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**publisher/editor** J. Paul Byrne  
**senior editor** Laurie Carter  
**associate editor** Dawn Renaud  
**creative director** Mishell Raedeke  
**administration** Wendy Letwinetz

**contributing writers** Michael Botner  
 Laurie Carter  
 Bruce Kemp  
 Shannon Linden  
 Darcy Nybo  
 Gillianne Richards  
 Yvonne Turgeon  
 Donalee Wallace

**contributing photographers** Michael Botner  
 Laurie Carter  
 Bruce Kemp  
 Andrew Lipsett  
 Gillianne Richards  
 Yvonne Turgeon

**okanaganlife.com** Laurie Carter  
**editor**

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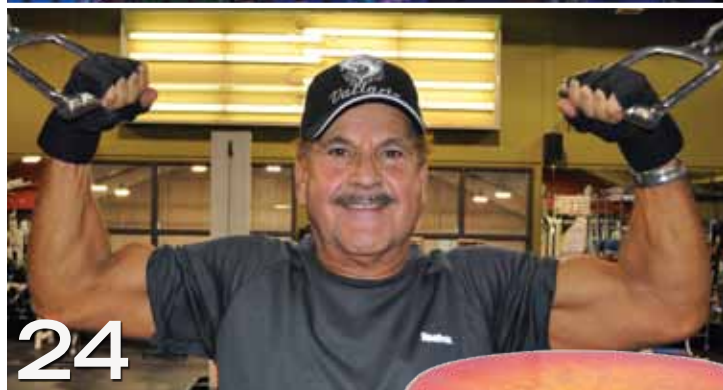


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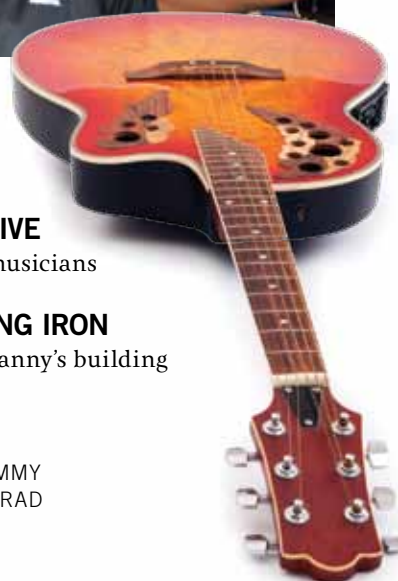
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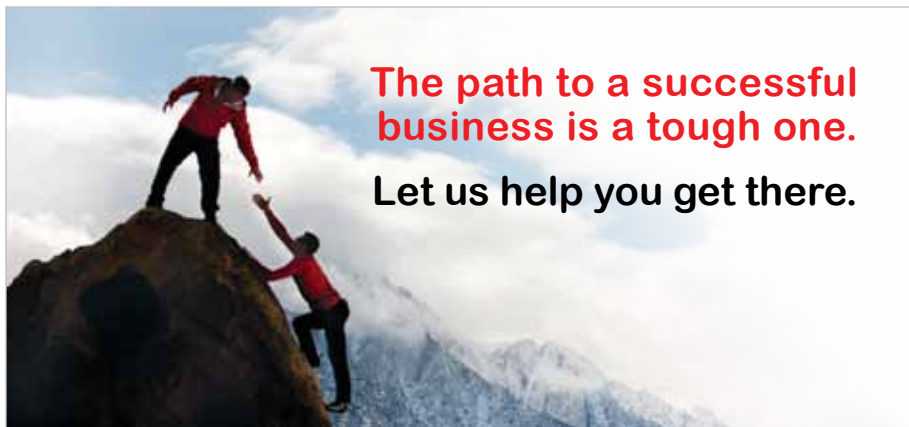
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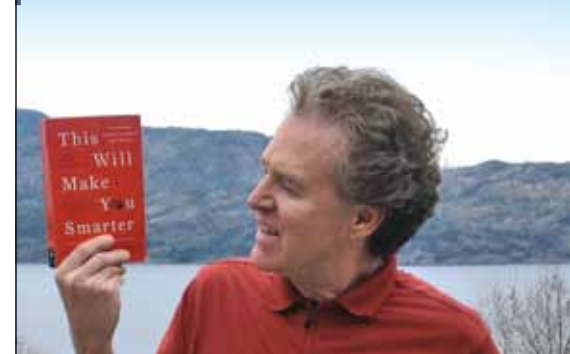
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paul'svoice



## Brain insights hit all the right notes

■ A monstrous amount of scientific evidence is showing that the human brain is most active when listening to or playing music. So it seems fitting that this column appears in the music issue of *Okanagan Life* because from my musical perspective, Fiery Cushman has written one of the best articles I have ever read.

Titled *Confabulation*, it appears in the book *This Will Make You Smarter*, produced by Edge.org. I relate to Edge because I find its motto as exciting as it is compelling.

**Edge motto:** To arrive at the edge of the world's knowledge, seek out the most complex and sophisticated minds, put them in a room together, and have them ask each other the questions they are asking themselves.

Brilliant!

**Present world motto:** To lay on the couch of mundane conformity, seek out the most ordinary minds, elect them to office, and have them pander to the richest one-tenth of one per cent.

Of course, I bought their book *This Will Make You Smarter* right away and pursued Cushman's article. Recently he explained confabulation to me in a telephone interview: "Confabulation is closely related to the phenomenon of self-deception. In a way, you could view them as two sides of the same coin. The typical case of confabulation is where you are engaging in a behaviour and you explain it with incorrect information. The typical case of self-deception would be where there is a piece of information that would be relevant to your behaviour, which you are deliberately ignoring."

Cushman's research relates closely to the reading I have been doing on split-brain patients, and the important research of Dr. Michael Gazzaniga and Dr. Roger Sperry.

Among others, they provided the shoulders on which Cushman stood as he penned the article that suggests “we are shockingly ignorant of the causes of our own behavior.”

Gazzaniga's research has revealed that the left frontal cortex of the human brain thinks it is all-knowing and eminently wise. Dubbed the “Interpreter,” Gazzaniga maintains this region of the brain will always try to make sense of the world for you, even when it doesn't have the right information. It makes stuff up!

After reading *Confabulation* for the seventh time, I enticed Cushman into an email dialogue with a friend and fellow city and regional magazine publisher, John Palumbo of Rhode Island Monthly.

Armed with new insight, John asked our publishers group the question I wish I had. “If none of us are making money after 10 years in the social media arena, why are we still engaging in it?”

Grasping Cushman's theory, I will phrase the question more pointedly: “If some 70 city publishers across North America have diligently followed the hype of the multi-billion-dollar corporations and social media gurus to embrace social media, why do we only have beautiful losses and a few ‘likes’ to show for it?” Isn't this confabulation? Why are we compelled to “follow” over-hyped Internet monopolies at the expense of our communities?

A monstrous amount of scientific evidence shows that we all confabulate and we are shockingly ignorant of it—until now. Not understanding confabulation has had us doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results. Understanding that our know-it-all Interpreter will fabricate stories should help us think and act with more purpose.

Listen to some music, read Cushman's article at [Edge.org](http://Edge.org), ask your Interpreter to stop bullying your brain and imagine a new beginning standing on the shoulders of giants.



**John Paul Byrne**  
publisher  
[paul@okanaganlife.com](mailto:paul@okanaganlife.com)  
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CANADA GEESE—AN ALL TOO COMMON SIGHT ON OKANGAAN BEACHES.

## GOOSE MANAGEMENT

### Egg addling controls introduced species

■ In a continued effort to control the Canada Goose population in the Okanagan Valley, the Okanagan Valley Goose Management Program (OVGMP) is about to begin its annual egg addling. Over the past six years, the OVGMP has prevented the exponential increase of the non-migratory resident goose population that inhabits the Valley year round.

"While most communities along the Valley are struggling with management of non-migratory Canada Geese, this program aims at reducing geese that are not native species to this area," says OVGMP coordinator Kate Hagmeier. "Trained contractors have already been searching for pairs and nesting sites, and we hope to complete the addling program by the end of May."

These geese are largely descendants of geese that were trans-located to the Okanagan in the 1960s and 70s as part of an introduction program. Young geese and eggs were brought here from differ-

ent areas in Canada to encourage the creation of an Okanagan goose population.

What was not foreseen at the time was the inability of these geese to migrate because they had no natural parents to teach them, but they did have the ability to adapt and thrive to the mild Okanagan climate.

The egg addling strategy involves shaking eggs or coating them with non-toxic biodegradable food-grade corn oil within 14 days of incubation to make them non-viable. The US Humane Society supports this egg addling technique.

Once addled, eggs are returned to the nest. Geese continue to incubate until they realize the eggs will not hatch. At this point, it is generally too late in the year to produce more eggs. Adults are not harmed and will continue with their regular life cycle.

Since the program began in 2007, approximately 7,700 eggs have been prevented from hatching through

this minimally invasive approach. Taking into account natural mortality of young through predation or nest failure, that is equivalent to approximately 5,800 fewer geese in the Valley. The program also entails a preliminary nest locating component and overall goose population surveys.

