The good news is there’s a vaccine for the coronavirus, and it’s in the province. But health officials are cautioning it won’t likely be in most people’s arms in this region for several months yet.

Earlier this month, the Province outlined its plans to roll out the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, which were approved by Health Canada at the end of last year to combat the coronavirus. And while essential health workers and the most vulnerable are receiving shots now (about 60,000 doses have been delivered), the rollout to the general population will take some time yet.

As of January 3, 24,700 doses of the Pfizer vaccine had been distributed in the province, and 1,600 of the Moderna vaccine. Six hundred and thirty-nine doses of the Moderna version were sent to Interior Health, which includes the West Kootenay.

Officials say the speed of the rollout depends on just how much vaccine is delivered to them over the coming months.

“The deliveries will continue to arrive on a routine basis and speed up over time,” says an official with Interior Health. “The most important thing of note to share is that vaccine is arriving, and will continue to arrive, to vaccinate the phase one priority populations. After that, eligibility expands to the next groups and so forth.”

When you get the shots (two injections are needed for both vaccines) depends on where you fall in the priority list. Right now, the groups targeted for the first round of vaccines are: residents/staff of long-term care and assisted living residences; individuals in hospital or community assessed individuals who are awaiting a long-term care placement; essential visitors in long-term care and assisted living facilities; healthcare workers providing front-line hospital care in ICUs, medical/surgical units, emergency departments, paramedics; remote/isolated First Nation communities.

The priority populations will get the first dose of the vaccine by late January, and get their second dose about 35 days later, says Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry. "It's constrained by logistics and how many vaccines we are receiving," she said.

Again however, officials caution that they won’t know the exact number of doses available for rollout until three to four weeks ahead of delivery from the National Operations Committee overseeing countrywide distribution.

As for where and when you go to get the shots in your community, and how you’ll be notified, that is still being worked out. The logistics for storage and delivery of the vaccine is underway now.

You’ll get word on distribution here in the Valley Voice and other media. In the meantime, Henry says its important people not let their guard down.

“This virus doesn’t know that we haven’t seen our friends in months. It doesn’t know that it’s our grandmother’s birthday,” she said last week. “This is our riskiest time right now. We cannot let our guard down as vaccination is just beginning. This is our winter, but we know spring will come.”
Local villages top list for increased property values

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Three local communities had some of the highest increases in property values in the province last year.

BC Assessment has released its annual list of assessed property values as of July 2020. That assessment is used to help determine the amount of taxes a homeowner will pay in 2021.

Most regions saw up to a 10% increase in property assessments last year, the government department says. However, Slocan, Nakusp and Kaslo saw higher-than-average property value increases in 2020, and several other West Kootenay communities weren’t far behind.

The Village of Slocan saw one of the highest increases in the province, at 19%, with the value of the average home rising from $165,000 to $196,000.

Kaslo saw a 16% increase, from $237,000 to $275,000, while Kaslo saw a 12% increase, from $209,000 to $290,000.

“The majority of Kootenay Columbia homeowners can expect a moderate increase in their 2021 assessments compared to last year,” says Deputy Assessor Sharyll Hill.

“Some of the smaller communities have experienced higher demand than previous years and that is reflected in this year’s assessments.”

Silverton and New Denver also saw increases, 10% and 9% respectively.

For comparison, the City of Nelson saw a 7% increase, with the average price of a home there assessed at $504,000.

A higher assessment doesn’t automatically mean higher taxes for the homeowner. That will depend on the tax rates set by local governments later this year, and how an individual’s property increases compares to the average. If your assessed value stayed the same, and your local government doesn’t increase taxes, a homeowner will see no change.

“It is important to understand that increases in property assessments do not automatically translate into a corresponding increase in property taxes,” explains Hill. “As noted on your Assessment Notice, how your assessment changes relative to the average change in your community is what may affect your property taxes.”

BC Assessment collects, monitors and analyzes property data throughout the year. Earlier this month, it mailed out assessments to 150,000 properties throughout the Kootenay Columbia region.

Overall, Kootenay Columbia’s total assessments increased from about $46.6 billion in 2020 to almost $49.8 billion this year. A total of about $488 million of the region’s total assessments increased from new assessments to 150,000 properties.

“The purpose of the agreement is to make clear the understanding that the RDCK will work to remove the property before it tumbles down to the water.”

The agreement was revealed in the minutes of the December RDCK board meeting.

“For example, if the RDCK is not able to remove the house due to safety concerns, and it falls down the bank and impacts the river, the RDCK will not be held liable.”

With the legal technicalities settled, the regional government and homeowners can begin work on demolishing the home and removing its materials. The couple faces a complete loss on what was to be their retirement home, and couldn’t afford to have it removed themselves.

While it’s a private building on private property, Johnsons says the RDCK has a duty to ensure the building doesn’t create an environmental hazard.

“All local authorities within BC are legislated to operate and maintain an emergency management program to manage and coordinate responses to emergencies within their political boundaries,” he told the Valley Voice.

“In this case, the emergency is an imminent threat of a deleterious substance entering a waterway. “Within our role in managing the emergency, our goal is to remove the hazard (the house) before it has a negative impact on the environment (the river and its ecosystem).”

It’s not known how much it will cost to remove the building from the property, as it’s still not even clear it will be safe to have work crews on the site. But Johnson says he hopes crews will be able to take down the house before spring runoff intensifies.

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It’s not known how much it will cost to remove the building from the region’s updated assessments is from new construction, subdivisions and rezoning of properties.

Homeowners who don’t agree with their assessment have a window of opportunity to challenge the BC Assessment finding.

“Property owners…who feel that their property assessment does not reflect market value, may file an assessment complaint with the Property Assessment Review Panel.”

The Property Assessment Review Panels, independent of BC Assessment, are appointed annually by the provincial government, and typically meet between February 1 and March 15 to hear formal complaints.

Agreement reached to help couple remove home in slide zone

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

A Slocan Valley couple is going to get help to remove their abandoned home from their property perched high above the Little Slocan River.

Scott Carlson and Christa Brakman’s house is in danger of sliding into the river as erosion eats away at the property.

The couple hasn’t lived in the building since the spring, and have moved to Castlegar to be closer to family.

But the house still remains a danger, and in November RDCK officials settled with the couple on a deal to help them get the building off the property before it tumbles down to the water.

“The agreement was revealed in the minutes of the December RDCK board meeting.”

“From this data, a safe work distance will be determined, then a viable method of removal identified, and finally, an overall cost underwritten.”

Johnson says their first priority is the health and safety of the crews who’ll be asked to work on the site. If qualified professionals determine that the instability of the slope makes it unsafe for removal of the structure, ‘we’ll have to look at other options,’ he says.

Three New Denver area residents arrested in early January

by Jan McMurray

The Valley Voice

January 14, 2021

On January 4, police raided a downtown New Denver business in the 800 block of Kildare Street, and report they seized a quantity of contraband tobacco as well as homegrown cannabis plants under both the Controlled Drug and Substances Act and the Cannabis Act. According to a RCMP press release, police found indications of trafficking of controlled substances from the business, as well.

The business owners were released from police custody pending further investigation.

On January 6, police executed a search warrant at a residence in the 8400 block of Red Mountain Road and report they seized about 1,200 marijuana plants in various stages of growth, as well as about 12 pounds of dried marijuana bud.

A 47-year-old man was arrested at the scene, and police say they will be recommending charges against him.
Possible Bigfoot sighting shocks, excites Silverton residents

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

‘Twas the night of Christmas And through the West Koot Not a creature was sighted Except maybe Bigfoot

At least, that’s how the famous poem could go after a group of travellers spotted what they say might have been a Bigfoot – also known as a Sasquatch – near Silverton on Christmas night.

The four friends were heading to their home on Hwy 6 just south of Silverton on the evening of December 25 when the people in the front of the vehicle saw what looked like a “huge, man-like figure” on the side of the road.

“I didn’t see the creature myself, I saw the prints,” says Erica Spink-D’Souza, who was in the back seat. She’s become the informal spokesperson for her companions. “But the person on the front seat cried ‘Oh my gosh look at that!’”

“They said it looked like a huge grizzly, or it was a large man, standing up.”

But before Spink-D’Souza could catch a glimpse, the figure turned, went on all fours, and headed deep into the bush.

“We tried to turn around and look again but it was gone,” she says.

After arriving home and putting her kids to bed, they returned to the scene to look for signs of the mysterious creature.

“We saw all these different tracks, and then we saw these tracks that were really alarming,” she recalls. “They were bipedal tracks in a straight line into the woods… “I got a little spooked, it was alarming to see such big prints. But there were no bear tracks.”

Spink-D’Souza and the others examined and photographed the tracks, and then she filed a report with a Bigfoot organization online.

‘Un-hoax-able’

The prints are “un-hoax-able” the Bigfoot Field Research Group, Matt Moneymaker (who also co-hosted a long-running Animal Planet TV show called Finding Bigfoot), described the tracks as “un-‘hoax-able.”

“The surrounding pristine snow proved the tracks were not fabricated by humans,” he says. “The stride length is beyond the ability of a human trying to leap through knee-deep snow. The drag marks and depth of the tracks prove they are not from a leaping rabbit. The linear pattern shows that it wasn’t a bear.”

Moneymaker also says it’s unlikely someone was trying to hoax random travellers on an empty stretch of road on Christmas night.

Spink-D’Souza, who just recently moved to the area, says she’s never had something like this happen to her before – though she’s heard weird animal sounds howling in the bush around her new home.

She says locals she’s spoken to have generally accepted her claim. “Well, it’s the Kootenays,” she says, laughing. “I tell them what happened, and they start telling me their Bigfoot stories.”

“People were saying ‘oh, that’s The Wanderer, there’s a Sasquatch who wanders around here,’” she says. “It sounds like around here people are pretty open to the possibility there is one.”

Investigators arrive

The sighting was strong enough that members of an Okanagan Bigfoot group returned to the location about 10 days after the sighting.

But after investigating the scene and examining the tracks carefully, the team put a damper on the excitement.

“They suspect the tracks are from a very large moose,” says Moneymaker, who’s based in California. “The witnesses may have seen a large female moose facing forward and mistook it for a man-like figure.”

But since nearly two weeks had passed since the initial sighting, Moneymaker says there’s still room to believe.

