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Summer 2006

Keeping in Touch

Welcome to the Summer edition of "Keeping in Touch". This issue looks at the Real Estate potential in Ladysmith, the best place to put your money in renovations and the latest in sights, sounds and tastes from our contributing writers and a continuation of my fishing stories in "Tacks & Tales". Our May Open Garden attracted about 50 people. The sun came out 15 minutes before opening and made up for the mucky morning. Thanks to everyone who took a chance on the weather. If you think of a topic you'd like to see an article on, just drop me a note. Hope you all have a great summer.

Dave Lynn

Waking Up in Ladysmith with Vancouver Island Views and Some Enticing Prices

Ladysmith, which together with Chemainus and Duncan, is waking. Ladysmith, named after an obscure battle and largely kept behind the lines of the hot Vancouver Island real estate market, is worth another look.

With a population of around 7,000 the 102-year old waterfront town just north of Victoria and south of Nanaimo, is best known as one of the oldest towns on the Island retaining many heritage buildings along its short main street. Coal czar James Dunsmuir named the town after a battlefield site in the Boer War.

It is a site just above the town overlooking Ladysmith Harbour where the action is today. A new subdivision, the latest and biggest in town, is selling 54 ocean view lots (the views are incredible over the Gulf Islands) and forest

view lots. Prices range from \$125,000 to \$160,000 for the building lots and Coast Realty expects the completed houses to be luxury units in the \$500,000 range. The planned development is called Seascape.

Prices in Ladysmith have increased over the past two years, but not as rapidly as in Victoria. Detached houses start in the \$220,000 range and you can still find view ranchers for around \$290,000.

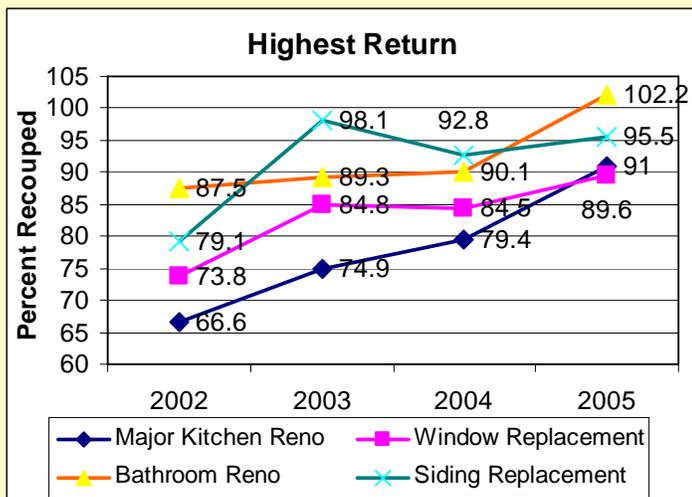
Ladysmith has been named among the prettiest towns in Canada with its nice beach, a marina and a nine-hole golf course. It may also be a sleeper buy on southern Vancouver Island.

"Most (Ladysmith) homes on this year's assessment roll are worth more than they were on the 2005 assessment roll, and market movement was strong again this past year," said Central Vancouver Island Area Assessor, Peter Bretherton. "For example, a typical single family home that was assessed at \$198,300 in the summer of 2004 was assessed at \$240,700 in the summer of 2005."

Ozzie Jurock

4 Best Renos *Realtor Magazine*

Four projects, surveyed each year since 2002, have shown the greatest return at resale on a national basis. Two of the projects, siding and windows, reflect the importance consumers place on curb appeal and insulation; the others, a kitchen and a bath project, are consistently high performers in most markets.



The Rule Of 72

If you don't already use it, you should know the Rule of 72. **The number 72 divided by your investment return indicates how long it will take for your investment to double.** For example, an 8% return will take 72 divided by 8 equals 9 years to double. To get a real feel of how this affects your future, consider your personal inflation rate, not the pie-in-the-sky official inflation rate, which doesn't include a lot of items that most of us pay for everyday, such as taxes, parking and lattes. Your personal inflation rate is probably closer to 6% - 7%, or about four times the official

inflation rate. Let us accept a personal of inflation at 6%. Then 72 divided by 6 equals 12 years.

This means that in 12 years your income level will be cut in half if it doesn't increase.

Agnes' Garden Tips



At this time of year when you are sitting outside a lot, if your garden is looking a bit blah, it's still not too late to do something about livening it up. Put some annuals and other tender plants in pots around the front entry way and the patios and decks. These potted plants give the illusion of massives of colour without all the work of traditional bedding-out plants. Plan what colour theme you want in advance. My favourite is pink, white, blue and grey. Most large garden centres will still have some annuals but one of the best at this time of year is Elk Lake Nursery who keep growing on fresh stock. Expect to buy 4 inch or gallon size plants. Good choices for sun, in order of increasing height, are Scaevola, Bacopa, Portulaca, Helichrysum Petiolatum, Swan River Daisies, Dusty Miller, Geraniums, Salvia Victoria, Nicotiana, Snap Dragons and Cosmos. For shade, try Impatiens, Mimulus, Wax-leaf Begonia, New Guinea Impatiens, Browallia, Fuchsias and Non-stop Begonias. Use Dracena or Cordyline for accents or try Grasses or a Banana plant for that tropical look. Wait till the cool of the evening to start repotting them into their patio pots. You can buy some of the beautiful pots that probably will be on sale at this time of year but I just use 2 gallon or bigger black nursery pots for most of my display. It is best to choose wider than deeper pots for a more impressive display. They don't need to be deeper than a foot at most. Fill the bottom with popcorn packing material covered with landscape cloth to fill up if deeper than that. I use light-weight potting soil mixed with humus-rich Sea Soil. One application of long-lasting fertilizer like Smart Cote Hanging Basket Food will keep the pots looking great through till frost. For less maintenance, think about a small mini-sprinkler system run off a regular hose outlet. Then sit back and enjoy yourself.