The public is asked to keep away from goose nests and to avoid touching the eggs. The Okanagan Goose Management Program has secured a special permit from the federal government allowing crews from EBB Environmental Inc. and Wise Wildlife Control to addle goose eggs on public and private lands with the owners' permission. In the case of private lands, an authorization form is available on the OVGMP website.

In addition to egg addling and population surveys, a grant from the Western Canada Turfgrass Association in 2012 contributed to a leg-banding program. When a marked bird is observed by a birdwatcher or recovered by a hunter, data on age, survival, habitat use and migratory patterns can be retrieved and analyzed.

"The data collected during the leg-banding program will help us to improve our understanding of the population and how different birds use the Valley," says Hagmeier.

In order for the goose management program to succeed, new nests need to be identified. The public is asked to report lone geese, pairs of geese or nest locations on private or public land. Email [coordinator@okanagangooseplan.com](mailto:coordinator@okanagangooseplan.com) or call 1-877-943-3209. More information about OVGMP is available at [www.okanagangooseplan.com](http://www.okanagangooseplan.com).

The Okanagan Valley Goose Management Program is a partnership between the City of Kelowna, Central Okanagan Regional District, Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen, District of West Kelowna, City of Vernon, City of Penticton, Town of Lake Country, Town of Osoyoos, Town of Oliver, District of Peachland, District of Summerland and Glenmore Ellison Irrigation District.

## ANNE FLEMMING SHORTLISTED

### Finalist for fiction prize

UBC creative writing associate professor Anne Fleming has been nominated for a prestigious Canadian literary award.

Anne is among five finalists for the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize in the 2013 BC Books Prizes. The winners will be announced at the 29th Annual Lieutenant Governor's BC Book Prizes Gala on May 4 at Government House in Victoria.

*Gay Dwarves in America* is Anne's third book. There are no gay dwarves in this collection of short fiction; there is a mother of a teen with dwarfism who worries he might be gay, a parasitologist named Edna who longs for the love of a certain young woman, a boy on a unicycle, and a hockey mom in Toronto who pretends to be Swiss.

"We are extremely proud of Anne and her literary contributions to Canadian culture," says Neil Cadger, head of creative studies in the faculty of creative and critical studies at UBC's Okanagan campus.

"In addition to being a celebrated author, Anne is an admired member of our faculty whose teaching and depth of understanding has benefited hundreds of young writers. We will all be rooting for Anne to win."



ANNE FLEMMING



OKANAGAN WINE FESTIVALS SOCIETY CHAIR BLAIR BALDWIN TOASTS THE RETURN OF SUMMER TASTINGS WITH SILVER STAR MOUNTAIN RESORT'S IAN GALBRAITH.

## MILE HIGH WINE EVENT

### Silver Star wine tasting set for August 10

The Okanagan Wine Festivals Society and Silver Star Mountain Resort have teamed up on a new signature summer tasting event set for August 10, 2013—Mile High Wine presented by Valley First.

## JASON DEWINETZ HONOURED

### Reprint of historic text wins book design award

Jason Dewinetz, a specialist in typography who teaches letterpress printing at the Vernon campus of Okanagan College, received second place in the Limited Edition category in this year's Alcuin Society Awards for Excellence in Book Design in Canada.

Jason's book was selected from 236 entries submitted by 112 Canadian publishers.

He chose to reprint Stanley Morison's essay *First Principles of Typography*. The British typographer, who created the Times New Roman font and died in 1967, is considered to be the most influential typographic scholar of the 20th Century.

"Morison's essay is one of the most important introductions to typography, and has been published in dozens of editions, yet there have not been many fine-press productions of the work," says Jason. "And, frankly, I wanted a nice copy of the essay for

myself, which is usually the driving force for most of the books I make."

With this in mind, Jason produced a limited edition of 50 copies of the book, each one selling for \$200.

This is the 10th Alcuin Society award for Jason, who publishes his limited edition books through his Vernon-based company Greenboathouse Press. This latest award means Jason's book can now take part in a number of exhibitions including one at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, and as one of the books representing Canada at the "Best Book Design from all over the World" competition held each year in Leipzig, Germany.

Jason shares his expertise with students in the Okanagan College writing and publishing program. Projects have included the creation of chapbooks under the Kalamalka Press imprint.



## MINI DRAGON SLAYER

■ *Dragon's Den* tough guy Kevin O'Leary was a bit hard on 10-year old Teagan Adams, but as Teagan sees it, O'Leary "wasn't as bad as I've seen him before." Teagan had even written a jingle to sing on the show. When he finished the song, O'Leary jokingly advised him "not to quit his day job."

Teagan appeared as the youngest-ever (10 at the time), pitch artist on the nationally syndicated show last fall when he attempted to get the Dragons to kick in 30 grand toward his Doogoods project that helps to raise funds for school building projects.

Four of the Dragons eventually gave him \$500 each and Arlene Dickinson also threw in an hour of marketing consultation.

Even without a big cash infusion from the program, Doogoods has sold more than 250 card packages in person and over the Internet.

With the help of his mother, Chantelle, the Anne McClymont Elementary School student developed the trading card game (Doogoods) to teach social responsibility to kids.

Billed on [www.doogoods.com](http://www.doogoods.com) as

a way to "start a new trend by making kindness cool," each card pack consists of 30 cards with Doogood characters on them. The characters give players a challenge to do good individually or as a family. Games are also aimed at the classroom. The educational package comes complete with lesson plans.

Doogoods isn't a concept exclusively for charitable ends. Teagan developed his program as a real business where he covers his costs and takes a small income. But, 20 per cent of total sales goes to social projects.

The idea was to help in fundraising for the school building program organized by Free The Children. So far game sales have raised enough to build a school in Kenya (\$9,000) and a good start (\$2,000) for a new school in Nicaragua.

Internationally renowned social activist Craig Kielburger is the inspiration for Teagan and his younger brother Tate, who also works with Free The Children to provide funding for clean drinking water. When Kielburger addressed a crowd of 60,000 at GM Place last fall, he hailed Teagan and Tate as important contributors to the Free The Children mission.

Teagan designed the cards and helped his mother develop a website for the game by writing most of the copy. He also writes for their monthly newsletter offering tips on how to make a difference.

"Lots of kids like Pokémon and trading cards," the youngster says of the game. "I came up with the idea around Christmas 2011 and mom helped me develop it."

It wasn't Teagan's intention to make something specifically for *Dragon's Den*, but the family were fans and watch it weekly. When the show's producers announced auditions in Kelowna, Chantelle ushered him down to the studio.

That was in February 2012. The call came to fly to Toronto for a taping at the main CBC studio in April.

The Adams family lived in Osoyoos at the time (dad Justin has since become vineyard manager at CedarCreek Estate Winery) and Teagan had never been to such a large city.

After meeting the show's cast and taping his 20-minute segment, which aired last Halloween, he toured the city. His reaction to the whole experience? "It was better than Disneyland."—Bruce Kemp

# Let in the breeze with Phantom's screens

With warmer weather right around the corner, homeowners across the Okanagan will soon be heading outside to enjoy the outdoor living areas of their homes.

Often times, it is the start of the spring season that prompts people to consider improvements to their patios and porches.



Whether it's a patio renovation, a deck installation, or a new set of double-French doors, more and more homeowners are including Phantom retractable screens to improve their outdoor living areas. Somers Screen Solutions, the authorised distributor of Phantom Screens in BC Interior, is proud to offer a wide variety of screens for doors, windows and large openings that match every architectural style. You can

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## culturista



Braden Kiefiuk with his monumental steel sculpture

# Who knew?

by Gillianne Richards

## Enderby metal worker releases the artist within

■ I took a little trek off the beaten path this month, deep into the bowels of Enderby. It's an unassuming corner of the Okanagan, perhaps not the first place you'd think to look for the next up-and-coming artist, but out beyond the shadow of the mountains that clip the feathered beaches of Swan lake, there's a brawny man with a mallet who stands waiting.

His name is Braden Kiefiuk. By trade, he's a sheet metal shop foreman. Two years ago, when the economy slumped, work slowed down and he was left with something better: time. I've heard similar stories before and feel a little thankful to the powers that be for the curious ways in which they pull the rug out from under the hardworking. Because chances are, they'll not only get up and make a new rug, but also build a whole house to go with it.

In his spare time Braden started play-

ing around with sheet metal. First he made flowers then he started cutting out designs rendered on his computer. That led to a line of stylized gates built around cameos of his original art. Work picked up again, but it was too late, Braden's inner artist had been unleashed. Last fall he made the leap into a new dimension, a seven-month project that would produce his first life sized sculpture.

Newly completed, it stands in his front yard and looks down at me stoically as I run my excited hands across its flanks. It's a massive buck, every inch of its metallic hide hand forged and fused together with painstaking patience and skill.

Braden tells me that he first printed some pictures of a mule deer to use as a reference for the metal frame that would give an initial shape to work with. Then he started building a leg.

PHOTO BY GILLIANNE RICHARDS

When that looked good he moved on.

"How did you know what to do next?" I ask.

Braden shrugs and responds, "People would say, well, what are you going to do when you get to the neck? I don't know. Same thing when I got to the antlers. I didn't have a clue, I don't know, I just did it."

"And how do you feel now that you did it?" He laughs and says, "I'm surprised."

