

The Westbank Express....



Silver Leung, part-owner of Dragons Lair, strums a tune on her guitar alongside Rosie Lobb, vocals and Danny Thompson on the stand-up base at a Friday Night Jam Session, while onlookers enjoy a pot of tea. Other jam participants were Eddie Plotnikoff, fiddle & guitar; Ken Dugate, mandolin & guitar; and Joe Lobb, banjo.

Whether one's favourite blend of White, Black, Oolong, Green or even Yellow or Red tea soothes the palette during a meditative moment or chases down an avocado-tuna roll, tea lovers will delight—move over coffee hounds—at the myriad of tea houses opening up around North America from Péchés Mignons in Rimouski featuring Noir gingembre tea; Cup & Kettle in Leavenworth, Washington, offering Green Plum & Pear Tea to Dragons Lair in Westbank, serving Lemonade Dragon Fruit Tea or White Dragon Tea. Silver's tea shop, located at #101-3466 Carrington Rd., displays all sorts of tea paraphernalia—including her hundred-or-so tea blends—like custom-made knitted tea cozies, a variety of tea pots, tea cups and theme baskets stuffed with special soaps, bath salts, relaxing tea blends, cracker pouches filled with goodies, chopsticks, tea jars, tea mugs and packets of tea. Silver also prepares hostess gifts, teachers gifts and home-herbal specialty tea blends in between waiting on tea-sipping, crumpet-munching customers. Silver imports her loose teas from around the world, but her largest supply comes from Germany. Just as tea houses are rapidly developing around the countryside, tea events are also becoming popular with the 3rd Annual North American Tea Conference being held Sept. 11-13/12 in Niagra Falls, the Victoria Tea Festival taking place Feb. 18, 19/12 at Crystal Garden and the 5th International Scientific Symposium on Tea & Health commencing Sept. 19/12 in Washington State. In 2012—the Year of the Dragon—the tea shop will be holding a free Red Packet Lucky Draw mid-January. Incidentally, both Silver and her business partner were born in a previous Dragon year, hence the name, Dragon's Lair. Silver also offers tea tastings and every Friday evening beginning at 7:00 pm the shop morphs into a jam session venue featuring live Folk music that will be sure to lure over those next-door-neighbour Kelly O'Bryan's Irish coffee patrons yearning for a lively cup of Organic Blood Orange Dragon Rooibos Tea to spice up their evening. While other parts of the world may be unmoved by this recent tea trend, North Americans are increasing their tea knowledge and tea consumption producing a whole new generation of tea toddlers, or should we say, tea jammers! Dragons Lair: 250-452-9188.

Is Spring around the corner?



Not quite, but one can still dream or plan and many nurseries and greenhouse owners will be doing just that as they prepare for a pre-spring season perhaps considering some not-so-common varieties of seeds to plant like Peach Autumn Sage, Margarita Mint, Bunny Tail Ornamental Grasses, Black Beauty Zucchini, Palladio Peas, Russian Blue Potatoes, or the Hyb. Romanesco White Gold Cauliflower that resembles a brightly-coloured sea urchin. Some seed houses include Stokes, Richters, Dominion-Seed-House and Spring Garden.

AROUND TOWN

Sunday, January 29th - 2:00 pm

*Country Opry Concert

Starting off the new year with a stompin good time; Intermission: coffee, tea, pop, water and cookies. \$5.00 admission at the door. 12 and under free. Westbank Lions Community Hall. 2466 Main St.