More Properties Available for Sale in June

Victoria Real Estate Board

The number of properties available for sale on the Victoria Real Estate Board's Multiple Listing Service® (MLS®) continued to increase last month, while sales softened somewhat and prices remained stable. A total of 3,147 properties of all kinds were available for sale - that's 35% higher than the 2,335 properties available for sale in June of last year.

Victoria Real Estate Board President, Scott Kendrew, says the move toward a more balanced market that began earlier this year continues offering a greater sense of stability for both buyers and sellers. "We've seen a significant increase in the number of properties available for sale over the last year. The inventory for single family homes, for example, is now 57 percent higher than a year ago while the number of active listings for condominiums is up 82 percent." Kendrew noted that sales have softened somewhat. "There were 762 sales of properties of all kinds through the MLS® system in June - down from 909 sales in May and 862 sales in June of last year." Kendrew added that total sales so far this year are running just over six percent below last year's levels.

Prices, however, continue to be stable. The average price for single family homes in Greater Victoria last month was \$538,913; the average for the last six-months was \$521,053. The median was substantially lower at \$447,500. The average price for all condominiums sold in June was \$282,651; the average for the last six months was \$274,636. The median was again lower at \$241,000. The average price for townhomes last month was \$367,631; the average for the last six months was \$360,556. The median was \$330,000.

MLS® sales last month included 445 single family homes, 197 condominiums, 69 townhomes and 19 manufactured homes.

Dave's Tacks & Tales

Chapter 2: The Adventure Begins!

OK, so now I have to get to Sooke in order to meet up with Ron and the Lady Doris to start our trip up the West Coast. First off, I put a ton of ice into the fish hold for ballast. This was obtained from Oakland Fisheries at the bottom of Yates Street. Then loaded on groceries, heavy on the essentials like Coca Cola and Kraft Dinner – lots of Kraft Dinner and then fill up the gas tank, yes gas. The Gaylord had a huge Chrysler Royal straight eight flathead engine. When you pinned the throttle you got gobs of black smoke and white water but not a whole lot of speed. Before departure ol' Vic Cooper sat down with me on the wharf and we rolled out the charts. Vic had been trolling since God put fish in the ocean. He'd tell stories of how they would hand-line for fish in open skiffs outside of Beecher Bay. At the end of the day they would beach the boats and carry their fish up through the farmer's fields to the road and wait for the fish company truck to come by. The truck driver would pick the fish he wanted. If the company didn't want all the fish or a certain species that day, they would just get left in the fields. All for 5 cents a fish. Vic showed me some of the tacks around Bamfield and Pachena Point. The Triangle off Ship Island, Seal Rocks, the 7 mile and 12 mile leading to the Big Bank, the Bluffs of Effingham Island.

Armed with my treasure map I linked up with Norm who was heading to Sooke as well on his boat the Tillicum R. This was a sister ship to mine (they built two of them? What were they thinking?) except his had the 6 cylinder Chrysler Crown engine. We left for Sooke on Swiftsure weekend. A strong westerly had been blowing for several days building up a good sized swell but we were sheltered from that by running up along the beach, at least until Race Rocks. As we reached Race Rocks things changed quickly, as they tend to do on the water. We were running with a strong ebb tide so we'd make better time, seemed like a good idea at the time, but as we came around the corner into Race Passage we encountered a huge swell. The ebbing tide against the prevailing westerly swell had built the seas up so high that the Tillicum R would disappear in the trough in front of me, poles, mast and all. The fog bank that had been laying off shore chose that moment to move in on top of us. Next, the Swiftsure boats arrived at the pass heading for the finish line under full spinnakers. As if this wasn't getting interesting enough the bow of the Gaylord dipped under a swell and the force of the green water lifted the escape hatch on the foredeck partially off sending a river of sea water through the focsle into the engine room immediately soaking the engine ignition and killing the engine. Boy, did it get quiet. All you could hear were the Swiftsure crews yelling at us to get out of the way as they shot out of the fog and surfed down the swells past us. I was too busy securing the hatch and drying off the ignition to make an appropriate response. Engine going again we

idled out of the pass, around the corner and into Sooke Harbour. Oh wait, what are all those black and red markers between Whiffin Spit and the wharf? Is it red on the left or right? Which ever we're going awfully slow and there's a bunch of muddy water behind so it must be the other way. Fifteen minutes later we were tied to the wharf. Wow, only 3 hours from home, seems a lot longer. Next: The West Coast!

