Processing co-op planned for Slocan cannabis growers

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Craft cannabis growers in the Slocan Valley are biding together to overcome one of the biggest obstacles they face to entering the legal market.

Nearly 50 growers are forming a co-op to build and operate a central processing facility for their crops.

“The whole idea that appeals to me is having a local co-op helping growers with all aspects of entering the legal market, whether they are legacy growers, or someone who has never grown cannabis before,” says Gary Krempl, an early recruit to the co-op from Winlaw. “I’m very, very excited by this. It’s very important to me.”

Krempl is selling his outdoor-grown cannabis to refine into a concentrate for edibles and other products, rather than smokeable ‘flower.’

“It fits with the Kootenay way of doing things,” he says. “People in the Kootenays don’t want to be supporting big corporations. They want to shop local. They want quality products. It’s what we’re all about.”

The processing facility, planned for Playmor Junction (at the site of an old cement company), will see up to 10,000 kilograms of bud processed in its first year, and 20,000 by its second, says Paul Kelly of the Cannabis Business Transitions Initiative, a branch of Community Futures Central Kootenay.

“This will help legacy growers in the West Kootenay achieve legal status,” Kelly told the Valley Voice.

The West Kootenay is estimated to have more than 2,000 people who grew cannabis prior to legalization, setting up the region to become a production powerhouse. But small growers face huge obstacles to enter the legal market.

One of the biggest is how to get their world-class product into market.

A facility to get local weed market-ready is having a local co-op helping growers and in line with cooperative principles.

“By doing this project we’re trying to continue the service of supplying the Kootenays with locally grown cannabis products,” adds Kessell. “One of our board members is a store owner. And he says people are asking for local weed, and they can’t supply it. So that’s our mission.”

The co-op’s planned building is 4,800 square feet, and can easily be upgraded to meet federal security or odour-mitigation regulations, proponents say. If all goes well, the co-op will be able to get product to distributors by next spring.

The Cannabis Business Transition Initiative is lending money to the co-op to get started, and shepherding the group of traditionally independent growers through establishing the co-op, financing, and local cultivation sector at risk,” he adds.

A grower-owned, regional processing cooperative for cannabis, “would bring the supply chain dollars and jobs back to the region,” Kelly says, estimating up to 30 full-time jobs by the second year of operation. “It would ensure packaging and processing is managed in the best interest of local growers and in line with cooperative principles.”

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The Cannabis Business Transition Initiative is lending money to the co-op to get started, and shepherding the group of traditionally independent growers through establishing the co-op, financing, and business practices. That’s why Kelly wrote to the RDCK board, seeking local political support for the initiative.

“After building costs of approximately $3 million and initial operating expense before revenue of $1 million, the facility does need broad political and financial support to start up,” Kelly wrote to the RDCK board. “Your letter of support will help in approaching funders to help make this needed project a reality.”

The board passed a motion to support the project, which also has the endorsement of the local area director, Walter Popoff.
Real estate booms in the West Kootenay

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

It’s a seller’s market out there for people thinking of buying or selling property in the West Kootenay.

Real estate agents across the region say despite the pandemic, they’re running off their feet.

“In Kaslo, Kul Nijjar of Fair Realty’s Kootenay BC Property Matchmakers says 47 properties have been sold to date “with a few others that sold without even being listed.” Nijjar is on track to beat last years’s sales of 49 units. The average sale price to date in Kaslo this year is up 12.2%.

The Slocan Valley has seen “robust” sales the last two years, says Lander. This year, Lander made 74 sales, at an average sale price of $279,000, about 94% of asking price. Last year, he made 81 sales up the valley, at an average $306,000.

The average sale price is marker in the Slocan Valley, where a couple of large sales in the last two years skewed the averages. But Lander says he figures prices are comparatively flat for the last two years, compared to the rest of the province.

Demand outpacing supply

Supply is an important factor in determining price. It’s been especially tight in Nakusp.

“[A] lack of inventory has turned towards a ‘seller’s-type market,’” says Kelly Roberts of Selkirk Realty. “Our office has the lowest listing inventory that I have seen in probably the past 25 years.”

She says locals buying into the tight market have kept Nakusp hot.

“I think some of this increase may be due to the COVID pandemic,” she adds. “I think the pandemic has perhaps pushed some of the fence sitters off on our side… those that were maybe wondering if they should move out of the city decided the time had come.”

With mortgage deferrals due to the pandemic scheduled to end soon, more houses may enter the market, stabilizing prices, says analysts. But other factors may mean the good times – at least for sellers – will continue.

“The hot construction market has also helped sell existing stocks,” says Coldwell Banker’s Lander. “Increased building material costs has definitely increased the value of ‘used’ housing.

“Trades workers are booked,” he says. “Development land has had a significant increase in costs as well.”

COVID opportunities

Like for most of it, it’s been a rollercoaster of a year for real estate agents. When the pandemic hit, the industry was essentially shut down. Both buyers and sellers were concerned about participating in the sales process. But as the situation stabilized, other trends that boosted local sales began to establish themselves.

“The COVID trend of being able to work remotely is also driving the market,” says Coldwell Banker’s Lander.

“I think we’re seeing that more people are able to work from home now so these people are buying in our area,” adds Selkirk Realty’s Roberts. “There are also those that are securing property in our area to eventually build and move here.”

“Once COVID hit it certainly has changed how people viewed living in rural, smaller areas in Canada. We just got busier and busier,” says Kaslo’s Nijjar. “A lot of people who are able to work remotely are attracted to our areas – having fibre available in Kaslo and area certainly helps those buyers.

“It’s also nice to see a few more families be interested in living here. More full-time residences are being purchased, whereas in the past we have seen people buy recreational/ seasonal properties.”

And as prices rise in the Okanagan and points west, the wave has moved towards the Kootenays.

“As real estate prices were going up in the busier areas like the Lower Mainland and Okanagan, that allowed those sellers to purchase properties here for little or no financing,” explains Nijjar. “For example, someone could sell their house for around a million dollars and then be able to buy larger properties or on the lake or with lake views [here] for considerably less.

“I’m seeing many buyers from Revelstoke, Rossland and Golden coming in with equity take-outs,” agrees Lander.

However, the realtors say they’re concerned about the economic impact of the second wave of COVID, and how long the hurt will go on.

“If it continues like it has been, then I foresee another busy market this spring, providing we have the inventory to sell,” says Roberts.

“However, depending on what the COVID pandemic long-term effects are to our economy, things could certainly change in the next 6-12 months.”

Province positive

Provincially, analysts remain bullish on BC’s real estate outlook for 2021.

“Multiple Listing Service residential sales in the province are forecast to rise 16.9% to 90,450 units this year, after recording 77,350 residential sales in 2019,” says a release from the BC Real Estate Association, adding that residential sales are forecast to increase 9.7% to 99,240 units in 2021.

“We are forecasting the provincial MLS average price to finish the year up 9.9% and to increase a further 2.6% in 2022.”

Still, 2020 is not a year realtors will soon forget.

“All I can add is that 2020 saw very strange, unprecedented market conditions in our area – something I’ve never quite seen in the 32 years I have been in this business,” says Roberts.
Slocan Valley Arts Council seeks member input

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In the meantime, Krempl says he’s looking forward to helping others rise out of the grey or black market economy. “We’re all at the spearpoint of the industry, we’re all learning the ropes, and the goal is community economic viability,” says Krempl. “To me it’s got a wide-open future. Getting the building, the licence and the equipment is just the first step. I think we can be a national brand, an international brand, and revive the economy here. And it’s helping people transition from being quasi-legal growers to something they can be proud of and make a decent living with – that is one of the biggest things to me.”

The co-op will also work to build diversity and respect in the white male-dominated industry, says Kessell. “We’re all learning the ropes, and the goal is community economic viability,” says Krempl. “To me it’s got a wide-open future. Getting the building, the licence and the equipment is just the first step. I think we can be a national brand, an international brand, and revive the economy here. And it’s helping people transition from being quasi-legal growers to something they can be proud of and make a decent living with – that is one of the biggest things to me.”

The co-op will also work to build diversity and respect in the white male-dominated industry, says Kessell. Women now make up a third of the board of directors and will be well-represented in its future workforce, and space is being provided for Indigenous representation on the board as well. “We’re going to be educating ourselves and our business is going to run with respect to the land we’re on,” he says. “Hopefully we’ll succeed,” Kessell adds. “We’ve got a good group of people working towards this, we’re proud of what we’ve accomplished so far and we’ll keep plugging away here.”

The co-op is planning a formal membership drive in the near future. Anyone interested should get hold of Paul Kelly at Community Futures Central Kootenay.

Merry Christmas and a happy holiday season to you all!

Best wishes from Ward and Staff.
Kaslo & New Denver Community Pharmacy
Phone: 250-353-2224 • 403 Front Street, Kaslo
Phone: 250-358-2500 • 309 6th Avenue, New Denver

GIVING TUESDAY has passed, but not your opportunity to GIVE WHERE YOU LIVE. For this holiday season, consider giving “in honour of” or “in Memoriam” to the:

SLOCAN VALLEY LEGACY FUND

Two easy ways to give:

1. Mail a cheque payable to the Ogopay Community Foundation designated for the Slocan Valley Legacy Fund. Address: Slocan Valley Legacy Fund PO Box 260 Kaslo
2. Give On-line at: www.slocanvalleylegacy.com
Go to ‘make a donation’ to donate electronically

Gifts of $20 or more will receive a charitable donation tax receipt.

YOUR GIFT TO THE FUND WILL KEEP GIVING --- IN PERPETUITY

www.slocanvalleylegacy.com
Facebook: Slocan Valley Legacy Fund
E-mail info@slocanvalleylegacy.com
phone 1-877-649-3643

December 3, 2020
Response to Bill White (‘COVID cream puffs’ VV Nov 19)

The tone of your letter is offensive to all seniors. I can only believe you are one of the non-believers, the way you express yourself. Sad.

Maybe the COVID will come calling on you one of these days and you will change your opinion and view things as they really are. We are living in the present. COVID does exist. I am one of those COVID cream puffs you refer to so eloquently in your letter. I am 88 yrs old and I am certainly not ready for the cordwood pile yet. Also I haven't reached my due date.

Shame on you.

Have a nice day. Stay safe.

