The Citizens for Safe Technology Society has filed a complaint with the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) regarding BC Hydro’s smart meter program.

“Up until now, the BCUC as a regulator has been left out and, with that, any consideration of the public interest has been eliminated from BC Hydro’s decision,” states a press release issued by the Citizens for Safe Technology Society. “The action taken [filing the complaint with BCUC] is about preserving the regulatory oversight and democratic process we uphold under the rule of law in British Columbia.”

Local lawyer David Aaron has been hired by the society, and he prepared a 20-page letter to the BCUC dated December 22, 2011 detailing the complaint.

The complaint is essentially against two properties of the meters that BC Hydro has chosen to install. The first offending property is that they are wireless. The second is that they contain a Zigbee Radio Chip that allows BC Hydro to collect detailed information about the household’s use of networked appliances and to remotely control the operation of those appliances.

The letter says that although the BC Energy Act mandates BC Hydro to install smart meters without applying for a certificate from BCUC, the Act does not require the meters to be wireless or to contain the capabilities of the Zigbee Radio Chip. Aaron indicates in the letter that the Citizens for Safe Technology would have no problem with the installation of smart meters that are wired and that do not contain the capabilities of the Zigbee Radio Chip. He points out that there are such wired smart meters on the market, manufactured by the same company BC Hydro has chosen to supply the wireless meters (Itron).

The Citizens for Safe Technology are concerned about the impact of the wireless and information-gathering/remote control properties of the BC Hydro smart meters on human health and wellness, environmental integrity, individual civil liberties and privacy, as well as the fiscal responsibility of BC Hydro. They believe that BC Hydro is going beyond the scope of the Energy Act by installing meters with these two properties, and therefore they claim that BC Hydro must make an application to the BCUC for a certificate. And, of course, the Citizens would oppose the issuance of the certificate through the public process that would be triggered by the BC Hydro application.

A response to Aaron’s letter from BCUC dated December 28 states that BCUC has directed BC Hydro to meet this requirement, and we’ve made some recommendations to help them improve their customer notification,” said Denham.

The report makes 14 recommendations that will improve BC Hydro’s existing privacy and security practices. BC Hydro has committed to put action plans in place to address these recommendations.

“There is still much work to be done by BC Hydro with respect to smart meters and the smart grid. While I am satisfied with the work that has been done to date, my office will continue to take an active role in monitoring this project to ensure BC Hydro is properly considering privacy and security,” said Commissioner Denham.

The Commissioner’s Office received complaints and correspondence from more than 600 British Columbians about the smart meter program, which prompted the investigation.

The full report is available at: www.oipc.bc.ca
Lardeau Valley Seed Savers offer workshops

Want to improve the food production of your garden? Looking for something new or unusual?

Lardeau Valley Seed Savers offers three workshops to help you achieve this goal. On the last Sunday of January, February and March a speaker/workshop series will be held at the Lardeau Valley Hall in Meadow Creek.

There is no cost for these sessions: a donation to cover costs is appreciated.

1. January 29, 1-3 pm: mycologist Peter McAllister will present Envisioning your Relationship with Mushrooms. Topics include using mycorrhizal fungi to boost yields in the garden, how to harvest and cure mushrooms to increase the vitamin D levels and how to start, grow and harvest homegrown mushrooms indoors and out using local natural materials.

2. February 26, 1-3:30 pm: the developer of Mycrobz Bacteria Solutions (Kaslo), Todd Veri, will share Probiotics for your Garden. Understand how beneficial bacteria and yeast act as a fertiliser factory in the soil, protect your plants, recycle all your organic waste, germinate seeds, dispose of unnecessary seeds and even save the bees. A Seed Exchange will follow for you to obtain seeds which the LVSS members have grown.

3. March 25, 12-2 pm: Refriending Bees with entomologist Lynn Wescott. Learn why bees are our champion pollinators, how to identify native bees, and understand why we shouldn’t be afraid of them. Take home a list of the food-producing plants pollinated by bees throughout the growing season. Build your own native bee nest and learn how to provide pollinator-friendly yards and gardens. Before this presentation a simple lunch will be provided and a chance for informal garden chat. Pre-registration is required for lunch and for the nest building portion, which is limited to 15 participants who will need to bring some simple equipment. There is no need to pre-register for the presentation only, which will begin at 12:45. To pre-register, email kate@kaslo.org or call 250-366-6452

Lardeau Valley Seed Savers encourages seed saving as one means of enhancing our local food/seed security by establishing our own local seed bank. Gardening with your own seeds, and continually reproducing them, will increase the vitamin D levels and how to start, grow and harvest homegrown mushrooms indoors and out using local natural materials.

School District 10 news briefs - teacher strike, administrative changes...

by Jan McMurray

At the December 13 school board meeting, Superintendent/Secretary-Treasurer Walter Posnikoff reported on several items.

On the teacher strike, he said there had been very little progress in negotiations at both the provincial and local levels. “The parties are billions of dollars apart,” he said. Posnikoff added that there is growing frustration among administrators in regard to communications within schools and within the district, student report cards, student supervision, etc. He acknowledged that “that was the intent” of the phase one job action.

