FortisBC declares no smart meter opt-out at BCUC hearings

by Jan McMurray

There was a lot of public interest in the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) hearings on FortisBC’s smart meter application, held in Kelowna during the first two weeks of March. Area D Director Andy Shadrack attended the hearings as an intervenor, and reported that the public gallery was so packed that there was no overflow room, and these were demonstrations outside every day.

MP Alex Atamanenko also attended as an intervenor, and Nelson lawyer David Aaron represented the Citizens for Safe Technology (CST) at the hearing. The West Kootenay Concerned Citizens, the local CST chapter, was also there as an intervenor, represented by Curtis Bennett.

The focus of both Director Shadrack and MP Atamanenko’s arguments was the health issue, and both wanted to know what recourse people with electrohypersensitivity (EHS) will have if smart meters are installed. “I was trying to advocate for people to be able to opt out,” said Shadrack in an interview. “But we got a bit of a surprise.”

Unfortunately FortisBC’s very rigid stand on opting out. “Based on what we’re proposing, there’s no opt-out for any reason,” said FortisBC representative Tom Loski during the proceeding. Customers who refuse the meter, he said, can have the meter installed away from their house at their own cost. If the customer will not accept this and continues to refuse the meter, the customer’s electricity will be cut off.

Loski said there were only two circumstances where FortisBC would not cut off power — in the winter when the customer uses electricity for heating; and when the customer has crucial medical equipment, such as a dialysis machine that runs on electricity.

MP Atamanenko read aloud a letter from someone who suffers from EHS, and said he personally knows someone with EHS, but the FortisBC response, heard directly throughout the proceedings, was that there is no scientific evidence that the symptoms of EHS are caused by exposure to radiofrequency fields.

Director Shadrack said in the interview he is very concerned that FortisBC has no mechanism to deal with people who are diagnosed with EHS, and noted that under the Charter, there is a duty to protect and not discriminate against people with disabilities. “There is evidence that there are health effects,” he said. “It’s true that it has not been scientifically proven, but it is under study. It’s like industry is afraid to admit the possibility of it for fear of what that means.”

During the hearing, BCUC’s Commissioner MacMurphy expressed concern about FortisBC’s stand on opting out. “...there are some FortisBC customers that seriously believe that there is a potential for adverse health effects. And I think that’s something that cannot be just dismissed arbitrarily. And then you come to the whole question of what sort of options does the customer really have? I mean you’re basically saying ‘My way or the lights are out.’”

FortisBC responded that there have been other instances where a minority of their customers opposed one of their projects, but in the end, the project was found to be in the greater and continued on page 23

House severely damaged by fire in Kaslo

by Jan McMurray

Jeremy Belh and Crime McKinney and their two children are very happy that they live in Kaslo.

The upper floor and roof of their house was severely damaged in a fire on March 5, but they are feeling well taken care of to thanks to the incredible support of the community.

If you’re going to have a disaster, this is the place to have it,” Jeremy said in a telephone interview.

Jeremy spent the last few years designing and building the house, but he is in surprisingly good spirits. “It’s actually been a really good lesson in letting go,” he said.

When the house caught fire that afternoon, Claire was downtown with their son and his friend. “I was gone for less than an hour, and when I got back home, the fire was already burning extensively and the fire department was there,” she said. She got the message to Jeremy, who was at work at his music shop, but taking his lunch break. Their other son was skiing at White Pass, so did not find out until he got home later in the day.

The response from the community was immediate. “If it was just fire, we would have everything we need in the essentials,” said Claire. “My kids have more clothing now than they did before!” The family was immediately housed at Jeremy’s sister’s house, and the manager of the local businesses has been very generous.

It’s been a real boost in my faith in humanitry,” said Jeremy. “A huge heartfelt thanks to everyone who has been supporting us – they know who they are.”

The family has found a rental house, and Jeremy says the insurance process is going well. He said it is too early to say whether they will try to restore the house or not.

Donations are being accepted for the family through KSCU account #144285, there are donation jars at local businesses, and a benefit concert has been organized for Friday.

Kaslo Fire Chief Larry Badry reported that when the fire department was called at 2:49 pm, he was visiting four houses down. He was at the scene within two minutes and was able to get dispatch that nobody was home.

The department was on site at 2:59 pm, just 10 minutes after being paged, with two engines and 15 firefighters. Badry called Regional Fire Chief Terry Swan and asked him to have the Balfour department as well, so a crew of three with an engine came from Balfour. Balfour acted as support with the Rapid Intervention Team, which has to be in place at all fires to rescue any firefighters if need be.

The fire started in the upper floor. The cause has not yet been determined, but Chief Badry said it is not suspicious.

The fire was particularly challenging because the very thick insulation in the enclosed air space between the ceiling and the roof was on fire. “Couches that with the height of the building – it was very difficult to get it under control,” said Badry. With no ladder truck, the department used the Village’s bucket truck to help put out the fire. “It’s a little unusual for us to see that, but we don’t have a ladder truck, so it is difficult when dealing with buildings 40 feet high,” said Badry. “A ladder truck has been on our wish list for several years, and eventually we’ll have to have one.”

He stated that the proposed new fire hall is designed to accommodate a ladder truck.

The fire was mainly out at about 9:25 pm, reported Badry. The last ‘overhead team,’ which puts out the hotspots, left at 11:20 pm, and then there was monitoring all night. The fire scene was turned over to the security company at 9:00 the next morning.
As a result of the two studies, the RDCK will add five full-time equivalent positions to the organization this year. These include a project manager in resource recovery (waste disposal) and water utilities, a community sustainability coordinator, a finance planning manager, a finance clerk, a human resource technician and a parks planner.

Reedland explained that the new positions are important to address areas where the organization is “at risk.” He also said that the organization is growing, and the demand for services is growing.

The new positions push up the cost of general administration, which accounts for 7.8% of this year’s budget, compared to 3.2% of last year. Although this is a huge increase, Reedland said this is still lower than average in most Regional Districts, general administration accounts for 10-15% of the budget.

Furthermore, Reedland explained that the tax impact of the increase in general administration (the new positions) has been offset by using surpluses from prior years. He said the approximately $500,000 increase had been reduced to $300,000 this way.

New Denver and Silverton – Because New Denver and Silverton’s assessments are being revised, the tax figures in the RDCK budget may change, but not significantly. Based on unreviewed assessments, a New Denver homeowner with a house assessed at $263,880 (the average value of a house in the RDCK this year) will see an increase from $244.04 last year to $275.22 this year ($31.18 or 12.8% in their RDCK taxes). A Silverton homeowner with a $240,880 home will see an increase from $256.65 to $284.18 ($27.53 or 10.7%) in their RDCK taxes this year.

RDCK services that have increased significantly from last year for New Denver and Silverton residents are: waste recovery and regional parks.

Sloman – A homeowner with a house assessed at $263,880 (the average value of a house in the RDCK this year) will see an increase from $448.05 to $477.35 or 6.8% in their RDCK taxes this year. RDCK services that have significantly increased this year for Sloman are fire protection and regional parks.

Area H – A homeowner with a house assessed at $263,880 (the average value of a house in the RDCK this year) will pay $242.60 this year, down from $243.60 last year, a decrease of $1.00 or 0.4%. The fire protection and regional parks tax (home assessed at $263,880) will pay $222.26 this year, down from $226.79 last year, a decrease of $4.53 or 2.0%. This does not include any area specific defined area requirements. Area H is defined as having no requirements.

Nakusp and Area K residents will see a decrease in their RDCK tax this year. Although there is a slight decrease, Reedland said that the is an agreement for Nakusp and Area K property owners, and in rural administration for Area K property owners, those increases were offset by decreases elsewhere.

A Nakusp homeowner with a house assessed at $263,880 (the average value of a house in the RDCK this year) will pay $240.60 this year, down from $243.60 last year, a decrease of $3.00 or 1.2%. The fire protection and regional parks tax (home assessed at $263,880) will pay $222.66 this year, down from $226.79 last year, a decrease of $4.13 or 1.8%. This does not include any area specific defined area requirements. Area K is defined as having no requirements. Area D – A homeowner with a house valued at $263,880 (the average value of a house in the RDCK this year) will see an increase from $448.05 to $477.35 or 6.8% in their RDCK taxes this year, excluding taxation for services provided to defined areas. Main increases were in Community Facilities, Recreation and Parks service ($13.72 on a $236,880 house), rural administration ($4.93 on a $236,880 house), waste disposal ($4.64 on a $236,880 house) and transit ($4.25 on a $236,880 house).

Increases in services to defined areas include fire protection ($8.93 on a $236,880 house), mosquito control ($9.17 on a $236,880 house), mosquito control Pineridge ($2.53 on a $236,880 house), library ($6.94 on a $236,880 house) and McDonald Creek water utility ($4.60 on a $236,880 house).

Upper Slocan Valley Bear Study: Province and communities need to work together

by Jan McMurray

Solving the human/bear conflicts in the Upper Slocan Valley will take the will of not only the local governments and communities in the area, but also of the provincial government.

This message comes through in the ‘Upper Slocan Valley Bear Hazard Assessment and Bear Plan Report,’ conducted by biologist Wayne McCorry and Maggie Paquet between 2009 and 2012. The draft report was presented to the Village councils of New Denver and Silverton in May last year. Now complete, the study has been submitted to the two villages and the RDCK, as well as several provincial and local authorities, politicians and citizens.

The report lists four top priorities for the Province and all communities in the Upper Slocan Valley “so they can work together to significantly reduce bear/people conflicts.”

Priority #1 is to complete bear-proofing of all attractions, especially in New Denver. The Province can support this by re-instating the provincial program, cut in 2010, that provided matching funding of up to $10,000 for bear-proofing in communities. The report highly recommends the re-instatement of the New Denver program.

Although the report acknowledges that a lot of bear-proofing has already been done in the Slocan and Kootenay valleys, it stresses the importance of carrying through. “Because of the intelligence of bears and constant need for high energy food sources, especially in winter, areas with non-bear-proofing does not work well in high conflict areas, especially in bad bear years, such as what New Denver experienced periodically. One neighbour who does not bear-proof ruins it for others who do,” states the report.

Kaslo Jazz Etc. Society explores new revenue streams

by Jan McMurray

Kaslo Jazz Etc. Society is having a feasibility study done on three possible new revenue streams for the organization—events services, fundraising services, and festival services.

The feasibility studies were identified in a strategic planning session, explained Executive Director Jimmie Holland. “We’ve already done a little of these three things, so we just wanted to get the feasibility study done to see if we should go the next step to a business plan.”

Event services involves renting out the society’s tents, porta potties, fencing and other equipment. Fundraising services involves putting on fundraising events for other organizations. Festival services might involve producing a summer music festival, organizing consulting services to other event organizers.

The study is being done by Tara Connolly of Arts and Culture living in Kaslo. Half of the funding for the study is coming from EntrepriNC Non-Profits, a partnership of funders including Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) that promotes and supports social enterprise development and growth as a means to build strong non profit organizations and increase wealth creation.

Holland said she expects the study to be completed by the beginning of April.
Celebrating Summit Lake Ski Area improvements

by Jan McMurray

Improvements at Summit Lake Ski Area are a shining example of what can happen when a community comes together and gets behind a project.

"So many people have helped, I'd never be able to name them all," said Eric Waterfield, ski club president, at a special event at the hill on March 9.

The ski club hosted the event to celebrate the new ski rental shop, to unveil plans for a new day lodge, and to take people on a tour of the new cross-country ski/snowshoe trail and the new terrain park.

The people who took the tour found out that Summit Lake Ski Area offers much more than downhill skiing.

The new cross-country ski and snowshoe trail is 4.5 kilometres long. It starts off with a climb that leads to a two-kilometre loop with features including a beaver pond and a beautiful view of the Three Sisters.

The loop is at the southern end of the ski area, above the bunny hill. Waterfield says they are planning to build a connector trail to the loop from the forestry road at the northern boundary of the ski area.

When this is complete, the cross-country/snowshoe trail will be nine kilometres in total.

The terrain park was re-built this past fall, with Nakusp Secondary students Angus Jackson and Jesse Kitchen taking the lead on this project. Waterfield says the boys approached K2, the Arrow Lakes (Area K) and Slocan Valley (Area H) RDCK directors, and the Summit Lake Racers for donations, and were involved in designing and building the equipment.

