Kaslo area operation boasts first cannabis crop from micro-licence in the Kootenays

by Jan McMurray

The first cannabis crop to be grown in the Kootenays under a micro-cultivation licence will be harvested this month. The West Kootenay Cannabis Corporation (WKCC) near Kaslo is the first out of the gate.

“It’s been a wild ride, but it’s all good now,” says Greg Warkentin, co-owner of WKCC. “There were quite a few times I wished I could have backed out, but I was in too far – I’d spent so much money. Now I’m glad I did it.”

Warkentin says he’s been told the WKCC facility is the first micro-licenced facility in the Kootenays, and one of the first in BC and probably even in Canada to put out a crop; there hasn’t been much uptake on micro licences in this new legal regime.

The application process is extremely onerous and expensive, Warkentin said, and the paperwork, legal requirements and costs don’t stop there. It took him 17 months, with the help of a consultant, to get his application submitted and approved. Now that he is licenced, he has to follow stringent standard operating procedures.

“Everything is very strict,” he says. “I have to wear a lab coat, designated footwear, gloves, and a scrub hat. I have to clean the whole place every day, monitor everything twice a day and write down all the temperatures. I have to tell them all the nutrients that go into every batch. I had to buy an electronic filing program to track it all. Growing pot – that’s the easiest part.”

Warkentin hopes selling the product is fairly easy, too. Judging from his Twitter account, he says there’s a lot of interest in cannabis from the Kootenays, and particularly from a micro operation in the Kootenays.

Unfortunately, though, without a processing licence, Warkentin can’t package and label the product. Once the cannabis is harvested and tested, he will sell it to a licenced processor for packaging, and the processor’s label will go on it.

Warkentin hopes to get a processing licence in future so he can package and label his own product.

“Right now, it looks like I’d be lucky to get $2,000 a pound – a little more than the black market. But I can do this legally. I don’t like doing things that aren’t legal. That’s just the way I am. So I’m happy.”

The micro licence allows for 2,100 square feet of canopy or light space, Warkentin explained, not a specific number of plants. “You can have unlimited plants – you just have to track them. You have to tell Health Canada every day, every month what you did to the plants.”

Warkentin grew legal medical marijuana in a building on his 12-acre property near Fletcher Falls for four years prior to this. He and his two business partners added on to the existing building, just about tripling its size, to grow under the new micro-cultivation licence. Warkentin is a carpenter, and one of his partners is an electrician and the other is an HVAC contractor.
by Jan McMurray

Cooper Creek Cedar

(CCC) has released two reports on the Salisbury Face forest development unit and is accepting public comments until June 1. The Salisbury Face unit is one of two units being developed on the Argenta-Johnson’s Landing Face.

The reports can be found on the Cooper Creek Cedar website and the Landerdale Valley LINKS website. Comments can be emailed to bkeister@shaw.ca.

Both reports — a terrain stability assessment and a karst potential assessment — were done by W. Hallaran P. Geo. of Apex Geoscience Consultants Ltd.

The terrain stability assessment mostly finds that the proposed timber harvesting and road building activities “will not significantly increase the low likelihood of landslide initiation.”

One of the proposed spur roads (Spur 6-1), however, and portions of two of the proposed cutblocks (405-6 and 405-7) are in an unstable area with a very high karst potential, according to the report. As Spur 6-1 “will likely result in additional slides,” Hallaran recommends that this spur line constructed as “proposed” but rather as a forwarding trail and realigned within one year. He further recommends that harvesting in this area be done in the winter on at least a one-to-two metre snowpack. The report notes that many slides in this area are caused by existing roads, which have altered the slope drainage. These slides are small and run out on the slopes just below the roads. So although there is a very high likelihood of slides here, the hazard level is low.

The study said Cooper Creek Cedar’s plan for culverts “for the most part will maintain natural drainage patterns,” but recommended six additional culverts for the Argenta-Johnson’s Landing forest licence. The AAC is 80.213 cubic metres, and has a five-year term. So over five years, CCC can cut 301,065 cubic metres for this purpose, or 60,213 cubic metres per year.

Changes to medical first responder services for RDCK fire service submitted

British Columbia Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) has issued a memorandum that will change effective immediately, how first responders – including those with the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) fire services – are dispatched to emergency medical calls.

The memorandum limits the maximum number of people who can be groups during the COVID-19 pandemic and is part of an ongoing effort to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus.

As a result of this memorandum, first responders will be limited to attending immediately life-threatening events, events that require technical rescue such as extrication at a motor vehicle accident, and to time-critical events where paramedics are delayed by more than 20 minutes.

“Many residents in small communities and rural areas across the RDCK rely on our fire services to attend in a medical emergency, and they trust us to be there when they need us,” said Regional Fire Chief Nora Hannon. “We are dedicated to serving residents and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, and will work with our partners at BCEHS to best support pre-hospital care during this challenging time.”

Watch the RDCK website for updates. www.rdkc.ca.

Swamp Tails

Submitted by Lorna Visser and registered professional biologist Wayne McCoy, directors of the Valhalla Foundation for Ecology. The VFE presents this paid column to inform readers about ecosystem restoration work to support our Valley Voice newspaper.

Cheerful notes from the Valhalla Foundation for Ecology

Greetings, marsh fans. We were hoping for a wonderful “reveal” but of course nature has her own ideas — it’s all about the spring! We were hoping for a wonderful “reveal” but of course nature has her own ideas — it’s all about the spring!

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Watch the RDCK website for updates. www.rdkc.ca.
Sinixt hunting rights appeal hearing postponed due to COVID-19

by Jan McMurray

Kalesnikoff proposes harvesting near private properties in Slocan Park

Kalesnikoff is proposing a cutblock near Silverton and Slocan Park, and is taking comments on the proposal until May 1. In an information package sent out to stakeholders, the company describes its proposal as “a Douglas-fir bark beetle and wildfire risk reduction management plan for the Wolverton Creek south area.”

The proposed fuel treatment in the Slocan Valley Community Wildlife Protection Plan (CWPP), which was completed by the Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative (SIFC), identifies the block as one “susceptible timber where appropriate, to include spot piling and burning, broadcast burning, and white pine.”

“The intended result is a forest which can survive the expected future climatic conditions and additionally which can withstand and survive lower-intensity wildfires.”

Kalesnikoff says the logging is not expected to cause terrain stability issues or impacts on domestic water supply. However, visual quality objectives for the area will not be met so the company will have to come up with a plan to address this, and submit it to the ministry for approval. Some of the possible mitigating strategies listed in the document include replanting the area promptly for quick greenup, retention of healthy and non-susceptible timber where appropriate, and the use of the beetle repellent MCH, a naturally occurring anti-aggregant pheromone to protect the Douglas fir trees that are left standing.

“It is evident that this proposal only addresses a small portion of the extensive infestation in the area,” the Kalesnikoff document states. “Much of the infested timber is inaccessible due to steep slopes, the creek gully and restricted access north of the creek. While this block will not stop the Douglas fir beetle infestation, it does create a strategic fuel break between the increasingly damaged public forests above and private land in the community below.”

Kalesnikoff says it is an important distinction because a common law Aboriginal right can be limited by government as it sees fit, and the federal government can extinguish it entirely. If the right is protected by section 25 of the Constitution, the government can’t limit it without having to justify it.

There are nine judges in the Supreme Court of Canada. Underhill says he and legal counsel for the provincial Crown will probably have one hour each to present their arguments. The Attorney General of Canada will likely be given 30 minutes, and then each of the other interveners will probably be given five minutes. The decision will not be handed down at the hearing, but will be provided in written form at some point afterwards.

In the first appeal, to the Supreme Court of BC, Justice Sewell recognized the Sinixt as an Aboriginal people of Canada. This was reaffirmed in the second appeal, to the BC Court of Appeal. Recognition as an Aboriginal people of Canada is extremely significant for the ‘extinct’ Sinixt. The upcoming appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada is the final appeal of the case, and will determine once and for all if the Sinixt are an Aboriginal people of Canada as defined in section 35 of the Constitution.

Underhill explained that the federal government and the Provinces can intervene when constitutional questions are raised. “From the beginning, we’ve been arguing that the provisions of the Wildlife Act under which he was charged are unconstitutional because they don’t account for his Aboriginal rights. That constitutional question can impact other provinces and territories that have similar provisions in their Wildlife Acts.”

The case is of interest to other Aboriginal peoples whose territory spans the border between Canada and the US. The interveners have not yet filed their written arguments, and their filing deadline has been suspended due to COVID-19, Underhill reports. He adds that they don’t have to follow through with written arguments. “They’ve given notice that they may get involved, but they don’t have to. We don’t know yet, so we wait.”

To raise funds to cover the travel costs of Colville Sinixt people who want to attend the Supreme Court hearing, the Sinixt were touring their traditional territory with the film, Older than the Crow, which tells the story of their journey to be recognized in Canada. The film showed February 20 at the Capitol in Nelson. The tour has been suspended due to the pandemic.
Response to Jerry Van Immerzeel
The letter from Jerry Van Immerzeel in your March 26 paper does its best to convince the reader that quad lovers are also nature lovers. I have seen too much evidence to the contrary to believe that claim. Personally I like to enjoy nature without the noise, and obvious human interference and damage. For me, even a jet trail in the sky cheapens the experience, so running into a bunch of people who claim not to care about the non-smokers is a bit much to take. I would urge Mr. Immerzeel to phone up his friends, and take a walk in the woods without his machine and try to understand our visceral dislike of his so called ‘sport.’ The key to enjoying nature is in the ignition. All you need to do is turn it counter-clockwise.