“It’s up in the air,” he says. “In most cases I can usually say it’s a large moose, but since nearly two weeks had passed since the initial sighting, there are witnesses who said they did not see a moose.”

Moneymaker says he’d love someone with a drone to fly along the trail of the purported tracks to see where they lead.

Ancient hominid?

There are witnesses who said they did not see a moose.

Sasquatches are thought by some to be present in the West Kootenay. Paranormal researchers believe it could be a lost subspecies of hominid, like the extinct Gigantopithecus, a large ape-like creature whose remains have been found in southeast Asia. However, no convincing physical evidence has ever been found to support these claims.

For Spink-D’Souza, the incident has left her with a larger sense of the magic of the world.

“It leaves me with a sense of awe and wonderment on all the beautiful mysteries of this world,” she says, noting Indigenous cultures recognize the existence of the Sasquatch.

“In terms of looking for evidence, in concrete ways, that’s fine, but I do hold a respect that there are people around who know of the existence of Sasquatch and that’s marvellous.”

If you see a Sasquatch, you’re invited to contact the Bigfoot Field Research Organization through their website.

VILLAGE OF NEW DENVER
PUBLIC NOTICES

2021 UTILITY BILLINGS

Invoices for 2021 water and garbage charges have been mailed to protect our environment. Payments can be made in person at the Village Office (cash, cheque or debit) or through Kootenay Savings Credit Union’s online banking.

Please note that a 5% penalty will be applied to all amounts that have not been paid by February 15th, 2021. An additional 5% penalty will be applied to all amounts that remain unpaid at October 1st, 2021.

DOG LICENCE RENEWAL REMINDER

Dog owners in the Village of New Denver are reminded that all dogs residing in the Village of New Denver are required to have a current dog licence, which can be obtained from the Village Office. In accordance with the Village of New Denver’s Animal Control Bylaw, there is a $15.00 reduction in the licence fees, if the licence for the current year is purchased prior to January 31st or within 30 days of the date that the owner first comes into possession of the dog.

BUSINESS LICENCES

A current Business Licence is required for all commercial undertakings of any kind within the Village of New Denver, including home-based businesses, professional, personal or other services for the purpose of gain or profit. In addition there is the Inter-Community Business License (ICBL). ICBL allows eligible businesses to operate across participating communities without having to obtain a separate business licence for each community. For more information or to obtain a business licence, please contact the Village Office.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Village of New Denver is currently accepting applications for a part-time janitorial position. For more information, please contact the Village Office.

CENTENNIAL PARK PLANNING

You are invited to help shape the future of Centennial Park. The Village is undertaking a comprehensive process to develop a new Master Plan for Centennial Park. Public input will help inform the design and master planning process moving forward. As a first step in the public engagement process, we are asking you to provide feedback through a short survey. Visit our website for the link or pick-up a paper copy at the Village Office. Your participation is highly valued!

2021 BUDGET NOTICE

The Council of the Village of New Denver invites public consultation in the preparation of the Village’s 2021 Five Year Financial Plan. Council welcomes public input from residents of the Village with regards to items they would like to see addressed in the budget.

To ensure Council’s consideration please submit your comments to the Village of New Denver Municipal Office no later than Sunday, January 31, 2021.

3NEWS
Perplexed

I’m having trouble understanding how people know, like and respect are demanding freedom to not wear a mask because they think the COVID-19 pandemic is a hoax of some kind. I’ve yet to see a credible source explaining how this can be. What I’ve seen so far comes from Rebel Media – a source I don’t trust and a doctor who is a climate change denier.

We’ve known for years that a pandemic was likely. We’ve also seen that countries that have taken strong measures have been able to greatly reduce the spread, while those who don’t see a lot of deaths.

It’s not as though I trust government. Corporate capture is a thing, as evidenced by the subsidization of the oil and gas industry, continuation of fish farms despite the scientific evidence that it’s killing wild salmon, not to mention the barbaric clearcutting of BC’s forests.

But I believe that when there’s a sincerity of purpose, we have a responsibility to wear a mask, social distance, etc.

I’m honestly perplexed, and hope someone will edify me.

Diana van Eek Winlaw

Reality prescription needed

Through no enabling of their own, retail staff, front-line workers and some who work in the service industry, because of certain government policy, have unwittingly become unpaid law enforcement officers. Their jobs have had and at times difficult responsibilities added to an already stressful workplace. The workers I have any contact with in our small village are dedicated, personable, efficient, and go about their duties as before. Anyone who would go out of their way to question or abuse these workers should be ashamed of themselves. Perhaps they would look in the mirror and ask themselves: “Would I enjoy being treated that way?” More likely than the answer would be no. Along with rights comes responsibility as your fellow human, to do no harm. Hurting epithept and abuse at workers for following basic rules designed to protect themselves as well as customers is cowardly, despicable and shameful behaviour. Those deniers of facts, those who believe that there is a worldwide conspiracy of mind control, need a prescription of reality. All they have to do is look at statistics. This is real. Stay down at the shallow end of the gene pool but don’t expect me to join you.

To quote from Albert Einstein, “Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I’m not so sure about the former.”

Jim Van Horn

Kaslo

Open letter to Kaslo council

I have been making my rounds and talking to my fellow merchants and taxpayers on Front Street. August long weekend of 2020 was quite prosperous for all of us. There was no Jazz Fest, but the hotel, motel, B&Bs and the campground were full.

We all had a good business weekend, and we did not have to deal with a drugged-out group of drunk beating their bongo drums at 3 am and disturbing the sleep of villagers and hotel guests. We did not have our woods and trails overflowing with unwashed and unkempt campers who mostly left their trash for others to pick up. Villagers did not have to clean up their yards from trash and worse when the festival ended.

I for one, and after speaking with many of my fellow employers and taxpayers in Kaslo, would rather never see another Jazz Fest darken our village. The message I would have for the council is that the Village should never again sell itself cheap for a festival that has little or no benefit for the taxpayers and residents of the village. As a business person, I would say the starting point would be a minimum fee of $100,000 to be used to reduce, on a pro-rata basis, the taxes of all the property owners in the village. I would prefer no Jazz Fest. But if there is one, it should be shut down at 9 pm – no more 11 pm to midnight noise – and the residents of the village should benefit, not be inconvenienced and dumped on.

John Eckland

Kaslo

Hope for the heart

I was very sad to read Carolyn Parker’s letter (VV, December 17) in which she chose to interpret my letter (VV, December 3) to mean that I cared not for the unfortunate heart attack victim at Empire Coffee and that I viewed splitting upon another person as an appropriate response in a dispute. It’s easy to see why many are afraid to speak up right now for fear of being thus vilified.

We are living in extremely divisive times. Many are afraid of a virus and infrations of ordinances aimed to halt its spread while others are concerned about eroding fascism and the erasure of civil rights and freedoms. How do we heal this division? Certainly not by splitting, not by name-calling, nor by false characterization. In her 2006 book, Unplugging the Patriarchy, Lucia Renee proposes that our past several thousand years of history is a time characterized by power and as such pertains to the solar plexus chakra. She says that in order to learn about power, we have needed to experience the abuse of power. Hence we have seen the rise of slavery, imperialism, and more recently corporate capitalism and the academic military industrial complex. Renee believes that the only way we will transition out of our current era is by moving into our feeling centre; the next epoch, she believes, will be ruled by the heart chakra.

I do very much care for the woman that suffered the heart attack, as I care about the hearts of everyone in our beautiful West Kootenays and all around the world. My greatest wish for this time is that we can continue to debate issues logically while trying our best to remember that the most important thing in life is unconditional love and compassion towards each other.

Catherine McGrath

The Valley Voice

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The Valley Voice

EDITORIAL / LETTERS POLICY

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

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

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

We will not publish anonymous letters or letters signed with pseudonyms, except in extraordinary circumstances.

We reserve the right to reject any submitted material.

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The Valley Voice

The Valley Voice

The Valley Voice

The Valley Voice

The Valley Voice
Forestry

Sorry I'm a little behind the times, but I would like to congratulate Philip Pedini on his brilliant letter regarding the Kootenay Forest Management

Loggers near Kaslo. He said a lot in a short letter. Well done. I also noticed, in the same issue, an article about Katrina Conroy's new job as commissioner of our own MFL in charge of such an important portfolio. In the past, the NDP has been reluctant to stop the loss of old-growth trees. I am sure Ms. Conroy is intent on doing what is best for the people she represents. Stopping log exports and the logging of the last remnants of old-growth is a good place to start. I also think she should restate the condition that logs should have to be milled in the same area where they are cut. Getting rid of that condition was one of the worst things Gordon Campbell ever did. Clearly, the people who suffer the consequences of having their forest logged should reap the benefits of the milling jobs. Good luck, Katrina.

Rod Retzlaff

Glade

Bites and pieces

When you have to take your car or truck in for warranty service, read your service manual first to see what is required and ask your dealer or mechanic what they are going to do. Also, you do not have to take it to your dealer for service work – it just has to be done by a certified mechanic to validate the warranty.

Have you ever taken your vehicle into a shop to have your winter or summer tires changed and they tell you your brake pads are worn out and need to be changed? Thank them and get a second opinion. There are some tire shops and garages that are less than ethical and do things like changing your coolant under false pretenses. If you suspect that something serious is happening? As to why are we still on lockdown, it is because it has been shown that slowing down the virus' spread and hence the death rate. For example, in the US where there is reluctance to impose lockdowns, the COVID fatality rate per million population (1088) is more than two and a half times higher than in Canada (420). In case she missed it, when the hospital case is large, the case of COVID is spiking and there is a good chance the healthcare system will be overwhelmed in parts of the country. That is why we are still on lockdown.

We are doing very well in the Kootenays regarding COVID – so far. That is because most have been abiding byadies, staying in our bubbles, not travelling, wearing masks in public indoor venues, etc. Amos 3:7 says “surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto His servants the prophets.” So, in Isaiah 7:14 it was told a virgin would conceive and bear a son, and call his name Immanuel. In Matthew 1:21-25 an angel told Joseph the same news. InMicah 5:2 it was told that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. In Matthew 2:4-6 the Scribes and Priests also knew that King Herod that Christ would be born in Bethlehem. In Luke 2:11-16 an angel was sent to shepherds to tell them the saviour's birth in Bethlehem. So here we have prophets, prophesying in the Old Testament and it being fulfilled in detail in the New Testament.