It's easy to bask in the grandeur of the beast, but when I step closer to see the fine details, it becomes that much more beautiful. Lichen grows across fallen branches at its feet; the finely wrought hoofs and antlers seem to carry an imagined history of the creature's life in the wild. I try and comprehend how, without training or tutelage, he did it.

Braden leads me to his shop, a cozy, tool-filled retreat laden with the tricks of his self-taught trade. And by tricks, I mean old school devices, as in a mallet and a log stump. Although he used a computer for his smaller projects, when it came to the deer it was a process of discovery built solely on the direction of a creative mind. In other words, this guy hand cut and pounded 16-gauge steel into dozens of unique shapes. He would guestimate the size and proper curve, then weld until all the puzzle pieces made this incredible statue. He even cut a hole in the roof of his shop so the buck would fit and eventually he had to hire a crane to help complete a project as grand in size as the imagination of its maker. I mentally bow to his awesomeness.

What was the hardest part? "All of it was," says Braden. "It was all hard, but each time I got through a challenge I would look at what I've done and be like, 'Wow, I did that!'"

I recognize this fire, this relentless addiction the fortunate few are lucky to have for art. They are driven to it at the expense of weekends and free time, they are at the mercy of its push for both challenge and perfection, they hand themselves over to it in a lone walk of faith with the hope of offering their service to some great end.

Facebook page: Sexy Metal Art  
braden@sexymetalart.com. **OL**



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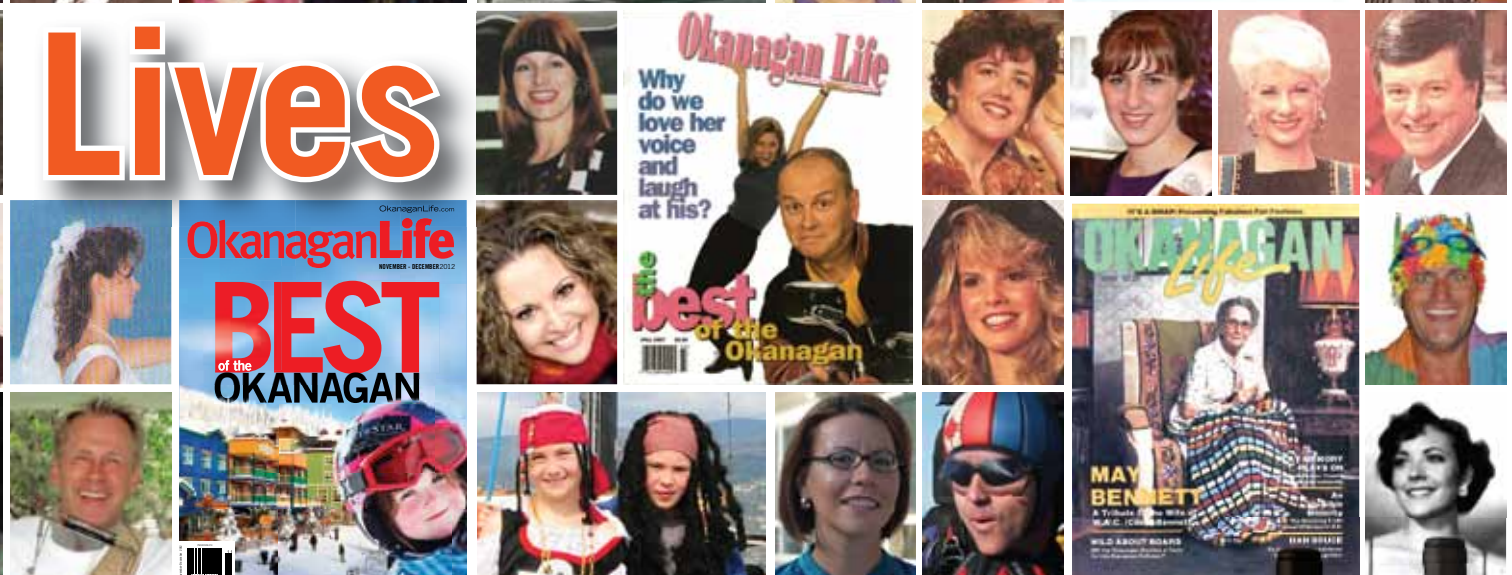
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# Lives



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The Okanagan has given birth to countless talented musicians. Think Grapes of Wrath, The Head Pins, Fields of Green, The Flu and We are the City. The Valley has also become a mecca for music makers who love the lifestyle of a four seasons playground and a winery around every corner. Talents such as Paul Rodgers, (Free and Bad Company), Danny McBride (Chris de Burg) and Julie Masi (Parachute Club) are just a few of the musicians who now call the Okanagan home.

Jimmy LeGuilloux has been watching the local music industry over 40 years. He and his band have been staples in the Okanagan for longer than he would like to admit. Jimmy moved to Kelowna in 1973 and credits much of his musical passion to his high school band teachers. The 70s were a very different time and the bands that toured through the Valley were big, brassy and bold.

"Back in the 70s bands had five or six members and were very influenced by the music of the time," says Jimmy. He remembers music circuits then, when bands could tour almost non-stop. "Bands used to play six days a week and travel in buses across Canada. They would run into each other at gas stations on Sunday."

But Jimmy says a lot of the circuits dried up in the mid 80s. "Expo 86 was the turning point when everything started changing." After bars were allowed to open and serve alcohol on Sunday, the circuits faded.

# OKANAGAN

Candid talk from local musicians

BY DARCY NYBO

# MUSIC LIVE



**Facing page:** Matt Rands of Papa Wheely.  
**This page:** Jimmy LeGuilloux.



Bands started playing more weekends or had house gigs as regulars.

"By the 90s and the early 2000s people shifted gears to disco and techno," says Jimmy. "Live music was around but it was grunge and it wasn't in the clubs, at least not in Canada. By the early 2000s you really didn't know where music was going."

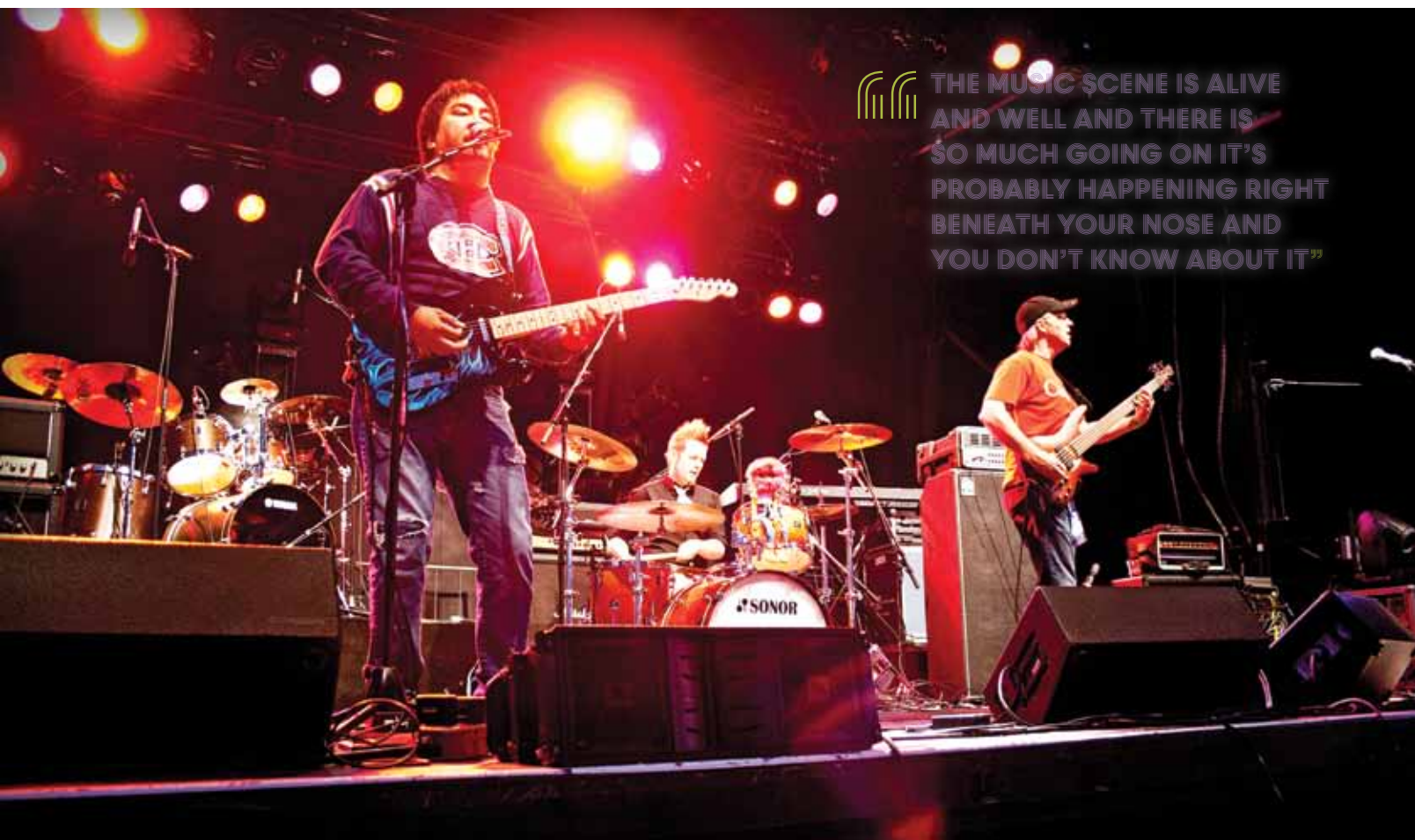
Things started to turn around when coffee shops, restaurants and small pubs began to hire singles and duos. The Grateful Fed in downtown Kelowna was one of the tiny venues that brought live music back to the public.