Rod Retzlaff
Glade

Opinion

Open Letter to Dr. Bonnie Henry and Minister of Health Adrian Dix
The World Health Organization has strongly urged governments to disclose the numbers and locations of COVID-19 cases in all countries, stressing that information and transparency about the extent of the outbreak are vital in building public trust. Our BC government’s unwillingness to tell us how many communities have confirmed COVID-19 cases feels paternalistic and is not acceptable in these exceptional times. Rumour and speculation only increase public fear and misinformation.

I join Kootenay Columbia MP Rob Morrison in urging the provincial government’s top health officials to make this essential information available immediately.

Dr. Amanda Bath
Kaslo

Interpreting the news
Major news outlets – The Guardian, MSN, Forbes, CBS, and Daily News – all reported recently with this or a similar headline: ‘Man dies after taking chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine; he mistakenly took “an additive commonly used at aquariums to take chloroquine’.

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Wulf Mense
Winlaw
Net zero by 2050?

I didn’t vote for any party in the last election because none of them had a good plan to address our #1 problem, the climate crisis. The Liberals promised real action by committing Canada to net zero emissions by 2050. Based on what they have done so far, we would be in trouble by 2050. It seems they were sly on the details of their real action plan. In an interview in the New York Times, the Minister of Natural Resources said, “I just gave a speech at the Nuclear Association of Canada and said straight out that nuclear is front and centre, and this government is putting nuclear front and centre. Because we cannot achieve net zero without nuclear. I’ve yet to see a plan that can do that. When Canadians reflect on nuclear in a different context, the context being we have to cut back on our emissions, have an economy that still needs to grow and people need to prosper, nuclear has got to be a part of that plan.”

He said we are extraordinarily well positioned to reinvigorate the nuclear energy market, and small modular reactors (SMRs) will be a big part of that. In 2018, an estimated 4.2 million deaths per year are attributed to air pollution. The costs of the catastrophic climatic effects of using fossil fuels rival that of the COVID-19 pandemic, and they recur each year. The enormous mobilization to fight COVID-19 shows what can be done when we focus on a problem. If we apply that focus to the climate crisis, we may achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Poverty and the virus

I worry more about educated scientists playing God in their laboratories.

I had an uncle who was constantly hospitalized to remove mushrooms growing in his bowel after being sprayed with something during WWII. He died young.

In 1988, I read an article called W.H.O. Fails to Stop Plague in Nepal about the biological warfare lab in Maryland, USA experimenting with the AIDS virus. I couldn’t sleep for days after that.

In 2012, I travelled with a journalist whose documentary exposed experiments conducted outside of Quebec City by Dr. Saulak (polio vaccine) for biological warfare during WWII. They developed super anthrax and made enough to destroy all life on earth many times over. The war ended and they put a solvent in it and dumped barrels into the St Lawrence River where the belugas are the most toxic mammals on earth. Another experiment was with Hoof and Mouth disease. Who knows what happened after that.

You’ll have to do better than tell me, o noble scientists and leaders, that some poor bugger ate a bat for Christmas in Wuhan, China and started this plague. From smallpox blankets to falling ill. Yes, they host and provide immunity (read: resilient health) resides with individuals. That digital cyber world and militarization of decrees and reforms; surveillance of the mental movie screen. All was installed at an elevated speed of molasses, all was installed like even, unalike, into peoples’ inner sanctum.

Since then many inner movies have been delivered (in) to all of us – to both the 99% and the 1%. Just in recent years, the nearly annual movies that have come out for us to host in our mind, to name only the biological genres: SARS, MEIR, West Nile Virus, Ebola, Swine Flu, ME/CFS, Monkeypox, Zika, HPV. The crux of my letter is that I observe leaders responding, not by throwing health at the vulnerable and stricken, but by making profit by international and national laboratories, making billions in dollars; dollar packages at those who are in the periphery.

When my mother and father saw their six-year-old son dying of meningitis in 1970, their response was not to quarantine and give money and medication to my nurse-aunt and us four children. They put all their financial and emotional resources into my little brother. It was him who got direct medical attention.

Optimal health (read: resilient immunity) resides with individuals. That is our ground-zero. Viruses, bacteria, germs, the surrounding polluted air, dirty surfaces are not the ground-zero. They host and provide adversity to our level of immunity but it is not “out there” where our immunity resides.

Environmental justice and human rights are due to the numbers of individuals with challenged immune systems contracting coronavirus, anti-contagion measures are warranted. I get that. But the trillions of dollars oughta go instead towards our stricken ones immediately – “bail-outs” in the form of paid rest, food, medication, appropriate places of care, restorative foods and liquids, mind-body spirit immune-balancing counselling with wholistic approaches.

It is very telling that our mislead intelligent leaders do not liberate us, but carefully assist us in liberating ourselves from that which does not serve us.

For those of us healthy, energetic, smart and able, I observe us joining, not opposing and alienating but in guiding another in expansive relation through this. Raising one’s vibration is what makes life easier for every single human on this planet at every moment.

My journey through COVID-19

I am writing this letter to share my experience getting through what was very likely the COVID-19 virus, in hopes that it will provide some insight and perhaps alleviate some of the fear surrounding this virus. I was not tested but my travel companions were. We all had the same symptoms at the same time. They tested positive.

I did not experience the illness while travelling in the Middle East. My travels began before there was any talk of pandemic, before COVID even had a name.

This is a very unique, Never experienced anything like it before. This is how it went.

A mild sore throat and headache to begin with, followed by a slightly elevated temperature that wouldn’t be classified as a fever. Then came the chills, body aches, and extreme fatigue. For four days. I slept all night and napped on and off throughout the day. It felt like I was weighed down, under extreme pressure, as though the world was the easiest way to deal with it. I never felt nauseous or sick. I lost my sense of taste for a while, which I didn’t notice since I wasn’t hungry. I craved only sweet food; I ate pizza, hots, and nuggets.

Oh, and maybe a few french fries with vinegar. No virus in the world will cure me of that craving. For the chills a hot sauce felt amazing. For the lungs I added a basin with hot water and a few drops of eucalyptus oil, threw a towel over my head and breathed there for about 10 minutes. That alleviated the cough for hours. It was great. I used a small amount of Advil for the aches and Fisherman’s Friend lozenges because that’s what I had available. I continued to take my vitamins. It was all said and done in about four or five days. I had the chills which lingered for another week.

This was MY experience. I am a healthy and active 62 year old. I do have an autoimmune condition and maybe that’s why I was vulnerable to contracting this, but was lucky to be able to ride it out and recover without any medical intervention. Do not take this as medical advice. Everyone is different. My husband had the same thing at the same time but his symptoms were milder.

The other major thing we did was to turn off the news. The fear was worse than the virus. We just quit watching it. No Covid stats. No Trump. Ahhhhh.

In my view it was easy to self isolate for two weeks. After returning to Canada I also followed the strict quarantine rules again for two weeks just to be on the safe side. We are in New Denver and there are supposedly thousands of Canadians that have now been through this virus at home. I look forward to hearing more about them as they emerge with their story. What an opportunity to volunteer where needed!

It is wonderful to be in a community that is so supportive. Groceries are dropped on the doorstep and everyone waves when they walk by and see us looking out with a couple of goldfish in a bowl! Thank you!

Keep well. The information about hand washing, covering your coughs and keeping your distance if unwell is valid.

Laurie Jansons
New Denver

Rise to the occasion

Our children and grandchildren.

We care for them, lose sleep over them, and provide them with food, shelter and so much love.

Why then is it so hard for us to consider their future and ensure that they have one in which they will thrive?

We know that the fossil fuel industry spends tremendous sums of money influencing governments, media, and educational institutions so they don’t speak about climate change, even as we read about increasingly serious natural disasters.

They want and need gas, and can this is a boondoggle more lucrative than the future we will leave for our kids and grandkids.

Here in BC right now, the Wet’suwet’en people are defending their legal right to protect their unceded territory. Yet we’re being told that they are the ones breaking the law.

These people are actually upholding the law, as affirmed by the Delgamuukw decision, while standing up to an industry whose interests threaten a livable future.

Even though big money is a major force, there is lots we can do. There are groups to join, organizations that would welcome our volunteer time and donations, people to vote for, lifestyles changes and institutions to divest from. And we can educate ourselves.

This historic moment needs all of our participation. It begs us to see the enormity of what’s at stake clearly and turn things around.

Diana van Eyk Nelson

April 9, 2020  The Valley Voice
The Valley Voice April 9, 2020

Rail trail submissions: Fake news or inconvenient truth?