Frances Matthews
Silverton

Top international lawyers to draft definition of ‘ecocide’

It’s an extraordinary moment to be launching this project as the first international trial related to ecocide at Nuremberg. Seventy-five years after coining the terms ‘crimes against humanity’ and ‘genocide,’ humanity faces a new and global threat: climate and ecological crises… and it’s time for recognition of a new international crime: ecocide.

International lawyer Philippe Sands QC and international judge Justice Florence Mumbra are to co-chair an expert drafting panel on the legal definition of ‘ecocide’ as a potential international crime that could sit alongside war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.

Launching with preparatory work this month, and set to draft the definition over the early months of 2021, the panel has been convened by the Stop Ecocide Foundation on the request of interested parliamentarians from governing parties in Sweden.

The Canadian government should pay attention, and sit at the table.

The executive branch of Stop Ecocide Canada
Donna Grace-Campbell, Kaslo
Jamie Hunter, Nelson
Judy Green Clementsford, Nova Scotia

Spitting caused heart attack?

After reading or listening to CBC reporter Bob Keating’s account of the November 29 incident at Nelson’s Empire Coffee, one is left with the impression that the 50-something employee of the Adventure Hotel suffered a heart attack as a result of being spat upon by a belligerent customer after a dispute about mask-wearing.

While the alleged attack upon the unfortunate woman can never be condoned, Keating’s report is incomplete.

In his May 11, 2020 article, “Face masks pose serious risks to the healthy,” American neuro-surgeon and author Dr. Russell Blaylock presents peer-reviewed evidence showing negative health impacts to mask-wearing, including headaches, the recycling of viruses expelled during respiration, and the reduction of oxygen levels (hypoxia).

Hypoxia is a known precursor to heart attack.

The irony of the tragic event at Empire Coffee is that the alleged spitter was attempting to protect their right to oxygen – a right that all Canadians have under sections 2 and 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms – and had the employee been able to protect her own right, the heart attack may have never occurred.

Catherine McGrath
Nelson

The Trump Virus – 2020

Imagine the utterly stunning spectacle of millions of MAGA Americans, ripped out of their minds from gawking QAnon kool-aid spiked with lysol, marching behind “Jack-Off” Giuliani as they got bootied out of every courthouse in the land. Having now been immunized from reality, these Trumpian evangelical prophets are now destined to establish their very own independent state of delusion where they may kneel in worship of their very own fearless leader, Don “the Chump” Trump.

Among his proudest achievements since graduating as the most gifted student from the Putin School of Demagoguery has been Trump’s stunning ability to promote the spread of what he once described as the ‘China’ virus, and is now to be known as the “Trump” virus in recognition of his exceptional accomplishments in achieving the highest per capita infection rate in the world.

Coupled with his elimination of the myth of global warming, the destabilization of the NATO alliance, the alienation of Europe and the virtual eradication of American prestige as trustees of the world’s greatest democracy, Trump has trampled the rule of law, stoked racial prejudice and perverted the entire American electoral system.

To confirm if Trump is lying, just watch when his lips start moving. Don’t make you feel proud to see America great again.

Ken Wilkie
Nelson

The obligations of journalists, politicians and physicians

There appear to be four vaccines for COVID-19 established or on the horizon. Three of them are being developed in the West and are called mRNA vaccines. These are very new and will long remain in an experimental stage. They somehow interact with our DNA, which I don’t claim to understand. The fourth vaccine, which CBC radio has claimed is “conventional,” was developed in Moscow and, like the others, is rated as over 90% effective. Apparently it has not demonstrated serious side-effects and it has been developed and tested from early this year.

The mRNA vaccines have only had a brief testing period. In a New York Times article, the Pfizer vaccine is further criticized. In an article by Peter Doshi and Eric Topol, they state, “To say a vaccine works should mean that most people no longer run the risk of getting seriously sick. That’s not what these trials will determine.” We end up with the risks and possibly no benefits.

I find it interesting that 50 countries are choosing the Russian vaccine. Israel plans to go into production with this vaccine. This brings to mind the Nuremberg Code, which prohibits non-consensual experimentation on humans. I doubt if you will find any people more versed in the history and guidelines of the Nuremberg Code than the Israelis.

How well is our Canadian government considering the health of its citizen and how conscious is it of the principles of human rights and the Nuremberg Code? In the relationship between doctor and patient, “informed consent” and the principles of the Hippocratic Oath are taken for granted when there is a normal doctor-patient trust. There is a danger that these principles could be ignored in the larger realm.

These principles also factor into the ethics of journalism and politics. The vaccines presently ordered by our government are in an experimental stage and citizens taking these vaccines will be subjects of experimentation. This information must be clearly given and honoured. In addition, for the research we are conducting, we need a comprehensive control population in order to reliably assess the medical challenges we face. This way future generations can properly plot their course.

Norbert Duerichen
New Denver
Open letter to all readers of the Valley Voice

These are very trying times for all of us. Fortunately, cases of COVID have been very rare in our area. However, watching events south of the border and in the Lower Mainland of BC is a reason for great concern. Is it inevitable that it comes to the Kootenays?

Vaccines are being developed and some people may be receiving them as early as next month. At the same time, more and more people have had COVID-19 and have recovered. Because many people can apparently have the disease with few or no symptoms, an ever larger group is becoming immune either from vaccination or exposure. All of this can give us hope that perhaps by spring of next year, COVID will or will soon be a thing of the past.

As terrible as this situation is for us all, it is worse for local business in the Kootenays, especially service businesses. The paper was in shock. Hotels, restaurants, salons, therapists, and general merchandise retailers. While Amazon and other online retailers, grocery stores, liquor stores, and pharmacies may be doing fine, local small business across North America is dying. When we all emerge from this COVID nightmare, hopefully next spring, the landscape will be different, with many of our local hangouts closed and gone. Going out may mean going to A&D,W, or Tim Horton’s – the big chains may survive – but your local independent may not. This is a plea to ask you to support your local small business with your dollars, instead of Amazon. Wear your mask, maintain your distance, support your local small business now in their time of need, or they will be not there when you emerge and want to do something different, like eat out for dinner. They want to be there for you, but they can only survive with your patronage.

John Eckland Kaslo

MP Morrison’s flyer

The recent propaganda mail-out by Kootenay Columbia Conservative MP Rob Morrison of right-wing, short-sighted rhetoric.

Appointed to O’Toole’s ‘shadow’ cabinet for National Security, Morrison’s recent propaganda mail-out nowhere mentions the effects of environmental degradation on Canada’s national security. Morrison has obviously not read the ‘Pentagon Papers’ commissioned for former US Republican President G.W. Bush regarding American national security. The paper was in shock as America’s right-wing power brokers.

It clearly concluded that in the next half century, US security will be most challenged by the consequences of a lack of capacity to deal with pollution of earth, air and water, resulting in a human-made environmental crisis.

This fancy smoke-and-mirror right-winger flyer not once mentions support for the scientific evidence that is unequivocal about which needs to be done to mitigate against the truth of western democracy’s dysfunctions, which consumes sanity and jeopardizes the well-being of future generations.

The “clear unity crisis” Morrison rants about will apparently be corrected by the “resource industry” paying less taxes with little or no regulations to protect our common good – not just rich corporations, ignoring common sense.

There is a ‘shadow’ over Canada’s future generation: systemic racism and a disregard for scientifically based information from our political leadership.

We currently suffer from a ‘virus’ lockdown that has turned our GNP inside-out, forcing our critical elderly to return stolen middle class tax revenues – something that Morrison and his party continue to advocate against.

Toni Prior Nelson

Open letter to Premiers Horgan and Kenney: re: decimation of old-growth forest

I am sick about the continued destruction of our old growth forests. I thought you promised to stop it, but maybe ‘mammoth means you don’t have to. I am heart sick, discouraged, angry as a wet cat, and my usual filters are gone around this issue. Old-growth forests are resistant to wildfire, unlike the fibre banks. They harbour genetic diversity, are the very best carbon sinks, and the core of Beautiful BC’s heart. And they are nearly gone forever. Don’t kid yourself that it will grow back. It won’t. Climate change will see to that, and this last dash to harvest the last of it before harvest gets stopped is as dirty and disgusting as Alberta’s oil sands. This timber is being sold cheap, sent overseas, and lining pockets of a few ‘tenure holders’ which are mostly not BC corporations.

This massive sell-off does not fuel BC’s economy. Stumpage is a half in the bucket of wealth that is being moved offshore. The tenure system is nothing but a thinly disguised privatization of a public asset. Your government is perpetuating one of the biggest breaches of public trust in Canada, and do not understand why you continue to get away with it. I am a retired lawyer for 30 years. I am not stupid. I am not a blind eye to what you are doing and I call you out!

John Eckland Kaslo

Dog eats dog

For those of you who aren’t familiar with this idiom, the meaning is: ruthless self-interest in which people will do anything to be successful, even if they do harms others.

Though I am somewhat rusty in my journalistic skills, having replaced such novelists with ventures some years ago, I still pride myself on international recognition for my journalism articles for many media outlets, including the BBC (UK). They have advocated my non-nonsense attitude, blunt, passionate writing for decades. And so, I bring forward the plight of a business owner, Connaught Labs, who is having their cannabis store, located in the Village of Nakusp. At this time, when businesses are struggling to make a living amidst an unprecedented pandemic, Connaught Labs faces potentially being put out of business by the opening of a second retail cannabis store a block and a half from their recently opened operations.

‘Dog eats dog’ is appropriate in this instance.

I don’t understand why the Village council approved a second cannabis store in Nakusp. Mind-boggling is that the population of downtown Nakusp is less than 2,2000s, many of whom are seniors, and there is a need for such businesses so close to each other is unfathomable.

I am avidly affected by council’s decision to go ahead with the opening of a second cannabis store in my residential property (the only residential property on the commercial street) abuts (only a few yards from my bedroom window) the proposed site. If and when this second store becomes operational, my residential property will be subject to devaluation.

Shame on the council and to my adjacent neighbours and friends of many years, who chose not to aprove the common courtesy of disclosing their intention to open a cannabis store near to my home.

Are we to promote the acquisition of profit in favour of genuine health and safety and personal considerations? To live peacefully in one’s home is a right. To conduct a competing business with the likelihood of putting an existing one out of business is not. It is all about the money.

