

Lorna A. Elder, Oak Bay Recreation Commission, 1973 to 1979

I have always been active in sports both as a participant and spectator. In my teens in Prince Albert, Sask. I curled, played tennis and basketball.

After graduating as a Registered Nurse from Saskatoon City Hospital I moved to Victoria in 1954 to work at the Royal Jubilee Hospital on the Private Ward on the South Wing. The Victoria Lawn Tennis and Badminton Club were near the Hospital at the corner of Foul Bay Road and Fort Street and I joined the Club in 1955. I met my husband Donald Elder, a local Chiropractor there and we were married in 1956. We bought a house in 1959 on Lorna Terrace in South Oak Bay and lived there for 10 years. In 1969 we bought our present home at [redacted] Oak Bay.

We gave up our membership in the Victoria Lawn Tennis and Badminton Club when the property was quickly sold and the Club changed their name to Racquet Club and bought property in Saanich. (I always found the name strange as the Club included two Ice Rinks for skating, curling and hockey!)

In 1965 Isobel Craig approached my husband Don and asked him if he would volunteer to organize a Recreational Adult Badminton Group to play on 4 Courts in the evenings twice a week at the Oak Bay Junior High School. A large group responded and from September 30<sup>th</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> on Monday and Thursday Evenings a happy group of mainly Oak Bay Residents enjoyed the fellowship and activity this sport provided. The cost was \$30.00 for the season and this included instant coffee and cookies.

In 1965 Isobel Craig asked me to petition the neighborhood where we lived near Quimper Park to have playground equipment and rest rooms built on the park. Isobel took the petition with many names on it to Oak Bay Council and it was approved. At 2 p.m. on Friday, July 8<sup>th</sup> 1966 the playground was opened at Quimper Park and a student Supervisor was hired to oversee Crafts, Games and other Activities during the summer. For many years residents in Oak Bay had tried to get a Recreational Center in the Municipality. Families had to go to Victoria to swim at the Crystal Gardens, skate at the Memorial Arena, curl at the Victoria Curling Club or go to Esquimalt or Saanich for other recreational activities. A referendum to build a Recreation Center in Oak Bay had been defeated twice. Divisions on Council and the cost of the project being the reasons. An "Action Group" made up of Oak Bay resident's door knocked on Oak Bay Homes in all areas of the Municipality with a petition asking for signatures of residents requesting a Recreational Center. This petition with many names on it was presented at a Council Meeting on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1972. I attended this packed meeting in the Council Chambers. I was shocked to see a large group that I recognized from the Racquet Club (in Saanich) who spoke out against the Recreational Center being built in Oak Bay. I knew many of these folk and they did not live in Oak Bay.

A proposal in 1972 to build the Center by a private group was turned down by Council.

Lorna A. Elder

I belonged to the Oak Bay branch of the Association of Women Electors since 1969. The women met in their homes once a month. One of the members called an "Observer" who had attended the two monthly Oak Bay Council Meetings gave a report to the ladies while they drank their coffee. The ladies met to be informed of what went on at the Council Meetings and discussed the issues brought up. The Association of Women Electors were very much in favor of building a Recreation Center and were aware of the Council Members who were working very hard to obtain one for Oak Bay residents— Mayor Frances Elford and Councilors Isobel Craig, Doug Watt and Norm Pimlott. In 1972 the Mayor Frances Elford, Councilor Isobel Craig and long time volunteer Maybelle Murphy drove up island to Port Alberni to meet and interview Dunc Russell who was the Director of the Recreational Center in that City. They were taken around the Center by Dunc Russell and these Ladies realized that this was the kind of Center they wanted. Dunc mentioned that his wife was receiving treatment for cancer at the Cancer Clinic in Victoria. The Ladies were very impressed with Dunc and the possibility of him moving to Oak Bay if the Municipality decided to build a Recreational Center. In early 1973 a "Make Work Programme" by the Federal Government proposed that they would pay 1/3 the cost of a Recreational Center if the Provincial Government paid 1/3 and the Municipal Government paid 1/3. At a large gathering that filled the Gymnasium at Oak Bay Junior High School on March 15<sup>th</sup> 1973 the Oak Bay residents there learned that the Federal Government and the Provincial Government had each agreed to pay 1/3 the cost of a Recreational Center if the Municipality of Oak Bay would pay the final 1/3. Those gathered at this meeting strongly supported Oak Bay Municipality paying the 1/3 to get a Recreational Center. At the next regular Oak Bay Council meeting all but one member of the Council voted in favor of the Municipality paying 1/3 the cost of a Recreation Center. Frances Elford was Mayor at this time. The Council proceeded immediately with plans to build the Center and Dunc Russell was hired as Director. A new Recreation Commission was formed and each Council member chose a resident of Oak Bay to be on the Commission. I was appointed by Isobel Craig and served as a member of the Commission for 6 years. Those members also chosen at this time to be on the Commission were Susan Brice, Victor Bull, Marilyn Callahan, Nancy Hill, Leota Mace, Chris Pollard, Lavinia Greenwood and local High School Principal Ken Hum was Chairman. Council Members Norm Pimlott and Doug Mclelland Commission Members met every Wednesday with Dunc Russell at 7 p.m. and had various duties assigned to them. I was on a committee of three who interviewed and hired the main staff. Programme Director Bill Johnson, Aquatic Supervisor Ron Friesen, Arena Supervisor Ron Austin and Curling and Social Supervisor Marion Andrews. The Center opened at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup> 1975. The Oak Bay Recreation Commission meets once a month with the Director of Recreation and Programme Director. I found my 6 years on the Commission a very interesting and rewarding period in my life.

Lorna A. Elder



ISABEL CRAIG . . . organizer and moving spirit.



TABLE TENNIS IN FULL SWING

1969

# DIRECTOR of RECREATION Oak Bay's Isabel Craig

Story by MARGARET WILLIAMS  
Photos by Allan Williams

*How often people have been heard to say, "There's nothing going on in Victoria" — a statement with which Mrs. Isabel Craig does not agree.*

*She is the director of recreation for Oak Bay, with an office in the municipal hall. Many people are probably not aware of what is going on although increasing numbers are availing themselves of the wonderful opportunities for participating in the activities which Mrs. Craig so capably*

Isabel Craig did not start out with a title nor with this desk. She began 17 years ago, as a volunteer

man of the inter-municipal recreation committee which is responsible for inter-municipal playground work-

enlarged and since Mrs. Craig was the only member available in the daytime she was made co-ordinator of all programs as they formed. This, at least, is the reason she so modestly gives for her appointment.

In time the programs grew to such an extent that the work of the commission became a full-time endeavor and the council was approached two years ago for the appointment of a full-time director with an office in the municipal hall. This was a welcome change for Mrs. Craig, and, incidentally, for her family, as most of the business and planning had taken place in her own home. It was not until the directorship was approved that she became a salaried employee.

From such small beginnings there are now some 26 programs going full swing the year round, plus the programs produced by affiliated groups who use one or two

time of Mrs. Maybelle Murp many willing helping hands members. A class of ceramic on at the same time under the capable instruction of Mrs. Dielson.

Mrs. Doreen Grant, a p Mrs. Peggy Bartholomew, crewel work, very beautiful dimensional embroidery with and Mrs. Elizabeth M teaches old painting and Junior Stamp Club advisor, president of the Oak Bay A and also one of the Van Island Printmakers. The Stamp meets once a week. There a classes of 24 very keen young aged eight to 17. Mrs. M teaches the history and classification of stamps.

One of the most exciting programs is creative drama taught by Peter McWhir. Peter, who from England, spent three years at Manchester University and industrial arts and creative drama at secondary schools in England and taught also



BLACK LABRADOR Chase hits water with a splash as handler and fourth watcher proceed. —Tom Ryan photo.



Alec Kerrison photo.



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### OAK BAY'S ISABELLE CRAIG

...ing to his or her individual  
 recreation. They revived, felt the  
 life of their jackets or dresses,  
 texture of their skin, then slowly  
 I the air with the living  
 elements of their own fingers.  
 ... McWhir and his children are a  
 fit to watch.

