



News from the Lodge



Winter 2023 - 2024

All the News that's fit to Point. . . .

...by Richard Hill

What Got Done During Our...

WINTER MAINTENANCE SHUTDOWN?

This more or less annual feature article is always a bit funny because it is written just *before* our December major overhaul, but is mostly read by guests *after* it's over. So while I can tell you all kinds of things about what is planned, the results may or may not be the same as written, depending when you're actually sitting down to read this.

I guess that last paragraph was a 'disclaimer', so here's what we have (*had*) in mind for the week of December 10th.

As usual, we have the giant list of routine stuff to do that can't, or shouldn't be done while we're open with lots of guests here. This includes, but is not limited to, a full top to bottom, 'Spring cleaning' of the kitchen, shampooing all the carpets and upholstery everywhere, power washing the range hoods, checking all the fire alarm and suppression systems, flushing and cleaning the main water system, re-finishing any worn spots on the wooden floors, putting up the Christmas tree and decorations plus having a staff party!



In addition to the 'regular' stuff, there are always a few special projects on the 'only when we're closed' list as well. I mentioned the new carpeting for the stairways and upstairs hallways in the main lodge in the last newsletter, so look for new, darker, slightly patterned carpeting when you enter the lodge or head upstairs. While the floor covering we have now isn't really worn out badly, the solid, lighter colour shows every little stain and speck of dust and is very difficult to keep 'presentable'. The new carpet should make us look just like a real hotel!

It should look so good that you won't notice the new stove pipe in the lobby. This normally wouldn't need to be a 'shut down' project, but it gets a bit tricky when it goes up through the third floor. It's better to be safe than sorry and have some time to figure things out if they start to present challenges, like everything does.

Our friend, Mark the Painter will have his crew on hand as well to freshen up all the lodge rooms, Driftwood cabin, the two public washrooms on the main floor by the office and a few more little touch up spots.

Tom, our multi-talented accountant is going to be rebuilding the ramp at the back door of Victoria cabin to be more durable and feature a larger landing and lower slope on the ramp portion.

Another previously mentioned job that might seem odd to be doing in the Winter is the addition of a modest air conditioning unit in the kitchen. When it is one of those really hot Summer days and the new ranges are busily cooking food for 110 people, it becomes a bit of an unpleasant workplace so we feel it's a good idea to try and make the people cooking all that food as comfortable as possible.

This, of course will tie in with a full preventative maintenance servicing of all our refrigeration equipment as well, since we're closed, and it beats having it break down when we're busy.

Replacing the windows in the White Beach cabins has been scheduled for later in the year, but should only require a couple of hours per cabin, over lunch, spread over a few days.

The Christmas tree will be (*was*) a little more modest this year, due to the availability from our neighbour Don. His selection of 'exactly 17 foot' trees was a bit limited this season, but they are growing, as we speak.

So, that is (*was*) the plan. However, as we all know, things don't always go exactly *as* planned so if you're not seeing some of the things mentioned here that probably means that some kind of 'exciting new opportunity' (*read: major, unpredicted problem*) presented itself and we had to adapt, or panic.

The important jobs will get (*got*) done and if there is one thing I've learned over the past few years it's that the group of people we have on staff now are very adaptable. I hope you enjoy the improvements.





Let's Hope This Isn't Premature... Post Covid Wrap-Up and Reflective Retrospective

Remember these? It seems like it's been awhile since those days. In fact, we are just wrapping up our first full year where we didn't have any restrictions imposed on the number of guests we could welcome, like '60 max' or '50%' or 'none at all'.



While there was a bit of a jump in the covid numbers in the Fall, it really seemed to fade into the background a bit with the RSV and regular old Flu taking more of the headlines. We haven't seen much of Dr. Bonnie Henry for a while and I hope she's getting a chance to relax a bit.

So, where is the lodge now that we can say with *some* confidence that we are 'on the other side' as far as most of the risks, restrictions and regulations go?

Well, a few things have changed. The cookies are all served in individual little bags now and there are more of those little 'single serving packages' of things like ketchup than there used to be.

The covid era brought with it difficulties in finding staff people, which resulted in the retirement of our shuttle van service.

Even if we could find enough people with the 'Class 4' license to operate it, we now realize that we'd have to charge as much as the rides provided today by the Nanaimo Airporter or the 'Uride' rideshare app to prevent subsidizing the service anyway.

Covid also ushered in a period of economic inflation that we hadn't seen for quite some time. This meant that the cost of everything for us went up, we had to pay our people more so they could stay afloat and these increased costs were borne by you, our guests in the form of higher rates.

However, through all of this, we have steadily tried to return as much as possible to the way things were, pre - 2020, like getting the weekend music back.