Serious concerns were presented to the Nakusp council at a meeting on Monday, November 23, 2020 but they fell upon deaf ears. I submitted a petition to the council, and the Mount Nakusp. Was it not heard? I submitted a petition with 187 signatures.

Has the human rights dictum, ‘Being treated fairly is my inalienable right’, been violated? Apparently so!

Lucia Mann Nakusp

The COVID drama

Since the mask mandate came in, I have started seeing current events in terms of Shakespeare’s observation, “all the world’s a stage.” This is quite the drama we find ourselves in. In it heroes and villains, kings and paupers, fools and sages, townspeople and many more. There is a peculiar twist; some of the players realize it is a play and has a script, while others vehemently deny that they are in a play and all attack those who try to point this out.

I am among those who do realize this, and watch with consternation as so many play their assigned roles unknowingly. My prediction is that the next act will include much harsher lockdown measures, business and school closures, statistical manipulation to convince people there is a mutated virus causing a condition called COVID-19, and civil war to the south. It will also include a dramatic and miraculous awakening.

There are many in this play perceived to be playing a role they are not playing at all. I am one of them, and would like to clear this up. Whoever wrote this script decided it would help the plot along if some of the players perceived others as villains when they are trying to be anything but. The idea is, “So-and-so isn’t following the rules because they don’t care, or rather lack the stupid and they are putting us all at risk.”

Anyone choosing not to vaccinate themselves or their children is familiar with this, having been caught between the twin dragons of public health and civil rights. They have been required to follow the rules, or else.

I know that not wearing a mask does not cause harm, and can back this up. As long as the conversation stays civil, I am happy to answer questions about my choices.

There is another odd twist in this play: you can change your assigned role anytime you like. The choice is yours.

Lisa Ross Kaslo

The story of Connaught Labs

When will we get our COVID-19 vaccine? Will we have to wait while vaccine-producing countries vaccinate their citizens first? Did you know many vaccines were developed and produced in Canada, until our vaccine provider was sold out to big pharma? Search: Connaught Labs.

In 1913, John FitzGerald and lab tech Billy Fenton set out to find a vaccine for diphtheria, which had been the scourge of humanity for centuries. An antitoxin existed, but its cost was exorbitant. Dr. FitzGerald set out to find a treatment people could afford. His notion that free access to life-saving medication should be universal would lead to his lab’s downfall. Linda McGuire does a good job describing how his work, his lab, and other examples of Canada’s public wealth were sold out in her book The Story of Connaught Labs, 1913-1974.

After the diphtheria vaccine was developed, FitzGerald and his expanding laboratory team with federal government funding churned out a huge supply of tetanus antitoxin and smallpox vaccine. Soldiers in the First World War were highly vulnerable to tetanus. In earlier wars, about eight soldiers died of infection or disease for every one killed in battle.

Next was diabetes. Fred Banting and Charles Best were onto something but needed lab space. FitzGerald jumped in, offering lab space at Connaught facilities and money to help them prepare enough extract for clinical trials. Connaught Labs was sold out in a manner that any of the other claims made about us.

In 1932, the Rockefeller Foundation was impressed with their work and paid for the construction of a four-story building to house the School of Hygiene. More money was to follow. The next two years, our scientists researchers played a key role in making COVID measures, and will refuse the vaccine when it comes along. You know what? Not a single bear ever hints a hint of the hoodie, for not once has anyone said, “I don’t care, I can’t be bothered, it doesn’t affect me,” or any of the other claims made about us. Not a whisper. Not a syllable. Rather, every single real person observes it is well informed, cares deeply, and knows we are being lied to and manipulated.

When you see me without a mask, you are not seeing “not caring.” You are seeing something that in other times was a conscientious objector. I am saddened, not shamed, by the vitriol. I know that not wearing a mask does not cause harm, and can back this up. As long as the conversation stays civil, I am happy to answer questions about my choices.

Continued on page 6
COVID-19 blues

Nine months into the COVID-19 pandemic we are at the front of the line for the COVID-19 vaccine. Between pandemics, Connaught and the University of Toronto sold Connaught and it became a private company later to be despoiled by big Pharma.

If those in power had not let COVID-19 New and Newer viruses be the front of the line for the COVID-19 vaccine. Between pandemics, Connaught and the University of Toronto sold Connaught and it became a private company later to be despoiled by big Pharma.

Finding a good mask was a challenge. I shopped online for hours until I found a three-layer mask that can be washed and reused. I waited two weeks for it to arrive. Wearing a cloth or fleece mask is like wearing a paper napkin for COVID-19 effectiveness. Would it bankrupt BC to send each family a good, three-layer washable mask for each family member? We seem to have endless cash for the Site C dam, which will cost billions more than anticipated and may not even be built because of a lack of foundation!

Another poor foundation is the Western world’s response to COVID-19. Nature’s revenge is ominously clear. Businesses that cannot flatten the curve much or get good masks to people.

The media has also failed us miserably. People can no longer find the truth about COVID-19. “Stop the Steal,” they chant in USA; no one is counting “Stop COVID-19.” North America is failing to protect the public and one of COVID-19’s challenges because many don’t trust the media or government. When truth is hidden, all kinds of dumb and sinister things happen on our little screens and enter our little brains.

Nature survives with diplomacy and cooperation between species. Man steals what is not his, and then deals with the dire consequences.

Healthy watersheds support resilient communities

The fear of losing clean drinking water hits close to home for many residents here in the Kootenays. For some, it’s been a reality. Nature-based planning provides a solution.

In 2019, a BC Supreme Court judge said the community of Gladie doesn’t have a right to clean drinking water. This, after years of trying every legal avenue available to protect their water source. This seems outrageous in a developed country like Canada. Upstream, at the northeastern end of the West Arm of Kootenay Lake, Laird Creek is being logged in the same area where a 2011 landslide resulted in over 100 water licenses losing water for weeks.

By paying both provincial property taxes and water licence fees, residents are the primary long-term stakeholders of Crown land. Decision making in these areas is the same as for farmers. It involves many factors: the requirement for stable, clean water sources. Nature-based plans assist in directing action and building understanding of our shared resources, and support an accessible framework for discussion.

Take action by contacting your new Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Fraser calves, a story is told of many forms. To light a dark and in dark to light, we have the ‘shades of grey’ in a manner that should bring some mindful contemplation and willful translation/interpretation within its integration to others. Long story short; we do not conform to this tipsy turvy world of total domination and control by a handful of shady aggressors but are TRANSFORMED by the renewal of your mind!
Some water users face cost increases as RDCK changes billing formula

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

People who get their water from RDCK-managed community systems will now see their utility bills include the cost of staff time spent to maintain the system.

The regional government’s Rural Affairs Committee approved changes to the Environmental Services Fee at its meeting November 18. The motion was ratified by the RDCK board the next day.

The change essentially means the RDCK staff will bill each system by the hour for work done on that system. It’s part of the Regional District’s long-term goal of making water systems self-sustaining by budgeting for all costs of maintaining their system.

Half the hours billed will be tied directly to the water system receiving the service, while the other half will be shared amongst all water systems. Larger systems or ones needing significant work would see the largest increases under the new billing structure.

While little or no maintenance will see smaller increases. Staff also had a suggestion to cushion against sudden spikes in demand.

“...it is staff’s suggestion that in the future, averages of hours spent in water systems over multiple years be used to determine the size of a water system,” the RDCK staff report states. “This will help to moderate the cost changes from year-to-year that are created through projects or severe water system challenges from multiple leaks or other unforeseen incidents,” the report says.

Still, the changes would mean an extra $75 per household. The RDCK fee of $122 per connection for residents of the Woodbury Village subdivision near Kaslo, $121 more for Rosebery Highland users, while residents on Edgewood’s common system would pay about $78 extra, compared to the 2019 rate. Those increases don’t include other general costs charged to users by each system.

A comparative chart showed several communities in the Valley Voice readership area facing substantial increases, including Woodbury - 42 connections share $8,939; Edgewood - 91 connections share $7,179; Fauquier - 94 connections share $4,707; St灵敏性; Cascade Valley - 68 connections share $3,485; Denver Siding - 20 connections share $2,668; Burton - 56 connections share $2,033; Rosser Highlands - 14 connections share $1,166.

The change could hurt people with lower incomes, staff advised RDCK directors.

“Some of the options in this report are anticipated to create financial hardship for some lower income households in a couple of water systems,” the RDCK staff report states.

“The impact is that in some small water systems the cost of providing water to residents is projected to exceed the $2,000/year threshold and with that threatens the affordability for low-income families. Full and detailed cost accounting comes at an additional cost and often affects these small water systems the most in regards to shifting cost of water to a full user-pay system.”

The RDCK manages about 19 community water systems and employs about six staff. Staffing and directly associated costs is the department’s largest line item, and budgeted at about $816,000 for 2020.
by Jan McMurray

The BC election poll-by-poll results are in, and they confirm what many people suspected—the Kaslo area voted Green. Results from all polling stations for residents of the Kaslo and North Kootenay Lake areas show the Green Party candidate for Nelson-Creston, Nicole Charlwood, in the lead. Residents north of Kaslo in the south to Meadow Creek, Argenta, Johnson’s Landing and the Duncan in the north along 444 votes for Charlwood, 311 votes for NDP candidate Brittny Anderson, 205 for Liberal candidate Terry Tiessen.

These numbers can be broken down further. Advance voting at the Kaslo Legion resulted in 173 votes for Charlwood (Green), 168 for Anderson (NDP), 92 votes for Finley (Liberal) and 12 votes for Tiessen (Libertarian).

Residents north of Kaslo in the Lardeau and Duncan voted overwhelmingly for Charlwood (95 votes). ‘Up the lake,’ the NDP and Liberal Party candidates tied for second place with 36 votes each, and Tiessen got two votes. Kaslo residents cast 68 votes for Charlwood, 47 for Anderson, 34 for Finley and six for Tiessen.

The final count for Nelson-Creston: Brittany Anderson, NDP – 7,296 (41.78%); Nicole Charlwood, Green – 5,611 (32.13%); Terry Tiessen, Liberal – 4,171 (23.89%); and Brittny Anderson, NDP – 168 votes for Independent Fletcher Quince (6.15%).

In Nakusp, the Green Party candidate came third after the NDP and Liberal candidates. There were 467 votes for the NDP candidate, 233 for the Liberal candidate, 186 for the Green candidate, 113 for the Conservative candidate, 19 for Independent Fletcher Quince and 12 for Independent Ed Varney.