"It holds maybe 30 people and it has fed the music scene in Kelowna like crazy," says Jimmy. "Then there are restaurants like the Minstrel in Kelowna and the Dream Café in Penticton that have well known acts appearing on their stages."

Rick Halisheff of Poppa Dawg has been a fixture of the Okanagan music scene for almost as long as Jimmy. Rick fell in love with blues and has been singing and playing the blues for over 20 years now. "I remember when Rann Berry started the Bluesday Tuesday jam at the Packing House Pub and a few years after that the Blue Gator opened in the Prestige Inn and then, in the late 90s, Kelowna held its first Blues Festival in City Park,"



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



THE MUSIC SCENE IS ALIVE  
AND WELL AND THERE IS  
SO MUCH GOING ON IT'S  
PROBABLY HAPPENING RIGHT  
BENEATH YOUR NOSE AND  
YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT<sup>TM</sup>

he says. "The blues isn't a popular kind of music; but Poppa Dawg plays in a lot of places most blues bands don't play. We want to see people dance so we play blues, soul, Motown and real R&B. I'm optimistic about the uptake in the music scene here in the Okanagan. In my opinion, if it's not live music, it's dead music."

The Okanagan plays host to countless live outdoor music events in parks and wineries throughout the spring and summer. Last year Mission Hill's concert series included Lyle Lovett and Chris Isaak. CedarCreek's Sunset Concert Series brought Chantal Kreviazuk and Andrew Allen to perform. Down south at Tinhorn Creek is known for its Canadian Concert Series. Previous years have seen performers such as the Boom Booms, Said the Whale and Sloan.

This year's line up looks almost complete with musical guests Jackie Treehorn, The Matinee and Five Alarm Funk.

Smaller wineries like Vibrant Vine offer live music on weekends and bring in local musicians such as Gordon James, The Malarkeys and Fighting Orange.

"The music scene is alive and well and there is so much going on it's probably happening right beneath your nose and you don't know about it," says Jimmy. "Even places like Riley's Pub on the Westside are starting to hire bands. Doc Willoughby's is thriving as is the Pheasant and Quail and O'Flannigan's."

He recommends The Blue Gator as the place to be if you're over 40. "It's a great place to go and dance. It morphs depending on who is playing there and the audience changes accordingly. The management is changing gears a bit and going more rock and a little less blues. The whole focus of the place is to dance your ass off and have a good time."

Brad Krauza, who has been helping people dance their ass off for three decades, has been the Young'uns bass player for 23 years. They play regularly at the Gator. "There used to be a lot more places to play," he says, "but we still manage to play somewhere every weekend. Places like the Green, Blue Gator, Rose's and Whiski-Jack's have been really good to us. People want to hear live music and we give it to them."

Live music thrives on the west side of the lake. Jimmy says Whiski-Jack's in the Westbank town centre of West Kelowna is one bar that kept hiring live bands through the years. "They never stopped, they never reformatted and

#### Facing page clockwise:

Rich Priske (L) and Jimmy LeGuilloux; Don Mutter (Young'uns); Rick Halisheff (L) with Sherman Doucette at the Bohemian Café.

#### Above:

The Young'uns—Tim Reardon (L), Brad Krauza (R) with Don Mutter on drums.

**Clockwise:** The Flu; Darby Mills; The Goods get dancers on the floor at The Green. **Facing page:** Barry Mathers formerly of The Cruzeros.



they always had bands. Over the years, the other clubs have come and gone and changed format, but not Whiski-Jack's, they stayed the same, and they are huge supporters of local music." Whiski-Jack's also supports the Power 104 Kids Care Campaign through its annual Rock4Kids event. Jimmy and his band will be performing.

A little further south, Peachland is a tiny town with a big appetite for live music. The Castle brings in the likes of Harpdog Brown, and the Edgewater has become quite the rock 'n' roll mecca with regular appearances by the Slamdogs featuring Alfie Galpin (Headpins), Tad Goddard (Prism) and Eddie Galpin. In the summer, live music streams from cafés and pubs

up and down the main street.

Matt Rands, owner of Skaha Sound in Penticton and drummer for Papa Wheely, says he's seen less live music in the South Okanagan over the past few years. "The Element closed down, Night Moves is a pawnshop now and the Blue Mule and the Barking Parrot are mostly DJ music with live music a few times a year. Back in the day, all of the clubs were competing to get better shows, but today—not much."

Live music in the South Okanagan does still exist though. Matt says the places that are making an effort include The Elite Restaurant, with its Friday night acoustic jam, and The Dream Café, which has done a great job of pulling in original acts from all over the world. "They

have regulars who will buy tickets no matter what he brings in," says Matt, who adds that Osoyoos also has a couple of new places that are talking about getting into live music.

Matt doesn't get to play his hometown as often as he'd like. "I've been in Papa Wheely for seven years now and at one point we were playing every week and in Penticton half the time. Now we play in Penticton about twice a year. The rest of the time we are mostly up in the Kelowna area."

Darby Mills, who lives in Vernon, is also a little discouraged by the lack of local venues for her band. "We are not an act that will fill Prospera Place, but we don't want to do the club crawls any more," said Mills. "Our shows need to be more of an event. People of our generation pick and choose what they

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

## CENTRAL OKANAGAN LIVE MUSIC

97 Street Pub  
The Blue Gator  
Bohemian Café & Catering Company  
Cabana Bar and Grille  
Creekside Pub  
Creekside Theatre (Lake Country)  
Dakoda's Sports Bar  
Doc Willoughby's  
Edgewater (P)  
Flashbacks Nite Club  
The Grateful Fed  
The Green Room  
Habitat  
The House  
Jazz Café at the Black Box  
Kelowna Community Theater  
Lake City Casino  
Level Night Club  
Memphis Blues  
Milk Crate Records  
The Minstrel Café  
O'Flannigan's Pub  
Ricardo's (Lake Country)  
Riley's (West Kelowna)  
Rose's Waterfront Pub  
Rotary Centre for the Arts  
Sapphire  
The Streaming Café  
Train Station Pub  
Urban Fare Bistro  
Vintner's Poolside Grill at the Coast Capri  
The Well Pub (UBC-O)  
Whiski-Jack's (West Kelowna)  
The Yellow House

## NORTH OKANAGAN

Bourbon Street Bar and Grill  
BX Creek Bar and Grill  
Checkers  
The Green  
Lake City Casino  
Longhorn Pub  
Lorenzo's Café (Enderby)  
Performing Arts Centre  
Vernon Jazz Club

## SOUTH OKANAGAN

Barking Parrot  
Blue Mule  
Cleland Community Theatre  
Copper Mug Pub  
Dream Café  
Elite Restaurant  
Fibonacci  
Murphy's Pub and Grill  
Opus Café Bistro  
Owl Pub  
Sage Pub

want to go see. I am working with some local players to put together something, so you may see me out there soon. I'd love to be working less during the day and more at night."

But Vernon isn't a musical wasteland. Places like Checkers, Longhorn and some of the smaller cafés also host live music. Ian Gibson, manager of The Green (formerly Sneakers) in the Village Green Hotel, says the Vernon music scene is lively. "At The Green we bring in everything from classic rock and roll to swing. I've had blues bands, tribute bands and impersonators."

Ian thinks there is a veritable cornucopia of untapped talent in the Okanagan. "At one of our jams a little while ago we had members from A Perfect Storm, Red Fish, the Young'uns, The Goods and some of the members of The Bone here. It made for an amazing night."

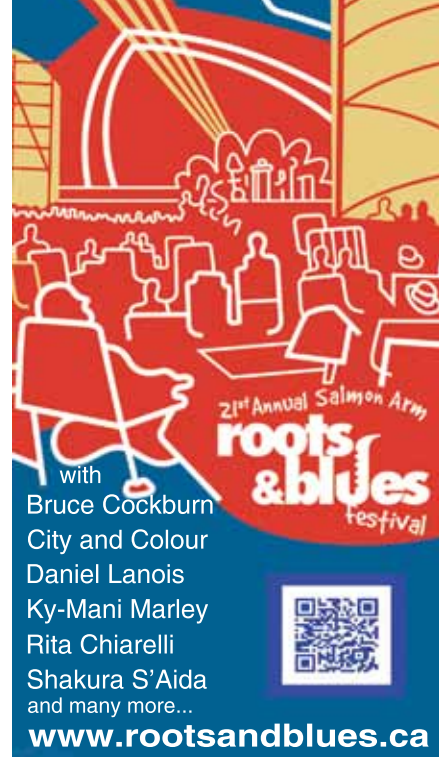
"There is a market for live music," says Ian. "But it must be done consistently. Now we have bands most weekends. People will come out if you give them a reason."