I must strongly object to Jerry Van Immerzeel’s claim in his letter in the March 26 issue that we presented “fake news” in our letter in the preceding issue. He claims we did not make submissions to the formal input process (that led to the Rail Trail Committee’s ill-conceived decision to approve the motorized road through a wetland ecosystem). Nothing could be further from the truth.

The rail trail section through the marsh had completed purchase all-terrain vehicles, side-by-sides, dirt bikes and all manner of noisy, polluting, disrupted motorized recreational vehicles. This would have wrought significant ecological damage to the fragile watershed of the Bonanza marsh area and the many threatened and sensitive species that shelter there. The Valhalla Foundation for Ecology owns the Sin’k mish Marsh Sanctuary in the heart of that ecosystem.

Some of us, as well as others very concerned environmental folks contributed voluminous “submissions” as this process went along.

To claim that none of us with environmental concerns bothered to provide input into the formal input process is actually laughable considering how repeatedly, and increasingly insistently, we submitted our submissions every juncture and in every possible form and available forum.

1. In early 2017 before the Valhalla Foundation had completed purchase of the marsh property, I submitted written input as a professional biologist and the representative of the Valhalla Wilderness Society, as well as submitted written input as a concerned local resident of Hills. I believe many others also made submissions expressing similar concerns — which were all largely ignored.

2. At the outset of the plan, at his request, I provided committee facilitator John Cathro with considerable factual information regarding the cumulative effects that motorized rail-trail use would have in the Bonanza to Summit Lake corridor on grizzly bears, adjacent wetlands, and Summit Lake with western toads. I indicated strongly that these concerns should be an integral consideration in the planning process. While these concerns were ignored in the committee’s Plan A as announced in early 2018, after two more years of our and others’ loud and clear submissions, some of these concerns were finally taken into consideration in the Plan B announced early this year.

3. During the initial 2017 formal input process, Lorna Visscher also attended several Rail Trail Committee planning meetings and provided clear objections to the original routing proposed. I also met personally with committee members Richard Allin and Mike Koolen and took them on a walking tour of the area to point out our ecological concerns.

4. In April of 2018 the Valhalla Foundation convened a tour at the marsh with several officials from Recreation Sites and Trails BC, Mr. Cathro, and two biologists from the Environment Ministry to show them in person why their facilitation tour really was ecologically unacceptable.

5. VFE objected and made submissions through our MLA (who investigated the matter) and our MP (who forwarded our objections to the Minister of Environment, and the Minister of National Resources, FLNRO Minister Donaldson) as well as to Columbia Basin Treat (at their AGM in Nakusp).

6. We also reached out to fellow concerned citizens, supporters and conservation organizations to express their objections— I could go on, up to and including the Valhalla Foundation for Ecology preparing a court injunction to stop the motorized trail section that would have run directly adjacent to our nature sanctuary.

The truth is, we provided so many submissions that Justin Dexter of RSTBC (the architect of the plan who throughout the process ignored our feedback and opposition support for the motorized-use lobby), and John Cathro (the consultant hired by Dexter to implement the plan, do all the facilitation and the required facilitation tools, our proposals and prepare a succession of reports) and the members of the Rail Trail Committee itself, were thoroughly sick of hearing from us (to the point that I received an obscenity-laden letter signed by the chair of the Slocan Lake ATV Club to this effect).

Mr. Van Immerzeel, you are entitled to your perspective but don’t claim we didn’t make full, fair, and comprehensive submissions to this process — that would be fake news indeed!

Wayne P. McCrory, wildlife biologist

New Denver doctor on COVID-19

I have read much in the press and on the internet recently about the “unprecedented times” in which we are living and the magnitude of the threat that we are facing with the coronavirus pandemic. Now it is true that the current pandemic is serious but let’s be clear, we are not in the middle of a zombie apocalypse. Indeed, I keep a very close eye on the coronavirus reporting and on the internet recently about the possible cure for COVID-19, when at least one person in Nelson believes that a cure already exists.

The Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918-19 is estimated to have killed somewhere between 20 million and 50 million people globally. Bircher-Benner established his naturopathic clinic in Zurich, Switzerland in 1898. He was rebuked by mainstream doctors for being a quack, and said that they paid a lot of money to eat grass and berries. The flu pandemic was killing 50% of Swiss people who entered the regular hospitals for treatment. Dr. Bircher-Benner took in over 200 Swiss soldiers, and not a single one died. What did he do? First he put them into warm beds, and then had all the windows opened because they needed the oxygen for the acute breathing difficulties. Then the kitchens were kept warm because they were constantly sneezing and giving the soldiers the warm nourishment that they wanted. This story may not be available online because the Bircher-Benner clinic no longer exists. I found it in the May 1976 edition of the Preventive Medicine Journal: “A Visit to Switzerland’s Bircher-Benner Clinic,” by James Magee.

A couple of weeks ago, I was told that in China they are using vitamin C to treat COVID-19. When I sent online, I was surprised to see that it is true, and further surprised to see that many clinics were using it intravenously. I was curious to know how this came about. I learned that in 2004 scientists at the Chinese Academy of Sciences said that vitamin C had the potential to treat COVID-19 and vitamin C and vitamin E are natural antioxidants. I received a follow-up email that explained that about 20 years ago, scientists at the Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine at Shanghai’s Ruijin Hospital, Dr. Enqian Mao, began using high dosages of intravenous vitamin C to treat difficult conditions such as acute pancreatitis, sepsis, and surgical wound healing. They thought they would try it on COVID-19. As of March 17, they have apparently treated 350 serious or critically ill patients and none of them died.

A further reference is a paper available online by Dr. Mark Hyman, Director of the Cleveland Clinic Center for Functional Medicine. The title is “How to protect yourself from COVID-19” He recommends vitamin C (500 mg to 1,000 mg throughout the day with meals or snacks). Also D3, fish oil and probiotics. As an aside, some people claim that South Korea is handling COVID-19 well in part because they eat a lot of kimchi, a type of spicy fermented cabbage. It contains a special strain of probiotic bacteria that ferment lactic acid bacterium plantarum. Dr. Hyman’s paper also mentions that doctors are using intravenous vitamin C in Wuhan, and he gives the dosages i.e. 50 to 100 mg/kg/day for mild symptoms and 100 to 200 mg/kg/day for severe forms.

China started the pandemic of COVID-19, but it appears they are leading the way out of it, in part by using large quantities of vitamin C. It seems that our medical health officers are not as aware of the successful use of these simple therapies for COVID-19.

Roger Pratt, MD

A sign of things to come

For the past three or so a half-years, I have been involved in an advocacy group organized in response to Vancouver Coastal Health Authority’s attempt to privatize primary care in New Denver and around the bazaars that constitute our health care system. Although our coalition was founded to address this particular issue, from the outset we have seen the defence of publicly operated long-term care as only one stage in an ongoing fight to defend our public health care system. The COVID-19 crisis shows what is at stake.

For decades, successive governments have chipped away at health care funding. All the while finding money for everything from corporate tax cuts and the Olympics to eliminating bridge tolls. This has led to chronic shortfalls in almost every sector of the health care system, including acute, long-term and home care.

The pandemic brings the fraudulence of the “affordability” argument into focus. In a time of crisis, chronic underfunding greatly increases the stress on a system already over capacity. It’s just not tax dollars at risk, but the lives of vulnerable populations and care providers.

The coronavirus crisis takes place against a backdrop of revelations about widespread abuse and neglect in the province’s long-term care facilities and other owned care facilities. Worse, a report by the BC Seniors Advocate confirms that such problems are not specific to retirement concepts, but symptoms of the general state of for-profit care. To his shame, Health Minister Adrian Dix has not committed to rectifying any of the problems in the provincial system.

Experts tell us that the current crisis is not a singular event, but a sign of things to come. As citizens, we need to demand a health care system that prioritizes health and operated care as our fundamental right, and hold to account those politicians who let corporate interests trump public safety.

Ian McLachlin, Nelson

LETTERS
Beyond handwashing...

submitted by Theres DenCamp

“Flattening the curve” is the new goal, a common commitment to lessen the suffering that we will cause each other—and ourselves—in this pandemic. Speaking as a person who has family members with COVID-19, I am seriously committed to flattening the curve. I am staying home, doing more of the walking or walking outside at a double-arm’s length. I am wiping doorknobs with bleach, bowling instead of hugging. I’m washing my hands a lot. And I think that I am doing this justly.

It is a Herculean task that world changes. They’ve shown us how to wash our hands. But we all need some ways to wash our minds and hearts. Here are a few suggestions.

DIAL DOWN THE NEWS:

• Area H Director Walter Popoff asked the Village to consider making a cash contribution to the Winlaw Regional Park Boardwalk Replacement Project. Councillor Moss’s motion to contribute $2,500 to the project was defeated, and council decided not to make a contribution. This item generated considerable discussion around the table. The Village collects taxes from its residents every year in order to contribute to the RDCK’s Slocan Valley parks service, which includes the Window Regional Park. Last year, the Village contributed $11,872 to the parks service. Council suggested a phased approach to the project, as well as an asset management plan for all the parks in the service. In the reply to Director Popoff, the CAO says, “Ensuring the ongoing financial sustainability of the service is a priority for Council and they do not want to spend beyond what taxpayers can afford, particularly in these uncertain times.”