So again, we have prophets telling of His second coming and signs around this event, so all may watch and be warned. In Matthew 24:21-22 it talks about a great tribulation (Dark Ages). Again, in Matthew 24:29 the signs after the great tribulation and before His coming on our world. The sun would be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. In Revelation 12:13 it gives an additional sign of great earthquake. These signs we are told, would happen after the great tribulation but both second coming. All these events happened in consecutive order. The first of these beacons of warning was the great Lisbon earthquake in 1755 which shook a huge land mass with tidal wave and many lives were lost. The next sign was the dark day of May 19, 1761, whether one notice but the warning of the Prophet; Joel 2:31. “The sun shall be turned into darkness and moon into blood, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.” The next sign was the falling of the stars November 13, 1833. History records these events, but because of the signs of the last days is pestilence. To me and I believe and to the world, COVID-19 was a wake-up call that it is no longer business as usual. I believe this world still has lots of beauty with many good and honest people. But God sees the suffering of humanity, and God's heart of love years for His children.

This pandemic is a worldwide problem and there have been many speculations and conspiracy as to how COVID-19 evolved. It doesn't matter where the virus came from, God is still in control.

It shows us all how quickly things can change. One cannot deny there has been a huge decline in morals even in our own lifetime. There have been wars, earthquakes and plagues over the ages. So, what is different now?

So, we see in our world one calamity and disaster following hard on the heels of another. The intensity is overwhelming. It is different now like 1 Thess 3:5 says that trouble comes on the earth like woman goes into labour the contractions and pains get harder and closer together. I think of the fire that moved through Paradise, California, and thousands of lives lost. It is known through so fast one would not have been able to outrun it had they been in the middle of it.

All these signs point to a soon-coming end of the old and locking down. God talks about some of the signs and why these things happen. God is long suffering towards us, not willing that any should perish, and would have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

Nature's laws always work. Take the law of gravity for instance. One soon learns to respect it at a very early age and we show a high regard for it. God's word is like that. What He says comes to pass and it is sure. We can trust it. Therefore, in John 14:23 Christ tells us “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself.”

Psalm 91 is full of encouragement during this pandemic.

May God Bless.

Rocky Isbell

Nakusp

Lemon Creek

Unto you a saviour and COVID-19

Many are looking for answers as to what is going on in our world. The purpose of this article is to show how God's word came true in the past for his first coming, and we can place our confidence that it will come true again.

Before Jesus came as a baby, it was prophesied in the Old Testament and was fulfilled in the New Testament. We are in harmony with each other. In fact, before God does something great or that involves man's salvation, He sends warning.

Amos 3:7 says “surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto His servants the prophets.” So, in Isaiah 7:14 it was told a virgin would conceive and bear a son, and call his name Immanuel. In Matthew 1:21-25 an angel told Joseph the same news. In Micah 5:2 it was told that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. In Matthew 2:4-6 the Scribes and Priests also knew that King Herod that Christ would be born in Bethlehem. In Luke 2:11-15, 16 an angel was sent to shepherds to tell them the saviour's birth in Bethlehem. So here we have prophets, prophesying in the Old Testament and it being fulfilled in detail in the New Testament.

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So, we see in our world one calamity and disaster following hard on the heels of another. The intensity is overwhelming. It is different now like 1 Thess 3:5 says that trouble comes on the earth like woman goes into labour the contractions and pains get harder and closer together. I think of the fire that moved through Paradise, California, and thousands of lives lost. It is known through so fast one would not have been able to outrun it had they been in the middle of it.

All these signs point to a soon-coming end of the old and locking down. God talks about some of the signs and why these things happen. God is long suffering towards us, not willing that any should perish, and would have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

Nature's laws always work. Take the law of gravity for instance. One soon learns to respect it at a very early age and we show a high regard for it. God's word is like that. What He says comes to pass and it is sure. We can trust it. Therefore, in John 14:23 Christ tells us “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself.”

Psalm 91 is full of encouragement during this pandemic.

May God Bless.

Rocky Isbell

Nakusp

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LETTERS

Flying Blind report concerning

A letter in your previous edition quoted a report entitled ‘Flying Blind,’ by the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms (JCCF), as a ‘MUSTREAD for all Canadians.’

The report was quoted as saying: ‘The risks posed by COVID-19 have been overestimated and mischaracterized; speculation and exaggerated estimates have been used to justify the lockdown policy.’

I wondered why an organization with such a fine-sounding name would say such a thing, because Canada’s (and BC’s) restrictions are clearly based on hard data. I downloaded the report, and it seemed to be much the same misinformation and conspiracy theory that we are all familiar with by now, only dressed up in legal-sounding language. There is no space in this letter to address all the omitted context and anti-lockdown bias I saw, but I will cite just a few elements.

‘Flying Blind’ claims that COVID-19 is “harmless for roughly 90% of the population.” Harmless? 1) Look up “long COVID-19” on the internet. There’s a witch’s brew of symptoms that can last months to years after infection. 2) ‘Flying Blind’ claims that COVID-19 is “harmless for roughly 90% of the population.” Harmless? 10% of the population that can be harmed by COVID-19 based on the “elderly and infirm.” Specifically, it claims that “COVID-19 poses virtually no risk to children, young adults and almost every adult under age 60.” Actually, the Health Canada website today shows that 29.7% of patients hospitalized with COVID are under 60 years old.

The JCCF is a non-profit law firm that has filed lawsuits in Alberta and Manitoba claiming that COVID-19 restrictions ordered by health authorities violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; it plans to expand this to other provinces, including BC. So far it appears the courts have not ruled on the main lawsuits, but the JCCF has applied for injunctions against the provincial orders, and two judges ruled against them.

A group called North 99 has done corporate research on the JCCF, its funders and the kind of lawsuits it has filed. On the internet, they cite links to numerous right-wing funding sources and think tanks, with endorsements that include the Fraser Institute, which is widely known for its anti-redistribution views. I know far too little to draw conclusions about the JCCF’s funding and lawsuits, but ‘Flying Blind’ does increase my concern that some of the health-related misinformation about COVID-19 may be motivated by interests with economic objectives.

When the same businesses that openly express concern about their financial survival, that’s totally valid, and forces us all to weigh the values of the economy versus public health. But very big money pursuing one objective under the disguise of another is a different thing altogether.

In either case, when it comes to my health, I’ll believe doctors, not a law firm or corporation or store owner.

Anne Sherrod
New Denver

The Valley Voice January 14, 2021

The Corporation of the Village of Slocan 2021 Council Meeting Schedule

Council meetings will be held on the second Monday of each month, unless otherwise listed below:

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Time to get in touch with COVID reality

In the December 17 Valley Voice a letter from Bill White asks: ‘Why has Sweden kept their borders open? What difference has it made? Sweden is now among the countries with the lowest rates of mortality.’

The letter argued that BC’s COVID restrictions are unnecessary because Sweden didn’t use them. Sweden has been held up by anti-mask people as a paragon of successful reliance on ‘herd immunity.’

Ironically, on the exact same day that letter appeared in the Valley Voice, news articles all over the internet featured the King of Sweden denouncing his own country’s COVID-19 policies. Photographs show a clearly furious King Gustaf. Headlines read, ‘King of Sweden blasts country’s ‘failed’ coronavirus response’ (The Guardian); ‘Sweden’s King: …we have failed with light-touch COVID-19 policy response’ (Huffington Post).

These same articles reported that Sweden was tightening its restrictions. Permissible group sizes were cut from 300 to 8, and there are now new rules requiring face masks for outdoor activities. Permissible group sizes were cut from 300 to 8, and there are now new rules requiring face masks for outdoor activities.

In summary, instead of enjoying the ‘herd immunity’ that Swedish citizens had been told would work, Sweden encountered a second wave of COVID-19 with skyrocketing deaths (over 200 a day). Hospitals have announced that they are so overwhelmed with COVID cases that they have had to postpone other health care, including cancelling non-emergency operations. This week, Swedish parliament passed emergency legislation allowing stringent national lockdown precautions.

The second wave began in autumn. Sweden’s average daily cases rose 173% between September 2 and October 6; in Stockholm, its major city, they rose 40% in the same period. By the end of September, Sweden’s daily new cases were in the mid-hundreds; they started increasing through October, and through November and December, daily new cases were at least several thousand – most days between 5,000 and 10,000 daily new cases. With this, there has been a corresponding spike in daily deaths, ranging from 50-100 deaths per day. As I write, the total cases are at 489,471; total deaths at 9,433 with 7,138 new infections on this date. (Worldometers, January 8)

Sweden’s initially non-binding precautionary measures led to what is today a death rate of 914 deaths per million population. Norway and Denmark, with their strict COVID measures, had death rates of 86 and 258 respectively, per million population.

The news of Sweden’s disastrous surge in COVID-19 has been widely published in news outlets on the internet. Surely people would want to check out the current situation in Sweden before telling us all that BC should be following Sweden’s example? It is not too much to ask that the varied anti-mask demographics writing to the public through the Valley Voice check out factual sources, not rely on what the conspiracy sites and anti-COVID belief echo chambers keep repeating, which which also ignore the irrebuttable facts.

With two full page paid messages plus some letters to the editor, I’ve yet set a personal record for reading through anti-COVID belief echo chambers保持 reader interest.

We, the taxpayers and ratepayers of BC, are building a dam which never should have been built (Site C), not there and not now. Years ago, Site C was thought unsafe, and Site E (near the Alberta border) was the site of choice. The dam is being built on land that is either wind or solar, so demand for power infrastructure being built in Asia near the Site C dam. Much of the new infrastructure being built in Asia is waiting for the leader brave enough to make the move. Once that happens, the other leaders of the world will join in. It’s just hard to be first.

Right now, here in BC, the situation is such that one would think that plain old common sense would have been running up a huge liability. The current government is subsidizing oil and gas to the tune of $800 million a year, up 79% from the Liberals, who loved gas development. At the same time, there are 770 abandoned gas wells – leaking methane, we think. Don’t know because there is no monitoring. Why aren’t we using those wells to get clean, non-handful and endangering urgings and claims? This subject is not about differences of opinion. The ongoing consequences of this virus has cut into the lives everywhere as well as causing intense suffering and protracted impacts in the health of many persons who seem to have recovered. This same week, the US had 260,973 new infections and 4,100 deaths in 24 hours. In California, intensive care unit beds are at zero; hospitals are blast country’s ‘failed’ coronavirus response, and virtual learning in high schools. While masks are not mandatory except in hospitals and public transportation, Swedish citizens are now urged to use them.

