NACFOR under fire again for Summit Lake logging plans

by Jan McMurray

NACFOR is gearing up to recommence logging operations in the Summit Lake area, much to the chagrin of the defenders of the blue-listed western toad.

Concerned citizens have been making regular field trips to the cutblocks area, and have observed many toads on the logging roads and in the blocks. They also found several dead toads on Summit Lake Forest Service Road, which NACFOR graded in mid-May.

“Last week, NACFOR graded the logging road while hundreds of toads were migrating across it,” says Craig Pettitt, a director of the Valhalla Wilderness Society. “Now it has been temporarily abandoned, which means logging could begin at any time. We recorded young toads all around their machine. We are outraged that the government and NACFOR would allow logging in critical toad habitat when it is clear toads will be killed left, right and centre.”

“There is no way there will never be any toads,” acknowledged Hugh Watt of NACFOR at an open house hosted by the community forest on May 19 at Selkirk College in Nakusp. “Those toads (observed by concerned citizens) are the juveniles. They are moving toward foraging habitat from hibernation. That’s not considered a migration.”

At the open house, NACFOR representatives Frances Swan and Hugh Watt said there would be no logging during toad migrations. They said this summer, NACFOR plans to build the last two of the upper branch roads and log the four highest elevation blocks, but they will halt operations during the logging. When migration of the toadlets from the lake to the forest begins, and will start up again in the winter.

The development area includes seven cutblocks. The three lower elevation blocks, considered to be the more critical toad habitat, are slated for winter logging on snowpack to minimize ground disturbance.

“We don’t want to be down in the lower elevations in the summer but we feel the higher elevations will be OK, subject to conditions. Generally speaking, the toads come down to the lower elevations in the summertime – the adults are down at the lake. So there is likely to be fewer of them up top.”

Swan and Watt also said there would be environmental monitoring during the logging.

“We’re trying to be as conscientious as we can. We will keep an eye on things and if it doesn’t make sense to do it, we won’t and if it does, we will have an environmental monitor and some help on that front too,” said Watt.

Watt said they had been criticized for grading the Summit Lake Forest Service Road in mid-May, but managing drainage on that road is one of their obligations. “We have to grade when it’s a bit moist but not when it’s wet, so it has to be done before freshet. We have to grade when there are toads on the road. It’s a necessary part of what we do to manage water flow. There have been big slides up there.”

The concerned citizen group has lodged complaints with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRIO), the Forest Practices Board, and the RAPP line. No response has been received as yet.

Debbie Pitaoulis, Summit Lake continued on page 3

Sandon Museum gets new wheelchair-accessible entranceway

by Jan McMurray

The Sandon Museum is now wheelchair accessible, with an attractive new wooden boardwalk and a new set of wooden stairs gracing the entranceway.

The completion of the boardwalk project was celebrated with a grand opening on May 20, 2016 with a ribbon cutting, cake, and refreshments.

Karen Hamling, chair of the Regional District of Central Kootenay, cut the ribbon after congratulating the society on the beautiful structure. Dan Nicholson, president of the Sandon Historical Society, welcomed everyone and thanked all those involved with the project.

In an interview, Nicholson explained that the boardwalk has historical value as well as the practical value of wheelchair accessibility. “At one time, there was a boardwalk that extended in front of all the buildings on the main street of Sandon,” said Nicholson. “This new boardwalk gives the feel of what it would have been like back then.”

He says wheelchair accessibility to the museum has been important to him ever since he worked there about 20 years ago and helped carry a visitor in a wheelchair up the stairs. Since then, he has worked as museum attendant for several seasons before he passed away in 2010, was disabled and also wanted to see accessibility.

Nicholson credited the boardwalk idea to former society president, Wanda Palmer. When she brought the idea forward, the board got behind it and Nicholson volunteered to write the grant application to the Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance (CKCA). The CKCA approved the grant in 2012, and had to extend the deadline for project completion three times.

“Many thanks to the CKCA for their patience while we worked through the building permit process,” said Nicholson. “Ulli Mueller of Nakusp was hired to do the design, and she was invaluable. She was able to come up with a beautiful design that satisfied the building inspector.”

Jim Pownall and crew of New Denver constructed the boardwalk. “As you can see, they did a fabulous job,” commented Nicholson.

On the day of the grand opening, a bus full of residents from Kaslo’s extended care facility arrived. They were very pleased with the new boardwalk, which made their visit possible.

The Sandon Museum is now wheelchair accessible by Rob Riley, who wrote most of the write-ups for the museum displays and worked as museum attendant for several seasons before he passed away in 2010, was disabled and also wanted to see accessibility.

Nicholson says the society’s next project will be to finish off the back of the museum with another wooden structure that will provide an improved fire exit. The fire exit will also be wheelchair accessible.
Large crowd of Winlaw School supporters confronts SD8 board of education

**by Sheri Walsh and Lori Thompson**

“Don’t close our school!” several young Winlaw Elementary students told the Kootenay Lake Board of Education in front of over 250 people at the school board meeting in the WE Graham School gym on Thursday, May 17.

During the hour and a half public comment period, dozens of adults and children, many holding signs urging the board not to close Winlaw Elementary School (WES), asked questions and made statements about the value of Winlaw school to themselves, their brothers and sisters, their children, their grandchildren and their community.

They pointed out that the school is growing and that the district’s own figures project increasing enrolment. Penny Tees told the board there is “no precedent for closure of a school such as Winlaw, a school that is growing... [past school] closures have only been in areas where enrolment has declined. Our community did our part and worked purposefully and diligently to make a community that is welcoming to families and enrolment is increasing.” Raina Gardner added that WES “is helping the district increase its utilization.” She pointed out that if the board closed Winlaw and all the students attended WE Graham, WEG would still only be 60% utilized. “What would prevent the next board from closing WE Graham?” she asked.

Jerome Liboiron told the board that the response from parents surveyed by the Winlaw PAC indicated that only one-third would send their children to WE Graham, one-third would transfer their children to Brent Kennedy, while one-third would leave the public school system. He pointed out that in four years, the funding lost from the students who would leave SD8 would equal the $1.3 million cost of deferred maintenance at WES.

Many parents and children from the homeschooled community spoke about how the school culture and programming that staff has created has brought them into a public school for the first time. Daniel Sullivan said, “I was homeschooled and now I’m at Winlaw. If it weren’t there, I wouldn’t be in school. It’s a great school, keep it up.” Jules Shootweg, a BC certified teacher, added that she had homeschooled her children for six years but now her children attend WES, “the only school [where] I would send my child.” She went on to say that if WES closes there “is a large homeschool community and I think you will lose a lot of families.”

