



8C 2C
Light rain

Times

ALBERNI VALLEY

ALBERNI BOOKKEEPING SERVICES LTD.

BASIC TAX RETURNS starting at **\$50**

Gabrielle Frost (Owner)

- Full Service Accounting & Bookkeeping

Call Gab 778-421-1899
or stop by Unit 3-4505 Victoria Quay
www.alberni-bookkeeping.com

Serving the Alberni Valley

www.avtimes.net

Tuesday, February 12, 2013

EDUCATION

Gill closure could cost district

Alberni Puddle Ducks: World Championships coming



Last August, a large crowd gathered at the Harbour Quay for the first Puddle Duck races in the Alberni Valley. The event was organized in conjunction with the city's centennial celebrations. [HEATHER THOMSON, TIMES]

Big competition should attract participants from the U.S.

JULIE BERTRAND ALBERNI VALLEY TIMES

After less than two years in existence, the Alberni Puddle Duck Racers club has been selected to host the 2013 Puddle Duck Racers' World Championship sailing races.

The competition will take place in the harbour on June 29 and 30 and should attract between 15 and 20 competitors.

"We had a hugely successful regatta last summer," said Chris Finlayson, Alberni Puddle Duck Racers club member and World Championship co-ordinator.

The Puddle Duck Regatta, also known as the Crowshaw Cup, was held on Aug. 4. Despite the lack of wind, the event drew in a good crowd, who watched the participants race each other near Harbour Quay. The event's success drew the attention of the sport's international governing body, which offered the

Alberni club the opportunity to host the 2013 World Championship.

"At that time, we thought 'Could we hold the World Championship as a club?' and we decided yes," Finlayson said.

He added that he has already received e-mails from competitors in California and in Florida.

The Alberni Puddle Duck Racers club was started after Port Alberni residents Pamela Day and David Whitworth introduced the boat to the Alberni Valley.

The couple was looking for a cheaper alternative to the Optimist Club to teach youth how to sail when they came across David Routh's free design for a small sailboat.

"He started the Puddle Duck boat with the idea to create a boat that was cheap to make and easy to sail," Finlayson said.

Day and Whitworth built their first test Puddle Duck boat in January and February, before launching it in mid-February. After they saw that

it could be done, the couple started inviting family members and friends to build their own.

Eventually, 19 Puddle Duck boats were built, including the one belonging to the Finlayson family. During one boat-building session, participants spontaneously decided to establish the Alberni Puddle Duck Racers club.

Their first event was the regatta. Puddle Duck racers also participated in the Harbour Days.

For the World Championship, Finlayson said a different itinerary would be used.

"We will be running it from the new breakwater to allow a bigger viewing area," he said.

Moreover, the new finger floats that the Port Alberni Port Authority will install on the breakwater before the end of April will help racers get on their boat more easily than at the boat launch.

JBertrand@avtimes.net

If school board closes Gill, Hupacasath students may leave public school system

SCOTT MCKENZIE ALBERNI VALLEY TIMES

If the Alberni School District board of education announces that Gill Elementary School will close next September, it could result in 26 per cent of Gill's students leaving the public school system.

That could mean a loss to the school district of more than \$350,000, as it is funded on a per student basis, in which the ministry gives the district \$6,784 for each student each school year.

According to Hupacasath First Nation chief councillor Steven Tatoosh, about 55 Hupacasath students attend Gill, and the community does not want them to be split up.

"We want all our kids in one location," Tatoosh said Friday, noting that putting the Hupacasath students in a private school, or sending them to haahuupayak Elementary School, which is owned by the Tseshaht First Nation, are both options.

Tatoosh spoke at Wednesday's public consultation session at Gill, and said one of his questions to the school board was, how would they find that money they would lose if Hupacasath children left the district.

"I don't mean it as a threat or anything, but it's up to the parents where they want their children to go to school," he said.

"We're going to work hard to keep our kids together. We're a close knit community, and we don't want to be spreading our kids out all over the place."

According to haahuupayak principal Gio Mussato, that school currently has 88 students but has had more in the past, and is not strictly limited Tseshaht students.

"The Tseshaht owns the school but as long as our kids get their education and they're close to home, that's all we're looking for," Tatoosh said.

District superintendent Cam Pinkerton hopes that, if Gill were to be closed, that defection does not happen.

"Our funding is based on the number of students in our district, and we would never want to see students leave en masse like that if we could help it," Pinkerton said.

Tatoosh likened Gill school to that of a haahuupayak for Hupacasath students, as he is a fan of the school's cultural programs.

Pinkerton said that if something like that did transpire, the school district "would have to adjust our system to accommodate the fact that we would have fewer students."

"It would be a terrible thing to happen," Pinkerton said, "but we also respect the rights of parents to choose where they wish to have their children educated."

Tatoosh said he is not yet sure if it would be a parent-by-parent decision for Hupacasath students to leave the district, or if it would be a community-wide decision, however that conversation will happen should the school board decide to close Gill at its meeting tonight.

SMcKenzie@avtimes.net

» Use your smartphone to jump to our Facebook page for updates on these stories or the latest breaking news.



New signage possible for Uptown district

Business owners have come up with a proposal for new signage that would direct people to the city centre or the Uptown area and tell them what it offers. » Alberni Region, 3A



Fun-filled Family Day offers lots to do here

Family Day was busy for the people in the Alberni Valley with lots of options and fun things to do at the city facilities and NEPTUNE. » Alberni Album, 12A



Inside today

What's On **2A**
Alberni Region **3A**

Opinion **4A**
British Columbia **9A**

Nation & World **10A**
Comics **11A**

Horoscopes **11A**
Sports **1B**

Scoreboard **2B**
Classifieds **10B**

ALBERNI VALLEY TIMES VOLUME 64, NUMBER 29

\$1 newsstand (HST incl.)



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY
FEB 14, 2013

Meat Specials
Frozen Wild Sockeye Salmon Filets
SALE PRICE \$1.76 100g

Meat Specials
3 pack Smokehouse Bacon
SALE PRICE \$7.98 ea

Produce Specials
Russet Potatoes
SALE PRICE \$2.98 10lb bag

Produce Specials
Grown in BC Spartan Apples
SALE PRICE .78 /lb

BUY-LOW FOODS
Open 8am-9pm daily. Free Delivery for Seniors. 4647 Johnston Rd., Port Alberni 250-723-4811

Feb 10 - Feb 16