Check out the Okanagan music scene—live. [OL](#)




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# PUBLISHER'S ALTER-EGO

When *Okanagan Life* publisher John Paul Byrne expanded his passion from the printed word to music scores, it's no surprise that magazines were his focal point. In 1991, he took a walk just a few blocks from the magazine conference he was attending in New York to see his first Broadway musical (*Les Misérables*). He then set to work, composing one of his early songs, *Power of the Printed Word*, which has a mesmerizing rock beat powerful enough for centre stage.

Paul was determined to see his own musical *Ink!* on stage. He called on the mastery of local pianist Neville Bowman, who helped with the instrumentation and prepared charts for the 12-member cast. Then teaming up with Triptych Theatricals, Paul realized his dream when his 28-number production, which centres on the staff of Memphis Magazine, hit the stage in Vancouver in 2006.

The musical production behind him and his built-in audience of three children leaving home, Paul moved from songwriting to performing, teaming up with up with long-time performer, tennis coach and teacher, John Vesterinen, to form the duo *Johnny vs. Johnny*.

In his new partner Paul has found a close friend and perfect foil. With John on electric guitar and Paul on acoustic, the two toss lead vocals back and forth like

volleys on the tennis court. Their camaraderie is always apparent and, no matter how intimate or large the gathering, audiences feel like guests at a house party.

"Paul is the consummate musician," says John. "He sings, he plays, he song writes, he does it all. When we got together, it was a perfect match. Vocally, his deep baritone pairs so well with my tenor and we have so much fun making music together."

Moving from the basement to the stage has been a journey eased for Paul by John's support. "Johnny has a wonderful stage presence and his musical spirit is exceptional," says Paul. "He has such a positive outlook and he makes being on stage so much fun and so enjoyable."

Paul also drew on his love of sports to make up for lack of stage experience. "I'm a competitor," he says. "I took the attitude I have in sport to my music and worked hard to get better."

The duo are also passionate community supporters and often lend their talents to local fundraisers, including the Kelowna General Hospital Foundation Annual Celebrity Tennis Classic, now in its 12th year. It's perfect for Johnny vs. Johnny as they showcase their prowess both on the tennis court and on the evening stage.

Paul has been close to music all his life. It was a mainstay at the Byrnes' Lethbridge home thanks to Paul's mother Helen, who taught both school and music. Now in her 90s, she still hums her way through each day. With lots of siblings, the household was busy and



Paul Byrne performing at The Yellow House.

while music was always present, it took a back seat to sports. At 17 he took up the guitar and joined a band, but that was short-lived as his love of athletics won out.

Raising his own children, Paul found his music sidelined by the kids' sports and activities. Yet in quieter moments, he tucked away into a downstairs homemade studio and composed ballads for each of them.

Paul's most influential musical moment came in early 1964 when, as a very young boy, he watched the Beatles perform on the Ed Sullivan Show. As Beatlemania grew and the 70s exploded with popular music, he just soaked it up. If you catch him on stage today, you'll hear echoes in his voice of 70s greats like Gordon Lightfoot, Jim Croce and Neil Diamond.

You can catch Paul playing solo as well as performances by Johnny vs. Johnny at a variety of local venues. One good bet is Kelowna's Minstrel Café. This musical hot spot is known for its warm, modern decor, courtyard patio shaded by a super-tree, great menu (including tapas) and wine list, plus live entertainment five nights a week. In downtown Kelowna, another favourite venue is the Yellow House, with its intimate setting, premium menu and wine list, and live entertainment Friday and Saturday nights. —Yvonne Turgeon



John Vesterinen and Paul Byrne as Johnny vs. Johnny.



## CELEBRATING TOGETHER 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL SALMON ARM ROOTS & BLUES FESTIVAL

The Salmon Arm Roots & Blues Festival is the largest and most musically diverse festival in the BC Interior. The event began in 1992 as a small indoor festival, a result of the grassroots Shuswap Coffee House collective of the 1970s and 80s, which by 1991 had coalesced into the not-for-profit Salmon Arm Folk Music Society. The society's aims to encourage and promote performers from all parts of the world (with a special emphasis on Canadian talent), and to introduce audiences to the world's diverse genres of music, musical instruments and the artists who play them.

Roots & Blues runs on the third weekend of August at the Salmon Arm Fairgrounds, a picturesque 18-acre park in the centre of beau-

tiful Salmon Arm. At night, two stages run concurrently. Main Stage is the place to catch headline acts. This year's line-up includes Bruce Cockburn, City and Colour, and Daniel Lanois. The dynamic Boogie Barn Stage lies at the opposite end of the grounds, pumping out live beats for the dancers in the crowd.

A sonic and visual sampler serving up an unforgettable experience, Roots & Blues is also family friendly. The Family Fun Zone offers loads of things for kids to see and do and the Family Stage features performances geared towards children. Kids 12 and under are admitted free of charge. It's a great place to come together in celebration with family and friends. —Staff





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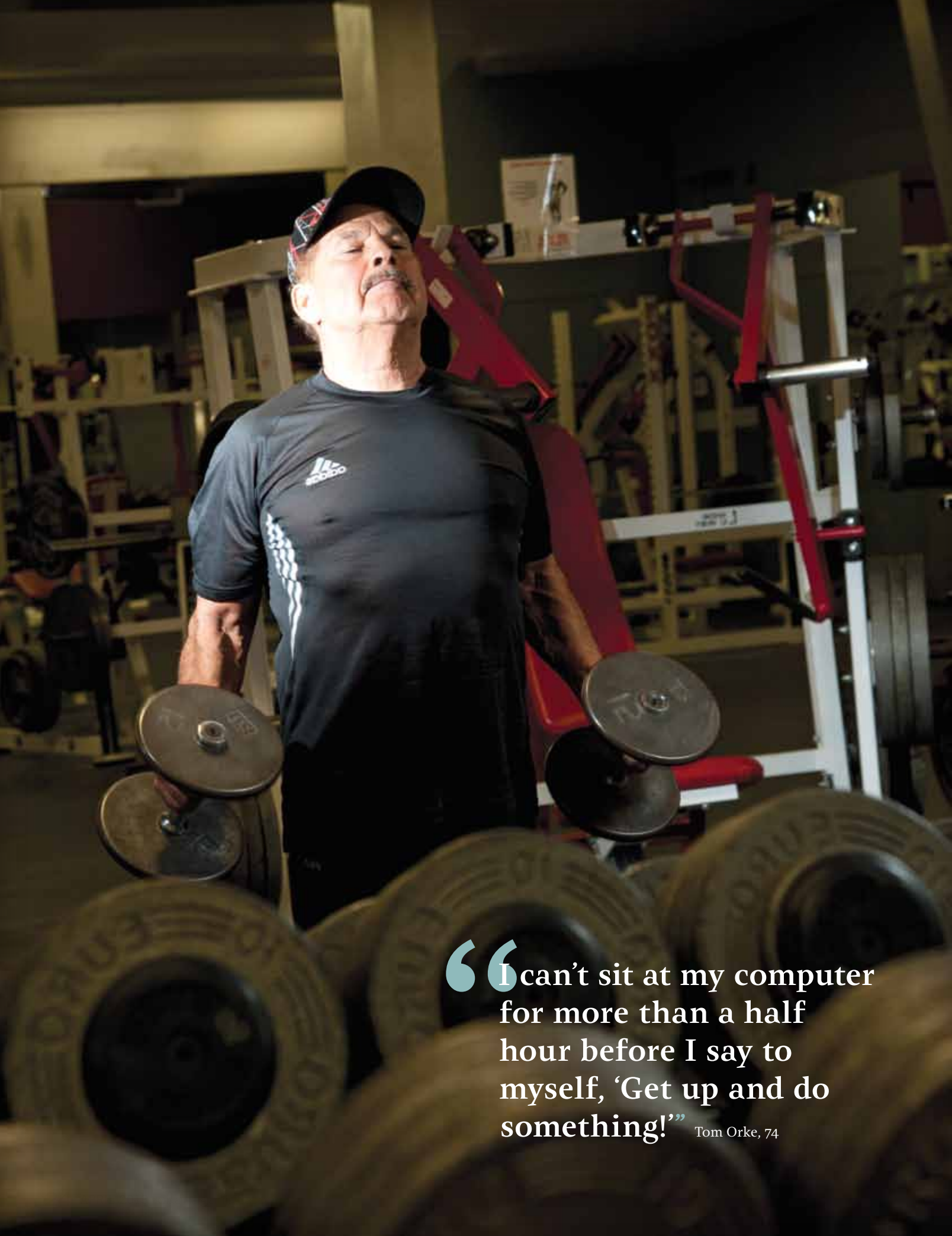
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“I can’t sit at my computer for more than a half hour before I say to myself, ‘Get up and do something!’”

Tom Orke, 74

Forget the bingo hall. Granny's building biceps at the gym

# Look who's pumping iron

By Shannon Linden

"I started exercising when I retired," says 82-year old Christine Albert. After running a coffee shop in Penticton, she and her husband moved to Kelowna, where Christine hung up her apron and pulled on a pair of running shoes. "I had osteoporosis," she explains. "I wanted to prevent further damage."

"Older adults want to stay active as long as they can and carry on their favourite activities," says Bobbi Kittle, owner of Pursuit Fitness and a personal trainer at the Seniors' Centre in Kelowna, where Christine works out. "They want to fight the signs of aging, stay strong, prevent injuries and maintain quality of life."