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Richard Camiell Silverton

Open letter to Premier Horgan

The pandemic will end, as pandemics do, with or without a magic bullet. What won’t end are the huge methane emissions from BC unless the government decides to do something to stop them. Climate change has been acknowledged (‘Clean BC’) but it’s just lip service, about the same as the cynical passage of UNDRIP last year.

The governments of Canada have long been caressed by lobbyists from the resource industries, especially gas and oil, and the point at which politicians believe the only way forward is to double down on extraction.

If climate change and global warming are “the greatest challenge of our time,” a foolish person might think it fine to continue damming and fracking. In fact, it leads to a horrible future where humanity hunkers down in concrete shelters while nature shows us just how good we used to have it.

It’s ironic that while world leaders are pretending to do something other than stoke the fires, a huge opportunity is waiting for the leader brave enough to make the move. Once that happens, the other leaders of the world will join in. It’s just hard to be first.

We, the taxpayers and ratepayers of BC, are building a dam which never should have been built (Site C), not there and not now. Years ago, Site C was thought unsafe, and Site E (near the Alberta border) was the site of choice. The dam is being built on land that is either wind or solar, so demand for power infrastructure being built in Asia near the Site C dam. Much of the new infrastructure being built in Asia is waiting for the leader brave enough to make the move. Once that happens, the other leaders of the world will join in. It’s just hard to be first.

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Nakusp council, December 14: ALR exclusion applications cause water concerns

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Land for industry

Some residents of Nakusp came to the Village council meeting in December to express concern about a proposed light industrial development on a bench above their homes. Village council is applying to the Agricultural Land Commission to take two lots on Hot Springs Road out of the ALR for use by local businesses.

The exclusion would “permit the creation of locally value-added light industry and/or possible expansion to the airport to allow additional amenities for the community,” the Village says.

It’s part of Nakusp’s long-term strategy to provide more land for job-creating business in town.

But the public hearing on the plan to remove #1315 and #2115 Hot Springs Road raised some concerns about protecting water users downstream.

“Anybody on 15th Avenue is well, all of us,” said one intervenor, Bernie Ryan. “And I’m no expert... but I would at least like to state my concern about the water supply, and any contamination that’s above it, and hopefully that would be addressed in licences and stuff that go with it.”

But Ryan emphasized his concern was not with the plan, but how vague the term ‘light industrial’ was.

“Again, I’m not saying no, [because] we need more space, etc. etc. But I would hate to see my only water supply, and any contamination that’s above it, and hopefully that would be addressed in licences and stuff that go with it.”

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- Flannel mens & Ladies shirts starting at $39.99-$69.99
- Mens reflective safety jackets $99.99

Kudos to decorators

Mayor Tom Zeleznik praised the work done by volunteers to prep the village’s downtown core for Christmas. The Society for Nakusp Community Events held its December light-up event earlier in the month, after volunteers spent hours adding lights and decorations to local trees, roofs and lamposts.

“Broadway was lit up beautifully and could be seen from outer space!” joked the mayor. “The village has now a new emergency airplane runway when required to land at night.”
You can be the community garden in New Denver

submitted

Things are moving right along on the community garden front in New Denver. Close to 20 plots have been spoken for, and the Gardening Committee of the Healthy Community Society of the North Slocan Valley (HCS) wants to make sure everyone interested gets a chance to join in on the fun. Read the ad in this paper for an update on their progress.

To get in on having a plot or becoming otherwise involved, write to healthycommunitysociety@gmail.com or drop a line to Healthy Community Society, Box 98, New Denver, BC V0G 1S0. All residents of the area are welcome to participate. If you’re wondering if you would be able to do it, or concerned you might not know how, important components of the community garden project are assistance and mentorship so persons of all ages and abilities can participate and benefit.

Gardening Committee members are excited about working on this project, and are determining what to use the community garden something everyone here will feel they own and will want to show off to their friends. They are reaching out to various community groups to support other food-related initiatives and to strengthen food resiliency in this area.

HCS and the Village of New Denver are in constant communication, working out agreements about the use of Village-owned land. The next step is to obtain the necessary funding. Fortuitously, the Columbia Basin Trust has developed a new Food Access and Recovery funding stream specifically directed to community-based initiatives. The top priority of the community garden project appears to be a perfect fit.

The eager community garden crew has been working as fast as they can to pull together all the information needed, including planning and site design, site prep, fencing, labour, soil, seed, tools and amendments, management, legal arrangements, support letters, budgeting, volunteer recruitment and coordination, active participants, and amendments. The crew has also been working out agreements about the use of Village-owned land.

The more people sign up in advance the better, as of course community buy-in is absolutely key. Not only will community support help avoid funding gaps, but also, the public support for a project like this can only be successful if the community gets behind it.

Eventually, expect permaculture areas, fully accessible growing stations, a community kitchen, cultural awareness programs, and workshops on topics such as growing edible flowers, how to make the most of what you have, and using your garden produce in gourmet cooking.

Work will start this spring, and some crops should be growing this year. Once the groundwork has been laid, the kinks ironed out, and even more people jump on board, the sky’s the limit.

Green Burial group in New Denver still soliciting donations

submitted

Carpenter Creek Last Wishes Society (CCLWS) wants to be clear it is involved in ongoing fundraising for the Green Burial project, but contributions are both needed and greatly appreciated. However, arrangements the society made to issue tax receipts have fallen through.

The Green Burial group in New Denver is a perfect fit. The eager community garden crew has been working as fast as they can to pull together all the information needed, including planning and site design, site prep, fence, labour, soil, seed, tools and amendments, management, legal arrangements, support letters, budgeting, volunteer recruitment and coordination, active participants, and amendments.

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Western toad mural by Debra Rushfeldt to be installed in Nakusp this spring

by Jan McMurray

Downtown Nakusp will be adorned with another piece of public art this spring when Debra Rushfeldt’s mural of a western toad is installed on the artist’s studio building at 206 Broadway, facing Jill and Hoss’s Bistro.

“My intention is to bring awareness to the western toad as a well-loved resident of the Basin, by painting a semi-realistic, high-intricacy image of an adult western toad in a natural setting with loving detail,” Rushfeldt said in an interview. “I felt this location, which is still on the main street of Nakusp, would provide an intimate and garden-like setting for my toad painting – and my first mural.”

Rushfeldt became interested in the western toad in 2018, while she was searching for a new subject to draw with a connection to the West Kootenay. Her photographer friend, Gail McMartin, provided her with source photos to work from. “I loved the detail I saw in their skin and eyes, so I began a series of watercolours in 2019. As I continued in 2020 to do more explorations of toads in watercolour and pencil drawings, I realized that I was moved to paint the toad as I believe they see themselves – as wise and dignified creatures, full of beauty and magic. I also discovered there is a rich native history of toad and frog symbology, which added another level of interest for me, in particular the association with the power of transformation, cleansing, harmony and new life. While I was working, I became inspired by the idea of taking this tiny and somewhat overlooked creature and scaling it up to a mural size.”

Rushfeldt says she was very excited to be awarded the funding for her mural idea, and she wanted to share this excitement with the community of Nakusp by getting everyone involved in choosing the design. So she produced three finished paintings she felt would all be appropriate for the mural, and asked for feedback in an online survey.

“I was curious to see if one design would turn out to be the most popular, and if so, I would choose this design over the other two,” she explained. “I was somewhat astonished to find out that after almost 400 responses, two of the designs had 80% of the votes and were equal in their popularity, so as the artist I made the executive decision to paint the design of my choice. I chose ‘Western Toad on the Forest Floor’ because I feel this design speaks more about the unique interior rainforest of Nakusp, and allows the toad, who is the main star of the painting, to rest serenely in his own habitat.”

The mural will be painted with acrylic paint on five 5’ x 10’ aluminum composite panels. Rushfeldt will be starting the prep work this week in the small side room in Prima Materia Gallery, and will continue with the painting over the winter. Those interested may view her progress during store hours. The mural will be ready to install by May or June 2021.

The project was facilitated through the Arrow Lakes Arts Council, which retains ownership of the mural, and is funded by CBT Public Art Grant Program, NACFOR, Art Party, RDCK, and Chris Johnston and Associates.
Santa’s epic run raises money for homeless youth

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Bigfoot wasn’t the only magical being spotted in the Slocan Valley over the Christmas season (see story, Page 3). Residents living along the Slocan Valley Rail Trail might have spotted Santa himself jogging up the valley in the days before the holiday.

But in that case, it was a very real apparition.

“The Slocan is such a beautiful area, the scenery on the way up – you can paint a picture – it’s just such a beautiful landscape,” says Umberto, who ran most of the length of the valley wearing a Santa suit. “A lot of cars were honking, it was great to raise awareness. I love all the great support we got on the way.”

Soda ran more than 160 kilometres in 12 days preceding Christmas, running several marathons’ worth of distance in stages, and visiting communities from Kaslo to Castlegar to Fruitvale. It was part of a ‘Santa on the Run’ fundraiser. Soda was raising money for Covenant House, a homeless shelter for youth in Vancouver. A former coastal resident, Soda found the organization reflected his own life experience.

“My whole mission – as a youth I had a path of drugs, alcohol and crime – my purpose is to help prevent youth from going down that wrong path. That’s why I do this. And we heard a lot of great things about Covenant House,” he says. “We thought they were a great organization.”

Soda raised over $1,000 for the shelter during his runs. His goal, however, is $25,000, and he vows to continue his run to raise money for the charity in the new year. Any donations to the cause will be matched by two celebrities – Deadpool actor Ryan Reynolds, and Gossip Girl star Blake Lively.

Continuing to run won’t be a problem for Soda… he’s working to qualify as an Olympic runner. And next year, he may do the run as The Grinch.

If you’d like to contribute to the cause, visit www.santaontherun.com.

It’s granting season at the Slocan Valley Community Legacy Society. The application form, guidelines, criteria and contact information are now available on the website www.slocanvalleylegacy.com. The application deadline is March 19, 2021.