Some voiced their frustration at not receiving answers to questions they had submitted by email or asked this evening. Board Chair Lenora Trenaman stated several times that they could not “debate the merits of any closure [yet, because] the board members have to keep an open mind, otherwise their decision could be challenged.” Penny Tees responded, “Don’t let your lawyers gag you from speaking truth to the public. I ask that you answer our questions tonight. It’s only fair.”

Several people acknowledged the difficult decisions facing trustees, and pointed to the provincial government. “I hope the board will ride the storm Christy Clark is putting us through and wait. The next Minister of Finance might do the right thing,” one man said.

Marcia Braundy said some school districts were calling on the BC government to use the prosperity fund for community schools in the province, and asked the SD8 board to take that call. She also said that in Osoyoos, the municipality was going into partnership with a private school, playing right into the government’s hands. This gives the Province “the pure pleasure of privatizing education,” she said.

Some expressed concerns that the threat of school closures in Winlaw and Slocan was dividing communities. Courtney Hubbert from the WE Graham PAC reminded everyone that “we are the same community; we are friends and neighbours and will remain friends for ever to contemplate is closure of a school. It goes against our values, what we’re all about. We’re about educating kids and we want to give them every opportunity possible. It’s the hardest place for trustees to be,” she said.
Tonnes of ideas generated at Climate Action Town Hall meeting

by Jan McMurray

“It’s way past time for talk – it’s time for action on climate change.”

Kootenay-Columbia MP Wayne Stetski made this poignant remark at the Climate Action Town Hall meeting he hosted in Nelson May 25, with the West Kootenay Ecocoy, Citizens Climate Lobby, and the Nelson Interfaith Climate Action Collaborative. About 208 people attended and 30 people spoke.

Stetski explained that the federal government has called for input into Canada’s climate action plan, and “that’s what we’re doing here tonight.”

All public input is being posted on the interactive website, www.canada.ca/climateaction and will be considered by the four working groups established at the First Ministers meeting last March. The working groups are developing options for mitigation, carbon pricing, adaptation and resilience, and clean technology innovation and jobs. The action plan is scheduled to be finalized by March 2017.

Lucerne class donates $500 to Fort McMurray school district

by Jan McMurray

Katrina Sumrall’s grades 4/5/6 class at Lucerne School has raised $500 for Fort McMurray, and will donate it directly to the city’s school district.

When students Cassandra and Hannah heard about the Fort McMurray cause. Since the news, they were moved to do something to help. With the help of Cassandra’s mother, Bin Li, and Joan Stetski, the two friends set up a lemonade stand across from Mountainview in New Denver. The lemonade stand brought in $163.65.

The rest of the class was inspired by the two girls, and decided to donate half the proceeds of their bottle drive for their canoe trip to the Fort McMurray cause.

Education Assistant Tim Sander helped the students contact the Fort McMurray school district. The assistant superintendent sent them a newsletter with stories of the evacuation. School staff went “above and beyond” to reunite students with their families. In some cases, students were separated from their parents for days.

“We were really sad when we read the stories in the newsletter,” said Cassandra. “We’re so happy to be able to help them.”

NACFOR under fire again for Summit Lake logging plans

continued from page 3

residents, says the group is not anti-logging, but has been advocating for a win-win solution by asking the ministry to reallocate this small part of NACFOR’s tenure. “We’re asking that they reallocate 663 hectares, which is core terrestrial toad habitat. That would capture 95% of the toad population and only represents about 6% of NACFOR’s tenure. “We’re asking that the ministry to reallocate this small part of logging, but has been advocating technology innovation and jobs. The technology innovation and jobs. The

Stetski said it’s been clear for many years that the earth is warming up, and “2016 will end up as the hottest year on record for the third year in a row.” Since 1880, global temperatures have risen 0.85°C and Canada’s have risen 1.6°C. He also pointed to the severe weather events in recent years. “All we have to do is to see what happened to Fort McMurray in May,” he said.

Stetski showed a slide with Canada’s emissions broken down by economic sector. Oil and gas (26%) and transportation (23%) are by far the biggest emitters, followed by buildings (12%), electricity (11%), agriculture (10%), other industry (10%), and waste and others (7%).

However, there’s been lots of talk and very little action, Stetski said. “There have been lots of meetings and conferences, but it’s very difficult to find anything in the federal budget to address climate change.”

Anna Purcell, City of Nelson councillor, gave the local context. “From the municipal perspective, climate change is really, really expensive,” she said. The 30-minute windstorm in Nelson last summer cost $1 million and the 15-minute flash flood in 2013 cost $340,000.

She pointed to Gobson as an example of a community that is adapting to climate change. “They’ve changed the way they view and value things – they now see a ditch as a storm drainage system and a field as a sponge. They believe nature is undervalued, underpriced and overused. If we use the right measures, we will strive for the right things,” she said. “We have a strong financial liability when we hope nature keeps working well no matter what we do.”

Scott Jeffery from the Nelson fire department spoke about efforts to mitigate against wildfire – the fuel treatment projects that have been done on something to help. With the help of Cassandra’s mother, Bin Li, and Joan Stetski, the two friends set up a lemonade stand across from Mountainview in New Denver. The lemonade stand brought in $163.65.

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Crown Land and the FireSmart program for homeowners. Carpenter Proctor of the City of Nelson’s EcoSave Energy Retrofits Program spoke about programs offered by Nelson Hydro and FortisBC to help people save energy.

Ideas offered by the 30 members of the public who each had two minutes to speak included: invest in green energy and divest from dirty energy, re-train oil sands and coal workers to the green energy sector, stop subsidies to polluters, institute a federal carbon tax as well as a provincial carbon tax, adopt hard targets and clear timelines, keep the oil in the ground, convert abandoned oil wells into geothermal wells, don’t build bitumen pipelines, incentivize the agriculture industry to plant cover crops and do no-till farming, implement the LEAP Manifesto, listen to First Nations people, move the economy to 100% clean energy by 2050, provide more support and incentives for solar, conserve energy by retrofitting buildings and homes, stop the TPP (which takes away our sovereignty and will null and void our climate action efforts), stop the wars (which produce hazardous waste, deforestation, exploitation of natural resources, and require fossil fuels), protect parks from development, reopen the Columbia and Kootenay Rivers to the salmon run, create biking and walking routes in communities, provide energy-efficient public transportation (i.e. high-speed rail), support the West Kootenay EcoSociety’s 100% Renewable Kootenays project, stop clearcutting, stop fracking, stop climate engineering (chemtrails).

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3NEWS

JUNE 3rd drop in for Kindergarten Set, Learn event and ends with

1290 Hwy #6

Open daily (Closed X’mas & New Year’s day)

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June 3rd drop in for Kindergarten

Gentle Start Camp for 2016-17 school yr.

9:30 start and goes through Ready, Set, Learn event and ends with lunch at 11:30

Lunch and Set, Learn Event

June 3rd 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

For pre-schoolers and Parents

In cooperation with the

Imagination Village

3NEWS
The time for action is NOW

We live in the beautiful and struggling ecosystems of BC. But like everywhere in the world, it is struggling, because we are not outside the reaches of the changing climate.