"I work out every day but Friday," says class member, Gail Lewis, a bubbly 69-year old with a complexion as rosy as her personality. Clad in short workout tights and a fitted tank top, she's got great gams, lean and toned—and big biceps, too.

Like Christine, Gail started working out to improve her health. "I had triple bypass heart surgery in 2005.

Before that, I wasn't really into exercise. My daughter bought me a gift certificate to the Running Room and it literally saved my life." Gail pounded the pavement to newfound fitness. After losing her husband to cancer in 2010, running kept her from falling apart. "It was heart-breaking. Without exercise, I wouldn't have made it."

Fit as she was, Gail lacked upper body strength. Dr. Kevin Pistawka, a Kelowna cardiologist, suggested she add weight training to her regime for more than increased strength.

Research shows resistance training can help lower blood pressure, improve cholesterol levels and control blood sugar.

**Facing page:**

Tom Orke checks his exercise form in the mirror.

**This page:**

Gail Lewis toning arms and building strength and more.



Even moderate weight lifting can hike the heart rate, thereby engaging both the cardiovascular and muscular systems. Weight lifting also increases lean muscle tissue and decreases the fatty kind; good news for our tickers—and our wardrobes.

Not only do we burn calories while working out, studies show by building more lean muscle mass, we burn them sitting still. That's because lean muscle mass requires more energy to maintain and repair than fat tissue, so even in recovery mode, our bodies are working, leading to a healthier heart—and smaller shirt size.

"I used to be on a list of medications. Now it's half a Lipitor (used to treat high cholesterol). That's it!" Gail beams.

## Dumb bells keep you smart

Even more than death, seniors fear a loss of independence, an Aging in Place in America study found.

Dementia (a serious loss of global cognitive ability in a previously unimpaired person) and profound lack of mobility make older individuals vulnerable, but research suggests strength training pumps more than muscles—it builds the brain.

A much-cited study by the University of British Columbia found after just six months of resistance training, women with mild cognitive impairment and memory issues experienced improved attention, problem-solving and decision-making functions of the brain.

The study followed 86 women aged

70 to 80 years old. Divided into three groups, the women worked out twice a week. One group lifted weights to build muscle strength; one walked outdoors for aerobic exercise; while the final group participated in balance and toning classes. Brain charting MRIs taken before and after the study showed the weight lifting group had significant cognitive improvement compared with the other two groups.

**"I'm the heaviest I've ever been... and it's all muscle!"** Gail Lewis, 69



PHOTOS BY BRUCE KEMP



**Above and facing page:**  
Gail Lewis  
works out with  
her trainer  
Bobbi Kittle.

**“I’m definitely getting stronger. I’m confident my training will improve my golf game.”** Michael O’Reilly, 81

While all exercise is good, Professor Teresa Liu-Ambrose speculated the mental power needed to learn and execute resistance routines played a role compared to, say, walking, which we do without much thought. “When you are performing strength-training exercises such as lifting weights, you’re constantly monitoring what you’re doing; you’re monitoring breathing; you’re trying to monitor the number of sets, the repetitions you’re doing as well as maintaining good form,” she told CBC News.

Leslie Park, a personal trainer specializing in exercise prescription and rehabilitation at Global Fitness in Kelowna, agrees. “I do balance and agility work with seniors—all functional movements because they need to climb stairs, walk in icy parking lots, that kind of thing.”

Leslie says heavy weights are not necessary. “Our goal is to keep seniors functional and strong. The biggest reason that elderly people break hips is the shift in weight. They can’t get their feet to move fast enough to catch themselves before they fall. It’s about prevention. If we work on balance, core and overall body strength applied in functional exercises, we can keep them moving.”

Leslie’s client Michael O’Reilly came to her following surgery to remove ribs and cancerous lung tissue. “My cancer was discovered in 2010. I’m extremely

lucky to have survived this long,” the 81-year-old says.

“I was introduced to Leslie and that was the end of sitting around!” he says, laughing. “I had to start from the beginning, working to get my strength up and breathing under control.”

Michael says he loves the atmosphere at the gym, not to mention the “get up and go” working out gives him every day. “I have to keep up with my 75-year-old wife. She swims three times a week and when she walks, she really hustles.”

Tom Orke also works out at Global: three days a week, two to four hours at a time. Tanned and toned, he flexes his arm muscles. His bulging biceps don’t lie—the 74-year-old is ripped right up.

“Proper nutrition, enough sleep and plenty of exercise. It’s all important,” he says. “I smoked from ages 13 to 24 and when I quit, I gained weight. I’m short, so I looked like a little ball. I didn’t like it.” When Tom took up running, he dropped 30 pounds, but he lost a little more bulk than he bargained for. “I was too skinny. I didn’t like that either.”

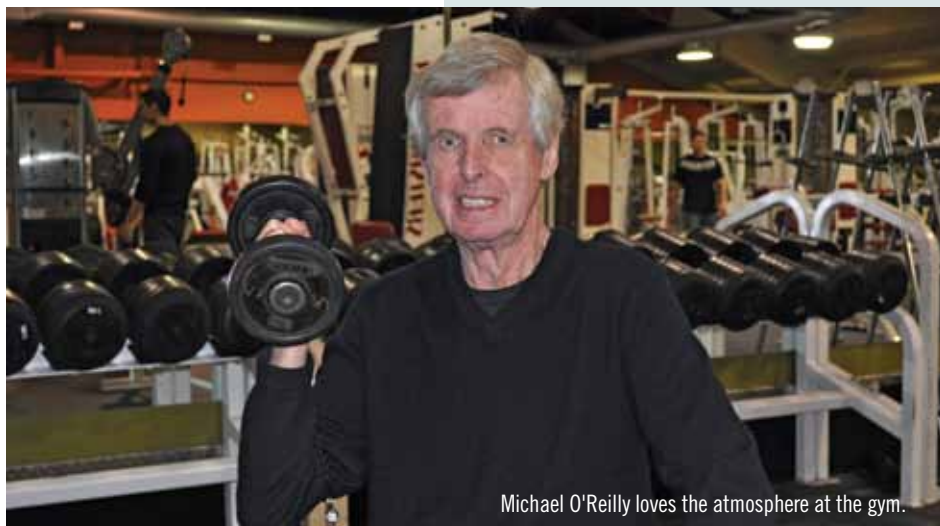
Weight training helped him strike a balance between a healthy body weight and the physique he likes. “It clears my mind, makes me feel strong and healthy.”

## 10 reasons to hit the weights

1. Build stronger bones.
2. Build more muscle mass (after middle age, muscle mass diminishes by up to 1% a year).
3. Burn more calories by raising even resting metabolism.
4. Promote greater flexibility.
5. Get stronger: boost all other activities with improved strength.
6. Improve cognitive function.
7. Reduce depression.
8. Boost good cholesterol.
9. Reduce the risk of diabetes.
10. Improve appearance: muscle mass takes up less space than fat, making clothes fit better and bodies look younger.

## Top 5 resistance exercises

1. **Squats:** work glutes, quads, hamstrings and calves all at once.
2. **Push ups:** another compound movement that works chest, shoulders, triceps, back and abs.
3. **Lunges:** works most of the muscles in legs including quads, hamstrings, glutes and calves.
4. **The Plank (or hover):** an isolation move that works the abs, back, arms and legs, as well as core.
5. **Lat Pulldown:** works the major muscles of the back (latissimus dorsi). *Source: about.com*



Michael O'Reilly loves the atmosphere at the gym.

PHOTO BY SHANNON LINDEN



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## Fit For a Long Life

Kelowna's Dr. John Oliver, an orthopedic surgeon, assistant clinical professor at UBC medical school and consultant to the Canadian Freestyle Ski Team, works with athletes—from elite to elderly—and the prescription is the same: “daily exercise is the key to healthy living.”

Dr. Oliver says the injuries that have consequences for seniors' quality of life result from falls. “Fractures of the wrist are most common. Next are fractures at the hip. These can be game changing events for anybody, but the older person has more challenges recovering.”

Prevention is key and along with aerobic exercise like walking, swimming and cycling, Dr. Oliver says strength training specific to muscle groups is now part of the prescribed exercise package. He advises seniors to seek professional help when starting a weight-training program.

