

Kaslo and New Denver submit affordable housing proposals to BC Housing

by Jan McMurray

The housing societies in Kaslo and New Denver have each submitted applications for just over \$1 million to BC Housing’s Community Housing Fund. The deadline for proposals was January 15, and BC Housing’s decisions are expected this spring.

“We’re really happy with our proposal and can’t wait to hear back from BC Housing,” says Kathy Hartman, vice-president of the New Denver and Area Housing Society. “The community really needs affordable housing.”

Erika Bird, president of the Kaslo Housing Society, says she is also very hopeful about their ‘Penny Lane Apartments’ proposal. “It’s nice to be involved in a project where there is no doubt there’s a need for it. This is critical,” she said.

New Denver’s proposal is for a two-storey building with 10 units, to be located on the Village-owned property where the recycling depot is currently located. The building would include two studios, two one-bedrooms, four two-bedrooms and two three-bedrooms. The main floor suites would be accessed from Slocan Avenue, and the second-floor suites would be accessed from the laneway to the north.

Kaslo’s proposal is for a three-storey building with 10 units – two studios, five one-bedrooms, two two-bedrooms and one three-bedroom. The building would be located on Village-owned property adjacent to the Kemball building, with the main

entrance on A Avenue and a secondary entrance on Penny Lane.

Both projects are fully supported by the Villages. Hartman says the Village of New Denver has promised to provide the New Denver and Area Housing Society with a 60-year lease at a nominal cost if the funding application is successful. Bird says the Village of Kaslo will either sell or lease the land to the Kaslo Housing Society at a nominal cost. Both Villages have also indicated that they will initiate the required rezoning process.

“The CAO and council have been proactively helping us find a site,” said Bird. “We’ve looked at three sites over the past four years. We submitted an application to BC Housing for one of them and didn’t get the funding. Then we started working with the Village on the Kaslo Bay Estates property, and in the end found it wasn’t financially viable. But through that process, we developed a good relationship with the Village and they suggested this site.”

Both societies are working on their projects in partnership with New Commons Development (NCD), a non-profit real estate developer based in Vancouver and Toronto. NCD’s main goal is to increase the supply of community-owned affordable housing. Its new Small Communities Initiative focuses on small rural communities like Kaslo and New Denver.

“A big shout out to New Commons Development and Dion Whyte [director, Small Communities Initiative],” says Bird. “It’s one of their

priorities to develop capacity within the community, and we really feel we’re part of the team. They have developed excellent relations with our CAO at the Village. I can’t imagine pulling this off without that kind of help.”

Hartman echoed these sentiments. “Dion and the team at New Commons have been amazing to work with. They’ve guided us through this process and we’ve learned so much.”

Preliminary drawings have been done for both projects. New Denver’s architectural firm is Cover Architectural

Collaborative out of Nelson, noted for its experience designing energy-efficient buildings. Kaslo is working with architect Christine Ross from the east shore of Kootenay Lake. Kaslo’s building site is in the heritage zone, and Ross was trained in Britain and has a lot of experience working in historical contexts.

Both projects are estimated to cost more than \$3 million to build. Both societies are hoping to obtain just over \$1 million in grant funding from BC Housing’s Community Housing Fund

and to cover the rest of the capital costs with a mortgage. They are also looking at applying for a grant from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which would reduce their mortgages by about \$450,000 each.

Funding for the work done so far on both projects has come from the Columbia Basin Trust and New Commons Development. The New Denver group has also received some funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Rural Dividend program.



Sandon Historical Society volunteers Gerald Wagner & Frank Barnes prepare to shovel the roof of the Atherton Block in Sandon.



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RDCK directors face 'difficult task' as budget talks begin

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The Regional District of Central Kootenay's board of directors have had their first glimpse of this year's budget – along with a warning that choppy financial waters may be ahead.

"We don't know if the last quarter of 2021 will look anywhere near the first quarter of 2020, and

being able to predict that is easily the most difficult task we've got with respect to budgeting," RDCK Chief Administrative Officer Stuart Horn told directors at a special budget meeting January 22.

He said the coming year will continue to see reduced service levels, opening and closing facilities, staffing difficulties, and unpredictable revenues.

"The uncertainty is even more prevalent in 2021. We don't know what the rest of the year will look like," he said. "With respect to 2020, with facility closures it's a lot easier to predict how it will impact things, but with the reopening we are not sure how we are going to re-open, or when we can reopen."

"And due to the fact budgets have to be set by March, anticipating what is going to happen in September/October does carry a significant risk, especially financially."

The opening session of the budget deliberations – which will go on for the next two months – brought the major issues to the fore and set general directions for the discussion. It's important to note the decisions made at the January 22 meeting are preliminary, and will be included in a new draft of the budget, which still has to be ratified by the board later this year.

Surpluses and cost cutting

Horn noted that the COVID-19 pandemic is now estimated to have cost the RDCK \$250,000 in direct costs in 2020. The board passed a motion to use some of the emergency COVID relief fund it received from the Province to offset about \$193,000 of that.

Horn said the General Administration department is conservatively estimating a "rather large" surplus for 2020 of \$300,000. The Building Inspections department had an even higher surplus (\$460,000). Even the RDCK's Fire Services had a modest surplus. There are also robust

reserves in some departments, that can also be used to lower any needed tax increase.

"This will allow the tax increase to be significantly lower than what was originally proposed in the five-year financial plan," he told the board. "[B]ut staff does want to point out that using surpluses to lower taxation simply pushes tax increases down the line, save for a change in service level."

In all, the administration's first crack at the budget set a tax increase at 1.8% – the rate of inflation.

New costs and budget pressure

On the negative side of the ledger, Horn pointed out pressures on that bottom line.

He noted that Community Services is going to continue its shift to providing outdoor recreation opportunities and support this year. Unlike last year, when facilities were open until February and closed completely for months, 2021 is a lot more hard to predict. As a result, "In 2021, we are going to have to move carefully to ensure we don't get into a position where deficits are unavoidable," he told directors.

Fire Services in general are becoming more and more expensive to deliver each year, he said, and composting and waste recovery efforts are also pushing up costs to the RDCK. Insurance rates are another pressure upwards.

Then there are projects that can't be delayed any longer. The RDCK's main office in Nelson needs a new roof and heating and cooling systems. While directors wondered if the \$254,000 project could be delayed until a decision is made on adding another floor to the building, Horn advised against it.

"My only comment on timing is, if you're putting a second storey on this building, you're looking at a referendum," he said. "And the roof and HVAC units will likely fail before that referendum."

The board passed the motion to finance the building repairs.

The board also agreed to hire a purchasing officer this year, noting the position can save a large organization like the RDCK money. A Chief Financial Officer will also be hired, but not till October, balancing the need to save money with the need to fill the long-delayed position.

Tough decisions

Directors put off improvements to the board's audio-visual system and website redevelopment, but did approve hiring a marketing/

communications officer for the recreation department in June.

The board removed all directors' travel expenses for conferences except for the 2021 UBCM conference, and they reduced the electoral area directors' allowance for workshops and conferences to \$1,500 per rural director.

Some Fire Service operations also face big local budget increases, due to new equipment and staffing needs. Emergency Management is always a wild card, depending on weather and other natural disasters to determine costs. And directors still have to debate including long-overdue improvements to the 9-1-1 communication system for that department.

Besides the job of properly funding the services people want from the RDCK, directors also have their eye on the calendar. 2022 is an election year. That had Area F Director Tom Newell warning his fellow board members to avoid cutting too close to the bone.

In response to a motion calling for slashing director's travel budgets and stipends further, he said, "If we don't go to UBCM, [then at least] we've covered part of our 2022 increase in this budget line. I just want to, as we go through this, make sure we don't rebound ourselves in 2022 and have tax shock."

Tax impact

Right now the administration has set its proposed tax increase to inflation, or about 1.8%. The January 22 meeting reduced that a bit further.

But what you will actually pay depends on where you live in the regional district.

Residents pay a different tax rate according to the services they get from the RDCK – fire, water, libraries, recreation, economic development, etc. Your final tax bill will also depend on local municipal taxes, and provincial property assessment increases.

But Horn was able to approximate tax increases based on the initial draft budget. Using a benchmark house value of \$250,000, here's the size of the tax increase/decrease in your area: Area D: + \$18.50; Area H: + \$11.25; Area K: - \$0.25; Village of Nakusp: - \$34.50; Village of Kaslo: + \$12.50; Village of New Denver: + \$1.25; Village of Silverton: + \$4.00; Village of Slocan: + \$34.50. (To calculate your tax bill increase/decrease, multiply by \$250,000 increments of the value of your house. For example, for a \$750,000 home you would multiply the increase or decrease by 3.)

These numbers are likely to change further as the budget deliberations continue.

The public will have a chance to weigh in on the proposed budget. Meetings are planned for the first week in February for Area H, New Denver, Slocan, Silverton and Nakusp, and the first week of March for Kaslo. Check the RDCK website for more information.

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Province acquires land for Valhalla Park and Purcell Wilderness Conservancy

by Jan McMurray

Valhalla Park and the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy are slated to grow a little bit bigger, thanks to the provincial government's purchase of key properties through the BC Parks Land Acquisition Program.

"It's certainly good news to see the government slowly picking up private land," said Craig Pettitt, director of the Valhalla Wilderness Society (VWS). VWS led the campaign that resulted in the creation of Valhalla Park in 1983. "The piece up Gwillim Creek west of Slocan is a very important piece – it kind of controls access into Gwillim Creek – so it's very good to have it added to Valhalla Park."

BC Parks' Land Acquisition Program Report says adding this inholding to Valhalla Park will prevent incompatible uses and will further protect the ecological integrity of the area.

The 32-hectare piece was purchased for \$175,000.

"Fortunately, we got the Valhalla Mile about 10 years ago, and now this one," said Pettitt. "Hopefully we'll get a few more – some property north of

Nemo would be nice to see come up for sale."

BC Parks has also purchased a trapline tenure in Valhalla Park for \$50,000. The tenure covered 33,000 hectares of the 50,000-hectare park. Pettitt said the trapline has not been active in the past several years, but that the main trapping activity had been in the Cahill-Beatrice Lakes area.

The piece purchased for the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy is an 18-hectare waterfront property in the Birchdale - Fry Creek area. The Province paid \$640,800 for it.

The report says that acquisition of this waterfront parcel reduces the number of inholdings in the southern section of the park.

Eddie Petryshen of Wildsight, which has been involved with the park since its very beginnings, said that most of the shoreline in the Birchdale area is steep and rocky, but the newly acquired piece is not. "So this piece is key for wildlife connectivity. It allows wildlife to move from higher elevations all the way to the shoreline and that's critical for a wide range of wildlife populations."

Petryshen said the Purcell

Wilderness Conservancy is the largest park in southeastern BC, so it provides a lot of critical habitat for wildlife such as grizzly bears, wolverines and mountain goats. "It protects diverse ecosystems from high alpine to old growth and interior temperate rainforest, so this parcel protects an important part of that travel corridor."

Petryshen said the properties that will be added to Valhalla Park and the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy are "small but significant." However, he points out we have a lot more conservation work to do.

"This is a great step, but at the same time, we are in the middle of a biodiversity and climate crisis, and we have to protect nature at a really big scale. It's been a while since we significantly expanded our park network. The federal government has committed to protecting 25% of Canada's land and ocean by 2025. In BC, we've protected around 16% so we need to see a significant jump in the next four years."

The government announcement about the land acquisitions states there are several more steps before

the properties are added to parks: engagement with Indigenous nations, consultation with local government, defining a legal boundary and legal designation.

In this land acquisition, which included purchases and donations of land, the government has acquired 650 hectares to add to 16 provincial parks and two protected areas in the province. The newly acquired land is valued at more than \$9.7 million. During the last three years, 883 hectares of land have been acquired for parks and protected areas.

Working to take care of parks in the Kootenays

submitted

The Province is investing \$5 million for infrastructure projects in 24 provincial parks, including Kokanee Creek Park.

New accessible pit toilets and a mobi-mat, which improves accessibility for wheelchairs over loose or low traction surfaces, are being added to Kokanee Creek Park. Located east of Nelson, the park is known for its sandy beaches, hiking trails and three campgrounds.

Upgrades are also being made to the drinking water system at Wasa Lake Park north of Cranbrook and Sringa Park near Castlegar.

Other infrastructure projects throughout the province include upgrades to water systems, parking lots, multi-use trails, campground facilities, backcountry facilities and accessibility improvements. Electric vehicle charging stations will be added to some day-use areas in northwest BC. The projects are scheduled for completion in the spring.

This announcement is part of BC's \$10 billion COVID-19 response, which includes StrongerBC, a plan that protects people's health and livelihoods while supporting businesses and communities.

Federal government explores new approaches to economic development in the West

submitted

The federal government is looking at creating a new regional development agency in BC.

BC has been served by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), one of six regional development agencies in the country. Founded in 1987, WD is the regional development agency for Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

"We can no longer treat the West as a monolithic bloc," said Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages and Minister responsible for WD Melanie Joly. "We need an approach that allows our agencies to be better positioned to respond to the distinct realities of their region. Increasing our presence in British Columbia will bring us closer to those on the ground, giving us an improved understanding of the needs of businesses and communities

across BC and ability to strengthen economic growth at the local level."

As the domestic and global economies continue to grow and evolve, the West's economy has also grown and become more diverse. Economic drivers and conditions in Canada's Pacific and Prairie provinces have diverged. For the government of Canada, this new approach of establishing separate regional development agencies for each region will provide greater flexibility to focus on unique economic priorities in BC, as well as targeted support that better meets the needs of the rest of the western provinces.

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The Corporation of the Village of New Denver

Notice to Electors of an Alternative Approval Process



This notice is the first of two notices to advise electors in the Village of New Denver of the intention to proceed with a Municipal Boundary Extension. The Proposed Municipal Boundary Extension includes properties primarily within the area known as Denver Siding; additional properties included in the proposal are either already serviced by Village water, are owned by the Village, or are properties that form a logical final boundary, as required by the Province.

The purpose of the Municipal Boundary Extension is to provide Denver Siding water system customers with a safe supply of drinking water. Grant funds have been received by the Village of New Denver to improve the Denver Siding water distribution system in the event of a boundary extension taking place. If the Proposed Municipal Boundary Extension is successful, Denver Siding water system customers would be connected to the Village of New Denver's water system and the Village would assume responsibility for the area's regulations and local services. All privately owned properties within the boundary extension area would participate in all functions and services provided by the Village, except that those not connected to Village water would not be charged Village water rates.

A summary of the proposal is available on the Village's website at www.newdenver.ca and at the Village of New Denver Office during each business day of the week between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. A copy of the full Municipal Boundary Extension Proposal as submitted to the Province of BC's Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is available, for in-office viewing only, at the Village Office during these times.

The Council of the Village of New Denver proposes to proceed with the Proposed Municipal Boundary Extension unless, by 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 15, 2021, at least 10 percent of the electors in the Village of New Denver sign an elector response form opposing the implementation of the proposal unless Village Council holds a vote.

The number of elector responses required to prevent the local government from proceeding unless a vote is held is estimated to be forty-one (41). A report respecting the basis on which this determination was made is available upon request from the local government.

Elector responses are required to be submitted to the local government on forms that can be obtained during regular business hours from the Village of New Denver Office at 115 Slocan Avenue, New Denver, BC. The form can also be downloaded from the Village of New Denver's website at: www.newdenver.ca. The only elector response forms that will be accepted by the local government are the ones provided by the Village of New Denver, or an accurate copy of the form.

Only electors of the Village of New Denver are eligible to sign the elector response forms. There are two types of electors – resident electors and non-resident property electors.

Resident Elector: When signing an elector response form during an AAP, a resident elector must: be 18 years of age or older; be a Canadian citizen; have lived in British Columbia for at least six months; have lived in the jurisdiction (Village of New Denver) for at least 30 days; live in the area defined for the AAP; and, not be disqualified under the *Local Government Act*, or any other enactment from voting in a local election, or be otherwise disqualified by law.

Non-resident Property Elector: When signing an elector response form during an AAP, a non-resident property elector must: be at least 18 years of age; be a Canadian citizen; have lived in British Columbia for at least six months; have owned property in the jurisdiction (Village of New Denver) for at least 30 days; own property in the area defined for the AAP; and, not be disqualified under the *Local Government Act*, or any other enactment from voting in a local election, or be otherwise disqualified by law.

Note: Only one non-resident property elector may sign an elector response form per property, regardless of how many people own the property; and, that owner must have the written consent of a majority of the other property owner(s) to sign the response form on their behalf. **Property owned in whole or in part by a corporation does not qualify under the non-resident property elector provisions.**

Resident electors signing the elector response form must provide their name and address. Original signatures are required on the completed forms – faxed or emailed submissions will not be accepted.

Non-resident property electors must provide their name and the address of the property in relation to which they are entitled to register as a non-resident property elector. The local government will not share the information on the form with anyone other than the Corporate Officer, or other person designated by the Corporate Officer.

For more information on elector qualifications, please contact the Village of New Denver or see the *Voter's Guide to Local Government Elections in B.C.*, available from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing or online at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/governance-powers/general-local-elections/voter-eligibility-voting>.

For further information please contact the Village of New Denver by phone at 250-358-2316, facsimile at 250-358-7251, or email at office@newdenver.ca.