By the end of August 2015, over 6,000 fires raged throughout BC, costing $380 million. Glaciologists tell us the local glaciers are melting at an alarming rate. We can see them disappearing before our eyes. This year, we’ve had above average snowfall, but within a matter of a few warm months, the snow is almost gone. And it’s not even summer yet.

But tragically ‘unprecedented’ is the new norm. Last week we heard of murderous temperatures in India of 51°C, hundreds dying and massive crop loss. Super storms and drought are common. NASA tells us the Earth’s magnetic poles are shifting due to the loss of ice from the poles… can we begin to understand what that might mean?

The time for action is NOW. We’re already late. We need BOLD federal action. Subsidies for fossil fuels must be eliminated NOW. We need job retraining for fossil fuel workers to build the green economy. We need the implementation of a steadily rising and nationally integrated carbon price.

Dona Grace-Campbell
Kaslo

Open letter to John Krebs, MFLNRO, co-chair FWCP

It was raining the other day so I got to reading about some of them Ac’s the Guvmint puts out. And I got to reading about some of them MFLNRO, co-

The Valley Voice welcomes letters to the editor and community news articles from our readers.

Letters and articles should be no longer than 500 words and may be edited. We reserve the right to reject any submitted material.

Please mark your letter “LETTER TO THE EDITOR.” Include your address and daytime phone number for verification purposes.

We will not knowingly publish any letter that is defamatory or libelous. We will not publish anonymous letters or letters signed with pseudonyms, except in extraordinary circumstances.

Opinions expressed in published letters are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Valley Voice.

EDITORIAL / LETTERS POLICY

The Valley Voice

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May 30, 2016

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Illusion of nuclear power

In the May 18 Issue of the Valley Voice, Frank Nixon was rummaging about nuclear power as the low carbon dioxide solution for the world’s future energy supply. If I get him right, he is wondering whether the earth’s climate (earthquakes) from nuclear power plants has not been thoroughly looked at, or indeed exaggerated. I know of no country that has come up with a final solution for disposing of nuclear waste. And it is being produced by the thousands of tons.

Nuclear waste is encased in molten glass (vitrified) and placed in various very deep underground rock caverns, often for temporary storage, possibly to be retrieved if safer methods can be found. Sometimes, although very seldom, these are permanent disposal sites.

But no one can guarantee that shifts in the earth’s crust (earthquakes) will not bring the stuff into human reach again, or contaminate water that we will have to rely on in years to come.

If we want to survive many more centuries, we will have to be content with less energy, produced from renewable sources like solar, wind, and geothermal, and to limit our own population growth. There seems no other way. 10,000 more reactors will sooner or later spell mega-disasters.

-Richard Eichenauer

Fauquier

Slocan Valley school closure

After reading Shauna Robertson’s letter in the May 18 Valley Voice, I have to say as a parent of a WINF student I am disappointed in her obvious “it’s them or us” attitude. Comments such as “Great parent volunteer and PAC involvement would not be carried over into another facility” are both sad and very frustrating to hear.

Why would dedicated parents and PAC members not continue to be involved in another facility if our schools merge together?

I am completely against the closure of ANY school here in the Slocan Valley and willing to fight for that belief. The SD 8 board has set up some serious divide and conquer tactics between Winlaw and Wrin and I refuse to buy into it. Both communities deserve to keep their schools open despite what any survey has to say. We have to stop reasoning with numbers and money and stand up for what this really comes down to – our children.

-Heather Reid

Slocan

Don’t steal life-saving equipment and supplies

Ten workers employed by Galena Contractors Ltd. were recently involved in a serious injury report on a harvesting block near Fauquier on April 29. One of their fellow workers sustained a large cut on his leg while he was working with a chainsaw. The worker needed medical attention, so the supervisor of the work site called 911 and requested an ambulance to transport the injured worker to Arrow Lakes Hospital in Nakusp. The plan was to evacuate the worker in Galena’s Emergency Triage Van (ETV) down the logging road and meet the ambulance at the junction of the highway and the logging road.

Galena’s first aid attendant assessed the condition of the injured worker and asked some workers attending the scene to bring him first aid supplies and the support of many others here in Slocan.

-Heather Reid

Slocan

Boaters and Village to work together on marine future

by Katrine Campbell

The Slocan Lake Boating Association and the Village of New Denver will work together on a long-term plan for the marina.

This was the result of a meeting May 16 attended by Commodore Ken Smith and a group of SLBA members, and Village Mayor Ann Bunka, Counsellors Henning von Krogh and Heather Fox, and CAO Bruce Woodbury and CO Catherine Allaway.

The major problem at the moment is the extreme silting-in of the marina entrance, likely caused by debris which diverted Carpenter Creek in Slocan in July 2011. The overflow creek washed out a mine parking lot and a road, and the resulting debris flowed down the creek into the lake.

As reported in the May 4 Valley Voice, no work has started on the entrance because of a difference in opinion whether removing the silt was ‘drudging’ (requiring heavy equipment and a permit from the Province) or ‘maintenance’ using a vacuum pump and requiring only that the Province be notified.

After discussing the historic (and now somewhat strained) relationship between the Village and the SLBA, the two sides moved on to getting the two sides working on the project; if they miss the June 1, 2016 deadline, the SLBA will have to rely on in years to come.

In order to do this, Bunka said the Village will need more information from the SLBA, including the names of board directors and the fee schedule.

The Village will apply to the Province for authorization to clean up the channel, and pay the application fee. If the application is approved, the association will hire and pay for the contractor and any other costs. If the dredging falls within the SLBA’s intentions to clear the channel one metre deep, three metres across and 30 metres into the marina.

There is a tight timeframe for working on the project; if they miss the window approved by the ministry, then they can only proceed by hiring a professional to assess the work plan. Smith said the work might have to be done again in the future, and suggested the association would submit a long range plan to avoid a repeat of the present situation.

“Oh, I like that!” Bunka said. “I love the idea of us working with you and the Village will apply to the Province saying what work has been done.

Dark Water Dragons kick off paddling season

The Dark Water Dragons (DWD) kicked off their 2016 season May 14 with the boat launch and first paddle. The dragon boat is a full-size 48-ft. vessel and when not on the lake, is moored at the New Denver marina.

The DWD is a member-supported society that provides its members, many of them breast cancer survivors, with the opportunity to safely participate in recreational dragon boating on the Slocan Lake. The paddling technique and stroke is unique to dragon boating and has been used to improve cardiovascular health. The bi-weekly paddles have also benefited paddlers with a renewed sense of fitness and health.