...tivity programs such as bad-  
 minton, bridge, and table tennis  
 are held in the Oak Bay school  
 premises which, through good  
 relations with the Governor Vic-  
 toria School Board, are produced at  
 very reasonable fee. This recom-  
 mendation, in fact, says Isabelle Craig,  
 is one of the basic factors of the  
 success of all programs. There are  
 members in the bridge club, 65  
 badminton, ages 20 to 55 and 50  
 boys play table tennis, ages  
 10 to 15. Table tennis was started  
 on a suggestion of George Clark, in  
 1948 and the grand-daddy of table  
 tennis in Victoria. Mrs. Craig, with  
 the help of members, looks after

...this activity. Badminton is run by  
 Dr. Don Elder and bridge is taken  
 care of by Mrs. Maybelle Murphy,  
 assistant to Mrs. Craig, and a  
 member of the recreation commis-  
 sion. The keep-fit class with 25  
 members is run by Mrs. Kay  
 Costain, once a pro-ree leader and a  
 fully qualified dancing teacher.

One of the most successful  
 programs is L.O.R.E. — looked after  
 by Mrs. Craig and Mrs. Murphy —  
 and this is Ladies' Outdoor Recre-  
 ation Education — with 45 women on  
 the roll. Some 40 or 50 travel each  
 Tuesday afternoon to various  
 regions in Greater Victoria, explor-  
 ing spots of historical interest, such  
 as the museum, Point Ellice House,  
 Helmcken House, or exploring the  
 out-of-lakes with naturalists such as  
 Freeman King. In November they  
 took the Dayliner to Nanaimo to  
 visit recreation spots in that area.

Summer is a busy time for Isabelle  
 Craig and her assistants. There are  
 four playgrounds serving 650 chil-  
 dren, ages five to 12, a teen program  
 in which about 150 young people  
 from 13 to 18, participate, and a  
 tennis program. Tennis is played at  
 Carnarvon and Windsor Parks under  
 the leadership of Howard Tooby. An  
 adult group, 50 strong, and 250  
 young people, ages 10 to 15, play  
 four nights a week. Last year a  
 public courts tennis program was  
 formed for adults. Swimming at the  
 Crystal Garden, softball for girls,  
 250 of them, ages nine to 18, headed  
 by Mrs. Joy Spolight, who has  
 worked in community centres in  
 Vancouver, are just two more  
 activities.


All these events are taught by  
 volunteers who give unstintingly of  
 their time and energy. Isabelle Craig  
 remarks that having been a volun-

teer for so long herself  
 appreciates the number of her  
 preparation as well as teaching  
 involved and she endeavors to  
 programs so that a token of  
 appreciation is offered. All are ded-  
 icated people.

A great many of the  
 leaders are found through  
 relationship of the recre-  
 ation department and the affiliated  
 and activity groups who use the  
 Bay facilities. These groups  
 of baseball organizations, a  
 rugby, football, the Art Club,  
 fish dancing groups and girls  
 men's grass hockey.

Isabelle Craig herself is a ef-  
 ficient and dedicated person. She  
 finds the work most rewarding, not  
 the materialistic standpoint,  
 from association with people,  
 "are really very nice," she says  
 "at all ages."

The Daily Colonist-Pat  
 Sunday, March 18,



OAK BAY RECREATION  
EXHIBITION

WELCOMES ALL YOUNG PEOPLE TO  
TAKE A TRIP THROUGH THE  
T I M E T U N N E L  
I N T H E  
SUPERVISED PLAYGROUND PROGRAM THIS SUMMER. 1964

JULY 2nd. to 7th. COUNT DOWN WEEK  
Preparation for trip: Crafts: preparing machines  
Games: Keeping fit.



JULY 8th. to 12th. FIRST STOP: 10,000 B.C.  
Crafts: Animals of the times  
Games: Big game hunting  
Special: Francis Park  
Event: trip.

JULY 13th. to 19th. SECOND STOP: Victoria Era.  
Crafts: Spanish-Galleons Pirates etc.  
Games: - Treasure hunts, Pirates  
Sailing on the high seas.  
Special Events:

JULY 22nd. to 26th. THIRD STOP: Present day.  
Crafts: Flowers, beads, pop-art Paintings  
Games: Various ball games.  
Special Events:

JULY 29th. to AUG. 2nd. PRESENT DAY CONT.  
Off to Olympics in Mexico.  
Crafts: Emblems, Mexican Jewelry etc.  
Full competition of all countries  
with finals of the older group at

**BOYS AND GIRLS: WELCOME TO OAK BAY'S**  
**CANADIAN PAGEANT IN THE PARKS. 1964**

JULY 4th. to 7th. INDIAN WEEK  
 Crafts: totem poles, Indian masks, hatchets, drums, teepees, canoes and beads.  
 Activities: Indian dancing, Tug-of-wars etc.

JULY 10th. to 14th. FUR TRADE WEEK  
 Crafts: Saddle boats, working with paper mache'  
 Activities: Fur Brigade Race, Inter-Park competitions.

*FR 1-14  
 PEANUT BUTTER CAKE - Rice Cakes  
 TRIMMINGS  
 RED HERRING  
 BLUES*

JULY 17th. to 21st. SETTLER WEEK  
 Crafts: Weaving, Yarn murals, Red River Carts, etc.  
 Activities: Barn raising, Virginia Reel, Checker Tournament etc.

JULY 24th. to 28th. GOLD RUSH WEEK  
 Crafts: Gold rush toys, etc.  
 Activities: Talent Show, Treasure Hunt, etc.

JULY 31st. to Aug. 1. THE WORLD COMES TO CANADA.  
 Crafts: Projects that portray all the Continents.  
 Activities: Inter-park sports, special events to be announced later.

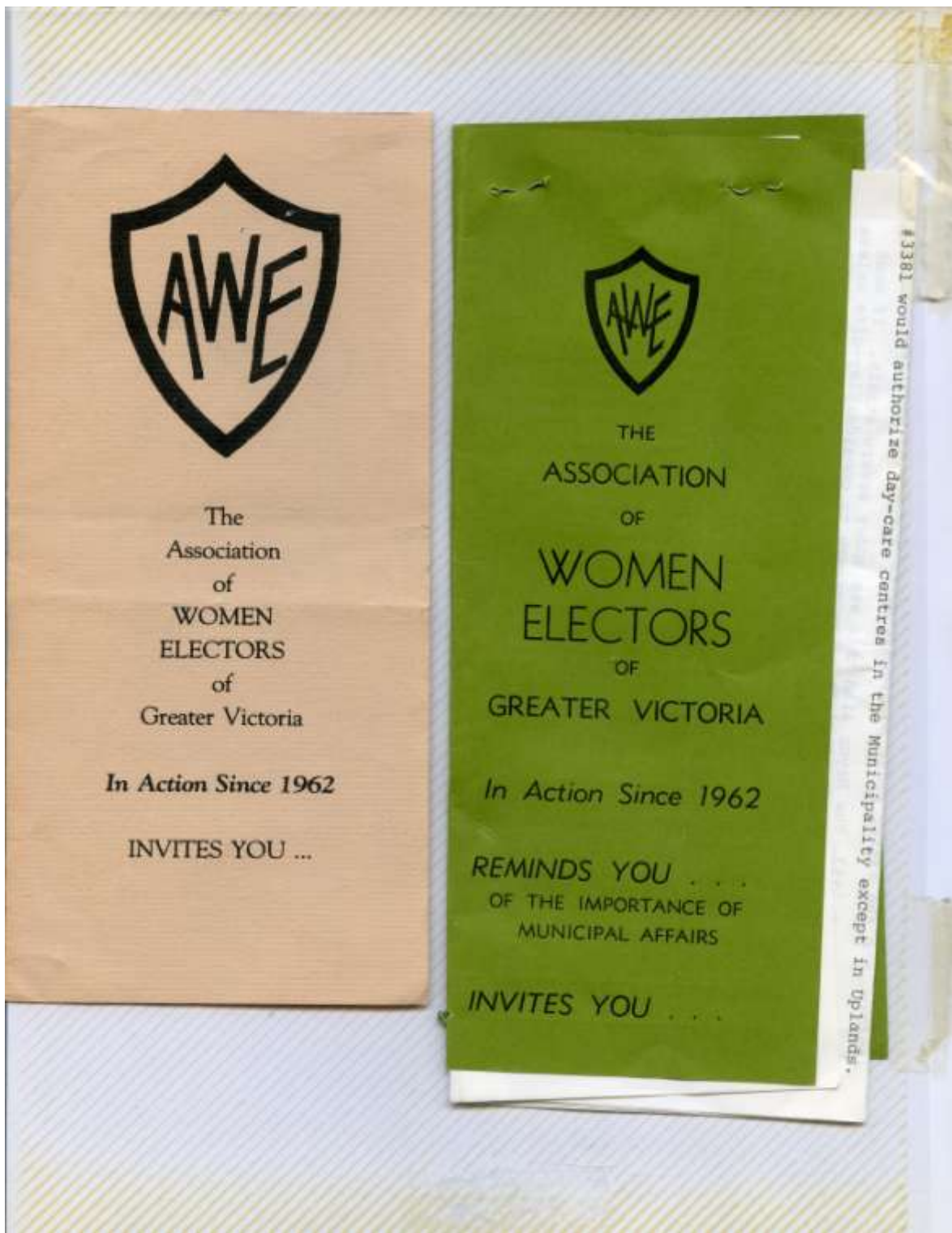
AUGUST 7th. to 11th. CANADA'S BIRTHDAY WEEK  
 Crafts: Party Hats and favors, decorations of all kinds etc.  
 Activities: Birthday party, Display of crafts etc.

