

## Gerry Furney

One of the more prominent business members of our community is His Worship Gerry Furney, our mayor. While Gerry's roots are in Ireland, he can speak of the old days of Port McNeill, old days that go back to when our town was a logging camp. He and his wife Carmel, with their daughter Lisa and their son James seem to have a special spot in their hearts for this community. They've all made it their home and are involved in various visible ways in the community.

There are many things the citizens of our town admire about Gerry. Not only is he a thinking man, and a persuasive one at that, but he's also endowed with a good touch of common sense, and he has never lost his common touch. There are few people in town he does not recognize, and it is doubtful that there are any who don't recognize him. He can be seen at the local arena cheering on his grandchildren or admiring them at school concerts. He is officially recognized at ice carnivals, school graduation ceremonies, and many other local events. There are several of the town's improvements that have benefitted from Gerry's ideas and involvement. One of our elementary school's gymnasiums is just one example. Instead of a typical small elementary gym, we have a fabulous multipurpose facility that is used by old and young for all kinds of sporting events, by touring art groups, by choirs, by many other groups and even by federal and provincial elections. There is no question this superb facility came about through his foresight and involvement with the local school board. Respect for Gerry goes well beyond this town of close to three thousand. Among government and business people in the province he is highly regarded.

With this background in mind, who would suspect that Gerry is also a poet, and a good one? His style of poetry has been influenced by some of the leading eighteenth century writers most notably the Anglo-Irish dramatist, writer and poet Oliver Goldsmith. Gerry's poems extol the common man and many things we enjoy, but take for granted. One of his poems, *The Eating Place*, can be read in one of our local eateries. It speaks of the pleasure of enjoying a coffee and a good bite in a local place. In honor of one of his faithful employees who loved to tip a pint back on Friday after work and who embodies many of our locals' taste, Gerry wrote *Sam's Suds*. The poem gives us the flavor of Gerry's humor. Hans Christian Andersen and most people's reluctance to speak the obvious inspired him to write, *The Emperor's Clothes* which he concludes with these thoughts:

“It is a fact, still true today,  
Most people are afraid to say,  
What's really on their thoughtful mind?  
Instead they sit on their behinds.  
So we should not be scared to shout,  
If in our hearts we have some doubt,  
About the things our leaders say,  
In trying to lead us day by day.”

After the passing of a friend he wrote for his widow a special poem, “Carrying On”. It was a kind and thoughtful thing to do, and I know it took him hours longer than it would have to sign a card and with it pass on his condolences.

To me it would be a shame if many people could not enjoy Gerry's poetry, his humor and his observations of man's follies, and so I'm pleased that he would give us a taste of these on my website. The world will also soon be able to read his complete works in a book of poetry Gerry is getting published. In his unique style he has called it *Popcorn for Breakfast*.