Ferry line-ups highlight community concerns in Fauquier

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

When Heather Fraser looked out her window July 2, all she saw was a long line-up of cars.

“We just felt concerned for those people stuck in the line-ups,” she says. “It was anywhere from a five- to six-hour wait.”

Fraser lives near the ferry crossing in Fauquier, a small community south of Nakusp on the shores of the Arrow Lakes. It’s also the point where Highway 6 crosses the lake, connecting the West Kootenay to Vernon and the North Okanagan.

It’s just a short crossing, and a small ferry. So when flooding closed the Trans-Canada Highway earlier this month, traffic that was rerouted down Highway 6 quickly overwhelmed the service.

Hundreds of travellers were stranded trying to cross at Fauquier, in a line-up stretching nearly three kilometres back from the ferry.

“A lot of them were stuck there overnight, a lot didn’t have any food, a lot didn’t even know where they were,” Fraser says. “They were coming into a town that was just overwhelmed.”

“It wasn’t only the septic mess that’s a concern. The Fauquier Community Club plans to write to the provincial government and BC Hydro, with concerns that the backed-up traffic presented a safety risk as well as a health risk to the community.”

“We left a few of our water bottles to people stuck in the line-ups,” she says. “And some enterprising locals started up a pop-up food stand to try to help out.”

“Everyone understands there’s going to be road closures — there are fires, mudslides, whatever. But BC Hydro made a conscious decision not to build a bridge. They are inconveniencing everyone, so they should be there to provide things for people, make it not as bad a time waiting.”

“It’s not up to us. BC Hydro, the Department of Highways, they have to start being responsible for what’s happening,” she says. “It’s not fair. Our town was just overwhelmed.”

“We felt bad for anybody locally who had to go to Nakusp, trying to get back home, why should they be sitting in a five-hour wait?” she says. “And what about emergency vehicles? We heard sirens, and they were going against the traffic. They have no idea when the next load of ferry-goers are coming towards Nakusp.”

The community club is calling on BC Hydro and the Province to come up with contingency plans, to be ready when traffic backs up next time. Fraser, the club’s treasurer, says they want to see portable washrooms stored nearby, emergency garbage pickup, bag people who can direct and prioritize local traffic, better signage outlining services available in the area, and better warnings when there’s congestion at the ferry crossing.

“DriveBC had on their sign near Nakusp that it was a one-hour wait, when it was actually a five-hour wait. That would give people the opportunity to say, maybe, ‘let’s eat here, let’s go to the washroom now, we don’t know what’s going on,'” Fraser says.

A spokesperson for BC Hydro says the ministry was running the ferry system 24 hours a day and on constant demand to help minimize queuing times.

“The ministry and the maintenance contractor are always open for ideas on ways we can improve our service, and we have debriefed the response to this incident to ensure appropriate resources are brought in when situations like this occur in the future.”

A statement from the Ministry of Transportation says the ministry was running the ferry system 24 hours a day and on constant demand to help minimize queuing times.

“The ministry and the maintenance contractor are always open for ideas on ways we can improve our service, and we have debriefed the response to this incident to ensure appropriate resources are brought in when situations like this occur in the future.”
Building bylaw changes for energy efficiency kicked further down the road
by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Local politicians hit the pause button last month on promoting higher energy efficiency standards for new homes in the Regional District of Central Kootenay.

At its June meeting, the RDCK board voted to delay early implementation of stricter energy-code requirements for new homes. Staff had proposed making the changes effective at the end of July. The board will have another look at this at its December meeting.

“I voted against that with enthusiasm,” says Paul Peterson, the Area K politician who helped lead the push to delay. “In my personal opinion, the Province has a one-size-fits-all rule for the whole province when it comes to building inspection, and with the building code changes they come out with every year, it seems to cost tens of thousands more dollars to build a new house.”

The changes were proposed to move the Regional District’s building bylaws closer to matching upcoming provincial legislation, which sets a five-step process towards higher energy efficiency in new homes.

“Changes to the BC Building Code are coming,” staff noted in a written report for the board at its June 18 meeting. “The BC Energy Step Code has set a goal of Net Zero Energy use buildings by 2032.”

To get to ‘net zero’ energy emissions, the Province has set deadlines for builders to meet progressively higher targets.

Step One would see builders having to hire an energy consultant to review their plans and make recommendations. The recommendations are not binding on the builder at that stage, though the builder still has to meet other energy requirements.

Staff were hoping for the board to adopt the new requirements 18 months early in order to ease the transition, the report to the board states.

“The RDCK can use this time and its leadership to support and prepare the construction community for this change through education and training,” the report says. “Builder workshops have been active since 2017 and continue to be offered through the Regional Energy Efficiency Program: New Home.”

Implementing the changes now also allows homeowners to access REEEP, or the Regional Energy Efficiency Program, an effort to improve housing conditions for RDCK residents. The proposed motion from staff also noted that builders adopt an even higher level of energy efficiency – Step Three – on a voluntary basis.

“Emphasizing energy efficiency and providing incentives for Energy Advisors enables homeowners to invest in a higher standard of construction that will build a legacy of energy efficient homes in our communities,” it adds. “BC Energy Step Code is an opportunity to build better homes.”

That may be, but the extra cost, the requirement tacks onto the cost of a home made it a non-starter for most investors.

“I think there’s frustration among rural directors that know most of their folks, and frustration with the things the Province has come up with, that have made new housing starts so hard,” says Peterson.

“It costs $400,000 to build a plain-Jane house nowadays, and in my estimation $100,000 of that is due to poor legislation,” he says. “And here we are in a housing shortage, and I don’t get it.”

“Step Code is an opportunity to build better homes.”

The board report argues the cost of an energy adviser is about $1,000-$1,200, and is offset partially by an energy grant. Staff say with the average home costing $250 per square foot to build, the consultant fee equals the cost of a very small stove.

Still, Peterson questions that figure.

“It think that’s what you pay the guy, but what happens if you don’t get the returns? You have to do this and that. I think it’s a bit misleading,” he says.

“Here we are with people out of work, approaching looking into a recession, if not a depression, very easily, so to add even more to all the rules doesn’t make sense.”

And concerns local politicians overwhelmingly voted to put off the voluntary changes another six months.

The board is also bringing its concerns to the provincial organization.

It passed a motion to bring forward to the annual Union of BC Municipalities convention, calling on the “BC Building and Safety Standards Division to assess regional financial disparities making building affordability and flexible low-cost building methods a priority for the revision of the BC Building Code.”

The motion goes on to ask that any additions to the building code that are beyond structural integrity and safety be addressed through provincial legislation mandating energy reviews of new homes and cuts to the carbon footprint will take effect on December 31, 2021.

At that point, neither the RDCK nor homeowners will have a say on the matter.

Cooper Creek Cedar sues local logging protesters
by Jan McMurray

Cooper Creek Cedar (CCC) is suing a small group of local logging protesters for losses it allegedly suffered as a result of blockades at its logging operations in Balfour and Argenta last summer.

The company is seeking damages and costs from Jessica Ogden, Brock Snyder, and Mick Grabowsky in connection with both the Balfour and Argenta blockades, and also from Tom Cooper, in connection with the Balfour blockade.

The Balfour blockade caused a loss of four days’ work in June 2019, and the Argenta blockade caused a loss of eight days’ work in August 2019, while the company went through the process of obtaining court injunctions to order the protesters off the roads.

 CCC says in court documents that the blockades caused “irreparable financial and reputational harm” by preventing its contractors from working, by limiting the company’s ability to harvest its allowed volume of timber, and by limiting the amount of timber CCC could deliver to its customers in a timely fashion.

In their written responses filed at the Nelson Court Registry, all four defendants say: “Although this defendant denies that he blocked or obstructed the plaintiff’s agents or employees in any way, the defendants assert that stopping the plaintiff’s proposed cut blocks is necessary to slow climate change globally, and necessary to prevent the destruction of local habitat.”

All four object to being characterized as “activists” and say that they have acted as “good citizens.” They assert in their responses that CCC has filed the lawsuits against them “for the improper purpose of harassing and intimidating” them.

No court dates have been set.

In related news, Ogden has filed a complaint against the RCMP “because there were many flaws in how the local RCMP handled a civil matter [primarily at the Greyhorse Ridge protest near at Greyhorse Ridge [Protest near Meadow Creek in winter 2018-19].”

She says at the Greyhorse protest, the RCMP arrested protesters without a court order, did not respond to a 911 call from the protesters when loggers allegedly drove through the protest line, were unnecessarily aggressive during her arrest, and denied her access to her lawyer.

The complaint is being investigated by the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP, an independent agency that “ensures that public complaints made about the conduct of RCMP members are examined fairly and impartially,” she says, “and determines whether a former local RCMP officer has been assigned to investigate the case.”
Rule change could boost food security, meat processor says

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

A West Kootenay meat processor is pushing for changes to regulations to allow more farm slaughter of animals in the Slocan Valley.