Posnikoff added that the province is not prepared to fund the $2 billion dollars budgeted for teacher staff development this year. It is likely that staff development in the educational sector will have to be re-directed to staff development of principals and vice principals and support staff. “Rather than sitting on that money and having a surplus, we may re-direct it,” he said. “They are unable to proceed with much of our teacher staff development due to the strike.”

The new day planner focuses on regional food security

It’s been three years since the release of the first edition of the West Kootenay Journal day planner, now out-of-print (a collector’s item), and it’s exciting to see the all-new West Kootenay Journal second edition day-planner hot off the press.

Similar to the first planner, this second edition is illustrated and informed with watercolour and pen and ink sketches and paintings from the illuminated nature journals of Susan VanRoooy. Unique to this edition, besides all new artwork and quotes, is a focus on food sovereignty, featuring local writers sharing ideas about ways to create more self-reliance and food security in the West Kootenay region.

For each month keen observers by people with expertise in wildlife crafting, gardening, cultural traditions, biology, economics, natural history and more, are shared here to encourage participation and investigation in nature, in the garden, in the kitchen, in our pocketbooks, and our communities, as we move through the seasons.


This planner also informs area residents, visitors, and newcomers of regional food gathering, growing, preservation and preparation, as well as cultural and natural history-related annual events.

It may serve as a sort of ‘primer’ to those moving in to the West Kootenay area interested in learning more about sustainability in their new home, and, hopefully, will stimulate an interactive sharing of ideas and knowledge — something many people of almost all ages will look forward to using and learning from, as well as contributing to, over the years.

A book launch and short reading will take place at the Live Art Shop in Kaslo on January 14 between 4 and 5 pm.

Social media policy to be developed for School District 10

by Jon McMurray

School District 10’s board of education has struck a committee to look at the development of a social media policy for the district.

The chair of the committee is Sally Mclean, vice-principal of Nakusp Elementary. The committee has three Kootenay Elementary Schools and district coordinator of early learning. McLean gave a presentation on social media policy at the board meeting December 13. Her presentation was based on a workshop she had recently attended on the topic.

“The internet can be a fabulous place, but many social media sites focus on the negative,” she said. She explained that most social media policies in North America are proactive, meaning they are developed in response to negative experiences online or in anticipation of negative experiences online. Instead, she lobbied for a proactive policy that would take into account both the positive and the negative aspects of social media. She defined social media as any two-way communication on the internet.

Probably the most positive aspect of social media is that students love it – it engages students. Also, it offers opportunities for differentiated learning; it fosters critical and creative thinking; it is contextual and relevant; and it is a 21st century job and life skill.

The negative aspects of social media are that it can be time-wasting and distracting; it sometimes provides information from non-authoritative or biased sources; it opens doors to properties and plagiarism; it offers opportunities for inappropriate online social interactions; it allows for the sharing of inappropriate information; and it can be anonymous.

“We can’t take our existing bullying policy and apply it to the internet because the internet has properties that haven’t been seen before – anonymity, for example,” she said. She pointed out that with traditional bullying, schools can talk to everyone involved, including bystanders and parents. This is not the case when the bullying is happening electronically by someone using a pseudonym. She added that half of girls aged 15-16

Posnikoff provided the board with a copy of the 2011 Superintendent’s Report on Student Achievement. Based on feedback that the district has in the top 10 percent for five years running, he said the district will be retiring this year, and a hiring process is underway to replace him. Board Chair Patie Adam reported that there has been a positive response to the position, with interest from people from all over the country.

I’m feeling very optimistic and I feel really good about the process,” she said, adding that some superintendent searchers in the province are attracting no applicants at all.

Another administrative change is in the works at the school district. The district has used School District 20’s Financial Comptroller for many years, and Natale Verigan has held the job. Verigan is now Secretary-Treasurer of SD 20, and Susan Brenna-Smith was hired as Financial Comptroller, starting January 9.

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Another concern is digital footprinters. “Digital footprints are pervasive, persistent and replicable,” said McLean. “We need to teach kids how to create a positive digital presence, how to access their complete digital footprint and how to protect themselves.”

A proactive social media policy would focus on the educational benefits of the internet and on positive online relationships, and would address ethical considerations, legal considerations and school safety, she said.

She said the policy should cover on- and off-campus behaviour that affects learning, behaviour intended to cause harm, inappropriate or personally harmful behaviour, and a delineated chain of contacts for reporting harmful or inappropriate behaviour. The policy must also be flexible enough to change with the changing times and technologies.

At the end of the presentation, Superintendent Walter Posnikoff observed that “Education is key. We can build as many fences as we want, but technology is pervasive. We have to give kids the personal tools to be able to sort things out and have ethical standards.”

McLean mentioned that Kent County Council in England has created a 32-page book that helps organizations to develop social media policy.
Lardeau Valley community discusses economic future in the face of Meadow Creek Cedar situation

by Jan McMurray

With the possibility of Meadow Creek Cedar’s licence being cancelled at the end of 2012, MLA Michelle Mungall hosted a community meeting in Meadow Creek on December 15 to discuss ideas for economic development in the Lardeau Valley.