A tube park was added last winter, and there are plans for a snowmobile area at the north end. There is also talk of ATV riding and other summer activities and events at the hill.

In short, there is a lot going on at Summit Lake Ski Area, and not just on the hill. The ski club is also making significant improvements at the lodge.

At the March 9 event, there was a ribbon cutting for the new '32 by 30' building at the north end of the lodge, which will have a ski rental shop on the top floor and a First Aid area with two rooms and a locker room on the ground floor. This was built during weekly meetings held every other weekend through the construction season last year, with anywhere between 12 and 30 people showing up to help. Beth Warrantz, who was club president for 17 years, is volunteering as project manager. The building is almost finished and will be in operation for next ski season.

This addition was funded by the CBT Community Initiatives/ Affected Areas program ($20,000), Kootenay-Slocan Community Foundation ($25,000) and KSCU's Care Wear Program, Nakusp branch ($700). Representatives from the funding organizations were there to say a few words. Waterfield thanked the funders and the volunteers and added, "So many tradespeople donated their time, and many of the materials that were used were donated or discounted."

The next phase of improvements to the building will involve converting the existing First Aid room to a women's washroom, and converting the existing men's washrooms into one large men's washroom. Both new washrooms will be wheelchair accessible. Funding of $50,000 from the CBT Community Development Program has been secured for this next phase and work will be done this year.

Funding is about to begin for the third phase, a new day lodge, with an application for $50,000 in to the CBT Community Initiatives/ Affected Area Program.

The fate of the old day lodge is still under discussion, but Waterfield hopes it will be moved up to the new cross-country ski trail area to serve as a warming hut.

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Community Calendar

Wednesday, March 20
Katrine Connery re-election fundraiser
Castlegar Community Centre
5:30 pm
Overseas Columbia Treaty Options
Golden Civic Centre
7 - 10:30 pm
Welcome, Spring, Perspectives Jam
Shakertown Gallery
Thursday, March 21
Overseas Columbia Treaty Options
Prestige Resort, Nelson
7 - 10:30 pm
Acrylic Painting Workshop
Shakertown Gallery
1 - 4 pm
Friday, March 22
Columbia River Treaty Review Conf.
Castlegar Sandman Inn
9 am - 5 pm
Saturday, March 23
Silvertown Community Club Car Wash
Shakertown Village Office
10 am - 3 pm
Bagpiper in Class
Ariz Shadok, ND
10 am - 1 pm
Sunday, March 24
Easter Bingo
Shakertown Legion Hall
1 pm
Wednesday, March 27
Munady Service
Slocan Catholic Church
5:00 pm
CBT Discussion with Sid Parker
Nakusp Seniors Hall
7:00 pm
Thursday, March 28
Slocan Valley Historical Society AGM
Window Elementary School
7:00 pm
Friday, March 29
Woodbury Resort Dolly Derby begins
Woodbury Resort
8:00 am
Good Friday Service
Slocan Catholic Church
3:00 pm
Sunday, March 31
Woodbury Resort Dolly Derby ends
Woodbury Resort
Noon
Easter Service
New Denver Catholic Church
12:30 pm
Easter Service
Slocan Catholic Church
4:00 pm
Wednesday, April 3
KSCU Director Elections
Your local KSCU branch
Regular hours
Thursday, April 4
KSCU Director Elections
Your local KSCU branch
Regular hours
CBT Discussion with Randy Holm
Location TBD
7:00 pm
Friday, April 5
the SHOT Concert
Ariz Shadok, ND
7:00 pm
Saturday, April 6
WVP Bottle Drive
WVP Graham School
9 am - noon
Shop-in-class clinic
Ariz Shadok, ND
10 am - 1 pm

Nakusp Rotary Club
Meets Wednesdays at 7:00 pm
at the Nakusp Rotary Villa • 206 - 7th Ave
Voices from the Valleys

Spring beer count
We had the Christmas Bird Count, now it is time for the Spring Bird Count. On March 8 between Mirror Lake and Ainsworth, I collected 534 empty beer cans of this invasive species, as well as 40 beer bottles. The numbers were down slightly from last year with the most common being Budweiser (151), Brava (59), Old Milwaukee (49), Kokanee (49), Molson (25), extra Old Stock (22), Caribou Drought (19), Pabst (15), Pilsner (12), Bud Light (12), Vodka (4), and a whole miscellaneous rattle of Miller, Alexander Keith, Heineken, Wild Cat, Hell’s Gate, etc. The most hazardous of all was Face Plant (2). A Face Plant at 80 on a twisty mountain road in icy conditions leads to broken glass, twisted metal, hospital and the morgue. Even one is too many. The RCMP was called by the numbers.

This invasion has spread from living rooms and bars to infest roadsides up and down the Kootenays. It is most lethal on young men between 16 and 28, but with some deadly side effects on women and children. No one seems to want this empty beer cans to pop up again spring on every curve and rocky bank. And so do the crosses.

Mohawk Gas Station gave me 5 cents for each can and I spent it all on 649 Lottery tickets on behalf of Kaslo Youth. We lost. Somehow it seemed appropriate to lose everything for all that time and effort, just through one turn of the lottery wheel.

Gerald Garnett
Fletcher Creek

Wake up, Kaslo: new fire hall
Has anyone done the math? I’ve lived in the area for over 40 years. There have been fewer than 40 house fires over that period of time. At current values, let’s say $200K per house, that’s 10 million bucks replacement cost.

There are approximately 500 houses in Kaslo, including the Allen subdivision. Over the 40-year period, that’s 20 million bucks in insurance premiums if everyone pays just a grand a year, and that’s not counting “surrounding area,” as allowed for in the first calculation.

A couple of years ago, the provincial government spent a ton of money, which it extorted from taxpayers, for “fire interface,” whatever, to make communities safer from fire. Okay, are we safe? I don’t know. But I’d sure like to hear from the person whose insurance premium was lowered as a result of that effort.

Now, Kaslo is in the “process” of replacing a three-car garage, known as the Volunteer Fire Hall. What kind of people could build a four-car garage for under a million bucks? The Kaslo Volunteer Fire Department has never lost a basement. And a multi-million dollar, four-car garage, will not change that.

If you are worried about the downtown core, don’t. It will inevitably burn one day and the only way to prevent that would be to start at one end and replace every 100-year-old wood building with more modern construction. A new four-car garage won’t help.

Wake up, you’re being homewrecked!

Gary Cockrell
Kasco

What?? Marc Garneau—brilliant, likeable, former astronaut and bona fide Canadian hero is dropping out and throwing his support to Justin, his nemesis?

He must have got the answer to “Please tell us what in your resume qualifies you to be the leader of the country?”

Open letter to MLA Katrine Conroy
Donated, used goods should be PST exempt
On behalf of the Arrow Lakes Health Care Auxiliary (ALHCA), we are writing to ask for your support and action in the matter of the Provincial Sales Tax as it applies to BC Health Care Auxiliary Thrift Stores across the province. Under the current HST regulations, used goods that are donated to, and sold by charitable/non-profit organizations, are not subject to HST. Effective April 1, 2013, our Thrift Stores, unfortunately, will be required to charge and remit PST on many of the used items that we sell in our stores. The negative logistical and financial implications of applying the PST to used goods are immense, both from a volunteer and customer perspective.

The Arrow Lakes Health Care Auxiliary (formerly Arrow Lakes Hospital Auxiliary) has operated a successful Thrift Store in Nakusp since 1962. This Thrift Store has always been a 100% volunteer operation; current volunteer hours exceed over 500 hours per month and the majority of these hours are worked by members in their 70s and 80s. Our store relies on the outstanding generosity of Nakusp and surrounding communities for the donations of ALL of the goods that we sell and the amazing support of the community members who shop in the store. The ALHCA Thrift Store serves as an extremely affordable ‘department store’ for lower income families in the area, a community gathering-spot and a way for the residents of this valley to pay for very real, very needed health care services and equipment in the Kootenay.

With monies raised through the Thrift Store goods, the ALHCA has purchased medical equipment and supported many programs and services over the years. In 2011, our contributions totalled $36,908; in 2012, $33,283; and so far in 2013, $10,552.

The financial contributions to health care programs and services, made possible through the ALHCA’s Thrift Store operations, are substantial. These programs and services are funded directly by people in your constituency, in an effort to fill in where health care funding from the Province leaves gaps. With the application of PST to donated, used goods sold by charitable/non-profit organizations, the Province is asking more of the organizations and individuals who have already given so much. The ALHCA feels strongly that the application of this tax will:

1) add more accounting / reporting responsibilities to overworked volunteers; and
2) tax the very residents who are already paying for health care services through their donations and their purchases at our Thrift Stores.

An exemption from PST on ALL donated, used goods sold by charitable/non-profit organizations is needed. We appreciate your support in this matter and we look forward to your response. If we can answer any questions or provide more information, please do not hesitate to ask.

We are extending an invitation to you, under separate cover, to join our volunteers at the shop for an afternoon, to see what we do, how we do it and how the PST regulations, as they stand, will affect our volunteers and our customers. We look forward to meeting and working with you.

Helen Scown, President
Arrow Lakes Health Care Auxiliary
Nakusp

EDITORIAL / LETTERS POLICY

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

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

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

We will not 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.

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 LETTERS

Lions and tigers and bears ... … recognizable dangers, which our ancestors obviously managed to avoid enough to allow the growth of our society. Today, it's much harder to discern what is a danger and what is not. The issue of cell towers and similar structures is one such case. On the one hand, the corporations say they are safe and pose no threat to the public. Others, such as the American Academy of Environmental Protection, which report a rise in infertility, autism, ADD as well as ElectroMagnetic Radiation (EMO) and cancer.

If the proposed microwave technology is detrimental to even a small portion of the people, why does Telus use existing corridors for cell towers instead of placing them in populated valley bottoms? Why is Fortis proposing to install smart meters which will not benefit the rate payer in any way? And why are they so indifferent to our concerns? As they say, why isn't the information available on their websites for us to access? Why did the people of the neighborhood near the proposed installation not allow smart meters? The Slocan Park Community Action for Responsible Ecology Society (SPCARE) invites all our neighbors to join us in asking these questions. The louder our voice is, the more likely we are to be heard. Please contact us at sar@midlifedude.
gmail.com.

Our ancestors survived and thrived because they avoided life threatening scenarios whenever/wherever possible. To ensure the good of our community, we should do the same now – ask the hard questions and insist they be answered honestly. Corporations need to be accountable to the people they purport to serve, their consumer base.

Slocan Park CARE Society

COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY ESTATE

September 16, 2014 could be an historic day for the Arrow Lakes Valley, the earliest day when 10-year post Treaty Review of the Columbia River Treaty can be delivered. The destruction of this rare fertile valley to serve the operational needs of American electricity companies was the darkest period in the history of British Columbia.

No one really knows what WAC Bennet’s state of mind was when he suddenly, against his most knowledgeable advisors, tossed the Arrow Lakes carelessly into the Columbia. Many books and papers have been written about what a one-sided horrible deal the treaty was. Hard working pioneers were tossed off their land, productive river bottom land washed away and sensitive riparian ecosystems eliminated. The treaty brought a path of devastation across the interior of the province that no mitigation plans could ever fix.

There are some aspects of the treaty that must continue; we must not throw out the medicine with the bathwater. But the negative consequences are quite obvious. Some cross border management protocols must be maintained. This is not 1961 however, and we know more about the nature of the problems that mega-project development in the Columbia Basin has caused. We need new objectives that recognize current knowledge and engineering capabilities that now exist on both sides of the border. We have ten years to develop a new strategy that does not repeat or reprise the mistakes of the past. On September 16, 2014, notification must be given to all Peoples that a new forward can be found that is both enlightened and recognizes values that once were somewhat forgotten.

Edward E. Mcginnis
CIT Arton Group Fasnugger

Power struggle at the Slocan library

I write to clarify recent controversies including an allegation of breach of confidentiality relating to the Slocan Library.

Following donation of a private library collection to the Village a few years ago, a call went out for volunteers to organize that collection. Village council set up a select committee to assist as the Village’s liaison with the volunteers. The committee had no administration or decision making powers, and operation of the library relied entirely on the cooperative efforts of the library volunteers.

