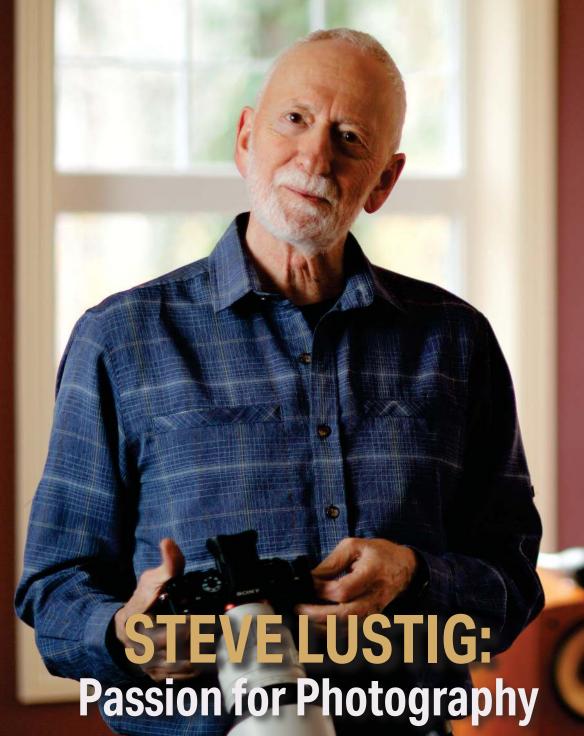
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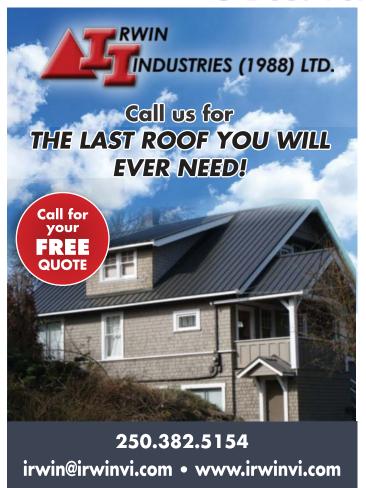


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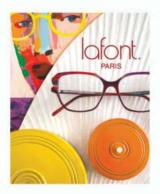


Cover Photo by Kevin Light Photography



Dr. Kelsey Ford O.D









Dr. Samantha Bourdeau O.D

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Publication Team Publisher: Edward Vanstone evanstone@bestversionmedia.com 250-589-9870

Content Coordinator: Audrey Wang audreywang@bestversionmedia.com

Designer: Rainy Whittaker rwhittaker@bestversionmedia.com

Contributing Photographer:

Kevin Light Photography

Advertising

Contact: Edward Vanstone Email: evanstone@bestversionmedia.com Phone: 250-589-9870

Feedback/Ideas/Submissions

Do you have feedback, ideas, or submissions? We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the 25th of each month. Go to www. bestversionmedia.com and click "Submit Content." You may also email your thoughts, ideas and photos

to: audreywang@bestversionmedia.com

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Content Submission Deadlines

Content Due: November 25	Edition Date: January		
December 25	February		
January 25	March		
February 25	April		
March 25	May		
April 25	June		
May 25	July		
June 25	August		
July 25	September		
August 25	October		
September 25	November		
October 25	December		

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Dear Residents.

Welcome to your February edition. February is the month when love is in the air, or so we are told. With Valentine's Day and Family Day in the calendar this month, February has really cornered the market on the 'Love' space of the year!

I was recently reminded by someone that these holidays, although intended to be joyous, can be a tough time of year for some. While I understand the hurt and loss that can come with love, I still think there is something special even in that. We are creatures born to feel, a curse and a blessing, you might say. The joy of love may be replaced with sadness and hurt at times, but I think February serves as a good reminder that the process is interchangeable; the emptiness of hurt feelings and sadness can again be occupied by love and happiness as we are not static beings. Also, as we change and evolve as a society, it becomes evident that Love can be found outside of the traditional bonds of marriage or family and that we are no longer bound to have to find it or define it in those spaces alone. I emphasize this because one of the core goals of our publication is to bring joy and happiness to the community. While respecting that not everyone enjoys this time of year, we can still invite them to be open to what may be a new-found love. I, for one, am appreciative that we live in such a beautiful place, in a community filled with amazing people. I may not always love it but even in those rare times, I am constantly reminded that it holds more potential for Love then most other places I know and for that opportunity I think we are all pretty lucky.

I hope you enjoy our cover story about Steve Lustig who has been capturing beauty and images in a lifetime of professional photography and we are fortunate to bring both his story and images to our pages. As always, our business partners deliver opportunities and passion. To my note above, if you are looking for new and reciprocated love this year, try a small business. These are companies run by local people who have vested passion in what they do for their work and community. We also have a great sports story about Flag Football. We love to cast an eye to emerging spaces in sports Brittany Hawkes and Dylan Tucker of RISE are captivating a wave of kids in an area that will be shining bright in the years to come.