Kyle Wiebe, the president of BC Meatworks, wants farmers in the valley to have the same ability to slaughter animals on their property as was recently granted to farmers in Area D of the Regional District of Central Kootenay.

He says allowing small farms to slaughter more animals on their property would help build food security in the region.

“While I celebrate Area D and Director Aimee Watson’s successful bid to restore the ability for farmers to sell their product, the few regions that were added to the Class D-designated area in BC will have little profound effect on regional food security,” says Wiebe. “After all the time and money that’s been spent studying and budgeting for how important local food systems are, by every level of government, I would have expected a province-wide solution.”

The province allows farms in areas distant from slaughtering facilities to butcher and sell their own meat, after going through a licensing process, Wiebe says. In the province’s designated farms in RDCK Area D – the region generally north of Kaslo – to be eligible to apply for a Class D licence, they first need to go through alicensing process for Class D farms. The province designated farms in RDCK Area D – the region generally north of Kaslo – to be eligible to apply for a Class D licence, they first need to go through alicensing process for Class D farms.

There are two common meat processing options for small farm operations in BC. They can apply for a Class E licence – allowing them to slaughter up to 20 ‘animal units’ – or a Class D licence, which allows up to 25 ‘units’ a year. A unit is 1,000 pounds of live animal.

“Making this region (and others) eligible for Class D licensing would increase local meat capacity by 500% mathematically, and perhaps more in effect, due to increased viability for business prospects,” argues Wiebe. “Additionally, many permaculture farms would benefit from an increased local supply of compost for fruit and veg production.”

That’s not the only benefit, he adds. “Meat processed in a Class D facility may also be sold to local food service and retailers for resale, a significant benefit over Class E.”

Wiebe says allowing Class D or E licences in a wider swath of the province would also acknowledge and regulate an activity that is already taking place. But one roadblock, he says, is that farmers slaughtering illegally now are reluctant to come forward and lobby for change.

“The constituents who are nervous about local meat production are more vocal than those who are currently running the underground system. And I don’t blame them for it,” he says.

“Those running the underground system are doing 26 animals, it is happening regardless, it’s whether they want to vocally support their local meat production or for getting a Class D licence,” Wiebe says.

He thinks a decision on this should be made in favour of farmers. “Canadians in general have largely neglected the issue of regional food security, and despite much chatter to the contrary in the Kootenays, we still have little to boast of for a food or agricultural industry,” he says. “Recently, COVID-19 has revealed that our supply chains are very vulnerable to global forces.

“For the provincial government to restrict farm-gate processing of any food at this time smacks of tone-deaf policy making.”

Recycling depots to reopen

compiled by Jan McMurray

The recycling depots in the North Slocan Valley, Arrow Lakes Valley and Kaslo area are scheduled to re-open later this month.

Kaslo, Marblehead and Balfour are expected to reopen between July 20 and 24. Silverton, Nakusp, Burton and Edgewood are expected to re-open between July 27 and August 1.

The depots at Crescent Valley Hall and Winlaw have already re-opened, as have the depots in Nelson, Castlegar, Crawford Bay and at the Kokanee Park Marina.

The temporary closure of the depots is due to the transition to the new Recycle BC system. This new system will be introduced throughout the province, as a result of new provincial recycling regulations.

Under the new regulations, the cost of recycling is being shifted away from taxpayers and onto industry. Recycle BC is a non-profit organization set up by industry to design and implement the new system.

Recycle BC allocated 12 ‘core’ depots to the RDCK. The RDCK elected to operate 11 ‘satellite’ depots to maintain the level of local recycling services that RDCK residents have enjoyed for years. Recycle BC funds all post-collection costs for core depots, including hauling, processing and marketing of the recyclables. For satellite depots, the RDCK pays for hauling to the next core depot or travelling to the nearest open Recycle BC depot.

For residents in areas experiencing service gaps, the RDCK encourages storing recyclables until depots open, or travelling to the nearest open Recycle BC depot.

Hours of operation

Hours of operation of depots in our area are as follows: Burton (satellite) - Saturday 10 am-2 pm; Crescent Valley (core) - Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 10 am-4 pm; Edgewood (core) - Sunday 9 am-1 pm and Wednesday 10 am-2 pm; Kaslo (core) - Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 9 am-2 pm; Nakusp (core) - Monday, Thursday, Saturday 9 am-2 pm; Silverton (satellite) - Wednesday, Friday 10 am-4 pm; Slocan (core) - Thursday, Saturday, Saturday 9 am-3 pm; Winlaw (satellite) - Monday, Wednesday, Saturday 10 am-4 pm.

The Valley Voice has a new telephone number

Toll-Free 1-833-501-1700
Open letter to RDCK Director Paul Peterson:
re: ferry line-ups

I am writing this to you to get your opinion and guidance on the ongoing problem of ferry line-ups and its effect on our small community of Fauquier.

Letters were written to the Minister of Transportation and to YVR Nelson in 2016 to try and rectify issues that occurred from highway closures in the past. I was informed that a response was not received and here we are again with the same issues. This will continue to happen in the future due to fires, mud or rock slides and flooding. I was in a ferry line-up for five hours in 2015 on the Edgewater side coming from the airport because two highways were closed due to fires.

The Fauquier Community Club has decided not to construct a bridge, they should be responsible to have some sort of proactive plan in place when highway closures impact our area.

There was at least a five-hour ferry wait on July 2 with people needing washrooms, food and water. The traffic was diverted from the highway closure west of Revelstoke.

Why is there no plan in place to provide portapotties on the Fauquier side of the ferry landing as well as the Edgewater side? Having one set up so far from the washrooms that portapotties are needed. Highways should have a supply on hand and store them close by so they can be set up quickly. People are going to the bathroom in our bushes (and I do not blame them) but there has to be a better way, especially when we know this will happen again and again.

The washrooms at the ferry landings were in such a mess. When you have line-ups like we had, those washrooms should be cleaned and stocked more often. The same goes for the garbage bins at the ferry landing. They are usually full in normal times. Why is this not automatically done?

Flag people are needed. Anyone from Fauquier coming home from Nakusp should not have to wait five hours in the ferry line-up to come home. There is also an issue with emergency vehicles coming from Nakusp. Flag people are needed to direct Fauquier traffic and emergency vehicles on the wrong side of the road (facing traffic) all the way into Fauquier. Also on the Edgewater side, vehicles are coming around the bend at a good speed before the reduced speed signs, only to be stopped immediately by the line-up. This is a safety issue and road signs need to be placed to slow down traffic well before the ferry landing.

YVR staff were handing out water, which was great, but I do not know when they started or how long they did that for, but it was appreciated. Thank you for that.

This again is too much to expect.

Everyone was asking us to open the hall so more washrooms could be used. The last time this was done, they just opened up the hall and left it unprepared and the bathrooms were a mess. The hall would have to be supervised, so means having staff set up all night and our volunteers would need to clean the facilities on a regular basis. This is far too much to ask of volunteers. Also because of COVID, we are not stocked with masks and sanitizer that would be needed to protect our volunteers.

This again is too much to expect.

This is not a Fauquier problem. This is a BC Hydro and the Ministry of Transportation issue that needs to be resolved. We are the ones left with all the mess and we obviously issue that needs to be resolved. We are the ones left with all the mess and we obviously feel terrible for the people.

Any guidance in how to proceed would be appreciated. We would like the people who are responsible for this to have the opportunity to rectify this.

Faquier Community Club board of directors

Rollin

Thank you

As a legal BC resident living in Slocan Valley who immigrated to Canada before the current crisis, I just wanted to send out a thank you to the other residents of the valley. I have not been able to change the Idaho plates on my truck over to BC plates yet and still the vast majority of people that I see greet me with the smiles and waves I’ve grown accustomed to when meeting a stranger in the valley. So thanks to all those taking the Bonnie Henry’s advice on kindness to heart. And, to those that may be nervous about seeing a US-registered vehicle around town, feel free to ask why. I’m willing to bet in almost every case you’ll come away feeling safer and more comfortable based on the response you get.

Will Garrison

Re: COVID-19

musing and the new normal is not normal

I want to express my deepest admiration to Rick Galbraith and Lisa Ross from Kaslo for their opinions in your June 4 issue. Both their amazing insights and fantastic expressions are worth their weight in gold. These two letters should be copied and sent to all the major newspapers. Everybody should read these! Both speak to my heart, and I could not possibly have constructed a clearer letter. Thank you, both! Yes, I am both confused and frustrated, and I did live in fear of losing my mind. Yes, people, the vaccine is to be avoided at all costs. This all to me is very Orwellian.