The count for Kootenay West: Katrine Conroy, NDP – 10,822 (61.15%); Andrew Duncan, Green – 3,040 (17.18%); Corbin Kelley, Liberal – 1,975 (11.16%); Glen Byrne, Conservative – 1,447 (8.18%); Ed Varney, Independent – 224 (1.27%); Fletcher Quince, Independent – 189 (1.07%).

Lakes and Slocan Valley polls reflect the landslide victory for the NDP’s Katrine Conroy, but the Green Party had a fairly good showing. In the Slocan Valley (fron Hills in the north to the Crescent Valley area in the south), Green candidate Andrew Duncan came in a solid second with 565 votes to Conroy’s 858. The Liberal candidate (Corbin Kelley) had 144 votes in the Slocan Valley, the Conservatives (Glen Byrne) had 108, Independent Ed Varney had 72, and Independent Fletcher Quince had 22.

In Butte County, the race for second place was very close between the Liberals and the Greens. There were 147 votes for Conroy (NDP), 56 for Duncan (Green), 47 for Kelley (Independent), and 34 for Byrne (Conservative), four for Independent Fletcher Quince and three for Independent Ed Varney.

In Nakusp, the Green Party candidate came third after the NDP and Liberal candidates. There were 467 votes for the NDP candidate, 233 for the Liberal candidate, 186 for the Green candidate, 113 for the Conservative candidate, 19 for Independent Fletcher Quince and 12 for Independent Ed Varney.
Time to return public forests to communities, says Herb Hammond

by Kathy Hartman

Herb Hammond, forest professional of 40 years from Slocan Park, presented a webinar November 26 called, “Protection vs. profit and how to change the story.” The webinar was hosted by the West Kootenay EcoSociety.

According to Hammond, forestry as practiced in BC is more about forest destruction than about forest protection. He said that currently, forestry is the single largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the province, the primary cause of water degradation, and a major contributor to floods and drought.

“Either we change or Earth will change us,” Hammond said. “Our forests have changed from carbon sinks to carbon sources.”

Hammond said BC logging is currently focused on primary and old-growth forests, and the production of wood pellets. Wood pellets made from “waste” are exported for energy production in Europe and produce more greenhouse gases than coal, he said.

“The three main forestry companies are only interested in profit, not jobs or tackling the climate emergency,” said Hammond. An example of profits, in just the third quarter of 2020, for the big three were: Interfor $222 million, Canfor $259 million and West Fraser $356 million. Yet in the last 20 years there have been 100 mill closures and 22,400 jobs lost, according to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

In 2020 alone, there were more than 26 mills closed and 6,000 more positions lost. Meanwhile, the taxpayers have been subsidizing those same companies to the tune of $365 million a year for the last 10 years, according to David Broadland, publisher of Focus magazine and member of a group that is exploring the potential for conserving selected BC forests for carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation and short-distance tourism potential.

Hammond blames the state of forestry today on the forest tenure system established in the mid 1940s by the BC government. Under this system, public land was gifted to corporations.


“I am excited, definitely a different direction from what I was doing, but one I feel I’ll be able to handle,” says Conroy of being chosen for the job. “I’m happy to be doing it. I’m happy to be the first woman that’s leading this ministry, and I think it’s going to be good.”

Mandate letter

Conroy and her cabinet colleagues will be primarily working on the Province’s economy recovery from the pandemic, according to the ministerial mandate letter the premier handed to each member of his 24-person cabinet.

But one of Conroy's top goals will also be to break up the ministry she leads. In his letter to Conroy, the premier told her he wanted her to oversee the creation of a separate “Ministry for Lands and Natural Resource Operations that will develop and implement land use policies that support BC’s goals for economic activity, environmental sustainability, and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.”

To help Conroy meet that goal, Horgan appointed Siksine MLA Nathan Cullen as Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations.

“When we were sworn in in 2017 it was my desire to have a stand-alone Ministry of Forests, something the BC Liberals had rolled into what is now one of the most unwieldy ministries in government...” Horgan said at his news conference announcing the new cabinet November 26. “So Minister Cullen’s job will be to work with Minister Conroy to disaggregate that, and take component parts and move them to where they might be better utilized.”

Among other items in the mandate letter, Horgan said he wanted Conroy to:

• continue work to update and modernize forest policy and legislation to ensure a competitive, sustainable future for forest communities, Indigenous peoples, workers, and companies;
• lead the transition of the forestry sector from high volume to high value production;
• support the advancement of the mass timber action plan, including making the use of mass timber in new public buildings a priority;
• dedicate a specific portion of the annual allowable cut toward higher value producers who can demonstrate their ability to create new jobs for workers in BC;
• implement the recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review;
• lead work with local governments to reduce wildfire risk and better prepare and support communities for future wildfires.

“The bottom line is you want to support people, put families and jobs first,” said Conroy, who noted one of her first jobs was at the local pulp mill in Castlegar. “So I want to make sure that forestry is an industry that is going to be here for the long run, it’s going to be here to support families. So we’re going to move forward in that way.”

Conroy is also to continue to oversee the Columbia Basin Trust and Columbia Power Corporation, and lead BC’s negotiation team at the Columbia River Treaty talks.

Conroy had that responsibility in the previous cabinet.

“I’m thrilled about that,” says Conroy. “I did ask him, I said to [the premier] that I’d really like to keep those no matter what ministry you put me in, because it’s important to keep the continuity.”

While forestry and the CBT are key economic engines in the region, Conroy will also have a parliamentary secretary assigned to her, in charge of rural development. One of that department’s objectives is to bring high-speed internet to rural areas.

Conroy is to ensure her parliamentary secretary, Kootenay Boundary MLA Roly Russell, supports the Minister of Citizens’ Services “to deliver high-speed connectivity throughout the province with a goal of connecting all regions to the high-speed network.”

The region does lose one voice at the cabinet table though. Rookie Nelson-Creston MLA Brittny Anderson was not selected for a senior position by Horgan. The previous MLA for the riding, Michelle Mungall, had two cabinet posts in the previous government, including Energy and Mines.

Conroy, first elected to represent the Kootenay West riding in 2005, was returned to the job after voters gave her an overwhelming 61% plurality in the Oct. 24 election. She was the former Boundary Children and Family Development in the last NDP government.

Slocan area resident dies in car accident

by Jan McMurray

One Slocan area resident died in a single vehicle accident near the Cape Horn bluffs on the morning of Saturday, November 21.

Sgt. Chad Badry of West Kootenay Traffic Services reports that there were two Slocan area residents in the SUV, but one drove off the road near the bluffs. The passenger was found deceased at the scene. The driver was taken to Kelowna by air ambulance, and treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

Badry said the accident is still under investigation, but icy roads and impaired driving were believed to be contributing factors.

Slocan Lake RCMP got the call at about 8:05 a.m., Badry said, and the road was kept open to single lane alternating traffic.

Anyone with any information about the accident is asked to contact West Kootenay Traffic Services at 250-354-5180.
Divided RDCK board approves move to STEP Code

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Builders working in the Regional District of Central Kootenay will have to meet new energy-efficient construction standards starting in the new year. The RDCK’s board of directors voted last month to adopt the provincial Energy STEP Code as of December 31.

Under Step 1, all new residential buildings have to have a certified energy advisor confirm its design meets the energy requirements of the current building code. Future steps will ease buildings having to meet more and more requirements. The final step, Step 5, due to be introduced in 2033, will demand all new buildings to be net-zero in energy use.

Step 1 is voluntary, but Step 3 will be provincially mandated in 2022.

Staff have been recommending adopting the voluntary level of compliance for more than a year. “Not adopting Step 1 in December 2020 will inhibit the ability of builders and Building Officials to suitably prepare for the jump to Step 3 in 2022,” wrote Paul Faulkner, the RDCK’s Energy Specialist, in a report to the November 19 board meeting. “This lack of preparedness may increase the likelihood of failure to achieve compliance to the Step 3 for builders unfamiliar with the requirements, processes, and techniques to achieve Step 3.”

If that happens, Faulkner warned home builders (and buyers) could see delays and extra costs to redo work that fails inspection, a shortage of trades workers familiar with the standards, inappropriate or inefficient systems being installed, and missed rebate opportunities to save construction costs.

Cost not a concern

Concerns have been raised that some builders received additional costs of Step Code and the impact on the affordability of homes within the RDCK. But Faulkner told directors research has showed Step 1 increases costs by less than 1%, and the next two steps only add another percentage point. “This finding suggests that improved energy efficiency and affordability can go hand-in-hand,” he wrote. The report also notes that more energy-efficient homes reduce homeowner costs, saving more money to be spent locally.

Some areas of the RDCK have already adopted higher standards. The City of Nelson requires builders to construct housing to Step 3 standards, and Castlegar and Creston adopted Step 1 this fall.

Mixed feelings

But the board, which has debated the move for more than a year, was divided in its final vote. Nearly a third of the directors, many from the Slocan and Arrow Lakes, questioned if the industry had the capacity to serve the whole RDCK, especially in rural areas. “I don’t see this as much as early adoption as putting in place the lowest possible cost,” said Area H Director Walter Watson, who ultimately voted against the motion. “I believe the RDCK should be doing more to improve efficiency. But I don’t think I support the industry as being ready for more centralization, what I’m hearing from builders at that end of Kootenay Lake is that the capacity is not yet there.”

But the majority of directors felt it was important the RDCK get moving on preparing for higher steps. “We’ve had this in place in the City of Nelson for some time,” said Nelson rep Janice Morrison, who moved adoption. “We’ve had positive feedback from builders who have moved up to Step 2. “It’s not new, it’s not out of the blue, much of it is common sense,” said Area A Director Garry Jackman, who seconded the motion. “I don’t look at this as much as early adoption as putting in place incrementally the education, in favour of hitting the wall at once and all of a sudden you’re at Step 3. I don’t see this as harmful.”

In the end, the motion passed. But Hughes, Moss, Area K Director Paul Peterson and Area H Director Walter Popoff — all from the Arrow Lakes/ Slocan Valley — and two other directors were in opposition.

FortisBC gets OK for rate increase for New Year

submitted

Power bills will be going up for FortisBC customers. The power company has received inter部门 approval from the British Columbia Utilities Commission to increase its 2021 electrical rate by 4.36%. The increase is effective January 1.