I had the chance recently to spend a little extra time with my team and I want to take a moment (given it is the month of Love) to say how much I love the team we have. Kevin's photography, Audrey's writing and editing and Rainy's designs are a joy to have. I hope you love what they bring to this little publication as much as I do. BVM has opened a space for increased feedback so I encourage you to use it - good or bad - we would love to hear from you. I hope you 'Love' this edition... I know, I knowenough with the love already, right? Well if you are sick of it already then take solace in the fact it is just 28 days ahead... wait, actually 29 days in February this year... mark that down! Still, they go quickly so let's make them count.

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen-speaking peoples, on whose traditional territories we live and work, and the Songhees and Esquimalt nations, whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Sincerely,

Edward Vanstone, Publisher



Edward Vanstone **PUBLISHER**



Audrey Wang

CONTENT COORDINATOR





Rainy Whittaker



Kevin Light

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER



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Mend Mobile Health Anna Walker

250-202-4390 www.mendmobilehealth.ca



Matthew Lowe

Community Plus 250-658-6508

matthew@ communitypluscare.ca www.communitypluscare.ca



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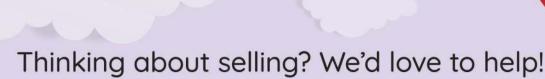


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By Dr. Megan Yim Image supplied by Backfit Clinic

How Laser Can Speed Recovery

What is cold laser therapy/low-level laser therapy?

Cold laser is a therapeutic, non-invasive treatment used to stimulate healing while reducing inflammation and pain. Employing a process called photobiomodulation, the laser produces light energy that passes through the skin to injured tissue and stimulates cellular activity, thus assisting tissue repair and releasing nitric oxide, increasing circulation.

How does it work?

Cold laser uses low levels of light energy at specific wavelengths that can be absorbed into the body. This absorbed light triggers a biochemical cascade including:

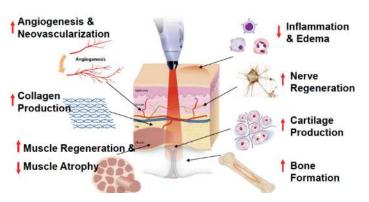
- Increased cellular energy: Increases cellular ATP or energy production, thereby boosting the injured cells' ability to heal and repair.
- Improves blood flow: Promotes vasodilation (bloods vessels increase in size) leading to increased blood flow, bringing oxygen and essential nutrients that are necessary for healing.
- Reduced inflammation: Cold laser light is absorbed by immune cells which triggers pro-inflammatory mediators, a.k.a. the process of inflammation reduction.

The procedure involves specific wavelengths and dosages according to the diagnosis and the tissue depth required.

What conditions can be treated with cold laser?

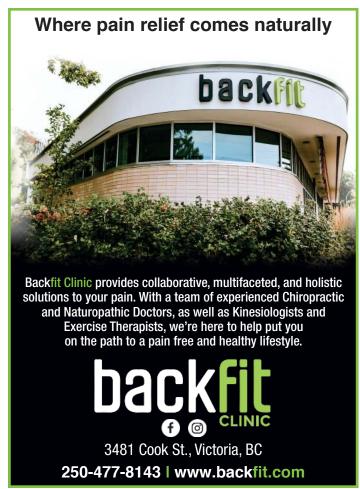
Cold laser therapy can benefit a wide range of conditions including sprains, strains, bursitis, tendonitis, and post-operative recovery. It can also provide temporary pain relief for arthritis, degenerative disc disease, tendinopathies, fibromyalgia, neuropathy and many more. It can even be used for wound healing – specifically, cold laser stimulates the growth of new blood vessels and improves muscle recovery.

Physiological Effects of Laser Therapy

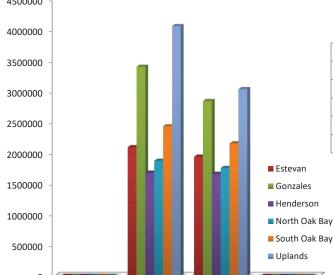


Why should clients consider cold laser therapy?

- Non-invasive and virtually painless (depending on the treatment area): Cold laser may get warm to hot on application but there is usually no pain after the treatment.
- No known side effects: unlike pain medication or surgical intervention, there are no known side effects.
- Pain management: Cold laser therapy can decrease pain associated with arthritis, fibromyalgia and neuropathy, as well as acute injuries.
- Faster recovery: Due to cold laser's effect on cellular repair and blood flow, injuries treated with laser can recover faster.
- Complementary therapy: Cold laser can be used in combination with many other therapies including manual therapy and rehabilitation exercise.