So, thank you, Lisa and Rick for voicing exactly how I feel. (The COVID-19 musings are even giving me a chuckle.)

So yeah, I will stay strong. Like the King of the Wildlings says in Game of Thrones, we do not kneel!

Kudos to you both.

G. Stein

Share the land

In “Response to ‘Where does Canada stand?’” VV July 2, 2020, Joan Law writes Israel has a historic right and claim to West Bank, portions of which it annexed. The Palestinians also have historical rights and claims to the land. Many of them are original inhabitants of the land. After invading Palestine in the 8th century, the Mohammadans offered lower taxes to those who converted to Islam. Many converted, as both religions have similar roots. Earlier, some inhabitants became Christians.

UN Resolution 194, which has been reaffirmed many times, also gives the Palestinians the right to return to their homes from which they were driven out in the war of 1948.

Ms. Law writes how impressed she is by how well the Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews get along. Arabs are mayors of towns, own businesses and have voting rights and seats in the Knesset. That is good news. It shows that Arabs and Israel can coexist without one being a minority. The ‘Arabs’ in occupied West Bank live under harsh military law. Israel controls Gaza and runs it like a prison. These ‘Arabs’ live on land controlled by Israel and should have the same rights as other citizens. Excluding them creates a system of apartheid. Other countries in the Middle East will resent Israel for this and it will not foster peace in the region. It is time to share the land.

Ed Zak

Nakusp

Zinc-no!

Here we go again. Another campaign of development at the expense of the high quality of life we have here, and the surrounding ecology. Individuals behind Brent Harkey & Associates over in Whistler, I truly wish you all the unimpeded success you can bring about for yourselves. I unequivocally want to be surrounded by community members who thrive and revolve around abundance.

But this shift is back to my years experiencing what made people begrudgingly move here, away from Camrose and Banff. Small town familiarity gone. Affordable way gone. Tourist machine taken over.

I do not wish a Camrose on anybody. Mother Nature in Camrose is and always will be a gem regardless of attempts...
continued from page 4

July 16, 2020  The Valley Voice

After 20 years of New Denver or the RDCK to have their actually be spent in New Denver?
done with old paradigm grasping!

who grow food for local consumption or deserve good jobs to blend well with a great
no will bring jobs to locals is unfair, as we
one- or two-occupant vehicles going to
between Slocan City and Crescent Valley,
made by entrepreneurs and developers.
continued from page 4

July 16, 2020

Consider this: Coronaviruses are mostly
their conclusions?

those going against the grain risk losing
attacking present verifiable data or rely on
more information: Drs. Buttar, Kaufman,
my claim that the 'new normal' is a bad
in the US) were built through the treaty,
agriculturally rich land, flooding over a
square kilometres of ecologically and
in the US) were built through the treaty,
funds for (1) adaptive ecosystem research,
A new agreement should provide new
voice.

A SARS-CoV2 virus has supposedly been isolated, but analyzing the studies does not support this. All the tests have serious issues. Dr. Tim Shea has described in detail and offered a $5,000 reward to anyone who can prove a COVID-19 diagnosis. On the basis of pseudoscience and fear-mongering, we have allowed our lives to be turned upside down. The data for COVID-19 cases and deaths has been so manipulated it’s hard to know where to begin. Here are some examples. There is a financial incentive in the US to diagnose COVID-19 prematurely rather than normal pneumonia, especially if the patient is put on a ventilator. Doctors are being told to pay COVID-19 on death certificates if the patient tested positive (after fatty death), even if the cause of death was something else. There have been cover-ups of empty hospitals. There has been rampant censorship. There have been thousands of deaths from COVID tested based on symptoms common to other conditions. Environmental factors in the worst-hit areas aren’t considered. The Canadian Centres for Disease Control total figures for cause of death are similar compared to the same period last year, but while respiratory deaths go up, deaths attributed to other causes go down at the same time. This is a classic signal of a second wave, we have a strong reason to believe.

Traumatically, death rates did later start to rise... not from COVID-19 but from the lockdowns. People are so afraid of COVID-19 that they avoid going to the hospital for other conditions. Suicides are skyrocketing. People are dying of stress-related conditions. As unemployment goes up, so do total death rates. Read Naomi Klein’s The Shock Doctrine in light of current events.

We are living in a real-time experiment in the world of nature and humanity. This is why I am brave enough to keep telling an unpatriotic truth.

Lea Ross
Kako

Basin residents need to speak up on Columbia River Treaty On June 29 and 30, Canada and the United States met for the tenth round of Columbia River Treaty negotiations. The negotiations were held by web conference due to COVID-19. Unlike previous rounds, negotiators actually started debating specific proposals. According to press releases issued by both sides, Canada responded to an initial proposal from the US and presented a counter-proposal for consideration. This is big news.

The week before, in fulfillment of a pledge made to continue with Basin residents around their issues and concerns, the BC Treaty Team released its latest report on priorities. The Province also committed to engage Indigenous nations, local governments, and citizens on final decisions about the treaty once options become clear. But with negotiations with the US progress, options will be whittled down toward a narrow consensus. That’s why it’s crucial for negotiators to hear from the public now. Our group, the Upper Columbia Basin Environmental Collaborative, is working on an Indigenous-led research process investigating how a modernized treaty could improve the health of Canadian ecosystems. This spring, we released a discussion paper and email (at 8bimby@gmail.com) or Facebook (@ColumbiaRivertreaty), or Twitter (@CRCTreaty). And when the Province holds its next round of formal public comment, we all need to show up. We are fortunate to have government officials in charge who truly want to listen. Let’s seize the opportunity.

Upper Columbia Basin Environmental Collaborative

Zincton proposal flawed

I’ve been suffering from an intense case of deja vu these past few weeks. My community is grasping to respond to an oversized real estate development disguise called a proposed Zincton gravelizzly habitat. Hmmmm. Local activists learned much about ski resort development during the 30 years we fought to keep Jumbo Wild. Our communities across the East and West Kootenay came together to uphold shared values of wilderness preservation, risk management, adaptive governance, and a democratic process that included local settler and First Nations priorities. What I learned was that, collectively, we have the ability to stand in solidarity and to make the world a better place. And we can do it again.

The Zincton Village proposal is deeply flawed in many ways, but I’ll highlight just a few.

1. Wieken: red-listed, blue-listed, grizzlies, goats, toads and wolves included, one just has to walk/ cycle/ drive between New Denver and Kaslo to understand the profound ecological value of that area. Adversity of animals and plants thrive there because the ecosystem is robust. How many places are still so healthy? Places that we can easily travel to where the animals still roam freely? Put the wreck-trational resorts in places where people have already done their damage. Our modern infrastructure and “needs” make it no longer wilderness. Or, in the words of Art Twomey who fought to establish the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy, “wilderness is where you can get eaten.” And, as this is core grizzly habitat as revealed by the work of biologists like Michael Proctor, that’s not just words. 2. Valley Voice, $5-$50

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5
SD8 commits funding to fix up its schools

by Jan McMurray

School District 8 has adopted an aggressive five-year plan to tackle the long list of repairs and upgrades needed at the schools across the district.

The plan is to spend $4 million per year, for a total of $20 million over the next five years (2020-25), on improvements to the school district’s properties. SD8 includes the Slocan Valley and Kaslo area schools, as well as the schools in Nelson and Creston.

“This marks a change in philosophy at School District 8 – from hoping the ministry will fund projects to more of a partnership with the ministry, and proactively getting ahead of some of our maintenance issues, and committing to dealing with them over a period of time,” said Michael McMullan, secretary-treasurer and chief financial officer at SD8.

McMullan stressed that the projects would be done based on priority need. “Whichever school needs it the most will get it,” he said.

Some of the 2020-21 projects in the Slocan Valley and Kaslo families of schools include the long-awaited well and water treatment system at Brent Kennedy; a new HVAC system, new lighting and gym floor at Mt. Sentinel; new lighting and gym floor at JV Humphries; gym floor at WE Graham; a new till station at Jewett; and a new roof, gym floor, exterior doors, disabled access, and interior painting at Winlaw Elementary.

“Winlaw was viewed as having priority needs, so it was a major focus in this year’s planning,” McMullan said.

The $4 million per year will come from the Ministry of Education and School District 8. The ministry provides roughly $3 million to the district every year for improvement projects. The SD8 board of education has agreed to top that up with an additional $1 million per year for the next five years.

“That extra million bucks is a 33% increase in capital spending, so it should make a very visible difference in the coming years,” McMullan said. “We realized that by using only the ministry funding on capital projects, we were treading water or falling behind, so that extra million per year will get us ahead. The ministry component is amazing, but we realized in our facilities review that the board needed to do more.”

The school district will come up with the $1 million per year from the proceeds of the sale or lease of its surplus properties, its unspent capital funds, and $400,000 per year from its operating fund.