We still include all the meals, snacks, bikes, kayaks and amenities in our rates, which we hope that with a little shopping around, our guests will still find on the somewhat reasonable side, especially considering the cost of going out for lunch today and that a common practice in the industry seems to be to offer what seems like a bargain, then charge extra for everything else.

Post-covid 'wrap up'? Well, some things have changed but hopefully not enough to keep our beloved regular guests from coming back.



Supply and Demand Dictates... A 'Memorial Chair' Program Hiatus.

We recently received four of the last six loveseats that were on order for many, many months and are expecting the last two shortly. There are a couple of people that I have already spoken to about something for their recently departed loved ones, but after that, we will be putting the program on a bit of a sabbatical until further notice.

There are several factors at work here, one being the availability of the seats and the time it takes to produce them that takes my friend away from his other pressing jobs. The other two are that we are featuring quite a collection of seats at the moment and finding suitable places for them is getting more difficult, but the most important one is; the maintenance they require.

We need to hold steady for awhile and make sure that we have enough 'person-power' to keep the seats that have been so generously donated here in proper shape and looking presentable and respectful to the departed people that they commemorate.

They take quite a bit of time to sand and finish, and we don't want them looking run-down or neglected. So, we will be doing some 'catch up' this year, taking stock of what we have and what is required to maintain them and perhaps re-instating the program some time in the future.

Our apologies go out to everyone that had to wait an inordinate amount of time for your chair or loveseat and our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who provided one of the big, comfortable seats for your fellow guests.

Let's Get This Over With... Rate Increase Correction!

In the last issue I stated that in order to hold steady during this inflationary period we would have to be increasing our rates by \$7.00 per person next year.

However, further analysis of recent trends shows that in order to hold steady and be able to pay our staff in a way that will allow them to hold their ground as well, we will have to increase our rates by the same amount as last year, which is slightly more than previously stated.

Therefore, I am really not happy to announce that on January 2nd, 2024 our currently posted rates will be increasing by **\$9.00 (nine dollars)** CA per person, per day.

This is roughly 6%, and while inflation is down from that now, we had a good portion of 2023 where it was still high. Additionally, the cost of food was increasing faster than the average inflation rate, which is one of our biggest expenses.

I hope this can be found reasonable, since we are not adding extra charges elsewhere or decreasing services.



1939- 2024 85 Years of Hospitality!

Most of you will be reading this in 2024, which will mark 85 years since the lodge opened for business at this exact location.

My father settled at the North end of the property in the early 1930's and built the rustic Beach Cabins down there in about 1935. The building on our guest map called 'the old, old' lodge was their home and the cookhouse and dining room for the guests in the new little cabins.

At that time, he was building the first lodge on the site we're on today, the one that burned down in 1985. That building was finished in 1939 and gradually opened for business that Spring and Summer. The original Beach Cabins were then floated around on little rafts to where they are now and have been in service ever since.

So, while the official date for the grand opening we recognize won't be until December 24th, 2024 (*the day my half-sister, Lesley, lit the first fire in the fireplace*) this Spring and Summer will mark 85 years since Yellow Point Lodge opened for business at our current location.

No matter what people will say, none of the mattresses are from the original lodge.

Thank you all for helping us to continue to do what Dad thought you'd enjoy, all those years ago! He'd be very happy to see you all here, today.



*Food Bank Program
Started Here...*

**'Kick One In'
Kicked Across
B.C. by Sysco!**

Here's a (*very*) old photo of myself and some friends unloading donations from a Sysco truck (*a major food supplier*) to our local food bank.

Some of you may remember 'Kick One In' as a program we started and developed here to make it easy for business's and restaurants to donate to their neighbourhood food banks by ordering directly from their commercial supplier.

Well, after 20 years of supplying roughly 400 cases of food annually to food banks on Vancouver Island, Sysco has partnered with Food Banks BC to make this program available to all their customers in the province in order to benefit all of the Food Banks BC members in British Columbia.

While we wish it wasn't necessary, we are hoping it will continue to do some good.

Special '85th Anniversary' Edition of... Old Timey Photographs!



Some of you may have seen these before, but you don't get a much older picture of the original lodge than a pile of the logs that it was built from! They came from up behind Ladysmith.

This shot is from the front of the lounge, looking down through the basement, under the kitchen. Some of the foundation and stonework under the main lounge is original.



Checking in? This is from the walkway out front, looking in through the 'almost' office windows. The old 'long log' style of building is evident in this photo and the big Garry Oak tree to the left is the one that is still there today. It survived the fire of 1985!

Here is the original lodge, very nearly completed. Note that the retaining wall at the end of lounge isn't there yet and the trees growing through the roof are in full bloom. Today's dining room extends to the outside end of the deck in the far right of the photo. The deck was later enclosed.