-	# of Sales	Yr Avg List Price	Yr Avg Sale Price	Yr Avg Days on Market
■ Estevan	24	\$2,100,000	\$1,946,766	29
■ Gonzales	10	\$3,404,923	\$2,848,275	52
■ Henderson	29	\$1,685,834	\$1,670,589	31
■ North Oak Bay	18	\$1,880,552	\$1,763,500	32
South Oak Bay	66	\$2,440,438	\$2,162,490	33
Uplands	14	\$4,063,678	\$3,043,133	59

Information given is from sources believed reliable but should not be relied upon without verification. Where shown, all measurements are approximate and subject to confirmation. Buyers must satisfy themselves as to the applicability of GST. All data is copyright either the Vancouver Island Real Estate Board or the Victoria Real Estate Board.

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By David Rose, Mile Zero Tours | Images supplied by David Rose

Discover a Canada You've Never Seen Before with an Epic Journey Across all Ten Provinces

As Canadians, we are blessed to live in a country so vast and diverse. But with our immense geography, how can one ever explore and experience all parts of this diverse nation?

There can't be a more perfect option than a once-in-a-lifetime expedition across Canada by rail. Canada's transcontinental railway is an integral part of our nation's history and an awesome feat of engineering. Completed in 1885, the railway connected Canada

from coast to coast and fulfilled a condition of British Columbia's entrance into confederation. With the interior lands of the west now easily accessible, the population exploded giving rise to the nation we know today.

Mile Zero Tours, a locally owned and operated tour company, offers The Epic Canadian Rail Journey - a 16-day deluxe guided tour departing Victoria in May which escorts travellers on the scenic rail journey across the continent. The trip includes five nights of private Sleeper Plus Class accommodations aboard VIA Rail. Travelling by rail allows guests to witness the dramatic change in scenery from snow-covered mountain peaks to endless prairie, from bustling cities to farmer's fields, and finally to the rugged shores of the East Coast. However, you won't just be watching the scenery from your window; stopovers have been included in four provinces during which you



will get to experience Canada's quintessential destinations and many hidden gems. Also included are many unforgettable experiences such as cruising into the mist of Niagara Falls and visiting one of the world's most famous lighthouses at Peggy's Cove and much, much more.

Getting to the East Coast is just the beginning, as Mile Zero Tours also offers the option to extend your stay with the 10-day Magical Maritimes tour in June. This exciting tour begins in

Halifax and includes New Brunswick, PEI, and the beautiful Cape Breton Island. Marvel at the Bay of Fundy and the world's highest tides, visit the birthplace of Confederation and experience panoramic views along the stunning Cabot Trail. There is still one province left and the 12-day Discover Newfoundland and Labrador tour is the perfect conclusion to this ultimate Canadian experience. Enjoy an iceberg and whale watching cruise, visit the world-famous Viking settlement of L'Anse Aux Meadows, explore the lively streets of St. John's, and tour the spectacular Gros Morne National Park.

How can you discover what this great nation has to offer? This year consider a trip of a lifetime and journey across all ten provinces – don't miss out on this opportunity. All aboard! Visit milezerotours.com or call 250-590-0811 today.













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CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2024



@Oak Bay High School, access of Cranmore Road

Bring your empty returnables to the Oak Bay High parking lot on the first Saturday of each month. This bottle drive is a joint fundraising venture by the Oak Bay Rotary Club and the Oak Bay High School Alumni, with all monies raised equally divided between the Jack Wallace Memorial Track Resurfacing Project and Threshold Housing Society.

Time: 10am-1pm

Sat., February 3, 10, 17 & 24 Moss Street Farmers Market

@1330 Fairfield Road
Shop local at the Moss Street
Farmers Market! Every Saturday
from November through April,
drop by the winter market indoors
at the Sir James Douglas school
gymnasium and Garry Oak
Room to find organic produce,
handmade crafts, community
education, and much more.

Time: 10am-1pm Cost: FREE

www.mossstreetmarket.com

Sun., February 4 Vancouver Island Dream Wedding Show

@Pearkes Community Centre
Planning your upcoming nuptials?
The Dream Wedding Show
showcases all the latest fashion
and decorating trends to help
make your big day unforgettable.
With local vendors and services
for your special occasion, you will

find everything you need to make your dream come true. **Time:** 10am-3:30pm

Cost: \$10 advance; \$15 at the

https://dreamweddingshow.ca

Sat., February 10 Circa: Humans 2.0

@Royal Theatre
Dance Victoria presents a vibrant
performance by Circa from
Brisbane, Australia. Humans 2.0
is an internationally acclaimed
symphony of acrobatics, pulsing
music and dramatic lighting.
The performance is described
as "intimate, primal and deeply
engaged with the challenge of
being human".