“We have some opportunities here in the Lardeau Valley,” Mungall said. She explained that if the forestry company’s licence is cancelled, the ministry can re-negotiate for a community forest licence or for another operator to take over the licence. “Whatever you want to do, I am going to go to bat for, so I need your direction on what the community wants to do.”

Mungall explained that the ministry is investigating four or five of Meadow Creek Cedar’s infractions. The first investigation, on the company’s failure to meet its silviculture obligations, is due to come to a conclusion at the end of January. If the company is found to be in contravention of its silviculture responsibilities, the minister can suspend the company’s forestry licence. At that time, the minister must give the company a certain time frame to meet its obligations – Mungall said Meadow Creek Cedar would probably have until September 1 to meet the requirements.

It seems unlikely that the company could meet a September deadline, because they have a liability of $4-$5 million in their silviculture account. If MCC does not meet its liabilities and the licence is cancelled, the ministry is responsible for the tree planting, and can draw from a fund set up for these types of situations.

Meadow Creek Cedar has a volume-based licence for 96,500 cubic metres per year, and owns the sawmill. The sawmill is not tied to the licence, so the volume can be sold separately from the mill. It was indicated at the meeting that the sawmill is in such poor repair that it will never operate again. “All you would get is the building and the property,” said Don Edwards, president of the Lardeau Valley Opportunity Links Society. Edwards explained that there is concern in the community that a big company will purchase the volume, and all the wood will be shipped to a ‘super mill’, resulting in the closure of all the small mills in the area. He said that because our area is not as affected by the pine beetle as is northern BC, some big companies, including companies from China, are looking at buying up the holdings of both Meadow Creek Cedar and Springer Creek Forest Products.

Edwards said local people set up the North Kootenay Forest Initiative to find a solution that would be palatable locally. The group has contacted several outfits, but “there is no appetite out there to deal with the present mill owners” and the liability they have created.

Susan Malkey from the BC Community Forest Association was there to speak to a community forest super mill in the valley. She said the idea behind community forests is to keep profits in the community and to create local employment. “There is no cookie cutter approach to community forests; they are all different,” she said. “We start with the community’s vision – what do you want it to do for you?” She said very few have their own mills – Harrop-Procter is one of them and they built their own kiln, too – but many have fibre flow agreements with mills.

Edwards feels a community forest is preferable to a big company coming in and shipping the wood out to a super mill, but he pointed out that the main drawback to a community forest licence at this point is that there is no market for the wood. He said District Manager Garth Wiggill has suggested that the community go into some sort of partnership with an outfit “with deeper pockets” that could come in and run a mill or some other type of processing plant. “We should be looking at manufacturing because we can’t compete with Canfor 2x4s,” he said.

Ideas for manufacturing or value-added opportunities include making pellets or fuel pucks, operating a sort yard, and building a co-generating plant.

Other economic development opportunities not involving forestry were also discussed. The owner of the marble quarry would like to see it open up again. Samples of the marble were sent to a company in China that made beautiful staircases, countertops, etc., for a home. Slides of the finished products were on display at the meeting.

Agriculture is also an industry the community wants to keep profits in the valley. She said the idea behind community forests is to keep profits in the community and to create local employment. Tim Trenholm said the community has been successful with market gardens and with haying, but is discouraged that much of the prime agricultural land is owned by the Nature Conservancy, which has not been very open to farming on the land.

Larry Grover is more optimistic on this point. He said the community had made some headway with the Nature Conservancy and could still make more. He said the Conservancy was working on a management plan, and the public would be invited to make comments on the plan until the end of January. “All we need to do is make our points known to them,” he said.

Dwight Smith of Hamill Creek Timber Homes said the two biggest roadblocks to economic development in the region are “lousy roads and a lousy communication system.” Mungall said she would speak with Glenn Olleck, district manager with the Ministry of Transportation out of Nelson.

Raise the Roof donation campaign launched for Centennial Building

The Arrow Lakes Historical Society has started a “Raise the Roof” donation campaign to help provide the balance needed for the completion of the two-storey addition to the Centennial building. Anyone donating between $100 and $500 will have their name placed on the ‘Raise the Roof’ plaque. Over $300,000 has been raised so far.

When the addition is completed, the archive office and archive material will be conveniently located under the same roof as two other cultural institutions in Nakusp – the museum and the library – and will be in a safe place owned by the village. The archive office will be one big room, which will serve well for meetings, to show movies and DVDs, and to look at maps easily.

It will be located on the top floor, which will require the installation

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January 11, 2012. The Valley Voice
Red is the new blue...bulletin board

I've been so grateful to several local people who made funding the new bulletin board on Nakusp's main street so easy. Thank you to Warren Jones, Ken Marshall, Larry Ferguson, Sharon Trout, Mike and Marie Wreck, Cheryl White and many others.

I'd originally approached the CBT for the $900 in materials (all labour was free) but was informed that I would need to be a non-profit organization.

Since I moved here two years ago, I've observed two things amongst initiators of low-to-zero-revenue-generating community projects.

One, they're busily running around spending 30 hours on bureaucracy for one hour of actual project work.

Two, many of these projects are repeatedly spearheaded by initiators who, bless them, enhance our community while being strapped for time and money in their own lives. And all the while, the institutions, i.e. insurance companies, banks, mortgage companies, government, etc. unfaithfully get their share first, leaving our initiators with the drabs and drabs of leftover time and money to invest.

