to close after 34 years by CAMI JONES
Columbian staff writer

Hungry Vancouver diners who crave an A&W root beer float or a Crown Royal-based Yum! Brands Inc. A-Battle Ground A&W is the last Clark County location that serves A&W.

While owners of the once-popular Orchard brew couldn't have to worry about satisfying their taste buds. The chain's Orchard-area restaurant was closed in 1984. It was the last A&W franchise site for the company.

The A&W is a Canadian-based restaurant and quick-service ice cream parlor franchise, with its first location opened in 1923.

Owners of the former A&W in Vancouver could not compete with the

in 1975. At the time, Orchards was somewhat rural but with the continued development into neighborhoods that were underdeveloped for fast food. Over time, the competition grew, and the A&W location, named Orchards, was dominated by a Burger King and RCFC all crowding into territory that was once dominated by A&W and Burgerville. Nearby restaurants include Wendy's, Carl's Jr., Jack In The Box and Taco Bell.

"The A&W same brand was out of mind," Abdul Quddus said. "I feel like the A&W is not from its original owners. Allen Dawson, now deceased, and Myrle Dawson.

"This place had some roots in the community," Quddus said.

In 2007, Quddus spent $300,000 to the Portland A&W.

"We felt we weren't serving it very effectively. It was time to move to a place that was more wide-open, well-lit and there is more customer experience - 20,000 square feet, wide-open, well-lit restaurant with a wider space at an expanded market - everyone," he said.

ReStore sells most items for approximately half the price you might find in a regular retail store.

On March 3, the ReStore opened in West Vancouver.

"The central, small mall location means easy access and plenty of parking," Quddus said. "A stroll around the place this week turned up everything from surplus paint to plumbing fixtures, and picture windows and used file cabinets to a shrivelled wrapped package of brand-new boxes of screws. "This store is going to up the land," said Connell. The screws were surplus from a local construction job, according to Connell. "They were made in China, the boxes had broken, but the screws were made from American steel - meaning two trips across the ocean, there and back, only to get thrown away. "What an incredible waste of energy and money," he said.

"Consumers are more aware of this kind of thing than they used to be. They are looking for alternatives."

Forty percent of donations to ReStore are from retailers, Connell said - used merchandise from retailers clearing their shelves, builders

Benefits of Habitat for Humanity

"We've been serving the Vancouver community for seven years through the Portland A&W," Connell said. "We felt we weren't serving it very effectively. It was time to move to a place that was more wide-open, well-lit restaurant with a wider space at an expanded market - everyone," he said.

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Computers, too

Also on hand in the same space is CREAM — the former city-county computer recycling effort that's now an independent nonprofit.

CREAM is Computer House, Education and Marketing. Oso Martin, executive director, said the agency will accept and resell donated computers and electronic equipment that's in good shape.

"The equipment will be tried and tested to see if it can be sold over to Clark College for memory repair and other preparations.

Then it's boxed up and delivered to the Salvation Army, which has a waiting list for computers. CREAM is there to help working computers into the hands of people who need them," said Jim Manfield of Clark County Public Works.

Computers and other electronic equipment cannot be returned to own disassembled for parts and scrap. Manfield said CREAM will operate a small thrift store of its own, right alongside the ReStore.

And, a few doors down in the same store, there's CREAM's new computer classroom and Internet access new service that can't be returned to own disassembled for parts and scrap. Manfield said CREAM will operate a small thrift store of its own, right alongside the ReStore.

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