“This $400,000 is more than the board has historically committed each year from the operating fund. It’s not an unreasonable amount – it’s less than 1% of our total budget. But combine that with the local capital and it comes to $1 million, and that will let us go after projects in a big way.”

As part of this program, the school district is inviting community groups with ideas for projects on SD8 properties to put forward proposals. “If a group has a sports or arts project that would benefit our students, the board is happy to consider providing land and matching funds,” McMullan said.

An example of this is the new tennis court at LV Rogers in Nelson, a partnership between the school district and the Nelson Tennis Club. “This was a win win for the community, the club and the students, so we want to see more of these projects,” McMullan said. “It allows our dollars to go further, and the amount of volunteer hours by the club was an incredible benefit to School District 8.”

McMullan explained that the extra funding means the work needed on its facilities became clear during the Long-Range Facilities Plan process. During the Facilities Plan process, the district looked at data provided by the ministry about the state of its facilities. Every five years, the ministry sends engineers around the district to assess their facilities.

“When they come around again in 2024, hopefully we’ll have dealt with some of the issues and made a difference to our learning environments.” McMullan said. “The goal is to improve them and modernize them and make them better for students. We’re progressing towards a new curriculum and a new economy.”
The family of Bob Workum would like to thank everyone associated with his rescue!

With a special call-out and thanks to Will Chambers

BC Craft Farmers Co-op proposes economic development partnership with BC and Canada

by Jan McMurray

The new BC Craft Farmers Co-op, supporting small cannabis farmers and processors, submitted a proposal to the federal and BC governments in June that focuses on regulatory reform, economic development and job creation. The co-op has asked for more than $108 million over two years to pilot the proposed program.

According to the co-op, the proposed project will help revitalize the economy in the wake of COVID-19, achieve the original goals of the Cannabis Act and provide craft cannabis farmers and processors with a safe, accessible alternative to the illicit market.

“The federal government has started to acknowledge that the way they set up the regulations is not working,” said David Hurford of the co-op in an interview. “The public interest of the Cannabis Act is not being achieved. The black market is still doing really well. More than half of consumers are still getting their cannabis outside of the legal market.”

Hurford points out that micro-cultivation licences were included in the new regulations to ensure there weren’t only large, corporate cannabis producers in the legal industry. “But in the Globe & Mail in February, it was reported that Health Canada has given out 1.2 million square metres of grow space and only 0.17% of that is for small farmers – less than a quarter of 1%. In BC, the number is 10 [micro-cultivation licences]. That’s sad, because we have thousands of people legally licenced to grow cannabis for the medical system – 6,500 in BC and 25,000 across Canada. Why can’t we transfer them over?”

In the co-op’s proposal, the federal Minister of Health is asked to transition 30% of micro medical growers into the new legal system this summer on a temporary basis, for 12 months. Currently, these people can grow enough medical cannabis for up to two people. If they are brought under the Cannabis Act, “they can grow more and put that into the legal market,” said Hurford. “This will have a very positive effect on the provincial economy when we need it the most.”

The project funding request is proportionate to government investments in other key job creating sectors and proposes a two-year return on investment for taxpayers of at least $4 and up to $8 of revenue for every $1 invested,” states a summary of the proposal. “An economic analysis prepared for the BC Craft Farmers Co-op last June confirmed a properly legalized craft cannabis sector can create over 20,000 direct and indirect jobs over the next two years – and $400-800 million of taxable income and direct taxes for all levels of government.”

The proposal asks for 50-50 funding from the federal and provincial governments of about $108 million over two years to pilot the proposal.

The economic development partnership would be led by a Project Advisory Group, which would oversee a suite of programs with economic development and job creation as the goals. One of these programs would be a micro-credit program, offering small farmers $95,000 loans to help them get established in the new legal environment.

The proposal was incorporated in March, opened its online membership application portal in June, and will have its first annual general meeting on August 29. Nominations for board members are due July 29.

“We have a strong response so far for membership and for board members,” Hurford said. “We’re seeing a nice response from across the province, and lots of interest from the West Kootenay.”

Visit bccraftfarmerscoop.com for more information.
Legions in the West Kootenay, pandemic and subsequent stress caused by the COVID-19 in 10 Legions across the country to a recent news report that one closing – if things return a little doesn’t see any local branches the Royal Canadian Legion West Kootenay Legions managing way through pandemic shutdown

“On the whole, everybody here is handling it,” says Gates. “But it’s difficult.” Gates oversees nine Legions in the West Kootenay, with about 1,790 members. While all Legions have felt the pinch from closures and social distancing rules, local branches are doing reasonably well.

“But each branch is a little different, and is being cautious, notes Gates. “But it is what it is. You look at the age demographic – the high sixties, early seventies is the average age of Legionnaires,” he says. “And that’s just the bad spot, according to [BC’s provincial health officer] Dr. Henry. That’s why Castlegar decided to shut down until September. Their whole executive is in that group.”

Besides Castlegar, branches in Slocan, Nelson, and Rossland have also chosen to remain closed until September, however. Rosslund, however is usually closed summer anyway, and Nelson’s been closed while the landlord does renovations.

Trail and Kaslo are open four days a week, while Nakusp and Grand Forks are open for three. Grand Forks has laid off its staff and is relying on volunteers to remain open.

The Salmo branch has reported some difficulties, says Gates, but says the organization has secured Columbia Basin Trust grants and is doing renovation projects this summer.

In Nakusp, Legion Branch #20 reopened on June 17, after closing in March.

“So many days it’s not too bad at all, while other days we’re not paying wages,” says Harvey Truax, president of the Nakusp branch. He says the big loss for his branch is not having the hall to rent for bingo and other events.

“We went from about 15 people a day to some days with as few as six. Saturdays have been the worst because these are the days you count on the meal draw,” said Truax.

Truax says the draw, one of the branch’s biggest fundraisers, will be resuming in July. That attracts more people to the hall. And he says the Legion has some money in the bank “to tide us through,” as well as a donation from the national Legion.

“But it’s not going to do us a lot of good if we don’t get open soon,” he warns.

Other branches are different financially. Both Trail and Nelson are sitting on healthy nest eggs from selling their buildings in recent years, says Gates, while Slocan and other branches were doing it a bit better before the pandemic and can weather the storm.

Gates says continuing public support is important to keep local Legions in good shape.

“Stick with your membership in the Legion if you are a member,” he says. “If we don’t have members, the Legion’s going to die. And if it dies, it’s going to be a long time to recover.

“We’re not going to be able to give as much this year as we normally do.”

Gates says continuing public support is important to keep local Legions in good shape.

“There’s a lot of different Legions that are doing reasonably well. While all Legions have felt the pinch from closures and social distancing rules, local branches are doing reasonably well. But each branch is a little different, and is being cautious, notes Gates. “But it is what it is. You look at the age demographic – the high sixties, early seventies is the average age of Legionnaires,” he says. “And that’s just the bad spot, according to [BC’s provincial health officer] Dr. Henry. That’s why Castlegar decided to shut down until September. Their whole executive is in that group.”

By John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter
The manager of the project building the Mount Abriel mountain bike trails says the weather has been a bit of a mixed bag this year. Gates, project manager. “But we’re really happy with the way things are going.”

The construction season started with some remediation work to repair winter and spring runoff damage on the trails. Then there have been the near-daily rains. But Gates says he’s confident they’ll finish this year’s scheduled work as planned before winter sets in.

“You just have to be flexible. There’s things you can do in bad weather and things you can’t do. We’ve just had to adapt and work with it,” he says. “Fortunately, our guys are good at doing that and we are just plugging away at it.”

Started in 2017, the $1.25-million project will see about 50 kilometres of mountain bike trails built from the top of Mount Abriel to the shore of the Arrow Lakes by 2022. The park is designed for both experts and beginners, with smiles on their faces. And he says the Legion continues to adapt and work with it; he’s confident they’ll finish this year, says Balls.

“Fortunately, as construction, we’ve always been able to see a use for what we’re doing. This year, says Balls, who was hired as the project manager this year. “Being outside has helped. We put in a robust COVID-19 policy, following all the advice WorkSafeBC and Interior Health were publicizing.”

Balls says what’s been really exciting this year is seeing visitors using the facilities. Even though the COVID-19 pandemic has put a damper on summer programming that had been planned.

“It’s been amazing!” he says enthusiastically. “It’s really great to see so many people out there using the trails with smiles on their faces. And people using it as a destination, from all over the region. It’s a really fantastic investment, constructing this.”

He says many of the people using the facility come from Rossland, Castlegar, Trail and Nelson – bringing tourist dollars to the local economy.

About 14 people will be employed by the trail project this summer. Money for this year’s project was supplied by the provincial Rural Dividend Fund, the federal-provincial Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, Columbia Basin Trust’s Community Initiatives program, and WorkBC’s Job Creation Partnership program.