These project initiators aren't the only ones faced with this, by the way. And yes, I think this is not intended to be a dismissal of CBT. CBT has helped a lot, and there is indeed a place for them, especially on larger dollar projects in my opinion. I suggest the time is right for CBT to consider accommodating this demographic, morose now in light of the local economic climate.

A huge sentiment of gratitude to these eight villages for making it as easy as talking to them about such a little project. Their generosity allowed us 'doers' to get another project done, reasoning that such projects can leave us with left-over energy to keep conceiving of new ideas for making our community continue to rock.

Marc Heroux
Nakusp

Criminal negligence, second offence

Last April I wrote to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Premier Christy Clark, Minister of Environment Greg Rickford, Minister of Natural Resources Pat Mungall, and RDCK Area D Director Andy Shadrack concerning radioactive fallout from Fukushima, asking:

"...why is our government (and media) completely ignoring the seriousness of this radiation situation? We are regularly told of the day’s UV index rating so we can protect ourselves from too much sun. Radioactive fallout should rate at least that high on the essential information scale. I would really appreciate some useful service, and reliable information, from all levels of government on this matter."

None arrived.

Now, ten months later, the Journal of Environmental Radioactivity (December 2011) confirms that radioactive fallout from Fukushima – containing plutonium, the most deadly mammade element in existence – reached completely around the northern hemisphere. Further, a peer-reviewed study by the International Journal of Health Services (December 2011), reveals that, in the first three and a half months alone, an estimated 14,000 people (mostly infants) in the US were killed due to this ongoing fallout. It is pretty unreasonable for a higher, proportion of premature deaths most likely occurred in Canada.

Every single level of government has responded to this crisis with silence, punctuated by denial and baseless reassurances. We have been betrayed by the professionals in our institutions of higher learning, research academicians, and most obviously, the media. Rather than provide the necessary information to the public about how to protect ourselves in what should have been a new system for the recession, these officials and institutions have neglected their most basic responsibility to the people of Canada in favour of doing damage control for the nuclear power industry.

There is no reason to expect a different response as radioactive debris begins to wash up on the BC coast. Well-intentioned but ill-informed citizens will pick up the dangerous debris, haul it in their cars, store it in their trash cans, and place it in local landfills. Their children will play in the “hot” sand, and everyone will eat the “safe” seafood. What value is a government that does nothing to protect the very people it existence to serve?

Bob Vetter
Argentina

Open letter to Premier Christy Clark

I am very depressed and concerned about the proposed new ferry for Galena Bay. This decision represents the largest financial burden or asset of the West Kootenay since the Columbia River Treaty dams.

When the Columbia River Treaty was formed, its stated goal was to restore the economic viability to the impacted areas. To date nothing has happened. There has been no economic return for what we sacrificed for the greater good.

The Okanagan and the East Kootenay both have north-south connectors between Highway 1 and Highway 3. The West Kootenay does not. Highway 3 in the Kootenay Lake Valley and Highway 6 in the Slocan Valley terminate at the Galena Bay ferry crossing. The ferry is a deterrent to all commerce. It has a negative impact on where industry locates. The ferry crossing is reviewed as a dead end road with long waits and no service at night.

I am a third-generation resident of the West Kootenay. Our home and business were flooded below the Duncan Dam. Are we going to continue the sacrifice by spending millions of dollars on a ferry that will not address the real problem?

A fixed link with a causeway and a bridge would revitalize the West Kootenay economy. Reliable transportation is of the utmost importance to all industry and business that create our much needed “jobs for families.”

The government’s concern about affordability of a fixed link should be addressed with the hundreds of millions of dollars realized every year from the water storage of the Arrow and Duncan dams. What better way to spend the money that is created in this area. The fixed link will more than pay back its cost by the rapid increase in commerce that will be generated in the West Kootenay.

The stated objective of our government to create “jobs for families” could not be better served in the West Kootenay. In truth, I have little faith that the right decision will be made. I believe the bureaucrats have already decided on a new ferry and the West Kootenay will remain depressed and out of step with the rest of the province.

In closing, can you imagine Kelowna with a new ferry instead of a second new fixed link in less than 60 years? Then old floating bridge would sure look good at Galena Bay.

Larry Greenspan
Meadow Creek

Let’s change the world in 2012

The Christmas season is a mixed emotions time for me. I love the Christmas lights, carols, cards, and celebrations, but I feel guilt over Western Christmas consumerism. But the recognition that strikes me most is that we Canadians ARE the 1% of the most privileged people on the planet.

And what is the reason for the season? It is often diminished in a secular world, but LOVE was born in a barn, in a Christ child, who gave us a perfect example of how to live in compassion, charity and justice. Jesus chose the poor, rejected and marginalized people of his society as friends, while he was rejected and killed by the religious elites.

This Christmas message was galvanized in the Amnesty International ‘Write for Rights’ event. We don’t need money...just a bit of time to write letters in order to help court set prisoners free; bring women’s rights to those sentenced to stoning deaths or victims of rape.