• The New Denver Emergency Program Bylaw No. 727, 2020 was given three readings. Adoption of the bylaw is planned for March 28. Current provincial legislation requires municipalities to have a local emergency plan. Although it is no longer necessary to establish these plans by bylaw, the CAO’s report to council says a bylaw provides clarity about the Village’s approach.

• A policy governing the payment of wages for municipal staff during an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) activation was adopted. The policy statement will provide certainty to municipal employees working in an EOC regarding their wage entitlement. It will also ensure that the Village of New Denver is eligible for reimbursement of these costs from the province.

• Council agreed to provide a letter of support for the Powell Street Festival Society’s proposal to bring Japanese Canadian artists to the New Denver-Kaslo area for a multi-generational exploration of historic internment sites in September. Information reported to council CAO Catherine Allaway acknowledged that COVID-19 was “creating an uncertain future” but that the letter of support would allow the society to proceed with their grant applications for the project. She added that the society would be advised that the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre’s operating schedule is subject to change.

• Councillor Moss reported on the March 19 Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) meeting. To reduce the amount of taxation and assist residents and businesses during COVID-19, $1,254 million was trimmed from the 2020 budget. While the RDCK is taking steps to protect staff, the building permit office and transfer stations are open. All RDCK and committee meetings will be held via Zoom. Elected RDCK approved procurement for new attendant buildings with propane heat for New Denver, Silverton, Winlaw and Crescent Valley recycling depots, and a kiosk for the Slocan transfer station.

• The Fire Department Committee, with Mayor Casey’s help, was able to secure some personal protection supplies, masks and hand sanitizer for first responders.

• Due to COVID-19, the Regional Energy Efficiency Program (REEP) has been put on hold, as the program involves energy evaluators entering people’s homes.

...and then some! It’s not a matter of thinking but of bodily practice. Try this whenever you are feeling stressed or exhausted, or angry. Then forgive. Just keep doing it. When you keep at a practice, it changes you, one meditation teacher in this community and lots more online. Use them.

FORGIVE, FORGIVE, FORGIVE: On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 is the worst. There are no bad days. Each day becomes an opportunity to forgive, to open our hearts and minds completely to the world around us. That’s all gone now. All we really know is that we will come out of this time changed in ways we can’t imagine.

So, let’s assume two things. We will do this beautifully—something new and unimaginable will be born from our mutual compassion. And we will do this badly—and need to forgive. Start by forgiving yourself for being afraid, or exhausted, or angry. Then forgive others for what they do to us. We need to surround ourselves with people and places that comfort us, that keep us out of harm’s way. Keep letting in beauty and generosity. Above all, plant yourself deeply in whatever You-Call-It—Love, Spirit, Nothingness, God, Evolution, Beingness—that which protects us from nothing but sustains us in all things.

VILLAGE OF NEW DENVER
PUBLIC NOTICES

ARBOUR DAY

The Village of New Denver is holding an Arbour Day starting on Tuesday, April 14, 2020 and will pick up all yard and pruning waste that is bundled or bagged and placed at the curb. Please ensure that all bundles are not more than 4 feet in length (use sturdy twine) and bags are an acceptable weight. Absolutely no household garbage or construction material will be picked up. If you have unusually large amounts of yard debris that you’d like removed, please call the Village Office to confirm prior to pick up. Collection of material may take some time as there are significant amounts of debris due to winter storms. Thank you for your patience.

OPEN BURNING BAN

Residents are advised that there is currently a provincial ban on open burning in the area served by the New Denver & Area Volunteer Fire Department which will remain in effect until at least April 15th. Campfires are still allowed, provided they are smaller than 2 feet by 2 feet. The Village will not be issuing open burning permits until the ban is lifted.

BOOK RETURNS

A reminder that both Knox Hall and Reading Centre are closed for renovations. If you still have Reading Centre books or materials on loan, please return them at the Village Office – a return box will be placed outside for your convenience.

WILDSAFE BC COORDINATOR – NEW DENVER

WildSafe BC is currently hiring for a New Denver Community Coordinator. This position starts May 10 to November 30, 2020. The deadline for application is April 6th, 2020 – 4:00 pm PT. For a complete job description and how to apply, please go to: http://www.bcfc.com/opportunities/employment

April 9, 2020 The Valley Voice

While it’s good to be informed, it’s acquired from the Silverton Historical Similkameen, Boundary, West

British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO) approached by the University of a year ago when the society was volunteers.

the society plans to have maps added there are about 3,800 images yet to be uploaded by society volunteers and uploaded says 1,600 photos have been scanned the Silvery Slocan Historical Society, website (bcrdh.ca).

at the BC Regional Digitized History online, both to view and to download, by Charlotte Farrell, Lucerne School

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115 Slocan Avenue · P.O. Box 40, New Denver, BC V0G 1S0
(250) 358-2316 · office@newdenver.ca · www.newdenver.ca
Silverton council special meeting, March 31: 100 campground trees being removed

by Moe Lyons

On Tuesday March 31 at 4 pm, Silverton council joined the rest of the technologically challenged masses to have a special meeting online. After about 10 minutes of technical difficulties, the meeting got underway with everyone present, with two invisible attendees and one attending both online and by telephone.

The main reason for the meeting was for council to discuss the trees in the campground, since recent events (two trees crashing down, one seriously damaging a home) have made it clear this is a problem that needs addressing.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Hillary Elliot told council there has now been an in-depth assessment done. Of the 169 trees in the campground, over half of them, perhaps about 100, will be removed. This work has already begun. The intent is to take down as many as possible as quickly as possible, with special attention paid to those trees which could threaten people’s homes.

One problem that may cause some delay is that the Village has no place to put the wood and debris, as there is a provincial ban on open burning during COVID-19. Mayor Clarke asked if the job would be done by the end of the summer. The CAO replied that the timeframe is unknown. Councillor K. Gordon said she felt it was really important to finish the work quickly, to get the campground going by the summer.

Councillor G. Main asked who was doing the work, and Elliot responded that it was the usual local contractor. Gordon asked if that meant a contractor from Silverton, but got no response. She suggested checking to see if local logging contractors might be interested, as they will not be able to work in the bush soon because of spring road conditions and load limits. She pointed out that they might be able to take the wood to their pre-established burn piles.

K. Gordon raised the question of contacting local logging contractors several times throughout the meeting before Mayor Clarke finally said staff was doing their very best, and “the path we have already taken needs addressing.”

Elliot indicated the Village was hiring someone to cut down the trees but that they had no ability to remove stumps. She is currently investigating to find out who locally has the equipment that could do this, as the Village has no knowledge of stump extractors.

Councillor T. Gordon and Mayor Clarke welcomed all previous assessments, and whether they had all been done by the same contractor. Elliot replied she did not know, as she had not been CAO at that time. She thought they might be able to find out by checking with the water operators, from getting sick at the same time or having to quarantine at the same time (if they are both exposed at the same time).

Councillor Main also noted that people would be allowed to have campfires. Councillor Main noted the current restrictions were primarily aimed at large burns, Category 2 or bigger, and campfires were not an issue right now.

Local businesses respond to COVID-19

Emery Herbals Botanical Dispensary, Healing Suites and Teaching Centre

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch #20

The other item up for discussion was the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Council was informed that all Village-owned buildings were now closed to the public. People can contact the Village office by phone, email or via Canada Post. Signs have been installed at the exercise equipment at the day park and at the playground. Staff is working from home. Elliot said they were striving for the least amount of interpersonal contact possible. They are also acquiring wipes and sanitizers and placing them everywhere they can.

In a recent interview after the meeting, CAO Elliott explained that Silverton’s two public works employees are working opposite shifts – one week on, one week on call. The employee on call comes to work on the week they are being tested for COVID, and if they test negative, they come to work; otherwise, they need to isolate. The opposite happens the next week. She also said council had to be more flexible in hiring water operators, from getting sick at the same time or having to quarantine at the same time (if they are both exposed at the same time).

Council agreed all meetings would be conducted via teleconference through GoToMeeting for the foreseeable future.
Kootenay Boundary Doctors urge everyone to stay home

by Jan McMurray

A lot of people in the Kootenay Boundary communities are on the frontlines in the battle against COVID-19. This crisis is unlike anything we have experienced in our lifetime. We are working flat out to be there for our patients and their families.

Doctors cannot do this alone. What the public does now will impact the health of everyone in our communities in the weeks and months ahead.

Lives depend on your actions now.

Our province is in a state of emergency. Please follow these directives:

• Stay home unless absolutely necessary. This means no get-togethers. No dinner parties. No shopping. No sports with others, even outside. No playdates. Connect online.

• For blended families, reduce frequency of turnaround between parent homes.

• Keep two metres or six feet away from everyone if you must go out. Even if they are relatives or close friends.

That’s about the width of a car or the length of two arms stretched out.

• Wash your hands frequently.

• Tell your loved ones to do the same.

This is especially important for young people. We sometimes see you out in the park or at the beach. You can get sick from this virus. More importantly, you can be carriers and cause a lot of harm to parents, grandparents, and other loved ones.