Time: 7:30pm Cost: From \$31 www.rmts.bc.ca

Sun., February 11 Kluxen – Shostakovich Symphony No. 5

@The Farquhar at UVic
The Victoria Symphony teams
up with the Greater Victoria
Youth Orchestra in a special
joint performance that's sure to
delight music-lovers of all ages.
Conducted by Christian Kluxen,
the scintillating cello concerto will
be played by VS principal cellist,
Brian Yoon.

Time: 2:30pm

Cost: Check website for ticket

prices

www.tickets.uvic.ca

Sat., February 17 Raven Spirit Dance: Confluence

@The Farquhar at UVic
Confluence is a contemporary
dance work that manifests the
physical embodiment of the
resilience of Indigenous women
by exploring their perspectives
and histories through movement.
Based in Vancouver, Raven
Spirit Dance Society produces
contemporary dance rooted in
Indigenous worldviews, honouring the communities and artists
with whom they work.

Time: 7pm

Cost: Pay what you can starting at \$5

www.tickets.uvic.ca

Sun., February 18 Chinese New Year's Celebration

@Victoria's Chinatown
Ring in the Year of the Dragon
in Canada's oldest Chinatown!
Event not confirmed at time of
publishing. Please check website
for updates.

Time: 12pm Cost: FREE

www.tourismvictoria.com/ see-do/festivals-events/chinesenew-year

Sun., February 17 Family Sunday

@Art Gallery of Greater Victoria It's Family Day weekend! What's better than spending an afternoon creating art with your family at the AGGV's Family Sunday event (every third Sunday of the month from October to June). Check out their website to learn more!

Time: 2-4pm

Cost: Included with admission; admission is free for Children 5 and under, members, support workers and Indigenous peoples

www.aggv.ca

Wed., February 21–Tue., February 27 Ainadamar

@Royal Theatre
Pacific Opera Victoria presents
a rich insight into the life of
playwright Federico García Lorca,
through the eyes and voice of his
muse, Catalan actress Margarita
Xirgu. Set in the heart of Andalusia
and sung in Spanish with English
surtitles, Ainadamar is a passionate
fusion of flamenco and classical
music, making this one-act opera
an unmissable experience.

Time: 7:30pm Cost: From \$30 www.rmts.bc.ca

Fri., February 23 Victoria Home, Renovation & Décor Show 2024

@Pearkes Community Centre
Come to Victoria's one-stop
shop for home improvement and
renovation ideas, products and
services. Speak to a wide range of
designers and industry experts and
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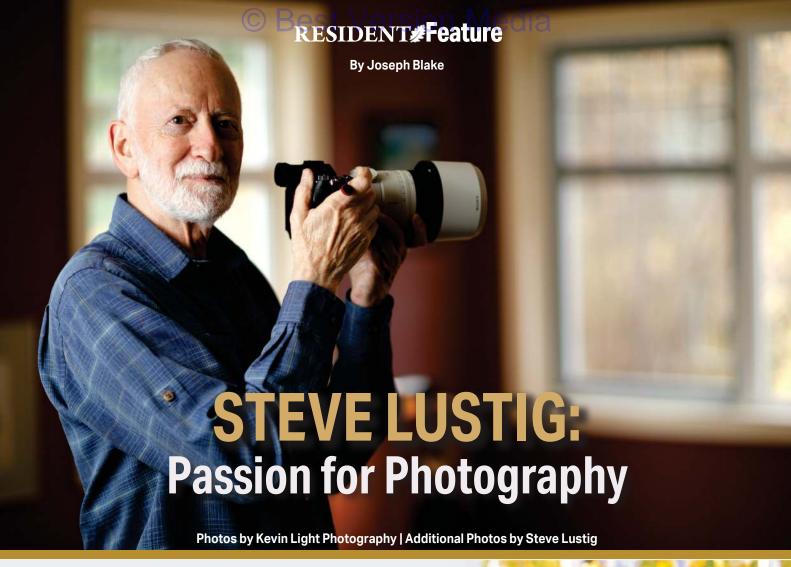
Time: 1–8pm Cost: TBC

https://10times.com/home-reno-

vation-decor







teve Lustig is passionate about photography. A retired psychologist who was Director of the Skeena Mental Health Centre in Terrace and the Victoria Mental Health Centre, he also served as the Acting Regional Coordinator of Mental Health Services for Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast. He maintained a busy private practice, including consulting for the RCMP, WCB and ICBC, before retiring nine years ago.

In preparation for retirement, Steve joined the Victoria Camera Club and began to enter photography competitions while taking workshops and developing his craft with the goal of sharing his work publicly. Since then,

Steve Lustig, Himba Chief, photograph.



his photos have been accepted into the Sooke and Sidney Fine Art Shows, as well as The New Photographer's Gallery in Sidney, BC.

Lustig's passion for photography began much earlier. In 1969, when he was attending grad school in New York City, his father gave him a Nikon camera. With the Nikon, Lustig captured black and white street scenes and images from a post-grad tour of Europe.