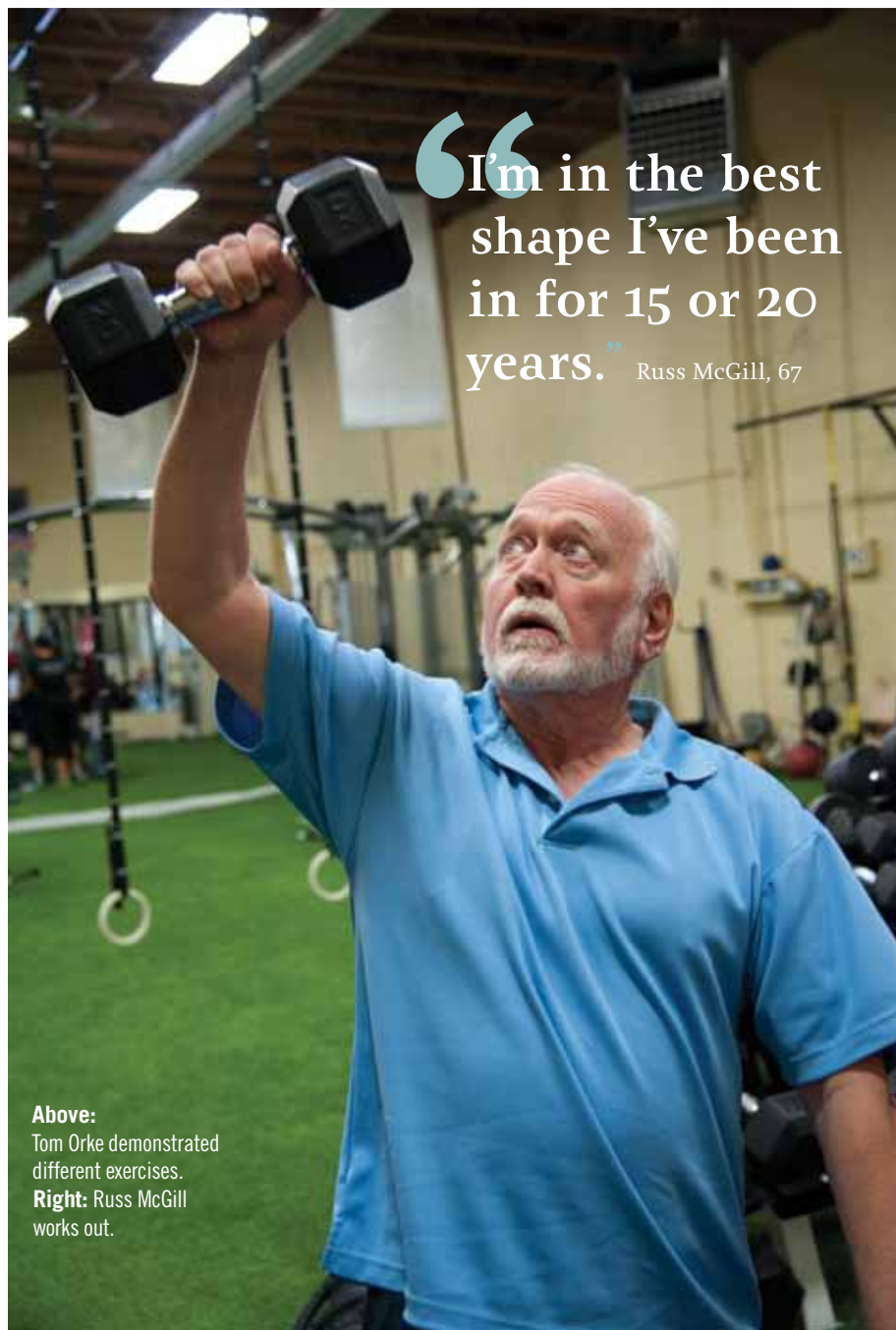
That's where personal trainer and owner of One-Life Fitness Sean Hawthorne comes in. He's been designing programs to fit individual needs for more than a decade. “The concept of age-related muscle loss doesn't have to happen,” he says. “Staying strong is the fountain of youth.”

A study at the UPMC Center for Sports Medicine in Pittsburgh confirms Sean's beliefs. Following recreational athletes 40 to 81 years old who worked out four to five times a week, researchers found neither leg muscle size nor strength declined significantly with age among the subjects.

“Sample MRIs showed virtually indistinguishable quadriceps in a 40-year-old triathlete compared with a 70-year-old triathlete. In contrast, the quadriceps of a 74-year-old sedentary man were shrivelled and enveloped in fat,” Alex Hutchinson reported for the *Globe and Mail*.

While older people are

“I'm in the best shape I've been in for 15 or 20 years.” Russ McGill, 67



**Above:** Tom Orke demonstrated different exercises.  
**Right:** Russ McGill works out.

YOU WANT A SECOND OPINION.

## Where do you go from here?

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Russ McGill supervised by trainer Brandie Cridland.

sometimes intimidated by the gym, Sean says once he gets them in, they're hooked.

That's the case for 67-year-old Russ McGill. Four times a week he's at One-Life, working with personal trainer and performance coach, Brandie Cridland.

"Russ skis," Brandie explains, "so we do lots of leg building and endurance exercises."

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Gail Lewis has no intention of slowing down either. "It's a commitment, but I want to be there for my kids and grandchildren. I want to live!" **OL**

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Dr. Craig Crippen,  
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Before

After

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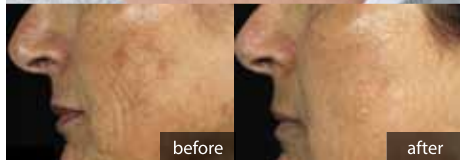


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3. Be gentle. Wash with warm water and use a moisturizer.
4. Eat a healthy diet.
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# TEE UP YOUR EVENT



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# Winery shuffle on Naramata Bench

by Michael Botner

The 2010 collapse of Holman Lang Group has significantly changed the Naramata Bench wine scene—spawning four new wineries

■ Winemaker Gavin Miller saw potential when Stonehill Winery went up for auction in 2011. No stranger to distinguished wines, Gavin and cheesemaker wife Shana joined forces with friends Wayne and Margareta Nystrom to make the winning bid on the 9.5-acre property. Naming it Upper Bench, they renovated the winery, adding a cheese making facility and welcoming frescoes by local artist Johann Wessels. Within easy walking distance of central Penticton, Upper Bench hit the road running when it opened in 2012.

Also launched in 2012, Moraine Estate Winery is the smallest of the quartet. Previously called Zero Balance Vineyard, it was taken over by Oleg and Svetlana Aristarkhov,

both natives of Russia who immigrated to Alberta. Production focuses on small lots with winemaking expertise from New Zealand trained consultant Jacqueline Kemp. Winemaking centres on a small but well equipped Quonset hut, while the cellar door is installed in a small house on the property.

Lang Vineyards, the Okanagan's first farmgate winery (launched in 1990), became part of the Holman Lang Group in 2005. Chinese-based businessman Yong Wang purchased it in a deal that included the six-acre vineyard. Recently renovated, the wine shop is as strikingly contemporary as any in the Valley. To revive Lang's reputation, Yang invested in state-of-the-art equipment and

brought founder Guenther Lang back as wine consultant. Trained in oenology and viticulture in Germany and formerly winemaker at Blue Grouse on Vancouver Island, Richard Kiltz joined the team in 2012.

Paradise Ranch Wines Corp., one of two BC producers of only Icewine and late harvest wine, acquired Soaring Eagle Estate Winery, a showpiece property with 30 acres of vines and unsurpassed views. Naming it Bench 1775 (after the actual address), co-owner Peter Wille took on the challenge of bringing the new acquisition "up to shape." He retained a Penticton architect to design a new entrance, purchased new winemaking gear and hired talented winemaker Richard Kanazawa. **OL**

PHOTO BY MICHAEL BOTNER

Showcasing a selection of wines from Naramata Bench wineries that have sprung from the Holman Lang break-up, the five star rating system stresses value for price.



**UPPER BENCH  
2011 PINOT GRIS**

*Penticton, Okanagan Valley*

★★★★½ **\$19.90**

Making wine “as simply as possible,” Gavin Miller has produced this lovely dry white inspired by homegrown fruit. The flavours suggest soft tree fruit, pineapple, grapefruit, beeswax and mineral, cleansed by lively acidity. Takes creamy fish, white meat or pasta.



**UPPER BENCH  
2011 RIESLING**

*Penticton, Okanagan Valley*

★★★★ **\$21.90**

Richly flavoured and textured Riesling features a poached pear nose and honeyed, off-dry palate exhibiting pineapple, honeydew melon, candied lime and a note of petrol, refreshed by a zesty lemon peel. Calls for roast pork or spicy Asian cuisine.



**LANG VINEYARDS  
2011 BRAVO WHITE**

*Naramata, Okanagan Valley*

★★★★ **\$15.90**

Inspired melange of seven white varieties, made in a crisp, lively, dry style. Bravo stresses floral aromas and intense flavours of pineapple, lychee, pear, peach, apricot, melon and orange peel with notes of honey and grassy herbs. Likes creamy sauces and spicy food.



**LANG VINEYARDS  
2011 MERLOT**

*Naramata, Okanagan Valley*

★★★★ **\$19.90**

Simply scrumptious Merlot emphasizes succulent fruit and exuberant character. It delivers juicy black cherry, black currant and strawberry fruit, notes of vanilla and toast, crisp acidity, and soft, ripe tannins. Enjoy with grilled beef, poultry, pork or lamb.



**BENCH 1775  
2011 SAUVIGNON BLANC**

*Penticton, Okanagan Valley*

★★★★½ **\$18.90**

Best of New Zealand and Sancerre in this classy, Naramata Bench Sauvignon Blanc. It exhibits intense flavours of gooseberry, passion fruit, kiwi, grapefruit, grass, canned asparagus and flint. Pairs with trout, salads, grilled vegetables and goat cheese.



**MORAINE  
2011 CLIFFHANGER RED**

*Penticton, Okanagan Valley*

★★★★ **\$21**

Delectable blend of Gamay, Shiraz and Merlot conveys a seamless palate evoking lip-smacking plum, raspberry and cherry fruit, and nuances of smoke, cedar, cinnamon and chocolate, backed by supple tannins. Best with chargrilled meats and spicy Indian dishes.