The End of an Era...
**McEwans Ale
No Longer Available**

This is a photo of my father presenting a case of McEwans Scotch Ale to Don Lippincot as he left the lodge's employ to seek his fortune in the early '60s. All important occasions have been toasted with McEwans at the lodge since the 1940's. My middle name is McEwan. Alas, declining demand and increased regulation has made it not profitable for the brewers to undertake the packaging and permitting required for export to North America any longer and the last few McEwans are slipping (*sipping?*) away. It might only be a beer, but it had a lot of history and followers here, cheers.

New Guest Information:

...on reserving and re-booking.

Re-Booking Your Room: In order to support as many of our guests who wish to be regular guests as possible, our reservation system only works for a period of **one year** in advance of today's date. So if you want to come at the same time, year to year (*for whatever reason, and we hope you do*) you can, because nobody can book 14 months ahead, and take your spot.

Getting Your Own Reservation: We have tried, and it is nearly impossible to maintain a regular 'Waiting List' because there are too many different dates, accommodation types and combinations of the two.

If you're in someone else's spot (ie: *holding a friend's reservation for them*) we will be re-booking the spot for them, but you can ask them to put a '*would like another reservation*' request on their reservation, so if we get a cancellation we call them and can get you in.

If you call the office and we don't have the room you'd like, it's suggested that you book whatever we have and ask that a '*would like upgrade*' be noted. If a better room comes available, you'll have a chance at it, depending on who requested an upgrade first.

Try calling us two weeks ahead of your preferred date, that is when lots of people cancel because they can still get their deposits refunded if they give us that much notice.

Don't forget to check the website for our 'post it note' vacancy page, at yellowpointlodge.com and keep your eye on our Facebook page, as well.

...and on more general policies.

Cellphones and Laptops: are fine anywhere *except*, at the request of a lot of guests, in **the main lounge and dining room**. The lobby is fine, and the downstairs lounge is encouraged. However 'E-readers' and 'tablets' are okay in the big, main room (*they're more discrete*). We don't have wi-fi, and probably never will.

Drinking in the Hot Tub: is a big health and safety risk, and, I'm afraid has to be on our 'strictly prohibited' list. This is for everyone's well being. Please enjoy beverages before or after, but not *during* your visit to the hot tub.

Really general policies: are probably defined as 'the Golden Rule'. We don't have a ton of specific rules around here, (*exception: above*) and since we seem to attract a fairly well behaved, top quality group of guests, rules and regulations are seldom an issue. We like people to have all the fun they want (*hence the sprung dance floor*) but not at the expense of the other guests ability to relax and enjoy themselves.

F.A.Q.

...frequently avoided questions

How come I can't bring my own wine into the lounge or dining room?

Basically, it's because we have a liquor licence. We are permitted to sell alcoholic beverages to our guests for their enjoyment in our public areas, but if you wish to furnish your own drinks, they'll have to be enjoyed in the comfort, or Spartan surroundings, of your room or cabin. We are not participating in the 'corkage' program, due to the difficulty of monitoring and the fact that our liquor pricing 'mark-up' policy is very modest.

Why are you so particular about what my special diet is?

Firstly, if you have a serious allergy or medical condition, we want to make absolutely certain that we get it right. Secondly, one way that we maintain our fairly reasonable rates is by serving our meals 'banquet' or 'boy scout camp' style. If you have a serious dietary condition or are a committed vegetarian, for example, our staff will do everything possible to accommodate you. On the other hand, if your diet is optional, or a preference it makes it a lot harder on the kitchen. The bottom line is: if you've told us you don't eat pork, then order bacon, we will gently ask you to reconsider your dietary request.

What's the deal with live music here?

The owner of the lodge, Richard Hill (*me*) played a lot of music earlier in life and has some talented neighbourhood friends. On most Friday nights there is an informal 'acoustic jam' in the Rumpus Room and, on Saturdays at 9:00 a swinging, vintage styled, rock 'n' roll dance party (*complete with trophy*) in the main lounge (*always done before 11:00*). However, sometimes my friends have an 'off site' gig with their Beatles tribute band, so I try to book Jo Deslippe for 'Jazz Monkey' but there is no guarantee. On any day of the week, any guest who entertains the other guests with any form of musical talent, will receive at least one complimentary beverage. I always said "*If I ever get to be the boss, I'm going to give the band free drinks!*"

Do you mind if I feed the dogs?

Since two out of the three dogs are not large, and the big one is a muffin hound, we kindly request that, no matter how 'persuasive' (*ie: mooch-happy little bums*) they are, please don't ever feed the dogs even the tiniest little bite. They really add up (*one little bite X 95 guests = puppy cardiac*) and most of the snacks that they would mooch off of you are not healthy for them, at all. They get fed plenty at home, no matter what they tell you.
