

## JOE KEMPE'S VANANDA STORE

For many generations of Texada's children a visit to "Mr Kempe's store" was a magical experience. From behind the candy counter Joe welcomed each one with a smile.

Clutching a dime in their hands, children would press their noses against the glass of the fascinating oak showcase. Who knew what special penny candy treats they might discover within?

Jawbreakers that revealed colour after colour as you sucked them. Dubble Bubble gumwrapped in a tiny comic. Licorice pipes with red candy embers. Giant gum balls, some almost too large to put in your mouth.



To adults, Joe's store was a hodgepodge of miscellany. One could find items that were thought impossible to obtain, often with their original 1950's price tag! From kerosene lamps to nylons to canning jars, Christmas decorations, rubber boots, greeting cards, wind chimes, yo-yos, hairnets, fishing lures, work clothes and more - Joe had it all!

A bell outside would summon Joe from his house in behind for only he knew where everything was stashed - on the over-stuffed shelves or, perhaps, hanging from the ceiling.

Joseph Kempe, born in 1908 in Germany (d. 2006), arrived on Texada in 1939. After working at Beale Quarries Joe bought (in 1947) Lowther & Young's general store and post office. The building, built by Pete Staaf in 1928, was located near the Van Anda wharf.

Joe hired a logger to drag it on skids uphill to his property on Copper Queen Street (diagonally across from the Texada Food Market). The skids broke and Joe was left by himself. Using a Gilchrist jack he patiently maneuvered the building onto the foundation he had prepared.

Joe's life on Texada was one of activity and service. From canvassing for the Heart Fund, selling Watkins and Tupperware products, landscaping the "Ideal Guest House", drumming for the dance band, showing kids' movies, there was little of Texada life that Joe was not a part of.

Our museum has Joe's vintage candy display case (built by Joseph Knittel Showcase Company of Quincy, Illinois). A huge photo of Joe standing behind the counter in his unique store reminds us of the service and kindness provided by this popular Texadan.