Voices from the Valleys

Thanks, KDCFS

Thank you very much for the great fire-safe logging done above Kaslo by the Community Forest. It shows a lot of foresight from the foresters and directors. Also thanks to Shane McKinnon for the excellent job on the logging.

Paddy Flanagan
Kaslo

Notice to anti-maskers

Your freedom ends where the freedom of the next person begins. That is: at your property line.

Don't want to wear a mask? I don't have a problem with that! Just STAY HOME.

I've been a senior for 19 years. I have a heart problem. If I run into you in a supermarket or in Home Hardware or a group of you protesting in the street, minus mask, you are putting my life in danger.

E. de Boer
Fauquier

COVID-19 is a real emergency

I appreciate many of the letters in the January 14 issue, but I particularly appreciate Diana van Eyk's letter. There are many of us who do not blindly trust our governments on many issues. But we are willing to put our trust in the vast majority of scientists and doctors who say that COVID-19 is a real health emergency, and that we can and should do our part to keep it from taking down our health care system.

Tia Leschke
Winlaw

Selfishness

I am reading articles by Black Press staff on how not wearing a mask represents unbelievable selfishness. I would like to retort that there are many, many acts of selfishness, one of which is the global industry of investments. More selfish than that is hard to imagine. What all the profits

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are based on is the suffering of the poor of the world. Mining predation comes to mind, and the sale of arms, fully endorsed by pension plans. Then there's tourism predation, where poor people are forced from their land by encroaching hordes of funloving others. Let us get real, folks.

Angelica Herlihy
Grand Forks

Jazz Fest

As someone who has volunteered at Jazz Fest, most recently the South Beach campsite, I was somewhat taken aback by the letter of John Eckland (VV January 14). I would really like to hear if the Kaslo Chamber of Commerce shares John's point of view and to have an accounting from the mayor and council on what if any costs to hold Jazz Fest are borne by the taxpayers.

Most of the people I see attending Jazz Fest are respectful, but yes, some young people are boisterous and like to stay up later than I do at age 70. Given the broad range of culture and music that Jazz Fest has brought to Kaslo from around the world over the years I would prefer an ongoing dialogue to deal with issues and irritants. Let us learn a lesson from our neighbours to the south, and instead sit down and discuss how to improve Jazz Fest rather than end it as John wants to do.

Andy Shadrack
Kaslo

Face mask exemptions

I'd like to inform your readers about the face mask exemptions in Emergency Program Act - Ministerial Order No. M425. Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety, signed this on November 24, 2020.

Please check the five-page 'Order of the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General' online by searching for 'M425.'

Note that the Emergency Act/M425 does not indicate that you have to prove your health issue.

I quote from the order: "...and



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The Ingrid Rice cartoon is a satirical look at current events in politics and is sponsored by the Kaslo Hotel. The Hotel does not necessarily share the political views of the artist.

whereas it is not possible for some to wear face coverings and I have taken that into consideration in this order..."

Section 4 of the order lists all the instances where face coverings are exempted. Exemptions apply to children under 12; people with a psychological, behavioural or health condition; people with a physical, cognitive or mental impairment; people who can't put on or remove a face covering without the assistance of another person. There are a few other exemptions listed in the order describing times when people would temporarily remove their masks.

On April 4, 2020 the government issued Ministerial Order M098 and on May 1, 2020 the government issued Ministerial Order M139. Both were repealed when the BC Ombudsman found them to be contrary to law. They were replaced with M425.

Karin Leja
Winlaw

Good luck to Brittny

Congratulations to Brittny Anderson on taking her hard-won seat in the legislature. In your campaign, Brittny, you expressed deep concern about BC's environmental crises. Now

in Victoria you will come up against challenges working with your party on these issues.

We have a half-finished Clean BC climate plan. Building LNG, and the fracking, leaking methane and emissions makes it impossible to meet our commitments to the world, both our 2030 target and the 2050 one. You'll find there is NO plan to capture the fugitive gas emissions, and we don't even measure them.

The skyrocketing billions in costs of the Site C dam were hidden before the election, but they will come out. These costs will be paid by BC Hydro rate payers for generations. Meanwhile the LNG and fracking industries will get a bargain deal on the power. You have a mega problem.

The government failed to tackle the forestry crisis of dwindling forests and exported jobs. The greenwash announcement in September to protect some old growth was a sham. The truth is old-growth logging won't be slowed at all. The government has failed to reform management of logging on public or private lands. They tinkered with the professional reliance model, but it still gives the fox purse-string control over protection of the henhouse.

The NDP's 'moderate' balance

of immediate needs of companies for profits and workers for jobs against hard environmental limits will have disastrous consequences, some of which will become glaringly real over the next four years.

Good luck.

Keith Wiley
Nelson

The common good

I felt real relief when Joe Biden became president of the US and the Orange Monster was banished to Mar-a-lago. Judging by what President Biden did in his first two days in office, it appears sanity is returning to the American federal government. It will be a long road back. We Canadians should wish our southern neighbours well.

I was glad to hear President Biden use the words "common good" quite a bit. In the '50s and '60s when I attended public school, the "common good" was part of what we were taught Canada was all about. Unfortunately, notions have been creeping in during the pandemic which are not about the "common good."

Kootenay Freedom should call themselves Libertarians, which is what they are if what I read in the Valley Voice are their true aspirations. Libertarians are on the far right of the political spectrum and are all about personal liberty trumping the common good. I can't help but think that there are far right agent provocateurs in Canada taking people down the wrong road. Ask yourself why you are giving up your personal freedom to be led astray to the fantasyland of conspiracy theories. Is wearing a mask when in

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The Valley Voice

Box 70, New Denver, BC V0G 1S0

Phone/Fax: 1-833-501-1700 E-Mail: valleyvoice@valleyvoice.ca Website: www.valleyvoice.ca

Publisher - DAN NICHOLSON • Editor - JAN McMURRAY • Food Editor Emeritus - ANDREW RHODES • Arts & Culture Editor - ART JOYCE

Reporters - BARBARA CURRY MULCAHY, MOE LYONS & KATHY HARTMAN

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Voices from the Valleys

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public buildings, social distancing, and refraining from travel for the time being really that much of a sacrifice?

This pandemic is far from over. Even with safe, effective vaccines and the following of responsible guidelines, we will be living with this for a year or two or three to come. Doing what we can to help the process rather than the B.S. whining and crying is the proper way forward. Stay well.

Michael Brown
New Denver

Open letter to BC Cabinet

Peter Milburn's report on Site C has been issued, and is in your hands now. Despite the work to date, and the report, the underlying facts have not changed:

1. There is no need for additional electricity. There are at least 12 alternatives, far less costly and ecologically destructive.

2. There is no point in spending additional money on a project that will have insufficient revenue to cover its costs. In the early years, should it be completed, Site C power will be sold to the US at \$30/MWh. That power will be costing you, your families and their children, over \$100 /MWh. That means BC subsidizes US power users \$70 for every one of the 5,100,000 MWh produced. That is \$350 million per year. Plus there is the cost of paying off the \$12 to \$15 billion debt.

3. There are many more jobs available by addressing the crucial climate emergency, retrofitting homes and buildings, community facilities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions dramatically, so that we can meet the Paris Agreement targets. That money will be productively spent, and many more jobs will be created than Site C offers.

4. It will be hard to admit. But it is like groceries forgotten in the back of the car. They are spoiled now. Will you eat them anyway? Site C is the same waste. Will you ask BC residents to waste more money on a project that does not make sense?

5. We save the productive Peace River Valley. It has not been used for intensive agriculture because of reserves for flooding, and BC Hydro ownership of the land. It can generate as much as \$500 million a year in intensive agriculture, and with climate change, we will need that productive land for food security.

6. We have no idea what the final cost will be. The dam is located in a geologically unsuitable area, with no actual bedrock, only consolidated mud, called 'shale bedrock,' which swells and slides when wet. There have been serious problems with work to date, and no assurance that these problems will not escalate, or other more serious problems arise.

The only road forward is to terminate the Site C project. Any other action is reckless. We do not know the safety of the dam, the final cost, and most of all, we do not need the

electricity.

Please vote with your conscience, and ask the premier to do the same. It is in the interests of all British Columbians that you terminate Site C.

Roger Bryenton
Vancouver

From the birds

While giving a lesson at Valhalla Hills Nordic trail, I was distracted by an exceptional example of the almost daily slaughter. The mostly red crossbills and few pine siskins were alighting on the highway for grit as they do most every nice morning after a highway plowing and sanding. Thump, thump and thump. I paused my lesson and walked out onto the highway and collected over 12 dead mothers, fathers and now grown children off the pavement and moved them to an open grit area of our ski club parking area hoping the dead would act as a decoy for the remaining flock (it didn't work). The time was late morning, a common time to encounter these two species collecting grit/salt to digest their diet of conifer and birch seeds.

Imagine you are on a family picnic at a beach with extended family, and someone from another culture than your own comes driving a truck on the beach at 100 kph and kills or mortally wounds four family members. When you run over to see what happened to them and try to wake them, along comes another strange vehicle and smacks four more including you. You just don't understand as you lie there dying. Everything was fine just moments before. Life was good and you were not hurting anyone! Red crossbills mate for life, or at least until a mate gets killed. They have one or two sets of offspring each spring. They face lots of perils in their lives: squirrels, martins, hawks, owls, cold, forest fires and disease. They might make it ten years if they are lucky.

Do I really need data for you, the driving public and the Ministry of Transportation, to show that thousands of these two species are being killed each winter on our local highways? Anyone who has driven these conifer-bordered roads has seen or hit birds collecting grit on the highways. What you have not seen is the total number of mortalities piled on the roadside. This is because of the ravens you often see flying the roadways. They check their raven watches and wait for the next plug of hurried ferry traffic to give them their regular feeding.

If the slaughter from fast-driving cars on gritty highways coincides with a year high in mortality from other causes, we could see a population collapse. Otherwise we can be fairly certain we will see a continual population decline in our valleys. By the time we change our behaviour, it will likely be too late for them (probably for us also). Do you think you can do anything about this big problem for our small feathered fellow creatures? As long as we keep making our hurried lives and hurried business so much more important than theirs, they will be killed. Think about it! The

solution is simple. Imagine they are children. How would you modify your driving behaviour?

Kip Drobish
Hills

Get together

I sit here feeling a mix of tenderness and grief at how much the world is suffering and how much we have all lost over the past ten months. We are all traumatized, all incredibly stressed, angry, hurt, and frightened. More than anything I grieve over how much the COVID issue has split society down the middle. It's very much on purpose: divide and conquer. This was what I was trying to say in my letter 'The COVID drama' (VV December 3.)

None of us has ever experienced such divisive times. People on both sides of what I think of as "the great COVID divide" are utterly convinced they are right and are perplexed at how no amount of arguing sways those firmly on the other side. On both sides, people are sure that those on the other side are dragging the world kicking and screaming to its doom. Understandably, tempers are frayed. Connection across the divide is almost nonexistent.

As I say, this is by design. If we are blaming each other, we don't see the smoke and mirrors for what they are. I stand by every word I said in an earlier letter ('Where is this headed?' VV August 27). Unfortunately, the Great Reset is not a conspiracy theory. Trudeau is one of its biggest champions. On my shelf is a book called *COVID-19: The Great Reset*. It's happening, and if we drop the confirmation bias that these are 'outrageous conspiracy theories,' the evidence is overwhelming that we are being deluded into believing there is a pandemic necessitating lockdown measures and the most dangerous 'vaccine' in history (it's not a real vaccine, but that's another story). COVID will not be over anytime soon; it is not meant to be over until the Great Reset is achieved. Business owners particularly need to research and fight this.

To answer Richard Caniell's question (VV December 17) about whether the body bags outside US hospitals are fake, my answer is "very probably." That really is the level of organized evil we are dealing with. I understand the hurt underlying Richard's full-page article lambasting me, but I do not accept the role of villain because I know what I am saying to be true. I wish more than anything that I were wrong, but I am not. We are facing horrors that we can prevent if we get together and refuse to cooperate with the fascist state that is fast encroaching.

I know some will be furious at this juncture. I can only humbly offer what I have: an open heart full of love for this tortured world, including both sides of this divide.

We may never all agree, but let's accept this at least: none of us are the villains in this situation. Villains do exist, and they are orchestrating this madness from places like Davos and Silicon Valley. That is where our anger should be directed, not at each other. Come on people, we're better than this.

Lisa Ross
Kaslo

If it ain't broke, don't fix it

First of all, kudos to the Village of Kaslo for allowing customers till the end of the year to pay utility bills, and the 10% reduction if paid by February 15, and for reducing business licence fees to zero. Very supportive.

I received my utility invoice from the Village of Kaslo, and discovered a new online payment option: an app called Pay TM. If you pay this way, a 'convenience fee' will be added to your payment and that goes to Pay TM to cover the cost of the service. Before the addition of Pay TM, there were and still are, other methods of paying such bills: in person with cheque or cash, through Canada Post, through your financial institution, i.e. Kootenay Savings Credit Union.

Paying in person costs nothing, mailing your payment costs perhaps a dollar and paying through the credit union costs nothing. Here are the 'convenience fee' numbers as found on the Pay TM website. Interesting enough, the Village News conveniently (no pun intended) left off the 'convenience fee' structure.

The website says that the convenience fee for bill payments made with a Mastercard or Visa credit card is 2%. For payments made with Visa Debit and Mastercard Debit, the fee is 1.25%. For tax bill payments with Visa Debit or Mastercard Credit, the fee is 2.5%.

My water bill is \$312.30, and adding another 1.25% or 2% adds another \$3.90 or \$6.24 depending if you use debit or credit card.

If your tax bill is perhaps \$2500, you can add an additional \$62.50.

And we mustn't forget the dog tags and garbage bag tags.

These 'convenience fees' go to a disembodied entity somewhere in cyber space and we as consumers receive nothing in return – just another attack on our wallets. The Village has had a method of collecting fees and licence costs for years, without a lot of internet interference. Now something new has been added, further confusing and disenfranchising those living without the benefit of the 'convenience' of computers.

Jim Van Horn
Kaslo

Children of the Donald

Billionaire sociopaths tend to

get what they want, eh, Donnie! Stable genius Donnie is not tired of winning, even though he lost the election to old man Biden by a landslide. Donnie wants to pardon a slew of friends, lawyers, family and finally himself. While the most powerful man in the world can prevent prosecution for others, he cannot pardon himself. A federal judge in USA has told Donnie and his toadies that "Fundamentally, no one can be a judge in his own case."

On January 6, Donnie was giving a speech to his faithful supporters. "If you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore." Patriots to Donnie believed him, even when he said he would march down Pennsylvania Avenue with them to the Capitol. Old Donnie actually cowered back to the west wing in the White House to watch it all on live TV. While Viking Man and hundreds of others stormed the Capitol in a violent insurrection, Donnie was glued to the tube. Even as five people died and lawmakers inside the Capitol begged for help for six hours, Donnie was hiding in Fortress White House, watching it on the TV.

Security at the Capitol building was pretty sparse. Maybe they thought the mostly white patriots would just wave their flags and chant "Stop the steal." Once they stormed past the guards and gained entry to the Capitol building, they were kind of bewildered. They shuffled around with their mouths open at a beautiful building. One patriot put his feet on Nancy Pelosi's desk and wrote her a nasty note saying "We will not back down." He said he was fully prepared to die violently that day. Lucky for him he was white and survived. Imagine a black and Spanish mob trying the same assault on the Capitol – they would have been gunned down out of existence.

A second civil war may happen in the USA. That the election was stolen from Donnie is pure fantasy. Over 60 judges refused to proceed with the stolen election platform because there was no evidence. This is when fantasy meets reality, Donnie: you LOST! Instead of draining the swamp as he promised in 2016, Mad Donnie is drowning in over 20,000 lies, COVID-19 and domestic terrorism.

Radicalized right-wing conservatives are suffering from delusional mass hysteria. Mad Donnie's base of 70 million Americans are in a fantasy world of conspiracies like QAnon, Deep State, The Reptile Alien Invasion, The Illuminati and the Pedophile Pizza Ring, to name a few. Like strange Hollywood B movies, people lap this stuff up like so much of Jim Jones' kool-aid back in Guyana when 918 people died in 1978.

Radicalized politics is religion for these deranged Children of The

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Voices from the Valleys

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Donald. Like any cult leader, Donnie wants his way, no matter what the cost or how many die. COVID has claimed 384,000 American lives to date and true sociopath Donnie says it is not his problem.

America will still be divided after Donnie leaves, if they can actually make it happen. The fantasy that the election was stolen is the fuel for these deranged patriots of the conservative right. The USA was forged in blood and bullets. From a civil war to the genocide of the native people, war after bloody war, Americans are not afraid to take up arms and use them to form their view of justice.

Russia recently computer hacked the USA government. What Russia does with this hidden power while the world is being ravaged by COVID-19 is terrifying. It's obvious that countries, politics and money cannot fix this existential mess we are in. We need new ways to govern or this tiny experiment of Humanity will likely end, taking all life with us.

