and Louis, first planted the 45-acre vineyard on Casorso Road that now supplies the family-owned Sperling Vineyards winery with Marechal Foch, Riesling and several other vinifera varieties. As the single largest investor in the original group that included Guiseppe Ghezzi, Pasquale (Cap) Capozzi and W.A.C. Bennett, the Casorso clan, led by Giovanni's wife, Rosa, played a pivotal

role in launching Calona Vineyards (BC's oldest continually operating winery) in 1931. Now owned by Andrew Peller Ltd., Calona Vineyards occupies a sprawling, 1950s-era complex, with newer Peller Estate Winery and Sandhill Wines, on Richter Street in downtown Kelowna.

As far back as 1929, the Rittich brothers imported vinifera vines, which they planted on land that now overlooks Kelowna International Airport, near Ancient Hill Winery. Reporting the results in BC's first wine book, *European grape growing in cooler districts where winter protection is necessary* (1934), they found that the Okanagan Valley is perfectly suitable for growing vinifera vines as long as growers selected suitable, early-ripening varieties and developed training practices for high quality wine. **OL**

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Showcasing a selection of intriguing wines from a host of producers based in Kelowna, the five star rating system stresses value for price.



CALONA VINEYARDS 2011 ARTIST SERIES SOVEREIGN OPAL

Kelowna, Okanagan Valley

★★★★ \$14.99

The world's only producer of Sovereign Opal, Calona buys grapes from Casorso-owned vineyards. Intensely floral and spicy, it displays exotic flavours of mandarin orange, juicy ripe peach, grapefruit, white pepper and mineral. It pairs with spicy Asian cuisine.



CAMELOT 2010 CHARDONNAY

Kelowna, Okanagan Valley

★★★★ \$24.90

Barrel-fermented Chardonnay exhibits nuanced aromas and a poised palate. The buttery flavours suggest green apple, peach and grapefruit with notes of hazelnut, smoke, toasty oak and creamy vanilla. Accompanies chicken or seafood pasta with a creamy sauce.



HOUSE OF ROSE 2009 MARECHAL FOCH

Kelowna, Okanagan Valley

★★★★ \$18.90

Spicy, richly-flavoured Marechal Foch unearthes layers of juicy, ripe berry, currant and plum fruit, and notes of tobacco, toast, smoky oak and coconut, refreshed by lively acidity. Best bet with game, smoked meats and barbecued ribs.



ST. HUBERTUS 2010 OAK BAY GEWÜRZTRAMINER

Kelowna, Okanagan Valley

★★★★ \$16.75

Dry-style Gewürztraminer shows an extravagantly perfumed nose and succulent palate. Spicy flavours suggest lychee, pineapple, apricot, melon, rose petal, jasmine, black pepper and ginger. Calls for curries, sweet and sour pork, Muenster or blue cheese.



PELLER ESTATES 2010 PRIVATE RESERVE DRY RIESLING

Kelowna, Okanagan Valley

★★★★ \$15.99

A steal at the price, this classy, dry Riesling shows style and finesse. Notes of lime zest and diesel combine with Granny Smith apple, honey and mandarin orange on the razor sharp palate. It prefers smoked salmon, grilled sausages or spicy Asian cuisine.



SANDHILL 2010 GAMAY NOIR SANDHILL ESTATE VINEYARD

Kelowna, Okanagan Valley

★★★★1/2 \$19.99

Delicious Gamay shows complexity and finesse. It features lovely dark chocolate, earth, plum and black cherry nose, followed by a spicy palate suggesting dark fruit, cinnamon, black pepper and sweet oak. It accompanies pasta with mushrooms and sausages.



SPERLING VINEYARDS 2008 SPARKLING BRUT

Kelowna, Okanagan Valley

★★★★ \$39.95

Pinot Blanc left on the lees for three months is the foundation for this elegant, bottle-fermented bubbly. Clean, zesty palate delivers notes of flower petal, green apple, pear, lemon, almond, toast, vanilla and mineral. Perfect with oysters, smoked fish and caviar.



TANTALUS 2010 PINOT NOIR

Kelowna, Okanagan Valley

★★★★1/2 \$29.90

Made from five- to six-year-old vines, this seductive Pinot Noir delivers a delicately floral nose and graceful flavours suggesting sweet, succulent cherry and plum, notes of earth, tomato leaf and vanilla and velvety tannins. Calls for veal or poultry with a mushroom sauce.



THE VIEW 2009 PINOTAGE

Kelowna, Okanagan Valley

★★★★ \$20.90

Beguiling Pinotage nose introduces a rich, tasty palate featuring supple, ripe, concentrated plum and black cherry, black licorice, mocha coffee, smoky oak, and chewy tannins, lifted by lively balance. Enjoy with game, meat stews and barbecued ribs.