Balls said it would be helpful if people enjoying the facilities can help keep the Nakusp and Area Bike Society, to help support and finance maintenance of the trails in the long term. You can learn more about their Facebook page or website, nakuspbikecommunity.ca.

Locals can also support the trail construction by participating in the volunteer work parties, held the last Sunday of every month. Check the society’s Facebook page or website for more information.

June weather: nice, if you’re a duck

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The summary of June’s weather by the Southeast Fire Centre’s forecasters is a contradiction: it rained a lot, but it was dry. The centre’s forecasters say the Southeast Kootenay saw about 10 low-pressure systems and associated Pacific moisture pass over the area in June.

“Rain fell at some point during all but five days, but the month’s total rainfall was 23% below average,” weather forecaster Jesse Ellis says. “This was likely due to local showers often being quite variable in nature with significant differences in amounts reported over relatively short distances.”

Indeed, 55.6 mm of rain fell in June, compared to an average of 72.5 millimeters. There was more extreme weather during the month as well.

“There were 50% more thunderstorms compared to normal,” notes Ellis. “Nine this month compared to an average of six.”

Temperatures were pretty average. The highest value (31.8°C on June 23) fell about eight degrees short of the record maximum; the lowest value (13.9°C during the nighttime of June 9) was a good 3.5°C above the record minimum; and the mean monthly temperature of 13.0°C was only a tenth of a degree above normal. In other words, if you’re a gardener, June was great for you normally. If you’re not a gardener, you might be thinking of growing corn or cucumbers.
New history book tells silver rush story of the Silvery Slocan

by Jan McMurray

A new Silvery Slocan history book is on the market. Silver Rush: British Columbia's Silvery Slocan 1891-1900 by Peter J. Smith is available at www.silveryslocan.ca

“IT’s not the Colosseum version of the history, but I hope it’s pretty comprehensive,” said the author in an interview.

The more than 600-page book is very well researched, and features many historical photographs.

“I strongly believe that a picture is worth 1,000 words. The photos are integral to the text. They help tell the story,” Smith said.

The photographs come from BC Archives, the Silvery Slocan Historical Society, the Kootenay Lake Historical Society, and from private individuals. “So many people have been exceedingly kind in terms of letting me use their photos,” Smith said.

“Some had been passed down from family members from the 1890s.” Smith said local historian Greg Nesteroff helped him make some of those connections.

Smith grew up in Victoria and first visited the Silvery Slocan in the early 1970s. “Leaving Slocan City, driving through the tunnel on the old highway, it was like entering a whole new world,” he said. “It was pretty exotic for me.”

He stayed in the area for a few years in the ‘70s. “Me and some friends bought a mining claim south of Silvertown from Ran Harding, so it was a back-to-the-land kind of time,” he said.

“I got to have breakfast at the Newmarket Hotel before it burned down.”

Smith says he was very interested in BC history but had never heard of the silver rush in the North Slocan. “I was fascinated by the local history and then in the summer of 1977 or ’78, I worked at the museum in New Denver and started thinking about writing a book. I felt there was a huge gap in the broader canvas of BC history because there was not much on the Slocan. So I started doing research back then – but then I had a family and a career and I let it sit for 30 years.”

His research in the 1970s included doing interviews with oldtimers such as Gene Peterson and Neil Tattrie. “But none of them had been in the area at the beginning of the silver rush, and I was eager to learn more about how this all started. So that took me back further, researching historical newspapers.”

When Smith retired, he picked up the project again. “It took a lot longer than I thought it would once I got going. I like doing everything myself, so I self-published, and it was a lot more complicated than I thought it would be,” he said. In the acknowledgements section at the beginning of the book, Smith mentions many local people who helped with the project.

Smith has a degree in anthropology, and a post-graduate degree in folklore. He worked for the BC government in Victoria for most of his career. He is now retired and lives in Ladysmith.

“I always thought I’d get back to New Denver but never did.”

Silvery Slocan Museum building gets fixed up

by Jan McMurray

Renovations to the Silvery Slocan Museum building in New Denver are almost complete. The museum, however, won’t open this year. The Silvery Slocan Historical Society is taking the opportunity presented by the renovation project and COVID-19 to spend the summer refreshing its displays.

The Silvery Slocan Historical Society, the Kootenay Lake Historical Society, and from private individuals. “So many people have been exceedingly kind in terms of letting me use their photos,” Smith said.

The photographs come from BC Archives, the Silvery Slocan Historical Society, the Kootenay Lake Historical Society, and from private individuals. “So many people have been exceedingly kind in terms of letting me use their photos,” Smith said.

“The site currently has an occupant that has chosen not to operate in Nakusp. When putting together a business plan, this does not provide a sound foundation on which to build.”

Hughes asks council to reconsider the site in their site-specific bylaw, and allow 205 Broadway Street W as a location.

If council would consider the change, Hughes says they can apply for a licence under the provincial cannabis retail bylaws. They also note their location complies with all other aspects of the bylaw regarding distance from schools, daycares, etc.

Coincidentally, council received a second request for a change to the bylaw.

“I am asking that the Village of Nakusp change the first bylaw to allow for two cannabis dispensaries to operate within the village limits instead of the current bylaw allowing only one dispensary,” says Trisha Albertine, who owns What’s Brewing on Broadway.

She’s also requesting council change the distance-from-school limit from 500 to 300 metres. This would allow her to open a cannabis retail outlet in a room that’s currently used for a U-Brew.

She also has an excellent address for a pot shop.

“I own the building at 420 Broadway. This is an advantage since I do not have to worry about whether a lease agreement would be renewed or not,” she told council. “420 is popular slang for smoking cannabis.”

Administration recommended council refer the matter to staff, so they can go through the requests and offer suggestions for council at its August meeting. It wasn’t known at press time if council would allow the referral, or reject one or both proposals.

Nakusp council asked to allow more cannabis shop locations

by John Bevin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Some local business people are asking Nakusp Village councilors to consider changes to the town’s cannabis bylaw.

Council received two different requests at its July 13 meeting to consider allowing different locations for cannabis shops than the one currently specified in its bylaw.

Council’s cannabis bylaw, passed in 2018, only allows one cannabis retail site in town, and in only one particular location – 312 Broadway.

But there are problems with that site.

“This site currently has an occupant that has chosen not to operate a cannabis shop,” says Andrew James Hughes, who says he’s considering opening a shop in Nakusp with his partner.

“This site is also for sale, so if a licensed cannabis retail operator were to rent this space and set up shop, the property may be sold at any time.

“This would effectively end the business and their ability to operate in Nakusp. When putting together a business plan, this does not provide a sound foundation on which to build.”

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Slocan Valley locations dominate latest Heritage Register additions

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The Regional District of Central Kootenay is set to add another 21 buildings and places to its Community Heritage Register.

The register, established in April, helps preserve places “with aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social, or spiritual significance for present and future generations,” planning officials say.

Nearly a third of the 21 sites to be added to the register are in the Slocan Valley, and remember one of the darker periods of Canadian history – Japanese internment camps. Six of the camps, which housed Canadians of Japanese descent during the Second World War, have been included.

Also making the list from this area are the historic townsite of Sando, including its cemetery and a general store; the City of Ainsworth shipwreck, the Vallican Heritage Hall, the Merrisaikie boat in Kaslo, and the Billy Clark cabin in Meadow Creek.

This is a second intake for the newly established Community Heritage Register. An initial five locations were selected earlier this year.

Most of the listings are already on federal or provincial lists of historically important sites, says Dana Hawkins, a planner with the RDCK.

They were chosen for inclusion now as a kind of housekeeping exercise, to get the RDCK’s efforts to preserve its heritage sites on solid ground.

“The advantage of also including these sites on RDCK’s local register is, should any change affecting them be proposed, leadership around their conservation can come from the RDCK in collaboration with the identifier of the heritage resource and the land owner as well as interested/affiliated community groups,” Hawkins wrote in a report to the board. That means should local government receive a request to alter or demolish a structure on the register, staff will be immediately alerted of its historical importance.

New landscape construction company starts up

by Jan McMurray

Greenstone Landscape Construction is a brand new business, started up by New Denver native Mitch Peterson.

Mitch offers his services throughout the West Kootenay.

Mitch was born and raised in New Denver, graduated from Lucerne School and then left the area for 15 years to work, study and travel.

“I looked for paradise all over the world and finally realized it was in the backyard all along,” Mitch says.

He came back a year ago, bought a property near New Denver and fixed it up, and is now ready to take on landscape construction jobs.

With his mini excavator and dump trailer, Peterson offers excavating, landscaping and hardscaping services. These include trenching, grading, site preparation; installing trees, shrubs, sod and mulch; and building retaining walls and installing paving stones.