**NOTE:** Special events such as field trips will be announced later when plans are completed.

**PLEASE BRING THESE ARTICLES.**

1. Salt cartons	2. Popsicle sticks	3. Brown wrapping paper
4. Large paper bags	5. Clean milk cartons	6. Cottage cheese cartons
7. Buttons	8. Newspaper	9. Baby food tins
10. Plastic bottles	11. Corks.	

*PROGRAMME SUPERVISOR DOREEN LUSK - COLLEGE STUDENT*



The Association of Woman's Electors discussed and supported a petition being circulated that explained the need for a Recreation Center in Oak Bay.

As a member of the Association of Woman's Electors Oak Bay Branch since 1965 I was aware each month of what went on at Municipal Council Meetings.

The members of the Association of Woman's Electors were aware of the Council Members who worked so hard over the years to obtain a Recreational Center for Oak Bay.

All members of the Woman's Electors could attend Council Meetings but Mrs. Joan Battles was the main representative who attended twice a month. Oak Bay Council arranged for a special chair for the representative from the A.W.E member who was attending.



# Oak Bay's <sup>1972</sup> golden chance

BY JOHN MCKEACHIE

DATELINE: Victoria, Sept. (April 1, 1972 (73, 78, '81), The Victoria (Esquimalt, Saanich) Minor Hockey (Lacrosse) Association will hold a registration session Tuesday at Memorial (Esquimalt, Parkers) Arena. Boys 7-19 years of age from the Municipality of Victoria (Esquimalt, Saanich) ONLY will be accepted. Please bring birth certificate and PROOF of residence.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Oak Bay: Do you, or do you not, believe this could happen? Not only could it, but it is faster approaching than you think, with already overflowing registrations facing the others NOW! Also, would you not like to know more about what is becoming a far too confining situation re: the Farmer Construction proposal that would give you a recreation complex with NO TAX INCREASE!!! The following will serve to enlighten you just a fraction of what a referendum vote would, something you are being denied. NOW is the key word, and the OAK BAY RECREATION ACTION GROUP IS ACTING NOW AND NOW THEY NEED YOUR SUPPORT. A ballot appears today to that end, with further explanation on page 45



The driving force behind the campaign to make the recreation complex in Oak Bay become reality SOON is seen here holding a model of the complex, designed, and to be built by Farmer Construction. OAK BAY RECREATION ACTION GROUP is the force, with (left to right) JACK SAMBROOKE, Spokesman ARCHIE COURTENALL, Convasser Chairman and BERT BERTOIA, President. They want YOU to have the opportunity to both learn more about the swap proposal AND to vote for or against it.

The inset photo shows the apartment complex proposal slated for the Victoria Riding Academy grounds, next to 120 acres of Uplands Golf Club and 23 acres of Henderson Road parkland. \$50,000 is the estimated, once only, cost to the taxpayers which will cover the cost of additional water facilities for the dwellings.



The town-house dwellings will be upper middle class, 2 storeys, 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms, include carport and basement, while the 'high' rises will be 12 storeys, 2 of the buildings apartments, the other condominium style. Underground parking will be available for all those tenants, while off-street parking will be available for guests. Those are just a few of the factors which have been proposed in that lone presentation, something to consider if you wonder what another private enterprise might submit if the land is sold later, if and when at a higher price. Do you think the next developer will be less monetarily minded?

Not only will the Farmer proposal bring something close to 2 mills (by 1972 rates) in revenue to Oak Bay, but also it will save the taxpayers a like amount to cover the cost of a recreation complex with tax monies. And remember, development of the Academy lands for apartments, etc., is inevitable, in fact, already zoned for such use.

Further ammunition for the swap is that if the Federal Government again has a Winter Works Program, the additional cost of the swimming pool could be rationalized as



So that I might learn more about all the issues involved re: the proposed development at the Victoria Riding Academy and the recreation complex site, I am in favour of the issue being brought to the voters of Oak Bay in referendum form. I am not in favour of the above.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

IF YOU LIVE IN THE VICINITY OF THE RIDING ACADEMY YOUR BALLOT WILL BE PICKED UP BY A MEMBER OF THE OAK BAY RECREATION ACTION GROUP. IF NOT, PLEASE MAIL SAME TO THE VICTORIAN, 1826 GOVERNMENT ST. VICTORIA IMMEDIATELY. YOUR BALLOT MUST BE IN THE HANDS OF THE CONCERNED PARTIES BY MONDAY, JULY 30.







# VIEW THE NEW RECREATION CENTRE



## Recreation Team Combines Experience and Enthusiasm

As the Centre Program Director, Bill Johnson will provide over-all continuity of the Recreation Team. Through his leadership the staff intend to provide Victorians with the highest standards of enjoyable and worthwhile programs. Marion Andrews, Curling and Social Supervisor, Ron Austen, Arena Supervisor, and Ron Friesen, Aquatic Supervisor, along with Bruce Sharrock, Aquatic Program Leader provide professional leadership in all programs offered. Each has special skills relative to their specific area of responsibility. Linda Stuart, Program Secretary, Inge Ranzinger and Penny Carter, receptionists will provide information with regard to programs and activities. Rob Campbell, Building and Maintenance Supervisor, along with Cliff Charters, Centre Maintenance Foreman and his crew of utility men will look after cleanliness and the mechanical side of the complex.

 BILL JOHNSON	 CLIFF CHARTERS	 ROB CAMPBELL
 MARION ANDREWS	 RON AUSTEN	 RON FRIESEN

*"The Time to be Happy is Now!"*

# Oak Bay Finally Realizes Recreation "Dream Come True"

To many dedicated volunteers, Youth Sports Organizations and Past and Present Members of the Oak Bay Parks and Recreation Commission, the opening of the Recreation Centre at 1975 Bee Street on Saturday and Sunday, October 25th and 26th at 7:30 p.m. is indeed a major community dream come true.

The first year was a time for listening to and listing the recreation needs of the residents of Oak Bay and the formulating of plans to cover these needs for both outside and inside leisure programs.

Since the only available buildings suitable for Recreation activities were the Boy Scouts and Girl Guide Halls at Fireman's Park and the School Gymnasium, the Recreation Commission obtained permission to cooperate programs in the schools from the School Board. As a result Badminton, Archery, Basketball, Table Tennis and many other youth and adult programs were scheduled into the Senior Secondary and Elementary Schools in Oak Bay. The Senior Citizens met in the Girl Guide Hall.

The reality of this dream is not an overnight accomplishment... Since the formation of the Oak Bay Recreation Commission by the Municipal Council on February 27th, 1957, under the leadership of the late Hugh Reston, the Oak Bay Municipal Recreation program has moved forward rapidly due to the continued interest of the community and Commission Members under the excellent direction of Ernie Costain, who succeeded Mr. Reston as Chairman in 1962, and of Kyrie Symons from 1979 to January 1973.