Nick Chatten
Crescent Valley

Truth vs. propaganda

Year 2020 will be remembered as the year common sense and critical thinking flew the coop. Mid-year, the BC Centre for Disease Control recommended an unusual variation of sexual intercourse known as *glory hole* for safer sex during the 'pandemic.' Check out the 'how to graphics' for *glory hole sex* to add a little COVID levity into your life and see how hobnobbing with a crash-test dummy could prove to be more fun. As well, the new restaurant seating protocol where patrons are required to wear masks until seated and once seated masks can be removed (if you think about it) is akin to creating a peeing area in a swimming pool. Not to be outdone by increasingly inane COVID mandates, mainstream media (MSM) 'news' in 2020 became *theatre of the macabre*. Politicians of all stripes and colours, unelected world leaders and unelected public health officials filled the air waves in 2020 with blatant lies, veiled threats (sometimes not veiled) and appalling manipulations.

Justin Trudeau jumped on the bandwagon to label two inconvenient truths (with potential devastating consequences for Canadians) as conspiracy theories. On September 17, 2020, the Canadian government sent out a tender notice which read "The Government of Canada (GoC) is considering engaging a Third Party Service Provider for Federal Quarantine / Isolation sites that will be used to house and care for people for public health and other related federal requirements associated with the COVID-19 pandemic response." The word "other" in the procurement request alerted Randy Hillier, an

independent MPP of course, to seek clarification on what "other related federal requirements associated with the COVID-19 pandemic response" means. He never received an answer from the government. Curiously, the procurement notice in question was swiftly removed from the GoC website but still exists on internet archive. Then, as more and more people learned about the tender notice, Justin Trudeau went into damage control mode on October 20, 2020 to squash any questioning of the tender notice to be misinformation and conspiracy theory.

The other colossal Justin Trudeau deception was when he called 'The Great Reset' a conspiracy theory six days after a video of him went viral promoting 'The Great Reset' to the UN. If you haven't heard of 'The Great Reset,' it is worth looking into. Essentially, the oligarchs and plutocrats of the world at the World Economic Forum (WEF) who devised 'The Great Reset' agenda are claiming by the year 2030, "You'll own nothing and you'll be happy." Based on history, me thinks the owning nothing part does not apply to oligarchs and plutocrats!

Chrystia Freeland, our deputy prime minister and federal finance minister, is a proponent of 'The Great Reset' and sits on the WEF board of directors. Recently, she described her 'pre-loaded stimulus' idea and asked Canadians how money in their savings accounts could be "unleashed" and used as a source of potent fiscal stimulus "and maybe it happens by itself." Apparently, Trudeau Liberals in their Fall Economic Statement mentioned "unleashing" the \$170 billion dollars in Canadian household and business savings accounts to repair the economy ravaged by COVID-19. Let me translate Minister Freeland's babble gab... *The Government of Canada wants to rob your personal savings account so that you can be happy!*

Continuing on a WEF theme, a mastermind for world domination emerged into cyberspace during 2020. His name is Klaus Schwab. He is the founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum, an advocate for transhumanism and co-author of a book entitled *COVID-19: The Great Reset*. One time he appeared for a photo op dressed in robes likening himself to a *Star Wars* supreme exalted space commander. Here is a statement made by Klaus Schwab foreshadowing a potential cyber-pandemic, "We all know – but still pay insufficient attention to – the frightening scenario of a comprehensive cyber attack could bring a complete halt to the power supply, transportation, hospital services, our society as a whole. The COVID-19 crisis would be seen in this respect as a small disturbance in comparison to a major cyber attack." These plutocrats certainly have a way

with words!

Finally, the Year 2020 wasn't all bad news. If you switched off the CBC and did a little research, you would have heard about the Portuguese Appeals Court decision declaring the PCR medical test to identify COVID-19 unreliable and the subsequent lockdowns based on the PCR test unlawful. In December (possibly due to crimes against humanity lawsuits being launched against public health officials and organizations worldwide), the World Health Organization (WHO) admitted there is "elevated risk for false SARS-Cov-2 results" especially when high cycle threshold (Ct) values are used. Even Anthony Fauci disclosed a PCR Ct cycle above 35 reveals dead virus nucleotides which means the person tested is not contagious. Confirmation of Fauci's disclosure was published in an article in *The National Post*. Nevertheless, most labs in Canada use Ct cycles between 35 to 40 to detect SARS-CoV-2. A seminal study released at the end of November entitled *External peer review of the RTPCR test to detect SARS-CoV-2 reveals 10 major scientific flaws at the molecular and methodological level: consequences for false positive results*. In this study, 22 scientists re-examined the test protocol to identify SARS-CoV-2 (originally endorsed by the WHO) and "identified concerning errors and inherent fallacies which render the SARS-CoV-2 PCR test useless."

Now, the burning questions are: How many people have had their lives, families and livelihoods ruined by the faulty PCR test? How long will Ministers of Health, Public Health Officials and MSM continue to traumatize humanity and promote lockdowns based upon the misleading and unreliable PCR test? Be assured there will be a day of reckoning for violations of the Nuremberg Code!

Dona Nobis Pacem.

Ellen Chambers
Winlaw

Where have all our animals gone?

I started trapping in the Duncan and Westfall watersheds in 1986, 34 years ago. The amount of wildlife was tremendous. I saw deer, elk, moose, caribou and mountain goats. Every major snowfall, the entire road from edge to edge would be completely packed down by these animals moving down the Duncan. This would happen three or four times a winter.

About 20 years ago, the wildlife started disappearing and over the next 10 years became virtually non-existent. You cannot blame it on the logging: the animals were still there when the logging was finished. You cannot blame ATVs because there is no off-road access for ATVs. You

cannot blame it on the wolves because I have only come across one wolf kill in 34 years, and only actually saw one wolf. Has major helicopter traffic had this effect on the animals? Consider Head Smashed in Buffalo Jump. Are terror-stricken animals jumping off cliffs (people have witnessed this) or pregnant females losing their unborn young? The loss of wildlife is too extensive. It is as though you took a wrong turn and wound up on the dark side of the moon.

Then the answer came. I discussed the lack of animals with the woman at North American Furs in Prince George. Her response was immediate, without hesitation, "Did they spray?" My records had letters from the Ministry showing they sprayed in 1999 and 2001. This woman communicates with trappers from all over BC so rest assured the Duncan and the Westfall are not the only places in BC where all the wildlife has been wiped out.

These were my animals. These were your animals. These were our animals. They were not the property of the ministry to destroy as they pleased.

Is this what all the caribou propaganda is about: to draw attention away from the fact that literally all the wildlife in BC has been wiped out? Yes, the caribou are in trouble but so is all the rest of the wildlife in BC. With nothing for the predators to eat in the wild, they chase what animals are left into our backyards. Misguided fools think with these animals in their yards that there is an unlimited number of animals in the wild.

Is this why roads are deactivated so the people are denied access to the backcountry so that they cannot learn all the wildlife has been killed? I was notified culverts and bridges were to be removed from the Upper Duncan and the Westfall. They pulled the bridges and culverts from the Westfall, then the Duncan. I was asked by the ministry what they could do to help me maintain access to my trapline. They believed all access would be cut off where the first bridge would be pulled out. I told them to leave big rocks (anchors) on both sides; I would run cable across to clip onto with an ATV to cross and proceed. Bridge and culvert removal was delayed by two years. I asked why the delay? The response was "waiting for money." They needed more money because now the plan went from removing bridges and culverts to total destruction of this public access. More money to completely rebuild 45 km of road to haul in heavy machinery on low beds to completely destroy the road the following year. The upgrades to the road would have left the road accessible for the next 15 to 20 years for public access to Glacier National Park and the trails that come into the head of the Duncan from Highway 1.

Why was it so desperately important to destroy this access; to rebuild a road then to destroy it? Was it to hide the fact from the public that the

wildlife had been totally obliterated? For five years, I have tried to find out through Freedom of Information what it cost. This was refused. So as a person who operates heavy machinery and worked construction, I have to estimate between \$10 and \$15 million. This was my money; this was your money; this was our money. Think about what this money would have done for underfunded long term care homes, the grandparents that died and the little children who will never know them. As for the loss of wildlife, whether it was accidental or deliberate, what should be the penalty? Should it be termination without severance or pension? Or should we look at what happens to a member of the public when they take an animal illegally and multiply it by a million times?

This loss of wildlife is confirmed by the ministry given the fact that trapping wolverines in Region 4 is terminated. Nothing left for them to eat so no wolverines either. Also because the wolves have nothing to eat in the wild, they have moved into "town." The ministry acknowledges this by having a no closed season with no bag limit over much of Region 4.

Ed Varney
Winlaw

Waiting for vaccine

As we do our best to survive during these crazy times, I read with interest letters submitted to the *Valley Voice* on COVID-19. In particular, I would like to thank Richard Caniell for his tireless efforts to share his well-researched information. Quite frankly, it disturbs me to see individuals and groups such as Kootenay Freedom questioning the science behind our collective pandemic response.

We have seen this before. The internet gives us many examples of those who believe climate change is a hoax. Most of us, including members of Kootenay Freedom I suspect, have chosen to base our information on the overwhelming majority of the world's scientists who state that climate change is very real. Our 'COVID deniers,' on the other hand, have chosen to base their beliefs on various conspiracy theories circulating on the internet rather than on scientific data supported by the World Health Organization, our medical professionals and governments of virtually all countries as evidenced by the international response to this deadly virus. This could prove to be dangerous for our collective well-being, if enough people do not follow the guidelines and choose not to get vaccinated.

In conclusion, I must say that both Ann and I are waiting for our chance to access the vaccine so that we can slowly get back to some normalcy in our lives.

Alex Atamanenko
Castlegar

THE MISINFORMATION PLAGUE

by Richard Caniell

It is profoundly worrisome, the degree to which fine, well-intentioned people can be confused and misled by continuing misrepresentation made by the anti-Covid, anti-mask, so-called Freedom Movement. In the last Valley Voice there was still more of this alternate reality view and this represents urging citizens to disobey the provincial laws presently enacted to protect community health, on the basis that the Freedom Movement is following "the advice of leading global experts".

I refer to the article (Jan. 14, 2021) entitled "Winlaw woman fined (\$2300) for organizing Castlegar Rally". The protesters claim to be upholding free speech and democracy. They base their resistance to masks and other health precautions by following the position taken by Sucharit Bhakdi, a German microbiologist, who published a book entitled "Corona: False Alarm". They say he is the most cited microbiologist in German history and quote him as follows: "The general consensus is now reached that Covid-19 is approximately equivalent to seasonal flu and for people under 70 it is in fact less lethal." His writings also go on to say "anti-viral measures lead to self-destruction and collective suicide."

Yet the purveyors of Bhakdi's "do nothing" theory use Bhakdi's credentials as support for their aim not to be inconvenienced by precautions, much less by wearing a mask to protect others. In citing his alleged fame, they omit mentioning that Bhakdi has been substantially criticized by the German Medical Tribunal because his position "is considered unscientific by a majority of experts." YouTube cancelled his submissions for violating YouTube community standards because there were endangerments in his statements that Covid-19 posed no more threat than influenza and that vaccines "would be pointless". The University of Mainz in Germany stated it does not support Bhakdi's views.

Besides this, in 2020 Bhakdi was awarded the German National Prize – *The Golden Brett* – by the Society for the Scientific Investigation of Pseudo-Science. This is a negative prize awarded Bhakdi for his – "degree of deviance from science; a resistance to criticism; commercial interest; radius of action; pseudo-science; and hazard potential." *The Golden Brett* translates into "Golden Blockhead". This is an example of Bhakdi's fame and standing, one in which he is actually considered "a prime example of the debunked but credentialed experts monitoring conspiracy theories and undermining factually based information"; this according to Tyson Boker, head of Germany's Council on Foreign Relations, a non-partisan, non-profit, foreign policy network.

Compare some of this against the Freedom groups' claims that Bhakdi was the most important and cited microbiologist in German history. What they didn't tell us is anything about the negative citations, holding him up as an unimpeachable source. This is gravely misleading.

Mind you, the Internet is swamped by hurrahs from individuals and groupies who believe, as Bhakdi asserts, no precautions are needed, so he emerges as their savior. What is missing from him and his supporters is how they account for nearly 400,000 deaths in 12 months in the US and over 2 million deaths in the same period cited for

219 countries as Covid related.

As I previously reported, flu deaths, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), have a world-wide, yearly death total between 290,000 to 600,000. These are separately compiled. How does that compare to over TWO MILLION deaths in one year?

Mischaracterization of the World Health Position

Bhakdi also states that the WHO in October adopted the consensus that Covid is simply the flu, but this also is not true; there is no such consensus. Although Covid-19 and flu have similarities, they are caused by different viruses. Both attack the respiratory system, but WHO states "Covid-19 spreads more easily than flu and causes more serious illness". WHO also states that unlike the flu, Covid-19 can include blood clots in veins and arteries of the lungs, heart, legs and brain" as well as deeply affect smell and taste. Persons can be infected, have no symptoms and transmit the virus.

John Brook, Chief Medical Officer of the Center for Disease Control Covid Response tells us, "Clots are deeply implicated in Covid deaths, and unlike flu, can affect the brain and also attack the nervous system generating delirium, strokes and lasting nerve damage." A German study of a hundred recovered Covid patients with the average age of 49 found 22 had lasting cardiac problems including scarring of the heart muscle.

In the light of this, WHO urges:

"Stay safe by taking simple precautions such as physical distancing, wearing a mask, avoiding crowds. Do it all!"

(Updated Jan. 6, 2021)

WHO is greatly concerned about the "infodemic" of misinformation that is swamping society, which it says "is potentially harmful and should be refuted and reported", naming eight media platforms including Facebook in which harmful misinformation is circulated. The Bhakdi statements are exactly the kind of misinformation to which the WHO and Provincial Health authorities refer.

The Covid deniers and anti-mask, anti-precautions people ignore documentation which factually rebuts their claims, so refutation achieves nothing. They switch subjects and experts, all the while the infection rates and death tolls keep increasing. Consider the US as an example: On Jan. 10, in 24 hours there were 205,892 new infections and 1,759 new deaths. The New York Times reported on January 10: "one person gets infected every six seconds" and "one person dies from Covid every 10 minutes." The hospitals are running out of oxygen, space, healthcare workers and doctors. These alarming figures pose a situation that could become a reality in Canada.

Consider California: lauded in late spring 2020 as having kept its infection and deaths low through immediate and comprehensive lockdowns, its authorities believed the Covid danger had ebbed and opened up the economy. The resurgence has been horrific. Between Jan. 8 and 14, new infections totaled 308,141. Every day new infections rose between 40,000 and 51,000 DAILY. The death toll for this seven days was 3,734. Citizens in California thought it couldn't happen there, they felt the danger had passed, but it hadn't.

How can the Covid deniers and anti-maskers ignore almost 4,000 dead daily in the US, or, as an example, the following daily new infection figures:

Jan. 1: 147,159	Jan. 5: 235,051
Jan. 2: 291,384	Jan. 6: 251,728
Jan. 3: 201,980	Jan. 7: 280,292
Jan. 4: 251,918	Total 1,659,542

Don't let the figures blur your mind: translate the percentage of those infected in this one week who are hospitalized (364 per 100,000 population). This equals 6,040 persons hospitalized. Consider the impact on already overwhelmed hospitals and the families and children of those who become grievously ill from being infected.

We cannot ignore the reality behind these figures, the US death toll soared from 300,000 to almost 400,000 in less than 5 weeks. This is part of the worldwide total of Covid deaths of over 2 million in 12 months. Yet Bhakdi tells us there's no danger, that taking precautions is dangerous and then some persons adopt his mischaracterizations in quoting his comments and acting on them. Behind the number of deaths, actual men and women died, lamented by family and friends. Is this so insignificant as to be ignored by these so-called Freedom lovers?

Covid deaths are particularly gruesome and experienced without the comfort of relatives and friends, who are not permitted in the hospitals; these dead are often subjected to the further indignity of being stored in refrigerator trucks because funeral homes have been overwhelmed along with the hospitals, while cremations are delayed by weeks and months, this according to the Washington Post report (Jan. 16) because of the backlog. Against all this come the willfully blind deniers claiming "health dictatorship" while arrogantly ignoring the actual facts.

Turning the Issues and Equities Upside Down

The Valley Voice article quotes the Freedom spokesman who says that "many policemen are questioning the reasoning behind the public health orders and are choosing to uphold constitutional laws by refusing to fine peaceful demonstrations. They [the policemen] have been publicly speaking out and are being censored... the Castlegar RCMP officer has shattered the 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."

This is a preposterous inversion of the issues. The fact that the ticket was given for organizing a public protest which in numbers of persons, lack of social distancing and lack of masks, violated the Covid-19 Related Measures Act, is ignored. Instead they claim the policeman, who enforced the Act, has moved against the groups' rights and for this they mean to seek a legal penalty and "hold him personally accountable." Why are they not personally accountable for endangering community health? What constitutional laws ignore the special circumstances of a national pandemic? And what happened to the laws governing our freedom from endangering actions by smug protestors who believe in their Me-First mind-set that it all has to go their way or it has no standing?

I ask them: If you text while driving and you get a ticket, is it an infringement of your "constitutional rights" and your texting is your form of protest? What about the law proscribing it, which means to protect us, the public, from your self-indulgent and dangerous action?

Some kind of wake-up call has to break through the imperviousness of these anti-maskers and Covid deniers, awakening them to the credulity they've given to maverick experts while ignoring the real danger. To support this, numerous conspiracy claims have been advanced by persons writing in the Valley Voice: the doctors are falsifying Covid data in order to gain extra funds; the governments are falsifying data in service to a world order that requires citizens to be gradually made into robots, sheep to be herded through mind control.