After graduating from Lucerne School in New Denver, Mitch went to Calgary and worked for a landscaping company two years. “I quickly realized that running the excavator was the best job in the company,” he said.

He moved to Kelowna, where he got a business degree from Okanagan College and worked for a builder doing landscape installations. He has worked in landscape construction in Australia, and heritage resource and the land owner as well as interested/affiliated community groups,” Hawkins wrote in a report to the board. That means should local government receive a request to alter or demolish a structure on the register, staff will be immediately alerted of its historical importance.

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He moved to Kelowna, where he got a business degree from Okanagan College and worked for a builder doing landscape installations. He has worked in landscape construction in Australia, and as historically, culturally or socially important in the regional district during public consultations held in the fall of 2019. The process has been funded by the Columbia Basin Trust and Heritage BC.

Hawkins says if residents are interested in learning more or want to get involved in preserving local heritage, they can visit the RDCK’s new planning and heritage commission web page.

The site also has a nomination form, so if you see something that we don’t know about already, you can nominate it and we can add to the ‘places that matter’ map.

“It’s not meant to be a static thing. We hope to keep it alive, so hopefully as time goes on, new sites will be raised and we’ll keep adding onto it.”

The RDCK board was expected to approve adding the 21 sites to the registry at its meeting July 16.

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July 16, 2020

by Kathy Hartman

A Calgary-based film crew has wrapped up principal shooting for a new documentary detailing the life of a master gardener who left an indelible mark on New Denver.

Racing against the setting sun, director Guillaume Carlier and cinematographer Bryce Zimmerman shot the last footage at New Denver’s Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre on July 8.

“New Denver is going to be woven into the large tapestry of big movements in history, one man’s life, and touch on philosophy,” says Carlier, describing the community’s place in the film.

The documentary, called Borrowed from Nature follows the life and work of Japanese Canadian master gardener Roy Tomomichi Sumi. Like hundreds of his fellow Japanese Canadians, Mr. Sumi was held in internment camps in Tashme, Rosebery and New Denver during the Second World War.

He returned to New Denver in 1994, at the age of 85, to design and oversee the creation of the Heiwa Teien Peace Garden at the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre.

Carlier has been coming to the Kootenays every summer since he was a boy and had always been struck by Sumi’s work.

“I thought that it was a beautiful gesture. You don’t hear about people going through something traumatic and then coming back to the place and making something beautiful out of it,” he says. “Not stern or moralizing. Something that says ‘Just enjoy this. Its peaceful. Its healing.’”

The Heiwa Teien garden was Sumi’s final garden before his death in 1997. He worked closely with the Nikkei Centre’s construction supervisor, Ken Butler of New Denver, and two members of the Kyowakai Society, Tsuneko Kokubo and Sakaye Hashimoto. All three are interviewed in the film.

“New Denver is sitting on a really critical piece of history,” explains Carlier. “And it’s tied together with this work of beauty.”

The film follows Sumi’s life through three of his masterful gardens. It begins soon after his internment, when he helped create the Nitobe Memorial Garden at UBC in Vancouver. This garden was the first gesture of goodwill and peace between Canada and Japan after World War Two.

The film then moves on to the Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden in Lethbridge, where many Japanese Canadian internees were moved to work on sugar beet farms. It finishes its story in New Denver, and Sumi’s experiences there.

By the time Sumi returned to New Denver, he had been nationally and internationally recognized for his work. He was awarded the medal of Zuihosho by the Emperor Hirohito of Japan for his ‘contributions to his community and for promoting the cultural interest of Japan in his work’ and by the University of British Columbia for his work on the Nitobe Gardens.

Typically, Sumi’s gardens are in the Shakkei style, which means ‘to borrow from nature’ – hence the name of the film. For example, the trees and hills in the garden may be situated to highlight or frame a vista of mountains in the distance.

In the Heiwa Teien garden looking towards Idaho Peak, you can see the juniper hedge following the line of the peaks in the distance. Or, looking through the original entrance you can see how it follows the line of the Valhallas looking over the lake.

Sumi also borrows from the local geography, making the gardens uniquely Canadian. Each garden uses the materials from the local area. The filmmakers made sure to take shots near Sandon of the rock outcrops and dense forest materials that you find in the Heiwa Teien garden.

Post-production on the film should be completed in October. It’s scheduled to be shown on CBC TV and CBC Gem. The filmmakers say they would be happy to arrange for a showing in New Denver later this year.
Arrows Lakes Hospital unveils newly renovated ER

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Staff with Interior Health can’t say enough about how much they like the new emergency department at the Arrows Lakes Hospital in Nakusp.

“It’s beautiful,” says Diane Shendruk, the executive director of clinical operations for Kootenay Boundary. “It has lots of light, the space really enhances patient privacy, it has an area for our visiting specialists right on site, a quiet area for families, the emergency room bays are quite a bit roomier.”

The $2.1 million project, started a little over two years ago, has outfitted ALH with a new trauma room, triage area, exam bays, space for families and a work area for visiting specialists to see patients.

“When you have a modern facility like this, it really improves the flow of patients so we can get them into the right care area, triage them appropriately, and the workflow is much more streamlined because the visibility to see the patients is very good,” she says. “As well as having access to the equipment, which is so important.”

Patients needing urgent care will first be assessed in the new triage area before moving into another area of care. The new trauma bay features an equipment boom while the exam bays offer more privacy. Families with a loved one receiving critical care can gather together in a private multi-purpose room.

For staff, an inter-disciplinary centrally located ‘touch-down station’ allows nurses to be able to monitor patients and enhances patient and staff flows through the hospital.

“I think it’s great,” says Mercedes Casley, a nurse at the hospital. “It allows patients to receive care in an updated space. They can seek emergency care and we can also see them as outpatients. This gives us more space and the ability to care for critically ill and injured patients in our community.”

Shendruk says residents of the region played a key role in outfitting ALH with important equipment. The Arrow Lakes Hospital Foundation and the Arrow Lakes Hospital Auxiliary raised $250,000 – enough to purchase critical pieces of equipment, including an equipment boom, monitors and the patient monitoring system.

“We’re so grateful for the tremendous community support we received,” says Shendruk. “It is really what makes it happen and we are so grateful for that.”

The project was funded by the Ministry of Health (60%) and the West Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital District (40%) along with the added $250,000 raised by the community.

The Arrow Lakes Hospital serves close to 5,000 people living in the communities of Nakusp, Edgewood, Fauquier, Burton, Trout Lake and the surrounding regions.

Tiny community reaches big FireSmart goal

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

A community on the west shore of the Arrow Lakes is the first in its area to achieve ‘FireSmart Community Recognition’ status.

“It’s one of the smaller neighbourhoods that we’re dealing with, but it’s quite engaged, and it’s done a ton of work,” says Joel Hamilton, wildfire mitigation supervisor with the RDCK. With only eight residents, and no stores or main street, there’s not much to see in West Arrow Park. It’s surrounded by forest, which places the community in the 6-7 range (out of 10) when it comes to its fire threat rating. And the nearest fire truck is a ferry ride away in Burton.

The community started working toward FireSmart Community Recognition status when the RDCK’s wildfire mitigation specialist for the area was invited to help neighbours assess, organize and reduce the risk of wildfire. Bree Lillies helped the neighbours form a community board, which made a plan to mitigate their wildfire hazards. The community works together to implement local mitigation solutions.

“One of the components of being a FireSmart recognized community is putting together a FireSmart community plan,” says Hamilton. “So they identified three major areas they wanted to work on.”

The first was an information campaign, reaching out to residents. The second was upgrading the community’s two existing fire caddies, a portable trailer and underground water storage tank system, to tackle fires locally and quickly when possible.

“They’re quite involved,” says Hamilton. “Each fire caddy has a pump, a 500-gallon water tank on a two-wheeled trailer, chainsaws, propane heaters, shovel, rakes and firefighting equipment.”

The third element they are working on is improving road access into and out of the community.

“There’s kind of an intrinsic value to getting together and working together communally – it kind of brings the community together in the name of protecting your own homes and communities,” says Hamilton. “It’s something everyone can relate to and typically agree on.”

The RDCK has been working hard to protect more communities from fire danger, but West Arrow Park is the first in Area K to get the designation. About 15 residential areas are working on their FireSmart status, he says.

The citizens of West Arrow Park will get a nice sign to mark their designation as a FireSmart recognized community. They could also be eligible for reduced home insurance rates, depending on the provider. It can help support property values, says Hamilton. And community recognition can also lead to more work being done to protect the community by other levels of government.

But most of all, residents will be able to sleep a bit better at night, knowing they’ve done what they can to protect their community from wildfire.

Residents of West Arrow Park have become the first community in the Regional District of Central Kootenay’s Area K to achieve “FireSmart Community Recognition” status.