Call for applications to the Slocan Valley Legacy Fund

It pays to advertise in

The Valley Voice

January 14, 2021

American army in 1965 and served until 1969. He rose to the rank of second lieutenant and you could always spy his old uniform in the closet of his hand-built house. Mike held a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Washington and a Master’s degree in industrial design from San Jose University in California. He was a professional teacher and taught for many years as the wood shop teacher at the high school in Slocan.

After leaving the army, Mike joined many of the American hippies on their exodus to Canada, settling into a commune just south of Slocan. Mike remembered these times as “pretty crazy,” but when the commune split up, he kept a beautiful portion of the land adjoining the Slocan River. You could often find Mike and his friends at “Mike’s Beach” where swimming and horseshoe games were the order of the day. As Mike would say, “Now everybody stop talking and look at the sunset.”

Mike was a proud member of the local Masonic Temple for many decades, an outdoor enthusiast and lover of nature. He will be remembered for his kindness to dogs, kittens and children. He is survived by his “baby sister,” Patty who resides in the family home in Seattle. A debt of gratitude for his kindness to dogs, kittens and children. He is survived by his “baby sister,” Patty who resides in the family home in Seattle. A debt of gratitude to dogs, kittens and children.

Covenant House, a homeless shelter in Vancouver.

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Soda ran more than 160 kilometres in 12 days preceding Christmas, running several marathons’ worth of distance in stages, and visiting communities from Kaslo to Castlegar to Fruitvale. It was part of a ‘Santa on the Run’ fundraiser. Soda was raising money for Covenant House, a homeless shelter for youth in Vancouver. A former coastal resident, Soda found the organization reflected his own life experience.

“My whole mission – as a youth I had a path of drugs, alcohol and crime – my purpose is to help prevent youth from going down that wrong path. That’s why I do this. And we heard a lot of great things about Covenant House,” he says. “We thought they were a great organization.”

Soda raised over $1,000 for the shelter during his runs. His goal, however, is $25,000, and he vows to continue his run to raise money for the charity in the new year. Any donations to the cause will be matched by two celebrities – Deadpool actor Ryan Reynolds, and Gossip Girl star Blake Lively.

Continuing to run won’t be a problem for Soda… he’s working to qualify as an Olympic runner. And next year, he may do the run as The Grinch.

If you’d like to contribute to the cause, visit www.santaontherun.com.
Beyond Disability: A Family’s Quest for Ordinary by New Denver author submitted

As part of the 121st annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count, Lardeau’s 24th CBC took place on December 27. Thirty enthusiastic participants submitted 38 species on count day – on par with the average of 36 – and an additional six species during the count week.

Not all the birds recognized were new. The American goldeneye, which has been regular during Lardeau’s CBCs, was again spotted. The Audubon CBC is known for generating a clear picture of the health of particular populations. When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, Audubon CBC data provide a picture of how the continent’s bird populations have changed in time and space over the past 12 decades. The long-term perspective is vital for conservationists. It informs strategies to protect birds and their habitat, and helps identify environmental issues with implications for people as well.

Audubon CBC data are also used to measure how birds are already responding to climate change. By tracking how bird ranges have moved over time, conservation efforts can be prioritized in areas that are important for birds today and in a climate-altered future. With two-thirds of North American bird species at increasing risk of extinction by the end of this century, Audubon CBC data is more important than ever for effective conservation.

The impacts of the pandemic have been far reaching – just ask anybody touched by disability, personally or indirectly. New Denver’s newest author, Susan Dunnigan, knows first-hand how societal attitudes, low expectations and assumptions weigh down its devalued citizens. As a social worker, she worked for decades with marginalized populations. Yet it was parenting a son with developmental disabilities that significantly deepened Dunnigan’s knowledge base, cultivated advocacy skills and strengthened her convictions.

Dunnigan’s book “Warrior Angel, Beyond Disability: A Family’s Quest for Ordinary” is filled with stories that intimately portray family realities with a member who society labels disabled. Rather than accepting less than ordinary opportunities for her son, she and husband, Neil went against the grain. They actively fostered capacity, connections and contribution – the pathway to an everyday life. Dunnigan acknowledges that it’s easy to bask in the spotlight of inclusion when things are going well. Yet when life takes a nosedive, that warm light can turn hot with judgement. Dunnigan’s book “Warrior Angel, Beyond Disability: A Family’s Quest for Ordinary” is filled with stories that intimately portray family realities with a member who society labels disabled. Rather than accepting less than ordinary opportunities for her son, she and husband, Neil went against the grain. They actively fostered capacity, connections and contribution – the pathway to an everyday life. Dunnigan acknowledges that it’s easy to bask in the spotlight of inclusion when things are going well. Yet when life takes a nosedive, that warm light can turn hot with judgement. Dunnigan embarked on sharing her family’s truths in an unfiltered, yet sensitive memoir. Retirement in New Denver was the key to completing her book. The book pulls back the veil of disability, exposing the breadth of one family’s challenging, unpredictable and rewarding experience. Without pulling punches, Dunnigan candidly speaks to unconditional love, risks, advocacy and personal responsibility – all components that fueled this arduous journey. While the stories are uniquely the author’s, themes of vulnerability, fallibility, self-determination and resilience are universal.

“Warrior Angel” is available at Raven’s Nest in New Denver, Meritex in Nakusp and Otter Books in Nelson – or, you can contact the author directly at susan.dunnigan@gmail.com.

The Village rescued the marina in 2020 when the aging structure began falling apart. Mayor Tom Zeleznik found the money needed to replace the western breakwater, ensuring it would be operational for at least another 20 years.

The Village of Nakusp may soon be getting into the marina business.

The Village’s Chief Administrative Officer Cheryl Martens wrote in a report to council on January 11. “… We are going to explore our options regarding how to take on the workload, but it will likely be a combination of Village staff and contract work. The administrative work should be easily transitioned to the Village office staff.”

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“Winter maintenance was recently completed on the marina and it should not require anything further until April/May,” the CAO’s report says.

Martens says the Village will incur additional expenses relating to maintenance and repairs but will also receive additional revenue of approximately $30,000.

“We will likely keep rates close to where they are at now for the upcoming year while we evaluate the costs of operating the marina,” Martens wrote.

The CAO said maintenance work will likely be contracted out, but the Village may consider hiring staff after they have a better idea of the equipment, training and other costs.

Council was expected to receive the report for information at last Monday’s council meeting.

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Slocan council, December 14: Garbage and water rates increased

by Barbara Curry Mulcahy

• The amendments to the zoning and OCP bylaws, the hot topic at this meeting, are discussed in a separate article.

• A Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw was adopted, allowing for a $10 increase in garbage collection fees, a 4% increase in water rates, and an increase in water disconnections/reconnection fees. The Village’s 5-year Financial Plan (2020-2024) Amendment Bylaw was also passed and adopted. The financial plan was amended to include the $1.5 million purchase of the mill site and plans for how the Village will pay for the purchase.

• Because cardboard from businesses is not accepted at the Slocan recycling depot under the new Recycle BC system, Slocan businesses must now drive to New Denver or Crescent Valley to recycle their cardboard. “A 90-kilometre trip doesn’t make any sense,” said Councillor Joel Pelletier. Council agreed to ask RDCK staff to meet with businesses in Slocan, and to contact Ron LeBlanc, Slocan Valley Economic Development Coordinator, to assist with this issue. The Village will also send a letter to the RDCK, in response to the RDCK’s letter to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy in which the RDCK asks that the new recycling system accommodate small businesses.

• Council gave permission to the Slocan Valley Heritage Trail Society to mount wooden nesting bowls for barn swallows on the outer walls of the gazebo. The trail society said the project to net off the rafters inside the barn swallows on the outer walls of the gazebo should resume in the spring. The Village will contact Trails BC to ask when the work will resume and when and adopt the new nesting sites.

• During public participation, council was asked why the new rail trail parking lot at the west end of Delaney Avenue was barricaded and why the trailhead project was unfinished. Mayor Jessica Lunn said this was a provincial project and was on hold over the winter. Work on the berms and landscaping should resume in the spring. The Village will contact Trail BC to ask when the work will resume and when the parking lot will open.

• At Councilor Ezra Buller’s suggestion, council agreed to send a letter of congratulations to MLA Katrine Conroy on her new appointment as Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development. Buller said it was “interesting and kind of cool” that she was the first female in that position.

• The Columbia Basin Trust has approved a $5,000 Small Environment Grant for an invasive species inventory and an education awareness project in the village.

• A letter from Councilor Madeleine Perriere announcing her one-month leave of absence was noted. Perriere was absent during this meeting and will also miss the January 14 council meeting.

• Among items received but not discussed was information from the Columbia Basin Trust that it had adopted the new nesting sites.

Winlaw woman fined for organizing Castlegar rally

by Jan McMurray

The Winlaw woman who organized the Kootenay Freedom Rally in Castlegar on December 21 was issued a $2,300 fine for violating the COVID-19 Related Measures Act (CRMA). The Kootenay Freedom group reports that they will dispute the fine.

“Many police officers across Canada are questioning the reasoning behind the public health orders and are choosing to uphold constitutional laws by refusing to fine peaceful demonstrators,” the spokesperson said. “They have been publicly speaking out and are being censured by their employers and mainstream media; however, this officer has personally chosen to do the opposite.”

The Kootenay Freedom spokesperson said RCMP members are required to respect the law and the rights of individuals under the RCMP Code of Conduct. “This includes respecting and upholding all rights which are guaranteed under the Canadian Charter. He [Castlegar RCMP officer who issued the fine] has shattered community trust by choosing to violate the RCMP code of conduct and the people’s constitutional rights by serving a ticket. As a result, we are considering legal options in holding him personally accountable.”

Kootenay Freedom is planning another rally in Nelson on January 23. “People who care about freedom will peacefully assemble on January 23 at noon at the Nelson City Hall in support of human rights, medical freedom and for replacing those who have made arrangements to correspond with Nelson City Police and hope officers follow conscience and uphold their oaths and Charter rights as they have respectfully done in the past.”

The spokesperson explained that because Kootenay Freedom members have been physically threatened, they prefer to do media interviews by email, and for responses to be attributed to the group or to a spokesperson for the group.