As seen in the States, convincing others that they are being lied to by doctors, scientists and government eventually generates violence. This has been true in Toronto (CTV Dec. 20) and elsewhere. Toronto police filed 39 criminal charges against 22 persons who started beating up those who asked or told them they had to wear masks. It's the same violence that Trump generated telling millions they'd been tricked and lied to by government.

Don't they recognize that the conspiracy claims they make that government is misleading them and falsifying data to subjugate their rights can produce danger and even violence? This is why Dr. Bonnie Henry requires police protection.

I don't admire these groups who ignore these consequences and rely on misinformation and the Net's echo chambers to confirm they are right. It is only through the practice of intentional blindness that they can convince themselves of their principled position. But why are they trying to convince others to ignore the law? Do they ever ask themselves... "Suppose I am wrong? I'd be endangering others along with myself."

Misleading the Public

Many good people have been misled by the leaders of the denial movement to their detriment and possibly to their endangerment. These persons are capable of re-consideration in the light of irrefutable facts and statistics. Others feel genuinely confused. This is another regrettable aspect to the denial movement: it generates divisiveness in the community when the peril of the virus requires trust in our doctors and cooperation in the community.

When you add to this that on Jan. 11 it was reported nearly 30,000 Americans died in the first 10 days of Jan. from Covid-19, you will see that a catastrophic emergency has devastated their health system and that it could happen here. I am greatly alarmed at the Freedom movement ignoring the real context, urging "do nothing – it's not serious" under the specious claim that they fight for freedom of choice. What that really means is freedom to infect others because they won't be inconvenienced by having to meet precaution standards. It's time for them to stop trying to convince others of their self-serving rationales, study the actual facts and recognize that their irresponsible actions, serving their so-called freedom, is endangering others, that's why their group got fined.

Slocan council, January 11: Zoning and OCP amendments for part of mill site adopted

by Barbara Curry Mulcahy

• Before starting the meeting, Mayor Jessica Lunn announced that Tim Hill would retire as public works supervisor at the end of January and that Lachlan McGreal would replace him. She praised Hill and expressed confidence in McGreal.

• Council adopted zoning and OCP amendment bylaws to allow the northern portion of the mill site to be rezoned from 'mill industrial' to 'parks, open space, and institutional.' This will accommodate future waterfront development within the foreshore and riparian areas, and will support environmental protection for sensitive areas. During public participation, Neil Turkington asked if this meant the Village was considering selling the newly acquired waterfront land. Mayor Lunn no, the Village was "not rushing into anything" and planned to have much community engagement and due process, starting in 2021, on future development of this "special piece of property."

• Dave Frederickson asked why Councillor Madeleine Perriere had been granted a leave of absence from December 14 to January 14. Mayor Lunn said Perriere's written request said she wanted time to "reconsider her commitment to the Village." The mayor said Perriere "had some concerns."

• Councillor Van Bynen reported receiving "a lot of complaints about snow plowing." He said some residents are parking on streets and public works couldn't plow around the vehicles. Mayor Lunn suggested staff publish "snowplowing protocols" in

the newsletter. Councillor Joel Pelletier called the streets "super icy and very, very slick" and suggested public works should add more gravel to the streets. During public participation, Jeremi Buzolitch-Roy and Dave Frederickson also complained. Frederickson said the roads were really bad from December 31 to January 2. CAO Michelle Gordon said the Village will review its call-out policy, that public works staff were taking staggered leaves and call-outs were also staggered.

• Councillor Pelletier reported that he had heard back from Daniel Scott of Rec Sites and Trails BC. The new parking lot by the rail trail will remain closed unless public works wants to take on plowing that area. Council directed staff to meet with Rec Sites and Trails BC and public works to negotiate a joint use agreement for plowing the new rail trail parking lot in the winter.

• The Fitness Centre had a \$2,417 shortfall in revenues last year, as it was closed from April through December due to COVID-19. Mayor Lunn said the Fitness Centre plays "a huge role in physical and mental health in our community." Council asked that the shortfall be made up from the \$262,000 COVID-19 Safe Restart Grant. CAO Michelle Gordon said a meeting was being organized to "get the numbers on funds" needed for the extra staffing required at the centre during the pandemic. This funding could also come from the Safe Restart Grant.

• Mayor Lunn reported that there had been significant blowdown of trees at the Owl Walk. She said the trees could

potentially be salvaged and the timber could pay for the clean-up. Staff were directed to advertise for proposals for the clean-up.

• The Village will apply for a grant to hire a summer student under the Canada Summer Jobs Program. CAO Gordon pointed out that the program now funds workers up to the age of 30.

• Mayor Lunn noted that the CBT Community Initiatives grant program is now open for applications, with a deadline of February 26. The program supports local cultural, social,

environmental, and economic projects.

• The 2020 Building Permit Report showed that only one new house was built in Slocan last year and one permit for a new house was renewed. Seven permits, an average number, were issued for additions, renovations, or accessory buildings. Permits for one reno and one accessory structure were renewed. One trailer home was demolished. No commercial and industrial permits were issued – the number of commercial and

industrial permits issued commonly fluctuates wildly from year to year.

• The 2020 Transit Sales Report showed that revenues are half of what they were in 2019.

• Council agreed to send a letter to the Minister of Finance, Minister of Health, Premier of BC, and local MLA Katrine Conroy in support of universal no-cost access to all prescription contraception available in BC under the Medical Services Plan.

• This meeting was held virtually. During public

participation, Dave Bouliane said virtual meetings were "technological discrimination" and "this platform is ridiculous – I was cut off for 15 minutes." Mayor Lunn explained that all municipalities had to follow the provincial health officer's order of December 2, which said that due to the worsening pandemic, the public was no longer allowed to attend local government meetings and public hearings in person. Lunn said that people could attend the meeting by teleconference instead of the internet.

Strong reactions to Slocan's affordable housing project draft plans

by Barbara Curry Mulcahy

Slocan council held a virtual meeting January 12 to present draft plans for the proposed affordable housing project for the corner of Giffin Street and Slocan Avenue. More than 50 people attended – many of them opposed to the project – and at times during the presentation, things got ugly. Mayor Lunn had to ask three times for a microphone to be muted. When one of the cat calls included a four-letter word, Mayor Lunn called the swearing "inappropriate," and after that the meeting was civil.

A 30-minute presentation of the plans was given by two representatives from Cover Architecture and two from M'akola Development Services. After the presentation, the public question period went on for an hour and 45 minutes.

Lukas Armstrong and Adam Brody of Cover Architecture of Nelson presented their draft building and landscape designs for the project.

The proposal is for eight units in three two-story buildings: two duplexes, each with three-bedroom units, and one fourplex with one-bedroom units. The two ground-floor units in the fourplex would be accessible for residents with disabilities. The plans call for patios on the ground floor, and balconies on the second floor. Each unit would have a washer and dryer and a 2.5-square-metre storage room. Each of the three-bedroom units and both of the accessible units would have access to a private back or side yard.

Brody described the designs as minimalistic, without "much architectural fluff." He also said the buildings would have a great deal of southern exposure. The pre-fab units would be pre-assembled, decreasing the cost, construction time, and construction noise at the site.

A driveway wide enough for two-way traffic with traffic-calming features would make the project accessible from both Slocan Avenue and Springer Avenue, and allow for good

snow-clearing and emergency access. There would be 12 parking spaces, two of them accessible. Brody said that fencing around the whole project would give "definition and a safety factor," and also limit "cross-traffic" of pedestrians.

Brody also noted that a lot of the building would be "quite hidden." The sloping site would make it visually "less impactful." Evergreens south of the driveway and on the east side of the property would partially screen the project from the neighbours on Springer Avenue. Evergreens along Giffin Avenue would partially screen the project along that street. Local native plants are planned for the landscaping. Two of the five lots fronting Slocan Street are set aside for a septic field, which would double as a common green space. A pollinator garden and a vegetable garden are planned for this area, too.

M'akola Development Service reps Graham Burns and Lindsay Monk spoke about the three phases of the project. The project is currently in the pre-development stage, which is the first stage. The second stage is development, where M'akola would oversee a funding application and put out RFPs for more detailed designs of the buildings, septic system and landscaping. The last stage is construction, and usually takes 12-16 months.

M'akola said BC Housing would be the most likely funder of the project. The deadline to apply for BC Housing funding for the development stage was coming up just three days after this meeting, on January 15.

During the public question period, 11 community members spoke, and the naysayers greatly outnumbered those in favour and those undecided.

The main concerns of people opposing the project were that they had not heard about the project until council started the rezoning process in July; that their opposition and questions about the project,

first documented in a letter to council in August, had largely been ignored; and that multi-family housing in the Village had septic systems that smelled.

Steve Baal reminded council that 28 people had written a letter in August opposing the project. He said there was "zero support in this neighborhood. We feel like we're being stonewalled." Councillor Joel Pelletier told Baal that his neighbourhood had opposed the project before it had been designed. He said it was impossible for council to answer questions about the project before the details had been ironed out and the design drafted.

Baal also noted that the draft plans were being presented on January 12 and that the deadline to apply for funding for the next stage of the project was January 15. He said that there had been "no chance for us to have any meaningful input other than to state our positions." He said, "process has been followed but not really honoured." Baal called for the project to "be put forward to the community before you move ahead."

A number of people were adamant that they did not want another multi-family development in the Village because the condos and the Slocan Suites (both multi-family developments) had inadequate septic systems. "They're stinking up the neighborhood," Baal said of the condos, and Dave Frederickson agreed.

When asked after the meeting about septic issues at the condos and Slocan Suites, Interior Health spokesperson Karl Hardt said they had no recent substantiated complaints for Slocan. He said if people are concerned about health issues associated with a new or existing septic system, they can contact the Interior Health Environmental Public Health Office in Nelson, and the local environmental health officer will assess the situation.

There were other reasons

given for opposing the development: that eight units were too few units when so many people needed a place to live, so council should plan a bigger project somewhere else in the village; that the corner of Giffin and Slocan was too dangerous and congested for multi-family housing; that the five lots on Slocan Street should remain zoned 'commercial' as there would be a need for more businesses as the village grows; that water pressure was too low in the village.

The last speaker, Pat Ashton, noted that speakers who were opposed to the project because of possible septic and water issues had also said they were in favour of affordable housing in a different location. Ashton said, "Sometimes it gets to be NIMBY – not in my back yard." He also spoke about a flyer delivered to Slocan mailboxes that claimed Slocan residents were "100% opposed" to the project, according to a recent poll. Ashton said he had not been polled, and nor had any of the 15 people he queried. He urged the community in its discussions to "try to make it truthful." He said traffic, water, and septic were in general separate issues that needed to be worked on. He noted that the septic design would be available in the next stage of the process and said, "We need to wait."

Lindsay Monk assured the community that there would still be time to make comments on and changes to the design even after the funding application went in on January 15. "The application doesn't commit us to anything... but if we don't submit, we don't have the opportunity" to move forward on the project.

The Village did not respond to a question after the meeting about whether or not it had submitted an application.

The meeting was recorded. Both the plans and the recording are available on the Village website under both the Slocan News tab and the Committees/Slocan Affordable Housing Commission tab.



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New Kootenay cannabis organization submits concerns to Health Canada

by Jan McMurray

A new organization in the region has submitted a 12-page document in response to the recent consultation on *Cannabis Act* regulations.

The Cannabis Economic Development Council (CEDC) was formed through Community Futures' Cannabis Business Transition Initiative to support economic development of the area's cannabis sector. Its 23 members were chosen through an application process last fall, and the council had its first meeting on December 3. This submission to Health Canada was the council's first formal action—but it most certainly will not be their last, promises the council's coordinator, Abra Brynne.

"This 30-day consultation was launched on December 12 so with the holiday season, it meant for a very constrained timeline for soliciting, consolidating and submitting a group submission," said Brynne, "but we managed to pull it off, with some really great and thoughtful contributions by CEDC members."

Health Canada put out the call for comments on regulations pertaining to micro-class and nursery licences, product labelling, non-therapeutic cannabis research, public possession limits and COVID-19 measures.

"One common concern that members of the CEDC hold is the fact that cannabis production and consumption remain stigmatized, despite the legalization of cannabis in Canada," Brynne said. "The prohibitionist approach still heavily

influences the development of public policy on cannabis across most government agencies."

She said another concern put forward by the council is the space restrictions on the micro-licence. "The limitation on the scale of micro class licences puts them at an economic disadvantage because they cannot realize scales of economies or produce amounts that would enable them to maintain a retail presence for more than short periods of time," she said.

Another issue flagged by the CEDC in its submission is that security clearance and licence approvals are given only after a huge investment by the proponent. "This leaves an enormous risk on the shoulders of the proponent without any safeguards," Brynne said.

The microbial thresholds that do not distinguish between pathogenic and beneficial microbes are another point of concern for CEDC. "For the many producers here who grow in soil, and may also follow organic practices, it is virtually impossible, without irradiation, to meet Health Canada's thresholds. Many of our producers are very committed to the incredible beneficial qualities of cannabis and know that irradiation will undermine the quality product that they put so much effort into producing," she said.

The council also put forward suggested changes to the labelling and packaging requirements to help reduce excess packaging and alarmist warnings, she said, "and to provide an

opportunity to connect the consumer with the amazing stories and quality that are part of our region's rich cannabis sector."

The provincial BC Craft Farmers Co-op also submitted comments in response to Health Canada's recent call.

"Over the past year, our volunteers have been encouraging the federal government to urgently reset *Cannabis Act* regulations that are excluding thousands of BC's craft farmers," said BC Craft Farmers Co-op President Bob Davidson in a December 15 press release.

The press release said that in the 26 months since the *Cannabis Act* came into effect on October 17, 2018, less than 30 of BC's craft cannabis farmers have been licensed by Health Canada to participate in the legal market.

"BC has the most to lose when these small, independent farmers are denied access to the legal market," said Davidson. "Even with the extremely 'micro' production and processing caps imposed by Health Canada, 2,000 licensed farmers will create over 4,000 jobs and hundreds of millions in new revenue for all levels of government."

The CEDC has established working groups, Brynne says, that will focus on provincial policy, federal policy, the creation of a regional brand (appellation), economic development, and education / communications.

"We have opened a dialogue with the Province, seeking to be involved in the very early stages of the development of the 'farm-gate'

cannabis sales that were announced last year to be implemented in 2022," she reports. "We want to ensure that this very promising announcement has a program development that will genuinely open up new, low barrier opportunities for our region's cannabis producers."

"We are continuously providing feedback and assisting both Health Canada and the Province in developing a more refined approach to small-scale cannabis production," says Paul Kelly, program manager at Community Futures.

RDCK Board Chair Aimee Watson sits on the CEDC as the appointed RDCK representative, and Leah Main, Silverton's RDCK director,

is her alternate. The CEDC is in communication with four Indigenous Nations to appoint a rep for the council.



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BC Auditor-General pans forest service road maintenance

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

BC's financial watchdog has found problems with the way the Province maintains and manages its vast network of forest service roads.

BC's auditor general, Michael Pickup, released a new audit of the backcountry road system through the province's forest lands on January 19.

The audit assessed whether the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development managed safety and environmental risks on FSRs in accordance with its policies.

And it found the ministry lacking.

"We found that the ministry did not complete critical maintenance and repairs on roads, bridges and major culverts that are part of the 58,000 kilometers of FSRs in the province," said Michael Pickup, auditor general.

The auditors also found that natural resource districts received only about 25% of their budget requests for maintenance on roads they had deemed as priority. And about \$9 million worth of high-priority maintenance and repair work was unfunded.

The audit also found that the ministry's information on inventory, inspections and maintenance was inconsistent, difficult to share and, at times, inaccurate.

"These gaps made it challenging for the ministry to monitor and track maintenance activity," the report says.

Nine recommendations

While FSRs are built primarily to access timber for forestry operations,

they are often used for other industrial and commercial purposes, and provide important access to remote and First Nations communities, private residences, recreation and wilderness areas. The roads aren't built or maintained to the same standards as public roadways, but proper upkeep is critical to help ensure the safety of road users and protect the environment, the auditors said.

Still, "The ministry did not manage safety and environmental risks on FSRs as required by its policies," the audit found. "The shortcomings in maintenance work and lack of reliable information increase risks to road users and to the environment."

The report includes nine recommendations to help the ministry meet its own expectations for undertaking inspection and maintenance work on FSRs:

- improve policies and practices to make sure information on FSRs is complete, accurate and easily accessible to both ministry and BC Timber Sales staff. "This includes location, length, the ministry entity responsible for administration, and the permit holder responsible for maintenance," the auditors said
- develop a plan for regular inspection and maintenance of bridges and culverts to meet ministry policies
- clear up policies and practices to 'provide consistent guidance' on inspection schedules, maintenance, and the closing and de-activation of roads
- do more to enable natural

resource districts to accurately and consistently track ministry inspections and maintenance on forest service roads

- assess whether the natural resource districts are inspecting forest service roads as required by policy and take action to reconcile any gaps
- reconcile the discrepancy between policy requirements and the extent of maintenance that actually occurs, given resource allocations

- support the effective oversight of forest service roads that are under road use permits, including improving the supervision of road maintenance by the permit holder
- BC Timber Sales should enable business areas to accurately and consistently track inspections and maintenance on FSRs

- BCTS should "assess whether it is inspecting and maintaining forest service roads as required by policy and take action to reconcile any gaps."

