by Art Joyce

New NDP leader Adrian Dix recently announced the appointments to the party’s shadow cabinet. Among them were Kairine Conroy, MLA for Kootenay West, as critic for seniors and long-term care; and Michelle Mungall, MLA for Nelson-Creston, as critic for Advanced Education, Youth and Labour Market Development. We caught up with them to ask what issues they hope to address in their new posts.

Michelle Mungall

This is a challenging and diverse portfolio. How do you see these as related and what qualifications or experience do you feel you bring to this post?

“It’s actually all very linked to issues that are connected: 75 percent of jobs now are going to require some form of post-secondary education. So we need to look at how we’re supplying the demand by how we support young people.”

What are the issues you’re hearing from constituents regarding this portfolio that vitally need addressing? What’s missing?

“The number one issue when I talk to students is debt load that results from high tuition. It’s jumped 300 percent since Christy Clark was deputy premier in 2001. BC has the highest interest rates in Canada on student loans. You combine the highest level of interest and the lowest level of student grants and what you have is the highest level of student debt in the country. Students pay more in tuition than the big corporations pay in taxes in this province. It’s just absurd. How can we expect them to be contributors to our local economy when they’re busy paying off the banks?

“The youth unemployment rate is typically higher than your average population but now it’s just skyrocketed. The reality is that MeJobs don’t pay good wages, don’t offer stability and what you make in a summer will not even cover your tuition. Historically you rely on young people who have some disposable income to invest in the housing market, but if you don’t create a scenario where people can do that you’re hurting the economy.”

Another thing we should be concerned about is our trades training and apprenticeship. There’s no independent oversight, it’s purely regulated by industry. I’ve been getting many complaints from labour that the Liberals have cut the public interest out of the trades. We had a young worker injured in Meadow Creek who blew open the whole story of how worker safety had been neglected. It’s happening for a reason and it’s because of government neglect.

Assuming the NDP forms the next BC government, what policies in its current platform will address these issues?

“We’ve already committed to establishing a student grant program of $100 million per year and to eliminating interest on student loans by budgeting $30 million for that. Of one the things I want to bring forward is re-establishing a public oversight body in training and apprenticeship to ensure that students, the public and businesses’ interests are met. That’s what government’s role is to find the middle ground, to mediate and collaborate. We need better training so people can do the job to the best of their ability. We are falling short of the demand for just green jobs alone by 60,000 so we need a lot more training spaces. And of course green jobs are the way of the future if we’re going to build a sustainable economy. Have you had some personal experience in these areas that gives you a feeling for peoples’ needs in these areas?

“I have two degrees; one from Alberta, one from BC. For my first degree I went through the exact same thing students in BC are going through. Everything has now changed in Alberta, it’s much better than it was, but I’m going to be paying off my student loan for a long, long time. I also struggled with finding work as a young person and lived in poverty as a result; so I’ve been there.”

Katie Conroy

You’ve been appointed Seniors and Long-Term Care critic. What background or qualifications do you feel you bring to this post?

“It’s not a new appointment for me; I was the critic as of January, 2011. What Adrian did was keep a lot of the appointments the same for continuity. In 2005-06 I did it as well but I’m really glad to be doing it again. It’s about all aspects of seniors but we’re adding a focus on long-term care.”

What are the issues you’re hearing in the constituency regarding seniors’ care that vitally need addressing?

“One of the main issues right now is the increase in residential care rates people are having to pay. Seniors are having to spend 80 percent of their income on rent so it leaves little disposable income. Another issue is couples, where that only leaves 20 percent of their income for the spouse. I had one woman ask me, ‘What am I supposed to do, separate from my husband and go on social assistance?’ We need to make sure there’s enough appropriate and affordable seniors’ housing available.

“Of the other big issues is the lack of funding for home support, which has been cut quite a bit. They say it hasn’t but it has, there isn’t the support needed for seniors to stay in their homes. I know home support workers who are frustrated and burnt out because they can’t provide the level of care their clients need.”

Will the current BC NDP platform address these issues adequately?

“Assuming of course you form the majority government.

“We’re definitely looking at seniors’ issues and making sure that they’re addressed. There’s nothing in the budget right now that’s directed at seniors; the new premier appointed a seniors’ parliamentary secretary but they used to be the responsibility of a minister. The government hasn’t met the needs for the level of care that’s required.

Do you think the IHA’s policies regarding seniors’ care are adequate to address their needs, or does this need reforming?

“They are trying to overhaul some of their policies to better meet needs but obviously it’s not enough. A few months ago I got a call on a Saturday from Trail from a daughter whose parents were going to be separated; we made some calls and by Monday morning they weren’t going to be separated. This shouldn’t be happening. People need to know I’m there so I can help them work through the system and make sure things like that don’t happen.”

Give me a sense of your personal feeling, what drives you to do this work of caring for our elders?

“You start talking to seniors and it’s just wrong what’s happening; these are people who gave their lives to build our country and they shouldn’t have to be worrying now at this time of their lives. We have amazing seniors in this province; I’m talking to 70-year old children who are caring for 90-year old parents. I just want to make sure I’m there for people who don’t have a voice.”

Federal election brings no change locally

by Jan McMurray

Although the May 2 federal election brought changes in many ridings in the country, there were no surprises in our neck of the woods. BC Southern Interior remains NDP and Kootenay-Columbia remains Conservative.