"Years later, after we moved to Oak Bay in 1987, I shot a lot of family photos," Lustig explained one morning over cappuccino and croissants at Demitasse



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Bakery. "I shot lots of what I'd call 'functional photographs' until my retirement when I joined the 250-member Victoria Camera Club and started taking part in monthly competitions where I won awards for portraits, landscapes, wildlife and street scenes."

"Since then," Lustig continued, "I've competed in international competitions sanctioned by the Photographic Society of America. I've had over 100 acceptances in international photography exhibitions with some garnering gold medals including Italy's Sardinia International Salon, Westchester International Photography Competition (Best in Show, nature) and Sweden's Torneka Circuit where I won a gold medal, a bronze medal and a certificate of merit."



Steve Lustiq, Dominance, photograph.

Steve Lustig's photos have appeared in numerous publications including National Geographic, Canadian Camera, Photo Life, Close-up, BCAA's members calendar, Capital Daily, and the Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society calendar. He has also won many awards: a People's Choice Award (1st place) in the Illumination Print Show and a People's Choice Award (3rd place) in the Reflections Print Show. In 2022, Steve was the Victoria Camera Club's Distinguished Photographer of the Year and earned the Photographic Society of America's Recognition of Photographic Achievement (QPSA). His images are held in private collections in the U.S. and Canada.

"I love travel, photography, and learning," Lustig explained. "That combination makes me very happy... Oh, and I love jazz too! I'm taking courses all the time and travelling on photo-



Steve Lustig, Cowichan Heron, photograph.

graphic adventures all around the world, some organized with small groups and professional photographers, guides who help get you to the right place at the right time to capture a powerful image. I'm currently taking 16-week Photographic Society of America course on objective image evaluation. It's lots of reading and study, but I love it."

"A pivotal point for me," Lustig continued "was spending a week in New Brunswick with Freeman Patterson, arguably Canada's most famous photographer. Freeman is not about camera gear. He uses a crummy, little camera, but he has a childlike enthusiasm, and he helped me learn to see the extraordinary

(Continued on page 12)





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Steve Lustia, Pengiun Parade, photograph.

in the ordinary. Was it Thoreau who said, 'It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see.'? Freeman challenged me to slow down and determine what I'm feeling and then try to reflect that feeling with the photograph."

Some of Steve's favourite photography trips were to the Falkland Islands, Faroe Islands and Chile's Atacama Desert, Italy's Marche, and the Palouse



Steve Lustig, Northern Pygmy Owl, photograph.



in eastern Washington. He calls his photography trip to Namibia "the greatest trip of my life, especially the wildlife and the sand dune landscapes where I took some of my favourite images of Kolmanskop, an eerie, abandoned German mining town's rooms filled with sand. Luckily the photographer guides on most of these trips were terrific. I've shot photos of Cypress trees in an east Texas swamp last November when the trees are turning red and orange and I've slept in a pup tent in Utah so I could hike to a site at 2 in the morning to shoot the Milky Way. I prefer to never do that again."

Recently, Lustig joined a group in the Colorado mountains to photograph the Aspens as they turn yellow, and in the spring of 2024, he has plans to travel to Charleston, South Carolina to shoot images of a Magnolia plantation in bloom. Looking further ahead, in the fall of 2024, he has scheduled a trip to the Yukon to photograph the Northern Lights and the province's otherworldly landscape and wildlife.

"Not all of my best photographs are products of international travel. I've sold images from local photo shoots," Steve explained. "One of my favourite images is from Cowichan Valley's Skutz Falls, a solitary heron in fog. Some of my other favourite locations are Jordan River, Botany Bay, and the Khutzeymateen's Grizzly Bear habitat. There are lots of opportunities to photograph striking images right here in B.C."

Check out Steve Lustig's stunning photographs on Instagram: http://instagram.com/stephenlustig1 🦼



Steve Lustig, Through Open Doors, photograph.



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n the first day of Christopher, we agree to dog-sit over the holidays. Christopher's mom and dad bring him over to get familiar with his hosts' surroundings. We set out some people treats as the holidays are approaching, and we are soon reminded that big Golden Retrievers and snacks on the coffee table don't mix.

On the second day of Christopher, mom and dad drop Christopher off with his luggage. He's excited to be here and dashes up the stairs to say hi to the teenagers. Our dog Zoe is submissive and happily flips over on her back to show him he's the alpha. Christopher's parents quietly slip away to head to the airport.

On the third day of Christopher, we're happy to be dog-sitting a Retriever, because now the teenagers diligently pick their stuff off the bedroom floors. Mealtimes are fun chaos, making sure both dogs eat their own food a la carte style, rather than buffet style.

On the fourth day of Christopher, we see that he has settled in nicely and loves being with the humans, especially when food is being prepared in the kitchen!