Westside Warriors Home Games - Jan/ Feb, 2012: Royal Lepage Place

Jan. 8 - 2:30 pm	Feb. 3 - 7:00 pm
Jan. 13 - 7:00 pm	Feb. 4 - 7:00 pm
Jan. 15 - 2:30 pm	Feb. 8 - 7:00 pm
Jan. 21 - 7:00 pm	Feb. 19 - 2:30 pm
Jan. 25 - 7:00 pm	Feb. 24 - 7:00 pm
	Feb. 25 - 7:00 pm

More events on page three.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Westbank First Nation

Administrative Office: 250-769-4999
Recreation Dept.: 250-768-7337

District of West Kelowna

Jan. 10 - Regular Council Mtg. 1:30 pm
Jan. 17 - Committee of the Whole 1:30 pm
Jan. 24 - Regular Council Mtg. 6:00 pm
Feb. 14 - Regular Council Mtg. 1:30 pm
Feb. 21 - Committee of the Whole 1:30 pm
Feb. 28 - Regular Council Mtg. 6:00 pm

For questions or further information about the newsletter, please email westbankexpress@gmail.com

Contributing Writers: Gordon Ficke, Rita Pedersen; Editor: Barbara Heaney

From the Kitchen Nook: by Rita Pedersen Will return next issue. Note last month's issue recipe for the Apple Dessert should have stated 3/4 cup breadcrumbs not 2 cups. Be back in March.



The Green Bay Ranch Remembered by Gordon H. Ficke

Haying at Green Bay Ranch with 1948 Minneapolis Moline tractor and two teams of horses. Frank is the third person from the left.

“On January 14th, 1946 my family moved from University Hill (adjacent to the University of British Columbia) in Vancouver to Westbank,” Frank Ficke stated. He and his twin brother were 9 years old at the time. Their father Franz, mother Molly, along with older sister Dorothy made the two-day trip over the Trans Canada Highway in their 1937 Plymouth four-door sedan. His dad had operated a Home service station in Vancouver for 15 years and now they were about to embark on the adventurous new life of being cattle ranchers. They encountered a snow storm southwest of Kamloops that resulted in white-out

conditions. The Plymouth hit some ice and spun around two or three times and when it stopped he did not know which direction to go. They drove down the road for ten minutes or so and then they recognized a familiar landmark they had passed earlier and knew that they had to travel in the opposite direction! “When things got tough,” Frank laughs, “perhaps that incident was an omen that perhaps we should have gone back to Vancouver.” When the family arrived in Glenrosa they were not prepared for the harsh winter conditions with almost three feet of snow. “It was a big change for us city kids,” Ficke admitted. “We arrived in city clothes and little leather shoes.” A tractor converted to a grader kept the narrow Glenrosa gravel road, mostly single lane traffic with the occasional pullout for two vehicles to pass each other, clear of snow. Thankfully, there wasn't much traffic as only nine families lived in the area at the time, and they were the last home, with no other families living beyond them. The 30 to 40 mixed breed older cows that Franz Ficke purchased from Lou Hitchner with the farm were over-wintered on the Green Bay Ranch by Okanagan Lake. Mr. Hitchner had made an arrangement with a gentleman who lived in a shack on the property, to feed and water the cattle every day. “He was paid to look after the cattle,” Frank revealed. “We then took that job over and that meant that we had to travel the six miles from Glenrosa to Green Bay every day to look after the cows.”

“Dad traded our 1937 Plymouth for a 1937 1/2 ton International flat deck truck. We needed a truck for the farm more than we needed a car,” commented Ficke. However, the International only had a three-speed manual transmission and when they were hauling loads of block ice they cut from Shannon Lake, the truck was almost always overloaded; it was a big challenge climbing those steep grades of Glenrosa road. We rode the clutch much of the time in order to get home. In those days there were no winter tires. Slough grass grew naturally at Green Bay that the Ficke's cropped every year. “We put up around 40 tons in a huge haystack,” Frank estimated. That hay would be used to feed the cattle over the winter. Around 10 to 12 acres of the 42 acres they owned down there was fenced off. “We had two teams of horses, two horses per team,” he confirmed. “One team stayed in Glenrosa and the other in Green Bay. Dad cultivated with the horses and in 1948 we bought a new Minneapolis Moline tractor in Vancouver. Henry and I learned how to drive the M&M when we were ten; taking turns disking and preparing the soil for planting.”