The 2015 season was the best year to date for the DWD, with more than 35 paddles from May to October and very few cancelled due to lake or weather conditions. No matter what your skill or physical ability, dragon boating may be the activity for you. Guest fees have been reduced to $5 making it easy for potential paddlers to come out and see what it's all about.

As well there will be an array of paddling practices.

The dragon boats are sponsored by so many individuals and businesses in the community. In particular, the DWD owes heartfelt gratitude to campground hosts Gayle and Mel Swanston who have been keen supporters since the beginning by matching “loosies” collected at the races.

The DWD would like to extend a huge thanks to the members and local businesses for providing the support. The club also thanks the community for being so welcoming and accommodating.

Boaters and Village to work together on marine future

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Mayor Ann Banka has been talking to FUS, or trying to, “they have been reluctant to engage in dialogue about recognizing pumping capacity regardless of the equipment that supplies it.” The Village wants the RDCK’s support to pursue getting the FUS to discuss modifying its strict requirements, something that would benefit many small municipalities and rural areas.

• Council received for information the Village’s 2015 CARIP (Climate Action Reporting Initiative Program) report. Some of the actions the village has taken, or is working on, include a 20 percent reduction in carbon emissions, setting up a light bulb recycling station, radon mitigation, switching to more energy efficient light bulbs, installing an on-demand hot water system at the Nikkei Centre, participating in the wood stove exchange program, connecting green spaces through an improved trail network, continuing the dike maintenance program, starting recycling at the campground, buying an energy efficient truck for Public Works, participating in the WaterSmart program, conducting leak detection monitoring, and using a wireless fire interface braking.

• The RDCK asked council for its response to a requested change of scope for the Slocan Lake Golf Club’s CIP grant of $3,755. It had planned to use the money for new doors, a hot water tank and other repairs. However, the main water pump for the course failed and must be replaced; the grant money will be used for that instead. Council had no objection to the change.

• Council will provide a letter of support for an application from the Slocan District, Nakusp and Kaslo Chamber of Commerce to the Rural Development Program. The chambers requested a grant for $10,000 to hire a consultant to explore options for sustainable funding for the ‘West Kootenay Route’ tourism project.

• Banka reported that she and Councillor Heather Fox had waited at Centennial Park for more than two hours to greet participants in the ‘Spirit of Silly’ Youth Unity Run. However, the runners were delayed and just kept on going when they reached New Denver. She did see them later and handed out Village pins.

The Village wants to look at getting two smaller pumpers, which would provide greater pumping capacity than the triple combination pumper that FUS says must use. Two pumpers would also give the fire department greater flexibility and faster response times.

The business plan is for the restaurant, which is the first step towards the longer-term vision of a ‘food hub,’ with a commercial kitchen available for value-added food production, food storage space, and a tool library.

The Village Heath will open in the fall. The society will lease Rory’s on Main Restaurant, which will remain open this season through to Garlic Fest weekend. “Rory has been very supportive of our project and very helpful during the business planning process,” says Everest. The society formed a Food Hub Committee to oversee this project, Zoë Creighton of the Upper Columbia Co-op Council was hired to produce the business plan.

The Village Voice
June 1, 2016

The Valley Voice   June 1, 2016

New Denver council May 24: Insurance issues restrict choice of fire equipment

by Katrine Campbell

• Council will request the RDCK’s support “regarding the opening of a meaningful dialogue with the Fire Underwriters Survey to allow local government flexibility of equipment selection to meet required firefighting capacity.”

The Village is buying a second fire truck and tanker truck, and is also exploring options for future purchases. However, “it is constrained by the requirements imposed by the Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS), a national organization which sets guidelines used by most Canadian insurers.” The Village wants to look at getting two smaller pumpers, which would provide greater pumping capacity than the triple combination pumper that FUS says must use. Two pumpers would also give the fire department greater flexibility and faster response times.

The Village of New Denver is now accepting applications for

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Village of New Denver is now accepting applications for the position of:

TEMPORARY CASUAL LABOURER

The position is at a pay rate of $19.01 per hour. Duties include but are not limited to: groundkeeping, facilities maintenance, operation of small tools and equipment. Preference will be given to members of IUCOE Local 115.

Please submit a resume and cover letter to:

Village of New Denver, Attention: Bruce Woodbury, CAO
Mail: P.O. Box 40, New Denver, B.C., V0G 1S0
Email: office@newdenver.ca
In person: 115 Slocan Avenue, New Denver

This position will remain posted until filled. All applicants are thanked for their interest – only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Water Smart Ambassador on the job in New Denver - Silvertown

Other goals for the restaurant are to increase access to local food, contribute to the local economy and create employment, provide a year-round dinner restaurant, and to be a central gathering place for the community.

“Everest says the society had been “kicking around the idea of a ‘food hub’ for some time” when the CBT Community Directed funding became available through the Slocan Valley Economic Development Commission. “The commission identified agriculture as the community’s number one priority for the funds, so we applied and were successful,” says Everest. The society was awarded $500,000 over two years for the project.

The Village Hearth Restaurant to open this fall in New Denver

The business plan is for the restaurant, which is the first step towards the longer-term vision of a ‘food hub,’ with a commercial kitchen available for value-added food production, food storage space, and a tool library.

The Village Heath will open in the fall. The society will lease Rory’s on Main Restaurant, which will remain open this season through to Garlic Fest weekend. “Rory has been very supportive of our project and very helpful during the business planning process,” says Everest. The society formed a Food Hub Committee to oversee this project, Zoë Creighton of the Upper Columbia Co-op Council was hired to produce the business plan.

The Village of New Denver has hired Matthew Fry as Water Smart Ambassador for the summer.
ILMA seeks RDCK support for small lumber manufacturers

by Art Joyce

Brian Simpson of the Interior Lumber Manufacturer’s Association (ILMA) says with a shrinking pool of forestland base, the way of the future is in maximizing the production of value-added wood products in BC, right down to the toothpick. Simpson and Ken Kalesnikoff, owner of Kalesnikoff Lumber, were seeking support from the RDCK board on May 19 for a resolution calling upon the provincial government to “encourage and incentivize the distribution of the timber supply to optimize the ‘right log to the right mill.’”

Simpson and Kalesnikoff spent about a half hour with their presentation and question period. Simpson is a former district forest manager for the BC government and has most recently spent several years working on wildfire management for the Province. In his capacity as ILMA spokesperson, he represents 10 independent family-owned companies with 60-100 years of history in the West Kootenay region. He explained that these small companies provide 4,500 direct and indirect local jobs worth $110 million annually plus $1.5 billion of spinoff spending, supplies and services. Sawmills represented by ILMA produced double the number of local jobs compared to conventional sawmills in 2008-2009.

But there’s a serious problem looming that could threaten the long-term viability of these small regional operators, says Simpson. Kalesnikoff.