On the fifth day of Christopher, we decide to get our social media act together. After all, Christopher is a famous supermodel, and is internationally recognized thanks to his Instagram style-influencer mom. We go to Beacon Hill Park and try our best to get some Insta-worthy shots to post on the 'gram.

On the sixth day of Christopher, in the early hours, we are startled awake by some deep barking. There are noisy party-goers one street

over and Christopher turns out to be a good guard dog!

On the seventh day of Christopher, the absent-minded human continues to call him "Lex", the name of our dearly departed Retriever. Christopher eyes him with confusion and exasperation, as if to say, "I don't answer to one-syllable names!".

On the eighth day of Christopher, we realize that he has us trained. After the evening meal, it's playtime. Usually, it's tug-of-war. Otherwise, hide the stuffie. Then, the best part – a good back scratching that elicits loud moans of pleasure!

On the ninth day of Christopher, we all pile in the car and head over to Granny's house for Christmas Eve dinner. She is delighted to have a second grand-doggy to spoil rotten!

On the tenth day of Christopher, we all wake to Christmas Day and we exchange gifts. It's a Secret Santa game this year, and lo and behold! Christopher is Zoe's Secret Santa. Then there are stockings filled with yummy treats. It is a good day.

On the eleventh day of Christopher, the dogs help clean the many dishes used for Christmas dinner. They station themselves by the dishwasher, making sure no food remains on the dishes before they are placed in the machine.

On the twelfth day of Christopher, we all go on one final group walk around the neighbourhood before it's time for Christopher to go back home to his family from over the fence. Bye, Christopher; see you around, neighbour!



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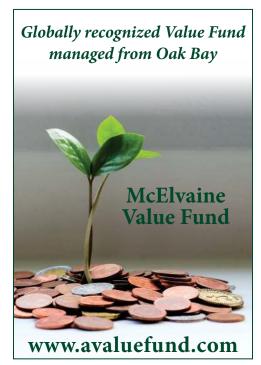


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RECIPE CORNER By Audrey Wang | Images supplied by Audrey Wa

Vegetable Dumplings

This February, Chinese, Vietnamese and South Korean populations around the world will celebrate the Lunar New Year, welcoming the Year of the Dragon, an especially auspicious year! Chinese dumplings, jiaozi,



are traditionally eaten during this festive time, as the dumplings symbolize prosperity thanks to their ingot shape. But dumplings can be enjoyed all year round. The juicy morsels are filled with meat and/or vegetables, and there's nothing better than gathering with loved ones and making these dumplings together.

Ingredients:

- 1.5 kg green leafy vegetables (such as baby bok choy and napa cabbage), finely shred-
- 1 cup garlic chives (Chinese chives), finely chopped
- 2 cups shiitake mushrooms, fresh or dried and reconstituted, finely chopped
- 1 ½ cups carrot, finely shredded
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp minced ginger

- 1/2 cup Shaoxing wine
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 3 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp salt
- 2 tbsp soya sauce
- 1/4 tsp white pepper
- ½ cup water, plus more for assembly
- 3-4 packages dumpling wrappers, available at most grocery stores

Instructions:

- For the filling, mix all the ingredients (except for the wrappers) together in a large mixing bowl, stirring thoroughly for at least 5 minutes until well combined.
- To wrap the dumplings, dip your finger in a bowl of water and dampen the edge of each circular wrapper. Scoop a ½ tbsp of filling neatly into the centre of the wrapper, fold in half and pinch the wrapper at the top. Then make two folds on each side until the dumpling resembles a fan. Make sure it is completely sealed. Repeat until all the filling is used up.
- Place the dumplings on a baking sheet ensuring that they do not touch. At this point, you can freeze the dumplings overnight in the sheets and then transfer them into Ziploc bags and freezer for later use.
- To cook the dumplings, I recommend pan-frying them. Heat 2 tbsp of oil in a nonstick pan over medium-high heat. Place dumplings in the hot pan, making sure not to let them overlap. Fry for 2 minutes, then pour in enough water to cover the bottom of the pan. Cover and reduce heat to simmer, allowing the dumplings to cook in the steam for about 5-10 minutes or until all the water has evaporated. Remove cover, increase the heat and fry for a few more minutes, until the bottom of dumplings is golden-brown
- Serve with Chinese black vinegar and shredded ginger, or other dipping sauce of choice!

Enjoy and Happy Lunar New Year! Xin nian kuai le! Kung Hey Fatt Choy!



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By Shannon Whissell | Director of Development, Threshold Housing Society
Photo supplied by Shannon Whissell

Oak Bay Rotary Partnership with Threshold Housing Expands to Include More Rotarians and More Youth

The Rotary Education Pursuit Fund (REPF), created as a partnership between the Rotary Club of Oak Bay and Threshold Housing, expanded in 2023, drawing support from two additional Rotary Clubs. Both the Rotary Club of Victoria and the Rotary Club of Victoria – Harbourside have committed \$10,000 to the REPF, bringing the total for the year to \$30,000.

