



Dollars & \$ENSE

What's happening in Our Community

JULY 2025



Faces Anchored in our Community

By Michael Robinson

Written in part by Marina Sacht (used with permission) Marine Volunteers Honoured, Take 5, March 2025

I want to tell you a secret: I love Ladysmith.

I didn't expect to feel this way when I moved here almost six years ago. I grew up in Nanaimo, and I liked where I lived so I figured I'd feel the same about Ladysmith. But I was wrong. I don't just like it here, I love it.

I love the scenery. I love seeing busy streets and shops full of people. I love the smiles on so many faces. I even love the people who still haven't figured out how to use the traffic circle (there are sooo many). In short, I love the community vibe that makes this town feel alive.

When my house was being built (shout out to Brian Childs Construction), Brian thanked me for choosing them. At first, I thought, "Well, of

course you're thankful, I'm paying you a lot of money." But that wasn't it. He reminded me that every dollar I spent supported his employees, which supported their families, which supported local shops, which strengthened the whole community. I've never forgotten that.

At LDCU, we support our Community. And when we talk about the importance of Community — it's more than just a word in our tagline. What we're really talking about are the people. The faces.

So today, I want to introduce you to some of the faces who make our community stronger in ways you might not even see: the team at Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue Station 29.

Recently, I had the pleasure of touring their base and chatting with Sue Wisely and President Larry Feagan about this remarkable volunteer crew.

2024 Highlights

RCMSAR is run completely with community volunteers, devoting countless hours to training, on-call rescues operations and other services.

Our volunteer crews are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

31

Active Volunteers
5 Coxswains

50

Missions
Completed

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93

On the water
training
sessions

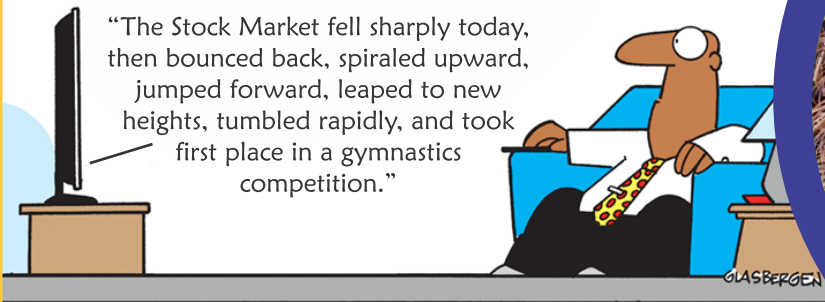
97

Classroom
Training
Sessions

- Kayak Emergencies
- Persons in Water
- Sinking Vessels
- Collisions & Groundings
 - Break-downs
 - Missing Persons
- Medical Emergencies
 - Derelict Vessels
 - Towing
- Persons in Distress
- Pollution & Hazard



Photo Bob Burgess/Take 5



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"There's nothing quite like getting that call at two o'clock in the morning," Sue told me. "It's not the same as a sunny afternoon in the middle of summer but every mission has its lessons, and it's always worth it to know you're helping people come home safe."

Sue knows how quickly things can go wrong on the water. She joined Station 29 in 2019 after a tragic local accident and has since served on over 100 missions—responding to medical emergencies, fires, capsized boats, and missing boaters, often in rough conditions. Her message is clear: Wear a lifejacket. Be ready. Respect the water. A few simple choices can mean the difference between life and tragedy, something they see firsthand every time they're called out.

Station 29, part of the Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue network, is the busiest rescue station in BC. In 2024 alone, they completed 50 rescue missions, staying ready 24/7 to help anyone in trouble on the water. Their hard work was honoured this year when Deputy Station Leader Ross Davis travelled to Ottawa on February 26 to accept the prestigious National Emergency Management Exemplary Service Award from the federal government recognizing the station's outstanding contribution to marine safety and emergency response.

But their work goes far beyond answering distress calls. These volunteers maintain and repair their boats, run safety drills, check life-saving gear, and train constantly so they're always ready. They also run community programs like "Kids Don't Float," which provides free loaner lifejackets at local marinas, and they give safety talks to help prevent accidents before they happen.

Of course, all of this takes resources and strong community support. Fuel alone cost the station nearly \$12,500 last year, and right now they're facing extra costs to complete a major refit of their main rescue vessel, the Spirit of James Bay, which is undergoing a 10-year overhaul.

Congratulations to Emma Allain and Ben Cram. Presented by Megan Dougan, these awards celebrate your hard work and bright futures ahead. Well done!



Brooke Orr, LCUI Manager, is LCUI Insurance Agencies Comm Sophia Toye. This \$1,500 award is for pursuing academic or vocational training at a secondary institution and receiving community involvement through school activities, or club



Congratulations to Zach Silverman, recipient of the \$6,000 John D. ... awarded for his outstanding achievement and dedication to involvement. Presented by



Michael Dean



ABOVE: Kathy Holmes from the Arts Council of Ladysmith accepts a \$1,200 cheque in support of local arts initiatives.

Now showing on our Gallery Wall

in Partnership with Ladysmith Art Gallery

Michael Dean is a Vancouver Island-based painter whose work captures the spirit of the West Coast's working waterfronts. Originally from Lancashire, England, he has painted for over four decades, creating finely detailed oil and watercolour pieces inspired by the shifting light, reflections, and vessels of coastal life. From his Ladysmith studio, Dean continues to honour the people, boats, and harbours that define the maritime character of the Island.



Lake in Cedar
Original Oil
Approx 36"x42"



ABOVE: LDCU presents LRCA Executive Director Carmen Barclay (left) with a \$1,500 cheque in support of Concerts in the Park.

RIGHT: Michael Robinson congratulates Staff Choice winners Annie and Julia for their outstanding creativity in the Sunny Photo Contest—their imaginative entry truly captured the spirit of fun and community.





“Thank You and Congratulations on your retirement, Connie.”

We extend our heartfelt thanks and warmest congratulations to Connie Forrest as she celebrates her retirement. Since joining us in March 2014, Connie has served with dedication, integrity, and exceptional leadership as a Senior Manager and Vice President of Finance.

Her commitment and steady guidance have left a lasting impact on our organization and everyone who had the pleasure of working alongside her. We wish Connie all the best as she begins this well-earned new chapter, may it be filled with relaxation, adventure, and everything she enjoys most.

Congratulations, Connie, and thank you for everything!

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Behind the scenes, the Ladysmith & District Marine Rescue Society works hard to raise the funds needed to keep the boats seaworthy and the crew ready for the next call. The station also welcomes new recruits each year (no marine experience needed) along with volunteers who help with maintenance, fundraising, and community outreach.

As Ross Davis says, “It's great recognition for the station and for our members, because everybody's involved in what we do, from training and drills to fundraising and public safety outreach. It all comes back to community and keeping people safe on the water—the faces we see, and the faces we don't.”

If you'd like to help, visit rcmsar29.com to donate, learn more or find out how to volunteer. You can also follow RCMSAR Station 29 on Facebook to see their amazing work in action.