Simpson spoke of the “fundamental shift in forest policy” that occurred in 2004 and “delinked tenure from management,” while allowing for unimpeded tenure transfer to the major forest corporations. Consequently, since 2000 more than 25 percent of small companies have closed permanently, while new log exports have soared.

“One of the concerns I had is that we allowed it to go far and created monopolies, making it difficult for people who own the resource to have control,” Simpson told the RDCK board.

“A large percentage of the timber supply rests in the hands of a few. We’re at a point in time where we have to step back and do something fundamentally different.”

Although on paper the Provincial government has had as a stated objective the encouragement of more value-added manufacturing, Simpson said in nearly 15 years that goal has not remotely been met. Kalesnikoff recently sent a delegation from his company on a tour of European mills. It turned out to be a life-changing experience for them compared to BC. Europe is light years ahead in terms of extracting the maximum value from every log through manufacturing. Logging there, he says, is much more community than corporate based. Simpson said in his work with Wade Simpson in the BC government’s own estimates, up to 25 percent of the forestry landbase could be lost to fires due to climate change.

Already there are massive fires burning in the Prince George district and of course the catastrophic fires in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan, destroying hundreds of thousands of hectares of forest. This is another element expected to place pressure on Allowable Annual Cut (AAC) allocations to tenure holders, which already are barely sustainable as unsuitable, Art Joyce Sr., a retired provincial district forest manager with 37 years’ experience, estimates that at the rate logging is proceeding in the Cariboo region, there’s at most three years left for harvesting of mature timber. The ILMA would like to see more log trading between corporate large and small companies, and more equitable tenure transfer instead of the current monopoly situation.

“If the status quo is maintained,” said Simpson, “in the future it’s going to get harder and harder to get the right logs. Eventually you’ll get more and more value added producers just throwing in the towel and going with the major industry approach. We need your help, to encourage government to change the status quo, so the right log goes to the right mill.”

Area D Director Aimée Watson asked whether the ILMA supported biomass energy generation. She asked how the ILMA specifically would support forestry workers in the Lardeau Valley. Kalesnikoff responded that the company has been researching biomass extensively. “It’s a huge opportunity but it’s still a very long payback.”

Area E Director Ramona Faust said residents in her area feel the current planning process has failed and needs to be changed. “I’m asking what your commitment is to doing things differently so we can achieve watershed objectives and keep protections in place. Right now all of that has been reduced in the past ten years.”

“If I was living in a watershed and had concerns about harvesting,” Simpson answered, “I’d be more comfortable with a community mill. If we end up with a small number of major licensees controlling the timber supply that’s going to be harder to do.”

The RDCK board deferred a vote on the resolution to the next regular board meeting.
### Asian Culture Night features leading Chinese poetry translator

**by Art Joyce**

Kaslo residents got a treat the evening of May 27 at the fifth annual Asian Culture Night held in the Langham. The special guest was Bill Porter, also known as ‘Red Pine,’ the world’s leading translator of classical Chinese poetry. Porter read – in both Chinese and English – selections of poetry dating back to the fourth century.

The scene was set graphically with a display of historic Asian masks curated by Cézanne Moss from various local collections.

Asian Culture Night co-organizer Laurie Moss met Porter while hiking on a mountain above Taipei, Taiwan’s capital city, in 1987. Porter by that time was well established in his career as a translator of Chinese poetry, sparked initially by a four-year stint in a Taiwanese Buddhist monastery. While at the monastery Porter was dubbed ‘Victorious Cloud’ but upon leaving he eventually settled upon Red Pine, the name of a Taoist master who lived in 2600 BC. The master of the monastery had gifted Porter a copy of the famous Cold Mountain poems with a Buddhist heart sutra workshop.

Porter read – in both Chinese and English – selections of Chinese poetry. Porter demonstrated the art of translating in terms of a dance. ‘It’s as if I see a beautiful woman on the dance floor and I want to dance with her, but I’m deaf.’ It takes years of study of the language readings, Porter said. But the reward for all that effort is beyond price. ‘All those great poets are dancing and I get to dance with them.’ In his Chinese language readings, Porter demonstrated how the Chinese don’t read poems, they actually sing them. This is a tradition in the poetry of antiquity long since lost.

Chinese state. Porter sees translation as a metaphor for life in general. ‘Every day we’re translating our experiences,’ he said. ‘Some marriages fail because of bad translation. I’ve been doing it for nearly 40 years and I can’t stop. I just love it so much.’

The event continued on the 28th with a Buddhist heart sutra workshop taught by Porter, followed by an Asian lunch and an afternoon panel discussion on the history of masks in Asia.

The special guest at the fifth annual Asian Culture Night was Bill Porter, also known as ‘Red Pine,’ the world’s leading translator of classical Chinese poetry.

### Kaslo Golf Club makes improvements to course

**by Jan McMurray**

The Kaslo Golf Club is reconfiguring the nine-hole course to make it longer and more challenging, and is replacing the greens to meet US Golf Association standards.

The club has replaced six greens and has four more to go to complete the nine holes plus the putting green. Kaslo Golf Club President Rob Lang explained that the new sand-based sod is less prone to disease than the original soil-based sod.

The course reconfiguration began when the old clubhouse was removed, creating more space for the course. Recently, the Village has added about four acres of land to the club’s lease, allowing for further reconfiguration. ‘We’re refreshing the course by adding length and difficulty, and upgrading the greens,’ said Lang.

The club has applied for a grant under the CBT Recreation Infrastructure Program. Although the application wasn’t successful in the first round, Lang says they are hopeful for the second round. ‘If CBT can help, we can get this done in the next two years,’ he said.

The club has accomplished a lot over the last ten years, starting with the construction of the new clubhouse. ‘We’ve invested close to $3 million in upgrades – including the clubhouse – and much of this was raised from the membership,’ said Lang.

The membership gives a huge amount of in-kind contributions to the club, he said. The only grants provided for the construction of the clubhouse were a $100,000 grant from the Kaslo Community Fund of North Kootenay Basin Trust Community Initiatives, event was sponsored by Columbia Basin Trust Community Initiatives, Community Fund of North Kootenay Lake Society, the Langham Cultural Society and the International Amenity Migration Centre.
by Katrine Campbell

An application for a 10-year licence of occupation over three trails in the New Denver area has raised a few eyebrows, but the North Slocan Trail Society is cautiously optimistic the venture will be positive for the area.

Sacred Rides Mountain Bike Holidays, based in Fernie, has applied to run two guided mountain bike tours per year on the Wagement Trail on Idaho Peak, the Galena Trail on Idaho Peak, and the Butter Trail on Ranch (Elk) Ridge, north of Rosebery.

The Galena Trail is leased from the Crown by the RDCK and is a regional park, supported with tax dollars and maintained by volunteers. The North Slocan Trails Society (NSTS) has a management agreement with Recreation Sites and Trails BC for the management of three trails, including the Wagement and Butter. The former starts at the upper Idaho Peak parking lot and ends at the Silvercreek Creek Forest Service Road. The Butter trailhead is reached by way of a forest service road off of Silver Creek Road, and ends in Rosebery.