A company release says the average residential customer using about 12,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) per year would see their bills increase by about $7.30 per month.

“We strive to operate efficiently and keep rates at the lowest possible cost,” said Diane Roy, vice president, regulatory affairs, FortisBC. “However, increases are sometimes needed so FortisBC can make necessary system improvements and long-term investments that ensure our customers will always have the power they need, when they need it.”

As a regulated, privately owned utility, FortisBC must ensure its electric rates reflect the actual cost of providing the safe, reliable service its customers depend on, from generating and purchasing power to maintaining and improving the grid.

The company plans to spend approximately $72 million on electric infrastructure improvements in the coming year, including power lines, equipment, and upgrades projects. FortisBC is continuing to make major upgrades to two hydroelectric facilities and plans to upgrade three of its substations and associated transmission lines in 2021.
Local business owners want customers to know that they can shop online this Christmas, and still support Slocan Valley stores.

And there’s an ever-growing choice of local shops whose wares are available online.

From clothing and gourmet foods, to jewellery or knitting supplies, more businesses popping up in the Slocan are counting on locals buying online this season.

“Online shopping is helping us out,” says Beth Campbell, who runs the Lemon Creek-based Viva Cacao! “You don’t need to go to Amazon, you can shop here.”

Campbell started Viva Cacao! about 18 months ago, though the chocolatier operated at a smaller scale for several years before that. She’s been having success before that. She’s been having success online.

“Once we opened our online store, it’s been steady. We’ve had a good platform to talk about our product and what we do here, and it’s hopefully a place where I can talk about the issues in our industry, things I care about and am passionate about.”

Campbell says after a slow summer start, orders began coming in steadily in November. For customers who go to her website (https://vivacacao.ca), it’s a simple process to buy her products, and ship them to whomever you want.

“Definitely ship anywhere, and I just figured out how to have a local pickup option so people can pick up and not pay shipping. People can contact me, and we can work out pickup. If it’s in Nelson or the valley, I can bring it in when I come in.”

Brendan Murray-Nellis just started his Raven Roast business this year in Slocan, after the pandemic shut down his acupuncture practice. His online business—marketing his own herbal coffee substitute—is also just getting off the ground, and he has invested heavily in building his sales online.

“It’s always interesting to see where our customers come from,” says Murray-Nellis. “We’ve been getting orders from across the United States and Canada.”

Murray-Nellis says with so many people staying home and avoiding crowds, it’s important to support local creators online.

“This year it’s absolutely critical to go out of our way to support local businesses. There’s a lot of small businesses that are suffering, and it’s this moment we can decide as a community whether we are going to give our money to all these online companies to do our Christmas shopping, or work with local people,” he says.

While distant orders help, Murray-Nellis hopes locals will reach out and support companies like his. Raven Roast (https://ravenroast.com/) is offering free shipping anywhere for anyone ordering online.

“We’re going out of our way to make it easy to shop local,” he says. “We don’t have to give our money to big companies. We’re trying our best to be an easy interface you can both support local and have all the convenience of online.”

Online Christmas market

The loss of Christmas markets in most communities due to COVID restrictions has been one of the latest hurts caused by the pandemic, affecting both buyers and sellers.

But soon there’ll be a way to enjoy the fun and excitement of a Christmas Market from your laptop.

Morgen Badarti is an artist in New Denver who’s started ‘Handmade Heart,’ a virtual online market, planned for December 5-13 on Facebook Events. She’s spent years helping organize real-world craft fairs in the area, and decided to use her connections in the community to try to help craftpeople sell their products online.

At first she said people she contacted about an online event were reticent.

“That’s because we love selling in person, don’t we? That’s why we do it, why we participate in festivals and markets and shows, because we love selling our own work, and meeting people in person. People like that too. But unfortunately we can’t do that right now.”

The Homemade Heart Market will encourage people to come to the Facebook Event, browse that page and visit individual seller’s sites. There’ll be prizes and treasure hunts and other side events to generate visits.

“Really hope that people support this, it’s so important to these artisans,” she says. “They have nowhere else to sell their stuff. It’s difficult to sell in stores, it’s not easy to make your craft and sell in a store. And I worry about their survival as artisans. They’re making useful and beautiful, functional things.”

And if you buy online from one of the vendors, Badarti says they’ll keep the market page open after Christmas, and perhaps have an ongoing place for local artisans to connect with buyers.

See the ad for the market on this page and follow the links we’ve added on the Valley Voice Facebook page to learn more about the market, the participating companies, and more.

Slocan Valley Artisans present a Virtual Holiday Market

WHEN: 5 to 13 December WHERE: www.facebook.com/SlocanValleyArtisans/events

there will be TREASURE HUNTS with beautiful handmade prizes from our artisans


Local delivery will be available at central locations for your market event purchases
New Denver to be lit up for late night shopping on Merchants’ Night

Submitted

Late night shopping, a celebration of lights, a display of kids’ colouring and a draw for the Merchants’ Basket are all happening for New Denver Merchants’ Night this year on Friday, December 4. Although many of the traditions of Merchants’ Night had to be skipped this year, downtown businesses and the Slocan Valley Chamber of Commerce invite people to come out to see the lights and do some local shopping. Most stores will be open till 8 pm.

While considering how to host Merchants’ Night during the pandemic, the Chamber came up with the idea of lighting up the main street. “We thought some colourful lights would lift everyone’s spirits this year, so we approached the Village and they got on board,” says Emma Beaton, Chamber manager. “The trees on the main street are lit up thanks to the Village, and the Chamber has purchased some lights to make sure that downtown will be colourful on Merchants’ Night.”

Downtown businesses and all residents have all been encouraged to get their lights up in time for Merchants’ Night, and with the additional lights supplied by the Chamber, a stroll down the main street on the evening of December 4 will be brilliant.

There will be a draw for a Merchants’ Basket this year, too, with a different way to enter. This year, anyone who makes a purchase at one of our local businesses during the week of November 30 to December 4 can enter to win. In past years, a visit to every store on Merchants’ Night was necessary. To avoid crowding in the stores, the draw is open to local shoppers all week long. The lucky winner will be drawn at the end of the night on Friday at the Valley Voice office.

Lucerne School students have been invited to enter a colouring contest sponsored by the Chamber, and downtown businesses will display the artwork in their windows on Merchants’ Night. Prizes for the kids have been donated by local businesses.

“We’re happy to offer the community an evening of liveliness and light downtown this year, and hope that next year we’ll be able to return to a full Merchants’ Night with Santa, the food table and all,” says Beaton.
Nakusp Celebration of Light set for Friday, December 4

by Jan McMurray

The Society for Nakusp Community Events (SNCE) announces the Nakusp Celebration of Light 2020 on Friday, December 4 starting at 5 pm.

Nakusp will light up Broadway, and downtown businesses will be open late. It’s always fun to shop on Celebration of Light night in Nakusp to check out the merchants’ tacky sweaters. Yes, the Merchants’ Tacky Sweater Contest is back this year.

SNCE has also organized a Home Decorating Contest. Residents are asked to submit a photo of their decorated home before December 24 through Messenger on the SNCE Facebook page. Photos will be posted on the page, and the photo that gets the most ‘likes’ will win exciting local prizes valued up to $100.

SNCE has been organizing community events in Nakusp for the past four years, having taken over the events coordination function from the Nakusp & District Chamber of Commerce.

“This dedicated non-profit group of volunteers applies for grants to put on these annual festivals,” says SNCE president Tom Zeleznik.

Current SNCE directors are Zeleznik, Donna Rebman, Dustin Raskob, Mary Hamling, Gordie Matchett, Anya Harrison, Jo Law, Shannon Lowe, Patty Riley and Kevin Starratt.

Zeleznik acknowledged all past members and volunteers, remembering in particular John Guild, Stephanie Dieterman, Jackie Watson, Annette Gorie, and Bud Adair. “Without these people and others, we would not have succeeded,” Zeleznik said.

Zeleznik also gave a shout out to SNCE’s funders and sponsors, including Art Party, NACFOR, Village of Nakusp, CBT, Columbia Power, Nakusp & Area Community Foundation, the businesses of Nakusp and area, Box Lake Lumber, Crescent Bay Construction, Galena Contracting, and Scott Norseman, and apologized to any he inevitably forgot to mention.

Nakusp welcomes new owners at Marvin’s, now Eagle Small Motors

by Jan McMurray

A son and mother partnership has taken the reins from Marvin and Cathie at Marvin’s Small Motors.

Jade Eagle (son) and Leigh Northcott (mother) are very happy to be new business owners in Nakusp.

“We love Nakusp! We have had a family cabin here for five years and have fallen in love with the people, the community and the picturesque setting,” Leigh says.

Jade has years of experience as a mechanic, including working on small motors. “When Jade found out Marvin might want to retire, it was a dream come true for him. He loves the area, loves working on small engines and enjoys a challenge,” said Leigh.

Jade is moving to Nakusp from Kamloops and Leigh lives in Kelowna. She retired to Kelowna seven years ago after a career in Calgary as a business analyst.

The name has changed to Eagle Small Motors, and that’s about the only change customers can expect. Jade plans to carry the same products and provide the same friendly, professional service.

“We would like to say thank you to everyone we have met so far and who have welcomed us to the community,” says Leigh. “And huge thanks to Cathie and Marvin,

Marvin and Cathie Roberts hand off their business of 34 years to Jade Eagle and Leigh Northcott.

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The Valley Voice   December 3, 2020

**COMMUNITY**

**First phase of historic Kaslo church renovation complete**

Submitted

Last year the congregation of St. Andrew’s United Church in Kaslo initiated an ambitious and much-needed restoration project to bring its grand, century-old building up to modern fire and safety standards.

Recently the church celebrated the installation of sprinkler and fire alarm systems, the installation of a new cedar ceiling, upgrades to the heating system and electrical fixtures, the resurfacing of the concrete stairs and wall, and the completion of the restoration and painting of the exterior of the building.

The renovation committee applied for and received grant funding through the Heritage BC Built Heritage ($21,448) and Museums, Heritage and Archives ($5,250) programs as well as the CBTF/YOK/RECK Community Initiatives ($3,300) program and the Community Fund of North Kootenay Lake Society ($7,000).