Threshold Housing serves at-risk youth, from 15 to 24 years of age, experiencing homelessness, aging out of care, or fleeing violence in the home. Threshold has three housing models, each with specific levels of support based on youth needs. Wrap-around support include the Foundations Program of life and relationship skills, financial literacy, clinical counselling, cooking and nutrition, and so much more. Threshold also runs the Supportive Recovery Program, the only res-

idential, harm-reduction focused program for youth on Vancouver Island. In total, approximately 50 youth stay with Threshold at any given time, and each one has the support of the REPF to pursue their educational goals.

The REPF was created to remove financial barriers to education for youth. Even for those who qualify for the government's tuition waiver program, costs of fees and textbooks, and tuition for programs



A recently graduated youth from Threshold Housing.

from excluded institutions can keep youth from pursuing their goals. Operating for two years now, the fund has opened doors to education for 21 youth who otherwise saw their future as one of minimum wage jobs and continued struggle. This past Fall, for the first time, a youth in Threshold Housing was accepted into the University of Victoria, something that wouldn't have been an option without the fund.

This youth, who accessed the fund to complete training in Community Services – Child and Youth Care, in preparation for giving back to the community that has helped her, had these words to say: "Thank you from the bottom of my heart for paying for 4 semesters, so far, of college courses. I never would have been able to imagine I would receive this amount of support from anyone."

While further education and full-time studies are not the goal for every youth Threshold supports, the percentage

of Threshold youth engaged in education rose 26% in the fund's first year. Threshold's promise to youth and the community is "Safe Homes. Brighter Futures". With the support of partners such as the Rotary Clubs of Oak Bay, Victoria, and Victoria-Harbourside, those futures shine even brighter.



FEBRUARY 2024



lag football is a sport that's growing in popularity all around the world, so much so that it was recently announced as an official Olympic Sport to debut in the 2028 Games in Los Angeles! And right here on Vancouver Island, the community response to the new RISE Flag Football league has been incredible.

The RISE Flag Football program was brought to Canada from the United States about 5 years ago and the league has expanded in Ontario and beyond. Together with head coach Dylan Tucker, Brittany Hawkes helped launch RISE's first season in the Spring of 2023 in Victoria. The response was immense, so in the Fall, the league expanded to

Duncan. For the 2024 Spring Season, there will be leagues in Victoria, Duncan and Nanaimo for athletes in grades 3-12.

Brittany was born and raised in Victoria and now lives in Mill Bay raising 4 active children with her husband Aaron. Brittany competed at a high level in numerous sports but never had the opportunity to play football until adulthood. For Dylan, on the other hand, football has been a huge part of his life since childhood. Reflecting on the sport Dylan said "whether it be in my work ethic, communication, resilience, conflict management... team sports, and specifically the game of football, has had a greater impact in my life than I ever could have predicted."







Unlike tackle football, little equipment is needed in flag football. "This is why it has grown at such a quick rate worldwide," Brittany reveals, "All it entails, in its simplest form, is a ball and a field. The minimal equipment speaks to the safety of the game and is a huge cost savings for parents, who are otherwise looking at considerable costs for protective gear."

Another exceptional aspect of the RISE league is that the games are played co-ed. "This is really an opportunity for girls to play a sport that hasn't been really open to girls before," Brittany explains, "In the past, it just wasn't the social norm for a girl to join a tackle football team. Plus, there are risks to safety for girls playing tackle football. So, this is an incredible non-contact opportunity for girls to learn the game, and from what we hear from both boys and girls, playing co-ed is a ton of fun! There aren't many sports where girls and boys can play together, so it's not surprising that flag football is so well received. "

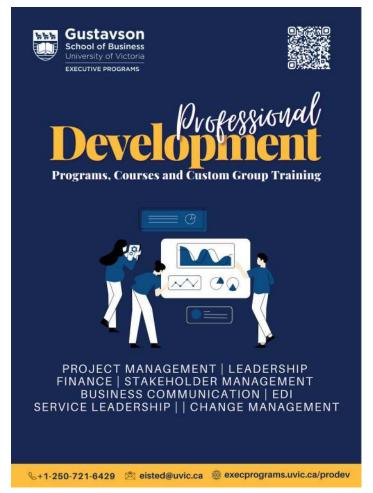
In addition to the co-ed teams, RISE is looking to launch an all-girls division as early as this Spring. "Because flag football is growing at a provincial, national and international level, we need to see the all-girls representation grow," says Brittany, "the model we are creating is to

always have a foundation of recreational co-ed leagues, but for those more competitive athletes - both male and female - there will be competitive streams of our program available to them. We can't wait to see how far some of our RISE athletes will go in the sport - some may even be able to secure university scholarships for flag football."