But perhaps the most poignant of the issues, especially for Canadians, is the third world living conditions that could be turned on a dime by sending a $900 in materials (all labour was free) but was informed that I would need to be a non-profit organization.

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

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

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

We will not knowingly publish any letter that is defamatory or libelous.

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

Opinions expressed in published letters are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Valley Voice.

The Valley Voice
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Publisher - Marion Bergevin
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Opinion - TimoThy Schafer • Contributing writers - Michael Dorsey

The Valley Voice is distributed throughout the Slocan and Arrow Lake valleys from Nakusp/Plumbery Junction to Edgewood and Kaslo on Kootenay Lake.

Circulation is 7,600 papers, providing the most complete news and advertising coverage of any single newspaper serving this area.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: canada $58.24, USA $89.60, OVERSEAS $134.40, E-Mail Subscription $22.40 (Prices include HST)

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Spotlight on Shea Weighill, outstanding hockey player from Nakusp
by Timothy Schafer

When Shea Weighill first stepped on the ice she was in love. The Nakusp native was only four years old when she started skating but already she knew what she wanted to do with her life: play hockey.

And play she did. Weighill played every day on the backyard rink created by her dad Tim – a former junior B hockey player – with her brother Lyndon and his friends, pushing to try and compete with the older, bigger players.

Thirteen years later, Weighill is one of the best female midget hockey players in the province, leading her team, the Kootenay Wildcats, in scoring for the second year in a row, and was recently a standout at the Female Midget AAA (FMAA) All Star Game in Langley.

The second-year right-winger won the breakthrough competition, scoring on both of her chances, while no one else could make good on all of their opportunities. It was the second year in a row she had won the competition.

Despite a 3-12 season, Weighill has had another standout season, scoring five goals and three assists in 13 games, chipping in 54 penalty minutes to lead the team in all categories.

“It’s still fun to play,” she said. “It’s part of my life. I can’t imagine living without it.”

Although the Wildcats drew from all over the East and West Kootenays, Weighill’s photographs are the biggest opponent, said Weighill. Players like Weighill have to travel more than 150 kilometres to Nelson twice per week to practice.

And games are played in centres like Kelowna (Rockets), Fraser Valley (Phantoms), Vancouver (Fusion) and Prince George (Cougars), adding to the travel schedule.

Several solid seasons with the Wildcats have spawned some interest beyond the midget ranks, with Calgary’s Southern Alberta Institute of Technology women’s team wanting her to come and try out next year for the club.

She will likely take physiotherapy to stay in the game, she said.

“It would be great to continue with hockey beyond [the Wildcats],” she said.

The Female Midget AAA League was initiated in the 2007-2008 season in response to the membership’s desire to provide an opportunity for elite female hockey players to come together to challenge other elite female midget teams.

For more information about the BC Hockey Female Midget AAA League, check out www.bchockey.com/maaa/Default.aspx.

PALS wants to thank all of those that participated in our 2011 CREATIVE HANDS! Our crafters this year had lots of wonderful items and it was great to see so many people purchasing gifts for their loved ones and for themselves!

Special thanks to all of the volunteers that pulled off this event and to those that contributed door prizes, crafts to the PALS. table, and goodies for our kitchen.

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Proposed changes to Vimy Park Ring Road unpopular in Kaslo

by Jan McMurray

Kaslo council has received an overwhelmingly negative response from the public to its proposal to change the Vimy Park Ring Road traffic pattern.

Under the proposal, the ring road would no longer be a through road. Rather, there would be turnarounds at Periwinkle Daycare. Vehicles could still enter from either end of the road, but would come to a cul-de-sac in front of Periwinkle Daycare. So the proposal would involve creating two cul-de-sacs.

The public notice inviting comments on the proposal indicates that council came up with the proposal in efforts to improve pedestrian and playground safety, reduce vehicle speed and reduce dust.

Comments were gathered until January 5, and many were receiving opposing expression to the proposal. A petition was also submitted to the Village office with 137 signatures indicating opposition to the traffic pattern change.

At a Development Services Committee meeting January 5, Kaslo resident Janice Sinclair attended to outline her objections to the proposal. First, she put forward that safety, speed and dust are actually not big issues on the ring road. She said Periwinkle’s manager had told her there is hardly any traffic on the road during daycare drop-off and pick-up times, and said there is minimal pedestrian and vehicle activity on the road most of the year.

Although Sinclair has been told that youth race on the road at night, she pointed out that the road is gated at night from May 15 to September 15. To deal with the dust, Sinclair suggested that council plan to pave the part of the road by the campground.

Sinclair also listed the negative implications of the traffic pattern change. She suggested that council plan to pave the part of the road by the campground.

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Kaslo Trailblazers solstice celebration spreads good cheer

Woodwind quintet to perform in Kaslo

Woodwind quintet to perform in Kaslo

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

Three Townsend’s solitaires were spotted in New Denver and every major creek had at least one water ouzel (American dipper) foraging under the rapids.

Five more species are known to be here as well, having been spotted within the ‘count week,’ the period three days on either side of the count day. They are not included in the actual count of 42.