Man with a mission

Major Ron Cartmell oversees a well-trained army of staff and volunteers serving the Central Okanagan with a wide range of programs that continually evolve to address ever-changing realities

■ What comes to mind when you hear “Salvation Army”—thrift stores? Christmas kettles? While Major Ron Cartmell was growing up, it was simply the church his family had attended for three generations. “I didn’t even understand the wider concept of what the Salvation Army does in the community,” he says: food banks and teaching kitchens, homeless shelters, support programs for single moms or struggling families, emergency support for first responders in times of community crisis. “One of the real gifts of the Salvation Army is to be able to survey the landscape, see what needs there are, and then step forward and meet those needs.”

The Salvation Army has always taken a practical approach to addressing need. In England during the late 1800s, young children and widows were employed for starvation wages in match factories where exposure to white phosphorus often led to a condition dubbed “phossy jaw”; their jawbones rotted from the inside out. Factory owners were aware that red phosphorus was a safe alternative, but weren’t prepared to spend

money converting their equipment. Not content with lobbying MPs to legislate change, the Salvation Army purchased a match factory, converted the equipment, doubled their employees’ wages, and cajoled retailers into selling only red-phosphorus matches.

That pragmatism lives on in their motto soup, soap and salvation. Real community transformation has to start by addressing immediate problems. This often means, quite literally, sharing a bowl of warm soup. The Kelowna Salvation Army also offers Breakthrough, a program for single moms, and Breakout, a homework and supper club to help children at a vulnerable age develop critical thinking skills. To help families reshape themselves when a member is in treatment for addiction, they’re introducing an empowerment program modelled on a successful one developed in Wollongong, Australia. “They’ve invited us to be their first international site,” says Ron.

To make sure all resources are well spent, every project proposal under-

goes a thorough needs assessment; existing programs are continually re-evaluated. To help with this, Ron says they’ve established a community council with representatives from law enforcement, the justice system and the business community. Salvation Army staff also participates in the regular meetings of service providers so that everyone’s on the same page and there’s no unnecessary duplication of service.

Instead of hosting new programs, the Salvation Army may add their support to someone else’s—like providing meal services at Inn from the Cold. “It’s not about how we can look good. It’s really about how do we best help the people that, together, we’re serving,” says Ron. “When other people come alongside and say, ‘Oh, yes, this is a big need,’ we can draw back because the need is now taken care of. And we can look again and mobilize fill to another gap.”

Often those gaps are where people are in transition—dealing with a major blow (or a long series of setbacks), struggling to get their lives on ▶



Arrive at office; write press release for today’s official opening of new heated building for mobile kitchen (at emergency services location in Rutland). Quick trip to contractor.



Back to office. Emails; touch up some grant proposals. Prepare for 9:30 meeting with Chief Louis in West Kelowna to talk about his community’s needs and how we may be able to work together.



Back to office; finalize thinking about today’s lunchtime presentation to Rotary regarding a grant the club provided for one of our programs. Attend luncheon and make presentation.



Take call from CHBC re: press release; provide interview. Tour a guest from head office in Vancouver around Kelowna office and new building; talk to reporters; work through details.



Host official opening of new building; visit with volunteers, staff, and guests. Head home about 5:45 to spend time with the Vancouver guests; share a glorious evening on the patio.



Slip out for a pastoral call, then return home to spend a bit more time with guests before heading to bed.



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CHILDREN: TWO; A DAUGHTER FINISHING GRADUATE DEGREE AT CARLETON IN OTTAWA, SON AT OKANAGAN COLLEGE.

track. Sometimes all they really need is someone to talk things over with; other times, they need practical assistance.

Staff and volunteers help find solutions to short-term problems, like temporarily accessing food banks so grocery money can be used to repair the breadwinner's work vehicle. They can also help people deal with some of the underlying problems that contribute to long-term poverty. Some low-income families aren't accessing existing support like the federal child tax benefit because they are too afraid of potential penalties to file their overdue tax returns. With support from the volunteer tax team, they find the courage. "Oftentimes, they don't even have to pay anything," says Ron, and when the benefit cheques start coming in "it makes a huge difference."

Few of us are comfortable sharing our biggest problems. Vulnerable people often find it doubly difficult to trust, so plenty of small talk—and soup—gets shared before they're ready to open up about deeper issues. And it's still at this very basic relationship-building level that the Salvation Army does its most effective work. While less obvious than a match industry makeover, those relationships are still transforming the community one life at a time.