A ministry official said FLNRORD agreed with the report's findings that there are opportunities for improvement in the management of forest service roads.

"To that end, we are creating new FSR data systems and reviewing and reconciling policies to address the Auditor General's findings and recommendations," said ministry spokesperson Tyler Hooper. "We are also committed to aligning policy and improving the tracking and inspection of maintenance being done on FSRs by government to ensure consistency and accountability."



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COLUMBIA KOOTENAY Cultural ALLIANCE

Credit union service cuts a ‘disservice’, says Kaslo mayor

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Kootenay Savings Credit Union has made more changes to its branch hours starting January 25.

Both the Kaslo and New Denver branches are now open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 am to 3 pm, and the Nakusp and South Slocan branches are open Tuesday-Saturday, 10 am-3 pm. The seniors-only hour from 10 am to 11 am has been discontinued.

Despite the shorter hours, KSCU says employees will still be on site conducting advisory appointments by phone or responding to calls to its Member

Service Centre.

“Branch transaction volume trends have been monitored over the last few years and we have seen a decreasing trend,” the credit union said in a document on its website. “In addition, several alternate ways to bank have been added over the last few years.

“There is no doubt members’ banking behaviours are changing,” it continues. “What’s not changing is our commitment to offering you choice and trusted advice to assist you with your financial goals.”

But the change of service – and how it was rolled out – isn’t going down well with Kaslo civic leaders.

“On behalf of council, I will

express our disappointment at how the days and hours of operation were considered, without any consultation with our residents or business owners who rely on your banking services,” Mayor Suzan Hewat wrote to a senior manager at KSCU, Colleen Yee.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Kaslo’s branch hours were reduced to Tuesday-Saturday, 10 am-3 pm (from Tuesday-Saturday, 9:30 am-4:30 pm pre-pandemic). Now they are being further reduced to Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 10 am-3 pm.

Hewat pointed out the change to Monday, Wednesday and Friday “is a disservice to business owners

and people who work weekdays, as they cannot conveniently get to the bank except on Saturday.”

The mayor also pointed out that ending Thursday service would affect residents living north of Kaslo, who only get bus service to town on that day. As well, there are many statutory holidays on Mondays, affecting the credit union’s hours.

“And we have a lot of seniors here,” she told the *Valley Voice*. “The push for online banking – where does that leave them?”

In a later exchange with Yee, Hewat said the manager told her she may be able to consider an alternate opening day on those weeks with statutory holidays.

However, Hewat reports that Yee indicated the reduction in hours is likely permanent.

While Hewat says there’s probably nothing council can do about it, her letter on behalf of council to Yee remained hopeful.

“We appreciate the support of KSCU and recognize its importance to our community,” Hewat wrote. “It is with great regret that we see the scaling back of financial services to our residents and businesses and we hope to see services restored once we are through these troubling times and would welcome further dialogue with you regarding this matter.”

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Musician's posts raise hundreds for Slocan food bank

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

It seems even COVID-19 can't quash the generosity of Slocan Valley residents. If anything, it gave it a boost.

A Slocan Park musician handed a cheque for nearly \$1,300 to the Slocan Valley Food Cupboard earlier this month, money he raised by "virtually busking" outside the Slocan

Valley Co-op.

"I wasn't surprised because I know valley people are so generous," said Bill Hillary. "I was humbled and proud at the same time."

Hillary, a retired contractor and hobby farmer in Slocan Park, plays music as a passion. He even has a local band, the Back Road Dogs, who performed irregularly for fun in pre-COVID

days. And for the last few years, he's busked outside the co-op at Christmastime.

"It was a stretch, as the co-op doesn't usually allow buskers," he says. "But this was strictly for charity, so they supported it."

Because of public health orders, Hillary couldn't do his usual in-person fundraiser at the gas station and convenience store. So instead, he posted his songs to the web.

"I posted the first song at the beginning of December, and the last one on December 23," he says.

The result was rather astounding. Instead of raising about \$350 or so, he raised \$1,285.

"It was just a joy," he says.

The response was a surprise

for the co-op as well.

"At first I believed in order for the co-op to reach its maximum matched contribution of \$500, it was going to take a lot of effort on social media to encourage people to donate," says Slocan Valley Co-op Manager Chris Sapriken. "That goal was reached in less than a week after just three of Bill's performances were posted on Facebook. It really is encouraging to see such great support from our community, especially in these difficult times."

Help for after the holidays

On January 14, Hillary dropped a cheque off to the Food Cupboard in Slocan.

"I know after the Christmas

season, the food bank is especially in need, so maybe this will remind folks when they have some extra change," he says.

You can hear the songs he uploaded by visiting his or the co-op's Facebook page. And don't worry about it not being Christmas – the songs he's posted aren't particularly seasonal in nature.

"They're all depressing, secular songs," he chuckles.

"Songs that kind of make people think about people who might not be having that good of a time at Christmas. People who don't have all that stuff."

They may not be Christmassy, but the spirit of the season still worked its magic.

And with the encouragement of this year, Hillary pledges to be back next season – and maybe bring some of his band members along for a live concert.



Bill Hillary delivers a \$1,285 cheque to the Slocan Food Cupboard after raising funds by virtually busking outside the Slocan Valley Co-op. The co-op topped it up by \$500.

Annual allowable cut under review for Kootenay Lake Timber Supply Area

by Jan McMurray

The Kootenay Lake Timber Supply Review is underway, and will result in an updated annual allowable cut (AAC) for the region encompassing Kaslo, Nelson and Creston.

In this review, the chief forester will determine the maximum amount of timber that is reasonable to harvest from the Kootenay Lake Timber Supply Area, which includes the tenures held by five large companies – Kalesnikoff, Porcupine, Atco, Canfor, and JH Huscroft – as well as BC Timber Sales.

The review does not include the community forests, First Nations woodlands, or woodlots operating in the region; these types of tenures have a separate AAC determination process.

The AAC is updated once every 10 years. In 2010, it was set at 640,000, down from 681,300

in 2001.

The process to determine the AAC has three stages. The first stage is underway. Comments are being accepted until February 5 on the Draft Data Package, a technical report that describes the data and assumptions that will be used in the timber supply review. In the second stage, a Public Discussion Paper describing the availability of timber supply is made available for public and First Nations consultation. In the third stage, the AAC determination is made, and a document explaining the rationale behind the decision is released to the public.

Once the chief forester has set the AAC, the Minister of Forests allocates the AAC to the general types of forest licences.

The draft Data Package is available online. To find it, search for 'Kootenay Lake Timber Supply Area.'

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ARCTIC OUTFLOW Claire Dibble

The culmination of an artist's residency aboard a ship sailing in the Arctic waters of Svalbard, "Arctic Outflow" reflects on the ways that humans are embedded in even the most remote landscapes on Earth. Using photo transfer images, bits of marine rubbish collected on shorelines, and found rope Claire Dibble's work expresses a commentary on consumerism, acceptance, and seeking beauty in our current situation.

Opening Saturday, February 6 - April 4

MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS by Bryn Stevenson

An avid adventurer into the high alpine, Stevenson paints from his own Photography, drawings, and direct experiences of local hikes and scenery. Using a knife, brush, paint, and intuition, he is determined to capture the magnificence, energy, and light held in the peaks and meadows he explores.

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New emergency vehicle for Lardeau Valley First Responders

by Jan McMurray

The Lardeau Valley First Responders now have their own emergency vehicle, purchased from the Ymir Fire Department.

Kaslo and Area Fire Chief Douglas Yee said the Kaslo department bought it “so that the First Responders in the Lardeau Valley would not have to attend calls in their personal vehicles, as they have been doing. This lets them carry their equipment in a dedicated vehicle while also providing enhanced scene safety with a clearly marked emergency vehicle.”

Robyn and Glen Skobalski, primary first responders in the Lardeau Valley for about six years, are thrilled to have the new vehicle. They have filled it with all their supplies, which were at the hall in Meadow Creek, and have been able

to equip it with additional items, as well.

“The back of the truck looks almost like the interior of an ambulance,” says Robyn. “We’re not trained to the level of paramedics so it’s not quite the same as an ambulance, and we can’t transport patients, but we can put them in the back of our vehicle and keep them warm and work on them until the ambulance arrives.”

Robyn notes that it can take the ambulance quite a while to get there at times. “Sometimes it’s the difference between life and death, so the vehicle will help that much more.”

The vehicle is parked in an old shop on private property in the valley, very close to where the Skobalskis live. The owners of Hamill Creek Timber Frame have generously offered the space, where

the vehicle can be plugged in and protected from the weather.

The Lardeau Valley First Responders are part of the Kaslo Fire Department. Robyn says

they feel very well supported by the department, and they have a great relationship with the local ambulance workers.

Anyone interested in joining the

Lardeau Valley First Response team can call the Kaslo Fire Department.

In an emergency, always call 911. The 911 dispatcher will contact the appropriate emergency responders.



Robyn and Glen Skobalski, Lardeau Valley first responders, are thrilled to have a new emergency vehicle.

Divine Fayerie exhibiting Frantisek Strouhal's artworks

submitted

West Kootenay artist Frantisek Strouhal is exhibiting in the new Divine Fayerie boutique in Castlegar.

Divine Fayerie is a gemstone and crystal boutique that features works by artists and artisans of the Kootenays. Erica, the face of Divine Fayerie, wants to bring divine love and light to the world through earth elements and alternative healing therapies and medicines. She envisions Divine Fayerie as a sacred healing space to help raise universal consciousness. Divine

Fayerie is an eco-friendly shop only using eco-friendly packaging.

“It is a privilege to showcase Strouhal’s exquisite work,” Erica says.

Strouhal is internationally known for his powerful expressions of the human body and spirit. His visual art and writing advocate the need for a change in consciousness within each one of us.

There is an increasing amount of scientific proof that art enhances brain function. It has an impact on brainwave patterns, emotions, and the nervous system. Art can change a person’s outlook and the way they

experience the world. Through the medium of art, we can be elevated to a different plane of consciousness where we feel rapture – pleasure, peace and harmony.

Strouhal’s ‘Art Embracing Awareness’ portfolio embraces the idea that all human beings, regardless of their differences in appearance, position, language, behavior, and values, are entitled to live in peace just as they are.

Everyone is welcome to experience a moment of serenity in the intimate environment of Divine Fayerie located at the Castleaird Shopping Centre in Castlegar.



Joan Scholz (nee Hurst) 1938-2021

I would like to announce the passing of Mom. She was born in New Denver, raised in Slocan and resided in Perry Siding where she raised 3 daughters with Rudy Scholz. She leaves behind Betty-Ann Thompson, Linda Jennings and Shelly Scholz as well as 7 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. She loved gardening and looking after her flowers. She will be missed. There will be no celebration of life.

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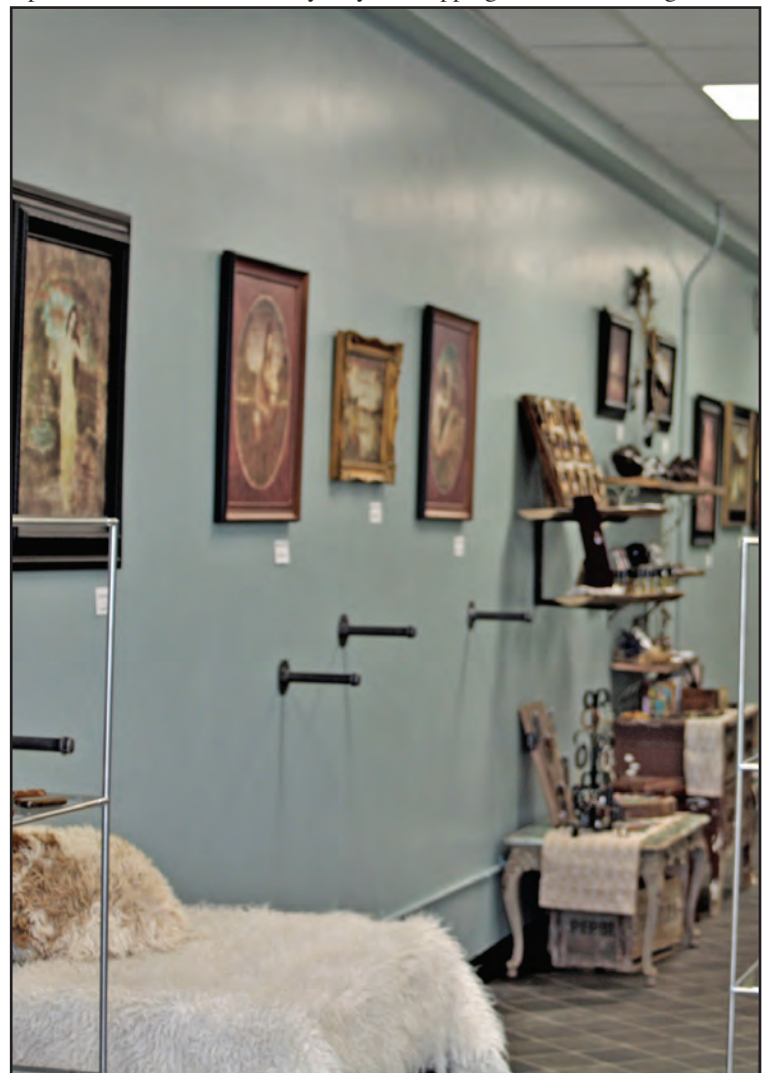
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The artwork of local artist Frantisek Strouhal is showing at Divine Fayerie in Castlegar.

Slocan musician reforming pop culture from the inside out

submitted

Slocan musician Akefa (pronounced Ah-keh-fah) Azu is about to release her counter-culture concept album, a pop experimental titled *Immortal*, this spring. This bushwhacked wild woman puts the medicine in the music, calling her genre 'kombucha' – the healthful pop alternative.

Her lyrics contain a depth of soul that is uncharacteristic of mainstream pop music. She admits that her mission is to change the listener from the inside out, by making the message count. "I yearn to rehab the listener. We have conditioned ourselves to half-listen to music. It's instinctive because we subconsciously know that the content is crap."

She challenges listeners to practice actively listening to the music they expose themselves to, and see how it feels in their bodies. "Like Allen Carr says in his guide to quitting smoking, when you fully participate in doing something harmful to yourself, you get the signal to stop," she says. "It's when we are unconscious that we can

continue acts of self-harm. That's why so many conscious folks like me stop listening to mainstream

music. But I'm sure that we don't have to throw the baby out with the bathwater."



Slocan musician Akefa Azu will release *Immortal*, her counter-culture pop experimental album this spring.

Akefa hopes that what she is doing inspires other artists as well. "I genuinely believe we can be the change we want to see... Music is powerful magic, and I want to emancipate it and elevate it to its former glory!" she exclaims. "We gotta look at what spells we are casting on the public. Do they bring us together or divide us, do they make us feel hopeful and powerful, or discouraged and weak?"

The central theme of *Immortal* is empowered love. "I feel my music is more relevant than ever in this climate of division and fear. I seek to encourage us all to keep focusing on love."

Akefa expects her song 'Solitude' to be a balm of validation for the isolated, estranged, and lonely, and 'Practice,' to give hope and guidance to us all, reminding us to practice self-acceptance, self-love, and self-care.

She is working hard to have the

album available for download from her website on March 2. If you want to pre-order or if you want to join her community to get exclusive access to what this spirited woman is up to, go to www.akefamusic.com. Her music will also be available on all major platforms as of March 22. Spread the word. The sonic revolution has arrived.

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The Langham's first-ever 'virtual' Polar Plunge makes a big splash!

submitted

The Langham Cultural Society's annual fundraiser, the New Year's Day Polar Plunge, has become a signature community event for Kaslo. Due to the pandemic, the event was forced to go virtual for 2021.

Polar plungers we're asked to plunge 'within their bubble' and to



Delanie Smith and Tyrell Green won the Langham's Most Creative Plunge Video Award.

video the plunge and share it with the community on the Langham Facebook page. Plungers were encouraged to be creative and plunge in any way they wanted.

The event turned out to be a big success – about 20 plungers (including four dogs!) raised over \$4,500 for the Langham's arts, culture and heritage programs. "We were very happily surprised with the results," says Langham Executive Director Paul Grace-Campbell. "Because of the pandemic, we were on the verge of writing the whole thing off this year. Then someone had the idea of a virtual plunge and folks just ran with it! A big thanks from the Langham to all who participated."

Prizes of \$75 gift certificates to Kaslo Front Street Market were

provided. Karen Pidcock won for gathering the most pledge money, and Delanie Smith and her son Tyrell Green won for most creative video. You can see all the plunge videos – and prize winners – on the Langham Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/thelangham>

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THE VILLAGE OF
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Two novice teams for Kaslo

submitted by Sarah Burns

The Kaslo & District Minor Hockey Association has two novice teams this year, with older Kaslo players on Nakusp and Nelson teams.

The Kaslo Winterhawks novice division continues to expand the program. The senior novice team has

players ranging from ages 5 to 13, and a junior novice team was added this year with players aged 4 to 6.

The public health orders due to the pandemic this year did not affect the program greatly, as the focus for the teams has been playing locally and developing skills through

practice and scrimmage.

