

## Museum Musings September 2012

### Texada Recreation Centre - (the Complex that never was)

Imagine - a modern, two-story recreation complex complete with six lanes of bowling, billiards, shuffleboard, meeting rooms, caretaker's quarters on the ground level with a dance hall, club rooms, theatre and kitchen on the top floor - all right here on Texada with no ferries to catch!

This was the almost-realized dream of island residents in 1971 when W.S. Beale, general manager of Ideal Cement Company, offered to donate five acres of land for the site of a Texada recreation centre. The parcel was situated on a promontory at the SE end of Andy's field (half way between Van Anda and Gillies Bay). The proposed 60' by 150' building was estimated by Permasteel Engineering Ltd. to cost \$325,000. It was to be financed at a tax rate of \$4.50 per \$1000 assessed value with the majority of taxes to be borne by island companies.

R. Maxwell of National Bowling Company in a 1968 letter to N.A. Carlson of Ideal stated: "The inhabitants of Texada most certainly will welcome a recreation complex such as you propose ... they will not object to such charges ... we are dealing with an average monthly income of some \$500."

In fact, the idea was well-supported by island ratepayers. Before voting on the proposal the Powell River Regional District asked the Texada Island Community Society for a consensus of residents. Mail-in ballots resulted in an 86% YES vote.

However, the exciting vision was not to be. Powell River city reps on the regional board were supporting plans for their own recreation complex and the Texada submission was defeated. The Powell River Recreation Complex was the result. Who is to say now whether or not the outcome has proved to be the best for islanders.

Perhaps a good ending to the story came in an ironic comment made at the official opening ceremony of the Powell River Complex. A rural PR Regional representative said to the Texada director: "You know, you guys on Texada should build one of these!"

Peter Lock

Texada Island Heritage Society