A power struggle soon developed between two of the volunteers, both of whom were dedicated and hardworking, and both of whom were well respected and loved by the community. One could not accept direction, the other had 30 years of library experience. One was primarily interested in control, the other in function. One operated freely, the other wanted policies. A sympathetic faction formed around each of them, one faction aggressive, the other relatively restrained. One volunteer faction did Tuesday and Thursday shifts, the other Fridays and Saturdays.

All was fine as long as these factions had no contact, but some conflict was unavoidable. Sometimes books would be shelved one way on one shift, and another way the next. Sometimes things were turned off which should have been left on. Sometimes things were left on which should have been turned off. Both volunteers were on the select committee, so meetings tended to be difficult. Occasionally there were telephone calls. After considerable discussion, one volunteer, one of the aggressive faction, made a threat of physical violence in an email. After another committee member, also of that faction, had mentioned that threat, I intervened and put a stop to it. I emphasized that, after eight months, that threat has never been retracted.

The threat having toured head, the aggressive faction launched a campaign of character assassination against the committee member who had been threatened, compiled in a written complaint to council, each page watermarked ‘confidential’ in the belief that by doing so the complaint would be more difficult to discuss. Finally, apparently still under that belief, a number of other people were invited to contribute letters of complaint, some to my knowledge, any of them were informed that the cause they were contributing to was in support of a threat of violence.

That complaint also included a request for an in-camera meeting of Council to discuss the matter further, a request which did not meet the criteria required for an in-camera meeting: agenda item under the Community Charter Act. I also emphasize that no in-camera meeting of council was ever held to discuss the complaint.

Despite the ‘confidential’ markings, the complaint contained no actual request that it be kept confidential, nor did it mention any need for an in-camera meeting of council.

Not only, however, was the complaint highly defamatory, council had no authority to hold an inquisition into the behaviour of a library volunteer, much less put them on trial, in secret or otherwise. I objected to the inclusion of the complaint and the agenda and had it removed.

Under these circumstances, no duty of confidentiality existed under the Community Charter Act. In preventing me from taking part of a public meeting, I maintained the privacy of those complaining. I also likely protected the complainers, as well as the Village, from the consequences of the complaint.

I informed the complainant about the existence and nature of the complaint.

The mayor gave the chair of the library committee the authority to deal with the matter: the committee members involved in dispute had to go to mediation and the volunteer who made the threat of violence would have to leave, failing which the library would have to close. The Village had no authority over the volunteer, but could control use of its property.

Mediation was held, but the aggressive faction appears to have turned it against the complainant, making an issue of how the threatened volunteer became aware of the complaint, the existence of which was the raison d’etre of the complaint itself, having no substance, was ignored.

In fact none of the recent complaints are confidential. All of them, including the allegations against me, have been manifested of an enervated power struggle in very close quarters. Despite the vitriolic black clouds often swirling around it, the library itself, a bright cultural jewel, actually functions quite nicely.

This may be a cautionary tale of the fragility of democracy, or simply of the value of a well thought out plan. I ask any readers of this letter to consider this: had the Village received a complaint about any of you, whom amongst you would have wished to see the situation handled any differently? Who amongst you, had a complaint been made against you, would prefer that it be dealt with completely, with no opportunity for you to respond?

Patricia McGreal
Slocan

BCUC hearings on FortisBC smart meters

The two weeks of official oral hearings on the FortisBC smart meter application to the BC Utilities Commission began on March 18 in Kelowna. Final written submissions are due March 28 for FortisBC and April 18 for the intervenors, and final FortisBC and intervenors’ oral evidence begins May 15 in Kelowna. Final written submissions due April 28. Also, the chair ordered some ‘undertakings’ from FortisBC – some further work to clarify some points. Sometimes after April 28, the BC Utilities Commission’s panel of three will hear of the public’s decision.

If you were able to listen in via web audio broadcast services provided by Allwest, you would have heard from the FortisBC lawyers over and over that the radiation emitted from the proposed smart meters is within Safety Code 6 and Health Canada limits, and from the intervenors and incredibly highly credentialed doctors who checked in from all parts of the globe to the roll out, over and over, that the standards being used are inadequate, “archaic” even, and entirely insatisfactory in protecting the public from harm.

One highlight that caught my attention was the cross-examination of a radiation expert, asked if he was aware of the town of 550 which had a cell tower put smack dab in the middle of it and 43 contracted cancer cases there. Jerry was not surprised when he answered, “no”, but when the answer to his next question, “Would you take your family and live there yourself?” was “yes,” Mr. Flynn was incredulous.

Another bit of evidence which surprised me was the degree to which radiation from smart meters still radiates into the earth. Interviewer Curtis Bennett, technician, tried to make a legal case for protecting the environment, stating that the effects of radiation on agriculture will cause great losses. While we are generally aware that radiation goes through concrete, fireworks, etc., during the course of his cross-examination, he asked that the EMR fields penetrate one meter into the ground.

In regard to the economic downside of smart meters, FortisBC’s counsel asked if it had looked into the far cheaper wired as opposed to wireless meters, which is what some places are doing (eg, the state of Hob). They answered “no.”

We heard so much technical detail and lawyer talk that at times it was often about as interesting as watching paint dry; therefore, much gratitude to our MP and RDCR Director for sticking it out all those grueling days and also to David Aaron in his lead lawyer role for the Citizens for Safe Technology!

Finally, while the mounting evidence regarding placing the AMI or smart meters on all our homes and businesses would seem overwhelming against their deployment, we must remember what happened in the Supreme Court of Maine, US last summer. Even though the judge stated the regulators (Central Maine Power) failed to adequately address health and safety concerns and ordered that they “reconsider,” the industry roll our continued anyway.

Not one nor another, just the course how to unite behind the truth for.

Duphne Fields
Slocan

Village of Slocan responds to Aline Winje

The following is submitted by the Village of Slocan in response to an earlier submission from Aline Winje, responding to the manner in which the Village dealt with the bond proposal of Mrs. Winje’s brother in law.

Burials in the Slocan Cemetery, as they have for the past 150 years, are viewed very seriously by the Village of Slocan. The Village understands that these are very emotional and Stonefaced times for the families.

The Village does its utmost to ensure the dialogue between the Village and families is done in an attentive and sympathetic manner and that the Village’s assistance is helpful to the families.

The Village will be implementing procedures to ensure that grave site preparations can be conducted efficiently, no matter what the season, and will make every effort to assist and minimize the worry and distraction for families at this difficult time.

Village of Slocan

INSIST ON CRUELTY-FREE FOOD

Some of your readers may have seen the Calgary Co-op story, which was on Global News, Saturday, March 16. Due to pressure from its membership, the co-op will cease carrying products from animals raised in confinement, pigs and chickens in particular. More on this story can be read online on Huffington Post.

Local people have access to pasture raised beef, pork and eggs and chicken. A few local retailers have been carrying meat products, delivering them farm gate sales. And Valley stones carry ethically raised meat and eggs. Ongoing an recent animal products.

Local restaurants have used locally grown meat, eggs and other fresh produce. Some restaurants have gone as far as offering a meatless Monday.

Local people want the choice!

Lorraine Raits
Passmore
Why should we care about the Columbia River Treaty?

by Janet Spicer

The Columbia River Treaty was ratified by the United States and Canada in 1964 in order to coordinate the construction of hydroelectric generation on both sides of the border.

Portland, Oregon realists made mistakes from the very beginning, neglecting real work on the Columbia River floodplain, but following the 1948 flood caused by an exceptional snowpack, the US calculated that they needed 18.5 million acre feet of water storage somewhere upstream from Portland to prevent it from happening again. Riparian rights along the American section of the Columbia River ruled out any further storage below the border. Consequently, the only remaining place to get it was on the Canadian side, where, unfortunately for Canadians, riparian rights along the Columbia River did not exist.

The result was the installation of three large reservoirs on the Kootenay (Mica and Dayna) and on the BC section of the Columbia River, and the US put in another dam at Libby, whose upstream had flooded back into BC for 40 miles. A total of 294,083 acres—much of it prime forest or agricultural land and critical wildlife habitat—was drowned or severely impacted in southern BC as a consequence of these four dams plus the Revelstoke dam. In the Arrow Lakes Valley alone, the Keenleyside Dam inundated or severely impacted 105,339 acres, of which 3,932 acres was farmland, and displaced 2,300 people from their homes and properties—the largest dislocation of people in Canadian peace-time history with the exception of the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

At the time of the signing of the treaty and construction of the dams, no thought was given to the impacts of these actions. The consequence was the complete destruction of the riparian zone bordering these massive reservoirs. A riparian zone is the natural area of either wetlands or grassland, shrubs and deciduous trees which lie between a stream and the forest. Riparian areas are essential for the health of both the water system and the forest adjacent to it. The riparian zone supplements the nutrient levels (insects, etc.) upon which fish and other aquatic creatures depend, and it provides the habitat for the millions of small insectivorous songbirds essential for pest and disease suppression in the forest.

With the loss of thousands of kilometres of riparian zone, the fish lost vital food sources and the forests lost their source of natural predation to prevent pests and disease. Bears, which had lost their summer feeding grounds through hydroelectric development, dug dens in the riparian zone of the Columbia River. Most upriver from the dam, these bears were shot as a result of the decline in the population of their food source: black bear, for example. It became more difficult to obtain healthy, Reliable fish populations to take them through winter hibernation because of the Grand Coulee Dam (which but could still feed on stream-killed salmon) lost their final feeding grounds before hibernation as well as habitat for their winter dens. Ungulates lost their winter browse. Some 4,000 muskrats starved to death when the riparian zone was flooded by the Mica Dam. The reservoir (Kumshait) caused muskrat and perquisite salmon populations to drop by 100,000, bear and coyote by 90%, mink and otter by 80%, black bear, rattled grouse, coyote by 70%, deer, wapiti and snowshoe hare by 50%, and elk and lynx by 40%. The insectivorous song bird populations have largely disappeared from the Columbia River corridor as reservoirs have flooded out their habitat and with no controls left to combat leaf miner infestations, the birds are dying in their thousands.

When 80 vertical feet of water was put on top of the natural water level in the Arrow Lakes as a result of the Keenleyside Dam, what effect did the subsequent increase in water pressure and diminution of light through the water to the lake bottom have on the photo syntrophic plants and freshwater plankton needed to maintain the delicate balance of oxygen-producing life forms in the water? The rapid rise and drawdown of the BC storage reservoirs as called for by the US in order to maximize their power generation and, even more important, their irrigation needs in former Washington desert, means wild temperature fluctuations, erratic water currents, and continuous erosion of the valley walls, leading to constant turbidity in the water. Conversely, the Americans vary carefully monitor the rate of drawdown in their own reservoirs to prevent such erosion and land loss from occurring.

Just as troubling is the very short period in which nutrient availability in BC’s section of the Columbia River, owing to the powerful flushing effect of these rapid drawdowns as water is returned into the river, causes the soil to be washed out of the reservoirs. Possibly compounding the problem of insufficient nutrients in the water is the stocking of BC reservoirs with trimmed (sterile) fish, which, because of their enhanced growth rates, require more food and so become more significant predators on other fish species as they all compete for dwindling foodstocks.

Studies suggest that by 2050, precipitation levels in western USA will fall by 50% and in BC by 20%. The US will increasingly be looking to British Columbia to make up that shortfall, as water storage from BC reservoirs for irrigation purposes outpaces power generation in importance to the US. The Columbia River Treaty has in effect taken away BC’s sovereignty over its section of the Columbia River and transferred it to Bonneville Power Administration and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

The treaty has created a multi-billion dollar agriculture industry in the former Washington desert owing to the irrigation provided by the storage of water held in the Arrow Reservoir while at the same time destroying food security in the affected BC valleys by flooding out its farmlands (5,893 acres in the Arrow Lakes Valley alone).

Are the staggering social and environmental losses in British Columbia offset by the economic gains from hydro power generation? The BC government currently has a $55 million debt. In 2011, Auditor General John Doyle determined BC Hydro’s debt to be $2.2 billion and anticipated that Hydro’s debt would increase to $5 billion by 2014. It is expected to continue to rise to $18 billion by 2019. In September 2014, the BC cabinet has the opportunity to make the decision to 1) keep the Columbia River Treaty as it is; 2) amend the treaty; 3) terminate the treaty. The same option is extended to the US. Ten years’ advance notice must be given if either the US or Canada wish to make changes to the treaty. (The status of the Columbia Basin Trust is unaffected by the treaty.)