This is serious. As physicians in communities, we are caring for many people who are abiding by the guidelines and staying home. We are seeing others who are ignoring the advice of our public health officer. Please stop. You are responsible for moving the finish line further. You are making this marathon harder.

The time is now. Every day will now see a doubling of cases. There are significantly more COVID-19 cases in your neighbourhood right now than the diagnosed cases suggest.

We can’t wait one more hour or one more day. Let’s save lives, together.

In Kootenay Boundary, we’re community minded, we pride ourselves in caring for each other and doing the right thing.

Let’s lead BC in following the Provincial Health Officer’s directives, look after our loved ones and make the rest of Canada proud.

Kootenay Boundary Division of Family Practice

Regional Hospital District budget passed

by Jan McMurray

The West Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital District (WKBRHD) board approved a $26,297,365 budget at its meeting March 25.

The biggest ticket item by far is phase two of the Trail Hospital project, which will see expansion of the pharmacy and ambulatory care unit. The WKBRHD is borrowing more than $15 million to contribute to this project.

The budget also includes a $3.2 million contribution to Interior Health for equipment and capital projects at several health facilities in the region for 2020. Most of these projects are planned for the bigger facilities in Trail, Grand Forks and Nelson; however, the Arrow Lakes Hospital emergency department will get a decontamination, a medical storage cart and a medication cart, and the Edgewater Health Centre will get a new emergency generator and transfer switch.

The taxation requirement will remain the same as last year at $5,109,657. The rate is 0.2601 per $1,000, so will cost property owners $260.1 per $1000 of assessed value.

Other sources of revenue include $2 million from the reserve fund and almost $4 million of surplus from 2019.

The board considered dropping taxation and dipping further into the reserve fund. However, board members agreed unanimously to maintain tax levels, which should allow for a $36,788 contribution to the reserve fund this year. The reserve fund currently stands at $6,655,965.

Idaho earthquake felt in the Kootenays

by Jan McMurray

The biggest ticket item by far was a $3.2 million contribution to the TRM Health for equipment and ambulatory care unit. The WKBRHD is phase two of the Trail Hospital emergency department at the request of Interior Health for environmental services at the facility.

“Some people might want to take advantage of their time at home to clean up their yards or deal with their closets, but we need people to understand that now is not the time to bring that material to one of our sites.”

“While that does not attract pests or pose a health risk should be left at home. It may be an eyesore, but non-household waste or excess volumes may cause a strain on our facilities and will be turned away,” said Wolf.

The RKD is not currently accepting payment for residential waste disposal as residents may not want to limit contact between staff and customers. However, customers who bring excess loads will be asked to dispose of one load per week per household, with loads up to the equivalent of one pick-up truck bed (less than one cubic metre).

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The earthquake occurred in a remote area of Idaho, about 120 kilometres from the capital city of Boise. “Magnitude 6.5 is large and capable of causing significant damage if you’re close to it – within 10-50 kilometres,” Cassidy said.

“People in Boise would have felt shaking that was frightening, but there was no structural damage.”

Cassidy explained that what people feel depends on local factors, such as the type of building they are in, what buildings they are in, what local factors are really important.”

Cassidy encourages anyone who felt the Idaho earthquake to go to the Earthquakes Idaho earthquake questionnaire. “It doesn’t mean there can’t be one, but we haven’t seen them throughout history. If you feel shaking, it’s probably from a large distant one in Idaho, Montana or off the coast of BC.”

He said the largest recorded earthquake in the interior was an M6 quake near Valemount in February 1918.

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The West Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital District (WKBRHD) board approved a $26,297,365 budget at its meeting March 25.

The biggest ticket item by far is phase two of the Trail Hospital project, which will see expansion of the pharmacy and ambulatory care unit. The WKBRHD is borrowing more than $15 million to contribute to this project.

The budget also includes a $3.2 million contribution to Interior Health for equipment and capital projects at several health facilities in the region for 2020. Most of these projects are planned for the bigger facilities in Trail, Grand Forks and Nelson; however, the Arrow Lakes Hospital emergency department will get a decontamination, a medical storage cart and a medication cart, and the Edgewater Health Centre will get a new emergency generator and transfer switch.

The taxation requirement will remain the same as last year at $5,109,657. The rate is 0.2601 per $1,000, so will cost property owners $260.1 per $1000 of assessed value.

Other sources of revenue include $2 million from the reserve fund and almost $4 million of surplus from 2019.

The board considered dropping taxation and dipping further into the reserve fund. However, board members agreed unanimously to maintain tax levels, which should allow for a $36,788 contribution to the reserve fund this year. The reserve fund currently stands at $6,655,965.
**Ivy to be removed from Nelson Courthouse**

Starting in April 2020, the Province will remove invasive ivy that is growing on the Nelson Courthouse and causing building integrity risks.

A recent assessment by Fairbank Architects Ltd. determined that the ivy is threatening the building’s structural integrity, including obstructing gutters and downspouts, preventing proper roof drainage, and damaging the chimney, roof and soffits. Ivy roots and tendrils are degrading the foundation, and there is evidence of water damage inside the building as well.

Previously, a five-year trim-back maintenance plan was in place. It proved to be costly and inefficient due to the ivy’s rapid growth. The original stone for the building, Kootenay marble, is soft and susceptible to damage.

The Province is contracting Cornerstone General Contracting to remove the ivy without the use of chemicals. The work must get underway in April. Timing beyond that would incur additional costs as the ivy will be in bloom. In carrying out this work, the contractor will follow the rules of the provincial health officer.

Once the ivy has been removed, the courthouse will be thoroughly inspected for any further indications of damage. Repairs and future maintenance work will be identified and prioritized.

A Nelson citizen is checking with a local nursery to see if it is possible to move, at their cost, the ivy root ball to different locations in the community or to individuals who may want a clipping. This idea was the result of a stakeholder group meeting held earlier this month. Other items discussed by the group included the project rationale and the risk of maintaining the status quo.

The courthouse, which was designed by Francis M. Rattenbury and constructed in 1908, has heritage status in Nelson. Rattenbury also designed the Parliament Buildings and the Fairmont Empress Hotel in Victoria.

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**Truck accident on Hwy 6 near Slocan Park**

Hwy 6 just south of Slocan Park was blocked by a truck and trailer from about 1 to 7:30 pm on April 2, after the driver caught a soft shoulder and lost control of the vehicle. He lost his load, took out a power pole and landed sideways across the road. There were no injuries. A detour was set up through Cunningham Road, which was open to single lane traffic for light vehicles only. Heavy vehicles had to wait until the highway opened at 7:30 pm. Once the vehicle was removed, FortisBC took care of the pole. The Passmore Fire Department, RCMP, BC Ambulance Service, YRB and FortisBC all responded.

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**COMMUNITY**
COMMUNITY

Brand new cable ferry for Arrow Park run
compiled by Jan McMurray

The new Arrow Park III cable ferry went into service March 30. This is the last of four cable ferries built by WaterBridge Steel of Nakusp as part of a $27.9 million contract with the Province. The Arrow Park III runs across the junction of Upper and Lower Arrow Lakes at Arrow Park, 22 kilometres south of Nakusp on Highway 6.

The new 24-car ferry will be larger and able to carry more vehicles than the existing ferry, with capacity increased to handle commercial vehicles at full highway loads. This is also the first vessel of the ministry’s inland fleet that will be fully electrified, scheduled for 2021. The ministry aims to achieve full electrification of the inland ferry fleet by 2030.

In 2016, Waterbridge Steel was awarded a $27.9 million contract to design and build four new cable ferries. The Adams Lake II went into service spring 2017, Glade II in 2018, Harrop II in spring 2019, and Arrow Park III in spring 2020.

WaterBridge has been shortlisted for the project to design and build the ferry that will replace the MV Balfour on Kootenay Lake, along with Western Pacific Marine out of Vancouver and Allied Shipbuilders of North Vancouver. All three companies were to submit proposals for the project earlier this year. The contract is expected to be issued at the end of May or early June 2020.

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, the ministry would like to remind people to avoid all non-essential travel and remain inside vehicles during sailings.

Student offers help in New Denver
by Jan McMurray

Cassandra Qiu, a 15-year-old grade 9 student in New Denver, is offering a free service to anyone who is anxious about running everyday errands during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I didn’t think it was fair that seniors had to risk their safety running their own errands under these circumstances,” she said. “My mom suggested that I do this, and there was nothing holding me back. I’m young and healthy and have some free time.”

Cassandra has posted a poster and has given it out to some seniors she knows.

“I can get groceries, things from the drugstore, and I can do laundry,” she says.

Call Cassandra at 250-265-8656.

ASK YOUR PHARMACIST
We’re here for you
KASLO & NEW DENVER COMMUNITY PHARMACY
250-353-2224
250-358-2500
Hand sanitizer now available, compounded in store by our pharmacist. Supplies are limited so we can only provide one per customer at this time. We have both Isopropyl alcohol 75% and hydrogen peroxide 3% formulations.

– Be sure to take care of your hands –

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New Denver – 309 6th Avenue • M-F 10:00-5:30

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK 2020
APRIL 19-25

We had to cancel our annual Volunteer Recognition event due to the pandemic, but the Slocan Valley Community Legacy Society would still like to recognize the amazing volunteers who help make this Valley such a special place to live.