Ryan Kikauka, Sacred Rides’ (SR) lead guide and ride director, said: “We want to have everybody happy.” He has talked with NSTS director Mike Koolen, who advised him the application would be forwarded to the RDCK’s Park Operations Supervisor Cary Gaynor and to Justin Dexter of Recreation Sites and Trails BC for their approval. Kikauka said he hasn’t heard from Gaynor.

Gaynor says he hasn’t received anything from Sacred Rides directly, although he is aware of the situation and in touch with Dexter.

“From some of the emails going back and forth, we probably will [hear from Kikauka] soon,” he said. The RDCK has a licence of occupation on the Galena Trail from BC Rec Sites and Trails. In order to use Galena, SR must apply for a park use permit. The fee could be cash, or trail maintenance, Gaynor says.

Koolen says Sacred Rides will have to become a member of the trail society “and contribute somehow for trail maintenance.” The details will be worked out after the company gets an answer to its application.

“What if he (Kikauka) goes by the book, then we’re fine with that. It will bring mountain bike tourism to our town.”

SR is applying for a type of tenure called a “Licence of Occupation,” which would give them permission to use the trails, sharing them with other users. There would be no development of any kind, no lodges built.

Asked how he would answer those who question why the company should have tenure on trails built, paid for and maintained by local residents, Kikauka said that people were confused about what rights tenure conveys.

“Tenure as a commercial operation means the government issues permission to use the land,” he said. “It doesn’t mean we have any more rights than the public does.” Sacred Rides will also make an annual minimum payment to Front Counter BC: the base rate is $500 but the amount could be higher depending on how many client days the company sells. Asked how the area would benefit, Kikauka said the group would spend a couple of nights in local accommodation; this year they are booked into the Glacier View Cabins. They will be eating in local restaurants, and paying trail fees to NSTS.

The Galena Trail is used by hikers, not just mountain bikers, and many of those are families. Kikauka said the trail’s other users would be treated in a respectful fashion.

“We are a guided operation, we always have a lead guide and a tail guide, so we respect other trail users and we act as the mountain biking community would want us to,” he said. “The guides know the trail, and they know where the bury sections are.”

Kikauka says the only response to the “Notice of Intention” legal ad posted in the May 18 Valley Voice (page 23) came from Koolen. Anyone else wishing to comment can click the ad online at valleyvoice.ca.

Fernie company seeks tenure on north Slocan trails

by Art Joyce

Agricultural Land Commission CEO Kim Grout and Chair Frank Leonard made a presentation to the RDCK’s general meeting May 19, updating them on recent changes to the governance of the ALC.

The ALC is an independent administrative tribunal appointed by government to administer the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) in the province. The ALC has had its budget for 2016-17 increased by $1.1 million, with much of that allocated to compliance and enforcement.

Under the recently passed Bill 24 for the ALR, the ALC Chief Administrative Officer, identified in rare cases, where the reconsideration period allowed by the ALC. In Zone 2, the applicant can request an exception. Panel decisions are recorded, published, and sent to the ALC. In Zone 2, the applicant has the opportunity to address those issues.
Hugh Walker was presented with the Citizen of the Year Award at the Kaslo May Days celebration by Mayor Suzan Hewat and Chamber President John Addison.
New Denver Citizens of the Year

New Denver’s Citizens of the Year are Tamara Claxton, David Everest and Judy Wapp.

Tamara Claxton has dedicated endless volunteer hours to the Girl Guides of Canada program. She has devoted over 15 years to Sparks, Brownies and Guides, and won the Silver Merit award for excellence in guiding last year. She is also on the local dragon boat team, and serves on the board of directors.

David Everest and Judy Wapp are involved in organizing the Hidden Garden Gallery Movie Night and the Food for Thought speaker series. David is a director on the TV Society, a founding member of Kootenay Co-op Radio, and a player in the New Denver Community theatre. He oversees booking, setup and use of the community AV and sound systems for many local events. He is also the vice-president of the Healthy Community Society, and is on the society’s Food Hub Committee, which is planning for a community restaurant that will feature local food. He helps organize the annual Harvest Dinner and has been a dedicated volunteer with the breakfast program at the school.
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On the Chemically Free Front: A Letter to the editor

The rural life was a better fit for the artist; he settled in the Slocan valley and turned his attention to drawing and painting, studying with David Alexander and John Cooper and developing a distinctive expressionist style. His reputation began to build, though he was not yet well known outside the country.

Velisek began his life in southern Bohemia in what was then called Czechoslovakia, where the landscape with its small villages, fields and forests, had a deep influence. He began drawing and painting at an early age and went on to study mechanical engineering, and began lessons with a sculptor, developing an aptitude for threedimensional work.

After immigrating to Canada, Velisek enrolled at the Kootenay School of Art in 1972. Upon graduating he continued with modelling and small sculpture here and in Europe, as well as in the Czech Republic, where, in addition to several shows, his work was featured in the Prachenske Museum.

Velisek lives with his wife and two daughters in their small farm in the Little Slocan Valley. The exhibition runs through May and June.
Bylaw #660, 2016 and its companion by Katrine Campbell

Nakusp council, May 24: Proposed park bylaw prohibits motor vehicles on Village trails

One, to the BC Rural Dividend Program, would be for the Nakusp Hot Springs Marketing and Tourism Action Development Plan "to develop a business case for a project to make Nakusp the Nakusp Hot Springs a tourist destination and revitalize the tourism sector." Council also voted to support this project through its duration.

The other application would be to the Infrastructure Planning Grant Program to help develop a capital asset management plan. According to CAO Laurie Taylor, the plan would "identify the needs, establish long-term financing means and regularly schedule maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement for the long term sustainability of the local government’s infrastructure. The development of a plan has been identified as an important tool for all local governments and will likely soon become a requirement for applying for any government infrastructure grants."

The Nakusp Chamber of Commerce asked for a letter of support from the Village for its application to the Rural Dividend Fund. The Chamber, in partnership with the Slocan District and Kaslo Chambers, is asking for $10,000 to hire a consultant to explore options for sustainable funding for the West Koot route tourism initiative. The request was approved, although the letter will state the Village’s first priority is its own application.

Council approved a request for a letter of support from the Arowmutun Senior Citizens’ Society for funding applications for Phase 5 of its senior housing project.

Council received for information the 2015 Statement of Financial Information, which must be forwarded to the Province each year by June 30.
Dogs at large a problem with few answers by Katrine Campbell

Dogs at large seem to be a big problem in the south Slocan Valley, but a meeting called by Area H Director Walter Popoff failed to draw much of a crowd.