With part time leaders, mostly recruited from sports and cultural groups in Oak Bay the program grew to the point where the Oak Bay Council recognized the need

for a Professional Recreation Director with a central office established in the Municipal Hall. Popularity of the recreation programs offered grew to such an extent the Council Chamber as well as every other available space was used. It was then Council approved the erection of Oak Bay's first Mini Community Centre at Windsor in 1968.

Still relying on Volunteers for help and with only one addition to the staff further plans went forward for the completion of Henderson Park and an ice arena and swimming pool were planned for the present site of the new complex, but to the great disappointment of the Council and Commission members, this met with defeat when presented to the residents in 1964.

However, undaunted, the Municipal Council and Recreation Commission Members turned their attention to the planning of a much-needed Senior Citizens

Centre and a field house at Henderson Park with space allowed for a gymnasium in the same area as there was evidence of a need for further large floor space for indoor activities.

In 1969 one more step in the realization of recreation dreams in Oak Bay was reached when both Federal and Provincial Government Grants and Loans became more readily available, and as a result Oak Bay's first major dream came true in the opening of the Library and Senior Citizens Centre in December 1970, where 1700 members take part in a full program of activities, 7 days per week. The Henderson Park Gymnasium was opened in June of 1971. This area is open 7 days per week and used to capacity.

In 1972 the Committee, consisting of members of Council, Representatives from the Recreation Commission and Sports Organizations began seriously planning the present Recreation Complex as a 3-area facility which included an ice surface for skating, Swimming Pool and Curling Rink. A further step of creating a Parks and Recreation Department was considered and in 1974 this was approved.

In February, 1973, the Recreation Commission took over the extra responsibilities of becoming a Parks and Recreation Commission with Mr. Ken Hare as Chairman.

Many long hours of planning and working with volunteers, service clubs, sports and cultural organizations have been an important part in the creating of recreation programs and facilities in Oak Bay.

To all those who have been involved through the years a very sincere vote of thanks is given as the dream draws near for the opening of a further important Recreation dream in the Municipality of Oak Bay.



BRUCE SHARROCK



LINDA STUART



INGE RANZINGER



PENNY CARTER

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 1995

Doug Watts was the chairman of a special committee to look into the idea of a recreation centre for Oak Bay in 1960. The idea finally took root and the centre was completed in 1975. In 1995, 20 years later, the Oak Bay Rec centre is still a jewel in Oak Bay's crown.

## OAK BAY RECREATION CENTRE



## Doug Watts recalls 15-year struggle to build Oak Bay Recreation Centre

By Andrew Costa  
News Staff Reporter

The Oak Bay Recreation Centre will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 1995, but if it wasn't for the hard work, political will and shrewd business sense of former mayor, councillor and alderman Doug Watts, it likely never would have been built.

Watts, 73, who served as mayor from 1979 until 1985, was elected to chair a special committee to look into the idea of a recreation centre in 1960, one year after first being elected as an alderman.

"The idea of a rec centre first came from the recreation commission in 1960," Watts said. "I guess it was a natural decision to have me chair the committee because for most of my time on council I was the only one there with any kind of technical background."

Watts is a former professional civil engineer.

He said it took such a long time for the project to come to fruition, 15 years, primarily because of frequent elections and divisions on council.

"We had a referendum on a recreation centre on the same site it was eventually built on in 1964, and it was denied," he said. "The council was basically split in half, the cost was a major concern and there was great opposition from people then living on the site in small-lot housing."

After the referendum Watts said he had to pick up the pieces and start again from a minus position.

"Eventually we got the momentum going again, largely with the support of many community and sports groups."

Watts said most members of council still wanted a recreation centre, despite the referendum, and by 1970 he was given the job of buying the 26 houses then on the site.

"Ted Hart (former municipal clerk) and I did most of the negotiating," he said. "We bought many of the houses as soon as they came on the market and the average

price was very fair, a little bit above market value, in fact, probably averaging about \$23,500."

In the early '70s, council was working out plans for the rec centre and gearing up for another referendum, when the announcement of new programs by the provincial and federal governments forced it to make difficult decisions very quickly.

"When Dave Barrett was elected premier in 1972 he an-

### ■ The idea of a Rec Centre first came from the recreation commission in 1960.

nounced a provincial program which encouraged the building of recreation facilities," Watts said. "The province would pay one third of the cost of construction up to a maximum of \$333,000."

A short time later the federal government announced it would chip in a large portion of the labor costs for the building of recreation centres through Winter Works, a make-work program designed to keep construction workers and other tradesmen working during the winter months. The feds offered to pay 100 per cent of construction labor costs in the winters of '73-'74 and '74-'75 and 50 per cent of the costs in the intervening summers.

"We knew our project would have a very long construction time so that was a great opportunity," Watts said. "There was a great need to get on with it and match that grant period."

A clause in provincial legislation allowed for a project such as the recreation centre to go ahead without the approval of a referendum if it was sponsored by a federal make-work program.

"Referendums were only al-

lowed to be held in conjunction with elections, so if we held one we'd have to wait for an entire year and waste a considerable portion of the grants," Watts said. "After a lot of public consultation and a well attended town-hall meeting, council voted six to one to go ahead without the referendum."

There were still several hurdles to clear, however, because of a sudden dramatic increase in contracting costs, largely the result of a high inflation rate which saw the prices of Oak Bay homes double in one year.

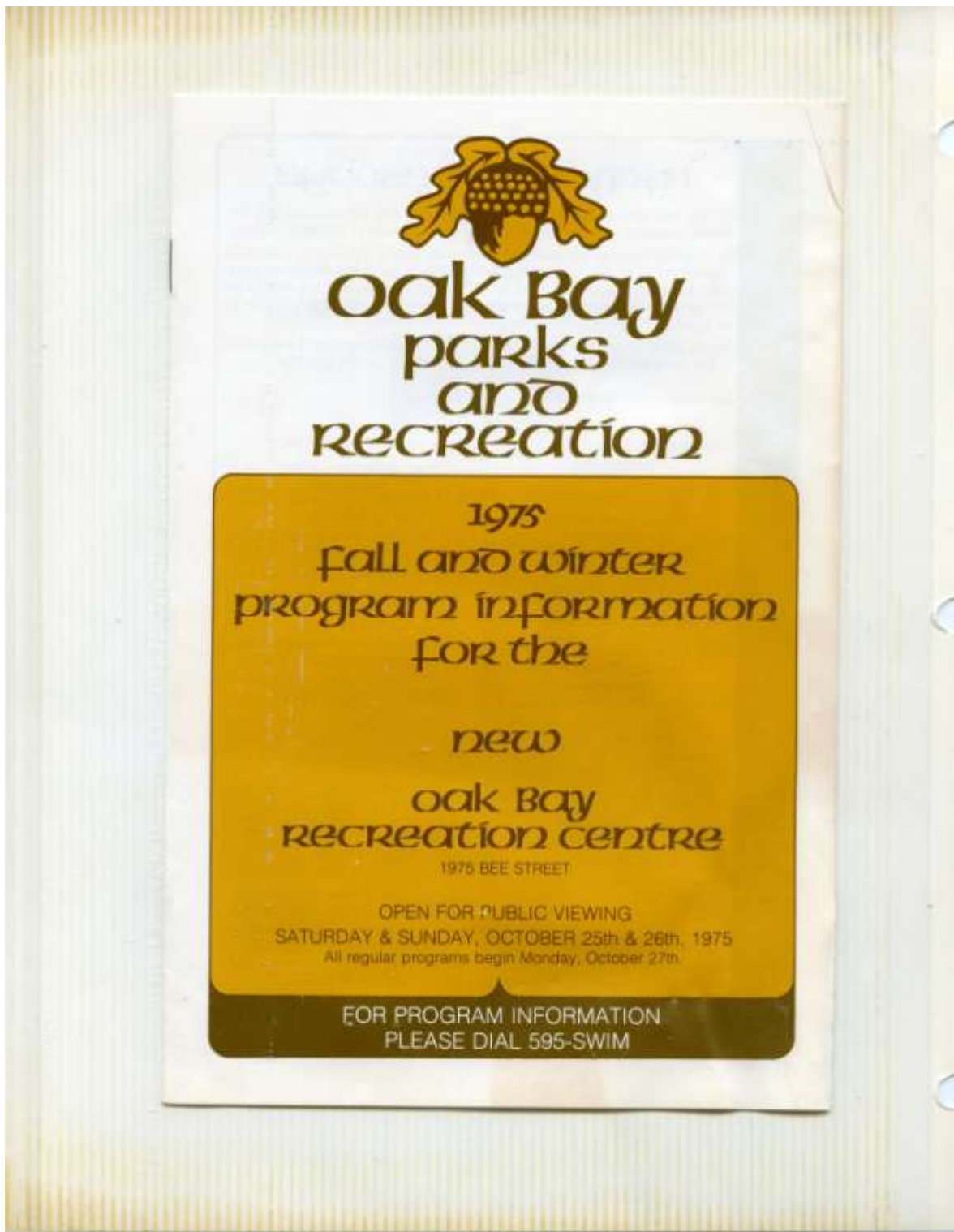
"Our estimates from architects (Carlberg, Jackson of New Westminster) for the contracting costs were approximately \$1.8 million yet when we opened the bids the lowest we got was \$2.7 million," Watts said. "I had a real problem then, which was how do you get council to accept a bid almost 50 per cent higher than was expected."