**PETER WILLE**

*President and director of  
production, sales and marketing  
Bench 1775*

Only a year-and-a-half old when his Danish family came to Canada, Peter may be stretching the point by crediting his European roots for his interest in wine. But they may very well have had something to do with his decision to spend six weeks in Europe visiting wineries—for his honeymoon. “On our return, I seriously looked at getting into the wine industry,” he says. Following a two-year stint at Okanagan Springs Brewery in Vernon, he went to work for Mission Hill in 1988. Climbing the ladder, Peter started out as interior sales manager, eventually taking over international sales as director of exports. In 2011 he joined Paradise Ranch Wines, purveyors of Icewine and late harvest wine to over 20 countries. Co-founded in 1997 by Jim Stewart, one of the pioneers of Canada’s wine export industry, sole ownership passed to Jim in 2002 when his partner Jeff Harries left the company, selling his 646-acre Paradise Ranch vineyard to Mission Hill. Once Jim and Peter joined forces, the new partners acquired Soaring Eagle Winery, one of the segments of the Holman Lang Group that went up for auction after its 2010 bankruptcy. With Peter in the saddle, the sun-drenched Naramata lakefront property has undergone a major makeover. Bench 1775, based on the winery’s address, seemed a natural choice for a new name, providing the inspiration for new labels with a bold, modern look.



# The power of song

**Nigel Brown's work has touched countless lives. Now the man who helped make sick children's dreams come true wants to teach the world—or at least Canadian seniors—to sing**

■ Pulling out a chair and waving his hand in welcome, Nigel Brown is the quintessential gentleman. Quietly gracious, his grey-blue eyes sparkle with humour, but from the moment he begins speaking, it's clear this is a man who takes his mission—and his coffee—seriously.

"They have the best Americano in town," he says of the very Italian Gio Bean Espresso on Water Street in Kelowna. A regular at the roast, Nigel begins many of his morning meetings here. On the agenda these days? The newly proven benefits of the old-fashioned sing-a-long.

Recently awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his work with the Make-A-Wish Foundation in Vancouver, the determined do-gooder is putting his expertise into action as executive director of the Kelowna Silver Song Club (SSC).

"The research coming out of England is incredible," Nigel explains, referring to Canterbury Christ Church University studies showing that seniors who sing together, heal together. Prone to ailing health, falls, depression and loneliness,

older participants in community based music activities are thriving. They report more joy, less stress, an increased sense of belonging, not to mention better memory, fewer doctors' visits, better motor skills, fewer medications, and an overall improvement in physical and mental health.

Such research led Nigel's brother, Stuart, a high level opera singer, to initiate the Sing For Your Life Foundation in 2005, resulting in the establishment of some 60 Silver Song Clubs in the southeast of England.

Inspired by his brother's success and excited about the benefits to participants, Nigel got to work. With support from the Central Okanagan Foundation, he launched a pilot project in West Kelowna in 2011, the first of its kind in Canada. Along with his partner in life and enterprise, communications consultant Jill Hilderman, the couple ran six monthly sessions, open to individuals 65 years and older.

Seniors sang, snacked and socialized, free of charge. "When the participants first arrived, their mood

was a little low," says Nigel. "As they sang, their mood greatly improved. They felt like better people."

The project was so popular, the positive outcomes so convincing, the couple secured federal funding from the New Horizons Seniors' Program, allowing for two more Okanagan-based clubs to warm up their voices.

"If we can ward off depression and dementia, we can change people's life experience," says Nigel.

Further funding is his biggest obstacle. While trusts in England support Sing For Your Life, Nigel says it's an uphill climb here in Canada. "The programming is only as effective as the number of times it's used. We'd like to offer it weekly or even biweekly, but we don't have the means right now." He's hopeful word will get out and a harmonizing of financial resources and eager participants will result. "We're determined to do things in a credible way. We're nonprofit but we've built a legitimate board of six members. Jill and I put in more time than we'd ever be paid for, but seeing those ►



Morning coffee, healthy breakfast of oatmeal with fruit and nuts; chat with Jill about each other's plan for the day. Confirm who's making dinner.



More coffee and a Sing For Your Life meeting at Gio Bean Espresso in Kelowna.



Connect with leaders focused on seniors' issues including arts/health programmers, funding opportunities and new Silver Song Club locations.



Coaching session with a client exploring career or personal transition, followed by a head-clearing bike ride (weather permitting).



In the kitchen craft a gourmet pizza; local red wine in hand. Debrief with Jill.



After devouring several news casts, read or take in an episode of the British miniseries Downton Abbey.

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happy faces makes it all worthwhile."

Highly organized, the SSC's learning outcomes include evoking memories, stimulating fine and grand motor skills, encouraging interaction and shared performance, as well as offering free choice and multicultural material where appropriate. Singing has been shown to raise oxytocin (a feel good hormone), lower cortisol (a stress hormone) and increase melatonin and the infection fighting immunoglobulin A.

"The sessions are particularly helpful for those aging in place, sometimes on their own, sometimes with a caregiver. Those individuals tend to be lonely, not mixing with friends. By getting them out, getting them active, we're improving their overall lifestyle. They're laughing, chatting, telling stories," says Nigel.

SSC sessions are guided by professional instructors and encouraged by volunteers ranging from youth to the Sweet Adelines. Nigel's goal is to spread the song, eventually establishing SSCs in other cities across the country.

He may have some scales to climb but Nigel is no stranger to the challenge of raising his voice. "We had hurdles with Make-A-Wish. At first we thought we'd take the siblings of sick kids until a family with 11 kids showed up. We learned as we went."

If he can get sick kids to Disneyland, surely Nigel can get seniors to sing—and rally supporters to listen.

To learn more about Silver Song Club, including dates and locations for meetings, contact Nigel Brown at [nigel@sing4yourlife.ca](mailto:nigel@sing4yourlife.ca). **OL**

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# That's entertainment?

Reactionary rant or right-on reasoning—your call

■ The 60s and 70s were fascinating decades to grow up in. I remember summer holidays lasting forever and playing outside all day with friends. Our parents never worried about where we were; when the sun disappeared behind the rolling hills we all made our way back home. Childhood was less complicated then; children didn't grow up so fast and innocence was the very essence of youth. Back then watching television in our home was a privilege, not a birth-right, that was reinforced by strict parental protocol and by kids having a healthy respect for our elders.

I have fond memories of my two older sisters, my parents, myself and the family dog settling in after dinner to watch our favourite TV programs—together. To this day nothing can parallel the comedy of *The Carol Burnett Show*, *Mary Tyler Moore*, *Laugh-In* and *Happy Days* or the easy, authentic entertainment that captivated us with a healthy dose of suspense and laughter in series like *Bonanza*, *The High Chaparral*, *I Dream of Jeannie* and *Green Acres*. The quality of storytelling in the shows from that era was remarkable, and TV stations didn't rely on obscenities and the "shock factor" to keep audiences engaged.

I'm not sure when soft porn became mainstream entertainment for daytime television, but something is really twisted when TV stations air programs for kids based on sexually explicit content. Television shows like *Jersey Shore*, *16 and Pregnant* and *The Simpsons* promote bad behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse, teen sex and pregnancy along with a blatant disrespect for authority. How can this be healthy? Children don't have the tools to process such raspy and raunchy content, and I believe their choices are influenced and affected by it. Monkey see, monkey do.

Reality TV has also brought a smorgasbord of unacceptable behaviour into our living rooms; every channel seems inundated with sex and nudity, swearing and violence, deception and infidelity, and we just sit back and accept this as the new normal. We have become a desensitized society that doesn't even flinch when someone's head is blown off, and the repetition of this type of programming doesn't shock us anymore.

Some series use the F-bomb in every sentence to make up for the lack of good script writing, and imaginative story-telling has been replaced by digital visual effects. What used to be rated as Restricted is now considered Parental Guidance, and the bar keeps getting set lower and lower.

The amount of time we spend with electronics now is scary; we have forgotten how to use imagination to entertain ourselves with outdoor activities and play. Handheld devices offer our children a ringside seat to Google anything under the sun, including porn and other adult content. It's all right there at their fingertips and, for the most part, without parental supervision.

TV shows today seem to focus on exploiting the dysfunctional side of humanity, rather than creating a more positive outlook on the future by exploiting good healthy morals and ethics. The programs I grew up with had class, honesty and witty dialogue; they were geared to bring the family together, to entertain, and to educate—not to separate us. Television today has become a convenient distraction for busy lifestyles and kids are left to police themselves with this influential technology. It's time to replace the remote control with a book or a ball glove and begin encouraging a little creative quality time with the great outdoors. There is no better teacher than Mother Nature. **OL**

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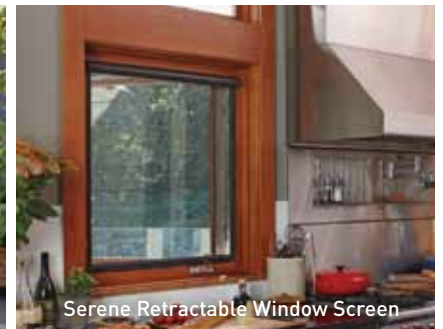
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