The soil was a beautiful black sandy soil, ideal for growing potatoes. Two acres would be planted with the Warba variety that was grown for the early market. It was always difficult to compete with the U.S. in this regard because they would have potatoes ready before Frank would. The rest was planted in netted Gems. “Those potatoes would grow so smooth and well shaped,” Frank remembered. “They were beautiful potatoes and we stored them in a big log barn that was already there at Green Bay. The building was insulated as best as we could with a foot of sawdust in the walls. Another wall was added on the inside, as well as a similar one on the outside to keep the inside warm. “It was quite a problem, as we would have upwards of 100 tons of potatoes. Especially in 1949, the year the lake froze over and with the wind whistling around the barn, it only needed a tiny crack through the wall and there would be a streak of frozen potatoes. We had a few coal oil heaters that would help, but would not carry the heat to the inside walls,” Ficke explained. Some of the Warbas were sold to the Occidental Packing House in Kelowna, The Kelowna General Hospital, Safeway, other grocery stores, restaurants, etc. Safeway and some of the other stores required that the potatoes had to be graded. Two inches in diameter was the minimum standard and they were very rigorous. “I remember that when we brought a load to Safeway, they would hoist a 100 pound bag onto a sorting table and thoroughly check each potato. If there was a potato under 2” or if a defect or bruise was found the entire load would be rejected. It was not like it is today,” Frank remarked. The family grew potatoes for approximately three years.

On April 1st we leased the Indian Reserve for pasture and the cattle would be released and they would graze along Boucherie Mountain where Mission Hill Winery and Quails Gate Winery are today, and down through McDougall Creek. On June 1st the forty cows with calves would be rounded up and driven through Westbank to Glenrosa for the summer months. “It was a challenge because there were always cows on the east side of McDougall Creek that had a challenge to cross the high water with their calves. We would have to rope the young calves and carry them across the creek to get them on to the other side,” he recalled. “After school and on weekends my sister Dorothy, Henry and I would spend every spare moment we had on horseback checking the cows and looking after them.” There were no fences back then to contain the animals. However, there was plenty of grass in that area and the cattle shared the land with the numerous wild horses that roamed the hills during that time. Those wild horses eventually became a nuisance and there was a big round up and they went for mink meat. “In those days there was no flood control on the southern end of Okanagan Lake, so in the spring-time half of the forty-two acres was under water. The cows, some of them quite old, would get bogged down in the mud and they would have to get a team of horses to pull them out,” Ficke noted. Sometime in the mid-fifties the Green Bay Ranch was subdivided and sold. One of the key reasons why they sold that property was to use that money to pay the Glenrosa Ranch loan off and start a purebred Hereford herd by buying four cows and a bull from a ranch in Kamloops. Arnie Wiig purchased the north piece comprised of 32 acres. He dredged out the bay, built the land up and established a camping resort with a few cabins. The southern ten acres, the high ground, was sold to the Baptist Green Bay Camp, which continues to this day.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN JAN/FEB?

WESTBANK

Library Speaker Series

Wed., Jan. 11/12 - 7:00 pm

Presented by Friends of the Westbank Library, David Finnis discusses how to download eBooks to your eReader from "Library to Go" with question and answer period to follow. To be held at the Library, 2484 Main St.

Country Opry

Sunday, Feb. 26th - 2:00 pm

Enjoy local musicians' country music gathering. Intermission with coffee, tea, pop, water and cookies. \$5.00 admission at the door. 12 and under free. Westbank Lions Community Hall.

Westside Seniors Centre, 3661 Old Okanagan Highway

Friday Night Jam Sessions: the 1st and 3rd Friday of every month. Bring your instrument and join in, or just visit to listen. Open-mike jam. C & W, Blue Grass, Old-time, etc. For more info. contact Norm Dumont at 250-768-9358.

Jan. 10th, 2012 - Don Wyse & Friends

Sing along, dance and listen.

1. 2012 is the Year of the ?