He argued inflation was at a horrendous level, and that if they didn't build the centre right away, it would likely never be built. Council eventually agreed.

"We ended up paying about as much as we first expected we would have without the grants," Watts said. "The total municipal cost was \$1.4 million."

Oak Bay Recreation Centre was finally opened to the public by outgoing premier Dave Barrett on Oct. 24, 1975. The bulk of its funding is obtained through a "user-pay system," Agnes Zailos, superintendent of the Oak Bay Parks and Recreation Commission, said roughly 80 per cent of the annual budget, \$480,000 in 1994, is derived from revenues. The remaining 20 per cent is provided by the municipality through Oak Bay Parks and Recreation, which also runs the Henderson Centre and Monterey Seniors Centre.

"It's good, but we were hoping for a break-even facility," Watts said. "There's always a reluctance to put up rates because there's so much competition out there."





# SWIMMING SCHEDULE



DAY	TIME	PROGRAM	DAY	TIME	PROGRAM
<b>MONDAY</b>	7:30-8:30 A.M.	EARLY BRD SWIM	<b>FRIDAY</b>	7:30-8:30 A.M.	EARLY BRD SWIM
	12:00-1:30 P.M.	MEN'S KEEP FIT		12:00-1:30 P.M.	MEN'S KEEP FIT
	1:30-3:00 P.M.	SWIM & SLIM FOR LADIES		1:30-3:00 P.M.	SWIM & SLIM FOR LADIES
	5:00-6:00 P.M.	ADULT SWIM		5:00-6:00 P.M.	ADULT SWIM
	+ 6:30-8:30 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME		+ 8:30-10:00 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME
8:00-11:00 P.M.	ADULT SWIM				
<b>TUESDAY</b>	7:30-8:00 A.M.	EARLY BRD SWIM	<b>SATURDAY</b>	+ 1:00-6:00 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME
	+ 12:00-1:30 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME		+ 4:30-6:00 P.M.	SNORKEL TIME
	1:30-3:00 P.M.	OVER 50's SWIM		+ 8:30-9:00 P.M.	FAMILY SWIM
	5:00-6:00 P.M.	ADULT SWIM		8:15-9:45 P.M.	TEEN SWIM
	9:00-11:00 P.M.	OVER 18 & ADULT SWIM			
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	7:30-8:30 A.M.	EARLY BRD SWIM	<b>SUNDAY</b>	+ 1:00-7:30 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME
	12:00-1:30 P.M.	MEN'S KEEP FIT		+ 3:00-7:00 P.M.	SNORKEL TIME
	1:30-3:00 P.M.	SWIM & SLIM FOR LADIES		8:00-10:00 P.M.	ADULT SWIM
	5:00-6:00 P.M.	ADULT SWIM			
	+ 8:30-9:30 P.M.	FAMILY SWIM			
9:00-11:00 P.M.	ADULT SWIM				
<b>THURSDAY</b>	7:30-8:30 A.M.	EARLY BRD SWIM			
	+ 12:00-1:30 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME			
	1:30-3:00 P.M.	OVER 50's SWIM			
	+ 3:00-5:00 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME			
	5:00-6:00 P.M.	ADULT SWIM			
8:00-11:00 P.M.	ADULT SWIM				

**ADMISSION**  
SWIMMING & ICE SKATING

CHILDREN	..... \$ .50 or 10 tickets for \$3.50
STUDENTS	..... \$ .75 or 10 tickets for \$6.00
ADULTS	..... \$1.00 or 10 tickets for \$8.00
SENIOR CITIZENS	..... \$ .50 or 10 tickets for \$3.50
(over 60)	
FAMILY	..... \$1.50

## SKATING SCHEDULE

DAY	TIME	PROGRAM
<b>MONDAY</b>	1:00-2:30 P.M.	ADULT SKATING
<b>TUESDAY</b>	* 8:00-10:30 A.M.	TINY TOTIS
	* 12:00-1:30 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME
	* 2:30-8:00 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	* 7:15-9:00 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME
	12:00-2:45 P.M.	ADULT SKATING
<b>THURSDAY</b>	8:00-10:00 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME
	9:00-10:45 A.M.	ADULT SKATING
	12:30-2:00 P.M.	TINY TOTIS
	* 3:30-5:00 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME
<b>FRIDAY</b>	* 7:15-9:45 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME
	1:00-2:45 P.M.	ADULT SKATING
	5:15-9:45 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME
<b>SATURDAY</b>	* 3:15-4:45 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME
	8:15-9:45 P.M.	TEEN SKATING (13-18)
<b>SUNDAY</b>	* 1:15-2:45 P.M.	FAMILY SKATING
	* 2:00-7:45 P.M.	EVERYONE WELCOME
	8:00-10:00 P.M.	ADULT SKATING

\*FAMILY ADMISSION RATES APPLY. PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN UNDER 6 FREE IF ACCOMPANIED.

**SKATE RENTAL .65¢**



## CURLING

Leagues have now been formed and schedules start Monday, November 3rd.

**LEARN TO CURL**  
lessons start Saturday, November 1st.

**Family and Teen Curling**  
— Register for above during Open House — watch for notice on curling notice board.

*For further information please call*

# 595-SWIM

OAK BAY RECREATION CENTRE



MONDAY MAGAZINE—November 28, December 4, 1977

# People

## THE HOUSE THAT DUNC BUILT

Oak Bay's Dunc Russell may be unassuming, but he leaves plenty of evidence of his work around



By MICHAEL NEUFELD

**E**VERYBODY OUT there loves Dunc Russell—at least, that's the way it looks. But more often than not, the unassuming director of the Oak Bay Recreation Centre wishes they'd stop. When he reads this he says he's going to be embarrassed and disappointed. Embarrassed, because it's mostly about him, and disappointed, well... that's how he described himself when he discovered this article was to be written. Sorry about that!

The simple fact is that the mass activity centre he runs, located just over the Oak Bay border near Fort and Foul Bay, has been an astonishing success since it opened in October 1975.

In its first year of operation more than a million people passed through its bright yellow doors!

And a lot of people, including Oak Bay mayor Brian Smith, municipal recreation commissions chairman Ronald Campion, and the lake, are not in the least bit hesitant about crediting the success of the centre to its very modest director, Dunc Russell.

They're a lot less hesitant than Russell in himself. Grateful though he is for such accolades, he declines to accept the credit.

He also gratefully declined an interview. In fact, when he learned the opportunity of his getting into the winter—which meant the government was willing to 'top-up' the cost of labor during the slack winter months.

But it would take more than money, it would require the brains of someone expert in the parks and recreation business: someone experienced in starting from scratch, in developing new and broad concepts in recreation and with an established reputation. Someone like Dunc Russell in Fort Albert.

In 1962, Russell was 42 years old, living in New Westminster and working as a liaison representative for B.C. Hydro, the firm he had been with for 20 years. His real attraction, however, was to what Mayor Smith calls "the most exciting business there is," namely helping people to relax and recreate.