Citing “bullying and hypocrisy,” Castlegar mayor resigns

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Residents of Castlegar will be going to the polls later this winter after the sudden resignation of the city’s mayor.

Bruno Tassone announced he was stepping down as of January 6, saying he had become fed up with “bullying, harassment and bullying behaviour along with outright disrespect” since taking office in October 2017. “It is with a heavy heart that I move on because I have come to understand that the work this community needs to do to create systemic and lasting change is far greater than my body and mind can do,” he wrote in his resignation letter. He also blamed “bullying and hypocrisy within the media” for prompting his actions.

Tassone was criticized soon after taking office when he went to a national municipal conference in Quebec City, but was accused of publishing an article about Slocan’s waterfront in its 2020 Trust magazine and on its website.

“The meeting was held electronically due to COVID-19 rules. Mayor Lunn closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. She said, “These are challenging times” and said the Village would be open to changes in the electronic participation “to make sure we are as accessible as possible.”

VILLAGE OF NEW DENVER - CENTENNIAL PARK MASTER PLAN

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Want to help shape the future of Centennial Park in New Denver? The Village of New Denver, supported by a collaborative consulting team, is undertaking a comprehensive process to develop a new Master Plan for Centennial Park. Public input will help to inform the design and master planning process moving forward. As a first step in the public engagement process, we are asking you to provide feedback in a short survey. Your participation is highly valued!

Hardcopy Survey: Paper copies of the Community Survey are available at the Village Office 115 Slocan Ave, New Denver, BC V0G 1S0

Online Survey: The Online Community Survey is available at the Village of New Denver website (www.newdenver.ca).

When: The Community Survey will run from Thursday, January 14, 2021 to Thursday, February 4, 2021

There will be future opportunities for the public to view proposed design options and provide feedback.

Questions? Contact the Village of New Denver. Email: office@newdenver.ca. Phone: 250-358-2316.
Many of the trees are spindly, when I walked a trail near trees. Sheltering in and around those crowns. You could sense the could see the flexible, sturdy root rot; last year’s deep snow snapped off the tops of healthy firs. As I looked, I felt my heart turning away from these diseased, scrawny specimens. I found myself bemoaning the sickly forest.

Then something inside me said, “Who are you to judge?”

It came to me, as soon as that voice spoke, that these trees, too, were holding their post. They provide what shelter they can for birds and small animals. They spend their days breathing in and out so that others can breathe. They attempt to stand both flexible and steadfast. Within the limitations of the place in which they find themselves, with diseases in the soil, and fire and logging and drought, with invasive species borne on the boots of walkers like me, they live out their purpose as best they can.

It’s easy to think that healthy and prominent trees — be they human or arboREAL — will save us. Such giants are critical, of course. But individuals alone will not save us. In evolution, change comes through collective magnitudes, not outliers. There is a post for everyone. Everyone is needed.

Some of us might be rooted in thin soil or lack underground water sources. We might be slammed by economic and political issues over which we are powerless. We might struggle with the same diseases that infect the community around us.

I just want to say, our effort still counts. It is critical to hold the post we have been given, regardless of how slender that post might feel. Even if we’re saplings barely holding on, the work that we do to stand steadfast, to support the community to which we belong, to breathe in and breathe out: it counts.

## Winter Write-Off, 2021

If you’re in danger of losing your edge, your mind, or your sense of humour this winter, why not try finding it again in the Winter Write-Off? Winners will receive gift certificates to local businesses—plus the adulation that follows when friends and neighbours see your piece printed in *The Valley Voice*!

Part One of the competition begins today, January 14th, and ends on January 27th at midnight. There are two categories which you may enter: classical haiku and haiku-like tomfoolery.

Classical haiku is a distinctly Japanese form of poetry, usually evoking a season with vivid word pictures in three non-rhyming lines. While Western teaching has often constrained English haiku to a 5-7-5 syllabic count, Japanese haiku are more nuanced. Spring going—/birds crying and tears/in the eyes of fish. (Basho) There is often a “turn” in the piece, a surprise, which invites the reader to see more deeply. Winter seclusion—/Listening, that evening/To the rain in the mountain. (Kobayashi Issa)

The second category will be haiku-like tomfoolery. Using a 5-7-5 syllabic count in three lines (or something close), contestants are invited to write about any subject that catches their fancy. We’re hoping that you’ll surprise us with your inventiveness!

Dark dense wet forest/Rotted roots let go, trees fall—/Call BC Hydro.

To enter the Winter Write-Off, submit your entry electronically at https://widespots.ca/event/winter-write-off-2021-part-one/, or via snail mail to Box 452, New Denver, BC VOG 1B0. All entries will be rendered anonymous prior to judging.

## Entries Are Due on Wednesday, January 27th. Winners Will Be Announced on the February 11th Valley Voice.

The Winter Write-Off is sponsored by Convergence Writers’ Weekend, Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance, the Columbia Basin Trust, and Wide Spot (a project of Turner Zion United Church of Canada).
Late season start frustrating for community ski hill

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Above-normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation is proving a frustrating combination for the operators of the Summit Ski Hill.

“I won’t talk to you unless you promise to pray for snow,” joked Mike Webster, the vice-president of the Nakusp Ski Club Association, which operates the hill at Summit Lake, east of the village.

Though the opening day always varies at the community hill, the last few years have seen skiers on the slopes during the Christmas holidays. But unseasonably warm temperatures (see story, this page) has kept the hill closed to date.

That’s been frustrating, Webster says.

“What are you going to do? We had a record number of early-bird sales this year,” he says. Instead, the hill is losing out on a “critical” revenue period.

“It’s very important, especially considering we missed the Christmas break and being open over the holidays,” he says. “It’s an important time of year for our revenue.”

The hill hopes to open by this week, says Webster, and they’re checking the snowpack regularly to ensure it’s safe.

However, Webster said it’s looking unlikely that the regular school trips to the hill will start until later this month. That important revenue source has also been complicated by the need to ensure COVID safety rules can be enforced.

Still, Webster remains hopeful.

“We’re getting set up, we’ve done quite a bit of grooming, the snow’s there but there’s not a lot of depth to it,” he says. “But we’re doing what we can with what we have. And as soon as we can, we’ll open.”

Spring conditions

While it’s been an exercise in frustration for downhill enthusiasts, it’s a different story for cross-country skiers in the valley.

“The conditions are cold and hard, it’s sort of spring-like,” says Kip Drobish, the president of the Valhalla Hills Nordic Ski Club. “Spring conditions mean it’s been through a freeze-thaw cycle. It’s not powder snow.

“That’s not the depth we’ve had the last few years, but everything is groomed and nice and skiable.”

His group has maintained about eight kilometres of track at Summit Lake for about four years. He says people are coming out to take advantage of the sport’s benefits.

Board amends hiring process policy to hear more voices

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The board was asked to consider changing its hiring policies at a special meeting in December in order to allow more flexibility in the selection process for a new superintendent. The former superintendent announced last month she was retiring at the end of the school year.

The school is currently seeking the job vacancy filled “in a timely manner,” the board passed the Notice of Motion on amendments to its Recruitment and Selection of Exempt Staff Policy on December 17.

“There are very few people who are qualified to take up the position of superintendent, so moving on this in a timely manner is a very good thing for the board to consider so they can look at it in a timely way,” Superintendent Taylor said after the board approved reviewing the policy.

“It’s around timing. Given that my retirement is almost complete. If the numbers are positive, however, it might not take much more time after that to get a sawmill operating.”

“Sawmilling was not a specific advantage of NACFOR — we were more concerned with building a viable and strong entity,” he says. “Now that there is some strength, it is possible to look around at other opportunities, especially ones that build on things that we are already doing.”

The committee’s exploratory work is likely to take at least a year to complete. If the numbers are positive, however, it might not take much more time after that to get a sawmill operating.

“Both could go hand-in-hand,” he says. “We’re up from 88 members from last year, we have 113 members at this time. Our kids’ program is as big as it’s ever been” says Drobish. “It’s gone up every year as people learn about the trail. That’s because it’s exciting, fun, and beautiful, and it’s a nice area.”

The good conditions are important for the club, which is looking to expand and improve the trail and their capacity to groom and maintain it.

Rail trail well groomed

The longest track in the area is also in great shape.

“We’ve been able to track from Slocan Park right to Slocan Lake,” says Helene Dostaler, the chair of the Slocan Valley Heritage Trail Society.

Conditions can vary wildly on the trail, with skiing starting some years as early as November, she says. This year it’s been late in coming, and the weather mixed, but enough of a base has developed to allow grooming to take place.

“It’s a going concern now, especially if you go north of Slocan Park,” she says.

Dostaler says there’s been one small benefit for non-skiing users of the trail. This year it’s been clearing the trail in Crescent Valley, allowing walkers to enjoy the paved portion of the 60-kilometre track.
Progress on service improvements to Kootenay Lake Ferry

submitted

People travelling Hwy 3A/ Hwy 31 will see tree clearing and other construction activity near the Balfour and Kootenay Ferry terminals this winter as part of the project to improve the Kootenay Lake ferry service.

Preliminary work on safety improvements to the Upper Balfour Road intersection, including tree removal and utilities work, could begin as early as January 2021.

Kaslo students raise over $5,000 for Food Hub

submitted

JV Humphries students collected well over $5,000 for the Kaslo Food Hub this year.

“Thanks to our amazing supportive community, many families had Christmas hampers and our Food Hub will have funds for lots of extras over these next few months,” said JHV Principal Victoria McAllister. “We couldn’t be prouder of our students and the dedication of our Youth and Family Worker Marlene Thiesen with the support of our Leadership teacher Cam Zuk.”

JHV has been involved in the Christmas Hamper fundraiser for about 20 years. The students sit at a table in downtown Kaslo, greeting community members and collecting funds for the hamper program, serving an area from Ainsworth to north of Meadow Creek.

The idea for the fundraiser came from Mr. Patience (now retired), when he was a teacher at JHV’s Lakeside Learning Centre in downtown Kaslo. Back then, the fundraiser was called ‘The Canned Food Quest’. Students took half-hour shifts, filling the days for two weeks before the Christmas break. At first, the students found it a little hard to take that seat, but over time they warmed to the idea, and found that being friendly was more productive. It wasn’t uncommon for several of our students to share that their families were recipients of these Christmas hampers. This made the fundraiser personal and helped the students own it.

