

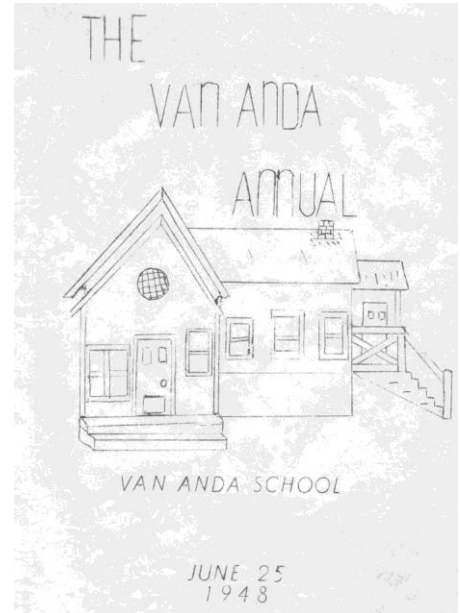
SCHOOL NEWSLETTER - 1947/48

When researching documents from the past it's sometimes the school's newsletters that reveal everyday life. Discovering the old school periodical *The Van Anda Echo* affords us a glimpse of activities in a coastal community in 1947/48.

The hand-coloured Gestetner-printed copies (selling for 2 cents) show how the two-room school (later Elks' Hall), its teachers, PTA and its 55 students helped to bring the community together.

As well as student poems and articles, the newsletters tell us about school life in Van Anda around 70 years ago. The Girls' Club was holding a "Shamrock Dance", the choir was awarded second place in the Powell River Music Festival and the "Bugle Band" finally received its drums from Vancouver. "Girls are learning to beat it out and will give the boys an earful."

It was too muddy to play softball. The grade 7 boys were building window boxes. In March three boys suffered attacks of appendicitis. A masquerade dance was planned for Valentines. Preparations were underway for May Day and a PTA picnic at Shelter Point featuring races and a parade. And, "the mumps" was going around.



Learning conditions were not ideal. Classes huddled around the wood stove on cold days, stomping their feet to "de-numb the tootsies." School equipment was supplied and maintained locally. The PTA painted tables, built bookcases, oiled the floor and funded magazine subscriptions. Electricity was only supplied (when available) on special occasions by Van Anda Mines so "picture shows" could be presented. Thanks were expressed to Beale Quarries for extending the playground area with truckloads of rock and sand.

The Echo also informed the greater community. It advertised union meetings, church services, dances ("PR Orchestra Box Social") and included the Gulf Lines schedule to Vancouver (in 5 hours!). Important social announcements included births, deaths, marriages, illnesses and news of recent visitors.

Citizens' viewpoints were discussed. Should the sawmill be reopened? How should the waterline be extended "over the hump"? Should Texada kids join the 5 cent chocolate bar strike? (Google it!)

Local merchants supported the newsletter with ads for chicken feed and seeds (Deighton's) while Macauley's coffee shop was "specializing in ice cream."

In post-war years, news provided by *The Van Anda Echo* was a vital part of the small community.