Russell had been chairman of the New Westminster Recreation Commission, member of the Board of Directors of the PNE, vice-president of the Queen City Minor Hockey League, the Minor Baseball League, and the

Who says fitness can't be fun?  
DUNC RUSSELL

Continued on page 16



THE OAK BAY RECREATION CENTRE'S

"TENNIS PLACE"

The Tennis Place is the newest addition to Greater Victoria's leisure facilities and will provide an excellent opportunity for the citizens of Greater Victoria to learn the lifetime skill of tennis. The Programs in the Tennis Place have a recreational rather than competitive emphasis and, therefore, the main objective of the program is to provide all participants with a healthy introduction to this lifetime sport. Something to remember is that tennis is a game for both the young and old, for both guys and gals, and for the skilled as well as the not so skilled. It is a game that is played worldwide and everyday more and more people are presented with the opportunity to learn the game. It is hoped that through a well planned program and sound instruction we can accommodate both the beginning player and the skilled player while, at the same time, provide fun and exercise for everyone!

The first phase of the Tennis Place, comprising four doubles courts covered with a removable air supported structure, has been completed and the final phase of the project, three activity courts and 44 car parking spaces, will be completed next year.

The Air Supported Structure or the "bubble" has been supplied by Thermo-Flex Incorporated from Salina, Kansas and has been designed to provide ample playing room on all four courts. An aluminum coated liner provides both insulating and reflective qualities and excellent acoustical qualities. The "bubble" is entirely supported by air pressure, without the aid of any internal or external frames. The heated air is supplied by one large heater-inflation unit and as additional doors open, the two auxiliary "blowers" are activated. A propane fueled, internal combustion driver blower provides support air during power shortages or mechanical breakdowns.

The Court Surfaces are another unique feature of the Tennis Place. They are constructed of porous concrete all hand laid, by All Weather Porous Concrete from Vancouver, B.C. The porous nature of the surface allows for excellent water absorption when the "bubble" is removed and considerably enhances the acoustical qualities of the structure. Possibly the best feature of the surface is its cushioned nature when play is in progress, caused by small pockets of air being momentarily trapped under the player's feet. The ball has a high bounce on the surface and the speed of play is medium slow providing an excellent surface for teaching tennis skills to all age groups.

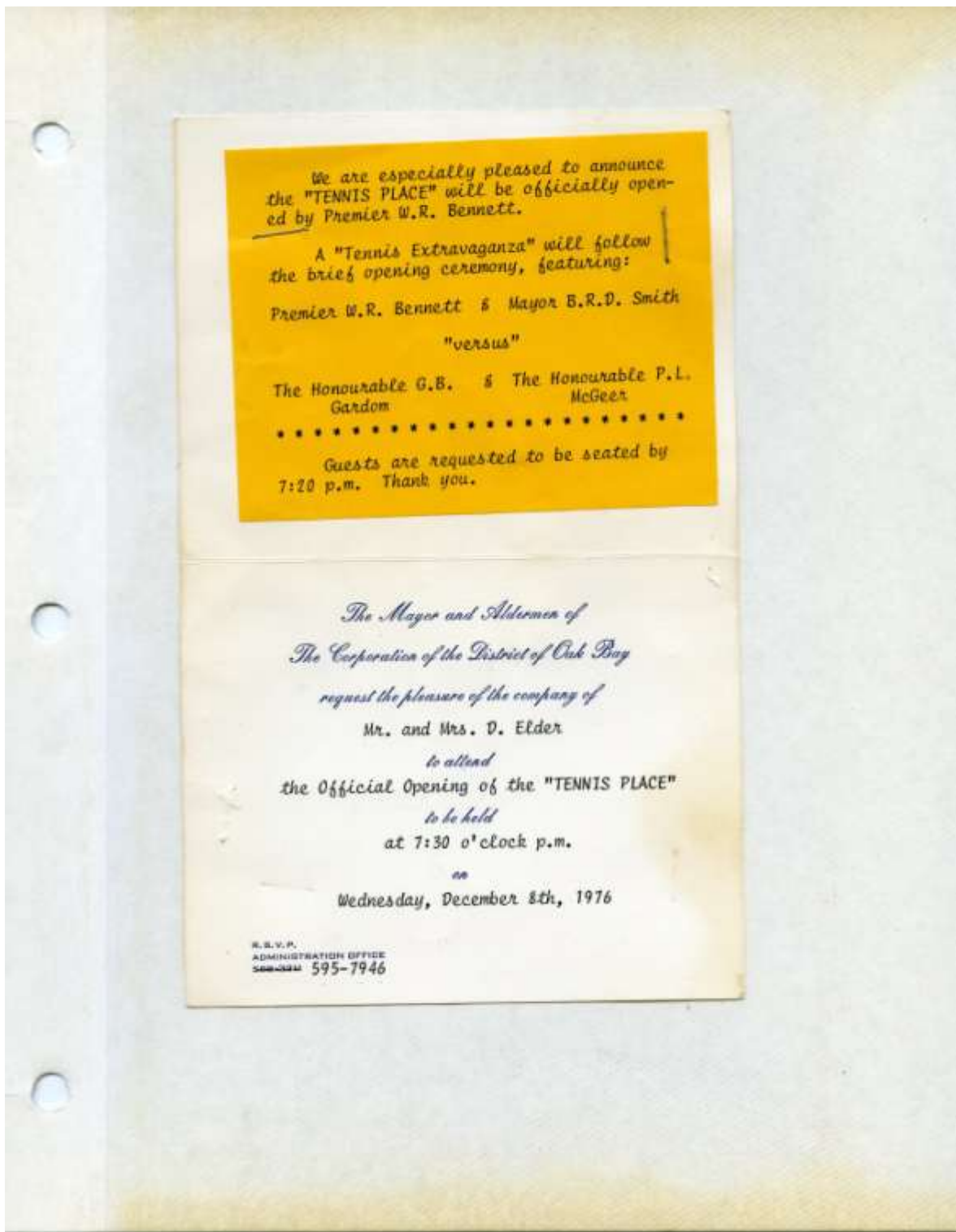
The General Contractor for the Tennis Place was Victoria Paving Company and the Electrical Sub Contractor was Beseor Electric. The indirect lighting is designed to provide 50 foot candles of illumination, as required for tournament play, and switching for each court can be individually controlled from the viewing area.

The financing formula for the Tennis Place includes \$198,747.00 from the Provincial Government, representing one third of the cost for the total project. As for the operational costs, it is hoped a position whereby revenues will offset expenditures will be achieved, with a profit projected.

In conclusion, it is hoped your newest leisure facility, the Tennis Place, will provide one more opportunity for the citizens of Greater Victoria to enjoy a lifetime skill - The Game Of Tennis!

For any additional information, please call 595-SWIM.

"STRIVE TO BE HAPPY"



1974

# 'Grandmother' of recreation retires

by Kathryn Crane

Anyone who has lived in Oak Bay for any length of time knows Isabel Craig. Parents, children, and senior citizens of the municipality have had their lives enriched by Isabel Craig. Now, with the selflessness she has exhibited throughout her career, Isabel has chosen to retire as of Dec. 31, "since I feel I cannot give a definite commitment for service on a long term basis".

That Oak Bay has evolved from a sleepy little community comprised mainly of houses and people to one where the recreational facilities will be among the finest in B.C. is due to the efforts of people like Isabel Craig.

In an attempt to express Oak Bay's appreciation, Mayor Brian Smith has announced that the social lounge in the new recreation center will be named "The Isabel Craig Lounge".

The lounge will be a "sort of family meeting place". It overlooks the swimming pool and curling rink, and features an open fireplace. It has not been determined exactly what facilities will be available in the lounge, but it will have the over-all atmosphere of a private club, epitomizing Isabel's philosophy of "recreation for everybody at a price they can afford".

Isabel's efforts in the recreational field span a period of over twenty years. She first became involved as a volunteer "Block Mother" at Willows Park. Mrs. Marg Beckwith was the co-ordinator of the Oak Bay Playground Association at that time. Eventually the parks became so busy that Isabel became a coordinator of parks along with Mrs. Beckwith. In 1957 the original Recreation Commission was formed, headed by Hugh Reston and comprised of "nine community minded" volunteers, including Isabel.