Our thanks to all the many groups and individuals (too numerous to count!) such as:

Parent Advisory Councils
Hall Societies
Firefighters
Environmental Groups
Arts & Culture Organizations
Spiritual Support Groups
Social Service Societies
Chambers of Commerce
Historical Societies

Caregiving Communities
Recreational Groups
Family Support Organizations
Trail Maintenance Crews
Literacy Leaders & Libraries
Search & Rescue Volunteers
Seniors Housing & Support Groups
Food Security Organizations
International Aid Groups

With thanks to the RDCK for their support.
Nakusp council, March: Council holding weekly meetings for COVID-19 updates

by Hannah Lisgo

• Council has been holding special teleconference meetings every Thursday at 1 p.m. since March 26 to keep everyone informed on COVID-19 updates. These special meetings follow the weekly meetings with all BC mayors and CAOs held by BC Minister of Public Safety Mike Farnworth and BC Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Selina Robinson. At the April 2 session, the ministers encouraged people to check www2.gov.bc.ca for COVID-19 information. Check the Village website to find out how to attend the meetings electronically.

• The March 23 council meeting marked the “first of its kind” in Nakusp, via teleconference using the ‘GoToMeeting’ platform. Due to the physical distancing recommendation of the provincial health officer, all councilors, press and public were in attendance through their computer or phone, while Mayor Tom Zelenik and Director of Finance Mark Tennant were in council chambers hosting the meeting. The mayor asked for patience and understanding as council gets used to this new way of conducting meetings.

• Council agreed to provide a letter of support to TeraSpan Networks Inc. to accompany its applications for funding for ‘last mile’ fiberoptic internet infrastructure in Nakusp and area. TeraSpan would like to construct a fibre to the home/fibre to the business network that would connect to the fibre backbone being installed by Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation. Mayor Zelenik reported after the meeting that the Nakusp and Area Development Board has also written a letter of support for the proposal.

• Council approved the Municipal Campground Expansion Committee’s recommendation to establish a reserve fund in the 2021 budget to allocate surplus revenue generated by the campground for the maintenance and improvement of the campground. At the March 9 meeting, council approved two of three recommendations from the Campground Expansion Committee: to not dispose of any park land and to appoint Dan May (campground contractor) as a non-voting member of the committee. The third recommendation, to separate campground revenue from the general operating budget for the purpose of maintenance and expansion, was tabled pending further information from administration.

• Four people were appointed to the NACFRD board of directors: Bill Tobey, Patrick Judd, Darlene Adair and Anastasia Hewitt.

• The Village will provide a letter of support for the Recreation Nakusp Society’s application to the CBT Community Initiative and Affected Area Fund for the restoration of Jackie James Ball Field.

• Council was appointed to amendments to the Kootenay Lake West Transit Service bylaw that increases the maximum allowable annual tax requisition and changes the way the costs are apportioned among the participating local governments.

• The Village will provide a letter in support of a resolution passed by New Westminster City council in favour of a national pharmacare program.

• At a special meeting on March 17, council closed all Village facilities to public access due to COVID-19 until it is deemed safe to resume normal operations. The hot springs, campground, Rotary playground, recreation complex (arena facility), and Emergency Services building are all closed. People can use walking trails, the waterfront walkway and parks; physical distancing signs have been installed. Only essential emergency personnel is allowed at the ESB. People can contact the Village office via phone or email.

Message from Nakusp Mayor Tom Zelenik

Council and staff are inspired by the community’s cooperation and collaboration while we navigate these uncharted waters. The whole community is coming together to safely protect each other by practicing social/physical distancing and self-isolation, and turning to virtual connection, online services, delivery services, and take-out. People are helping seniors and shut-ins, keeping our most vulnerable safe.

As of March 26, the Province has taken unprecedented steps to support the COVID-19 response under the provincial State of Emergency Program Act. Several orders under the Act will affect the operations of all local governments to help strengthen both the provincial and local response to this pandemic.

There are four key things the Province is asking the Village to do. We need the full support of you, our community members. This will protect our doctors, nurses, health care workers and other front line.

1. Educate: Be calm, and ask all community members to follow Dr. Bonnie Henry’s orders. Model physical/ social distancing of two metres or more.

2. Enforce: Educate first! Municipal bylaw officers can support enforcement of the provincial health officer’s orders. This may include monitoring certain facilities, providing information and warnings to the public, and providing information to provincial health officers. This does not provide bylaw enforcement officers with additional powers.

3. Communicate: Communication will be required not only by the Village but by everyone. We are here to support each other.

4. Planning: We will work with our staff and our emergency personnel to prioritize our activities, and to determine our local government business continuity concerns, without straining/overloading our resources.

Violations of provincial public health orders can carry fines of over $25,000 or jail time. Gatherings are discouraged and people must remain two metres away from each other. Stay home as much as possible. Use virtual connectivity to call friends and family. It’s okay to go outside for fresh air and exercise. Self-isolate if you are sick, even if it’s not COVID-19. Remember we are all in this together! Our front-line workers need to stay as healthy as possible. They risk their lives daily; we don’t need to compromise them. One of them may save our lives.

Please continue to monitor the BC Centre for Disease Control website on COVID-19 and https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/home for updates, information, and resources on best practices.

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Alice Watson M.Ed. Counselling Psychology 250-265-3328

*Member of Canadian Counsellor and Psychotherapy Association, CBT certificate holder, 17+ years experience.

We are here to support each other. Only by the Village but by everyone. Communication will be required not only by the Village but by everyone. We are here to support each other.

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Please continue to monitor the BC Centre for Disease Control website on COVID-19 and https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/home for updates, information, and resources on best practices.
Kaslo council, March 24: Meeting held using technology due to COVID-19 measures

by Jan McMurray

The Valley Voice

Kaslo council has met electronically every week for the past six weeks. By the time this column is published, council will have met eight times on Zoom.

Councillor Niki Steiner, CAO and kneeling on the floor of the council chambers, had difficulty connecting because he was out of the cell service area. "The minutes are posted on the website," explained Coun. Trevor Durrance, who is council’s liaison to information technology, "but not the council proceedings.

The council met about the following issues:

• The CAO reported that he met with Kaslo Search and Rescue to discuss possible expansion and construction of new facilities. He met with Kootenay Columbia Regional District and was told that the area is at 30% of its growth. Additional Village-owned land would be needed for this.

• Grant applications were turned back to the Kaslo Food Hub because of the pandemic. It had applied for grants to allow them to stock up the food bank, prepare for the Saturday Market and expand its operations. Council was told that the province would be releasing the money to communities that had applied for grants over the past year, but that it was not clear when.

• The CAO listed other COVID-19 measures in his report. The skate park, Viny Park playground, and campground are closed until further notice. May Days is cancelled. Staff will consult with partners and stakeholders about a possible event later in the year. Staff is investigating credit card payment options for the public to pay their bills and taxes.

People helping people during COVID-19 in Kaslo

by Jan McMurray

Anyone in Kaslo and Area D who needs something delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic can call Andy Shadrack at 250-353-7350, email him at ashadra@telus.net, or message him on Facebook.

"I live with someone with a compromised immune system, so we started self-isolating on March 13," Shadrack said. "We’ve been thinking that we’re asking people to self-isolate if they’ve been travelling or are sick, but there’s no way for them to get groceries or drugs, so I asked the grocery stores if they’d cooperate if we did a delivery service, and they said yes.

Shadrack went on Facebook with a call for volunteers, and about 30 people responded. "We’re using about half of them," he said. "We started with one delivery per day and now we’re up to four per day. I really appreciate the people who are helping and I’ll do it for as long as we have to.

Shadrack says they’ve delivered groceries, prescriptions, flowers, a birthday cake, medical equipment... unsuccessful for the Moyie stabilization project (reinforcing walls) and the Kaslo Bay wharf demolition project. Both these applications were made to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. The CASO said that it was disappointing, as both these projects are important to upcoming waterfront/shipyards planning.

"The purchase of a zero-turn mower was approved. This purchase is planned for in the 2020 budget. Foreman Mike Lind was able to find the mower for $1,200, which is $2,200 below the expected price," he said.

• Mayor Hewat reported she was selected to be chair of the Kaslo & Area D Economic Development Commission for this year.

• Committee of the Whole meetings will take place at 7 pm instead of 4:30 pm until further notice.

• The Kootenay Local Agricultural Society (KLAS) tool library. "We anticipate extra use of the rototiller because there is a lot of renewed interest in growing food, so we’ll continue to manage that in the North Kootenay Lake area," Steiner said. There are KLAS tool libraries in Invermere, Creston and Cranbrook.

Air Canada suspends flights to and from Castlegar

Air Canada has extended the suspension of all flights in and out of the West Kootenay Regional Airport in Castlegar until at least April 30, 2020.

As a result of COVID-19, Air Canada is facing uncertainty and is making adjustments to its schedule which resulted in the extension.

The extension of flight suspensions has resulted in the temporary closure of the airport terminal building to the general public," says Patrick Gauvreau, airport manager. "The airport remains open for emergency air and cargo service, and the Southeast Fire Centre.

