



IN THE SPOTLIGHT - DECEMBER 2017

Campbellton is the birthplace of Campbell River, with settlements dating back to the late 1800's. The river that runs through it was named for a ship surgeon, Dr. Samuel Campbell, and the town of Campbell River was named in 1907 following the construction of the first post office.

Since its inception, Campbellton has been a gathering place. It is where north, south and west island highways converge, and where legendary salmon run upstream. It is the home of the recently-lost historic Quinsam hotel, and one of the entrances to the beautiful city of Campbell River.

Campbellton has undergone many changes over the past several decades, and more recently, has appeared to be treading water as Campbell River expanded. However, residents and entrepreneurs in Campbellton have been rowing against the tide, working hard to improve the area through a variety of actions. In particular, more businesses have recently set up shop in Campbellton, and the community is starting to band together to create change. Read on to learn how, and to meet some local Campbellton businesses that may just surprise you.

CAMPBELLTON



DID YOU KNOW...YOU CAN GET A GREAT COFFEE IN CAMPBELLTON?

Kris Nesbitt and his dad entered the coffee business in 2005, giving away free samples to shoppers in Ironwood Mall. They opened up their first coffee shop there, and moved Nesbitt's Island Coffee to Shoppers Row five years later. While business was good, the father and son team had a dream that simply couldn't be realized at that location. They wanted to own their own building and create a multi-business space that would offer customers a diversified experience.

"We weren't able to purchase a building where we were," says Kris, "so we decided to move to Campbellton, where it was kind of 'untouched', just like Shoppers Row when we first showed up."

Since making the move, Nesbitt's has done a lot of work to their location. Renovations both inside and outside the building have been underway for over a year. The result is a cozy coffee shop with a licensed outdoor patio, perfect for summertime visitors. They are located on the corner where the two Island Highways meet, right at the northbound bridge. Kris says that this is a great spot to catch people coming into Campbell River from both north and southbound roads.

Building a Community, One Step At A Time

The Nesbitt's team has been working towards that goal since buying their current location, as well as the adjacent building. They hope to attract more businesses by creating a new, updated space that will attract customers and incentivize other businesses to come to Campbellton. Currently, they share a location with Destiny River Adventures and Unsugared Confectionary, and have high hopes for the future of their shared business space.

"Instead of having just the 2 businesses on that corner, we have upgraded the space for potentially 8 businesses," says Kris of the



renovations. They've also beautified the buildings with a new coat of exterior paint, and are waiting for the return of the nice weather to do more. "We'd like to plant some trees, flowers, put in more planter boxes. There's only so much time in a day, unfortunately, and only so much that we can do!"

"Our long-term goal is to bring more business into Campbellton," Kris explains. "It's an investment in the community that we think is important."



One of their most popular changes has also been the simplest. “Have you ever noticed that there’s nowhere to sit in Campbellton?” Kris asks. “So what we’ve done is put a nice bench right out front. It’s a place where you can rest, people watch, relax, and there’s no pressure to come in and buy something just to sit down. Folks appreciate it.”



Wei Shae

“Interest from other businesses in coming to Campbellton is expanding,” says Kris with optimism. “It’s all about baby steps. We will get there together.”

already produced recommendations for business and residential revitalization projects for Campbellton. “We have a world-class river right there,” says Kris.



The Possibilities Are Limitless

Kris brings his attention to detail and sincere desire to improve Campbellton for everybody to all of the projects he is involved in. He’s been collaborating with the Campbellton Neighbourhood Association to bring some interactive art to the area, such as an artist’s map of Campbellton and the riverfront. He is also looking forward to the completion of ‘steampunk art’ sculptures currently being designed, which will stand outside specific businesses.

“I think they’re going to be really cool, and a big draw for people to come and move around Campbellton, to look at all of the art,” he says. Kris is also excited about an ongoing collaboration between a group of geography students from Vancouver Island University and the Campbellton Neighbourhood Association. The partnership has already produced recommendations for business and residential revitalization projects for Campbellton.



“It’s such an epic place and nobody knows it’s there! To get people to Campbellton, we have to improve river access.”

Nesbitt’s has been in business for over 13 years, and Kris admits that moving to Campbellton was a challenge, “almost like starting from scratch again.” But his passion for great coffee, community and collaboration has helped him to really dig his teeth into all of these projects.