Reminiscent of the 1960s, the BC government is still treating little interest in the environmental impacts of the treaty dams. Jake Jacobs, BC Ministry of Energy spokesman, says the market value of the size and value of the Canadian entitlement and the implications of any flood control provision changes. (The Canadian entitlement is an estimate of one-half the additional amount of hydropower that the US can generate as a result of the Canadian dams. It is sold on the open market.)

For those members of the public who have concerns or questions about the Columbia River Treaty that they wish to voice to a collective voice, and to respond to, public sessions are being held in Nelson at the Prestige Inn on March 21 from 7 to 8:30 pm and in Castlegar at the Sandman Inn on March 27.

On March 27 at the Senior Citizens Hall in Nakusp, Sid Parker will speak about the treaty. Parker, as mayor of Revelstoke for eight years and MP for nine years, spent 17 years dealing with the very serious problems created by the CTR.

On April 4, Wendy Holm will be speaking in Nakusp at 7 pm. Holm has developed a provincial, national and international reputation as a resource economist and advisor on such issues as trade and competitiveness, sovereignty and food security. She will offer advice on the implications of the CTR now and in the future.

Finally, on April 10, from 10 am to 4 pm at the Fanquher Community Hall, the Ministry of Energy has agreed to respond to the concerns of local people in the Arrow Lakes Valley to hold a special meeting to listen to their concerns about the impact of the dams and their reservoirs on the environment and discuss ideas about what could be done to address them. How can a vibrant riparian zone be re-created that will bring back insectivorous songbirds and wading shorebirds? How can a sustainable fishery no longer dependent on chemical fertilizers and sterilized fish be brought back? How can the ongoing erosion of silt banks and beaches be halted? Can that most endangered ecosystem—the giant cottonwood forests which buttressed the Columbia River bottomland and now completely gone—be brought back, and with healthy populations of great horned owls and kingfishers?

The dams are in and are here to stay, but could they be gradually converted to run of river systems or otherwise modified to operate at lower and more stable water levels?

The average high-water level of the Arrow Reservoir during the summer period is 1,435 feet above sea level. If it were lowered by 10 vertical feet, would that again make available the irreplaceable wetlands and agricultural land at Banata, the Narrows and, most notably, north of Arrowhead at Sifnshon and beyond.

Or has the treaty so compromised Canadian sovereignty and control over its water that restoration and revitalization is impossible?

Rather than concentrating exclusively on the dollars’ worth of power that is returned to the BC border by the US referred to as the Canadian entitlement, perhaps it is time to ask for an environmental entitlement.

COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY

Upcoming public events

21 March, Prestige Lakeside Resort, Nelson, 7-8 pm
An overview of Treaty options, hosted by provincial Columbia River Treaty Review Team.

22 March, Sandman Inn, Castlegar, 9 am- 5 pm
All-day conference, hosted by provincial Columbia River Treaty Review Team. Registration required. Bus service provided for Edgewood, Faquher and Burton participants.

27 March, Senior Citizen’s Hall, Nakusp, 7pm
Sid Parker (author), will share his perspective on the Columbia River Treaty. As mayor of Revelstoke for 8 years and MP for 9 years, he spent 17 years dealing with the very serious problems created by the treaty.

April 4, Nakusp (location TBA), 7 pm
Wendy Holm, international resource economist and advisor on water and land use, will discuss the Columbia River Treaty.

April 10, Faquher Community Hall, 10 am - 4 pm
Ministry of Energy hosts public meeting on solutions to restoring failing ecosystems below the Treaty dams. Lunch provided.

This Notice sponsored by the CRT Action Group

The Valley Voice March 20, 2013

The Hugh Keenleyside Dam, constructed 12 km upstream of Castlegar, created the Arrow Lakes Reservoir in the late 1960s, flooding thousands of acres of productive farmlands, and displacing hundreds of families.
New Denver council, March 12: ‘Imagine Sloan Lake’ survey results presented

by Katrine Campbell

• Theresa DesCamp, Mike Lesnik and Mike Koelen attended as a delegation on behalf of the Slocan Valley Community Network to present the executive summary of its community survey. DesCamp explained the ‘Imagine Sloan Lake’ survey was replaced by the new survey because community values for the lake, which would be included with the scientific studies for future decision makers to use in developing a management plan. Scientifically, she said, there is no reason not to develop around the lake, “but it’s a big deal to the community.”

Council approved a request from the Village of Silverton to contribute $315, one-quarter of the annual cost of the electronic recycling service.

Unrepentant author Gary Wright reads at the Nelson library

submitted

Gary Wright is unrepentant.

Lovers of books, politics, and subversion can find out why at a reading of Wright’s rollicking 2012 autobiography Unrepentant on Thursday, March 21, 7:30 pm at the Nelson Public Library.

Wright is not only unrepentant, he’s unrepentant from a past that has earned him the label as the former longtime mayor of New Denver. If that is remarkable in itself, so is Wright’s story. An American college student in the 1960s, Wright became involved in the anti-Vietnam war movement, becoming active with Students for a Democratic Society and the American Indian Movement. The FBI revoked his passport and put him on the FBI’s watch list. Wright began planning a move to Canada.

Unrepentant begins with those heady protest years and follows Wright through decades playing music and all that went with a free-spirited life—sex, drugs, and rock and roll, all of which eventually led him to politics. His entrance into civic politics began when, working as the Village of Invermere’s janitor, he was encouraged to run for a seat on council. It was a short step to become New Denver’s straight-speaking mayor, a post he held for 22 years.

“Life is weird,” says Wright. “One year in one country I am wanted by the FBI; another year in another country I receive a medal for public service, and get a letter of commendation from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Same man, same beliefs. Go figure.”

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO ALL...

On behalf of the Brad Hicks’ Benefit

How do you begin to express the gratitude we have for a community who gives so generously?

WE ARE IN AWE... of local businesses who donated to the benefit; your contributions were unprecedented and over the top.

WE ARE IN AWE... of those who gave so so selflessly of their time, made donations, or helped in any way, from ticket sales to dinner preparation, from planning to pulling out to do dishes to clean up, you are amazing!

We are truly touched by your caring and kindness. We feel very loved and comforted. We will never forget.

With love, Darlene, Jason and family, Michael and Derek Friends of Brad—Candice, Debbie, Kerry, Natalie and Shelley

Dark Water Dragons

Entertainment, Silent & Blind Auction

Sweets & Savories for Sale

Silverton Gallery: April 13, 2013

Door Open: 7:00 P.M.

Admission: Donation

Expected Launching of Our Dragon Boat is in May

The Catholic Churches in New Denver & Slocan

Holy Week—a time of prayer; Easter—a time of joy!

Around the Easter weekend we remember Christ’s journey from the table of the last supper, through his Passion and Death, to the joy of his Rising to new life.

The Holy Week services are beautiful— with the washing of feet, at the Maundy service, the readings of the Passion on Good Friday and the celebration of light and life on Easter Sunday.

(All these last fast a little hour.)

As always you are very welcome to join us at this most sacred and uplifting time.

Maundy Service:
On Wednesday 27th March in Slocan at 5 pm

[Note—Wednesday not Thursday]

Good Friday (29th):
Slocan—3pm

Easter Sunday (31st):
New Denver—12:30pm
Slocan—4pm

Other local Christian Churches will also be praying and worshipping in a similar way.

So wherever you celebrate the weekend, we hope you will feel the warmth of Christ’s light shining on you.
Kaslo council, March 12: Kaslo Housing Society requests extension on Pine Street property

by Jan McMurray

Interviews for a new CAO have been completed, but it was too early to say if a new CAO would be chosen. Rainwater will be retiring. September is a letter from the Kaslo Housing Society, asking for a further five-year extension on their right to build affordable housing on the Pine Street property, was referred to the Municipal Services Committee.

The letter states that although society members are discouraged by the high infrastructure costs to build on the property as outlined in the Focus report, and has therefore investigated other projects, they have not given up on the Pine Street land. They see that the Tinhubers footbridge will be an asset to the property. They have tentative plans to have engineers do an investigation of the soil for septic and foundation requirements this spring, at a cost of $3,000. They note that if they do not move ahead with a project there, this work will not benefit to the Village or any other developer of the property.

If the Village is not willing to grant the extension, the society asks that council consider a covenant on the land requiring 15% of any future development to be designated for affordable housing.

The society is also assisting the Abbey Manor board with its plans to add two units to the facility. The $60,000 grant from the Community Forest Society that has been held in trust for the Kaslo Housing Society for several years has been allocated to the Abbey Manor Society at the request of the two housing societies.

Approvals for the construction of the boat launch ramp in Kaslo Bay are slowly trickling in. The Okanagan Lagoon Board has provided approval, with the condition of archaeological monitoring, which means the band sends someone to be on site while the work is underway. Federal approval has also been received, but provincial Water Act and Land Act approvals have not. A provincial ministry employee notifies the Village in an email that Land Act tenure should be coming soon. The Province received a 30-day extension for its application for the ramp on October 5, 2012.

A letter from David Stewart of the North Kootenay Lake Arts & Heritage Council asks for clarification of the Park Use Policy where it gives priority to organizations for celebrations such as May Days, Canada Day, Jazz Fest, Light Up and Saturday Market. When he went to book Front Street Park for the Saturday Market for the upcoming season, he was informed that two Saturdays (June 20 and August 31) were already booked. June 20 was booked for Canada Day, another celebration on the priority list. Stewart asks that Village staff help to mediate potential conflicts in future. Council agreed, and directed staff accordingly. Council also referred the Park Use Policy to the Municipal Services Committee.

Council received the Community Forest report from Village representative, Erika Bird. Positive parts of the report include that the Winter in the Forest Festival went very well, the board is making an in-depth assessment of its geo-spatial data, and Community Dividend distributions of $83,000 are available. There will be four director positions available at the April 24 AGM. “On the frustrating side has been the board handling of finding new management,” the state. “So far, I am not hearing support for the decision from the public, the Ministry or from local contractors.” Richard Marchand’s last day as manager was March 8 and the deadline for proposals from prospective managers was March 15. An interim manager will be needed.

Council will request a meeting with the ROCK and Community Forest Society on site at the airport to discuss a road upgrade on the south side of the runway.

Councillor Lang will work with staff to develop a Request for Proposals to map and GPS the airport property, current and potential gravel reserves, and future land uses on that property.

An email from Russ White asks when the snow berms created by DIXL Driving School at the airport will be removed so that the runway can be open again. He notes that DIXL ended up not operating there and therefore not paying for the use of the facility. He further notes that DIXL was to remove any snow berms. The Village should think less of running what could be a moneymaker (the airport) as an amusement park, and more as a facility in lines that are set up by Transport Canada... I believe the Village should find someone to become the operator, just as they have a Village foreman, that can take care of the day to day issues and push this facility ahead, rather than backwards,” he states in his letter.

White will be informed that the municipality is trying to address his concerns by monitoring the runway condition regarding snow removal.

Road closures for­ferFest on September 29 and 28 were approved.

Arrow Lakes (Area K) RDCK Director Paul Peterson responded favourably to an email from the Village of Kaslo asking local governments in the area if they would like to participate in a regional highway building project. Councillor Sawyer reported that Peterson is the only respondent so far. When Councilor Holland asked if this was a Chamber initiative or a Village initiative, Sawyer said it was a Kaslo initiative.

Mr. Lee, acting as CAO, was authorized to sign the agreement with Columbia Basin Trust for the $10,000 Water Smart Match Funding program. The Village will provide $5,000 for a total project cost of $15,000 to implement a water loss management plan. Night flow analysis has been done twice by Village staff, and both data sets indicate extremely high water loss in the distribution system (looking upsets).

Joyce Davidson’s letter of resignation as Animal Control Officer as of April 30 was received, and a letter of thanks and a $50 gift certificate will be sent to her. The Village will advertise for someone to replace her.

A request to the electrical system of a ditch in Viney Park will not be done this year. The Village will suggest that the Chamber fund grant funding elsewhere.

Measure T, the business tax, will be 2.45 times more than the standard tax rate this year, down from 2.5 times.