The project was directed by two members of the St. Andrew’s Board of Trustees, John Whitehead and Shelley Stickel-Miles, and Paul van Deursen, a local builder who served as the project manager. Chris Temple, a local builder, and Robert Inwood, a heritage specialist, both served as consultants for the project.

Many people from the Kaslo area and the larger region were involved in the many aspects of the project.

Prior to the beginning of the construction phase, Robert Inwood provided a heritage assessment of the sanctuary and hall, funded by the MHA grant received through Heritage BC. This document has provided a valuable guide both for this phase of the project, for upkeep, and for future plans.

This is yet another amazing legacy of CBT and our local funders to restore our heritage buildings to vibrant, safe use. To serve the community effectively requires that the rental rates are kept low. While rental charges help cover the operational and basic maintenance costs of St. Andrew’s, it does not cover the costs involved in major upgrades or restoration work.

St. Andrew’s United Church, originally named Robertson Presbyterian Church, was constructed in 1893 and is believed to be one of the oldest continuously operating churches in British Columbia. Along with the Langham, the Kaslo Village Hall and the Moyie, it is an important component of Kaslo’s outstanding architectural heritage. St. Andrew’s continues to serve the needs of the community.

In addition to providing a varied program of worship throughout the year, the basement houses the Kaslo Food Hub with its 12 different programs to do with food sustainability. The sanctuary, with its outstanding acoustics, hosts amongst other community events an annual series of Kaslo Concert Society concerts, an annual guitar festival, and a community choir together with an annual choral workshop. The Heritage Hall hosts a wide range of programs including a weekly seniors exercise class, dance groups, the Kaslo Quilters, the Circle of Indigenous Nations Society, and the Wela’lin cultural gatherings. The variety of activities – in non-COVID times – is stupendous.

During the pandemic, when restrictions permit, St. Andrew’s will be able to support activities that need large spaces to allow for social distancing. With the addition of Wi-Fi, the church will be able to do further outreach for groups and performances. Thanks to Don Scarlett and Kaslo infoNet Society for that work.

Future work includes installing a system of gutters on the sanctuary, bell tower and hall. This will not only protect the exterior of the building from environmental damage but also reduce operating costs by extending the time between painting.

With the work performed in a manner that “strives for authenticity in the maintenance of all original historic materials and detailing” as described in the “Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada,” the church congregation is very proud to introduce the community to this new heritage renovation.

While awaiting interior wall assessment and preparations for another renovation phase, local artists will be showing works that demand a large commanding space. Currently, internationally renowned artist Kentree Spier’s work ‘in-fringe’ is displayed in the sanctuary. Shelley Ross will bring pieces in soon for December/January.

Financial support from the community is welcome. Cheques to St. Andrew’s United Church, Box 998, Kaslo, BC, V0G 1M0 are gladly accepted, or you can see pictures and visit online at: https://gofundme/contribute-to-the-rebirths-of-a-grand-centurian.

**WildSafeBC wraps successful season of reducing human-wildlife conflict**

Submitted

With bears heading into hibernation for the winter, WildSafeBC is also wrapping up its 2020 operations in New Denver, Silverton, Nakusp and Area K, and in Kaslo and Area D.

Like many other organizations this year, WildSafeBC had to modify its outreach activities to deliver the program safely and effectively with COVID-19 mitigation measures in place.

The WildSafeBC community coordinators reached over 2,300 people through door-to-door information delivery, garbage tagging, attendance at public events, booths at trailheads and local businesses, workshops on how to use bear spray and set up electric fencing, and more.

Community coordinators Brian Montgomery and Cora Skierien would like to thank the residents and visitors in this region this year for their continued interest and efforts to reduce human-wildlife conflict in our communities. They look forward to returning next season to work with everyone to continue building the communities’ efforts to keep wildlife wild and our communities safe.

For more information on what the WildSafeBC community coordinators accomplished this year, please consult the year-end reports, which will be published online in December at www.wildsafebc.com.
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December 3, 2020
The Valley Voice

Community

Green burial takes big step forward with land donation

submitted

The Carpenter Creek Last Wishes Society says it’s delighted to announce that it has the “ideal” location for a green burial ground, thanks to a generous local land owner.

Shortly after the green burial campaign was announced in the Valley Voice, an individual offered to donate a beautiful piece of flat land in the New Denver area.

“It is slightly less than half an acre in size and partially treed,” says Moe Lyons, a member of the society’s Green Burial Committee. “If we had sat down to envision the ideal site, it would look exactly like this one.”

With the site well on its way to being secured, the rest of the work to make this dream come true is underway, the society says in a release. It will cost around $50,000 for the subdividing, soil percolation test, permits, landscaping, etc. Another group of volunteers is approaching funders as well as seeking direct donations from supporters and interested parties.

As soon as all the necessary legal arrangements have been made and all the costs ascertained, the society will begin to make it possible to purchase a “pre-need certificate of internment,” i.e. the equivalent of purchasing a lot in a conventional cemetery.

The Green Burial Committee is also distributing a survey for people in the local area to find out just how interested people are in this idea, and to what extent they would like to be involved. Visit Survey Monkey (Google “Survey Monkey Carpenter Creek”) to participate. A physical copy of the survey can be filled in at the offices of the Valley Voice or Silverton Building Supplies.

More and more people are considering green burial these days, and locally many have expressed a desire to be buried in a way that is supportive to the environment. The local green burial ground will use only biodegradable materials, and will create a beautiful, uncluttered space with considerable ambience, incorporating native plants and places for people to sit and contemplate.

Potential donors can choose among several ways to financially support this endeavour.

With tax receipt: Go to https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/53957. Turner Zion Pastoral Charge has agreed to be the umbrella charitable organization so that donations are eligible if you go through them.

GoFundMe: https://gf.me/u/i2rthx8 (no tax receipt)

Etransfer: through your bank, e-transfer to carpentercreekgreenburial@gmail.com.

In-bank deposit: Green Burial bank account at the Kootenay Savings Credit Union in New Denver.

Mail: Carpenter Creek Last Wishes Society (Attn: Green Burial), Box 231, New Denver, BC V0G 1S0

The group is phenomenally grateful to the generous person who is contributing the land for this shared vision, and invites everyone to participate in this endeavour in whatever way works best for you.

Another year has gone by, another year spent missing our beloved Lyla (18) and Joel (19) who passed on December 5th, 2013. 7 years have passed, but there isn’t a single day that goes by where you aren’t in our thoughts. Remembering your warm smiles and laughter is what has kept us surviving without you.

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The Healthy Community Society of the North Slocan Valley cultivates the elements of a healthy community — food security, self-reliance, healthy people, a healthy environment, and a thriving local economy — through education, relationship building, and community service. We actively support initiatives that are inclusive of all and that foster a vibrant community.

HCS had an exciting AGM this year!

A warm welcome to all our new Board members:
Eily Schoepens ~ Jenna White
Heather Wurtele ~ Leda Bottig

They join Dean Spankie, Helen Davis, Jan McMurray, Mick Wilson and Moe Lyons on a robust new board. Thanks to Norbert Durichen for his years of service.

Follow our new Facebook page (created by Heather), and watch for our new Newsletter in the New Year.

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As soon as all the necessary legal arrangements have been made and all the costs ascertained, the society will begin to make it possible to purchase a “pre-need certificate of internment,” i.e. the equivalent of purchasing a lot in a conventional cemetery.

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Silverton council, November 23: Campground design contract finalized by Barbara Curry Mulcahy

The Valley Voice December 3, 2020

Slocan council, November 19: Rezoning process begins for part of mill site by Barbara Curry Mulcahy

The rezoning will allow the Slocan council to proceed with the subdivision of the mill site for development, subject to meeting certain conditions.

The Village Voice December 3, 2020

It’s WEGCSS Holiday Hamper Season! by Joe Lynch

The Village of New Denver

The Village will apply for Regional District Community Development funding.

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The Valley Voice December 3, 2020

NIMC is the only centre of its kind in Canada. Part history, part cautionary tale, part companion to the exhibits and gardens at the NIMC, this book explores the history of the NIMC, this book explores the history of the NIMC.
Old South Slocan schoolhouse slated for demolition

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The building that’s stood as a landmark in South Slocan for nearly a century is coming to the end of its days.

The RDCK Commission of Management has approved a plan to demolish the 91-year-old South Slocan School building in the community.

“It was pretty hard,” says Ruby Payne, the chair of the Commission. “A lot of us have pretty strong histories with that building.”

Built in 1929, the old school building saw generations of children from the area go through its doors, including Payne, who attended the first day there when she was 5 years old, purchased by the Regional District of Central Kootenay for the community’s use in 1987.

The building had been kept alive from that point based on a volunteer system, and by really small rental fees,” says Payne. “It really fell on the back of a small, hard number of volunteers to keep it going.”

The building was rented out to various groups and individuals over the years, but only made a fraction of the money in rent needed to maintain the structure. And the community hasn’t been able to underwrite the needed repairs.

“This is the building has come to the end of its life,” says Payne. “The amount of work it would take to get it back to ship-shape or rebuild is significant. The community, which comprises 51 households – a really small tax base – had this burden of helping make the decision.”

The issue is that the facility’s rental and upkeep costs are too low compared to the very high upkeep,” explains Joe Chirico, the general manager of community development for the RDCK. “The building has only lasted this long due to the tremendous efforts of local volunteers.

Flooring, operating costs and insurance is a fraction of the cost of continued reinvestment.”

At its November 24 meeting, the commission of management, a quasi-council for the commission managed, voted in favour of demolishing the structure.

“They truly are not in a position to do the work,” adds Chirico. “The water system is a heavy burden on their taxes and through the commission we are trying to remove as much risk as possible while ensuring the water system and easy access to it and the infrastructure is preserved.”

Unable to save the building, Payne says the community will be sad to see it go.

“There’s lots of people who went to school there as children, took a dance class, went to church. It was difficult because a lot of people feel strong ties to it,” she says. “But it just feels like we were fighting a losing battle, factored into the decision to remove the structure.

Demolition could begin as early as the spring or summer of 2021, says Chirico. It will be paid for with a small reserve fund the Commission of Management kept for the building.

There’s no discussion yet about what will be done with the property after that.

Our discussion with the Commission... is that we need to get over this hurdle, have the RDCK water service identified as critical infrastructure and provide new routes for infrastructure, and then the community should brainstorm what to do with the land,“ says Payne.

The current tenants, including a daycare, have been in a bind to comply with the impending decision for years and are making plans to move.