Orion's Fish Bus by The Cherry Pit

February 18 & 19, 2012

70 peeled Tiger Prawns \$20 or 2 for \$35 or 3 for \$50--Sole, Snapper & Basa \$12.00 each or 3 for \$30. Stop by the Truck and join the email list to get tasty Seafood recipes and a free bonus every \$100.00. For more info. go to tritonsage@yahoo.com.

SUMMERLAND

74th Summerland Business & Community Excellence Awards

Saturday, Feb. 25, 2012

Nominate the best home based business of the year, employee, employer, retailer, agriculture/viticulture excellence, professional service, manufacturer/industry of the year, tourism &

hospitality excellence, youth of the year, etc. Nomination forms will be available in January, 2012. Awards will be held at the Sumerland Waterfront Grill. Contact the Summerland Chamber for more information.

PEACHLAND

Polar Bear Swim

Sunday, Jan. 1, 2012

Must be willing to brave Lake Okanagan's chilly waters. Hot chocolate served by Peachland Rotary Club. Certificates presented to all participants. Free. Pre-registration required. 12:30 pm check-in. 1:00 pm start. Peachland Community Centre @ 4450 6th St. For more info. call 250-767-2133.

February Freeze Up

Sunday, Feb. 12, 2012

February is Heart Month and what better way to participate then by joining the 5 km run and walk along Beach Avenue and the foreshore of Okanagan Lake. Peachland Community Centre. \$20.00. Check-in at 9:45 am; Start-time at 10:00 am. Refreshments after the race. Call 250-767-2133.

PENTICTON

Evita

Jan. 18, 19, 20 - 7:00 pm

Jan. 21 - 2:00 pm & 7:00 pm

Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, Lyrics by Tim Rice. To be held at the Ballroom of the Penticton Lakeside Resort, 21 Lakeshore Drive West. \$27.50 for Adults and \$22.50 for Students/Seniors. For tickets call 250-493-8221.

John Cruz @ The Dream Cafe

Friday, Feb. 10th 7:00 pm

One of Hawaii's most popular artists John Cruz is a singer song-writer and guitar player. \$25.00 at The Dream Cafe, 67 Front St. For more info. call 250-490-9012.

OLIVER

Frontier Twirlers Square Dance Party Night

Saturday, Jan. 28, 2012

Oliver Senior Centre, 24452-95th St. \$8.00 per Dancer. MC - Ralph Halsall, Cues - Regine Anderson. Pot Luck @ 6:00 pm; Pre-rounds @ 7:00 pm; Mainstream 7:30 - 10:00 pm. Refreshments after the dance. Call Ron @ 250-498-0677 for further information.

LOOKING AHEAD!

WESTBANK

Tim Hortons Family Fun Day 2012 - Sunday, March 18th

CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN

Donna O'Brian performing all day; tentative schedule of events throughout the day include face painting & tattoo, treasure hunt, cardboard and duck tape race, fun snowshoe race and much more. All participants must wear a helmet at all of the events and a waiver must be signed. For more info. go to www.crystalresort.com.

CROATIA

59th World Ploughing Contest

Sept. 14 & 15, 2012

To be held in Biograd na Moru, Croatia, registration begins Sept. 7th followed by a week of meetings, official practises and tours of surrounding National Parks, olive groves and vineyards. Opening Ceremony, Sept. 13th, tractor parade & competitions, Sept. 14th and 15th. 2013 World Ploughing Contest will be held in Olds, Alberta July 19 & 20. For more info. go to www.worldploughing.org.

2. What two World Events will be recognized on March 21, 2012?

COUPON CORNER



Natural Harvest Market & Vitamins
 Health Food & Vitamin Shop
 3654 Hoskins Road
 Free \$20.00 comprehensive 15 minute vitamin assessment with minimum purchase of \$20.
 Expires Feb. 29th
 Phone 250-768-4558

Feb 14th - Happy Valentine's Day!



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