Mayor Lay informed council that the West Kootenay Boundary Regional Health Board voted in favour of setting aside $3 million each year for capital reserves.

Mayor Lay observed that the local health advisory committee is currently conducting a series of focus groups on Monday, March 25 in Kaslo.

Council will respond to a letter from Victor Arenameno to let him know council shares his concerns about the new electoral boundaries. Concerns are MP accessibility, geographic challenges and splitting up communities of interest.

IH announces two new physicians and launch of strategic planning in Kaslo

by Jan McMurray

A change in physicians at Kaslo’s Victoria Court Care Centre effective April 1, has been announced by Interior Health.

Dr. Thibodeau and Johannson will be leaving the centre, and two new doctors were announced.

Dr. Thibodeau and Johannson both posted letters to their patients at the health centre. Dr. Thibodeau announced in his letter that he will be opening a private clinic in Kaslo in October 2013. Dr. Johannson’s letter states: “You are aware of the difficulties that the physician system has had here trying to maintain services in the clinic and the emergency room. These difficulties have progressed to a point where I feel I can no longer provide safe, appropriate care to my patients, and IHA has elected to not renew my contract for services.”

Dr. Annemarie Delacor, a family practitioner, will begin practice in early April, joining Dr. Lauren Rodgers. Both have accepted half-time positions.

Dr. Alsa Stewart of IH explained that Kaslo’s service is two full-time physicians, so they are still looking for one full-time or two half-time doctors for the community. There’s a relatively small pool of MDs who want to work in small areas, so we’re revisiting our strategy to come up with the best marketing approach for Kaslo,” he said, adding that filling the vacant physician positions in Kaslo is a priority.

In the meantime, locum coverage will continue to be provided by Dr. Fen Smit, and Dr. Jannesse Frouws will provide additional locum coverage through the month of April.

This will keep the ER open 24/7 in the near term,” said Stewart. “There could be gaps if we don’t secure locums, but we are in advance notice well ahead of that happening.”

Stewart also reported that the strategic planning process for the health centre had started, and has had very active engagement before March 1 (1). We had the initial meeting of the strategic planning steering committee and we set out the road map for how this will play out,” he said. “This will be a scheduling of focus groups shortly.”

Stewart said representatives from Interior Health, the community and physicians attended the meeting, along with Linda Tarrant, whom Interior Health has hired to facilitate the strategic planning process. Tarrant is an expert in facilitation and strategic planning.

Dr. John Ross from Nova Scotia, an expert on rural emergency care, will be providing biomedical training.

Mayor Lay reported at the March 12 council meeting that focus groups would take place on March 25.

Kaslo City Hall Committee update

by Jan McMurray

At the February 27 City Hall Committee meeting, Ken McConnell presented a concept for a second floor space in the courtroom for arts and culture-oriented activities, such as music and dance classes and performances. This would be compatible with the Kootenay Lake Historical Society’s concept to use the space for movable exhibits. McConnell would like to apply for grants for the project and have it considered in the Village voice planning for Kaslo,” he said, adding that filling the vacant physician positions in Kaslo is a priority.

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Nakusp council, March 11: Utility rates reduced for drive-in restaurants

by Katrine Campbell

Bonnie Carson from the Paddy Shack and Angela Carson from Kootenay Crystal Clear Water attended as a delegation to appeal their 2013 utility rates. The Paddy Shack asked for a reduction in its water and sewer rates since it is only open for part of the year and does not use water for dishwashing, as a sit-down restaurant does. The water bottling operation objected to being lobbied for both the small business rate ($36.1) and a bottling operation ($0.132/litre).

Council decided to reduce the water and sewer charges for drive-in restaurants with no interior seating to 75 percent of the Restaurant, Cafe and Drive-In rate.

Council discussed the possibility of establishing a business rate for drive-in restaurants with no interior seating.

Mayor Karen Hamling reported the new ferry construction is on schedule and the new ferry will be on site for at least two years, in case the new ferry was not operational.

She also reported on the February 27 Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital District meeting. Hospital facilities throughout the region are “in really bad shape and equipment needs to be replaced,” she said, so the board voted to contribute $2 million to reserves for replacements and upgrades. This means a tax increase of about $60 on a $300,000 home. Nakusp is also trying to attract one more doctor to the village, and has been posted as a priority community within BHC’s Health Match.

Hamling and Castlegar Mayor Lawrence Chernoff have been working with BC Hydro on the issue of debris in the Arrow Lakes. BC Hydro has spent over $200,000 more than it budgeted over the past year on clean-up.

The mayor and three councillors attended the Kootenay Regional Workforce Table meeting on determining community needs in training and resources. A full report will be available in April.

Two delegations appeared before the RDCK board meeting. Harry Bidias from the Ministry of Forests spoke about Crown land clean-up initiatives; he will meet with the Resource Recovery Committee chairs on the issue. Doug Anastos from Telus spoke about expanding wireless coverage; the board asked Telus to consider existing sites.

The dog control service agreement for Nakusp and a defined portion of Area K was approved. Jacks Kibbun was the successful candidate.

Voting for projects which will receive funding from the CBF Community Initiatives and Affected Area funds will take place April 14 from noon to 4 pm in the arena auditorium.

Councillor Guy Duchaine reported that the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) has been renamed Emergency Management BC (EMBC). Regional Fire Chief Terry Swan attended a meeting of the local Emergency Response Committee and gave a presentation on the RDCK coordination process and the possibility of pooling specialized equipment at strategic locations.

Duchaine and Councillor Tom Zelenik attended the introduction to Emergency Management course and were scheduled to take the Planning for Recovery course March 12/13.

Duchaine reported the Chamber of Commerce has several major items in this action plan. It will look at becoming a “business hub,” will try to get business owners to work as a team, and plans to work with other Chambers to have an event manager.

Councillor Ulli Mueller reported the Health and Environment Committee held a visioning session for the facility’s future.

The Nakusp and Area Development Board has the business directory almost ready for a soft launch, but is looking for a new web designer to complete the project. The Tourism Marketing group is working with the regional group to develop regional branding. Work is progressing on the old fire hall inspection. Susan deSandoli will act as a Community Business Champion, responding to business and relocation inquiries by taking new owners for coffee or lunch to help them make local connections.

Councillor Zelezak reported on the Nakusp and Area Community Forest. A student team from UBC’s Masters of Sustainable Forest Management program is developing a Forest Health Strategy for NACF’s management plan.

Council denied a request from Jean McKilligan for reflective markers on a private fence at the corner of 4th St NW and 3rd Ave NW, as the fence complies with the zoning bylaw.

Nakusp council was named as a “community partner” of the Nakusp and Area Youth Society and Councillor Joseph Hughes was appointed as liaison.

Council will invite the vice-president of Foothill Power Co. to speak on the proposed amendment to the Foothill powerhouse.
Mountain Film Festival continues to hold audiences in its seventh year

by Art Joyce

You know you have a loyal audience when you sell out for the seventh year running and even a major technical breakdown doesn’t have people heading for the door. The North Valley Mountain Film Festival, held at New Denver’s Bonita Hall March 9, experienced problems with sound that caused a half-hour break in the program but didn’t seem to deter many from staying. It’s testament to the growing ‘mountain culture’ in the Kootenays — people who are deeply dedicated to exploring the great outdoors in all seasons. Unfortunately that meant that The Gift, a film about veteran mountainer Chuck Scott, was unable to be fully shown. This promised to be a fascinating insider’s view of the esoteric world of mountaineering from the perspective of a climber who has been testing his mettle on the slopes since the 1960s. In the section of the film that was shown before the sound was cut off, Scott said that unlike hookey, where most non-players agree on the goals, the story is very different among mountaineers. “If you ask the man in the street who the great climbers are you get a very different answer in the Rockies than you do in the Alps,” or other climber. Understandably — this is a highly challenging and difficult sport.

Highlights of this year’s festival, hands down, were films by emerging filmmaker Miriam Needoba andparalysed filmmaker Benjamin Needoba. In the feature, From the Forest, profiled award-winning wildlife photographer Jim Lawrence. In true documentary fashion, needoba went into the wilderness of the Lillooet Valley with Lawrence to get firsthand footage of grizzly bears. According to Needoba, such footage is actually rare since most of the film that has been shot of BC grizzlies comes from the west coast. Unlike bears, grizzlies tend to avoid contact with humans and our settlements. Interpersed with Lawrence’s iconic, unforgettable images of bears, the film gives us a rare visual treat. Eyes in the Forest is prefaced by a quote from the dictionary on the basis that Lawrence to express his philosophy. “When one taps at a single thing in nature one finds it connected to the whole world.” The low-key tone of the film is one of keeping with Lawrence himself — humble and soft-spoken — consistent with his gentle philosophy. Just the kind of person who is likely to leave a soft imprint on the wild — or better yet, no imprint at all.

Ben Jordan’s film, The Boy Who Flies, is an ambitious mini-epic about Kaslo signs with Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation

by Jan McMurray

Kasco is moving ahead with high speed broadband provided by the Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation (CBBC) — a much faster connection than what is currently available.

“Kasco is open for business for people who want to make their living on the internet. We will be trying to market that opportunity,” said Mayor Lay at the March 12 council meeting, when he and the CAO were authorized to sign the contract with CBBC. Under the contract, CBBC will cover the infrastructure costs of installing fibre optic cable (100 Mbps) and video conferencing capabilities at the Kaslo Golf and Curling Club. The Village of Kaslo will pay the ongoing service fee of $750 per month, starting June 1.

An ad hoc committee has been working with the Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation on this since last September, when the Chief Operating Officer of CBBC, Mark Halwa, made a presentation to council. The group looked at four different scenarios for delivering the service from the KMC to the community, and has recommended providing the service to the downtown commercial core immediately at a cost of $150,000. Village council has endorsed this, and will explore the possibility of grants to raise the $150,000 from Western Economic Diversification ($50,000), Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust Fund of the RDC/Community Development Fund (30,000) and CBT ($20,000).

The committee also looked at two distinct business models for delivering the service to the community — as a Village service or as a stand-alone non-profit enterprise. The preference is for the latter, and the Village has decided to initiate discussions with Kaslo InfroNet (KI) to determine the feasibility of KI becoming the internet service provider for the broadband service.

A white paper on the topic prepared by Councillor Holland lists the advantages of the non-profit model. It avoids high startup costs and is more grant program than the Village would need, and may be better situated to provide additional services in the future, like data back-up services, media services, VOD services or general IT support.

The paper also states that a Village operation would be less likely to serve the area surrounding Kaslo.

At the council meeting, responsibility for the initiative was delegated to the Sustainable Economic Development Select Committee.
Slocan Valley launches Business Retention and Expansion project

submitted

The Slocan Valley is ready to launch the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) project, a valuable community economic development project. The Slocan Valley Economic Development Commission (EDC) and the Slocan District Chamber of Commerce (SDCC) designed the BRE to stimulate economic development and growth by assisting existing businesses, and they are working in partnership to implement this project throughout the Slocan Valley.

In the next few months, local BRE researchers Sharon Butler and Theresa Tremaine, trained by Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute (RDI), will be contacting Slocan Valley businesses to invite owners to participate in the surveys. Surveys will cover business-related questions such as local workforce, facilities and equipment, government services, and business climate and business health.

The surveys will take about one hour and 20 minutes, depending on the individual businesses surveyed. Participation is crucial to the project as the data collected will not only help to identify the needs, concerns, and opportunities of existing local businesses but also help support economic development planning and improving our local economy.

“The RDI’s mandate is to support informed decision making through provision of timely and relevant information and applied research,” said Dr. Tam MacDonald, RDI Regional Innovation Chair in Rural Economic Development.

“With the valuable information collected through community-driven BRE projects in hand, decision makers and economic development practitioners in the region will be well positioned to provide targeted support to our local businesses and to take collective action to improve overall business climate in our region.”

“A key aspect of this project is confidentiality”, says Leah Main, Slocan Valley’s local BRE lead. “We do not publish or share information on individual businesses. The project is very careful about this confidentiality issue. All research staff involved in this project have signed confidentiality contracts and are committed to this principle.”

The information gathered from the visits is compiled and analyzed by the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute. The local BRE lead and steering committee review key findings and recommendations and set into motion a plan for follow-up actions. A summary of the research findings and recommendations for future economic development initiatives will be announced at a public meeting at the end of the project.