The City anticipates an update from Air Canada in the later part of April to determine if flights will resume May 1, 2020 or if there will be additional delays.

The Inter Community Business Bylaw was adopted to encourage the use of COVID-19 related measures.

• Mayor Susan Hewat opened the meeting with a message related to the impact of COVID-19 on the community. She thanked local front-line health and emergency workers for working to keep residents safe, Village staff for their efforts in the Village running, and Mel Bryce for livestreaming the meeting online. This was the first council meeting the public could not attend in person. People could watch the meeting online, thanks to Mel’s efforts. People could also attend the meeting by phone or computer via Zoom, an online conferencing tool. Mayor Hewat urged people to self-isolate if they had just returned from travelling or had been in contact with anyone showing symptoms or with anyone just back from a trip. She recognized local business owners and encouraged everyone to shop locally. “Now, like no other time, is the time to shop locally.”

• Council adopted the minutes of the special meeting of March 17, where council agreed to allow residents to set out one bag on garbage day without a further notice and then close the Village office to the public except by appointment. People can contact the Village office by phone or email. The $2/month penalty for late payment of water bills was suspended, and seniors will receive the 10% discount on water bills until the end of the year.

• The CAO listed other COVID-19 measures in his report. The skate park, Viny Park playground, and campground are closed until further notice. May Days is cancelled. Staff will consult with partners and stakeholders about a possible event later in the year. Staff is investigating credit card payment options for the public to pay their bills and taxes.

The Kaslo Food Hub is a depot for local food banks, and has restricted them to selling food only. This includes fresh and prepared foods, food carts and liquor.

“There’s a potential for a shortage of food through the global system that stockpiling food, such as grocery stores and restaurants, but now that’s on hold. The original plan was to have the study done by the end of May. "It might take a little longer," he said.

The Kaslo Food Hub is located in the basement of St. Andrew’s United Church, 504th St., Kaslo. Council Chambers, Contact: 353-7120, patricksteiner@ nklkcss.org. For more information, including how to make a donation: www.nklkcss.org. The Kaslo Food Hub is a project of the North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society.

Village of Castlegar parcel tax roll

A Parcel Tax Roll Review Panel, which has been appointed to deal with Parcel Tax Rolls pursuant to waterworks improvement, shall hear from the property owner(s) and may review and correct the roll as to errors or omissions respecting:

• Name or address on a Parcel Tax Roll;
• Inclusion of a parcel;
• Taxable area or taxable, frontage of a parcel;
• Whether an exemption has been improperly allowed or disallowed.

Parcel Tax Rolls are available for inspection online at www.kaslo.ca under the “Village Hall” tab, then click ‘Reports of Interest’ and then ‘Parcel Tax.’

Written notice must be received by the Village by 12 noon Friday, April 24, 2020, prior to the first sitting of the Parcel Tax Roll Review Panel at:

Village of Castlo
Box 576
Castlegar, BC VOG IM0
Canada Post

413 Fourth Street (mailbox at side of building)
admin@kaslo.ca (email)

The first sitting of the Panel will be held:

Tuesday April 28, 2020, 5:30 pm, Council Chambers, City Hall 413 Fourth Street, Kaslo, BC.
Hello bears and springtime

For the most part, bears have been in their winter dens since late October. In late April, when the bears emerge from their private dens, they have lost one third of their pre-hibernation weight.

This past winter, we received a heavy snow load, and the current weather trend is for a very late spring. The bears that emerge from their dens may have a difficult time foraging for their first meals.

Unfortunately, early spring food sources do not even provide bears with enough calories to maintain their weight. They continue to lose mass well into the summer until they find food sources to begin putting on weight.

A new study published in Nature found that bears that eat human food huckleberries, followed by spawning salmon, accumulated 20% more body fat per week. An adult female bear must lose one third of her pre-hibernation weight.

In late April, when the bears emerge from their dens they are the males, then the sub adult and single females, and finally the moms with their young cubs. At that time, the black bear cubs are four to six pounds; grizzly cubs weigh in at ten pounds. Black bear cubs remain part of the family unit for two or three years, while grizzly cubs are tutored several years more.

Bears must consume between 15,000 and 20,000 calories per day to survive the five-month hibernation period. An adult female bear must supplement her diet with 20% more body fat (and other nutrients) than she needs to sustain her own life in order to successfully gestate and nurse her cubs while in the winter den.

When the teenage and adult bears awaken from their slumber, they are a little groggy. It takes a couple of weeks for them to ‘break their fast.’ Once they wake up, they have a voracious appetite.

Adult males and females that do not have cubs have two things on their minds. Food and attracting a mate. Newly born cubs continue to nurse exclusively for one month after they exit their winter den. In May, their new teeth emerge and they can now commence eating solid food.

In the spring, the best nutrient-rich food is in low-laying, snow-free elevations, valley bottoms and riparian areas, open meadows, and undisturbed riparian areas.

Bears must be cautious of uncleaned barbecues, and unpicked fruit. Foraging in this manner provides them with a good source of the caloric intake they need in order to maintain their weight.

New Denver Hospice and COVID-19 Community Action Committee receive CBT grant

A COVID-19 New Denver and Area Community Action Committee was already set and ready to launch when the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) offered a grant of $9,500 to help community members affected by the virus. The grant is part of an $11.7 million aid package for the Kootenays in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

New Denver Hospice Society Coordinator and grant administrator Ana Bokstrom said she was surprised to read the email when it came. “We were just set to launch our community relief effort, with the first time in the late fall.

“We saw the future coming — if we didn’t act sooner — and decided to look into fundraising as a way to provide support to those in need, especially those facing the virus for the first time in the late fall.

“We like suggestions on how to reduce your impact on local businesses. If you share our valley, please contact us: Area H VWS Bear Smart Coordinator Kim Frederiksen, (250) 226-6908, kimfrederiksen@gmail.com.

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“Funding for cost sharing (50%) for electric fencing: Grizzly Bear Coexistence Solutions, (250) 241-1177, grizzlyfencingproject@gmail.com.

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Also, you can contact WildSafe BC. A new coordinator to replace the excellent work done by Tammy White for the Villages of New Denver, Silvertown, Nakusp, and communities in Area K will be hired soon. www. wildsafebc.com and www.facebook.com/ WildSafeBCnewdenver.

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BC Hydro introduces COVID-19 Relief Fund

BC Hydro recognizes that COVID-19 has resulted in financial hardship for many of its customers and has introduced the COVID-19 Relief Fund. The fund allows eligible residential customers who have experienced job loss to arrange three months of free credit on their BC Hydro bill based on their average consumption. The fund also allows eligible small businesses that need to close due to COVID-19 to have up to three months of electricity charges waived.

For residential and commercial customers that are not eligible for the COVID-19 Relief Fund, there is the COVID-19 Customer Assistance Program. It allows customers to defer bill payments or arrange for flexible payment plans with no penalty.

Residential customers facing temporary financial hardship and are unable to pay their bills due to job loss, illness, or loss of a family member may also be eligible for grants from the Customer Crisis Fund. If you meet the eligibility criteria for both, you can apply for both the Customer Crisis Fund and the COVID-19 Relief Fund.

BC Hydro will be stopping disconnections for non-payment during the pandemic. If you’re having trouble paying your bill, call BC Hydro to arrange for flexible payment plans with no penalty. Some customers have reported receiving calls threatening disconnection from fake BC Hydro employees. BC Hydro has stopped disconnections during the COVID-19 pandemic and asks that you report these fraudulent calls to your local police department.

Due to the high concentration of visitors on site and the need to enforce social distancing in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, all BC Hydro recreation areas are closed, including boat launches, campsites, washrooms, day-use facilities and parking lots.

Contact BC Hydro at 1-800-224-9376.

School District 8 announces principal and vice-principal changes for 2020-21

by Jan McMurray

Slocan Valley and Kaslo families of schools will have new principals and vice-principals next year.

At Mt. Sentinel, Shelie Malloff will be the new principal and Ed Nielsen will remain as vice-principal. Malloff is moving back to MSS from Brent Kennedy, where she is currently principal. Previously, she was vice-principal at MSSS. Current principal Glen Campbell is retiring.

Province supporting BC’s food banks during COVID-19 submitted

To support vulnerable British Columbians during the COVID-19 crisis, the Province is providing a $3-million emergency grant from the Community Gaming Grants program to Food Banks British Columbia.

Food Banks British Columbia will distribute the money among food banks province-wide to support the immediate needs to buy and distribute food, pay employees and cover other costs essential to the delivery of food services. Food Banks BC was selected to distribute the funding because of its expertise in management of food distribution.

Food Banks BC will assess the needs and requirements of food banks to determine the amount and timing of the distribution. Funds will be distributed quickly and equitably to food banks across all regions of the province.

The $3-million grant uses funding that remained in the Community Gaming Grants’ 2019-20 budget of $140 million after all 2019 community gaming grants had been awarded or approved for eligible organizations.

The grant to Food Banks BC is in alignment with the ministerial order issued March 26 under the Emergency Program Act, to protect BC’s most vulnerable, making it easier to support critical services for vulnerable people, like food banks and shelters.