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Canada tables proposal during latest Columbia River Treaty negotiations

submitted

The 10th round of Columbia River Treaty negotiations between Canada and the United States was conducted by web conference on June 29 and 30, 2020.

During this most recent round of negotiations, Canada responded to a framework proposed by the United States during the previous round of negotiations in Washington, DC, and tabled a Canadian proposal outlining a framework for a modernized Columbia River Treaty, developed collaboratively by Canada, BC and Columbia Basin Indigenous Nations.

Due to the confidential nature of the cross-border negotiations, details of Canada’s initial proposal and of the US framework cannot be made public.

Tabling proposals is one part of a complex negotiation process and the exchange of options between countries will take time. Once the process is sufficiently advanced and options become clear, the Province of BC will engage Canadian Columbia Basin Indigenous Nations, local governments, citizens and stakeholders on decisions regarding a modernized treaty.

The next round of negotiation meetings has not been scheduled.
Daycare expansion will meet part of Kaslo’s need, manager says

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The group that runs Kaslo’s only public daycare is hoping a grant they’ve applied for will help ease the community’s shortage of child care spaces.

But the manager of the Periwinkle Daycare warns the improvement won’t be seen for at least a year—and will only meet part of the community’s need.

“Sadly, this is going to take another year before our expansion will be ready to double our capacity,” said Heke Reeg-Smith.

A recent report commissioned by Periwinkle shows the community needs at least 12.5 spaces to meet the growing demand for child care. The study shows there are no spaces available for infants or school-aged children in Kaslo.

“Just before you called, I had a parent call for this coming year, and I have no space,” says Reeg-Smith. “This year we are very short of spaces. It’s sad. It’s very hard.”

Periwinkle’s expansion will allow the daycare to add 15 spaces for children from 2.5 to 5 years of age—more than double the current capacity.

“When a few years ago, children mostly attended one or two days per week, and our services were primarily viewed as ‘enrichment’ rather than care, we now have several children who attend full time,” she says. “Most families are now accessing care to go to work. Currently enrolled families are asking for more days and we do not have space to support their needs.”

As with many improvement projects, the expansion of Periwinkle started off as a much smaller affair.

“It all started with a leak in the ceiling of our cubby room, and a long wait list,” recalls Reeg-Smith. “We decided the cubby room was hardly worth fixing – we needed it fixed.”

Periwinkle raised $52,000 for that project, with about $38,600 from the Columbia Basin Trust and the rest from other sources. But the project got postponed, and that gave the board a chance to look at the bigger picture.

“It was such a long wait list, so we thought if we were improving and building and upgrading, we should expand at the same time,” she says. “So then we started to apply for other funds.”

Now, the Kootenay Lake Independent School Society, which runs Periwinkle, finds itself looking for $70,000 for the expansion.

“The new spaces will only be for the same age of children – 30 months to 5 years of age. Periwinkle can’t provide space for infants or school-aged children, even with the expansion. That would likely take a whole new facility, and another group to run it, says Reeg-Smith.

“You would need other tools, furniture, and space to accommodate older or younger children, and that just doesn’t fit in with what we are doing, or what we can design,” she says.

for living wages for workers

A board member for Periwinkle says the society is also addressing the daycare industry’s other problem—finding enough qualified early childhood educators and assistants, and paying them living wages. Periwinkle’s been hit hard this year by the shortage.

“As an organization, we have worked hard to improve our wages and benefit standards,” says Dr. Jessie Ann Kestell, the society’s president.

Kestell says in the June 10 update, CCC’s Woodbury Manager Bill Kestell referred to a section of road proposed for cutback by John McMurray

Planning for the Argenta-Johnson’s Landleging logging operation in the Salisbury Creek to Bulmer Creek area is coming to an end. Cooper Creek CCD has announced that it will submit the closure application after August 1.

Site plans and maps for each of the five cutblocks are posted on the company’s website at coopercreek.com.

Assessments completed for the cut permit area (CP 405) for Cooper Creek CCD (CCC) include a terrain stability assessment, a karst potential assessment, a mountain caribou’ wildlife habitat and risk assessment, and a visual impact assessment. All of these were posted on the website and shared with community members.

In a June 10 written update, CCC’s fibre-optic network makes this a possibility, says McDiarmid.

The idea will be discussed further by Kaslo’s COVID Recovery Committee.

Big grant makes Woodbury water improvements a reality

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Boil water orders could be a thing of the past by 2021 for residents of the Woodbury Village subdivision south of Kaslo.

That’s after a $480,000 federal-provincial infrastructure grant has made water improvements a reality.

“We take [the discussion] off Facebook,” he says, pointing out there are 3,000 members of “this crazy, chaotic community forum” in a town of 1,000 residents who wonder where the other 2,000 people are hanging out.”

Instead, this widespread consultation process could develop into a new kind of community organization.

If it discloses its winds, it’s not only going to be an economic, social and civic benefit for the people who live and work here, it ends up being a lighthouse, a catalyst, to everybody across the community, across all the other Woodbury and the RDCK area.

The idea will be discussed further by Kaslo’s COVID Recovery Committee.

Kaslō & District

The Kaslo District Community Forest Society invites our members and community to follow operations on our social media sites while social distancing measures are in place:
https://kaslocommunityforest.org/
https://www.facebook.com/kaslocommunityforest
Find links provided to join virtual board meetings every third Wednesday of the month at 7 pm.
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NACFOR
The NACFOR office is now open to the public for regular business hours between 8 am and 5 pm. Monday to Friday, with COVID-19 safety precautions in place. 250-265-5665, info@nakuspcommunityforest.com

NAKUSP COMPUTERS
Open Mon-Fri, 9 am-5 pm; Sat 9 am-5 pm
250-265-0129, nakuspcalendar@gmail.com; facebook.com/nakuspcalender

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SHEIKH REALTY
The office is closed, but the agents are working remotely and more than happy to help! They can be reached directly, or via 250-265-3833 or Naksheikh@realtyedge.com

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Please drop off bike repairs to the rear entrance (in alley) of the shop. No appointments are necessary for bike tune-ups. Our coffee shop and lounge area is currently closed. All 2019 bikes are on sale.
For all inquiries, call us at (250) 265-3332, email: info@shons.ca, website: www.shons.ca, Facebook: Shon’s Bikes - Ski - Stay.

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**KIDS KIDS CLOTHING EXCHANGE** has kids’ clothes! Please contact Robin at 250-305-4610 or robinmcnabb@gmail.com. Donations can be mailed to LACE, Box 208, New Denver, V0G 1S0.

**FUTURES TO LEARN** about the free Business Basics Workshop open to anyone! And if you are an aspiring entrepreneur, there will be a limit on participants. Call for info: 250-265-2020 or 250-265-1247.

**BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES ARE YOU AN ASPIRING ENTREPRENEUR?** If so, call Community Futures to learn about the free Business Basics Workshop open to anyone! And if you are an aspiring entrepreneur, there will be a limit on participants. Call for info: 250-265-2020 or 250-265-1247.

**COMING EVENTS**

**THINKING OF STARTING** a business or expanding your own business? If so, Community Futures offers business loans, counseling & training; and delivers the Self Employment program in the Arrow & Slocan Lakes area. For more info leave a message at 250-364-2771 or 265-354-4871 or futures.bc.ca.

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**SLOCAN SATURDAY MARKET**


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with ability work independently and as a team, understanding and carrying out verbal and written instructions, meet deadlines, work with minimal supervision and deal effectively with interruptions, good interpersonal and communication (oral) skills, and physical ability to perform assigned duties. Contact Operations Manager, Joselin Corrigan, for full job description at wholeschool@gmail.com or leave a message at 250-355-7777. Closing date July 31 by 3 pm.

**NOTICES**

**RHYTHM OF LIFE:** You can find the path to love, wisdom, and spiritual freedom by singing Hu every day. Singing Hu helps us align with our own spiritual Rhythm of Life. http://eckankarblog.org/sound-of-soul

**Carpenter Creek Last Wishes Society** provides information on preplanning for death and advice for alternative funeral arrangements. Ph. 250-777-1974. www.carpentercreeklastwishes.org


**Have you or someone you know** been sexually assaulted and want help? Call the Interior Crisis Line 24/7 at 1-888-353-CARE to discuss your options or to go directly to Arrow Lakes Hospital or your local emergency room for confidential care. You can find the local emergency room for confidential care. Call 250-777-5700. For more info on all the services, visit carpentercreeklastwishes.org or call 250-355-7777.

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**Journeyman Plumber and “B” ticket gasfitter for new construction or renovation plumbing, water systems/ filtration, septic, 250-777-3588 (Tim); www.paradisevalleyplumbing.ca or email: schaferspeare@gmail.com.