In those first years, the hampers were organized by Teresa May at her sandwich shop down the street, in conjunction with the Salvation Army in Nelson. Teresa was always kind and supportive of the students and started the tradition of offering each student a hot chocolate after their shift. For several years, the students also collected Turkey Bucks, a popular gift card for the City of Kaslo, which would include these turkeys in the hampers. The food items collected by the students were displayed in the classroom window, then loaded on the bus to the store and collected by Teresa’s Toys also made their way into the collection.

Eventually, North Kootenay Lake Community Services took the project over, and the hampers were arranged from the Food Hub. The Alternate School students still collected funds to help get school supplies, which became the Front Street Market. The store now offers the students a hot chocolate after their shifts, and access to an outside plug-in for a heater.

When the alternate program Kaslo fisherman wins November draw

submitted

Kaslo resident Rick Taylor is the winner of the Kootenay Lake Angler Incentive Program’s November draw.

The Kootenay Lake Angler Incentive Program (KLIMP) is designed to help the iconic kokanee salmon population recover after the collapse in 2013. Anglers are encouraged to harvest rainbow and bull trout in the main body of Kootenay Lake and then turn in the heads to local depots to enter a monthly draw for $1,000 worth of gift certificates. Taylor turned his heads in to Woodbury Resort just south of Kaslo. Each head returned also gives anglers a chance to enter the lottery draw for a 18” Kingfisher boat with a 115 horsepower Yamaha engine.

Taylor has lived on Kootenay Lake for 40 years and is known to swim up and down in fish numbers and size, but commented that the last few years have been catastrophic for kokanee numbers. Conservationists have been trying to reverse the decline by collecting kokanee egg plants and fry release in concentrated bars. Laundry detergent is available in small dissolving sheets. Use concentrated cleaning products and refillable containers. And, remember, household cleaning can be done with vinegar and water.

What else can we do? Ask our grocers about their efforts to reduce or eliminate plastic from their businesses. Talk to our neighbours about what they are doing and learn from each other. Evaluate what plastics are in our garbage and check in with recyclebc.ca materials list or call toll free 1-800-667-4321 to make sure we are recycling everything we can.

We all know the motto: reduce, reuse, and recycle, and the most important “R” is REFUSE. As consumers, let’s lead by doing, let’s REFUSE to buy or use single-use plastics. Then governments and producers will get the picture and it will be easier to get changes to regulations and practices.

Village of Kaslo is on the way to zero waste

submitted

Almost every piece of plastic ever made still exists. We are all becoming more aware of the need to quit putting plastic garbage into the environment. We need to buy and use fewer plastics, particularly single-use items and disposables. And most of us are already taking steps to change our habits. At first, this seems inconvenient but once we acquire a new way, it becomes an easy routine. Here are some alternatives to using plastics that can be easily incorporated into our daily lives. We don’t yet have all the solutions but we can feel proud of the steps we take and continue to try new habits.

- Carry your own fabric shopping bags or baskets. Boxes and paper baskets are also good because they are compostable.
- Carry washable mesh bags or baskets for produce or don’t use any (we wash our produce anyway). Avoid prewrapped vegetables.
- Carry your own mug, drinking bottle and metal straw.
- Store food in glass or stainless steel containers. Buy low or no more plastic refrigerator dishes. Try out the reusable beeswax wrappers to cover leftovers or wrap sandwiches.
- Avoid disposable products in plastic bottles. Soap, shampoo and hair conditioner also come in new sheltered waiting areas, better safety signage, EV charging stations, life-saving improvements and many others.

Design of the new electric-ready vessel continues to progress steadily, with designs nearing completion. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2021.

In addition to the terminal capacity and intersection upgrades, the MV Balfour, which it will replace, will be ready for service in early 2023. The new vessel will more than double the capacity of the MV Balfour, which it will replace.

The new ship will be able to accommodate around 60 vehicles in tandem with the larger MV Osprey 2000, reducing sailing times by 2 months. The vessel will be fully converted to electric propulsion by 2030, once shore power is installed and reliability of the technology advances.

Ferry users are reminded health and safety measures are in effect to protect the passengers from COVID-19, and are asked to obey all measures and guidelines to help keep other ferry users and the crew safe.

The Kootenay Lake Ferry Service Improvements Project will be funded by the Province of BC with a contribution from the Government of Canada through the New Building Canada Fund’s Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component - National and Regional Projects.

More information on the project, including details of design for both terminals can be viewed online: www.gov.bc.ca/kootenaylakeferryproject

January 14, 2021
The Valley Voice
250-358-2278


BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

WHAT AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY to live your dream and own your own business. Become the proud owner of the Valley Voice and a quaint building on the main street of New Denver. The newspaper business can provide a modest living for you and your family, and wonderful community connections. If you are so inclined, we would love to show you the ropes and stay as long or as little as you need us. We have absolutely loved our life as newspaper people! Give us a call at 1-833-501-1700 for a chat, or email valleyvoice@valleyvoice.ca. Yours, Dan & Jan.

ARE YOU AN ASPIRING ENTREPRENEUR? So call Community Futures to learn about the free Business Plan workshop open to anyone! And if you’re eligible, you may also qualify for the Self-employment program where you will receive ongoing business training and coaching and usually financial support while you start your business. For more information call 265-3674 ext. 201 or email Nakups@futures.bc.ca.

THINKING OF STARTING, buying or expanding your own business? If so, Community Futures offers business loans, counseling & training; and delivers the Self-employment program in the Arrow & Slocan Lakes area. For more info leave a message at 265-3674 ext. 201 or email Nakups@futures.bc.ca.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

THE NEW VALLEY MOUNTAIN Film Festival is now accepting submissions of short films and digital slideshows for its 2021 event. Visit www.newvalleymountainfilm.com for information and submission guidelines or email inquiries to newvalleymountainfilm@gmail.com

CARD OF THANKS

The New Denver Area Community Hamper Society thanks everyone who made donations of money, gifts, food and time for the Christmas hamper. We are very grateful for your help. If you are needing a food hamper, call 358-7158 or 358-7787 or 358-2676. From Cariboo, 1-833-501-1700 for a chat, or email valleyvoice@valleyvoice.ca. Yours, Dan & Jan.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Business Classifieds start at $10.00 per ad. Call 358-7787 or 358-2676.

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Mon-Sat 9-6
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Community Discount Day: Last Friday of the month
Mon-Sat 9-6
Sunday 10-4
Downtown Winlaw • 250-226-7255

Gaia Tree Whole Foods

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Slocan Valley Market

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**by John Bauman, Local Journalism**

The race has begun to build up the population’s immunity to the coronavirus to try to stem the rise of the disease.

Interior Health has reported it has begun vaccinating ‘priority one’ individuals in the region. Right now, that means the roll-out is taking place at seniors’ and long-term care homes in the Okanagan.

Here in the West Kootenay, healthcare workers have received their first shots. (To see how the drive-through vaccine clinic took place, see front page article.)

“As vaccine deliveries continue to arrive, and immunizations accelerate throughout our region, we must not lose focus on following the public health guidance that prevents the spread of COVID-19,” said IH President and CEO Susan Brown after the first long-term care residents were vaccinated in an Oliveier care home earlier this month. “Adhering to that guidance, combined with COVID-19 vaccine, will help bring an end to this challenging pandemic.”

A case map for December 27-January 2 had some good news for Valley vaccine readers, with no cases reported in that period in the Arrow Lakes or Kootenay Lake subregions, which includes most of this paper’s readership area. However, in that same reporting period there were seven new cases reported in the Nelson subdistrict, which includes the Slocan Valley from Slocan City south, and one each in the Castlegar and Trail regions.

Still, that doesn’t mean the virus is far away. The Province reported 1,475 new cases from last Friday to Monday, including 217 in the Interior Health region. As of press time, there are 5,220 active cases in the province, with 358 people hospitalized. There were 22 deaths provincially over the weekend. The Interior Health region had 36 people hospitalized and nine in intensive care, and two deaths, for a total of 40 in the region since the pandemic began.

Revelstoke continues to be a concern. The community bordering on the Arrow Lakes subregion saw nearly 30 new cases over the Christmas period.

“Interior Health has identified increased COVID-19 activity in the Revelstoke region and reminds all residents to maintain their efforts to prevent community transmission. There is no specific source for the new cases,” says an IH release. “It is for this reason all residents and businesses are reminded of the importance of COVID-19 testing at the first sign of symptoms in addition to keeping social bubbles small.”

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Kootenay youths’ climate concerns amplified in parliament

submitted

No one is surprised that young people are very concerned about the climate crisis. Nor is it surprising that they are underrepresented in places of power, like Parliament.

To counter this, youth in the Kootenays drafted a formal parliamentary petition expressing their concerns and their expectations of government. Youth in both the East and West Kootenay obtained over 600 signatures on their petition during the pre-COVID climate strikes — when millions of people across the globe took to the streets to demand more climate action.

“The voices of young people continue to be disadvantaged and discouraged by our society,” said Linn Murray, one of the youth who drafted the petition. “There is an awful lot of talk about consulting with youth, but there is rarely any interest in actually listening or taking action.”

Murray, 21, is involved with the Fridays For Future team in the West Kootenay. He was initially inspired to create the petition after a trip to Ottawa with Citizens’ Climate Lobby. The petitions were separated into smaller petition packages to maximize exposure in Parliament once youth could find a champion to present them. After MP Rob Morrison (Kootenay-Columbia) did not commit to presenting them, they found that champion in MP Richard Cannings (South Okanagan-West Kootenay). MP Cannings presented the petition in the House of Commons 11 separate times in the fall session of parliament.

“I’m happy to see that more and more young people are encouraging politicians to act responsibly and expeditionally on climate change,” said Cannings. “It’s their future that is at stake, and the government should be listening to their voices.”

The petition states that “youth are anxious that they are being left with an uncertain future in which we can grow, survive, and thrive.” They ask the government to enact science-based targets, keep raising the national carbon price through this decade, put an end to fossil fuel subsidies, and redirect funds to renewable energy, energy efficiency, low-carbon transportation, and job training.

There are signs the government may finally be listening with the recent release of a more ambitious climate plan, net zero climate accountability legislation (Bill C-12), and announcement of a new youth climate advisory group.

“We look forward to continuing to work together towards a sustainable future in the new year.”