These latest steps are part of government’s $5-billion COVID-19 Action Plan to provide income supports, tax relief and direct funding for people, businesses and services.

Blew Elementary expansion will not be going ahead

by Jan McMurray

School District 8 has announced that the Blew Elementary School expansion project will not be going ahead, as the project does not meet the Ministry of Education’s “priorities for capital investment.”

Superintendent Christine Perkins explains in a press release that the ministry now recognizes the school’s existing capacity is sufficient for current and future enrolment, based on 10-year projections.
CREATING A COMMUNITY that makes life possible and LBGTQIA+ welcoming is no easy task. It requires strong community leaders, who are honest and fair, to create a space for inclusion and acceptance. This is a big task for us as we navigate through these challenging times.

Mistretta, MA


COMMUNITY FOOD HAMPERS: Anyone in the New Denver, Silverton, Hills area needing a food hamper during this difficult time call Sue 250-358-7787 and ask for box #445 New Denver. This cheque to Box 445 New Denver.

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COMMUNITY SERVICE? valleyvoice@valleyvoice.ca. Call 358-7218 for details.

Real Estate

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COTTON ROAD AT CARBON: Caring, peaceful setting just for cats. Comfort, playtime, toys, outside runs. Please call (250) 265-4131.

SHIFT HAPPENS - Hopefully you miss us as much as we miss you! Jeff and Ana are still around - we’re just no longer affiliated with Kootenay Co-Op Radio. Check out our new podcasts starting on April 10, 2020 at https://SHIFTHAPPENS.media.
The COVID-19 crisis continues to dominate the news across the country and around the world. As the news gets grimmer in other regions, there is growing hope from British Columbia analyses that show the daily increases in cases diminishing. Our efforts at physical distancing are working, and we must keep up those efforts. Please stay home as much as possible and stay away from people you don’t live with.

The federal government has come up with a series of initiatives to support Canadian workers and businesses affected by COVID-19, and applications for those supports can be made starting this week. The Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) will cover for some affected workers, the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) provides $2000 per month and the Emergency Business Account offers $20,000 per month to up to $40,000 in interest-free loans for Canadian workers don’t qualify for Employment Insurance when they lose their jobs. A journalist mentioned to me yesterday that she thought the $2000 per month rate was too low to support Canadian workers. I asked her how she felt that people with disabilities and people on income assistance get about half that in normal times. The world will be different after COVID-19. Let’s take the opportunity this crisis gives us to build a fairer society.

If you have any questions or concerns, please send an email to richard.cannings@parl.gc.ca, or phone 250-770-4480 (Penticton) or 250-365-2792 (Castlegar).
No boundaries with COVID-19

When an outbreak hits a community, one of the most urgent things people want is information. This is human nature, as information allows us to protect ourselves, our families and our loved ones.

Information is at the heart of public health: knowing what our risks are, where they are coming from and who is affected. One of the key ways we gather information is through active contact tracing, when public-health teams map the transmission, alert those at risk and close the circle. Health teams work to connect with each and every person who may be at risk of exposure to COVID-19. We do this to provide individual support and, equally important, to continue to follow the transmission trail.

Initially, public-health teams identified the source of transmission from travellers. That is why we share travel information with the public. We need to understand that while cruise ships are a small proportion of the global spread, they have been a significant player in the COVID-19 pandemic. As we notified the public about briefings listed travel locations and was from travellers. That is why our public-health protocols also could be here for only $19.50 + GST.

In B.C., once there is community transmission, there is no longer a boundary to the spread of COVID-19. We do this to protect the public from potentially exposed and the specific personal details of people who were potentially exposed. This is imperative for public health, to know and understand what is happening in your community. The actions you take are equally important, to continue to keep all of us safe.

So, while I understand the desire to know where the positive cases are does not protect you, your family or your community. The actions you take will do that.

No one is immune from this disease, but everyone can make a difference. Every British Columbian has a part to play to flatten the curve. Wash your hands, don’t touch your face, stay home if you are ill, and stay apart with physical distancing. Let’s all do the right thing.

For the latest medical updates, including case counts, prevention, risks and testing, visit: http://www.bccdc.ca/ or follow @CDCofBC

For the provincial health officer’s orders, notices and guidance, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19 or call 1-888-COVID19 (1-888-268-4319) between 7:30 am and 8 pm, seven days a week.
Helping businesses through COVID-19 pandemic

As we learn more about the programs, subsidies, and funding streams being rolled out, we will identify the opportunities for local organizations to help fill the gaps,” said Andrea Wilkey, executive director of Community Futures. “This is an evolving situation and we want to make sure that our region has the resources necessary to thrive.”

Community Futures is facilitating a Business Community Weekly Roundtable on COVID-19. These Zoom video conferences are open to business owners, managers, and business service providers in the Kootenay region. An accompanying Facebook group, COVID-19 Support for Kootenay Businesses, is a platform for business owners to ask questions and find resources. To attend the roundtable, email amacdonald@futures.bc.ca or visit futures.bc.ca/covid-19-support-for-businesses.

A survey conducted by Community Futures BC, the BC Chambers of Commerce, Small Business BC and the BC Economic Development Association showed that 86% of businesses surveyed in the Kootenay region had already been impacted by COVID-19. Of respondents, 73% in the Kootenay region indicated that their business has experienced significant negative impacts.

The Community Futures Business Loans program is working closely with both new and existing clients to help them through this time of economic hardship. As an organization dedicated to helping communities, the Community Futures loans fund can adapt quickly to changes such as the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, visit futures.bc.ca/business-loans.

The Community Futures Small Business Training Centre continues to offer workshops, but is now delivering them online as webinars. Business owners looking to drive online sales and enhance their online presence can find resources. To attend the roundtable, email amacdonald@futures.bc.ca or visit futures.bc.ca/covid-19-support-for-businesses.

Columbia Basin Trust helps communities address pandemic’s impacts

People in the Columbia Basin are experiencing the broad and serious impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Columbia Basin Trust is announcing $11.7 million in new funding to provide immediate support.

To aid local small businesses, the Trust will provide low-interest loans through the new Business Loan Program to help them meet their immediate needs. The Trust will also increase support to existing programs, including the Impact Investment Fund, Basin Rev UP, Summer Works, the Career Internship Program, Basin Business Advisors and Training Fee Support. If your business needs help right now, visit ourtrust.org/COVID19 or call 1-800-505-8998.

To aid vulnerable people, the Trust will directly help Basin residents at risk of not meeting public health requirements and continue operations, provide new programs, and support private operators to adjust and make operational changes, and funding for community social service agencies to adopt their services to meet public health requirements and continue operations, provide new programs, and directly help Basin residents at risk of not meeting the public health requirements.

“The Trust will also support community social service organizations to shift to virtual operations, so that their programming and supports are still available to residents.”

Not only will this increased funding support business and community organizations to address COVID-19 impacts, each dollar is invested in our region and will provide broader economic development benefits,” said Strilaeff. “During this most difficult time, I encourage everyone to follow public health recommendations and be kind, compassionate and supportive of one another.”

Columbia Basin Trust

All over North America anadromous and landlocked salmon populations are seeing sharp population declines. Habitat is increasingly being threatened by human impacts such as development, hydro operations and climate change.

Salmon are a keystone species, meaning they are an essential part of a thriving ecosystem. Many species both terrestrial and aquatic depend on them for survival. They also hold tremendous cultural and spiritual value.

This year FOKLSS will be working with local experts and advocates to ensure existing Kootenai habitat on the West Arm. Learn more about our work by contacting us. Consider becoming a member today! www.friendsokootenaylake.ca info@friendsokootenaylake.ca
Hello friends and neighbours,

These are unusual and uncertain times. Every one of us is experiencing a lot of upheaval, change, and stress. Our government is working hard to address the many challenges facing British Columbians, even as they change and develop by the day. I understand the deep impacts these changes can have – I too am personally taking life day by day. Today, however, I want to focus on this amazing region that we all are lucky enough to be living in.

Kootenay West is home to some of the most beautiful lakes, mountains, rivers, trails and parks. I am taking solace in nature, and I hope you are as well. Please follow Dr. Bonnie Henry’s guidelines of physical distancing, by engaging only with your immediate household members, and participate in good handwashing. In addition, please stay near your home community, and do not travel if it is not essential.

Your mental wellness is important, and I encourage you to practice self-care that helps you most. Take time to connect with family, friends and community members. Learn a fun new skill, speak to a loved one, take a bath or treat yourself to that slice of fresh baked bread – with extra butter and jam!

We have many local businesses that are feeling the impacts of COVID-19. Many have closed or are working in reduced capacity, online or in other innovative ways. Non-essential businesses are allowed to remain open and operating if they follow Dr. Henry’s directives around physical distancing and other safety measures. Our communities depend on these businesses, and we should support them if we can.

My parting request for each of you is that you instill kindness in all of your actions in the coming days. We are all doing the best we can, and we need to be gentle, not make assumptions, and refrain from online negative comments.

Thank you all for your efforts, your calls and your emails. We truly are a community here in Kootenay West, and I am so proud to call this home. Keep safe, stay healthy. Thank you an essential worker.

Richard Cannings, MP