Want to help the Salvation Army help your community? Why not get co-workers, friends or neighbours and sponsor a kettle. Last year a Scotia Bank team worked three kettles for a day and brought in \$19,000; under a matching program, their branch tossed in another \$15,000. The Salvation Army is proud that 86 cents of every dollar is used to sustain life changing programs. **OL**

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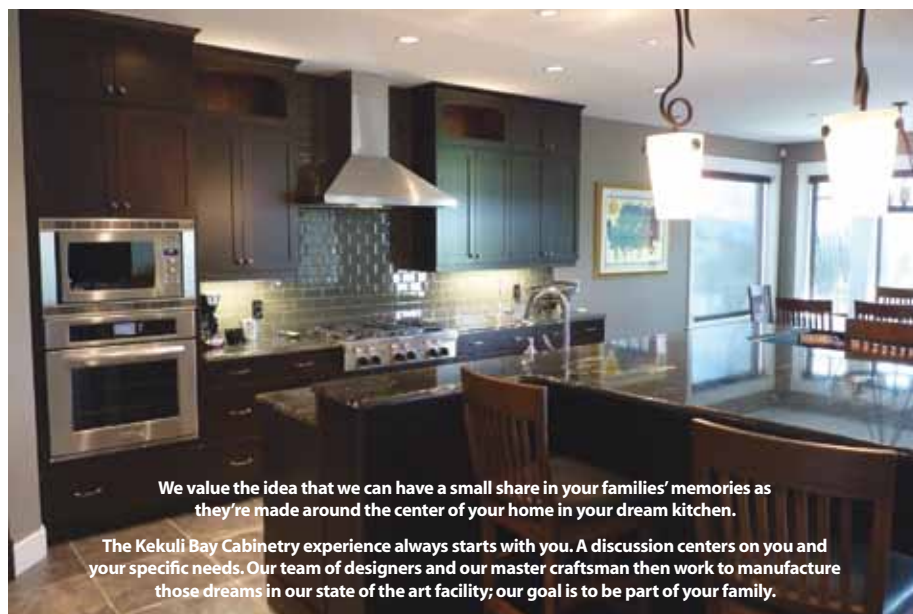
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Of geese and men

Mild musings on the fate of free thinking

■ “So this goose walks into a bank and says...”

“Hold it.” I took a sip of my decaf double grande non-fat extra-dry cappuccino. “Is this that old joke where the goose wants a safety deposit box to store its golden egg?”

Buck scowled down at his boringly tall Americano. “You ruined my punch line.”

I shrugged. “It’s not my fault your jokes are stale.”

People are so unimaginative these days. The human race has become the human meander. The raging torrent of inquisitiveness that once clove its way through staunch mountains of established thinking has become a stagnant flow, seeking the lowest crevasses of public opinion. The “meaning of life” is gleaned from YouTube videos; “critical thinking” is a mere question in Google search.

Take my friend Buck (please). Just once, I’d like to hear him spout a far-out yarn, a dynamic barn-burning tale so unbelievable that it might actually be true. Like what happened the other day, when this goose came walking into the bank and...

No, I’m not making this up.

Sixteenth in line at the Saturday morning bank teller, coffeeless and pitiful, my weekend was doomed to mediocrity when suddenly the glass doors slid open and in waddled a goose on a leash. Thankfully it was wearing a diaper.

Naturally, I tried to ignore it. Like most humorists, I suffer a marked lack of social skills, but at least I know that it’s impolite to stare. Yet every blessed soul around me was not only staring, but hauling out cell phones and taking video. Some even had the audacity to converse with the owner, asking questions about goose husbandry and the early childhood development issues of goslings. I was appalled.

But my point here is not the goose in the bank lobby, but rather the goose owner who brought it there. I admire her imagination, her quest for uniqueness—in short, her zest for life. After all, this is not something you see every day, and furthermore, it doesn’t happen by accident. This is intentional life.

She had bought a gosling (or perhaps had it hatched), raised it in close contact with humans, and then leash-trained it to be quietly led along crowded city sidewalks. Here is a woman

not shy of attention, who invites comment from strangers and who obviously couldn’t give a honk about public opinion. There is passion and purpose in her life choices and whether you are a goose lover or not, you can’t help but admire her creativity. Should she ever run for office, she’ll certainly have my vote.

“So you don’t like my jokes?”

Buck’s question dragged me back to the unfortunate present. “What’s wrong with them?”

“They lack imagination,” I said. “No, let me rephrase that—you lack imagination. I mean, look at the coffee you drink.”

His eyes narrowed. “Well, I could’ve ordered a solo Venti two-pump white mocha soy extra foam two Splenda Misto with Sumatra.”

“So why didn’t you?”

“Because it’s all a joke.” He jerked his thumb at the coffee counter. “One of your baristo buddies even admitted that. ‘It’s just the illusion of choice,’ he said. ‘It’s all just tiny differences—extra hot, no foam, non-fat—but it’s all the same.’”

The thought of Buck researching specialty coffee was a shocker. “You mean you actually interviewed someone?”

He shrugged. “Naw, I saw it on YouTube.”

I rest my case.

Now, don’t get me wrong; one day I hope Buck does, in fact, become a free thinker, but not just yet. Let’s face it; some friends you keep around just to make yourself look good. **OL**

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