**Local Astrologer** offers Astrology Natal Chart Readings, 1.5-2 hour comprehensive session, tailored to suit your needs and interests. Email amandakonkin@protonmail.com or call/text 250-686-6576 to find out more.

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**Next Valley Voice Deadline: July 24, 2020**
The West Kootenay Football (Soccer) Club, which was forced to end its season early due to the COVID-19 pandemic, is starting the summer season this month, with limitations due to the pandemic.

 Registration was scheduled to start in early July, and the training camps to begin on July 20. If you’d like to participate, all registration is being done online. If you live in the Slocan Valley south of Winlaw, you can register through the RDCK’s valley recreation office. For Slocan or New Denver, register through the WKFC’s website.

Visit the club’s Facebook page or website for more information.

"It’s been very positive," he says of the reaction. "We did some visits down the valley, giving out free soccer balls to any families that wanted them, and they really appreciated that. A lot of them were excited to learn when we would actually be doing something.

“Everyone’s been kind of waiting for us to be able to put something out.”

Registration was scheduled to start in early July, and the training camps to begin on July 20. If you’d like to participate, all registration is being done online. If you live in the Slocan Valley south of Winlaw, you can register through the RDCK’s valley recreation office. For Slocan or New Denver, register through the WKFC’s website.

Visit the club’s Facebook page or website for more information.
Hidden Garden Gallery shows entice with textiles and paintings

COMMUNITY

July 16, 2020

Hidden Garden Gallery shows entice with textiles and paintings

submitted

Textiles Works features the mother and daughter duo of Margaret and Wendy Toogood. Their first joint exhibit will be featured at the Hidden Garden Gallery in New Denver, July 21-26, from 10 am to 3 pm.

Margaret’s works are large quilts that are traditional, hand-sewn and hand-quilted. Wendy is displaying small contemporary cloth constructions incorporating collage, embroidery, with hand and machine stitching. Her cloth constructions are small-scale autobiographical works on canvas, each depicting a specific activity or theme. Both artists celebrate colour and craftsmanship in their artworks.

When she turned 50, Margaret was living in England and took a course in traditional hand-piecing quilts using paper templates. Over the next four decades, she constructed some 30-40 quilts until she passed away in 2018 here in New Denver, at the age of 92. This is the first exhibition of her work.

Wendy, who lives in Nakusp, graduated from the Alberta College of Art in Calgary (now the Alberta University of the Arts) in 1969. Since then, she has had numerous solo and group shows in Canada and internationally, including galleries in BC, Alberta and 12 exhibits in South Australia.

Victoria Mitchell’s paintings will be showcased at the Hidden Garden Gallery July 28-August 2.

Arising, a series of paintings by Victoria Mitchell, will be showcased at the HGG July 28-August 2, 10 am-3 pm.

This artist’s work reflects her lifelong passion for creating visuals from emotions, inspired by what comes from within. Extensive studies of body structure and kinetics over the years, as both a registered massage therapist and yoga teacher, have influenced her abstract paintings that represent many natural elements.

Mitchell is intrigued by the exploration of environments, finding different ways to communicate the feelings of what she sees through painting. Living in the beauty of BC lends inspiration to diverse creative endeavours.

Her paintings speak to the abundance of life’s ever-changing elements and settings. She has enjoyed sharing these explorations from her 2017 gallery, with exhibitions spanning Vancouver, the Okanagan, Kootenays and beyond.

Studio Connexion’s summer exhibitions series continues by transitioning from abstract art back to landscape with another Vancouver Island artist: Allan Dunfield.

Dunfield studied at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. He also worked as a professional chef until finally deciding to seriously paint on a daily basis. He has been a member of the Federation of Canadian Artists for many years. He has signature status and has been a senior member since 2014.

Dunfield loves camping and the great outdoors; landscapes have always captured his soul. He is well known for his beautiful West Coast scenes, and that is one of the reasons gallerist Anne Beliveau wanted to bring his work to Studio Connexion.

Dunfield is not a stranger to the Rockies and Kootenays, and some of his paintings will be of alpine settings.

His series, ‘West Coast Feeling,’ is featured from July 14 to August 1. Unfortunately, the artist cannot attend the opening, as he has been scheduled for eye surgery.

Studio Connexion is open 11 am to 4 pm, Tuesday to Saturday. Also open by chance or appointment. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, no more than five persons can be in the gallery at a time. For more information or to arrange a viewing, contact Anne at 250-265-8888.

Studio Connexion’s new website should be ready soon, where you can view fine artworks by various Canadian artists. Follow us on Facebook to see regular posts of the gallery’s art.

Victoria Mitchell’s paintings will be showcased at the Hidden Garden Gallery July 28-August 2.

Harvest Share 2020

We connect people who have excess fruit from their backyard fruit trees with those who have the time and energy to harvest it. The fruit is shared amongst homeowners, volunteers, and other community initiatives.

How do TREE OWNERS get involved?

Local tree owners help us turn private trees into a valuable source of food for the community. If you have more fruit than you can manage, call now to register your tree.

How do VOLUNTEERS get involved?

Interested in food preservation and taking home a portion of the harvest? We would love for you to come and volunteer with our project. Scheduled picks run from July to October.

For more information contact your local coordinator:

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Winlaw Elementary School Principal Jon Francis received a tearful goodbye from parents, staff and students on the last day of school June 25.
Connecting with African Grandmothers: a Grassroots Grammas update

submitted

The Slocan Valley Grassroots Grammas stand committed to the health and human rights of African grandmothers, on top of HIV and AIDS. For example, in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, children are not in school, where they would normally receive a daily meal.

Grandmothers are seeking new ways to source food and medicine, as those in their care living with HIV face increased challenges accessing treatment and health care.

The Stephen Lewis Foundation is partnered with community-based organizations that are already responding to the double crisis. Trusted local service providers are well positioned to support communities affected by HIV and AIDS.

They are adapting and innovating during this time of closed markets, restricted movement, and lockdown. Projects focus on distribution of food and medicines, access to clean water and COVID-19 screenings, especially for people in remote areas.

The Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign is adapting its fundraising to try to meet these new and ongoing needs.

In June, the Slocan Valley Grassroots Grammas participated in a virtual version of the annual ‘Stride to Turn the Tide’ fundraising event. The next fundraising venture will likely be virtual, and may involve a silent auction featuring local suppliers of goods, services, and COVID-friendly opportunities. Donations are gratefully accepted through the group’s online donations page at slf.akaraisin.com/GrandmothersPledges2020/GrassrootsGrammas.

African grandmothers are seeking new ways to source food and medicine, as those in their care living with HIV face increased challenges accessing treatment and health care due to COVID-19.

Eldorado Square opening soon in downtown New Denver

submitted

Eldorado Square in downtown New Denver will open soon with an inviting outdoor gathering place, marketplace building and staging grounds.

“Eldorado Square was five years in the making, and was designed through community engagement,” said Patrick Warren, the developer and entrepreneur behind the venture. “The square provides a new type of event space – one that is small scale, fully wired, environmentally friendly, and inviting for locals, visitors and small business owners alike. This is your space, and we are looking forward to seeing all the innovative ways everybody puts it to use.”

Warren says a need for short-term rentals became apparent during the community engagement process. The Eldorado Square consists of three different spaces that can be rented on a short-term basis.

The Eldorado Gathering Space is a landscaped open-air plaza facing the main street, with Shade pergola and bench seating for outdoor events, music, theatre, lectures, markets, festivals and other gatherings. Members of the public can feel free to spend time in the plaza when it’s not being rented. It will be outfitted with electrical outlets, so locals and visitors can charge their devices while sitting under the pergola.

The Eldorado Parlour is a 1,250-square-foot building designed by Kootenay-based Studio9 Architects, with a frontier aesthetic in keeping with New Denver’s heritage guidelines. The inside of this bright yellow building is a secure multifunctional space with broadband LAN and power outlets for several work stations, capacity for a number of wall-mounted speakers and monitors. With maximum wall space for retail racks and displays, a kitchen and a bathroom with shower, the building offers versatility for diverse, short-term rentals.

The Eldorado Yard is an outdoor, wood-fenced, gravel-bed staging area and project work space for uses such as outside fabrication and woodwork. It can be used as a staging area for expeditions and sporting events.

Eldorado Square can also supply 100 amps of commercial-grade power to food trucks, film productions, and events.

Eldorado Square replaces an abandoned grocery store with a collapsed septic system, and represents an investment of approximately $500,000 into the community. Equipment and other materials from the original building site were donated to shelters, a museum and other organizations in need.

“With local input, we have revitalized the property and created a new hub for prosperity,” said Warren. “Our collective success in launching Eldorado Square comes as good news at a time when we all continue to grapple with the pandemic and are looking ahead to new ways of connecting, convening and collaborating.”