

'A River Runs Through It' only if watchdog repaid with support

BLACK CREEK — My first introduction to the Oyster River was a written one. A friend and co-worker, the supremely talented Arthur Mayse, wrote about the Oyster and described it as "one of my life's dearest loves."

Greater awareness of the Oyster, situated between Courtenay and Campbell River, was provided years later by Fr. Charles Brandt, who is invariably identified as "the Hermit Priest" but who more properly should be hailed as one of the resident geniuses on Vancouver Island.

The other day it was Charley Vaughan's turn to show me the Oyster. He also pointed out the good that could restore some of the stream's greatness and the ugly things — some encouraged by the provincial government — that would take it to another direction, to destruction.

Vaughan, still with a discernible drawl, is an American who now lives in the Black Creek district. He chalked up two tours, honorably, as a helicopter pi-

lot in Vietnam but now is concentrating his fights against developers, bureaucracy and anyone else who dares hasten the destruction of the Oyster.

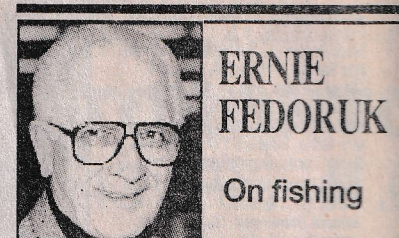
On land, the former fighter commands, as president, the Oyster River Enhancement Society.

The society has been notified that funding from the Salmon Enhancement Program, a tributary of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, is being withdrawn.

The society operates its hatchery and reigns as an outstanding watchdog on a modest yearly budget of \$65,100. Only \$28,000 comes from DFO but the federal fishing ministry is withdrawing a piddly sum that gives the area a million-dollar return.

Without funding, salmon and trout enhancement would cease except through natural methods. Great educational and research benefits would disappear. Tourism in the area would suffer.

As mentioned, and most important, a watchdog would be muzzled.



ERNIE FEDORUK
On fishing

One job, Joe Bye's modest salaried position as hatchery manager, would go.

Last year 40 tours, mainly groups from local schools and elderhostels, visited the hatchery site. Dr. Ian Fleming lived on the site for two years to study in depth the breeding competition and reproductive success in hatchery versus wild coho salmon.

But education and salmon enhancement are not priorities with the federal and provincial governments, it seems.

The Oyster is utilized by anadromous species of trout and salmon.

In the 1950s the river had returns of

over 100,000 pink salmon, 30,000 coho, 15,000 chum salmon and 200 chinook salmon. It was a world-famous steelhead and cutthroat trout angling river.

By the mid-1960s, poor logging practices contributed to excessive flows that severely damaged spawning and rearing habitat.

The society, organized in 1983 as a charitable non-profit group, came into being in an effort to stabilize the river and restore the salmon and trout stocks.

The enhancement of salmon has strengthened trout stocks. Bye says cutthroat and steelhead have increased in size and numbers because of the food chain bolstered by pink salmon enhancement.

One of the society's problems is location. Lack of population in the immediate area makes it difficult to raise funds and recruit volunteers.

Last year the enhancement society raised over \$36,000 through memberships and fund-raising.

"It's easy to raise fish and find volunteers to clear channels," said Vaughan. "The hardest thing is to find volunteers to go out and raise funds. That takes an extraordinary amount of time."

"I spent several days getting to sit down with owners of two successful businesses. The best I could do is get them to contribute \$200 — in total, not each. You kinda forget every business has a constant parade of fund-raisers knocking on the front door."

If the society doesn't get funding in place soon, the Oyster River's greatness will live only in memory.

And if you're of a mind to help Vaughan and the last line of defence on the Oyster River, phone Charley (337-8955) or Bye (337-5393).

Hell, yes, even governments are allowed to phone!

(Ernie Fedoruk's column appears here Tuesday through Saturday. You can phone him at 380-5346.)

Kennedy bound for Boston

Fired Rangers manager hired to take over Red Sox

The Associated Press

Boston

Kevin Kennedy made a speedy return to managing Tuesday when he was hired by the Boston Red Sox six days after losing his job.

The same day he was fired by the Texas Rangers, Kennedy spoke last Wednesday with Boston general manager Dan Duquette, who had worked with Kennedy

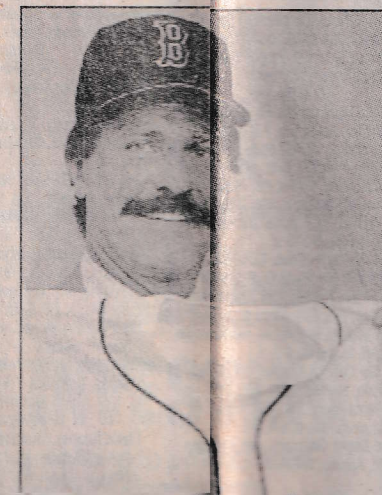
Tony La Russa not agreed to a three-year contract extension as manager of the Oakland A's. That was announced Tuesday, depriving Duquette of the man widely assumed to be his first choice.

Asked if the timing of the announcements was coincidental, Duquette smiled and said, "purely."

Kennedy, 40, succeeds Butch

directed at Kennedy.

"Any time you struggle and you lose six straight and you have a team that had high expectations, you're going to have some people that are unhappy," Kennedy said. "I know Jose Canseco said some very nice things (about Kennedy) on the air in Texas the other day. I'm a disciplinarian but I'm also a players' manager."



New stadium seen as M's salvation

The Associated Press

Seattle

The Seattle Mariners are losing money fast and won't dig much deeper into their pockets unless a new baseball stadium is built soon, the team's chairman said Tuesday.

John Ellis, part-owner and chief representative of the Mariners' ownership group, told a King

said the committee expects to present its recommendations to county executive Gary Locke by January.

Ellis said the ownership group prefers a stadium with a retractable roof, grass field, 45,000 to 47,000 seats, 60 to 70 luxury suites and 3,000 to 4,000 club seats. The team wants to operate the facility and will help finance it, though most of the money for construc-