By John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The building that’s stood as a landmark in South Slocan for nearly a century is coming to the end of its days.

“The last few years, several communities have had a variety of developments occurring, with new resources and requests for local land use regulations,” she wrote.

While many parts of Area D would not benefit from zoning due to their density, Watson said other areas would.

So she asked the RDCK to conduct an engagement process with Area D residents in 2021.

“This process will begin with community discussion on Zoning 101: what is it? How does it work? What does it do and do not?,” she says. “Within these discussions, I hope to be able to identify which communities are interested in moving forward to develop zoning and those that are not. Only those communities who show a strong interest will be engaged in the discussions.”

Kootenay Lake brochure

RDCK staff reviewing how development takes place along the freshwater shoreline.

The Lake will be burning an educational brochure from a similar group in the Okanagan.

The brochure will be adapted for Kootenay Lake, thanks to $3,500 approved by the board to hire a Qualified Environmental Professional and the same graphic designer who created the Okanagan brochure.

“The costs savings that will be made from the Okanagan resource as a template provide a significant opportunity to create a high-quality education document at a fraction of what it would normally cost,” staff said.

COVID help

Like other local governments, the RDCK will get help from the federal and provincial governments to weather the financial storm created by the pandemic.

The RDCK will get $760,000 under the COVID-19 Safe Restart Grant for Local Governments.

Caribou coalition

The board received notes from a November 2 meeting held to investigate the formation of a local government resolution coalition in the Kootenay-Columbia-Shuswap.

“Based on the voluntary nature of this project, changes to the funding formula of the Program to hire seasonal resource specialists for seasonal outreach and education; protect critical local infrastructure like RDCK fire halls and community water systems; help with the setup of Indigenous communities; and offer a rebate for homeowners to complete FireSmart work on their properties,” says a staff report.

Anti-racism policy

The RDCK board has adopted an anti-racism policy and action plan.

“This policy applies to all employees, elected officials, contractors, volunteers, and students working or volunteering for the RDCK or providing professional services to it. While citizens aren’t covered by the policy, “the public is responsible for themselves in a manner consistent with the values and principles outlined in this policy when accessing RDCK services or facilities.”

In-house construction crew

Critical work on failing water pipes in RDCK-owned water systems will soon be the job of an in-house construction crew.

The board approved the hiring of a three-person crew, as well as the purchase of excavators, service trucks, safety equipment and other smaller items that will allow the crew to do their work.

The RDCK will borrow $355,000 to purchase the equipment.

A full-time supervisor will be hired in February at a salary of $40,000.

Zoning for Area D?

Area D Director Aimee Watson reported to the board that zoning may be coming to some areas in the future.

“In the last few years, several communities have had a variety of developments occurring, with new resources and requests for local land use regulations,” she wrote.

By John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

“Almost everyone I have spoken to feel strong ties to the building,” he says.

Walter Popoff was also given the gavel. Area H Director Joe Chirico, the general manager of community development for the RDCK, noted from a November 2 meeting held to investigate the formation of a local government resolution coalition in the Kootenay-Columbia-Shuswap.

“The purpose of the coalition would be to better deal with senior governments on caribou management and other similar topics. One of the organizers, Milt Hamilton, said there has been interest and steps to build a caribou coalition in Kootenay since 2018. Hamilton suggested that in the short-term, a coalition would deal with Herd Plans and other issues. What is a viable population? How much habitat should be protected for what population and habitat working or volunteering for the RDCK or providing professional services to it. While citizens aren’t covered by the policy, “the public is responsible for themselves in a manner consistent with the values and principles outlined in this policy when accessing RDCK services or facilities.”

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Nakusp council, November 23: Second Nakusp pot shop approved

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Nakusp Village Hall and the Public Works offices are closed to public walk-in traffic under the new COVID-19 orders issued by Provincial Health Officer Bonnie Henry. The public is asked to call ahead if you need to speak with Village staff, as all meetings are by appointment only. Masks will be required in all public and common areas in municipal offices as long as the health order is in effect, which is currently until December 7.

Zoning decisions

• A developer’s plan to tweak the zoning of a property at 88 Nelson Avenue across from the Leland breezed through a public hearing and approvals. The developer wants to build a multi-story building over five lots, with professional offices at street level and strata townhouses above.

“The new owners are applying to rezone their property to allow for the operation of a doctor or dentist practice within the commercial space of a newly constructed building,” explained a staff report.

However, to do that, the zoning had to be changed from Lakeshore Development (LD-1) to Core Commercial (C1).

No one spoke against the zoning change, and councillors approved it without comment. Mayor Tom Zelznik, who’s related to the developer, declared a conflict and did not participate in the discussion or vote.

• It was a significantly more robust debate over approving a second cannabis store in downtown Nakusp than the first go-around. Fresh Cannabis, a company out of Revelstoke, wants to open a retail cannabis shop at 201 Broadway, but needed to apply for a zoning change to allow for site-specific use. The Village received five written submissions on the issue, and three people attended the virtual meeting to voice their opposition.

“I was told that’s not where Nakusp wanted to be, allowing more franchises to come into town,” said Colin Hanet, owner of Mount Odin Cannabis. He just opened Nakusp’s first pot store a few months ago, and said new competition when he was just getting established would “impact me very negatively.”

“We’re local, we’re keeping everything local, we’re trying to get as many BC growers into the business as we can. We try to give back to the community, that’s our goal,” he said, adding he was submitting a petition signed by 187 people showing opposition to the second retail shop.

Other intervenors cited health and safety concerns, and questioned the need for more than one cannabis shop in town.

Two council members agreed. Councillor Ken Miller and Mayor Zelznik voted against the proposal. But it was Councillor Joseph Hughes’ argument that won the day.

“This isn’t a simple decision, it’s very challenging,” he said. “But as a small community, we need to support a little bit of diversity in options… sometimes the market needs to decide what we have the capacity for.”

The zoning amendment passed, and Fresh Cannabis will be the first company out of the gate under the Village’s revised bylaw that allows more than one cannabis retail shop. A third potential company, which has applied for zoning to set up a retail outlet on the highway near the golf course, has tabled its proposal while it gathers more information for council.

Well tender accepted

The project to build a third well for the Village water supply has taken another step. Council approved a proposal from WSA Engineering to do the project design, tendering and management of the project for $53,020.

Hot springs revenues cooled by COVID

The new COVID restrictions implemented November 19 have also put a damper on the revenues from the municipally owned hot springs. The facility is being closed to non-residents, at least until December 7, the term of the current orders from Dr. Bonnie Henry. The hot springs chalets will also be closed for the duration.

The new restrictions are going to impact what was turning out as a decent year for the facility. After the shutdown earlier in the season, revenues bounced back along with the strong summer tourist season. Even with the limits set by the pandemic, the facility was showing a profit of $35,700 for the first 10 months. That’s now evaporated.

“Our hope will be to end around ‘net-zero’ for the year, which is still a possibility” said the Village’s financial officer, Mark Tennant. “Which I think would be a success for the year, all things considered.”

Arrow Lakes food security consultations adjust to new COVID rules

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Plans to hold a series of community meetings on food security in the Arrow Lakes region have been put on hold due to the new restrictions handed down by the provincial health officer in mid-November.

The Old Firehall Collective was planning to hold meetings in Nakusp, Fauquier and Burton late in the month to talk about food security.

“We wanted to go to the grassroots, and talk to people about their food security situation,” says Rosemary Hughes, a member of the collective. “We have 51 children accessing the Nakusp Food Bank. That’s a lot.”

The collective’s events had to be postponed after Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry announced new restrictions to try to stem the growth of COVID-19 cases in the province. Those restrictions included canceling any community events for at least two weeks.

“We’ll have to see what she says on December 7, and decide from there,” says Hughes, referring to the end date of the current list of restrictions. The collective will meet to decide alternative paths to consulting with the community, including possible online surveys and virtual meetings.

Huges says their new plans will be announced in local media and online.

The project has received $25,000 from the Union of BC Municipalities, and $6,000 from Interior Health to do the consultations.

Huges says the project began out of concern about food security for residents of the Arrow Lakes region, and a desire to enhance Nakusp’s role in an agricultural production hub for the area.
Gravel pit proposed for south entrance of Kaslo by Jan McMurray

Brenton Industries owner Sean Brenton has applied for a permit to operate a gravel pit on part of his property at the south entrance to Kaslo. He hopes to have a public forum as soon as regulated public meetings resume, to answer questions and address community concerns about the application, and is working with the mines inspector on the logistics of a public process during a pandemic. He assured that the forum will be advertised.

“I recognize and understand why residents and community members would have a concern around it,” Brenton said in an interview. “When people think gravel pit, they think big, loud, dust and danger. I don’t believe (noise) will be the drone of a diesel engine and the sound of heavy iron, but no squealing of chains or engines. I can’t see any other significant noise.”

Brenton has applied to mine 38,000 cubic metres of gravel from the site, after having the surveying done to determine how much material is there. He estimates he’ll need 5,000 cubic metres for his development project, leaving 33,000 cubic metres to sell. The processing plant that will come for a week or a month would produce about 3,000 cubic metres of material, he said. Brenton guessed it would take 10-25 years to exhaust the gravel pit, but it could be shorter if there were a big project that needed a lot of material. “It would depend on the demand,” he said.

Brenton’s application says his hours of operation will be Monday to Friday from 7 am to 5 pm. “For that reason I will only operate one week at a time, and we would have the noise of the processing, and the rest of the year, it would fall silent again,” said Brenton. He said the noise would be the drone of a diesel engine and the sound of heavy iron, but no squealing or squeaking. There is also a quieter alternative to the backup beepers on loaders, he says.

Brenton also has a Dust Management Plan, as required in the application process. “I’ll try not to do work in the dustiest time of year, but if I must, I’ll use water to help with dust suppression and I’ll be controlling theスピード at 40 km/h,” he said.

Brenton also wants to move the gravel pit and the development of the land. “As an excavation for his development plans complement his development of the land,” Brenton guessed it would take 10-25 years to exhaust the gravel pit, but it could be shorter if there were a big project that needed a lot of material. “It would depend on the demand,” he said.

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Kaslo Hospital Auxiliary endures despite COVID restrictions submitted

Despite the forced closure of the Kaslo Auxiliary Society’s thrift store, the organization has worked to move forward in 2020.

