

**April 30, 2020**

What to do while in isolation? Apart from learning to navigate virtual Board meetings (thanks to our Staff for all their behind-the-scenes work to make that both possible and seamless last week) and staying connected with family, community and constituents, I have started on my Spanish again, I'm trying with the help of a tech-savvy friend to get into podcasts, and I am writing down some of the stories that I have told in schools and clubs over the years.

This week, I would like to share a story with you. It is a slightly modified traditional folk tale most likely originating in Northern Europe but found today in cultures around the world. Maybe you or your kids heard it at school. I gave it a special spin for the current times.

### **Stone Soup (in the Sea to Sky)**

Karen looked out of the window and wondered how she was going to feed her three boys. She had recently lost her job to the plague that was gripping the country and the cupboards were bare. The view of mountains and trees was beautiful but it was hard to appreciate on empty stomachs. "Let's go for a walk," she said to the boys, "and see if we can forage anything to eat from the hedgerows or fruit trees."

But it was too early for berries and any fruit from last season had long since been gleaned by others. At the creek, the boys began skipping stones across the water, giving Karen an idea. "Boys! Each of you find me a smooth stone as round as possible like a small ball." As soon she had exactly what she wanted, she hurried the boys back home.

"What are you doing, Mother?" asked Jack.

"I am going to make stone soup. Jack, go and get wood to make a fire here in the yard. Mike, bring me the big cauldron. Peter, fetch buckets of water from the well."

The boys got to work and Karen gathered the salt and pepper from the cupboard.

When the fire was going and the water was hot, Karen dropped the three stones into the pot. She added salt and pepper and began to stir.

Oliver, the little boy next door, called out, "What are you doing?"

"Making stone soup."

"I've never heard of that," said Oliver.

"Well, it's delicious, but it really needs a few old potatoes - then it would be even better."

Oliver ran inside to his mother and a few minutes later came out with a basket of potatoes which Karen immediately added to the pot. Oliver asked if he could help so Karen let him stir.

The old woman next door was curious. Karen explained about the soup, adding "You know, it would be even better with a few old carrots." In a couple of minutes, the old woman came out with a small bag of carrots which were quickly added to the soup.

Doug, the old lawyer who lived across the street called out, "I've probably got an old chicken in the pantry if you send someone to get it." Peter raced over and brought back the chicken which Jack and Mike cut up and threw into the pot.

Other neighbours were getting interested in the activity in Karen's yard so she told the boys, "Go around to all the neighbours and ask if they have a few vegetables they could spare for the soup. Tell them we'll share it with everyone as soon as it's ready." So off went the boys and they soon came back with mushrooms, beets, tomatoes and other vegetables. Everything went into the pot.

As soon as the soup was done, Karen invited her neighbours to come over, one at a time, with a bowl that she filled for them to take back to their homes. (They still could not gather together because of the plague.) Karen and her three boys still had plenty to eat and not a word was said as they filled themselves until they could eat no more.

"This soup is wonderful," called one man. "Best I've ever had," said another. And when they had all finished, they banged their bowls in appreciation.

At that moment, Lord Patrick and Sir Jordan were riding by on their sturdy horses and paused to ask what was happening. Jack and his brothers excitedly told them all about the stone soup, to which Lord Patrick said, "Sir Jordan and I are doing all that we can to help you at this time and it is great to see the local community coming together like this to help themselves." And with that, they rode on.

Mike turned to his mother, "Mum, that's definitely the best stone soup that I have ever tasted"

"Indeed," said Karen.

###

{Note: this story is a work of fiction and any resemblance to real people is entirely intentional.}

On behalf of the SLRD and its member communities, I invite you to look in your cupboards and wallets for a little something you can add to the pot, that we might make stone soup here, today, in our region.

Before gathering up food offerings, please call your local food bank to find out how they are dealing with donated non-perishable and canned goods. If you want to donate money, it is really easy to do through the Sea to Sky Community Services website which will generate a tax receipt for you.

Go to [sscs.ca/feed-the-need](https://sscs.ca/feed-the-need).

You can direct your dollars to the food bank of your choice or to the General Account which will be directed to areas of greatest need and will cover the rural parts of our region.

Thank you for helping to keep our community strong at this time.



Tony Rainbow  
Chair, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District