“The great thing about the BRE project is that it not only supports long range planning for the community but also yields some short-range tangible results,” says Leah Main.

For more information about the Slocan Valley BRE project, please email slocanvalleyedc@gmail.com.

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Reduced Prescription Drug Costs

Starting April 1st, prices for generic prescriptions drugs drop to 25% of the brand name price, and will drop to 20% of the brand name price next year.

Find out what this means for you:

Budget2013.ca

The savings is calculated as a percentage of the cost of brand name drugs.
Gardening season begins at Lucerne Elementary-Secondary School

by Jan McMurray

Lucerne School students planted seed starts on March 8 in preparation for the gardening season.

Thanks to a generous donation of $1,500 worth of equipment and materials from Pacific Northwest Garden Supply in Nelson, the students are now ready to use these starts in the school's garden. "We hope to have a better crop than ever this year with this new equipment," commented Julia Greenlaw, who runs the Healthy Community Society's Food Program in partnership with the school.

The society provided the seeds and approached Pacific Northwest about the donation.

Kip Drobish from Eltrendal Farm in Hills helped the children plant the seed starts, along with Paula Shandro of the Healthy Community Society's Food Program and Lucerne staff.

Julia Greenlaw and Paula Shandro will be helping teachers to further incorporate gardening into the curriculum this season. The grades 7-8 Social Studies teacher, Gary Parkstrom, has divided his class into two teams. One team will plant an old world garden, and the other will plant a new world garden to see which team can grow more calories in the same amount of space.

Greenlaw reported that they plan to have a community-wide Spring Fling event on or near Earth Day (April 22) to prepare the garden, transplant seedlings and perhaps sell a few surplus seedlings to help raise more funds for the project. She says they will serve stinging nettle and leek and potato soup.

Greenlaw hopes that the school will be starting up again soon.

Canada Water Week
March 18-24

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Georama Garden Centre
SPRING 2013
Workshops and Seminars

During the spring gardening season Georama will hold a series of workshops and seminars covering a wide range of gardening topics. Expert staff members will provide informative and entertaining sessions Saturday mornings and repeat them again on Sunday afternoons. Registration fee of $5.00 with proceeds going to local charities, coffee and local baked goods will be served.

Register now for one of these interesting topics:
Saturday March 23
The Art of Propagation
Seedling, taking and rooting cuttings, germination, soil and propagation mediums, containers, greenhouse production and much more.

Saturday March 30
Pruning Workshop
Covering all aspects of pruning, including fruit trees, roses, evergreens and more, includes organic controls and spray, tools and much more.

Saturday April 6 and Sunday April 7
All about Proper Plant Nutrition
This seminar will cover all aspects of fertility, soil composition, organics & composting, great for both the novice and more experienced gardeners alike.

Saturday April 13 and Sunday April 14
Hanging Basket Workshop
This is our most popular hands on workshop, you will be planting your very basket, choosing from a wide range of containers and plants, be prepared to be creative! (containers and plants extra).

Cross-country skiers Kolibri Drobish from Hills Nordic Ski Club, Sophie and Sabien Eglny from Nelson Nordic, and Jasmine Drobish from Black Jack (Rossland) relay raced together at Kootenay Tracks on Fire at the 2013 BC Midget Championships in Revelstoke, March 23. The Midget Championships are for youth aged 6-12, and this year’s kids spent an action-filled fun weekend of racing at the Mt. Maquarson BC Ski Trails. Best results for West Kootenay skiers: Renee Drobish of Rossland took 3rd and Kolibri Drobish 6th in their individual Classic races on Saturday. Sunday races Drobish again placed 2nd in the skiing sprint competition for his age group. Skiers were recognized not only for their speed, but also their technique and Oliver McDougall-Eglis, Nelson Nordic, won the best ski style technique award on Sunday during their sprint races.
Nakusp Midget House finishes season in first place this year

Nakusp won the West Kootenay Minor Hockey Midget House Championship this year at the tournament in Trail, March 1-3.

The team started the year at home with one win, one loss and a tie, and then went on a 9-0 win run and also won the Koko tournament. The team stumbled a little in February, coming in third at their own tournament and tying the last two games in league play.

At the playoffs, the team faced Boundary on Friday night, and won, but barely. “It was like a wake up call,” said Reimer. The team dominated the next game against Nelson 2, winning 6-3.

“We knew going into the last game on Saturday that we were already in the semi-finals and the team went into the game with that mentality,” said Reimer. The Falcons lost 4-3 in a hard fought battle.

Sunday morning’s semi-final game against Trail 2 brought the realization to the seven players that they were in their final year of minor hockey that if the team didn’t win, it could be their last game. “They came out playing like there was no tomorrow and we won 6-2,” said Reimer. “The Trail host team that we beat was far from sportmanlike, taking many penalties.”

The Nakusp Falcons met Grand Forks in the final. Nakusp had lost to Grand Forks in their last round robin game, but they came out flying for the final. “We never trailed, stumbled or faltered. The whole team was focused on the banner,” said Reimer. “We won 5-2 with class!”

“I am one happy coach and president,” said Reimer. “This is the best team I’ve ever coached. Go Nakusp Falcons Go!”

Easter Bunny hop at the Vallican Whole

Nothing says spring like Easter, and nothing says Easter like the Easter Bunny Hop!

Slocan Valley Recreation is setting the stage for this fun filled annual children’s event at the Vallican Whole Community Centre on Saturday, March 23 from 1 to 2:30 pm.

Children six years and under are invited to attend with adult accommodation. Rabbit attire is encouraged. This fantastic fun-filled afternoon will include a variety of Easter crafts, healthy snacks, songs and an outdoor chocolate egg hunt.

Everyone is welcome, but please call 250-0008 to pre-register by March 18. Admission is $5.

Hopping to see you there!

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SLOCAN VALLEY COMMUNITY LEGACY Society is ready for our first grating cycle! We have $5000 to distribute this year to projects in area H, with a maximum of $1800 per group. Applications due March 25th and are available online.

A living legacy:
Help to create a lasting legacy that will continue to give back to your community. Visit our website to learn how you can donate today.

SLOCAN VALLEY LEGACY FUND
To learn more, visit: www.slocanvalleylegacy.com

COMMUNITY
Slocan council, March 11: Library Committee dissolved

by Jan McMurray

* Councillor Elliott reported that the Library Committee had decided, and Jonna Ellis, who was chair of the committee, had been appointed to look into a new structure to take its place, possibly a non-profit society. Mayor Perreira stated, "I think this is the only way we can go and make sure we have the library and move forward. It's such an asset in our town so we cannot risk losing it." A letter of appreciation will be sent to all library volunteers. The library will remain open during its regular hours, staffed by the regular volunteers, while Jonna Ellis works on a new management structure.

* Council received a "formal complaint regarding the breach of confidentiality by Councillor Patricia McGrath" from Michelle McGeer. McGeer alleged breach of confidentiality was all library volunteer Stuart MacCraith about the contents of documents marked "confidential" and provided to council by Member of Parliament and others last summer. The documents contained complaints about MacCraith. "I feel that the councillor in question should at the very least be asked to step down from the library committee and issue an apology for not fulfilling the privacy of seven members of the community," concludes the letter.

* Council did not act on the letter.

* There will be a public meeting April 8 at 5 p.m. for CBT Community Initiatives applicants to give five minute presentations of their projects.

* The Slocan Lake Stewardship Society will be invited to attend the next regular council meeting as a delegate to present the results of the Imagine Slocan Lake project. Council acknowledged that there may be considerable interest from the public, and a council meeting is not the best format for public discussion of the society's project. They concluded that SLS will be able to gauge whether or not a public meeting is needed from the turnout at the council meeting.

* Mayor Perreira reported that Megan Bly, instructor at the fitness centre, is moving. "She will be hard to replace," commented the mayor. A letter of thanks will be sent to her.

* A Tourism Committee meeting was scheduled for March 20.

* The Village of Slocan will contribute $315 to the Village of Silverton's electronic recycling program submitted.

VILLAGE OF NEW DENVER

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY – UTILITY WORKER 1

The Village of New Denver is taking applications for a Utility Worker 1 position. The position will run from April 8, 2013 to October 4, 2013. A Utility Worker performs a variety of general and specific manual labour type duties requiring physical effort and agility in the performance of semi-skilled tasks, and a variety of general and specific tasks including the safe and efficient operation and servicing of light trucks and self-propelled single or multiple function maintenance equipment. This uncirculated position is for 35 hours per week at a pay rate of $22.40 per hour.

Duties include but are not limited to:
- garbage collection
- cleaning shops, yards, buildings, public facilities, parks and grounds, etc.
- assists in maintenance of parks, gardens, cemetery, etc.
- snow removal including, but not limited to, operation of loader, snow-plow and sander
- minor maintenance and repair of equipment
- minor maintenance and repair of equipment and tools
- assistance in the installation, maintenance and repair of such systems and facilities as water, gas systems, and electrical systems
- operates equipment such as light trucks, mowers, chainsaws, snow-blowers, and other light equipment and hand tools
- Makes daily inspections of vehicles and equipment operated to ensure safe and efficient use
- keeps accurate records as required
- other related duties as may be assigned from time to time and may give guidance to part-time labour.

Minimum Qualifications and experience:
- Valid BC Driver's Licence, minimum Class 5; with air endorsement
- Grade 10 education or higher
- Physical Fitness
- Enroled in EOCP Certification Program

Deadline for applications is Tuesday, April 2, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. Please submit applications to: Administrator Carol Gordon, Village of New Denver, PO Box 40, New Denver, BC, V0G 10 or drop them off at the Village of New Denver Municipal Office at 115 Slocan Avenue, New Denver, BC. All candidates are thanked for their applications. Only those applicants short-listed will be contacted.
What time is it, Mr. Wolf?

If you or I really think about it, we live in a world made up of various patterns and cycles where we come to expect a familiar rhythm or routine around certain things. For example, we have come to expect the cycle of the four seasons – winter, spring, summer, and fall. There are definite differences in the characteristics within those seasons. We may have a warm spring, rainy summer, snow in October and a balmy, mild winter. Nevertheless, we know what season we are in and we know what season follows, but the day-to-day weather patterns will vary.

If we try to use this more simplified analogy when comparing the patterns of the stock market cycle, perhaps it would provide a bit more clarity and overall understanding about where we have been, where we are now and some insight to what may lie ahead.

Let’s rewind the tape and take a walk down memory lane. Looking back at the years 2007 and 2008, we now know that we were nearing the peak in the market. We had been experiencing steady growth from early 2005; however, the issues with the US and the sub-prime mortgage fiasco were beginning to rear its ugly head.

We were in a US presidential election year, and the Republican leader of the day was already making his exit plan, leaving his people and his country to determine its future direction.

What followed in late 2008 and early 2009 was a horrific global meltdown with one of the worst recessions ever experienced in our lifetime. This noteworthy recession was akin to having a most brutal winter. The day-to-day volatility had the markets sharply down one day and bouncing back the next – just as mind-blowing as an Alberta chinook.

By March 9, 2009 we appeared to hit bottom or the ‘through’ in the stock market cycle. The markets then regained their footing and started to rebound into recovery territory right through to the end of 2010. Typically, a growth period in the markets can last about four to five years. This isn’t an exact science as there are so many factors that make the timing of it so difficult to determine.

True to form however, the year 2011 was a negative year where we experienced a natural correction in the markets. This is a typical pattern after a period of growth and recovery in the markets – a cooling down period – before the final phase of the late cycle boom.

Most people have probably been quite pleased with their rates of return and overall performance on their investment portfolios since early 2012. Double-digit returns can make anyone smile and we’ve all been basking in the glory of it all… hoping this doesn’t turn any time soon.

We have become all too familiar with the pattern of the seasons and the variable weather systems we could experience throughout the year. However, the same can’t be said for those who invest. Exact market timing is impossible but patterns to the stock market cycle are somewhat clearer to identify.

A peak in the market is followed by a recession lasting about a year, on average, followed by a rebound recovery as it enters a new growth phase. Part way through that four or five year growth phase, we have a cooling down period – a correction – which makes way for the last exciting phase called the late cycle boom. The late cycle boom does not last long. It makes way for the inevitable peak followed by another recessionary period.