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC), submitting

Perfect weather conditions on December 21 provided an opportunity for approximately 50 neighbours and friends to gather at the Kaslo Trailblazers bridge to visit over hot chocolate, enjoy a warm fire and watch a lantern procession on the main trail from town.

The bridge was especially magical this year with its festive lights and the soft glow of 24 tea light lanterns hanging from the roof supports. Holiday greetings and hugs of good will were exchanged as people gathered around the picnic tables to tell stories and be thankful for all that we enjoy in this place we call home.

The Kaslo Trailblazers look forward to hosting this event for many years to come.

Kaslo Trailblazers solstice celebration spreads good cheer

Woodwind quintet to perform in Kaslo

in being entertaining and have assembled this program in that spirit.

Tickets available at Figments in Kaslo or at the door. School-age children admitted free when accompanied by an adult patron.

Learn something new submitted

Selkirk College in Kaslo offers many avenues for learning.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) is a springboard for many future endeavours: upgrade skills and academic courses to re-enter the work force, complete high school, prepare for post-secondary education, and get tutorial help with courses from Selkirk College as well as courses from other institutions. For more information, contact Nathaniel or Andrea at 265-3640, or drop by Kaslo Selkirk College, Monday to Thursday, 9 am-12 pm and 1-4 pm.

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Local 2012 calendar steps ‘off the beaten path’ Kootenay style

Submitted

evel Kaela has received the 2011 Community Literacy Award.

Eva Kelenem receives Kaslo’s CBAL Community Literacy Award 2011

Submitted by Barb Szuta

Eva Kelenem of the Kaslo and District Public Library

was quite elusive. The most

is the other.

on the Arrow Lakes – Nakusp

count is one of two carried out

and elsewhere. Fauquier’s

of ‘count circles’ across all of

and Bird Studies Canada.

The total of individual birds

18, a balmy winter day, 19

for birds on the annual

comfort of a warm home

for knowledge along with

submitted

A holiday tradition – Fauquier Christmas bird count

submitted

For 33 years, the thirst

knowledge along with

and operators of Kootenay

that library’s services were only minimally

excellent organizational and

the desire to contribute to

or in the water, were the

saw these six species: flickers,

narrow hawk owl resting on a power pole. All parties

The birders, citizen

Near, or in the water, were the

sightings: Canada

goose-143, gadwall-2,

amidst a mountain mixture”

with outdoor adventure.

“we wanted to inspire

people with our calendar images,” said professional

photographer and co-founder of Kootenay Kalendar. Lucas

involving thousands

scientists, are part of an army

People doing the footwork

submitted

January 11, 2012 The Valley Voice

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A slideshow of the calendar

can be viewed free online at:

by Jan McMurray

• Acting CAO Elaine Rogers reported that the application for wildlife interface work has been approved. The Slocan Integral Forestry Co-op (Slocan Valley Community Forest) will work on the project over the next couple of years, she said.

• Mayor Provan thanked Acting CAO Rogers for her professionalism during the transition to the new council. She reported that the AKIBCO (Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments) seminar in Rossland was worthwhile. She also reported on an emergency preparedness workshop she attended. Provan said she would keep regular hours at the Village office to be available to the public. She said those hours would be posted.

• Councillor Main reported on RDCK meetings. She has been appointed to the Westbank Treaty and Invasive Plant committees as the alternate; Hillary Elliott of Slocan is the main appointee to both committees. Main will be attending an FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities) conference in Saskatoon in June and a UBCM (Union of BC Municipalities) conference in Victoria in September, at RDCK expense. She said that RDCK Director Hans Cunningham, outgoing president of FCM, reported that there will likely be another round of infrastructure grants in the near future. He spoke to be another round of infrastructure grants in the near future.

Councillor Main attended the CBT Youth Initiative meeting in New Denver on December 12. The New Denver/Silverton area will receive $25,000 per year over four years from CBT for a youth project. She said there were about 50 youth and adults in equal representation at the meeting, and they agreed to work on establishing a youth centre.

• Councillor Jason Clarke reported that the Chamber of Commerce is planning its January 30 AGM with guest speaker Lynda Lafleur and a planning its January 30 AGM with guest speaker Lynda Lafleur and the Visitor InfoCentre manager. The job will now be divided into two, and the Chamber’s staffing committee has met to draft the two job descriptions.

Councillor Clarke also reported that the staffing situation is changing at the Chamber. Currently, one person (left) has been acting as the Chamber manager and the Visitor InfoCentre manager. The job will now be divided into two, and the Chamber’s staffing committee has met to draft the two job descriptions.

One of the region’s oldest traditions was being grasped by some of the West Kootenay’s youngest folk.

Aboriginal students from Kindergarten to Grade 4 at South Slocan’s Brent Kennedy Elementary School received instruction in the age-old technique of caribou hair tufting, part of the cultural programming offered through Slocan Valley-based Onewolf Aboriginal Education.

In the tufting program, children learned knot tying and hand work with a needle and thread, some of the skills necessary for decoration on traditional aboriginal clothing and footwear.

For the tufting, strips of hide with attached hair is harvested from fleshed animals, dyed, dried and stored for use.

Tufts of hair are attached to velvet fabric with a canvas backing through the use of loops of thread and knotted on the back of the canvas. Designs are trimmed with scissors.

