

lifestyles & leisure

Mahatta River memory features in memoir

By Kathy O'Reilly

While he is a mainlander now, Larry Amstutz says he will always be an island boy.

Amstutz was at Cafe Guido in Port Hardy Oct. 30 to promote his new memoir and visit family.

Finding My Groove, Life, Love and Lyrics is a memoir that provides detailed accounts of the author's careers, and livelihoods, lessons, and loves of several generations of working people in the resource-based industries of British Columbia, with in-depth descriptions of how jobs were and are performed and how communities come together and splinter. The author provides equally detailed

accounts of his subsequent careers in broadcasting and business in Toronto, Vancouver, the Okanagan, and back on the Island. One of the stories in the book is Amstutz's memory of living in Mahatta River - located on the southwest portion of Quatsino Sound - as a child. "My dad was a cook in the logging camp in Mahatta River."

There's a road in now, but in those days, the only way of reaching the community was by float plane.

Amstutz's family lived in the isolated community for about year. "I think the main reason we left was because there was a tremendous storm one night, a huge storm, and we lived on

float houses, and they were cabled to the land, and in this big storm all the float houses broke away and they drifted away," he remembers.

"They rescued everybody off the floats in the middle of the night in the raging storm and then we had to live in the bunkhouses," he said.

"They cleared enough rooms for the families until they could find other accommodation. I think my mom said 'that's enough. It's time to move back to a place where we don't have to be floating away in a storm'."

That safe place was the Cowichan Valley where Amstutz's dad got a job cooking at a logging camp at the north

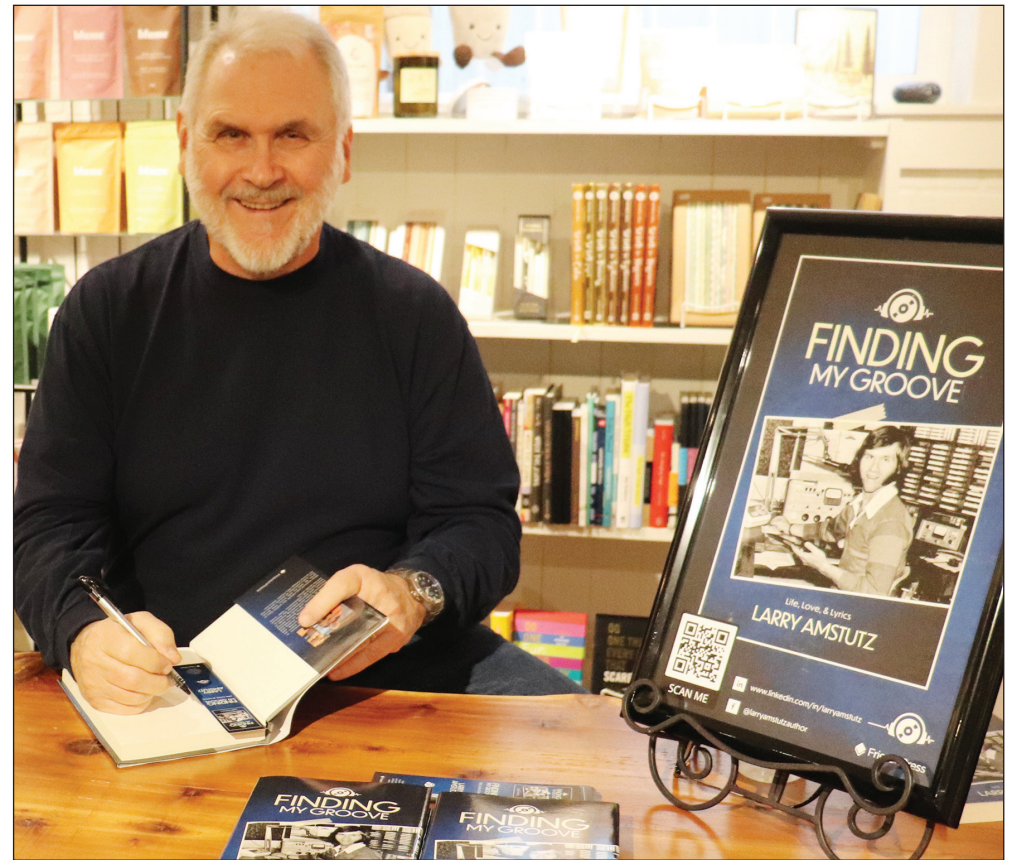


Photo — Kathy O'Reilly

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end of Cowichan Lake called Nitinat Camp 3.

"I lived there from when I was five until I was 18," Amstutz said. "I left high school, went to Vancouver to go into broadcasting school because that was my dream from when I was in Grade 5. I wanted to be a radio announcer."

Finding My Groove is partially about wanting to be an announcer and achieving that childhood goal.

When he was a teenager 16-18 years old, Amstutz, worked summers in the mining camp near Campbell River called Western Mines in Strathcona Park, "so, I have an affinity for the island."

His book starts with the statement that he will always consider himself an island boy even though he lives is 'Tsaw-

wassen (Delta) now.

When he comes to visit family, driving past logging trucks on the highway "reminds me of being a lad, of being young, and really ties me back to the island and I just feel a sense I'm home."

It is great for him to see that activity "that I miss, and I'd put the city behind me any day to come back and live on the island."

It took four months for Amstutz to write his memoir.

"I decided one day I was going to sit down and write. I got up at 5:30 in the morning and I would write for an hour and a half or two hours, and I did that every single morning for the next three or four months," he said. "Then I found a publisher and I have a book. The really cool thing is I've been

a reader since I was a kid. I love books, music, and books, and so I hung around a lot of libraries," Amstutz said.

"Now my book is in the Vancouver Island Regional Library system and it's in the Fraser Valley Regional Library system and the Greater Victoria Library system as well as local bookstores such as the Book Nook at Cafe Guido. So, to me, it's a dream come true to be able to write a book, and have it distributed in places that mean something to me."

Now retired, Amstutz lives in Delta, BC with his wife Trisha, their terrier Gus, and a collection of acoustic guitars including his prized Vintage 60's Fender Telecaster.

For more on the author visit www.larryamstutz.com.

North Island Community Services Society

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Please send the name and phone number for board member nominations (for self or others) to:

reception@nicommunityservices.ca

Nominations will be accepted until November 16th.



For more information: (250) 344-0546 or reception@nicommunityservices.ca

Meeting Information

Wednesday,
November 23

6:00pm at Cheslakees
Elementary School
2853 Mine Rd.

We are seeking nominations for six board members to help us provide an array of community-based child, youth, and family services.