“My impression was there was a considerable amount of people concerned about it but not that many showed up,” he said later. “I was hoping for a far better turnout – [complaints] indicated it was rampant, a big issue in the community, but…”

Popoff said he received a request for a meeting from a resident who belongs to a social media site that expressed a lot of concerns about dogs. The resident said calls to the RCMP, the RDCK and the SPCA resulted in people getting conflicting information, and asked if the director would host a meeting with those agencies.

Popoff booked the Crescent Valley hall for May 19 and had three reps from the SPCA (including regional manager Tracey Westmoreland from the Okanagan), RCMP Inspector Tom Roy, and the RDCK’s Sangita Sudan, General Manager of Development Services.

About 20 people showed up, coming from Krestova, Crescent Valley, Shoreacres, South Slocan and Winlaw. Six of them were from Krestova, which seems to have a major problem with dogs running loose and in packs.

“What really stood out for me was we don’t have a bylaw, so how do we address dog issues in Area H?” said Popoff. “What I gather is education is needed. Education would be one of the tools I’ll look at. The SPCA does provide education so I would ask if they would come into the schools and teach about responsible dog ownership.”

There is no bylaw in Area H because the idea was soundly rejected in a referendum by a 67% margin. Popoff was asked at the meeting if he would try again.

“If I have requests from constituents, but a referendum costs about $8,000 and I need to be sure it would pass or the RDCK wouldn’t approve holding it.”

Inspector Roy said the RCMP will respond to a ‘dangerous dog’ call but “we don’t have the resources to come out for dogs running at large.” A dangerous dog is one which attacks or harasses people, other pets or livestock. If serious injury or damage results, the owner can be charged with criminal negligence.

Someone asked what his rights were to protect his family or his livestock. Roy told him he had the right to shoot a dog harassing stock but was concerned about firearm safety. “You are entitled to destroy the dog but if you are discharging a firearm make sure not to put it through the neighbour’s window.”

The SPCA will pick up abandoned or neglected dogs but, without a bylaw, have no authority to pick up dogs running loose. Residents can (if they can catch them) take such dogs to the shelter; the SPCA can hold them for a week while staff try to locate the owners. If the owners turn up, the SPCA can’t fine them but can charge for room and board. If no owners are found, the dogs will be spayed or neutered, retained, and adopted out.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Are you in favour of the Regional District of Central Kootenay adopting Bylaw No. 2487 to provide for the following:

- the establishment of the “Edgewood and Area Volunteer Fire Department Financial Contribution Service” with the annual requirment for the service not to exceed $100,000 of net taxable value of land and improvements within the service area.

AND

- the establishment of the “Edgewood and Area Royal Canadian Legion Hall Financial Contribution Service Establishment” with the annual requirment for the service not to exceed $5,000.00 of net taxable value of land and improvements within the service area.

**GENERAL VOTING DAY**

The General Voting Day will be on Saturday, June 25, 2016 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. for qualified electors within a portion of Electoral Area K as follows:

Edgewood Legion Hall, 234 Granby Street, Edgewood, BC

**ADVANCE VOTING OPPORTUNITY**

The Advance Voting Opportunity shall be on Wednesday, June 15, 2016 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. at:

Edgewood Legion Hall, 234 Granby Street, Edgewood, BC

**EIGUL ELECTORS**

The Local Government Act sets out the qualifications for electors entitled to vote at Local Government Voting and if you qualify, and you are not on the list of property owners (if any) that they are entitled to register for the jointly-owned property. Pursuant to the Local Government Act, no corporation is entitled to be registered as an elector or have a representative registered as an elector and no corporation is entitled to vote.

**VOTING BY MAIL**

The RDCK has recently enacted a bylaw which authorizes voting by mail ballot and establishes the procedures therefor. The only electors who may vote by mail ballot are the following:

- persons who have a physical disability, illness, or injury that affects their ability to vote at an other voting opportunity; and
- persons who expect to be absent from the Regional District of Central Kootenay on the General and Advance Voting Days.

**SYNOPSIS OF BYLAWS**

As required by the Local Government Act, the following are synopsis of the Bylaws to be submitted for the assent of the electors:

**Bylaw 2387**

1) Authorizes the establishment of the Edgewood and Area Volunteer Fire Department Society Financial Contribution Service not to exceed $10,000 of net taxable value of land and improvements within the service area.

**Bylaw 2388**

1) Authorizes the establishment of the Edgewood and Area Royal Canadian Legion Hall Financial Contribution Service not to exceed $5,000 of net taxable value of land and improvements within the service area.

These synopses are not intended to be and are not deemed to be an interpretation of the Bylaws.

**TAKE NOTICE**

That the aforesaid Bylaws may be inspected at the following location:

Regional District of Central Kootenay Office 202 Lakeside Drive, Nelson, BC, during normal working hours, or available for viewing on the RDCK website at www.rdck.bc.ca

Please direct any inquiries to the Chief Elections Officer or Deputy Chief Elections Officer at 250-352-6665 or 1-800-268-7325 or by e-mail at info@rdck.bc.ca

Randy Matheson, Chief Elections Officer
COMMUNITY FUTURES to learn about the free Self Employment program in the Arrow Lakes area. For more info leave a message at 265-3674 ext. 201 or email Nakusp@futures.bc.ca.

If you're thinking of starting, buying or winning, hand-stretched artisan pizza. Award winning, hand-stretched artisan pizza.

THINKING OF STARTING, buying or winning, hand-stretched artisan pizza. Award winning, hand-stretched artisan pizza.

If so, call Community Futures to learn about the free Self-Employment Program, where you will receive ongoing business training and coaching and usually financial support while you start your business. To learn more call 265-3674 ext. 201 or email Nakusp@futures.bc.ca.

FOR RENT IN SILVERTON - Spacious two bedroom suite with lake view, on main floor of duplex, 616 Hunter St. Quiet area, close to Cooper Beach. Covered porch, excellent wood stove, all facilities. $650 per month - water & garbage included. NS, NP. Available July 1, 2016. Call Ernst Grewguy 403-762-5109 or 250-358-2283.

FOR RENT IN SILVERTON - Spacious two bedroom suite with lake view, on main floor of duplex, 616 Hunter St. Quiet area, close to Cooper Beach. Covered porch, excellent wood stove, all facilities. $650 per month - water & garbage included. NS, NP. Available July 1, 2016. Call Ernst Grewguy 403-762-5109 or 250-358-2283.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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**REAL ESTATE**

**SLOCAN LAKE SWIMMING LESSONS:** Mon-Fri, July 25-29 & Tues-Fri Aug 2-5. Pre-school to Level 4, $60; Level 5-7, $75. Slocan Lake Public Beach. Financial assistance available. 250-358-1222. WWW.RICH.MCA

**CLASSIFIED ADS**

**SPRING SALE** - Full Service Chimney Sweep - Call, text or email now to book before July 15 and get last year’s rate. WETT certified. 250-354-3489 or redhead homer @ hotmail.com.