DID YOU KNOW...THAT THERE ARE 'MUSSELS & MORE' IN CAMPBELLTON?

The story of how Jan and Mike Sell built their beautiful, family-run business reads almost like a fairy-tale. Jan, a born and bred Campbell Riverite, fell in love with pottery over 40 years ago. Her artist's mind wanted to create something both beautiful and functional that people could have in their homes. Inspired by the beauty of the West Coast, Jan created the now-iconic Mussel Shell dish, imagining a line of seashell-inspired pottery dishes stretching into her future.



Enter Mike Sell, also a lover of the West Coast. He was working on commercial fishing boats when he met Jan and, together, they started to turn Jan's dream into a reality. The business that began in their kitchen has turned into the highest volume-producing pottery studio in Canada. Daughter Erin and her fiancé Blair are also integral parts of the Mussels and More team, participating in all aspects of the business.

“The business is running better than it ever has since Erin and Blair came on board,” says Jan. “Being family-run is a big part of why we have been so successful!”

The business also boasts a beautiful gift shop, which has become a destination for people visiting Campbell River, and the line of seashell dishes now includes dinnerware, serving bowls, mugs and platters.

Doing Business in Campbellton

Mussels and More first moved to a warehouse in Campbellton over 14 years ago, and have been in

their current 11,000 square foot location for 10 years. And that location is hard to miss!

“Our mural has been a huge draw for people,” Jan says.

“I remember when I started painting it, I'd barely finished the first starfish before people were stopping to ask me what I was doing, and about the business.



“Our sales jumped about 40% after it was finished!”

Visitors and tourists are drawn by the colourful mural to browse the gift shop, and locals know it’s a great place to pick up a special gift for birthdays and holidays.

The studio is also uniquely decorated throughout the year, sporting Canada flags for July 1st and a 30-foot Christmas tree on the roof at this time of year. Jan hopes that, by expressing themselves through beautifying their building, they will inspire other businesses in the area to do the same, saying, “Campbellton just needs a little more beauty.”

When asked what she likes about operating her business in Campbellton, Jan doesn’t hesitate before answering, “I love that it’s a thoroughfare. We meet so many people, both from here and away, that are passing by. They are going camping, fishing, to the suspension bridge, or for a hike. Those activities are what inspires our products and our business.”



The Future of Mussels and More

Today, Mussels and More is half wholesale and half retail, with retail set to increase. “We are really excited to be expanding our retail space next year,” says Jan. “More room for beautiful gifts!” The studio is also a convenient FedEx ‘at-hold’ location, holding FedEx packages for people in the community. Finally, the business continues to make a name for itself across Canada and internationally. Their handmade products can be found in stores throughout North America, and they continue to receive orders and ship items to customers around the world.

“We love that we can bring attention to Campbell River, and to Campbellton,” says Jan with a smile. “We love this place and want to help other people love it too.”

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DID YOU KNOW...YOU CAN GET 'UNSUGARED' TREATS IN CAMPBELLTON?

Teena Sieben is relatively new to Campbell River, but she already has people talking about her new bakery, UnSugared Confectionery. Located next to Nesbitt's Coffee in Campbellton, UnSugared aims to provide sweet treats that are diabetic friendly and allergy-friendly.

"When I first moved here from Alberta in the spring of 2015, I decided to take the summer to spend time with my parents, who I hadn't lived near for 20 years," Teena explains. "My dad has Type 2 diabetes, and he also has a major sweet tooth. So I began creating different treats that satisfied his craving for sweets without compromising his diabetes."

Teena's background is in industry. She is a former Chemical Technologist and Certified Water Treatment Plant Operator. However, she was having difficulty finding work as the summer came to an end. She realized that she would either have to go back to school or figure out a new career on her own. At the same time, more people were



hearing about her delicious no-sugar-added desserts and were asking her for samples of their own. "I realized that there was a need here that I could fill," she says. And so UnSugared was born, opening its doors only 8 months ago.

