

## TEXADA FARMERS' MARKET - A HISTORY

The Sunday Farmers' Market has been a popular community activity for over 30 years.

It all started in 1991 when Dave Murphy and Lorraine Davies decided to sell their farm produce from the back of their truck at Van Anda's Centennial Service gas station.

Others were inspired by the concept and within two weeks they were joined by Amanda Martinson and Michael Poitras (selling fancy bread, cakes and cookies) and Neal Berjer (offering jewellery and Nepalese clothing).

The idea caught fire! By the end of the second year more vendors had joined and Edward Campfire (Jamie Nuotio) entertained with his original songs.

"It became a huge Sunday social event and a lot of fun," said Dave.

The market soon outgrew the gas station asphalt and, in its third year, the Regional District gave permission for it to set up at its present home - the Gilies Bay ballpark.

Plans were hatched to build a permanent structure. Marv Nyl designed and organized the project and Blubber Bay quarry supplied materials. Community volunteer work parties laboured and the present buildings were completed in 1998.

After Dave, a series of managers took over. Collecting the one dollar vendors' fee was Sheila Schippling, although a few chose to set up their tables for free in the "outlaw zone" just beyond the park.

As well as multiple offerings of baking, vegetables, preserves, soaps, arts and crafts and so much more, the Farmers' Market provided a wonderful summer/fall social event.

Adding to the fun, Dawn Hughes (manager since 2016) has also organized special contests to celebrate autumn : pie-eating, donut chews, pumpkin (now zucchini) weigh-ins (largest pumpkin? 660lb!), scarecrow making and exciting slug races. The market's mini "Fall Fair" also featured a "photo booth" with a backdrop of corn stalks and bales of hay.

Dawn feels that the market over the years has become even more of an important island social connection. "We're very proud of it," she said.

The Sunday Farmers' Market continues today bigger and better than ever! It is one more example, seen throughout Texada's history, of what can result when a great idea is combined with enthusiastic community support.

Peter Lock

Texada Island Heritage Society