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ECHO Extra

The COMOX VALLEY ECHO □ Tuesday, February 6, 2007

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CR's Take 3 brings jazz to the Valley on Thursday

The Georgia Straight Jazz Society is proud to host "Take 3" this Thursday evening at the Elks Home on 6th Street.

"Take 3" is a Campbell River-based jazz trio that has been performing together for the past three years. The group consists of Dan Ludwig on drums, Mike Ness on saxophone, and Chris Coon on piano.

Their performances feature both traditional jazz and original jazz compositions.

The second set is open for musicians to participate in improvisational renderings from the great American Songbook. Come out this Thursday from 7:30 till 10:30 to the Elks' Home for jazz located in the heart of Courtenay on 6th Street. The Georgia Straight Jazz Society sponsors the Jazz Jam - there is no cover for this event.

For further information, go to www.georgiastraightjazz.com.

Songwriting circle meets on Wednesday night

The Comox Valley Songwriter's Circle will meet again on Wednesday 7th February at the Muir Gallery on Anderson, Courtenay (near the 5th St. Bridge).

We meet at 7pm to start playing from about 7:30pm - 10pm. The circle is hosted by Helen Austin and is open to anyone who is of the songwriting persuasion. An audience is also more than welcome. FMI please go to www.cvsongcircle.ca or call 335 0042.

Vanier team presents famous trivia night

Come out for the Famous Vanier Trivia Night on Saturday, February 24 at 7pm. Form a team of 8-10 people and join us for a night of fun, trivia and treats. Match your wits against the reigning winners (yikes - could that be the Highland team?) and test your knowledge against an all new set of trivia. Trivia Master, Bob Hale, promises to challenge, befuddle and bemuse all comers.

During Spring Break 2007, G.P. Vanier coaches will be taking a team of fifty boys on a tour of England and Ireland, where they will have the opportunity to play against local teams and be involved in cultural events.

The boys have been working hard fundraising and this is our last event before the big trip! Come on out and lend your support and have a great night of Trivia to top it off!

The evening starts at 7pm at the Comox Legion.

Only \$10 to play (must be 19 years of age)! To register your team call Marnie at: 338-0739 or e-mail evandale@telus.net

Vanier team presents famous trivia night

Comox Valley's Forbidden Plateau Barbershop Harmony Chorus is busy rehearsing for Valentine's Day, when for a small fee of \$35, a quartet will visit any home, office, classroom, bank, shop or restaurant in the Comox-Courtenay area on Tuesday, Feb. 13 or Wednesday, Feb. 14 between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.

They will arrive unannounced, search out the "Valentine" (male or female), sing two songs to that person (or persons), present a rose and a special Valentine card. Finally, a Polaroid photo will capture the moment as a keepsake.

The chorus will this year be donating again to the Comox Valley Prostate Cancer Group.

To arrange a Valentine visit please call Vic 890-0551 or Phil 897-1749.



Employees of Fanny Bay Oysters process some of the many oysters produced by the huge and well regarded shellfish farming operation.

Local pearl sold to U.S. firm

Taylor Shellfish owners say Fanny Bay Oysters operation will remain the same

By Marcel Tetrault
Echo Staff

Fanny Bay Oysters Ltd.—the largest oyster producer in Canada—has been sold to an American company.

Taylor Shellfish Farms from Washington State has purchased the local shellfish processing plant as well as 250 acres of shellfish growing area, the retail store next to the Denman Island ferry terminal and the internationally recognized Fanny Bay name.

"With their excellent reputation in the half-shell market, Fanny Bay Oysters will fit nicely into our product profile," said Taylor Shellfish Farms president Bill Taylor. "Other than shifting a few of the crops and using our resources to boost production, we don't envision any substantial changes."

"Our main interest is securing a long-term supply of consistent and superior quality oysters."

The company has said that all of Fanny Bay Oyster's 80 employees will retain their jobs.

Former owner Glen Hadden said that the reason he sold most of the business—65 per cent—was that it was time to "slow down a little bit."

"I'm just getting to that age that we all get to," he said. "I wanted to find a good owner for it that would keep all the jobs going."

"Things are pretty much the same, people are coming to work every day."

He said that for each of the last 18 years, production has increased by about 10 per cent at the local plant.

The portion of the company Hadden kept includes shellfish growing tenures in Desolation Sound and Nanoose Bay. He said he intends to continue to work those areas with an eye to increasing production there as well.

"I'm not putting my feet up yet," he said.

Hadden, who was a fisherman before starting the shellfish farming business, attributed the huge success of Fanny Bay Oyster's more to the natural conditions in the local area, as well as good employees, rather than his own personal business acumen.

"It's been very rewarding personally," he said. "We've been very lucky I think. We were sort of in the right



Fanny Bay Oysters' Sharon Hadden with a platter of their much sought after product. The Haddens will remain on to help with the transition to the new ownership and Sharon will continue to run the local office. (Photos by Victoria Times Colonist)

business at the right time and we had a lot of dedicated employees and people helping us.

"This part of the world is the best place in the world to grow the products we grow, so we take credit for looking after the stuff that grows but

we can't really take much credit for the quality that is produced by the area, it's just natural environment more than anything."

Other reasons for the great success of the oyster producer, said Hadden, included some new methods they

introduced, including being the first to use hatchery seed in a big way.

"We tried some new and innovative things," he said. "You never know whether they are going to work, but in our case we were fortunate. More of them worked than didn't."

"There's always a scrap heap of failed experiments too."

Taylor Shellfish co-owner Paul Taylor told the Echo there were two primary reasons they purchased the local shellfish powerhouse.

"One, just looking for more resource or product to fill markets and second, we have some mussel farms and we're looking for some processing capacity in Canada," he said.

Taylor Shellfish Farms has been expanding into the B.C. market since 2001 and, in addition to their new Baynes Sound tenures, have about 250 acres of deep water oyster and mussel farms near Powell River.

He said that, despite the increased processing likely at the local plant, no expansion at the facility is expected in the near future.

"Right now we're going to operate as normal," he said. "We're planning on processing some additional products that we're growing in other areas there and we feel that we can expand the production off of some of those beaches. It's going to take a few years but that's our intention."

B.C. Shellfish Growers Association executive director Roberta Stevenson welcomed the news of a change in ownership, noting that there was no issue with respect to an American firm taking over control of such a successful local business.

"Taylor has made it very clear that the staffing will remain the same," said Stevenson. "There is not a loss of opportunity, there's an increased opportunity here. Local people will continue to be employed and be very involved."

"I think people should welcome the change and see it as a positive note for the community. I think it's great, it's just great. New energy, new beginnings, new opportunities, new expertise."

"We know for sure that these people are more than capable and that's a good thing."

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Hours: Mon - Sat = 9:00am - 5:30pm