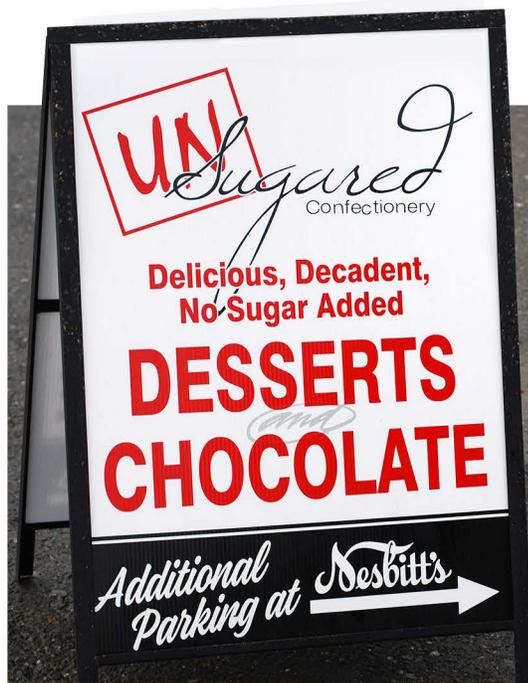
A 'Sweet' Idea

To be clear, UnSugared is not a 'sugar-free' bakery. The business rests on its no-sugar-added philosophy, meaning that everything is made using sugar alternatives, although some fruit is used in certain products.



"I use sweeteners such as Splenda, stevia and sugar alcohols like erythritol," Teena explains. "Many people aren't aware that alternatives like agave are still added sugar. A large part of my business is helping to educate folks on what they are actually eating."

Teena says that only about half of her customers are diabetic; the other half are simply people looking for low-carb and low-sugar alternatives. A primary aspect of the business is the 'single serving' approach - no need to buy a whole cake when you only want one slice. This goes back to Teena's desire to satisfy somebody's sweet tooth without enabling over-indulgence, which can be dangerous for somebody with diabetes.



“I offer a very tailored experience to my customers,” she says. “Individualized options are widely available and I always try my best to meet any dietary requirement.” Teena is constantly experimenting, exploring gluten-free, nut-free and dairy-free recipes. Her store also boasts a selection of specialty items, such as low-carb bread, pastas, crackers and chips. She happily shares information with customers about where she finds these products, and will order in an item specifically for a customer if she doesn’t have it on the shelf. “I love to educate people and help them anyway I can. It’s all about filling a need for somebody.”



Becoming a Part of the Campbellton Business Community

Teena chose to set up shop in Campbellton for a number of reasons, but the biggest one was simply wanting to be a part of the growing business community.

“I was told about all of the projects that are underway to beautify the area and make it more business-friendly, and I wanted to be a part of that,” she says. Campbellton is currently undergoing a shift in how it presents itself, with many businesses updating their storefronts and freshening up outdoor spaces. When asked about other ways Campbellton could become

more attractive to shoppers and tourists, Teena points out that improving walkability would be a great start.

“Give people a reason to come here, and the entire community will benefit”.

“Businesses need foot traffic. More benches along the sidewalks, maybe some trees, and better access to the river would be huge draws for people to come and walk around Campbellton. Give people a reason to come here, and the entire community will benefit.”



DID YOU KNOW...THAT THERE IS A CAMPBELLTON NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

For nearly 7 years, a dedicated group of Campbellton residents, business owners and volunteers have worked tirelessly to beautify and improve the place where they live and work. The Campbellton Neighbourhood Association (CNA) was jointly formed in 2011 by Councillor Ron Kerr, Destiny River Adventures founder Jim de Hart, and current CNA Chair Brian Shaw. “We wanted to help solidify the identity of the community,” says Brian, “as well as boost its image a bit.”

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The Association has completed a variety of projects over the past several years. For example, a community garden was built on 15th Avenue entirely by volunteers in the spring of 2016. They also installed planter boxes along Highway 19A and filled them with colourful flowers, bringing a sense of freshness and vitality to the area when they bloom.

Several exciting projects are also currently underway. An interactive feature for the northern entrance to Campbell River is in Phase 1 of development. “We are collaborating with the City and with Sealand Aviation to install a float plane on the green space that sits on the northern entrance,” Brian explains. “The plane is being assembled by Sealand and we are working with McElhanney Group and the City to assess the green space for proper installation.” Phase 2 of the



project will see a parking lot constructed on-site to allow visitors to stop and view the float plane.