**SUE MISTRETTA, MA**, offers online counseling and counseling sessions in Silverton and Window offices. Contact 250-456-3177.

**RUSTY VOLKSWAGEN bus/van with split front windshield. Any information please call 403-527-6468.**

**TEACHING AND PRACTICE SPACE** - Looking to rent a space in New Denver for piano lessons and rehearsals. About 15 hours/week (TUE/WED/THU), much less/nothing in JUN/JUL/AUG. Respectful, responsible and very tidy. Maybe a guest cabin, rental property? May consider sharing – ideas? Must be ground level/ish access for piano moving. Thanks. Kevin Heschdahl 250-551-6909


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** barber**

Bart Douglas won a $109 gift certificate from Kaslo Community Pharmacy in the Best Dressed Scooter category at the Kaslo May Days Parade.

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Talking Spade book launch attracts full house
by Art Joyce
It was more like a family reunion than a book launch. About 100 people showed up at the Silverton Memorial Hall the evening of May 25 for the launch of The Talking Spade: Garden Lore from North Slocan Elders, written by Anne Champagne. The book, artfully designed by Theresa Tremaine, is illustrated by the lush photography of Chililia Zoll. The project was conceived by the Healthy Community Society of the North Slocan Valley and had the participation of students from Katrina Sunrall’s grade 4-6 class at Lucerne School.

The Talking Spade profiles 18 farms and gardens ranging from south of Enterprise Creek to Hills, featuring gardening tips as well as treasured family recipes. A touching moment came when kids passed out complimentary copies to the elders profiled in the book. Music was provided by students Sakura Azzopardi on violin, and Amelie Tremaine and Cassandra Qiu on piano.

Paula Shandro coordinated both the project and the event with her usual grace and competence. "I grew up visiting the area," she said, "and there are so many veteran gardeners in the upper valley. The gardeners in The Talking Spade range in experience but typically have been raising food in the north Slocan Valley for decades. Amy Mori has been gardening on the same patch in New Denver for 60 years. Certified organic farmer Colleen Bowman of Hills has been cultivating food for 45 years, as have John and Bay Herrmann. Some, such as Tumako ‘Koko’ Kokabo and Mark and Hoot Owl Perry, have turned mountain clearcuts or ‘stump ranches’ into lush, inviting landscapes that keep them in fresh veggies and soul food. Champagne writes of Rosalie Bird, who considers her showpiece gardens “painting with plants.” Others, like Burgin Jacobs and Gretchen Park, find it’s a kind of conversation with nature, learning what plants like or don’t like. For many, it’s a kind of meditation on the path to wisdom and inner peace. Champagne calls veteran gardener Jim ‘Moonbow’ Rutkowski ‘Obi-Wan Moonbow.”

The Silverton Memorial Hall was filled with the spirit of community on May 25 as people gathered for the launch of the book, The Talking Spade: Garden Lore from North Slocan Elders by Anne Champagne. Here Mark and ‘Hoot Owl’ Perry – profiled in the book – receive their copy.

Canadian Geographic features work of local biologists to create grizzly sanctuary
by Jan McMurray
The cover story of the April 2016 edition of the Canadian Geographic Magazine has a local connection. ‘Grizzly Haven: Celebrating BC’s renowned bear sanctuary’ by Nick Mallam is the story behind Canada’s only grizzly bear sanctuary, located in the Khutzeymateen Valley on the northern coast near Prince Rupert. The effort to have the area designated as a Class A provincial park and garden was spearheaded by Wayne McCrory and Erica Mallam of the Valhalla Wilderness Society.

McCrory and Mallam’s Khutzeymateen adventures began when McCrory received a package of information from an anonymous sender in 1985 – the valley was slated for logging and needed to be saved. The sender turned out to be a provincial government staffer who knew of McCrory’s reputation as a bear biologist and of VWS’s success creating Valhalla Park.

From 1985 until the Khutzeymateen Park deal was signed in 1994, McCrory and Mallam went to the valley every spring and fall to do bear surveys.

“This absolutely was the highlight of my career as a bear biologist,” says Mallam. “I feel so privileged to have been involved.”

Mallam described the remote Khutzeymateen as “heaven on earth,” with huge old-growth trees and an abundance of bears and other wildlife. “It was so remote – the bears were not used to people at all, but they were so tolerant. We had not one aggressive bear encounter. It was very humbling to be among them.”

To garner public support for the park proposal, McCrory says they brought in hundreds of people over the years. They would charter one of two sightseeing sailboats and take them on a tour. They brought in David Suzuki and The Nature of Things, the CBC Today Show, teachers, conservationists. First Nations people, and corporate groups. Slocan Valley resident Herb Hammond came and did some timber surveys.

“This was a pivotal part of our campaign,” he said. “We built up a huge support base that still exists today.”

The Valhalla Wilderness Society team has been directly involved in creating Valhalla, Goat Range, Khutzeymateen, Spirit Bear Conservancy Complex, Dasiquox-Taseko Tribul, Green Inlet River Tribal and South Moresby Parks. The group has contributed to the formation of Gwai Hanass National Park Reserve, Claqout Sound protection areas, Kitlohe Conservancy and the southeast addition to Kockenes Glacier Park. Currently, the society has three park proposals: Selkirk Mountain Caribou, Quensel Lake, and Gribbell Island.
More fuel treatment projects completed in RDCK

by Jan McMurray

Fuel treatment projects at Brent Kennedy, Crescent Valley (Chatfield Road), Pass Creek (Goose Creek Road), Robson Regional Park and at Morning Mountain Ski Hill and Blewett Fire Hall were wrapped up in April.

West Arm Silviculture and Debi Resources were hired to do the work, and Tyson Ehlers was managing the projects on the ground for the RDCK. About 20 people were employed for four months.

Ehlers says these projects have a significant influence on fire behaviour. An area treated in Balfour in 2013-14 was credited for the quick extinguishing of a fire that started up there last summer.

“We like to leave the forests looking better than we found them,” said Ehlers. “These projects enhance recreation and forest health.”

He explained that the prescriptions call for a conservative approach to cutting. Enough canopy is left to hold the forest floor. Other than danger trees and pine beetle killed trees, large trees are left, as they are the most fire resistant.

The debris created by thinning and slashing the ladder fuels gets fed into small fires that are dispersed throughout the stand. Stingray burning guidelines are followed.

Several projects on Crown land have been completed in the RDCK over the past few years, thanks to the provincial SWPI funding program. Although there is still a lot of work to be done on Crown land, Ehlers says there is a large amount of private land that needs to be treated. The provincial FireSmart program is helpful to homeowners, but does not include much funding.

The debris created by thinning and slashing the ladder fuels gets fed into small fires that are dispersed throughout the stand.