

Booting around the Okanagan



The Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre in Osoyoos is worth a stop if you're visiting Osoyoos.

Ursula Maxwell-Lewis photo

By [Ursula Maxwell-Lewis - Cloverdale Reporter](#)

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Rain batters my office windows, but summer is on my mind. The truth is...I'm goofing off.

Laurie Carter's new book, *Grandma Wears Hiking Boots*, arrived in the morning post. Subtitled "A Personal Guide to the Okanagan", the companionable guide book comfortably blends Carter's passion for writing, photography, family, and British Columbia's Okanagan Valley.

Pausing at the Kelowna Farmers' and Crafters' Market chapter reminds me that the market opened on April 2 for its 16th year. Carter reports that she and photographer husband, Bruce Kemp, are regulars at B.C.'s largest farmers' market. I can understand why.

Torn between artisan cheeses, honeys, fresh veggies and a juried selection of crafts during my summer visit a couple of years ago, I paused for lunch at the Okanagan Street Food Trailer. Proprietor Chef Neil Schroeter told me: "Fresh food with great flavour is my passion!" His market menu proved his mantra, plus geared this gal up for another round of taste testing and browsing. The

market is located at Springfield and Dilworth Roads. Check www.kelownafarmersandcraftersmarket.com for details.

Browsing on through the book, pictures of the O’Keefe Ranch near Vernon remind me of family outings there when my children were small. “O’Keefe is one of those attractions that don’t cause kids to roll their eyes,” reports Carter. So true – and picnics are encouraged.



Easy to follow hiking maps – interspersed with tales of a ride on the Kettle Valley Steam Train, a visit to Carmelis Goat Cheese Artisan at the end of the Kelowna Wine Trail, and a closer look at First Nations history at Nk’ Mip Desert Cultural Centre near Osoyoos – are only a few landmarks Grandma highlights.

Nk’ Mip is a particularly unique success story. In addition to developing and protecting the 20 hectare desert environment – which includes a rattle snake research and tagging program, the Osoyoos Indian Band has successfully built related projects overlooking Lake Osoyoos. Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort and Spa, and Nk’Mip Cellars, North America’s First Aboriginal-owned and operated winery (plus the nearby Cultural Centre) offer a multi-faceted North American cultural experience.

This casual little book offers insights into what lies beyond the realm of the legendary Okanagan wineries. Carter comments on her love of history, which reminded me of my own jaunt to Gellatly Nut Farm Regional Park just off Hwy 97 in West Kelowna.

David Gellatly and his wife Eliza arrived in the Okanagan from Scotland (via ten years in Ontario) in 1900. They purchased 320 acres which they cleared by hand and farmed. As time went by David gave ten acres each to his sons, David Jr. and Jack, who experimented with cultivating assorted nut trees. Eventually, Gellatly Nut Farm “became the cradle of hardy nut growing and breeding in North America”.

David died in 1969, and in 1998 a developer made a bid to buy the land. Local opposition halted the rezoning application and the Regional District of Central Okanagan was persuaded to buy the land and preserve it as a park.

The residents formed the Gellatly Nut Farm Society (GNFS) and the park opened to the public in September 2005. It’s a tranquil, low key, stop. You can buy or collect nuts, picnic, stroll through charming parkland, and enjoy being a small part of a pioneer enterprise which was, in a nutshell, the mainstay of the historic community at Gellatly Point.

The rain has stopped. 'Grandma' has prompted me to dust off the camping gear ... well, maybe my hiking boots ... and a room near a spa. This grandma isn't as quite as intrepid as Laurie Carter.

Grandma Wears Hiking Boots is available from www.littlewhitepublishing.com.

– Ursula Maxwell-Lewis collects too many books, tons of travel tales, and is rarely seen without a camera. Contact her at uttravel@shaw.ca.

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