It is very exciting to see fresh enthusiasm for hockey with a new generation of players. Thanks to the Kaslo Arena, parents and on-ice volunteers for helping this great group of kids have fun and play hockey!



Kaslo Winterhawks Junior Novice: Front row - Tess Dufort, Avery McGeorge, Mazie Carlson, Theo Howes, Rory Turner, Erik Bunney, Oakley Gillies, Ruby Gingerich, Leo Poisson. Back row - Coach Chase Sellwood, Junior Coach Ryatt Mercredi, Coach Jason Turner, Coach Sarah Burns, Coach Casey McKinnon. Missing - Maverick Chatfield, Byron Smith.



Kaslo Winterhawks Senior Novice: Front row - Xander Cameron, Hudson Danby, Jack Walker, Cailen Scott, Theo Carlson, Kaeda Dube, Keanna Tyers, Joseph Hume, Griffin Gillies, Fen Bunney, Will Danby. Back row - Coach Scott Gillies, Ryatt Mercredi, Trey Dufort, Coach Cal Walker, Ronin Dube, Lily Kinnear, Fynn Wilson, Lochlan Dube, Tyson Austin, Coach Chase Sellwood, Ella Kinnear, Coach James Danby, Coach Sarah Burns. Missing - Soren Stewart, Emma Gillies, Piper Wiens, Bodyn Gillies.



The Nakusp & District Minor Hockey Association's U18 team practises their passing skills at the Nakusp arena.



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The Nakusp Minor Hockey program is running with four house league teams this year.

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Nakusp Minor Hockey keeps on keepin' on through the pandemic

by Jan McMurray

The Nakusp Minor Hockey program is running with four house league teams this year, and has done well despite having to navigate the public health orders related to the pandemic.

When the program started in the fall, games were allowed. Then in early December, the provincial health officer made tighter restrictions, and only practices have been allowed since.

"We're hoping things will get back to normal next year, but this year, it's just how it is. The kids are happy that they are still able to get out and practice at least," says Kristy Robins, treasurer and registrar for the Nakusp Minor Hockey Association.

Nakusp has 11 players on the initiation team, and 18 players on the U11 team (formerly called the Atoms). Of special note – there are two U18 teams (formerly Midgets) this year. Nakusp has the distinction of being the only association in the West Kootenay to have two U18 teams. One U18 team has 11 players, and the other has 14. There are eight players from Kaslo on those teams, and both goalies are

from Kaslo.

There are no rep teams this year, and no one over 18 is allowed to play indoor sports, so the Nakusp men's and ladies' leagues are not running right now with the restrictions.

Robins says that at the beginning of the season, when games were allowed, the West Kootenay Minor Hockey Association did a good job of setting up cohorts for each of the divisions and scheduling games within the cohorts. That happened for a few weekends before the program had to be scaled down to practices only.

"We can't have any contact of any sort," she said. "The kids have to be three metres apart at all times, and only coaches and players can be in the arena. No parents or spectators are allowed, so it's hard for the little ones. Our numbers are down because a lot of those little ones need the support of their parents."

"It's sad, because the Bantams did so well last year, and it's pretty much the same team this year, so it would have been fun to see what they could have done," said Robins. "The one U18 team is mostly going to graduate, so they've been in hockey since they were four years old and now, for their final

season, they're back to just practicing."

Fundraising has been difficult, too. The association raises most of its funds at 50-50 draws at the games. The arena concession is also a regular source of funding for them. The Falcon's Cup adult tournament is another annual fundraiser for the association, but couldn't happen this year. The Legion held some meat draws for Minor Hockey until they were prohibited by provincial health orders. However, Robins says they've done well with their fundraising in the past, so they are not struggling now. "And we still

try to help families out," she says. "Last year, we bought lots of gear, so we can lend out gear every year."

There was extra training for

referees and coaches to help them work with the COVID protocols – and then the referees had a very short season while games were allowed.

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Curlers see early end to season; Kaslo Arena may shut down early

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Curlers in Nakusp are calling it quits and minor hockey players in Kaslo may face an early end to their season as arena managers in that community face mounting budget deficits.

The Nakusp Curling Club announced last week they were ending their season early as a result of a ban on adult group sports announced by the provincial health officer. And the Kaslo Arena board is considering closing the facility a month early because of the same COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, which will reduce revenues.

Soon after Nakusp curlers announced they were folding for the season, the Village announced it was going to pull the ice from that section of the sports complex. The main ice will be kept in until the usual end of the season, in March.

Unlike Kaslo, it's not directly tied to a funding squeeze from the loss of participants, says Nakusp Chief Financial Officer Mark Tennant.

"The deficit for the curling rink in 2020 is minimal – approximately \$4,800, which is actually slightly less than what we budgeted for," he told the *Valley Voice*. "This will impact us more so in 2021 and fortunately we will be able to account for that in the budget since it is so early in the year."

However, with no curlers, the Village was wasting money and energy keeping the rinks in. The Village receives about \$10,000 from the curling club each year, a small fraction of the \$410,000 it

receives annually from the RDCK to operate the facility.

Kaslo youth leagues cut?

Meanwhile, the future's not so clear yet for Kaslo Minor Hockey players. The volunteer board there will decide in early February if it should try to keep the season alive.

"We'll do our best to keep going, and hope for the next month people abide by the rules so we can go back to the way we were operating earlier in the season," says Molly Leathwood, who sits as the council representative on the Kaslo and District Arena Association.

The Kaslo Arena gets \$50,000 to operate annually from the Regional District of Central Kootenay, but that only covers a portion of the building's \$120,000 budget. The rest of it is covered by fees charged to user groups – especially adult users – for the facility.

"We opened the arena up a little late to all the user groups, with restrictions in place, and it was going pretty good," says Leathwood. "Then the restrictions were put in place on adult sports."

Since those orders came down, the arena association has done everything it can to keep the facility open for at least the youngest players. And she says minor hockey organizers have done an excellent job of making sure players and coaches are following public health protocols. But with most of its revenue gone from adult users, the arena just can't afford to remain open.

"We just want to make sure that when the end of the season comes we're not in a deficit," she said.

With the next RDCK grant not coming until September, the association faces a budget crunch.

"Our expenses are pretty high in winter months because of power. We pay an average of \$5,000 a month for power. But all of our income from minor hockey is less than \$1,000," she says.

The association has decided to keep the arena open until February 5,

Leathwood reports, when the Province decides whether they'll extend the restrictions or allow adult sports again.

"If we can open it up again for adult users and get through the season, then we would definitely keep it going. But if they don't ease up on the restrictions, and it's only youth hockey, then it's hard to justify staying open and operating with

SD 10 board, January 17: Board moves forward on Fauquier land sale

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

• Superintendent Terry Taylor opened her report to Arrow Lakes School District 10's board of trustees with a headline that's getting to be a regular item: the district's enrollment is going up.

"Slow but steady," is how Taylor described it to the board. The district saw a net increase of four students in the last month. Six new students were added to the Distant Learning program, and two more to Nakusp Elementary's enrolment. However, two students left both Edgewood Elementary and Nakusp Secondary, making for the net increase of four.

• After five years of hard work and navigating the labyrinth of property sale procedures, SD 10 staff have seen some progress in their plan to sell the old school property in Fauquier to the community.

"Amidst many delays exacerbated by the pandemic, slow and steady progress on the Fauquier School property file has been made," Taylor told the board. "Application was approved by the Ministry of Transportation and the Agricultural Land Commission to subdivide the property into two lots in the fall – these are significant milestones."

In a process that began in 2015, the board committed to sell one building lot at a "modest price" to the community of Fauquier, while the second lot will be put up for sale at market value.

"Hopefully we'll make enough back to cover the cost of the subdivision," Taylor said, only half-joking.

It doesn't mean the land sale will happen right away. Taylor says their application is sitting with the Ministry of Education for its approval as per the *School Act*. The final review period ends February 28, "at which point district staff anticipate good news," she told the board.

Taylor credited Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Shelly Woolf for her work and RDCK Director Paul Peterson for his "unwavering support" for the project.

• Things are getting shuffled around at the Burton Community Learning Centre.

The community school has seen an absolute renaissance in recent years, thanks to young families moving into the area. In recognizing the new need for space, the BCLC has moved its gym and fitness equipment out of the school building.

Taylor says both increased enrolment pressures at Burton School and pandemic constraints prompted the group to move its equipment out.

There are three classrooms at Burton School with one classroom currently in use for a primary class, and the second for intermediate students. The third classroom, recently vacated by Burton Community Learning Centre, is being

that much of a deficit."

RDCK closes facilities

The news comes as the regional government also struggles with its budget. Earlier this month, the Regional District of Central Kootenay announced it was closing two of its five ice sheets to cut costs. The Pioneer Arena in Castlegar and the Nelson Civic Centre will be closed

used for Strong Start programming.

The classroom pressure is a far cry from the dark days of 2012, when only a handful of students remained at Burton Elementary, prompting its closure. It proved only temporary, however, and Taylor credits the BCLC for taking care of the building and maintaining it during the downtime.

She says BCLC will continue with shared use of the school library and Burton Reading Centre.

• Plenty of daycare news for the district as well. Taylor reported that the final architectural drawings have been completed for the Nakusp Child Care Centre by district architects, engineers and consultants.

The Request for Proposals – the official call-out for contractors to bid on the project – should be ready by late February.

"The project is proceeding on time, albeit with minor adjustments to the schedule, and is on budget," reported Taylor.

Meanwhile, operations at the newly opened Goat Mountain Child Care Centre in New Denver are going well, says Taylor, with qualified staff serving the needs of a growing number of young children and families. Some final tweaks to the construction job are being completed now, which has set back the final reconciliation of the project for funders. But Taylor says,

Kaslo's big-picture plans need more hands

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The Village of Kaslo has an "urgent need" for more staff if the local government is going to meet its ambitious five-year plan, say officials at city hall.

The plea for more bodies at the village office was made at the end of a planning document presented to council at a Committee of the Whole meeting earlier this month.

The 2021-25 Corporate Plan outlines the strategic priorities for the Village and community, and the updated version builds on plans that were first outlined in 2015.

As is common with such documents, it lists both general goals and specific targets around areas of interest, including the economy, arts and culture, community health, planning and capital projects. Items can be as specific as installing new public toilets in a park to more general, like reviewing housing needs or the need to repeal obsolete bylaws.

Within the general corporate strategies, council develops and manages specific programs on a yearly basis. And, staff note in the report, it's a big job.

"There are a total of 61 priorities listed in the 'Corporate Strategic Priorities Grid' covering all of the areas of focus – a daunting number for a Village with a small staff and resources," it says. "But we fulfilled 27 of

after the adult sport restrictions cut the RDCK's revenues by \$118,000 this fall.

"Decisions like this, although difficult, are important to ensure that the cost of our recreation services are balanced between user fees and taxation," said Joe Chirico, the manager of community services for the regional government.

"The project remains within budget and a beautiful child care centre... has been created." There's no word on when the official opening will take place, thanks to COVID.

Taylor wrapped up her update on the child care service by noting the NDP government plans to move delivery of child care to the Ministry of Education by 2023. "All current and future Shared Use Agreements with non-profit childcare providers will comply with forthcoming Board Policy and the *School Act*," she noted.

• The massive wind storm that passed through the area on January 13 caused some damage to Nakusp Elementary playground structures, closing schools for the day and snarling buses with downed trees – but thankfully no one was hurt. The NES forest play area and the damaged area of the playground are currently out of bounds and cordoned off while an assessment of trees on NES and all school properties is conducted.

• And Taylor ended her report with another dollop of good news. Based on September enrolment numbers, which were much higher than projected, the district's operating grant increased to \$8,896,161 – about \$760,229 higher than projected.

There may be more adjustments upward to that, as new students still trickle into the district, especially for distance learning.

these priorities and continue to work on the rest of them with a multi-year outlook."

Staff capacity, training and succession will be a significant challenge, as "the job of running the Village does not get any easier," the report states.

The staff make a direct pitch for more help at city hall. They note the Village currently has grant applications or involvement in projects totaling over \$17 million in value, which require an estimated 3,400 hours of management time to administer and execute... "on top of the normal day-to-day management activities," says the planning document.

"This situation underscores the urgent need for additional management capacity at the Village Office," the report says. "A critical strategic planning outcome will be for staff and Council to determine how this gap can be filled without being burdensome to the local tax base."

The planning document also points out the fragile economic status of the local government, and urges caution.

"The Village of Kaslo continues to be reliant on grant funding to remain sustainable due to the limited local tax base," it notes. "Although grant funding has been generous recently, particularly with the \$480,000 in COVID Rapid Response funding we received, we must be cautious of what lies ahead and how the money is spent."

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Norma Waldron 1940-2021

Norma Waldron of New Denver, born November 6, 1940, passed away January 4, 2021, at Kootenay Lake Hospital following a brief battle with cancer.

Norma spent her working career in several cities throughout BC, eventually settling and retiring in Castlegar before coming to live in New Denver in 2014. She enjoyed walking and exploring around town, with her favourite walk being the Mori Trail along the lakeshore. It was on one these walks that she met her close friend Gary.

Norma was predeceased by her parents and sister, Margaret Fallon, and is survived by her cousin in Vancouver and her second niece in Calgary.

We will miss you, Norma, at our regular breakfast outings and birthday dinners.

Missed by Gary, Lora Lee, Grace, Pete Vanin, Mark and Vicky, and Tom and Daphne in New Denver and her close friends Grace Mills and Faith Sontag in Castlegar, and Carl and Daphne Halvorsen of Langdon, AB.

New Denver council, January 12: Voting opportunity coming soon for boundary extension

by **Kathy Hartman**

• Village residents will soon have a chance to weigh in on the Denver Siding and area boundary extension. To move forward, the boundary extension must be approved by the eligible voters of the municipality, either through a referendum or the Alternate Approval Process (AAP). Council approved the AAP option, as it is faster and less expensive than a referendum.

In the AAP, only voters who are against the boundary extension register their votes. Those in favour do nothing. If 10% or more of New Denver's eligible voters register their dissent, the AAP fails and the extension cannot move ahead. Should this happen, the Village would likely hold a referendum.

Notice of the AAP is being given through an advertisement in the January 28 and February 11 issues of

the *Valley Voice*. Between February 12 and March 15, voters who are against the boundary extension can register their dissent on an elector response form, available from the Village office or website. Completed and signed forms must be returned to the Village office by 4 pm on Monday, March 15, in person or via Canada Post. Emailed or faxed forms will not be accepted.

Results of the AAP will be

announced at the March 19 council meeting.

The boundary extension is being proposed mainly as a solution for Denver Siding water users. The Denver Siding water system has been on boil water notice since April 2004 because it is a surface water system with no treatment. The Village has received confirmation of funding to improve the Denver Siding water distribution system if the boundary extension goes ahead, allowing Denver Siding residents to connect to the Village water supply. The boundary extension takes in Denver Siding, properties between New Denver and Denver Siding, and properties outside of the Village that are already connected to the Village water system.

• Council gave staff the go-ahead to apply for three grants. One of the grants, from the National Association of Japanese Canadians, would provide \$1,500 to recover lost revenue during the closure of the Nikkei Centre in May and June 2020. The other two grants, through the Canada Summer Jobs program and the federal Young Canada Works in Heritage Organizations program, would provide wage subsidies for summer employees. The Village has accessed Canada Summer Jobs funding for many years to offset the costs of hiring summer students for the Nikkei Centre and the public works department. If funding is not received for Nikkei Centre summer staff, the digitization project will not proceed, and staffing levels in the gift shop will be reduced to minimum levels.

• The Village will provide a letter of support for the New Denver and Area Housing Society's application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Green Municipal

Fund Sustainable Affordable Housing program. This program provides funding to study how to achieve a net zero energy building for the proposed 10-unit affordable housing project.

The Village has already provided a letter of support for the society's BC Housing application. The NDAHS should hear back from BC Housing this spring.

• Council voted to limit participation in council meetings to virtual only. In order to comply with the guidelines set by the provincial health officer, no members of the public or the press may attend meetings in council chambers. Members of the public or the press wishing to participate are encouraged to do so remotely via telephone or video conferencing. Draft agenda packages for regular council meetings will be posted publicly on the Village website Friday afternoon before the meeting. Members of the public are invited to submit written comments regarding items on the agenda up until 4 pm on the day of the meeting. These comments will be presented to council during the 'public comments' portion of the meeting.

• Emma Beaton, Slocan Valley Chamber of Commerce manager, expressed the Chamber's appreciation to the Village for the upkeep of the local sidewalks and trails along the dyke and thanked the Village for the lighting installed on the main street this holiday season. The letter stated "These things promote community pride and make our village an inviting place for visitors and prospective residents. Be assured that the Chamber board and many local citizens are very pleased with these community improvements."

Silverton council, January 13: Acting Mayor Leah Main promises to take care of business

by **Moe Lyons**

• Acting Mayor Leah Main made an opening statement to start off the new year in the absence of an elected mayor. "I am sitting here in a mayoral 'caretaker' position in our established acting mayor rotation... The business of the Village does not stop just because a particular permanent office is not filled, and it is my intention to take care of the business of the Village during the time I sit in this chair."