The class was one of 21 different courses Onewolf founder and instructor Tony Appleby has been teaching in the area for several years to students in Kindergarten to Grade 12.

“One’s real gap for aboriginal education in this district,” she said. “And there is a need for cultural programming,” considering the number of aboriginal students in the West Kootenay.

Other courses include medicine wheel and smuggling, button blankets, totem and animal sprits, pine needle basketry, cedar bark knife sheaths, Métis flower beadwork and power necklaces.

Onewolf also offers several field trips, such as bighorn sheep to Kootenay Pass for bighorn sheep and mule deer viewing, a biodiversity fieldtrip to Spokane, fall hiking into the crystal caves, and a rosehip tea field trip for wild edibles field trip for wild edibles field trip

Council received correspondence regarding the Village’s law firm. One of the partners in the firm, Lorena Staples, has opened her own practice. Consequently, the Village’s law firm has now changed its name to Stewart McDannold Stuart. Council may choose to switch firms to Lorena Staples – this was tabled to the next meeting.

• An update on RCMP contract negotiations was received from UBCM. The UBCM executive has indicated its support in principle for the new draft agreement. One highlight of the proposed agreement is enhanced local government oversight and governance. Local governments will also have more ability to contain and control their costs. Further, a BC Independent Investigation Office has been created to review all serious complaints involving the RCMP and will be operational by mid 2012.

The 2012 support agreement with MultiWare Local Government Financial Software will be signed. The service costs $475.16 plus HST per month.

The Valley Voice | January 11, 2012

by Timothy Schafer

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Three cheers for New Denver’s Food Hamper Program

by Andrew Rhodes

Every year just before Christmas and just before Easter, the New Denver Community Christmas Sharing Program gives up to do boxes of groceries to local folks who could use a little help for food that holiday season. Sue Davies, who organizes the program, says that year after year the local community has been very generous with donations of food and finances to make it all happen. There are also quite a few volunteers who gather at Bosun Hall over a two-day period to set up and label the hampers for at least 34 families.

Hampers are made to order for individual families. Boxes for food are set up, arranged and labeled on day one, and on day two a huge amount of food arrives and is distributed into boxes for each family. There’s always a turkey, chicken or ham depending on the families requests, and enough fresh produce and other food items to fill several boxes for each family. No one is overlooked. Families can either pick up their hampers or request delivery.

It is quite a big community effort, and a great deal of credit goes to food and financial donors including individuals, local stores, local businesses, churches and many more organizations. The team of volunteers also works very hard to get it all done. The Community Christmas Sharing Program is something that all of New Denver can be very proud of.

If you wish to get involved as a donor or volunteer or in any other capacity, you may call Sue Davies at 250-356-7767 for any information you might need. Monetary donations may be sent to Box 445, New Denver, BC V0G 1S0. Throughout the year there are also boxes at local businesses for donations of non-perishable food items. Many big thank yous to everyone who contributes, in any fashion, to this wonderful program. It is greatly appreciated.

Lucerne Writers

Coffeehouse – a can’t miss event submitted

The Lucerne School Writing class is hosting its annual Writers Coffeehouse on Thursday, January 19 at 7 pm at the Silverton Gallery. Admission is by donation and all proceeds go toward the writing class trip to Banff.

In addition to the writers reading their pieces, there will be snacks and refreshments. Writers have been working on their short stories, poems and podcasts since September and would love it if you attended. Parents and all community members are invited.

Lucerne School’s 2011 recipient of the Governor General’s Academic Medal is Michael Ryu, the graduate with the highest average in his grades 11 and 12 courses. Principal Natasha Miles presented Michael with the medal on January 2. Michael is currently in his first year of a Bachelor of Science program at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, and plans to go into dentistry.

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Kaslo council, December 13: Chamber proposes closer working relationship with council

by Jan McMurray

• Debra Hamilton and Steve Hoffart attended on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce. They proposed a closer working relationship between council and the local business community, and asked council to choose a community economic development officer. The position is presently used by Nelson, Nakusp and Selkirk College.

• A letter will be written to Telus regarding the potential of the Village of Slocan's OCP (Official Community Plan). A strategic priority-setting exercise will be included on the agenda for the first budget committee meeting in January 2012.

• Staff was asked to arrange a municipal development bylaw meeting on January 17. The development bylaw is to utilize its property to alleviate parking congestion downtown.

• A strong diesel smell at the logger sports grounds was reported to the Village office on December 5. Bruce Freeman of the Logger Sports Community Boat Club donated his excavator and provided his services to the community, at no cost. The Village will provide a letter of support to the RDCK for its Community Recreation Grant application for the Kaslo Outdoor Recreation Society.

• Council asked staff to research required paperwork and the potential of making the Village of Kaslo and Area D符合 BC Municipalities. A letter will be sent to Sasha Cuff advising any light industrial development at the Kaslo aerodrome property would meet all standards for air, water and contaminants and, at the same time, be assessed on the merits of creating local employment and increasing Kaslo’s tax base.

• Council discussed setting some joint meetings between the council and the Municipal Services Committee. The Village will be willing to contribute a $30,000 forest service grant if the two parties can work together better.