Their function was to establish the recreational needs of Oak Bay, and then do something about them. "For a year and a half, we did nothing but survey needs", Isabel said. It was discovered that the young people were relatively well off as far as utilization of existing facilities, but that there was nothing available for senior citizens.

A meeting was organized at the girl guide hall in Firemans Park. Eight attended.

"They had so much fun that they brought a friend to the next meeting", Isabel chuckled, and the organization presently boasts a membership of 1,800. Isabel went on to describe how every available nook and cranny within the municipality was utilized.

"We even used council chambers for a creative drama group", she said, pointing out that in Oak Bay a definite need for facilities was always well-established before construction began.

Dunc. Russell, superintendent of parks and recreation describes Isabel as "a pioneer in the development of an awareness in the community that parks and recreation are as essential to the welfare of the community as any other service."

"It is not too often that you meet people like Isabel, who have such purpose and work as doggedly to accomplish it", said Russell. Isabel had been instrumental in the development of Windsor Park, Henderson Park, the Senior Citizen Centre, and the now under construction recreation center, he said.

Isabel's office is temporarily located at the Senior Citizen Centre, a building she helped design. Anyone who has visited the building has an inkling of the personal satisfaction Isabel must feel about her career.

The building is staffed primarily by volunteers, and is blessed with a capable co-ordinator, Mrs. Maybelle Murphy. It is more than just a building where the elderly can pass some time.

It is a place where a feeling of warmth and cheerful activity seems to permeate the atmosphere. It is as much for this intangible feeling of "Community" as for the actual facilities that have been established that Oak Bay thanks Isabel.

How does a woman who has devoted a large part of her life to the well spent leisure time of others adjust to retirement?

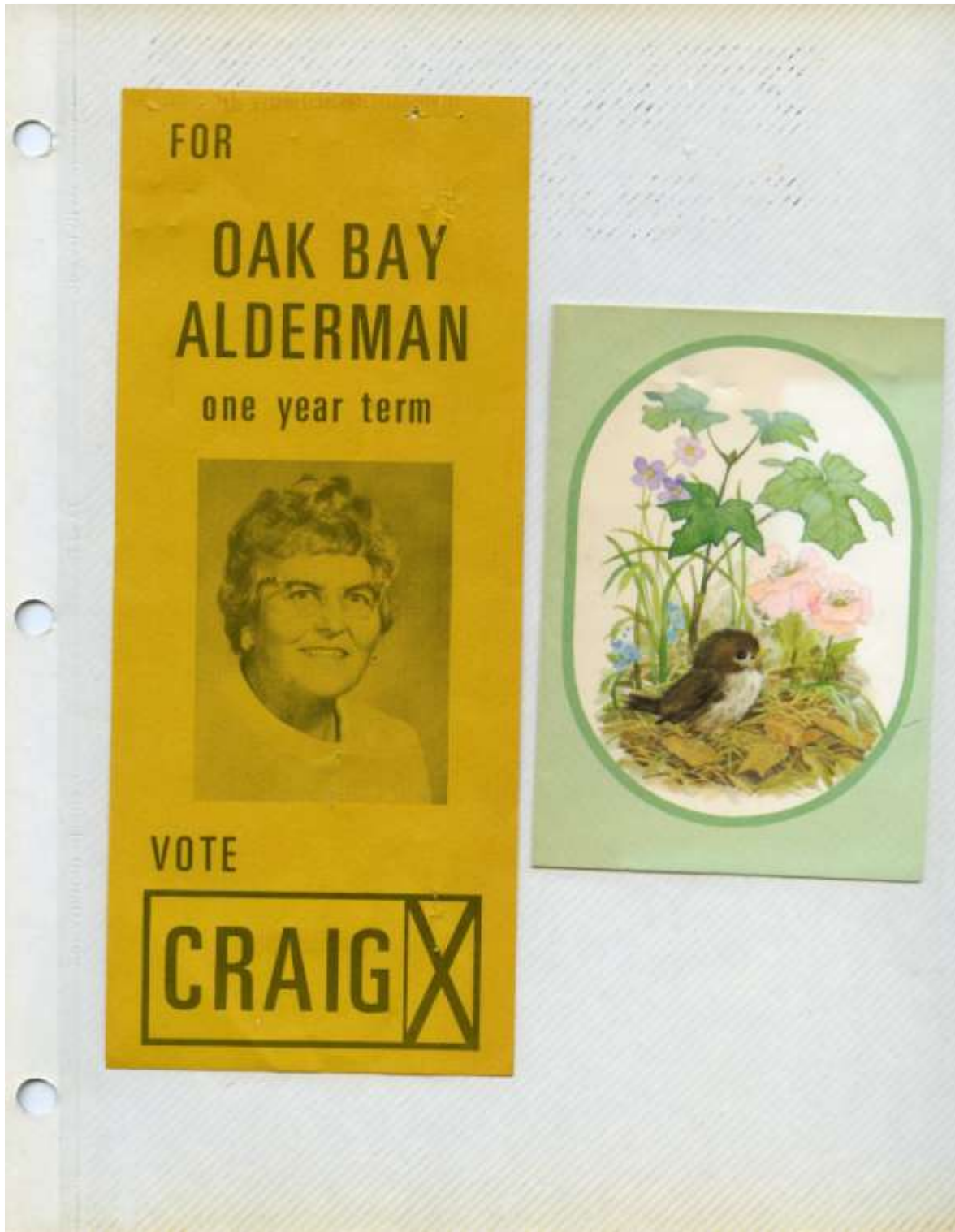
I asked Isabel how she planned to spend her own well-earned leisure now that it was about to become available.

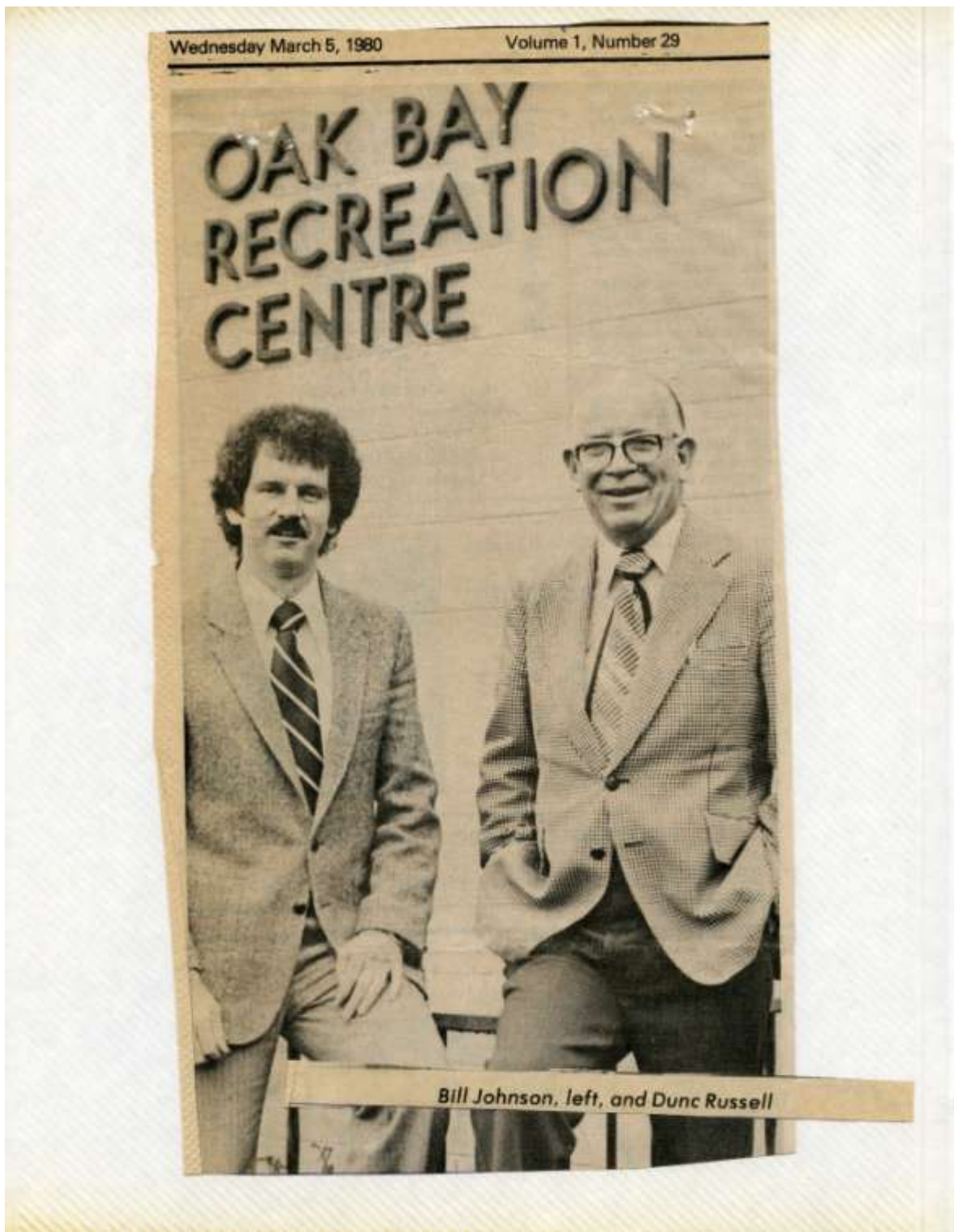
"I don't really have any plans as yet, my basement is full of papers and records, and I would like to sort them out and put them together in chronological order so that the people of Oak Bay can have some record of their history," she said.

