

To the Editor:

Life Port Alberni Style - 201

We had a recent shock here in Port Alberni, BC, quite unlike the one that occurred 50 years ago – March 28, 1964, when the great Tsunami entered our inlet destroying many homes and businesses; yet sparing all lives in its wake. The shock this time didn't originate off the coast of Alaska; instead it came to us via an article in a recent edition of "MoneySense" providing a different sort of jolt to the community, albeit without the physical destruction of March 28, 1964.

The article used numeric statistics including housing prices, income levels, unemployment ranks, inaccurate population #'s, etc., and through that an algorithm of some sort was applied that positioned us in spot number 201 of 201. And, to complicate the mathematics, the study included communities outside of Port Alberni, some as far as three hours away, under our city umbrella; hence the population inaccuracies.

Since that date many members of our community - from the guy at the local coffee shop to the woman getting her hair done, to us at the Chamber of Commerce, and of course right up to the local City Officials, staff and elected, have been hit with countless emails, phone calls, and general conversations wondering how anyone, anywhere, could conjure up such 'nonsense!'

Here are the real facts for your consideration and further reporting and analysis. In our opinion the report is quite inaccurate. Yes, some of the numbers and statistics may in fact be valid; as example, we do have some of the most affordable housing prices in Western Canada. And yes, our average property taxes are less than \$1250 per year, yet we have a new 60 million dollar High School that clearly ranks as one of the best not only in BC, but in this great Country we all call home. We have a modern full facility Hospital along with several Care-homes, and a very well respected Hospice. We have live music and theatre, our recently resurfaced Track facility, an Athletic Hall for basketball & other indoor activities, a Rugby Centre, countless Sports Fields, a Pool, and 2 NHL size arenas, one of which houses a Junior A "Community owned" hockey franchise; The Alberni Valley Bulldogs. And speaking of community....how many on your list can boast of hosting pretty much every Provincial event? Port Alberni through an incredible volunteer base has hosted the BC Summer Games, BC Winter Games, BC Special Olympics, and BC Senior's games; and we didn't stop there. No, we invited the world by hosting the U17 hockey challenge not long ago. Like every community on your list, we too host annual events that we're proud of; each of which bring thousands of visitors to our fine city. In fact, on the heels of our annual Salmon Derby comes our Award Winning Fall Fair followed soon thereafter by our Toy Run....feel free to google it, especially if you enjoy a "bike" ride!

Since we host so many tournaments and other events, we at the Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of the entire business community, and the residents of Port Alberni, would like to invite your writer out to spot number 201 to see for himself. We'll find him accommodation, on us, some excellent food, be it Seafood, Bavarian, Moroccan or whatever else suits his fancy. We'll tour him through some of our long term businesses including furniture stores, two in particular, that combined have over a century in

business; family operations still competing successfully against National Chains. He'll meet long-time residents who love this valley and who've never left, or those who've left only to return to their paradise. We'll take him along our new Centennial Pier and were he here today....he'd be filling his camera with pictures of Orca's swimming by – downtown (uptown) Port Alberni. But don't worry if he misses the Orca's; we have an abundance of local natural wildlife that we're pleased to share our city with, visible most any time of the year. And you know because we're happy to host, and we're happy to boast, we'll invite a second person from MoneySense to join him for a wonderful Port Alberni Adventure Experience. As our guests, they'll see the Port Alberni culture cultivated through years of business passion and community involvement that is unique to few locations in Canada. Port Alberni is one of those places.

We welcome the opportunity to share Port Alberni with you (MoneySense). We guarantee that once you've traveled our Steam Train to Canada's only Steam Powered Saw-Mill, once you've enjoyed the Alberni Inlet on board the MV Frances Barkley, or once you've swam the warm clear waters of nearby Sproat Lake you'll not only re-evaluate the suspect algorithm, you'll likely spend an extra day here looking at property in Port Alberni. And the last thing; when we're off work in Port Alberni; we're home minutes later; in fact, we can be fishing, golfing, hiking, sailing, or simply enjoying a glass of locally produced wine all within half an hour of leaving work. Oh, and by the way - we golf, hike, bike and jump on our ATV's, all year long; including January! Plus, as Canada's ULTIMATE FISHING TOWN – we're on the water with our traps and/or downriggers 365 days of the year, plus an extra day every four years! I don't know about your readers, but to us in Port Alberni; it is about the culture, the lifestyle, the affordability, the environment, and the opportunities.

On behalf of the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce I welcome Mr. Brown and a colleague to Port Alberni, BC, to Experience Vancouver Island and what we believe is the jewel of it. Find me at www.albernichamber.ca and while on our site please take a moment to review a couple of our Adventure Videos; Mr. Brown may wish to pack along some toys for his visit!

Yours truly,

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