Improving Urban Spaces in Campbellton

There is also ongoing collaboration with geography students at Vancouver Island University. The students, under the direction of Dr. Pamela Shaw, have been assessing Campbellton since 2012, and have created an ‘urban design’ action plan to assist the Association with their efforts.

“The Action Plan lays out a visualization of what Campbellton could become,” says Brian. “It includes detailed plans for sidewalk improvements, tree planting and modern infrastructure design, such as moving the power lines underground.” The geography students are also involved in helping map out the Rescue the River project, which aims to improve access to the world-class Campbell River for residents and visitors. The City has provided a \$15,000 grant, to be matched by the Association, for the implementation of a pocket park at the Spruce St. riverfront.

“The plan is in place for that particular project, and we should see it completed by this coming spring,” notes Brian. “The river is such a huge draw for Campbellton, and Campbell River. We want to showcase it to the world.”

Finally, a ‘Steampunk Art’ installation project is currently in ideation stages. “We want to bring quality artistic pieces to the area. They will be specific to each business they stand in front of, inviting people to stop and appreciate them,” Brian says of the project.

**The Campbellton Renaissance:
A Community Effort**

All of these projects aim to bring beauty and a sense of community back to Campbellton. When asked about his involvement, Brian simply states, “Campbellton is the oldest of the villages of Campbell River, and deserves to be appreciated for its heritage.”

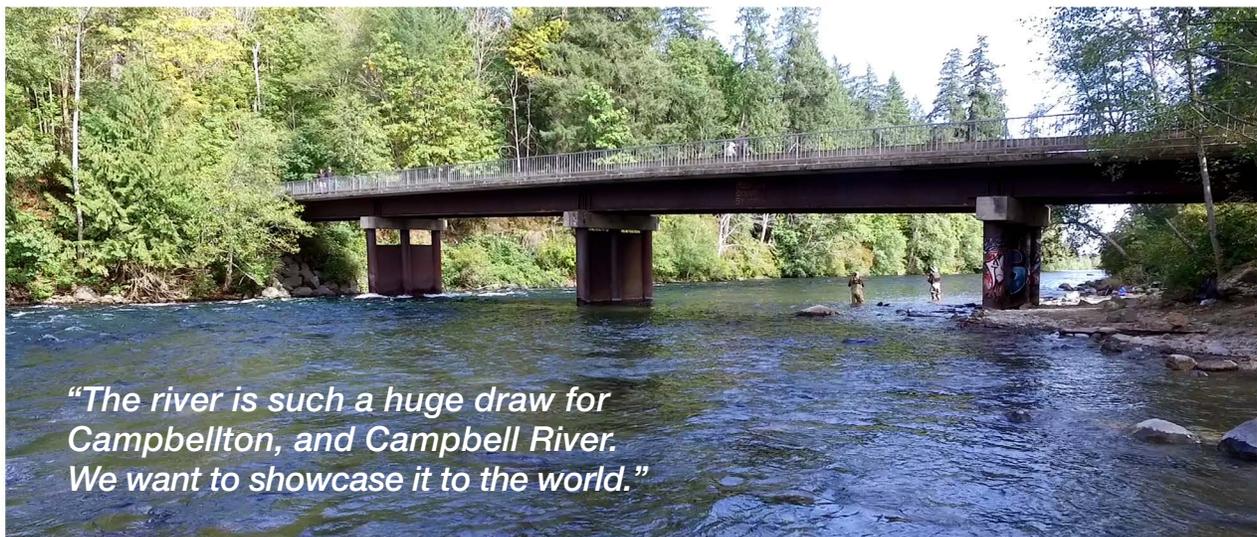
Brian dedicates himself to chairing the Association while continuing to work at his day job as branch manager of Mackie Research Capital, located in the heart of Campbellton. All of the projects are conceived and implemented by dedicated volunteers from around the Campbellton community. However, all Campbell Riverites are invited to participate in the revitalization efforts.

“We have our Annual General Meeting at the end of January,” says Brian, “and we invite everybody that’s interested to come out to that and see all of the exciting things happening in the coming year. We currently have between 30 and 50 dedicated participants in the Association, and we would love to see that number grow.” The date and time of the AGM will be announced in the coming months; email info@campbellton.net or get in touch with them on Facebook.

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Image 574 courtesy of the Museum at Campbell River



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Image 10226 courtesy of the Museum at Campbell River



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