Caitlin Kellendornk of Castlegar gathers signatures on the youth parliamentary petition at the September 2019 climate strike in Nelson.
Local business happy to receive federal loan to help make it through the pandemic

by Jan McMurray

The federal government is providing loans for women entrepreneurs whose business has been impacted by the pandemic, and Leeza Zurwick of Happy Gut Pro in Castlegar is one of the recipients.

“Our sales were affected by COVID for sure, so I’m very thankful for the loan. It helps tremendously to keep us afloat,” Zurwick said in an interview. “It doesn’t hurt to have money in the bank for two years, so it gives us a chance to get back on our feet.”

The Women’s Enterprise Centre (WEC) is the not-for-profit organization selected to disburse these loans from the federal Regional Relief and Recovery Fund. They’ve disbursed over $1.7 million to women entrepreneurs all over BC in the past six months, and they hope to double that amount by March 31, says Melanie Rupp, director of loans and advisory services at WEC.

Women business owners can apply for up to $40,000, with 0% interest, no fees and no payments required until December 31, 2022. If the loan is repaid by that date, then 25% of the loan becomes a forgivable grant, up to $10,000. Any balance that is unpaid as of January 1, 2023 is converted into a three-year term loan at 5% interest.

Happy Gut Pro received $30,000, so if Zurwick can pay back $22,000 by December 31, 2022, the remaining $8,000 is a gift.

Happy Gut water kefir bottled drinks are available at stores throughout the East and West Kootenays. The company also sells do-it-yourself kits, cultures and infusions throughout Canada and the US through Amazon.

“Our drink division has suffered through COVID because there are no concerts, and restaurants are at half capacity,” she said. “It’s also a real struggle for us to get wholesale accounts because there are no trade shows happening. COVID has prevented us from going ahead with expansion plans for the drink division. The loan helps us to hang in there.”

At the end of March, business slowed down to a trickle, so Zurwick laid off all her staff (two full-time and four part-time people) and continued the business on her own. She was able to rehire her staff in May, after creating a COVID plan for the workplace.

Her business coach at Community Futures put her in touch with WEC, and she applied for the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund loan in September. “It was a very quick turnaround.”

To be eligible, businesses must show they were financially healthy prior to March 2020 and that they have been negatively affected by COVID-19. Applicants must attest that they have applied for and either been declined or did not qualify for other government COVID-19 relief funds.

WEC’s Melanie Rupp explained that the primary reason a business does not qualify for the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) loan is because it does not operate with a business bank account. Many sole proprietors operate with a personal account, often as directed by their banker, and often to avoid costly banking fees, she said.

The funding is available for sole proprietors, partnerships, companies, and corporations, and can be used for expenses like employee salaries, rent, utilities, professional fees, insurance, lease and other regular debt servicing payments, cleaning supplies and additional safety measures.

“I’m very thankful, but it’s always in the back of my mind that I have to pay it back,” Zurwick said. “I hope we make it through 2021 so I can pay it back.”

Andrea Blendt of WEC says studies have shown that the pandemic has disproportionately affected women in the workforce.

Many women entrepreneurs have been forced to assume most of the responsibility for childcare and home schooling while keeping their businesses afloat. Women are also more likely to self-finance their business, she says, and during crisis uncertain times may be even more reluctant to increase their debt load to support their business.

Women’s Enterprise Centre also has a regular loan program, includes small business development, and can lend up to $150,000, with access to up to an additional $100,000 through a partnership with the Business Development Bank of Canada. Since 1995, WEC has been providing business advice, skills training, mentoring, practical resources and a supportive community for women business owners gain the skills, mindset, financing and networks they need to realize their business potential.

For more information about Happy Gut Pro: happygutpro.com.

COMMUNITY

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For more information about Happy Gut Pro: happygutpro.com.

STRUCK, Raymond Rudolph
April 16, 1935 - December 1, 2020

It is with great sadness that the family of Raymond Struck announces his sudden passing at the age of 85 at home in Nakusp, BC. Survived by his loving wife, Alice and her extensive family, and Ray’s children Wanda Rusynyk (Andrew), Ernest Struck (Sandy), Sherry Struck (Chris), and his many grandchildren and great grandchildren. Also survived by his sisters Viola Maas, Leona Mamaczak (Frank), and his brothers Ralph Struck and Lloyd Struck (Jane Player), many, many nieces and nephews, and his many bus. 

Ray’s family would like to express their appreciation and extend their heartfelt thank you to Alice’s daughter and husband, Howard & Laura, who looked after Ray & Alice. All the memories, and special words from family, friends and neighbours. We will all miss him so very much as he was a quiet spoken man of great patience who always had a dry sense of humour, quick wit which caught you off guard a lot, and loved to tease with a twinkle in his eye. He taught many of us to enjoy the simple pleasures in life - such as watching the ferry go back and forth across the Lower Arrow Lake, fishing, camping, hiking to special places, and to enjoy nature and the peace around you. He was a major listener and always paid attention to what you had to say. Family coming to visit was always a highlight in his life. He was a great dancer, and taught his oldest daughter how to two-step and jive. He loved growing his flowers and vegetable garden, and grew the best tomatoes and zucchini ever. Ray loved adventuring with the Fire Departments, belonging to the Arrow Lakes Historical Society of Nakusp, the camaraderie many shared with him, and the many crib/card games played with friends and neighbours.

In his younger years he loved planning many family holidays which included fishing, camping, motorbiking & waterskiing. He made sure his kids were active across the Lower Arrow Lake, fishing, camping, hiking to special places, and enjoy the simple pleasures in life - such as watching the ferry go back and forth.

Due to COVID-19 a private family visitation took place on Dec.3, 2020. A private family service will be held at the Valley Funeral Home and their families. And a donation to the Arrow Lakes Historical Society of Nakusp in the future with a plaque in honour of him. Donations in memory may be made to the Red Cross, or to the Arrow Lakes Historical Society of Nakusp and are sincerely appreciated. His family will also be donating a bench or tree in Nakusp, BC in the future with a plaque in honour of him. Due to COVID-19 a private family visitation took place on Dec.3, 2020. There will be a Celebration of Life Memorial when we are all able to do so, and will notify when and where we will be celebrating Ray’s life. We will be a large part of each of our lives and we will be missing him so much but he will always be in our hearts and memories!”
Northern portion of former mill site rezoned to Parks, Open Space and Institutional

by Barbara Curry Mallochy  

Slocan council has rezoned the northern portion of the former mill site from M1: Mill Industrial to P1: Parks, Open Space and Institutional. Adoption of the zoning and Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment bylaws occurred at the January 11 council meeting.

Upcoming changes to the Environmental Management Act’s Provincial Contaminated Sites Site Profile Regulation pushed the Village to amend these bylaws before February 1, when costly new administrative fees come into effect.

The bylaw amendments came under public scrutiny at three virtual meetings on December 14 – a special meeting at 5 pm, a public hearing at 6 pm and the regular council meeting at 7 pm.

At the special meeting, Mayor Lunn outlined why the Village of Slocan, like 43 other BC municipalities, has opted out of administrating the site profile system of the Provincial Contaminated Sites Site Profile Regulation. Slocan’s environmental consultant, Dave Diplock of Bear Environmental, explained in a presentation at the meeting that if the Village hadn’t opted out, the upcoming changes to the Site Profile Regulation would have a dramatic effect on Slocan’s timeline and cost of development for the 20-acre former mill site it purchased in September. He said the Village would save at least $100,000-$200,000 – perhaps even more – in administrative fees and reporting costs. Diplock said there was no advantage to paying these fees: the Village would be required to do the same physical remediation and risk assessment protocols whether it had opted out or not.

In addition, Diplock said opting out would allow the Village to make use of any of the less contaminated portions of the mill site more quickly. After February 1, the entire site would have to be completely remediated before the Village could subdivide even one little piece. By opting out, the Village will be able to subdivide as it figures out how it wants to use the various parts of the site. It can inspect the smaller parcels and remediate where needed.

Seven Slocan and area residents showed keen interest in mill site rezoning. They asked questions about contamination, whether some of the land could be zoned for multi-family residential use, how much of an area would be rezoned to parkland, and whether there were plans to build on the foreshore.

Diplock said there were two primary areas of concern for contamination. The area where the burner had been was “a place of concern” and the area where the shop had been was “known to be contaminated.” In addition, there was “spotty contamination here and there, with residual contamination at depth,” and concern with the area where the rail lines had been. He said further work needed to be done to assess the contamination, that “not all contamination is treated equal… the devil is in the details.”

Mayor Lunn said the zoning amendment only concerned the “front area” of the mill site and that zoning for parks requires less remediation than zoning for residential use. She said there are no plans to build on the foreshore. Multi-family residential zoning would require a much higher standard of remediation and is not being considered for these amendments. Zoning changes for the rest of the site would happen at a future time and be based on future needs.

Three residents spoke during the public hearing. Dave Boulaine repeated his request that council consider multi-family residential zoning in the amendment. Sandra Linstead said, “I don’t feel the public has had a chance to participate in any of these rezones.” Jeremi Buzolitch-Roy said he agreed with Linstead. He commented on how few people attended the public hearing and recommended better advertising of meetings.

During public participation at the regular council meeting, after the amendments were given third reading, Dave Frederickson said it was unfortunate these amendments were being “pushed through this quickly,” that rezoning the former mill site was “probably the biggest zoning decision in the last half century.” Dave Boulaine was disappointed that council passed third reading after hearing his concerns, and asked the mayor to clarify a term she uses: “robust community involvement.”

“We are on a very short timeline… if we don’t do it [rezone before provincial regulations change on February 1], we can’t do it,” said Mayor Lunn. She said the Village hadn’t had an OCP update or significant community engagement since about 2008, but in 2021, a number of activities will take place – surveys, open houses, educational pieces, and town hall meetings are all possibilities, Lunn said, though the Village will have to work with what is possible during the pandemic.

Dave Frederickson said there was significant contamination in the areas of the mill site where the burner, shop, and dip tank had been. “What percentage of the land is usable?” he asked.

Mayor Lunn called the former mill site “a complicated site… a brownfield.” She said “technically 100% of the site is reusable – but at a cost.” She said there were “definitely” areas where the cost of remediation is quite minimal and it was important to consider “subdivide while we can.”

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