"There is a pace to the business of local government, a schedule of items that need attending to, and a roadmap of activities that need to happen regardless of bumps in the political road. I will work closely with our CAO and council to ensure that Silverton meets all statutory and practical deadlines, remains functional and well looked after, and can thrive in the coming months, regardless of what challenges come our way."

"We will continue to meet virtually, in compliance with the December 2 Public Health Order on Gatherings and Events, which, in part, restricts members of the public from attending all local government meetings and public hearings in person."

• Councillor Kerry Gordon stated she felt that the appointments of councillors to various committees, as determined at last month's meeting, should wait until a new mayor had been elected. She requested a change to the minutes in regards to the appointments. Main replied that council had a statutory duty to make these appointments on an annual basis, and that these appointments could be revisited if deemed necessary or advisable after a new mayor is elected. She said minutes could not be changed "to change what actually happened at the meeting."

• CAO Hillary Elliott was asked for a byelection update. She said she had no new information since last month's meeting, and referred council to her report. The Village is awaiting further correspondence and clarification from Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Elections BC and IHA re procedures for holding a byelection during COVID-19.

Elliott has determined the approximate cost of the byelection to be \$6,000, based on the previous election and the addition of an option for all eligible voters to vote with a mail-in ballot.

Councillor K. Gordon feels the byelection should be the top priority and expressed deep concerns about the timeline. She asked about the possibility of hiring someone other than Elliott to be chief election officer, to fast track the process. CAO Elliot said she would try to report back on this at the February meeting.

• Correspondence from the Healthy Community Society outlined the community composting program, presented the program budget, and asked what kinds of support the program could expect from the Village. Council agreed (with Councillor K. Gordon opposed) to refer this to the upcoming Village budget discussion – but not without considerable discussion first.

Councillor Tanya Gordon wanted to know if a request for support for the program would come up every year, and wondered if there would be compensation for Silverton's loss of one composter. Main said she didn't know if this would be an annual request, and noted that Silverton has three composters, "which is what we started with."

Councillor K. Gordon said she and Councillor Arlene Yofonoff are the Village liaisons to this program, and haven't been receiving reports on it. She suggested no money be offered to the project.

Following the meeting, the manager of the compost project, Julia Greenlaw, wrote a letter of apology addressed to Councillor K. Gordon and copied to all council members and the Village, assuring them they'd be kept up to date. Greenlaw acknowledged that they had failed to put Councillors Yofonoff and K. Gordon on their mailing list because they had been focusing on communicating with users of the service.

Also during the discussion on the composting project agenda item, K. Gordon asked that all correspondence and communications always be in the minutes available to the public. Main replied that correspondence is in the agenda package, not in the minutes, and the public has access to the agenda packages.

K. Gordon also asked how councillors could participate in drafting the agenda. Main replied it is not the job of council to construct the agenda, and that council members can submit items by noon

on Wednesday a week before the meeting. K. Gordon replied, "How can we assure the items make it there? Because they're not." Main replied councillors have the opportunity to raise issues in the councillors' reports. K. Gordon wound up by saying, "These concerns are greater than my voice."

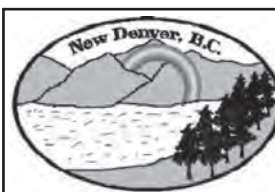
• Councillor T. Gordon reported that rat activity has picked up quite a bit and wants to remind residents to get trapping, and not to put food waste in their personal compost.

• Councillor T. Gordon also reported on a "really productive" campground project meeting and said people can look forward to more news soon. CAO Elliott said the contractors are "looking at the last pieces of the puzzle," mainly timelines for the permits from DFO and MOE. A draft will soon be ready and a special meeting will be called. She said this was "reasonably imminent."

• Councillor Yofonoff expressed safety concerns with logging trucks from a private operation coming down a decommissioned road directly behind her house. She said the homeowner had access to Red Mountain Road as an alternate route. She also said large trees are falling down as a result, and she believes these should be given to the campground for firewood. Main said there was no policy on this, and the Village should seek clarification on who has jurisdiction over the decommissioned road.

• The application form and parameters for grants-in-aid are attached to the agenda for perusal by the general public. Some grants-in-aid are disbursed annually. These include: Chamber of Commerce (\$24 per business licence), Community Club (\$1,000), Royal Canadian Legion (\$50), Slocan Lake Arts Council (\$5,000).

• The meeting wound up with the public input session. Policy now states that questions will not necessarily receive an immediate response, including questions from the press. Don Broughton asked some questions about the campground planning documents and was told by Councillor T. Gordon that the information he was asking for had been given to him and to the contractors. Press asked a question about hiring for the byelection and was invited to meet with Acting Mayor Main at a later time for clarification.



VILLAGE OF NEW DENVER PUBLIC NOTICES

2021 UTILITY BILLINGS

Invoices for 2021 water and garbage charges have been mailed to property owners. If you have not received your invoice please contact the Village Office. Please utilize the drop box located at front door if paying by cheque. Payments can be made in person at the Village Office (cash or debit) or through Kootenay Savings Credit Union's online banking as well.

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.

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Nakusp council, January 11: From marina to arena, Nakusp ponders infrastructure needs

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Marina woes

News the Village may have to take over operations of the marina raised some concerns around the council table.

The Village heard earlier this month the Nakusp Launch Club Society, which runs the facility, was disbanding for lack of membership. The society wants to turn in the keys to council by the end of March.

While Village staff seem confident they can manage the operation (with perhaps some hires), councillors were concerned about the size of the project being taken on.

"This has the potential to have significant impact on services and taxation," said Councillor Joseph Hughes. "Look how much trouble we have getting grants for the arena. This would just be another massive one on the list."

"That is correct," agreed CFO Mark Tennant.

Hughes suggested the council go to the community with the issue for consultation and direction. He suggested the town could, as a last resort, turn the facility over to BC Hydro for removal.

Mayor Zeleznik said he was reaching out to MLA Katrine Conroy for a meeting to see if she could intervene to help solve the community's ongoing problem with BC Hydro's lack of support for the marina. He pointed out other communities on the lake have breakwaters and boat launches maintained by Hydro, while Nakusp is responsible for its own.

"If it goes under, it could

really affect the economics of this community," the mayor commented.

The issue went to council's strategic planning meeting for further discussion.

Arena heating study rejected

Councillors unanimously rejected a report that recommended the Village forget about producing biomass energy to heat and power the local arena, and instead go for a completely different system.

The report by Rocky Point Engineering, which was hired by the Columbia Basin Trust to assess the Village proposal, said biomass wouldn't meet the community's needs, and recommended instead council use a proven system to save money on the ice-making at the community complex.

The Village of Nakusp wants to install a new biomass boiler system to replace the existing electric boilers that provide domestic hot water and hydronic heating to the building. It could be expanded to serve other buildings as well, and would use local wood waste for power generation.

Council had gone to the CBT for a \$100,000 grant for upgrading the facility's systems for energy efficiency.

But the consultants found that "...at an estimated capital cost of \$637,200 this is a very expensive project and our analysis indicates this cost will not be recovered over the estimated lifespan of the boiler; therefore, we do not recommend proceeding with this project."

The REALice system—at a cost of about \$40,000—was a much better investment, the consultant said.

The report did not impress council.

"I struggled with this, I think there are some flaws in it," said Zeleznik, who's been studying biomass energy systems for years. "I still think we have to go with biomass. We know it's proven."

Councillor Ken Miller, who used to work at the arena, agreed.

"The figures don't seem to jive. It's theoretic, even the life expectancy," he says. "...I want to be convinced these work."

However, the Village CFO, Mark Tennant, pointed out the grant application had to prove its numbers made sense, and the consultant's report showed biomass wouldn't; so the particular grant council was seeking might not be available.

With only a day or two before the grant deadline, councillors chose to stand down on the grant application.

Ice House renos

A plan to do something with the old Ice House at 96 3rd Avenue downtown is going forward to a public hearing. The applicants want to construct a new foundation for the historic building, and are asking council to allow for a reduction of the front yard setback from 16 feet to 1.25 feet.

The plan is to renovate the structure to accommodate two, two-bedroom rental units (one up and

one on main floor). Each unit would have proper parking as well as its own yard to enjoy.

"Keeping it in its current location will allow us to provide a beautiful yard space for each rental unit as well as providing off street parking for them," the proponents wrote to council.

Councillors did have some concerns however, especially about allowing smaller setbacks from the property line. The proponents were to have a chance to defend their proposal at the January 26 council meeting.

Green motion

Council is taking its push to be able to access green energy another step up the lobbying ladder. It passed a motion at its January

Fee increases in future for Nakusp residents

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

By the time you read this, the fees for some services from the Village of Nakusp will likely be increased. Council approved a new rate schedule for civic services at its January 11 meeting, and was expected to ratify them at its January 25 meeting.

Some of the changes are as follows.

The Winter Wednesday discount at the Hot Springs will no longer apply to tourists, just locals. "Many tourists show up expecting to pay full price and end up receiving the discount," staff note.

While waste fees were "right where they needed to be to cover the cost of collection" last year, that cost is going up, staff warned. Expenses are anticipated to increase by about 6.5% in 2021. To cover the increase, staff proposed increasing the cost of Village bags from \$3 to \$3.25 and non-residential receptacles from \$21 per cubic metre to \$22.50 per cubic metre.

It's going to cost more to connect to the Village sewer system, as staff warned that connection fees are substantially underpriced for the cost.

"Typically, a straightforward connection will cost approximately \$2,300," the report says. Currently the new connection fee is the greater of \$1,385 and actual cost. Staff recommended amending the new connection fees to the greater of \$2,300 and actual cost.

Staff also recommends increasing sewer rates. An infrastructure report found that the Village needed to put more into its infrastructure reserve to cover capital replacement costs over the next 30 years.

"While we understand 2020 was a difficult year financially for many, staff recommends increasing sewer rates at least 5% for 2021 (\$22.61 for a single-family dwelling) to avoid falling farther behind in our capital replacement plan."

Water rates are also going to see

meeting to forward a resolution to the Association of Kootenay-Boundary Local Governments, which will then forward it up to the provincial organization, the Union of BC Municipalities.

The motion calls on the Province to allow municipalities to "have the option to obtain and use Green Energy within their communities to reduce the increasing energy costs... [and] to provide an alternate option that has low impact on aquatic ecosystems, habitat, land and communities."

"This resolution is very, very important," said Mayor Tom Zeleznik. "Hopefully all communities can get behind it, and we can all have a say in green energy, not just clean energy."

The motion comes after a

some hikes if council accepts staff recommendations. The report says the base fee for a new connection doesn't cover actual costs.

"Currently the new connection fee is the greater of \$1,320 and actual cost. Staff recommends amending the new connection fees to the greater of \$2,000 and actual cost," the report says. With a new well in the works and expanded service, staff warn the Village needs to replenish its reserves to avoid rate shocks in the future when

Nakusp rail trail washout repair project update

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Nakusp council's January 11 meeting opened with an update on efforts to repair the rail trail on the outskirts of town that was damaged by a washout. Janice Neufeld of the Kootenay Adaptive Sport Association attended the meeting virtually to tell council that they needed to move quickly to get the project underway.

Neufeld told council an engineering estimate has set repair costs for the trail at about \$90,000. While KASA will do the fundraising, she said they needed to start by showing funding agencies that the local government was behind their project.

"My confidence level is very high at this point that we'll have funding to move forward in 2021 to repair the washout," she said. "What needs to happen now, and I need mayor and council to understand very clearly, is the first thing that has to happen is the Licence of Occupation."

The LOO is necessary for her group to apply for numerous grants, she said.

"At any point if they come back and ask if I have permissions in place, that I've done all the proper consultation, then I need to supply that Licence of Occupation that basically proves all of that."

A Licence of Occupation (LOO) is a legal agreement authorizing the non-exclusive occupation of Crown

presentation in November from Hal Wright of Silversmith Power of Sandon. He told council his station can produce clean, run-of-river power, but they have a difficult time selling it to the grid. He was looking for support from communities like Nakusp to pressure the Province's utilities regulator to even the playing field for small, green producers.

Fire contract

The Village renewed its fire protection agreement with the RDCK, pretty much without comment. The agreement allows for the portion of Area K just outside Nakusp to receive fire services from Nakusp's volunteer crew. The RDCK is requesting to renew the agreement for five years, paying the Village \$78,336 for the service in this first year.

infrastructure needs replacement.

"Rather than increasing rates by 10% in five years to make up for these changes, staff's recommendation is to smooth it out with 2% annual increases," council was told.

This would result in an increase of \$8.54 in 2021 for a single-family dwelling.

Council needs to adopt the new fee structures by February 8 to have it ready for the first billing period of 2021.

lands for a specific period of time under specific terms and conditions from the Province. It's not quite a lease, but allows a certain user to use an area for a specific purpose.

Neufeld first asked for the LOO from council in October. Without it they'll deny the application, she warned.

"I really need to impress that the Licence of Occupation be moved upon, sooner than later," she said.

It seems there was a bit of miscommunication while trying to get moving on the project. Neufeld said the Village CAO, Cheryl Martens, was looking for KASA to get the funding first, before applying for the LOO.

"That's a Catch-22, I can't apply for the funding and then get the LOO. It has to come first."

Through different organizations, Neufeld hopes to raise the money for the completion of the project.

They also need a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure everyone agrees to their roles in repairing the trail.

KASA will fundraise and manage the project; the Village will apply for the Licence of Occupation and chip in for the engineering work to be done; and local trail organizations will commit to maintaining the trail after repairs are completed.

Mayor Zeleznik said he would look into where the Licence of Occupation process is right now with municipal staff.

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Kaslo council, January 12: Support for housing, Legion, racquet club

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

In addition to waiving business Licence fees for 2021, Kaslo Village councillors accomplished a lot at the January 12 meeting.

• The push to bring affordable housing to Kaslo got a boost from the Village. At an *in-camera* meeting of the Committee of the Whole in December, council passed a motion to support the Kaslo Housing Society's project if it receives funding. Council said it would contribute by rezoning the site and providing the land either at a nominal cost or as a long-term lease.

The support is being provided on the condition that there are long-term legal agreements ensuring the project is for people needing affordable housing.

The motion was ratified at the January 12 council meeting. The KHS project is now before funders for consideration.

• A Kaslo homeowning couple is getting some pushback on plans to expand a deck on their property. The owners of the house, on 245 A Avenue, want to reduce the setback from their property line from 3.9 metres to 1.67 (approximately 13 feet to five feet) metres to accommodate an addition to their existing deck. The project would also require the overall limit for building coverage on the property to be increased from 40% to 50% to accommodate the change.

Council held a public development variance meeting to hear arguments for and against the change. Two neighbours to the property wrote in to the hearing, objecting to the proposal. One said it would set a "dangerous precedent."

"Variances should be allowed only when there are special needs, such as providing a wheelchair-accessible ramp, or a small kiosk that acts as an historical interpretation

board, not simply because a residential property owner feels like expanding," wrote neighbour Rick Galbraith.

Village staff suggested that the applicant consider revising their plans to reduce the side setback variance being requested. Recognizing that the existing house and deck are already non-compliant, staff said some relief from the requirements can be justified, "but perhaps not to the extent being proposed."

The applicant, however, didn't show up, so council tabled the hearing until its January 26 meeting to allow the applicant to answer some questions.

• The former owner of 439 View Street has found you can't fight city hall. The Village had placed a Notice on Title for bylaw violations and property remediation in 2018, and put the property up for sale for unpaid taxes last year.

The property was sold by the owner before the tax sale was finalized and the proceeds were used to redeem the property. That turned out to be a \$30,000 payday for the Village. The new owners have promised to clean the site of noxious weeds by this spring, and with that pledge, the Village has removed the notice from the land.

"Staff have no concerns with removing the order and are happy to work with the new owners through the planning processes to redevelop the property," a report to council states.

Mayor Suzan Hewat declared a conflict and removed herself from the discussion of the issue, as she's a neighbour to the property.

• Staff will prepare a grant application to government for the replacement of the Kaslo Arena's ice condenser. The project, expected to cost \$200,000-\$250,000, can receive 100% funding from one of the federal/provincial COVID recovery pots of

money.

• The Kaslo Raquet Club wants the Village's help in expanding their facilities. The KRC wants to build new pickleball courts, rehabilitate the playing surface of the existing courts, install new fencing, lighting and install a small building with washroom. To do that they need a long-term lease and some adjustments to the boundaries of the property, located near the arena. Council directed staff to investigate the issue – there are technical and legal complications with trying to expand in that area – and report back on the project.

• The Village has chosen a manager for its Front Street Park construction project. Chris Temple will handle the construction of the stage and washrooms and will be paid a maximum of \$15,000 for the job. The work is expected to be done by early summer.

• The Village is going to take advantage of this year's reconstruction of the Highway 31 bridge over the Kaslo River. The Province has offered to include a sewer line connection across the river as part of the scope of the construction and design. The Village just has to pay for the pipe and materials needed to install it – about \$25,000 – saving the Village from the more expensive job of retrofitting a pipe in the future. Engineers will ensure the pipe will work with the planned sewer expansion. In related news, the Province has told the Village the bridge project may be ready to go out for tender as early as the end of

January.

• Council approved a plan by the Kaslo Legion to apply for grants to start planning major renovations to their building. The organization is looking for \$5,000 from the RDCK Community Development program to get the work underway. The building, constructed in 1901, needs significant repairs and even scoping and pricing

the project is a big job.