“Our mandate includes ‘to support the life-long health and well-being of our community,’ as well as many funds over the year, that has also been problematic,” the society says in a release. “Due to COVID-19 we had to close our thrift store, our main fundraiser, and we are now in the process of improving the inside to comply with the new health guidelines.”

Many groups have contributed time, money or energy to the thrift store renovation project, including the Columbia Basin Trust, the Osprey Community Foundation, and the Kaslo Community Foundation and the North Kootenay Lake Society.

“The council of the Village of Kaslo has also been very supportive. The thrift store now has sewer and water connection,” the society says. “And thank you to all the volunteers, so many wonderful people who donated their time in getting the thrift store ready for these improvements. Their hard work and initiative has been inspiring.”
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There has been a bridge over broken dreams
And a rainbow made from all our tears.
(From ‘Common’)

Love you, love you, love you constantly.

December 3, 2020
The Valley Voice

Silverton curling rink needs your support submitted

The Slocan Lake Arena Society needs your help to keep the lights on – and the ice in – at the Silverton community facility.

“We were unable to proceed with the FUNdraising activities that routinely take place during the year,” says a release from the society. “We are asking for your assistance to raise the approximately $8,000 necessary to operate the current facility.”

The largest expense is the electricity required to keep the ice surface optimal.

“Volunteers have worked hard for generations to ensure that families from Hills to Enterprise Creek have a safe location to learn this extremely Canadian skill,” the society adds.

Cheques – consider them a gift to the next generation – can be made to the Slocan Lake Arena Society, Box 445, New Denver, V0G 1S0.

Tax receipts can be issued for amounts of $20 or more. Contact Carol Pengally at 250-358-2717.

IN MEMORIAM
IN LOVING MEMORY
Matthew George
August 20, 1960 – December 7, 2003

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IN LOVING MEMORY
Matthew George
August 20, 1960 – December 7, 2003

There has been a bridge over broken dreams
And a rainbow made from all our tears.
(From ‘Common’)

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The Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) board has approved a service agreement between the RDCK and the City of Nelson for bylaw enforcement to monitor the Nelson & District Community Complex (NDCC) parking lot. Effective December 1, 2020, the NDCC lot will be a two-hour parking zone, from 9 am to 5 pm, and enforced by the City of Nelson. Violators will be subject to ticketing and/or potential towing. The agreement was reached after in-depth research was conducted to monitor, evaluate and consider options to address the negative impact of unauthorized parking at the NDCC parking lot. Parking capacity has been an ongoing challenge for residents in the area attempting to access services at the NDCC due to non-enforcement. The goal is to create more parking opportunities for NDCC users, while supporting an effective approach to parking enforcement that is consistent with other areas throughout the City of Nelson.

Bylaw enforcement will begin with an education program during the month of December. Vehicles will be monitored by enforcement officers and warnings for failing to comply will be issued to ensure the ongoing challenge for residents is provided with adequate time to adjust to the changes.

“We do not want to ticket our community members; however, we need to create accessible options for our diverse community to park within reach of the facility to allow access for those with mobility issues, large equipment and young children to reach us safely,” said Marty Benson, Manager of Recreation, NDCC. “We have heard from our community members how important this issue is for everyone. We encourage everyone to work together with us to support appropriate parking lot usage.”

For more information on the new parking regulations or any questions you might have, contact Jodi Vousden, Assistant Manager of Recreation at jovusden@rdck.bc.ca or 250-354-4383 ext. 5129.

New parking regulations for the Nelson & District Community Complex

Stories about Bosun Hall and Donation Store wanted

Silverton resident and LACE board member Carol Bell is working on a book about the Bosun Hall and the Donation Store, and is asking people to submit their stories. “Compelling stories and memories about both locations have been shared for many years,” she says. “For over 100 years, the Bosun Hall has played an influential part in the lives of many people.” Performers, community groups, weddings and movies “have imbued the Bosun Hall with community spirit,” she says, and more recently, the Donation Store has become part of that community spirit. The Donation Store is a source of operational funding for the hall.

Those with stories to share are asked to send them to Box 68, Silverton, BC V0G 2B0 or to carollbellbc@gmail.com. Stories should be under 1,000 words and can be accompanied by photos. The deadline is January 30.
### Revelstoke COVID cluster a reminder for locals

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

While COVID-19 case numbers remain relatively low in the Arrow Lakes and Revelstoke region, a community cluster in Revelstoke in late November demonstrated how quickly that situation can change.

On November 25, officials with Interior Health reported that 29 people in the mountain town were diagnosed with COVID-19 – and they are bracing for more.

“Cases at this time have an average age in the low 30s,” said a release from IH. “Additional cases are not unexpected as the public health investigation continues.”

Overall numbers are creeping up in the Interior Health Region, which goes from the Alberta border to Kalamloops and Kelowna to Revelstoke to the north, Salmo in the south of the region also had a community cluster in November. That was last estimated at 24 cases about two weeks ago.

On November 30, the Province reported 212 new cases over the weekend for Interior Health, for a total of more than 490 cases that are active and in isolation.

Fifteen people are in Interior Health hospitals, and five are in intensive care – more than double in a week. Since the start of the outbreak, there have been 1,750 cases in the health region, and three deaths.

Across the province, there were 8,355 active cases reported as of the weekend. More than 460 people died in hospital as of this time period.

The cluster and rising numbers across the region demonstrate why the Province’s new restrictions are in place and continue to reinforce the view of Health Minister Adrian Dix said late last month.

“We don’t associate COVID-19 up to now with Revelstoke, but you seeing that,” he said in a recent town hall. “And what that tells us is that it’s everywhere, and in every community, and that’s why some of the orders that were regional orders a couple weeks ago are provincial orders.”

### Community

### BC’s Site C Dam: Where do we go from here?

by Moe Lyons

“I have always thought it was going to be Mother Earth who was going to stop this project.” This from Judith Sayers, board member of Change Our Climate and co-founder of the Nux-ch`a-nulth Tribal Council, and one of four panelists on a November 26 webinar sponsored by The Narwhal magazine. The other panelists were West Moberly First Nations Chief Roland Willson, former BC Hydro president and CEO Marc Eliesen, and Sarah Cox, the magazine’s award-winning BC reporter and author of Breaching the Peace. The webinar was titled, “BC’s Site C Dam: Where do we go from here?”

All the panelists agree the project should be stopped, and should never have gone ahead in the first place. Where they go from here, they all agree, is away from this project. What we should do is ramp up the pressure on government to recognize this fact. “I don’t know if British Columbia is going to be brave enough to make this decision,” Sayers says. “I think we need to help him get there.”

The panelists are alarmed that the independent watchdog, the BC Utilities Commission (BUC), which presented numerous questions and concerns about the project, has been, as Cox says, “completely rebuffed” in favour of an upcoming report by Peter Milbour, a policy analyst and economist hand-picked by government. Cox is particularly critical of this choice, saying Milbour “doesn’t have the technical background or expertise to investigate Site C’s problems, nor does he have the time needed to do so.” She states, “The government is looking for ways to continue the project, not to cancel it.” The panelists wonder if the report will even be made public.

Cox has encountered endless problems in reporting on this project. She says she has never encountered such secrecy on any project. One alarming fact she found is that Hydro has given out millions of dollars of “direct award contracts,” meaning no bidding ever took place.

“People are taking the actions they need to, and that is extremely gratifying,” Chief Public Health Officer Bonnie Henry said last Monday.

Roland Willson and the West Moberly First Nations have tried to go the legal route to stop the dam, to no avail. They still have a civil suit in place even in rural areas, Health

### Robert William Robins

December 3rd, 1945 – November 17th, 2020

Nakusp, B.C.

We are deeply saddened by the loss of Robert (Bob) Robins. He passed away November 17th, 2020, peacefully in his home with his family by his side, after a long battle with cancer.

Bob was born in Nakusp, B.C. to Olive and William Robins. At a young age he moved to East Arrow Park with his family. In his early twenties he bought a home in Burton where he raised his family and lived for over 50 years. He took pride in his land, animals and raising his children on his beautiful property. Bob was an active member of the Burton community, most notably helping to build the new Bug Old Timers Ball team.

Bob enjoyed riding quads, fishing, hunting, ball and horses. Bob was very active with the Burton Old Timers ball team, where he played first base. This gave him so much joy and it is where he gained many long-lasting friendships. His children started adventuring as a child, he would never go anywhere without his Imagine Horse. He spent most of his adult life training, breeding, and loving his horses.

As is common in the Arrow Lakes, Bob’s life-long career was in the logging industry. In his early teens he began logging with his father Bill. His logging and machinery careers were extensive, eventually he owned his own logging truck, which he took great pride in.

Bob esuded strength, determination, confidence and compassion. A man who was strong with large but gentle hands and loving arms, protected everyone around him. He was a gentle heart never afraid to say he cares. Adored by his children, grandchildren and respected by many.

Bob is Survived by his children; Wade Robins (Dorothy), Darren Robins (Junnell), Nadine Robins (Steven Craig), Lorraine Robins (Gary August), Grandchildren; Cody, Colby, Morgan, Kyler, Mackenzie, and Kieran; Siblings; Bernard Robins (June), Janis Dahlen (Dan Freeman), Kenny Robins (Lorette), Patti Lythgoe, Karen Spavor (John), Brenda Scott (Jody).

Bob is also survived by many nieces, nephews, and great nieces and great nephews.

He was predeceased by his son; Jonathan Robins, father; William Robins, and mother; Olive Robins.

He will be sadly missed by many life long friends and co-workers of the logging industry.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

His family would like to extend a special thank you to the Arrow Lakes Hospital staff, Ambulance Attendants, Home Nursing staff and Royal Canadian Legion for their support and kindness. Thank you to Valley Funeral Home for handling the arrangements with care and compassion.

It is comforting to have the support of so many in our small community of Nakusp during this difficult time.
Slocan Community Healthcare Auxiliary Society celebrates 110 years

Lahner said the auxiliary is grateful for the continued support from local businesses, the community at large, private and public funders, and all who make their accomplishments possible. Anyone interested in joining the auxiliary or helping out in any way is encouraged to contact Lahner at 358-2653.

The Valley Voice December 3, 2020

The Slocan Community Health Centre Auxiliary receives congratulations on its 110th anniversary from the BC Association of Healthcare Auxiliaries.