

## TEXADA WELCOMES THE WORLD

Texada residents were launched into a “whole new world” with the proliferation of “wireless” (radio) in the 1930’s.

Remote coastal camps, canneries and settlements welcomed the reprieve from isolation. It was now possible to hear a human voice or to listen to live concerts from far away (albeit through whistles and static!).

For 8 years Jim Spilsbury (of Savary Island) travelled the inner coast monthly selling and servicing radio telephones and receivers to remote locations.

When television reception (“like radio with pictures”) became available in the 1950’s south-facing Gillies Bay was in a good position to receive signals directly from KVOS (Bellingham), CBUT (Vancouver), CHEK (Victoria) and, sometimes, Seattle stations (KOMO, KING).

Residents gathered around small black and white screens to view wavering images while constantly adjusting the aerial to minimize the “snow” (interference).

In Van Anda the first serious attempt at improving community TV reception was spurred on by the desire to watch the Ripple Rock explosion live on April 14, 1958. A public meeting was held which resulted in the formation of an association to offer \$200 bonds to finance the \$8,000 needed for equipment. “They sold like hotcakes.”

A tower site on Volunteer Hill above town was chosen and a team of eager supporters cleared the pole lines and strung coaxial cable to each subscriber’s house. Another Texada community success story!

Residents were able to choose their TV sets from Bob McKay’s sales show room above Mary’s Cafe. RCA Victor floor models sold for \$300 to \$400.



In Gillies Bay in 1966, Texada Mines provided cable TV service from towers at the end of Sanderson Road to its bunkhouses and townsite families (\$5/month and \$3 for mine employees).

Upon closing in 1977 the mine turned the system over to the new Gillies Bay Community TV Association for one dollar. The TV tower site was purchased later for \$1,000.

The days of fuzzy TV test patterns accompanied by high-pitched humming are hard to imagine now as we take for granted today’s 24-hour multi-channel satellite TV networks. It’s interesting to look back at these milestones in Texada’s media history.