Kaslo to Sandon Rails to Trails Society invites all to enjoy the trail submitted

The Kaslo to Sandon Rails to Trails Society has been building a trail from Kaslo to Sandon since 1991. The trail is currently in place from the south end of Zwickley Road in Kaslo all the way to Fish Lake – a 28-kilometre stretch. The trail is very passable, although some work remains to be done.

The multi-use trail follows the old Kaslo to New Denver highway, commonly referred to as the Wagon Road, and sections of the old K&K railway right-of-way. It winds its way through pristine forest and mountain areas and is enjoyed by bikers, hikers, horse riders and skiers. The trail is motorized, and ATV and snowmobile enthusiasts also use the trail.

The long-term vision of the society is to create a trail all the way from Kaslo to Nakusp, involving the Slocan Valley, New Denver and Nakusp trail societies.

Armed in 1985 with the Bitterroot Trail in Montana and the 25-kilometre long Wanatah Access Trail, the Kaslo to Sandon Rails to Trails Society began and was subsequently registered under the Society Act on April 27, 1986.

The original organizer was Jim Erlandsen of Kaslo and some of the original founding citizens are still members of the society.

The Rails to Trails Society has an ‘Adopt a Trail’ program for Kaslo’s Sustainable Complex Project 2011, which includes upgrades to the arena and curling rink complex. An application will go in to the Community Recreation funding program for the project, valued at $235,832. Upgrades include a new compressor and chiller for the curling club, a new compressor and dehumidifier for the arena, electrical upgrades, fire exit doors, exit door shelters, acoustic conditioning, and concession upgrades (fire suppression system and hood and vent system).

• Council received a proposal to update Kaslo’s zoning bylaw. Her estimate cost to update Kaslo’s zoning bylaw is $13,000. Her proposal was referred to budget deliberations.

• Council received the North Kootenay Lake Bear Aware annual report for 2011, and referred it to 2012 budget deliberations and to the Municipal Services Committee. The report summary indicates that 2011 was a particularly difficult year because spring came late and the huckleberry crop was poor – at least 11 black bears were destroyed in Kaslo and Area D during the period May-November 2011. The report also states that the community is quite knowledgeable about bears and most people are managing attracting well.

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nylon tool pouch located on Saturday, December 17 on Main St., New Denver. It found, please phone 250-358-2355. Many thanks.

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Nakusp Figure Skating Club is currently accepting registrations for boys and girls of all ages to join all of the club’s programs from January to March 2012. For more information or to register, contact Valerie Hill - 250-265-9938.

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PAPYRUS – Akita, wolf, husky, black lab.
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PEOPLE IN NEED OF A HOME are currently accepting registrations for boys and girls of all ages to join all of the club’s programs from January to March 2012. For more information or to register, contact Valerie Hill - 250-265-9938.

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In memory of Peter Leontowicz
submitted by Gerry Duth

As many know, Pete passed away December 10, 2011 after a life full of adventure and hard work on the earth’s surface, prospecting, and underground in mines nation-wide.

He had a large family and was a great family man, worker, protector, story-teller and had no shortage of information on many topics, none more so than minerals and mining.

He was an avid reader and researched many areas including the entire Slocan Valley for minerals; his work is well recorded with Mineral Titles and he was carefully watched by many mining companies over decades and had dealings with numerous self interest groups and mining companies.

This knowledge was sought out by many, including what we call professionals in the industry.

The Retallack ski lodge was one of his endeavours. It is world class, and all of the prominent industry shareholders still consider him the founding member.

Pete was a generous philanthropist and donated to many different causes, including the large rocks on 6th Ave in New Denver, as well as donating to the Silverton museum and the ski lodge in Retallack to name a few.

When he settled in Hills some 50 years ago, he quickly became a founding member of the community and assisted in many needs for many people over the decades. His gentle demeanor made it easy for self interest groups and mining companies to deal with him. As computers took, he was saddened to see the industry change the way it had.

It still amazes me how he stayed in this tough industry through all the ups and downs over all those years. He worked for many people over the decades.

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New year, new storytimes at Nelson Library

submitted

The Nelson Storytime staff are gearing up for another great year of programs for children at the Nelson Library. Songs, rhymes and feltboard stories of silly monkeys, rambunctious sheep or trickster spiders are just some of the tales to be told during preschool storytime. This program starts on Wednesday January 18 and is for 3- to 5-year-olds. Have a younger child? Tales for Two is a program designed for 2- to 3-year-olds with parent/caregiver participation. Start date is Saturday January 21. Tales for Two focuses on songs, dance and a book or two. Each program starts at 10:15 and lasts approximately 30 minutes or longer depending on how much fun we are all having. Both storytimes support early literacy by building vocabulary and sharing age-appropriate literature in a fun and engaging atmosphere.

Pre-registration is required and programs fill up fast. Have a younger child still? Book Babies will resume in the Spring. BRB is for newborns to prewalkers. Don’t delay call today to sign up for any of these sessions.

For more info email nmtnudymich@mtn.ca or call Nancy or Megan @ 352-8283 or 352-6333.

COMMUNITY

12

The Valley Voice January 11, 2012

The Valley Voice
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The Valley Voice
January 11, 2012

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