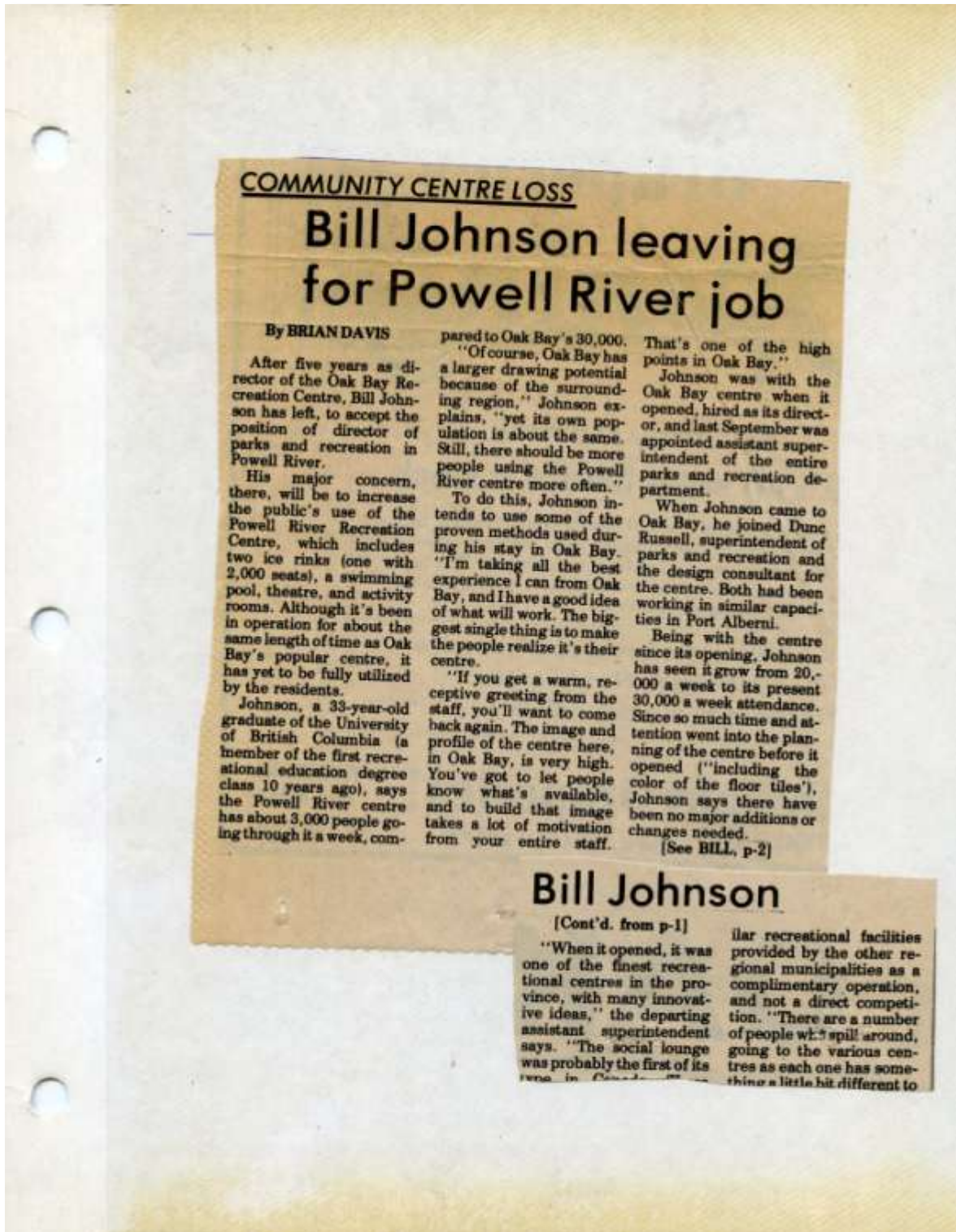


OAK BAY RECREATION co-ordinator Isabel Craig, who retires Dec. 31, chats to Mayor Brian Smith.

Barry Casson Photo







Lorna Elder was a Member of the Oak Bay Recreation Commission for six years.



THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF OAK BAY

MUNICIPAL HALL - 2167 OAK BAY AVENUE - OAK BAY, B.C.

V8R 1G2

E.H. HART  
Municipal Clerk and Administrator  
Phone 598-3311

February 5, 1976

Mrs. Lorna Elder,


Victoria, B. C.

Dear Mrs. Elder:

I wish to advise you that at a recent meeting of the Municipal Council, you were appointed for a further one year term on the Oak Bay Parks & Recreation Commission, being for the year 1976.

The time and thought which you give to this work is indeed appreciated.

Yours very truly,

  
Deputy Municipal Clerk

/jm  
cc Supt. of Parks & Recreation

Commission Members all had special duties with all the Recreational Activities in the Municipality.  
Lorna Elder was mainly involved with the Playground Activities, Curling and Tennis.  
Lorna skipped a rink at the Curling Club and played Tennis in the Bubble



OAK BAY LIONS president David Ackerman isn't throwing just a curve to Oak Bay Recreation Commission member Lorna Elder, because wrapped around that ball is a cheque for \$3,500. The Lions made the presentation last week to past president Jim Barnes as back catcher just in case Lorna failed to connect. — Ellis Shipman Photo.



THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF OAK BAY  
MUNICIPAL HALL - 2167 OAK BAY AVENUE - VICTORIA, B.C. V8R

(Miss) JEAN L. MACQUEEN  
Municipal Clerk  
Telephone: 598 - 3311

January 20, 1977

Mrs. Lorna Elder,

Victoria, B. C.

Dear Mrs. Elder:

At a meeting of the Municipal Council held on January 17, you were appointed for a one year term to the Oak Bay Parks and Recreation Commission.

I trust that you will be able to accept this appointment and may I express the appreciation of the Council for your work in the past on this Commission.

Yours very truly,

Municipal Clerk

cc: Superintendent of Parks and Recreation

JM/id

One of the most interesting experiences I participated in as a member of the Oak Bay Recreation Commission was when the Henderson 3 Par Golf Course was created. Dr. David Philip was the Commission Chairman. A lovely elderly lady appeared before the Commission with a request that she wished to donate a large sum of money to be used to establish a "sporting activity" in an Oak Bay Park in memory of her two brothers who were killed in action in World War Two. She was the wife of "Joker Patton". I knew a little of the background of Joker Patton. In the 1940's and 1950's the only places that liquor could be served was in Hotels or Club's. This gentleman formed the "British Public Schools Club" that people could join and enjoy a drink after work or on a social occasion. It was located on the top floor of one of the heritage buildings in Bastion Square.

The Commission Members received many requests from Sports Groups. One member had seen the par 3 Golf Course in Stanley Park, Vancouver and after studying all proposals chose spending this money on a par 3 Golf Course. The Henderson Park Recreation Center was already established to run the Course so no tax payer's money was needed. The Henderson Park 3 Par Golf Course has been very successful for all ages and a great money maker for the Municipality.