What time is it, Mr. Wolf? Let’s just say, if an old man winter finally bids us adieu, we can all look forward to spring showers and warmer days ahead.

The stock markets, on the other hand, might be returning some positive numbers now but will eventually start to lose some steam, as we go through this last phase of the late cycle boom.

For well over 100 years, history has shown that cyclical stock market patterns have a way of repeating. Something tells me that spring may have sprung in the Kootenays, but when it comes to the stock markets, it’s starting to get a tad breezy and I’m sensing a bit of chill in the air.

Submitted

As the signs of spring become more apparent, valley residents can look forward to a variety of upcoming rural skills workshops through Slocan Valley Recreation to expand upon existing skills and knowledge or pick up something new. Wider program development in this area has catered to community values in self-sufficiency and sustainable food production.

On Saturday, March 20, Gregoire Lamoureux hosts the first of two hands-on workshops, offering an overview of the basic principles and strategies of ‘Fruit Tree Pruning’ (including tree restoration). The following weekend, on Sunday, April 7, the focus is on permaculture design, with ‘Fruit Trees and Edible Forest Gardens’, developing backyard (or larger) spaces of mutually beneficial trees and plants that provide an abundance of foods, medicines, fibre and more.

Those interested in hunting should mark their calendars for April 13-14, when the ‘Possession and Acquisition Licences’ program is being offered at Slocan Park Hall. The ‘Hunting Training’ CORE certificate program runs one week later April 20-21. These programs are necessary for the purchase, transfer of ownership, selling or trading of a firearm as well as to purchase ammunition. CORE training is mandatory for those wishing to obtain their first BC hunting licence.

Starting on Saturday, April 27, Christina Yahn, who has been researching and advocating around local issues related to honey bees for numerous years, kicks off a series on ‘Natural Beekeeping’. The first session, ‘Alternative Backyard Beekeeping’ offers an overview of alternative techniques to smoking, allowing natural comb formation, using plant essences to support immune systems and more. Christina’s varied experience as a beekeeper with conventional training and years spent developing a ‘natural’ or ‘instructive’ approach will be of value to beekeepers of all levels and styles. Field days will begin in May and run until October. At these once-a-month workshops, specific topics and skills will be presented, discussed and practiced.

For more information, contact Slocan Valley Recreation at 250-226-0008. Early registration is recommended. More programs and events can be found in the new Spring/Summer 2013 Leisure Guide – available now and viewable online at www.riskc.ca.

Ask an Insurance Broker

Why is basement flooding very serious?

Besides the inconvenience of the mess and the disruption of your household it can create, you know that frequent occurrences of basement flooding can result in long-term damage to the building and contents that may not be covered by insurance.

Generally your insurance will not cover you for water damage caused by continuous or repeated seepage or leakage of water or steam from within a plumbing, heating, sprinkler or air conditioning system, or domestic appliance, including but not limited to a washing machine or furnace. Your insurance also will not respond if water damage is caused by flood, surface water, spray, waves, tides, tidal waves, ice or waterborne objects.

The water damage may be caused by the sudden and accidental escape of water from a watermain, the sudden and accidental escape of water or steam from within a plumbing, heating, sprinkler, or air conditioning system or domestic appliance, which is located inside your dwelling.

Basement flooding problems can be avoided or prevented by checking your downsputs and eavestroughs. Make sure the downsputs extend away from your house so water does not collect next to the basement walls and windows, it should drain away from your house. Clean debris from eavestroughs regularly. If the land around your house slopes in toward the foundation, you want to build up the ground around your house to keep the water away from your basement walls. Also examine sidewalks, patios, decks and driveways as these can settle over time and cause water to drain towards your basement walls. Proper drainage helps to reduce the amount of water seepage into your house through basement windows and cracks in your basement walls.

To get more information about what is covered under your insurance policy contact RHC Insurance Brokers at any one of our locations.

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Along with a degree and at least 3 years’ experience in continuing education, or project or program development and management, your portfolio should be creating and operating with budgets, writing proposals and working effectively in a team.

Closing date: March 26, 2013.

For more information, please visit selkirk.ca/postings

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS
Summit Lake Ski Racers enjoy a fabulous season on the slopes

submitted

"If you're lucky enough to be in the mountains, you're lucky enough." Twenty-one racers, four coaches and one sharp-dressed man had the privilege of reading this wood plank slogan while waiting in an early morning snow line. Breakfast on the mountain was the coveted conclusion to months of afterschool dryland training and weekend practices as the Summit Lake Ski Racers found themselves piloting eggs and hash browns on top of pre-race butterfies in the Hudson’s Bay Lodge some 5,413 feet above the northern town of Smithers.

From March 4 – 6 our young athletes competed for the fastest downhill descent in a pool of 42 female skiers, 50 male skiers, 30 female snowboarders, and 59 male snowboarders from high schools around the province. The BC School Sports Provincial Alpine Championships, hosted this year by Burns Lake School of the Lakes District, was a competition comprised of two giant slalom courses for each discipline of racing, culminating on the third day with a Terrain Cross for both boarders and skiers.

Athletes competed as individuals with each performance ranked according to a combined time from both courses, but also earned points for their team based on a seeding system that made the competition a little more interesting than just ordering racers from first to last.

“We’ve worked individual performance and made it into a team sport,” quipped the race commissioner during the coaches’ AGM, and the Summit Lake Racers embodied the spirited enthusiasm of teamwork admirably; no other group of racers on the top of the mountain acted more as a team than our young athletes. Nakusp cheered and supported Nakusp, making unashamed spectacles of ourselves in the thick of the carnival-like atmosphere around the starting gate, with enough sportsmanship left over to encourage other team racers as well. We were also undoubtedly the best dressed, dappled the colorful array of snow pants being sported by some of the other racers.

As individuals the Summit Lake Ski Team performed competitively at the slalom with Taylor Aichelle earning a 7th place finish with a combined time of 01:07.24 behind the top time of 01:07.87 and Angus Jackson achieving a well earned 17th spot in the boys category with a combined time of 01:19.57 behind the top time of 01:12.63. Even though our racers didn’t medal as individuals, our team managed to edge out enough points to make it to the podium on Tuesday night, proudly earning a silver finish for combined team effort in the girls ski category. The relative quiet of the ceremony was shattered by Nakusp enthusiasm as our female athletes charged the stage to collect their hardware.

The scene was soon echoed as the awards shifted disciplines and the Summit Lake Ski Racers erupted for a second time with a third place team finish in the girls snowboard category. Amy Surina’s 8th place individual finish with a time of 01:46.34 behind the top time of 01:32.88 along with her team mates strong overall finish contributed to the bronze medal reward.

The final day of racing was a technical qsquare as the entire racing company was faced with the tricky Terrain Cross punctuated by a challenging Wu Tang bump at the top of the racecourse. This tricky pile of snow was nothing to mess with, as it neither launched inexperienced racers into the air for a speed eating flat-laning, or psyched out the athlete’s momentum entirely. The sunny bluebird day was abuzz with the background chatter of how to handle the technical puzzle of the Wu Tang, as teams traded ideas and solutions. The rest of the Terrain Cross was a mash up of banked corners, rollers and breakdown dips that dared the racers to check their courage and the conviction of their top speed. All of the racers had one chance to try their hand in the course, and their time would be added to their Giant Slalom results for an overall placing.

The majority of the Summit Lake Ski Racers managed to improve their standing, but the stand out finish was Taylor Aichelle’s amazing third place time of 00:50.97 behind the first place time of 00:49.35. Taylor simply owned the Wu Tang, crushed the course and launched her combined results from 7th to 4th overall earning her a bronze medal for the week.

The racers from Nakusp were lucky enough to find themselves in the mountains last week, but luck had nothing to do with their outstanding performance. Congratulations to all of the racers.

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Learn more or apply to:
• Social Grants Program www.cbt.org/sgp; and
• Youth Grants Program www.cbt.org/ypg.

Program guidelines and applications can be found on the related webpage. Deadline April 12, 2013.

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Notes from the RCMP - Slocan Lake Detachment

These notes are compiled from RCMP Press Releases, and may have been edited.

• On March 8 at approximately 10:20 pm, a member of the Slocan Lake RCMP attempted to execute a traffic stop with a camper van that was southbound on Hwy 6 near Hills. The vehicle was traveling at approximately 30 km/hr in the 80 km/hr zone and was driving on the shoulder of the road obstructing traffic. The officer observed there was no licence plate attached to the vehicle and attempted to execute a traffic stop, but the driver continued on until Rosebery before pulling over.

• The male driver and female occupant refused to identify themselves to police and were arrested for obstructing a police officer. Additional police officers attended and had to forcibly remove both occupants from the vehicle. The male driver and female passenger were not known to local police and were determined to be transient. The female suspect and one police officer sustained minor injuries as a result of the incident.

• The identity of the individuals was confirmed, both were released from custody with a requirement to attend the Nakusp Provincial Court House on April 25. Police are recommending charges of Obstructing a Police Officer and Resisting Arrest against the female passenger. Charges of Assaulting a Police Officer, Obstructing a Police Officer, and Resisting Arrest are being recommended against the male driver. Both suspects have also been charged with a number of offences under the Motor Vehicle Act.

• Police are seeking the public’s assistance in identifying motorists that may have witnessed this incident. Please contact the Slocan Lake RCMP at 250-355-2222 if you observed the police incident described above.

• Update: Thomas Troy Dill entered a guilty plea in court March 12 and was convicted on one count of Possessing a Controlled Substance for the Purpose of Trafficking contrary to Section 5(2) of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Dill was sentenced to two years less a day in jail and a 10-year firearms prohibition.

• He was arrested February 27 when Slocan Lake RCMP responded to a report of a traffic complaint on Hwy 3A just east of New Denver and located the suspect vehicle parked at a pull-out on Sandon Road. Upon approaching the vehicle, the officer observed a lone male in the driver’s seat, and drug paraphernalia on the passenger seat. Dill was arrested for possession of a controlled substance and charged incident to arrest. Police found approximately 26 grams of crystal meth, over $3,000 in cash, and paraphernalia consistent with drug trafficking.

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Tales from the Fisherman’s Market: El Niño Year

Black Cod fishing is typically the most glorious and unpleasant of all the Pacific fisheries. The grounds are usually located 50 to 100 miles offshore; nights are spent drifting at sea. The hours are long and full fishing usually brings heavy seas and being the last fishery of our season, nerves become frayed. The Black Cod season of ‘97 is one that stands out for me. That was a strong El Niño year and the impact on the fishing grounds was amusing.

Half way out to the fishing grounds that season, a line appeared on the horizon. As we approached, the meeting point of the two current systems stretched to the north and south as far as you could see. The water changed from the typical dark black/green of the Pacific North West to a tropical turquoise. The water temperature jumped almost 10 degrees as we crossed over.

Large sharks were spotted dally basking on the surface allowing theAllocate 99.99999999999999% of the fishing to the North and Sablefish (Black Cod)

March Special:
SABLEFISH (BLACK COD)

Adam and I stood soaking wet and grateful to still have all our fingers. No land in sight, adrift at night surrounded by sharks in a small boat is humbling.

Black Cod fishing is rough, but has its moments. There is good reason it is so prized around the world. Knowing where our fish comes from is important as we buy all the best. March is Black Cod month at the Fisherman’s Market, Available at our locations in Nelson, Kelowna and Kamloops.

Geoff A.
Fisherman’s Market
Quality you deserve
Call for nominations: CKCA Steering Committee

submited
The Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance (CKCA) invites members of the arts, culture and heritage community in the Columbia Basin to join its volunteer steering committee.

Belle Plaine performs in the Slocan Valley

submited
Following her recent JUNO nominee press conference performance, Regina’s ‘Best Singer’ Belle Plaine is touring Western Canada. The jazz/folk singer will play a house concert that is open to the public on Monday, March 25 at 8 pm. Michel Davernet will host the performance in his barn, near Slocan. Tickets are $30 in advance, $35 at the door. People who are interested in attending can email or phone Mich to arrange for tickets and directions to his farm: mich_dav@hotmail.com, 250-355-2232.