Tara's Scene



Victoria has many options for live music. A popular choice is the Open Mike night. Many bars in town have a night where anyone can sign up and play a few tunes in front of an audience, some even reward your efforts with a pint of beer. This is a great way to introduce yourself to playing in front of people as well as chance for you to showcase your own songs. These nights offer a great relaxed atmosphere to see new and established musicians perform. Music can range from popular acoustic sets to new wave flute performances and much more. So if you have a night to spare and you want to see what's out there, check out the following Open Mike nights in Victoria.

Monday Oldtime Music Jam at the Spiral Cafe, 418 Craigflower

Monday Night Stage Fright at Steamer's Pub, 570 Yates St

Monday JamTard at D'Arcy's Pub, 1127 Wharf St

Wednesday Open Mike at Ocean Island Lounge, 791 Pandora St

Wednesday Open Mike at Logan's Pub, 1821 Cook St

Companions or Family

by Patrick Muir

Since beginnings of man
They're a part of the plan
We love every breed
From spiders to steeds
Run to meet and complete us
They fulfill a deep need

The soft smooth under fingers
As you stroke feline fur
Or the thrill when your cat
Responds with a purr

A dogs wagging tail
When you toss him a bone
Or his safe reassurance
When you're home all alone
True friendship unending
Is as good as it gets
We just can't underestimate
The value of pets



Rate Watch

From Prime Mortgage Works Inc
As of July 17, 2006

Term	Best Rate	Bank Rate
6 Month Open	6.60%	6.55%
6 Month Closed	5.60%	6.40%
1 Year	5.25%	6.50%
2 Year	5.35%	6.50%
3 Year	5.45%	6.55%
4 Year	5.45 %	6.55%
5 Year	5.50%	6.75%
6 Year	5.65%	6.85%
7 Year	5.60%	7.00%
8 Year	5.85%	7.10%
9 Year	5.90%	6.75%
10 Year	5.75%	6.29%
15 Year	6.19%	6.64%
18 Year	6.27%	6.72%
25 Year	6.38%	6.83%
Prime Rate	6.00%	

For the Birds



I am often asked how I get so many hummingbirds to visit the garden. True, feeders with sugar water will get some visitors to the garden but it's all those other plants that keep them coming back so faithfully. Mostly the hummers like red and orange flowers but in the winter they will go for the pink flowering cherry and they also like the cream-coloured honeysuckle and yellow Oregon grape. In early spring they go for the native white arbutus flowers and the creamy twin berry. A sure-fire early spring native is the dark pink salmonberry. I even have a double one that looks like a rose. Don't believe people who say the hummers don't like double flowers. I see them on my double hybrid fuchsias also that I keep out over the winter unless it gets really cold. I grow most of my fuchsias as standards, trained as a tall single stem. This prevents the neighbour's cats from catching the little gems. Shrub favourites for spring and summer are weigela, buddleia and phygelius. Later in the summer, the trumpet vine is very popular. Buy the species, not the hybrid. Another favourite shrub that blooms for months starting in early spring is grevillea Canberra which needs a sheltered hot spot. I do make the odd exception for lower growing plants. Penstemons are real magnets but try to get the taller varieties. I even resorted to an annual for them. It's cuphea, the cigar plant, and it bloomed way into the fall for them. Of course, once you have them in the garden, also keep those feeders clean and filled.

Darcy's Gourmet Corner



Barbecue Tips for Summer

Well it is that season and I thought it would be good to go over some basics to make your outdoor eating enjoyable and safe.

Cooking meat

All bacteria known to be associated with meat are killed by 160°. Most meat, except poultry and ground meat, is safe at lower temperatures. If making burgers, commercially ground beef should be cooked to 160°. Poultry and pork normally get over-cooked and can be tough and dry. If you cook pork to 150° and poultry to 160° in the thickest part it will be safe, tender and juicy.

Marinating is fun and can really help tenderize and flavour what you are barbecuing. Here are the basics of preparing a marinade for any meat. The first thing you need is oil. The next thing you need is an acid such as wine or lemon juice. The third ingredient is spices and/or herbs of your choice. Make the oil/vinegar proportions equal. Don't over power the marinade with spices. Salt, sugar and garlic are universal flavorings. Also so are peppers, basil, oregano, dried mustard, onion and the list goes on.

Be creative.

Good luck!

Need a cooking tip? Email me at darcyladret@hotmail.com

I Referrals

Better than a Free Lunch? A Free Dinner!

Marketing for new clients cost me a lot of time and money. Time I'd rather spend with friends and clients. A major part of my business is built on referrals from friends and satisfied clients. So here's the deal.

If you know of somebody thinking of buying or selling, ask if you can pass their name on to me. I'll look after them promptly and professionally,

I won't let you down. They are under no pressure or obligation to work with me.

If the referral results in a sale, I would like to treat you to a dinner for two at your favorite restaurant as a token of my appreciation.