The testimonials from parents speak to the kids' enjoyment of the game, even for those who had never liked team sports before. Brittany explains: "Our passion is to see kids thrive. We don't see RISE as just another program to fill your schedule. We see it as an opportunity to invest in the next generation and to build up the youth in our community. What makes RISE special comes from the top down. The heart and soul and passion we bring to the kids really shine through and that's why kids come away with such a positive experience. The sport itself is fantastic but the leaders make the difference."

The Spring flag football league will commence the first week of April. To find out more, visit https://uariseflag.ca/find-a-league/van-couver-island/





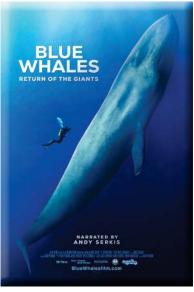


By Audrey Wang | Image Courtesy of IMAX® Victoria

7 Huge Facts About Blue Whales

MAX® Victoria is excited to bring to the big screen a wondrous journey exploring the world of the magnificent blue whale. "Blue Whales: Return of the Giants" follows two scientific expeditions – one off the Seychelles and the other along Mexico's Gulf of California. As populations rebound from near extinction, the film is an inspiring story about the largest animal that ever lived, and to celebrate this momentous occasion, we have made a list of huge facts that touch on all the superlatives that characterize these marine marvels.

- 1. Blue whales are the Earth's largest animals, some growing over 30 metres long and weighing more than 130,000 kilograms. That's as long as 3 city buses and as heavy as 30 elephants!
- 2. Although blue whales are water-dwellers, like all other whales, they are mammals and not fish. As mammals, they are warm-blooded, breathe air with their lungs and bear live young.
- 3. Blue whales can be found in all our planet's oceans except for the Arctic and can usually be found swimming alone or in small groups of 2-4, unless they happen on a very active feeding ground, in which case, a few dozen may be found together.
- 4. Blue whales are carnivores, but despite their massive size, they feed on tiny shrimp-like crustaceans called krill. But of course, to fill their whale-size hunger, they eat a lot of it, about 40 million in a single day!



- 5. Whales are categorized into two groups toothed and baleen. Toothed whales eat fish and penguins. Blue whales are baleen. Instead of teeth, they have baleen, a fibrous material that is used to filter their food. When feeding, a large volume of water and krill is taken into the whale's mouth, then the water is pushed back out through the baleen plates, trapping the krill that the whale eats.
- 6. Blue whales are great communicators. They talk to each other using a series of vocal sounds that are so loud that they can be heard underwater for hundreds of kilometres. Their calls are the loudest of any creature on Earth!
- 7. Blue whales follow a seasonal migration pattern. They feed on krill in cold polar waters then travel to warmer waters to mate and give birth.

There are many more amazing facts about blue whales we would love to share, so we hope you will catch the visual feast that is "Blue Whales: Return of the Giants" at IMAX® Victoria. The movie opens on

February 9th. To buy tickets, visit www.imaxvictoria.com.

For more information about the film and to engage in some captivating online learning opportunities, check out https://bluewhalesfilm.com/activities.







OAK BAY

Connect with the District!

We want to hear from you and want to ensure you have every opportunity to participate in what is happening in the District.

Here are some ways you can get involved:

- Attend a meeting of Council (in-person or virtually)
- · Write to Council
 - o Email: administration@oakbay.ca
 - o Mail: 2167 Oak Bay Ave, Victoria, BC, V8R 1G2
 - o Drop off at Municipal Hall
- Follow the District on Social Media
- Sign up for newsletters on www.connect.oakbay.ca
- Serve on an Advisory Body to Council

For more information on ways to engage with the District, visit www.oakbay.ca/get-involved

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4929 PROSPECT LAKE ROAD | \$2,699,000 4 BD 4 BA | 3,846 SQ FT | 13,068 SQ FT LOT



1307 TRANSIT ROAD | \$4,375,000 5 BD 5 BA | 4,512 SQ FT | 6,851 SQ FT LOT



10704 BAYFIELD ROAD | \$2,500,000 3 BD 3 BA | 3,177 SQ FT | 22,651 SQ FT LOT



2685 BURDICK AVENUE | \$3,950,000 6 BD 6 BA | 3,675 SQ FT | 6,000 SQ FT LOT



4291 GORDON HEAD ROAD | \$5,250,000 5 BD 5 BA | 3,828 SQ FT | 1.87 ACRE LOT



3917 CADBORO BAY ROAD | \$5,000,000 4 BD 3 BA | 3,348 SQ FT | 16,465 SQ FT LOT



2151 FAIR STREET | \$1,600,000 6 BD 4 BA | 4,384 SQ FT | 12,426 SQ FT LOT



2118 PENTLAND ROAD | \$1,499,000 3 BD 1 BA | 1,686 SQ FT | 8,085 SQ FT LOT



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