• Kaslo Hotel owner John Eckland wrote to council calling on it to ban Kaslo Jazz Fest, saying that the festival-free long weekend last summer worked out just fine. (The letter was published in the January 14 Valley Voice.) Council received the letter as information.

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An article on this page was found to be incorrect and has been redacted

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS
THE NORTH VALLEY Mountain Film Festival is now accepting submissions of short films and digital slideshows for its 2021 event. Visit www.northvalleyfilmfestival.com for event information and submission guidelines or email inquiries to northvalleyfilmfest@gmail.com

COMING EVENTS
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ATTENTION "AIR" TV VIEWERS IN SILVERTON, NEW DENVER, ROSEBERY, AND HILLS: Analog TV will remain available until all the new Digital TV licences are approved by Industry Canada and CRTC. This might take a while, so keep those antennas up and stay tuned! Area H North TV Society.

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HAVE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW been sexually assaulted and want help? Call the Interior Crisis Line 24/7 at 1-888-353-CARE to discuss your options or go directly to Arrow Lakes Hospital or your local emergency room for confidential care. **SILVERTON LAKESHORE INN** is looking for all the things taken from the hotel as follows: all the archive pictures that were displayed in hallway, BA sign orange and blue, grandfather clock, air conditioners in all the rooms, 5 old yellow hockey jerseys in frame with broken glass, and numerous other things. Please return, no questions asked.

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Selkirk College pre-med program invites community support

submitted

Selkirk College's Rural Pre-Medicine (RPM) Program is providing a successful post-secondary start for future healthcare professionals.

Growing up at the end of a dirt road along the shores of Duncan Lake in Howser, Jace Lamoureux's ambition to become a medical doctor started in September at Selkirk College, a place that feels custom-designed for his needs. A member of the first-year RPM cohort and graduate of Kaslo's JV Humphries School, Lamoureux did not need to look far to find the right fit.

"This school is an incredible transition for rural students," says Lamoureux. "To go from a school with less than 300 K-12 students to a university in a big city would be very difficult. The RPM Program is a lot of hard work, but the education is personalized and it is very helpful to have that strong connection with your instructors."

A stellar academic student and valedictorian for his 23 classmates who graduated from his high school in 2020, Lamoureux had no shortage

of post-secondary options. A leader in both the classroom and the community, the 18-year-old has already discovered the benefits of a close-to-home start to his education.

"The positive skills and habits that one is encouraged to build through the program helps me develop what is needed to succeed not only academically, but in anything I do in life," he says. "Through diverse and comprehensive courses, along with the additional coaching and preparation, I am acquiring the essentials needed to prepare me for what I will be facing down the road in my pathway to medical school."

The RPM Program was created in consultation with stakeholders from medicine and medical education. As the program continues towards its next stage of development, one of its foundational funding partners has provided a boost for the future. A partnership between the Doctors of BC and the Ministry of Health, the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues (JSC) has renewed its commitment to the Selkirk College program with a further \$1.074 million in funding for 2022-2024.

In addition to the JSC, the program receives financial support from regional hospital auxiliaries and the Kootenay Boundary Division of Family Practice, contributing more than over \$6,000 annually towards scholarships for graduates of local high schools.

The program is now inviting members of the public to participate as part of a community initiative to develop an RPM Scholarship Endowment.

The endowment will support students by lessening the financial stress they experience at the beginning of an academic pathway that can take as many as ten years to complete.

To donate to the Selkirk College Rural Pre-Medicine Endowment Fund, contact Jonathan Vanderhoek at jvanderhoek@selkirk.ca or get more information at: <https://selkirk.ca/donate-today>



Raised in Howser north of Kaslo, Jace Lamoureux is a first-year student in the Rural Pre-Medicine Program at Selkirk College.

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Selkirk College welcomes new Regional Innovation Chair in Rural Economic Development

submitted

The BC Regional Innovation Chair in Rural Economic Development (RIC) was established at Selkirk College in 2006 with the goal of developing regional capacity and economic diversification, and supporting provincial/national networks. Dr. Sarah Breen assumed the RIC position in late 2020.

"We are incredibly fortunate to have recruited Dr. Breen to serve as our RIC," says Dr. Terri MacDonald, former RIC and now Director of Applied Research & Innovation at Selkirk College. "Her expertise in applied research, policy analysis, rural considerations and experiential learning for students, coupled with strong partnerships from both within and outside of our region make her an ideal fit for this role."

One of nine regional innovation chair positions across the province, the Castlegar-based RIC is the only one

focused specifically on rural economic development. Funded through a \$2.5 million endowment fund created by the provincial government, local governments and non-government sources, the RIC partners with crown agency Innovate BC to deliver valued research.

Framed by rural regional resilience, the work Breen will undertake in the coming years is multifaceted. Research streams will focus on mobilizing human capacity, technology and innovation, and building for the future. Working with government and non-government partners, Breen is currently assembling a team that will include Selkirk College learners in different programs and post-secondary students from partner institutions.

"It's about bringing forward credible information to help people make sound decisions," says Breen.

"For me it's less about standing up and simply advocating for rural places. We are bringing forward an evidence-based case about why it's important, this is why it benefits our communities, why it benefits our province and why it benefits our country."

Breen's zeal for understanding and analyzing information has been a lifelong passion. Starting her post-secondary pathway with a Bachelor's degree in Geography from her hometown Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Breen continued with a Masters in Geography from Newfoundland's Memorial University and PhD in Resource & Environmental Management from Simon Fraser University in Burnaby.

Her resume is thick with contributions to rural research at multiple levels, senior policy analyst positions with government, work

with the private sector and an adjunct professor position at the University of Saskatchewan. In choosing Breen for the RIC role, an Innovate BC peer reviewer noted that she is considered "one of Canada's most impressive and leading new scholars in the fields of rural development, community economic development and regional economic development."

Discovering the West Kootenay while working on her PhD as a research assistant, Breen came on a data collecting roadtrip to the region in 2011. Finding the perfect blend of scenery and lifestyle, she fell in love with the rural location and eventually moved to the area full-time in 2016. She joined the team at Selkirk College's Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI) as a research assistant for two years and after a stint working remotely with the BC provincial government as

a senior policy analyst, has returned to take on a new challenge as the RIC.

Learn more about the BC Regional Innovation Chair in Rural Economic Development at: <https://selkirk.ca/research/ric>



Dr. Sarah Breen is the new Regional Innovation Chair in Rural Economic Development at Selkirk College.

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RDCK noise bylaw expanded to include Area H

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Residents of the Slocan Valley will now have recourse if they suffer from a chronically noisy neighbour.

The board of directors of the Regional District of Central Kootenay approved a motion at its January 21 meeting to expand its noise bylaw to include Area H – the Slocan Valley and the north end of Pass Creek.

But don't expect the 'noise police' to be patrolling the area,

knocking down offender's doors.

"First step always taken is through education of the bylaw and encouragement to comply with requests made," says Grace Allen, the bylaw enforcement team leader for the RDCK.

Under the RDCK bylaw, Allen's office must receive two letters of complaints against the same source of noise for a file to be opened for investigation. Then, a series of escalating actions takes place from there.

Allen says at the discretion of the bylaw officer, courtesy action may be taken on receipt of one noise complaint. That means only that bylaw officers will bring the provisions of the bylaw to the attention of the person of interest, identify the hours the bylaw is in affect, and request voluntary compliance.

On receipt of two written complaints, the bylaw officer will ask each complainant to keep a noise log that contains information such as

when the noise started and stopped, she said. "[The bylaw officer will] identify the type of noise that is causing concern (parties, loud live or recorded music, hooting and hollering, animal-related noises, etc.), identify the location of where the noise emanates and follow up by notifying the person of interest of the bylaw provisions and request voluntary compliance."

Should the notices be ignored, Allen says a written warning can then be issued to the person of interest. The written warning is to bring the fine amount to the person's attention and advise a fine will be issued if compliance is not met.

If the problem continues and more complaints are received, a fine of up to \$200 per offence (plus court fees) can be issued.

Allen notes there are exemptions

to the bylaw, including emergency repairs to a dwelling, garage, or signage; farm animals located on ALR land that has a class designation of agriculture under a zoning bylaw; and public works for road maintenance or repairs.

Emergency sirens from fire, ambulance, police and other signalling devices deployed for safety are also exempt.

**Next Valley Voice
Deadline:
February 5,
2021**



New owners for New Market Foods in New Denver

by Jan McMurray

New Market Foods in New Denver is changing hands. Vern and Janice Gustafson will hand over the keys to New Denver natives Teresa and Kieth Steenhoff on February 2.

"We're really excited!" says Teresa. "We both grew up in New Denver and are raising our family here. We knew we wanted to stay living here but we were both ready for a change from our current careers, so we were looking for a business opportunity. The more we looked into purchasing New Market Foods, the more we realized it would be the right fit."

Teresa and Kieth say they have no plans for major changes. "Janice, Vern and their staff have done an amazing job running the store and making it a place people want to come and support. Our goal is to keep that up. We may make a few small adjustments to make it feel like our own, but overall we have no plans for major changes. Local food and products is an important part of

the business and will continue to be."

Janice and Vern have been training the new owners since December, and have indicated that they will still be available to help if needed. Teresa and Kieth say they will both take on active roles in the store. "The store has amazing staff who are all great at their jobs. We plan to learn from all of them and see where we can fit in," Teresa said.

Kieth comes from a construction and mining background and Teresa has been in the insurance business. Teresa has worked in grocery stores before, "but overall this is a new adventure for us both," she says. "We would like to thank Janice and Vern for giving us this opportunity. Without their help and guidance this would not have been possible."

Janice and Vern opened the store on June 11, 2011. After attempts to buy two local grocery stores, they decided it would be best to build a new store that would meet the community's needs for several years to come. The store was built

by local contractors and tradesmen from December 2010 to May 2011. Opening day had to wait several weeks until BC Hydro hooked up the power.

"It was very exciting building the business from the ground up," Janice says. "We tried to source products that our customers wanted. Creating an outlet for local producers to sell their products was a particular high point for us. The lows were things we couldn't control, like late deliveries and products simply not arriving."

Janice and Vern also grew up in New Denver. They spent 30 years in Golden, and then returned to New Denver to be closer to their parents and siblings. "New Denver is where we wanted to spend the rest of our lives," says Janice. "In our retirement, when we are able to travel again, we would like to go to Golden and Whitehorse and spend some time with our kids and grandkids. But we're here to stay – I think we will even do some gardening this summer!"



Kieth & Teresa Steenhoff have purchased New Market Foods in New Denver from Janice & Vern Gustafson.

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Trust seeks true measure of internet speeds in valley towns

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The Columbia Basin Trust wants residents of some Valley communities to let it know how fast their internet connection is – and it needs the information as soon as possible.

But so far, the response to the Trust's request has been "very low."

The CBT is calling on residents of five Slocan Valley communities to take part in a speed test before the end of the month.

The goal is to gather information for an appeal of a federal assessment that the internet service is fast enough in Nakusp, Rosebery, New Denver, Silverton and Slocan.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars of support for completing the high-speed internet project may be at stake.

"The Trust is submitting an application to the federal government's Universal Broadband Fund to support 'last mile' projects in the Basin," says Delphi Hoodicoff, a spokesperson for the Columbia Basin Broadband

Corporation. "The federal government determines eligibility based on the connectivity data found on their map.

"So if a community is deemed to have access to 50/10 [the federal standard for up/down connection speed], then it doesn't qualify."

While large areas of the Slocan Valley don't meet the federal 50/10 connection threshold, Ottawa's maps say those five communities do have adequate service, and thus won't qualify for funding support for connecting from the main trunk line to individual homes.

"But what we've heard from residents is that they are still not getting adequate connectivity," says Hoodicoff. "... but it's up to us to prove that, hence the request to residents to conduct a speed test."

Deadline looms for survey

But time is running out. To meet an appeal deadline, the Trust is asking residents of those five communities to test their internet speeds at the RDCK website, ourtrust.org/speedtest. You have until January 31.

"We definitely want to take advantage of any government programs that will provide funding for connectivity projects," says Hoodicoff. "Connectivity projects are expensive and require more funding than the Trust and local communities can bring forward."

However, the CBBC can only make the appeal if they get a survey response from 20% of the residents in the area. So far, she says they're not getting a good response.

"The good news is over 3,800 speed tests have been done in the Basin! This data will be useful for us," Hoodicoff says. "Unfortunately, only a small number of tests met the criteria."

"Folks who live in that specific area that's in dispute, they need to complete

the test and they need to fill out the form giving their internet package info."

Split applications

The snag created by the federal map has the Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation splitting the funding request into two parts.

"In order to increase our likelihood of success, the Trust will be putting forward an application that includes communities that are definitely eligible," she says. "We will put in a second application with the communities currently deemed ineligible, along with supporting data to dispute the current mapping information."

But it may be an uphill battle to get the money, even if the CBT can bring a successful argument to the table.

Stubbornly high COVID numbers prompt plea from BC Health

by John Boivin, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The first weeks of January have seen inoculation plans slowed across the province as vaccine supplies temporarily dry up, while a handful of cases continue pop up regularly in the West Kootenay.

Though mid-month was overall a bit better for the region, BC Centre for Disease Control figures show the Arrow Lakes subregion, which includes Nakusp, New Denver and Silverton, with a single COVID case between January 10 and 16. The Nelson subregion had two cases. However, the rest of the Kootenay Boundary – Grand Forks, Castlegar, Creston and Kootenay Lake subregions – all had no new infections during the period.

With new variants spreading and numbers remaining stubbornly high

across the province, though, health officials warned on Monday we were on the brink of skyrocketing case numbers. They pleaded with British Columbians to redouble efforts to stay at home and social distance.

"This is about doing more," Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry said. "This is the most challenging of times for us. This is not the time to falter. Despite us being tired and frustrated and wanting it to be over. We need to hang in there, we are so close."

The Province reported 346 new cases Monday, with 54 in the Interior Health region, which includes the Valley Voice readership area. As of press time, there are 4,392 active cases in the province, with 328 people hospitalized. There were 26 deaths provincially over the weekend.

The Interior Health region had

"The federal program is already oversubscribed and the Trust's application may not be successful," says Hoodicoff. "We would need to continue to work with communities and the Southeastern BC Regional Broadband Committee to look at other options for funding these projects."

The Slocan Valley Fibre Optic Project was announced in March 2019, and envisions a \$10.2 million high-speed cable line from just north of Nakusp to the Playmor Junction. The project's seen delays due to licensing complications, but officials hope to start laying cable later this year. The completion for the main trunk is scheduled for mid-2022, but connecting the line to individual homes may take several years beyond that.

1,034 active cases as of Monday, with 50 people hospitalized and 11 in intensive care. There have been a total of 62 deaths in the region since the pandemic began.

Meanwhile, international supply problems continue to slow vaccination plans.

While just under 120,000 doses have been delivered already, Henry said deliveries are going to slow for the next three weeks. She says that's prompted public health officials to extend the second dose date to 42 days. That will allow them to at least partially protect society's most vulnerable, Henry said.

"This is about putting out fires before they get out of control," she says. "...we will make up these doses, we will be providing the second doses to everybody as soon as we possibly can."



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY Parcel Tax Roll Review

The Regional District of Central Kootenay is updating parcel tax rolls for the following service areas:

- South Slocan Water Service Parcel Tax
- Duhamel Water Service Parcel Tax
- Ymir Water Service Frontage Tax
- Lucas Road Water Service Parcel Tax
- Voykin Street Lighting Service Parcel Tax
- Sanca Park Water Service Parcel Tax
- Riondel Water Service Frontage Tax
- McDonald Creek Water Service Parcel Tax
- Balfour Water Service Parcel Tax
- Woodland Water Service Parcel Tax
- West Robson Water Service Parcel Tax
- Burton Water Service Parcel Tax
- Edgewood Water Service Parcel Tax
- Fauquier Water Service Parcel Tax
- Grandview Properties Water Service Parcel Tax
- Rosebery Highlands Water Service Area
- Woodbury Water Service Parcel Tax
- Local Conservation Fund Service Area (Areas A, D and E)

Pursuant to section 205 of the *Community Charter*, owners of property located in these parcel tax areas may request that the roll be amended, in relation to their own property, on one or more of the following grounds:

- there is an error or omission respecting a name or address on the assessment roll;
- there is an error or omission respecting the inclusion of a parcel;
- there is an error or omission respecting the taxable frontage of a parcel (for water or sewer service areas that use frontage for taxation); and
- an exemption has been improperly allowed or disallowed.

The parcel tax rolls are available for inspection at the Regional District of Central Kootenay office in Nelson during regular office hours.

Requests for amendments must be made in writing to the Regional District of Central Kootenay, Box 590, 202 Lakeside Drive, Nelson, BC V1L 5R4 on or before **February 12, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.**

If requests are received, Parcel Tax Roll Review Panels will meet at:

NELSON

February 22, 2021 Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: Remote/call-in - please check the RDCK website for details.

CRESTON

February 25, 2021 Time: 10:00 a.m. (Creston Time)

Location: Remote/call-in - please check the RDCK website for details.

Stuart Horn, Appointed Collector

Phone: (250) 352-8152

Email: shorn@rdck.bc.ca

Web: www.rdck.ca

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ourtrust.org/speedtest

Columbia Basin **trust**