Plaine is an acoustic guitar playing, storytelling vocalist whose debut full-length album, Notes From A Waitress, reached number three on the Southsask National Jazz Chart. She describes the album she recorded along with several fellow Grant MacEwan alumni: “I wanted the songs to read as a travelogue from the other side of the world and back. They’re like souvenirs from each journey. It’s my throwback to the vocal jazz of the 1960s. Think of Peggy Lee and Julie London. I created Notes From A Waitress in the spirit of these artists.”

Belle Plaine’s own brand of jazz fusion unites swing with vintage country and feminine pop. Audiences experience a genre-crossing set list that includes original music and sensual jazz standards such as Nobody Knows You When You’re Down and Out by Nina Simone, folk anthems such as Bob Dylan’s ‘I Shall Be Released’, and country classics such as Mamas Don’t Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys.

Plaine is touring Western Canada in March and April with The Fifteen Two band: Elizabeth Curry on stand-up bass and harmony vocals, and Jeremy Sauer on piano, banjo, accordion and harmony vocals. In addition to her appearance in the Slocan Valley, she will also be playing a house concert in Nelson March 26. For more information, please visit http://www.belleplainemusic.com.

NKLCS$ wants support for funding bid

submitted
North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society (NKLCSS) needs your support. FortisBC PowerSense is awarding $4,000 to a local non-profit in energy efficiency retrofits as part of their Earth Hour Challenge. If NKLCSS wins, the money will go towards much needed renovations, help us save energy and reduce our operating costs. Even better, if we win it will mean that we will have more money to put towards our community programs.

Here’s how it works. Just go to fortisBC.com/earthhour and make a pledge for NKLCSS – this is free to do. When you take the pledge, click: For Your Home. Then fill out the required fields, click the Pledge button and click NKLCSS in the non-profit field. If we receive the most pledges per capita by 4:30 pm on March 23 we’ll win the FortisBC 2013 Earth Hour Challenge and the grand prize of a $4,000 energy efficiency upgrade.

Plus, by pledging your support and committing to an additional energy saving action, you’ll be entered to win your own $2,000 energy saving box. And click NKLCSS in the non-profit field. If we receive the most pledges per capita by 4:30 pm on March 23 we’ll win the FortisBC 2013 Earth Hour Challenge and the grand prize of a $4,000 energy efficiency upgrade.

Earth Hour, happening March 23 at 8:30 p.m., is a global event highlighting the importance of conserving energy and working together to tackle climate change. Last year, more than 7,000 cities and towns in 152 countries worldwide switched off their lights for Earth Hour.

PST returns April 1

Is your business ready?

► Register by April 1, 2013.
► Know what’s taxable and what’s not.
► Get ready – update your systems and suppliers.

We can help your business make the transition. Visit www.gov.bc.ca/PST

Questions? Ask us:
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Grants available for social well-being and youth projects

Submitted
Applications are now available for two CBT programs, with an April 12 deadline for both.
The Social Grants Program
The abundant not-for-profit: it’s not an oxymoron

Submitted
Many non-profit organizations are talking about a “crisis in voluntarism” and how there’s not enough money to go around. Those in search of a different perspective should take note of the upcoming book launch presentations for The Abundant Not-for-Profit: How Talent (not Money) will Transform Your Organization that will be delivered by co-author Lynda Getty of the Vancouver-based not-for-profit, Vantage Point.

A decade in the making, The Abundant Not-for-Profit offers an innovative approach to drive transformative change in not-for-profit organizations. The book infuses theory with tips, case studies and practical tools to show how organizations can attract, meaningfully engage and integrate the 21st century volunteer. From organizational culture to planning, from great governance to excellent people processes, the book offers leaders a new road map to transform their organizations with talent, not money.

The book launch in Nelson will be March 26 from 10-4 pm at The New Grand Hotel. Cost is $20, which includes the presentation, an electronic copy of the book, and refreshments. Interested participants are asked to register in advance at wwwBasinresearch.ca or by calling 250-352-6786.

Corazón Choir offers surround-sound gallery experience

Get your tickets early for ‘63/360 (City-three singers, three hundred and sixty degrees)’ at the Touchstones, Nelson Museum of Art and History on April 7.

Corazón, Nelson’s celebrated youth choir (age range 13 to 21), will enliven the interior of Gallery A and perform four pieces. You, the listener, will not be seated like an audience but will stand or wander in the middle, surrounded by song.

Corazón’s director, Allinco Girvan, has chosen colourful, dramatic music to highlight the incredible acoustics of the gallery. The 63 members of Corazón will perform the same 20-minute show five times, for a new audience each time. Behind the singers on the gallery walls, providing a provocative backdrop to the performance, will be Touchstones’ current exhibit, ‘I Love You, In Theory’, the text-based paintings of the Winlaw/New York artist Graham Gilmour.

Last year’s performance sold out early and received ecstatic reviews from audience members. The show will be at 2:30, 3, 3:30, 4 and 4:30. Admission is $10, in advance and in person only at Touchstones, 502 Vernon St. There will be no phone reservations or online sales and a maximum of 40 tickets will be sold per show.

For more information call 352-7670 or email billmoer@gmail.com

Nelson business owner wins National MOMprenuer Award

Jenet Skolka of Jilly bo Billy Boutique has placed third in the national MOMprenuer Award of Excellence held in Toronto recently. The awards, created to recognize entrepreneurs who juggle work with the daily life of being a mother, were launched in November 2012.

Skolka applied and relied on the support of her customers to get her to the finals. The winner receives $30,000 in cash and prizes to grow her business, so competition was fierce. After three months, almost 300 entries, and 74,000 votes cast, Jilly bo Billy was announced as a Top 10 finalist.

Skolka was given a final survey to complete, filled with questions of innovation, passion, sacrifice and the future, all packed in 100 words or less. A panel of judges, made up of veteran MOMpreneurs who have made a name for themselves, decided the fate of the finalists.

Check out Jilly bo Billy online at www.jillybobilly.com, where it all began, or at their storefront location 422 Herridge Lane in Nelson. Vote daily to help Jilly bo Billy receive a $10,000 grant from ADF Canada at www.adfgrant.ca/stories/jilly099.

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Corazon Youth Choir performs at the Touchstones Nelson Museum of Art and History on April 7.
New after-school sports initiative in Slocan

submitted

Slocan is getting active with a new after-school sports initiative. Thanks to the efforts of School District 8, WE Graham Community School and WEG Community Services Society, Slocan is now one of 17 communities in BC selected to receive funding from the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development.

The money is available to provide new equipment, payment for instructors and training opportunities. An co-ordinator was hired in December and programs started late January and will run until June, with two more school year cycles in the works.

"This funding opens up many possibilities for kids in the Slocan area to explore recreational opportunities," says co-ordinator Sharon Butler.

So far, the programs have offered free classes in akido, hip-hop, cross country skiing and floor hockey for Winlaw Elementary, WE Graham School and homeschooling students.

After spring break, starting April 5, we will offer instructor-led drop-in gym sports as part of the Youth Centre Friday night activities from 7 to 9pm. All this will continue on Tuesdays for primary grades.

Hip-hop will continue on Thursdays and will include some cross training, skipping and indoor rock climbing for intermediate grades.

In addition, a free Soccer Quest coaching clinic is scheduled for Sunday April 7, for volunteer soccer coaches of ages 6-12 from the region.

"We are hoping to see a good response for this clinic which will benefit others in our area who are also working with kids in sports," says Butler.

Pam Sims exhibition at the Nelson library

The Valley Voice March 20, 2013

submitted

"It's hard to do," she says. "Old leaf is difficult to cut with a sharp scalpel and yet easy to tear with a soft brush. I love it."

With each piece of paper, the heart of nature shines through. "I make art that people want to live with," she says.

The exhibition continues at the library until the end of April.

Slocan Valley artist, Pam Sims is displaying her work at the Nelson Library until the end of April.

Sally T and Rob Hay perform at Sleep is for Sissies

submitted

Sally T was born and raised in the Tofino Straits — the most northern point of Queensland, Australia. Her love of music and travel has found her a new home in the Slocan Valley. Having performed in a variety of musical acts from folk bands to rock duo, this singer-songwriter has played in cities and small towns, from theatres and clubs to street corners across the country.

Sally T’s latest musical endeavor is driven by the firm belief that, through music, we can connect strong communities and positive social change. Her original songs are a folk fusion of roots and old-timey jazz, well rounded and strongly driven by her warm, bluesy vocals. Sprinkled with improvised jazz scats and beatboxing, Sally T’s disarming performance will naturally pull an audience in to participate. Her lyrics, inspired by natural beauty and the human condition, move between poetically raw and playfully sweet, and are often delivered with a cheeky smile.

Sally T is performing with Rob Hay, a dynamic singer-songwriter, hailing from Owen Sound, Ontario. Rob’s original compositions are grounded in folk and country and infused with hints of gospel, blues and roots.

Together, Sally T and Rob Hay put on a show full of toe-tapping melodies and soul-shaking harmonies that you won’t forget. They are appearing at 7 pm, March 29 at Sleep is for Sissies in Winlaw with local cellist Melanie Iglesias.

The Library gets lively: storytimes, and service to the Valley

submitted

Sally T and Rob Hay perform at Slice is for Sissies in Winlaw, March 29.

The library comes to Winlaw School on Thursday, March 28 from 9 to 7 pm, one week later than the usual third Thursday due to March break. Residents of Area H South can sign up for memberships, browse the mobile collection and check out or return books, DVDs, audiobooks and CDs. Friendly library staff are on hand to help you use online services and order books.

In Slocan Park, the Heritage Credit Union serves as a drop-off for book returns and orders can be delivered for pickup by special request.

For more information on Library programs and services call 352-6333.
FortisBC declares no smart meter opt-out at BCUC hearings

continued from page 1

public interest. When Commissioner MacMillan pointed out that in those other applications, FortisBC was not putting customers in a position where they would lose their electricity, the FortisBC representative replied, “I suppose if you’re concerned about health, you’ve got a choice to make between moving or staying and being subjected to the perceived health concerns.”

The other health concern that was pursued by Commission members (Commissioner Morton and the chairman) was the cumulative effect of all the devices emitting radiofrequency fields around homes. FortisBC was asked if it would be able to produce a document that would give calculations of the total amount of radiofrequency exposure at five or six homes, ranging from rural areas to urban areas. FortisBC representative agreed to compile the information from existing documents and provide it in a week or so.

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The final rally following BCUC hearings on FortisBC’s smart meter application at Holiday Inn in Kelowna on Friday, March 15.
Kaslo Singing Grannies invite new members to join in the fun

submitted by Marge Buchanan

The Kaslo Singing Grannies are looking for ladies who like to sing. The group was started by Mona Lindgaard, who got a group of ladies together to sing in a vaudeville show to celebrate Kaslo’s 100th birthday in 1993. Agnes Neerland was their pianist. One original Granny, Bobby Johnston, is still with the group and plays the glockenspiel (washboard banjo). After Kaslo’s Centennial, the Singing Grannies decided to travel to the mining towns in the area and sing for the residents. Their objective was to cheer up the residents with the songs that would be familiar to them, and to get them to sing along.

Twenty years later, the Grannies, with a membership of 12, travel twice a year to the care facilities in the area. These include Castlegar, Teztanib and Castlegar Village in Castlegar.

Mountain Lakes, Jubilee Manor, and Lakesview Village in Nelson, the care facility in New Denver, as well as the extended care facility at the hospital and Haley House in Nakusp. They also sing twice a month at the extended care home in Kaslo, and at Kaslo area events such as May Days and July 1st. Ladies who like to sing and who enjoy seeing smiles on people’s faces are welcome to join the Singing Grannies. Call Marge at 353-2402 or Lois at 352-2191.

Gardens wanted for 14th annual tour

submitted by Ruth Porter

Is it your garden?
This is a call out to gardeners, new and experienced, from Kootenay to the Village of Slocan. The 14th Slocan Valley Art and Garden Tour will be held on Father’s Day, Sunday June 16 from 10 am to 4 pm.

Do you have a garden that is structured or playful, built on a grand design or perhaps a vision in progress? We would like to invite you to take part in this popular event sponsored by the Slocan Valley Arts Council. For many people from the valley and beyond, this is an event they look forward to all year.

Please call Ruth Porter at 250-226-7312 by April 15. Closer to the time of the event, tour brochures to direct visitors to your garden will be available at local garden centres, on community bulletin boards and at www.slocanvalleyarts.ca.