The NDP’s Alex Atamanenko was given a third term as MP for BC Southern Interior with 50.9 percent of the vote (25,176 votes). Coming in a distant second with 38.9 percent (19,276 votes) was Conservative candidate Stephen Hill. The Green Party’s Bryan Hunt received 6.4 percent (3,173 votes) and the Liberal Party’s Shan Lavell received 3.8 percent (1,872 votes). Voter turnout was 66.4 percent (49,497 out of 74,519 registered voters).

In Kootenay-Columbia (Arrow Lakes and Larderale Valleys), Conservative candidate David Wilks was elected to be Conservative Jim Abbott’s successor as MP with 55.9 percent of the vote (23,886 votes). NDP candidate Mark Shrimski won 33.2 percent (14,161 votes); Green Party candidate Bill Green received 5.9 percent (2,532 votes); Liberal Party candidate Betty Atchison got 3.5 percent (1,492 votes) and Independent Brent Bush received 1.5 percent (643 votes). Voter turnout was 64.2 percent (42,714 out of 66,576 registered voters).
BC Hydro chooses Itron as smart meter grid supplier

by Art Joyce

BC Hydro has selected Itron Inc. to supply approximately two million new electric meters over the next two years as part of its smart metering program. The associated software and meter data management system are included in the agreement, for a total contract value of $270 million. Earlier this year, a $37-million contract for installing the new system was granted to Corix Utilities.

The total cost of installing a province-wide smart meter system is estimated at about $900 million. BC Hydro claims that the grid will net savings of about $70 million in the first three years of implementation and a net benefit to customers of over $500 million in the long term. The real-time data collection system is being touted as an effective means of recouping annual losses of $100 million in power theft. It’s also being seen as a tool to ‘conserve power’ by measuring peak hour consumption and charging a higher rate for those periods. But so far there’s no evidence this accomplishes anything more than generating more hydro revenue. And there’s no reason to believe that the same results can’t be achieved through effective rate structures or other measures.

The real-time data collection system will be part of a province-wide smart meter system that is being installed to provide meter readers with a more complete picture of the grid’s load and to determine usage patterns. The new meters will give BC Hydro a better understanding of the grid and will allow it to make more efficient use of the existing infrastructure.

According to rate increases, projected at up to 50% over 10 years, BC Hydro and its appointed panel of senior officials have chosen to review BC Hydro and its proposed $1 billion smart metering program. The real-time data collection system is expected to provide BC Hydro with the capacity to optimize its grid operations and reduce energy consumption. The meters, which will be part of a ‘mesh’ network, will transmit data to a collecting device or cell relay access point. Individual smart meters will communicate with the mesh network and collect data on utility or light poles. These access points are designed to transmit data from up to 5,000 smart meters to the utility company.

Access points have a similar transmitter to smart meters as well as a data card similar to wireless cards used in laptop computers. These typically operate at .25 watt in the 800-900 megahertz or 1.9 gigahertz range. In challenging terrain such as found throughout BC, the smart meters may transmit ‘hop’ from one meter to another in order to reach an access point. BC Hydro claims that the meters will communicate four to six times a day for a total average daily transmission of one minute.

“The cumulative exposure to radio frequency from a BC Hydro smart meter – over its entire 20-year life span – is the equivalent to the exposure during a single 30-minute cell phone call.” Itron’s estimate is a little higher: “A relay device actively transmits data for approximately 13 minutes per day in total, which means it’s not transmitting data for 99 percent of the time.”

Fine, in theory. However, in practice this has not been found to be the case. Smart meters installed in California and Ontario have been found by citizens monitoring these microwave emissions to be transmitting almost continuously. For those who are electromagnetic – including many school children whose immune systems are still developing – these signals have been shown to cause disruptions of cardiac rhythms, and other symptoms such as headaches and insomnia. Schools in Ontario that have installed Wi-Fi systems which transmit at similar levels have had to keep dehydrators on hand for teens experiencing cardiac arrests. This effect has been verified in clinical tests done by Dr. Magda Havas of Trent University.

Itron and BC Hydro are stating that smart meters will transmit at levels .5 percent of Health Canada and FCC exposure guidelines, claiming that there is no consensus and inadequate to protect public health. Dr. Blank, in an open letter to Langford city council regarding cell towers, states: “We can state unequivocally that electromagnetic fields can cause single and double strand DNA breakage at exposure levels that are considered safe under the FCC guidelines in the USA.” According to BC Hydro Communications Manager Cindy Verschoor, “BC Hydro is considering potential options that could be offered to customers concerned about the potential effect of radio frequency on their personal health.” So far Verschoor has not stated what these options would be.

A community meeting about smart meters is being held at WE Graham school library in Slocan on May 11 at 7 pm.

Nelson library gets new name to go with expansion

submitted by Jane Stockdale

With the expansion into the lower level now complete and a new name – the Nelson Public Library – to reflect greater involvement of outlying rural communities, the doors of the library have opened to a new era and many new possibilities. “The renovations to the library allow us to better serve the growing number of residents who use our facility,” explained June Stockdale, Chief Librarian. “Memberships from Regional District Areas F and H south have increased by more than 60 percent since January, when universal access to library service became available for them.”

There is more going on than just a change in name and look. The library is also working with its partners and interested residents to develop a strategic plan for how it can best meet the diverse needs of our communities over the next five years.

“It is widely recognized that having access to high quality information is essential to participate in an information-based economy, yet many are feeling overwhelmed by the challenges of doing so,” says Stockdale. “We are having wonderful discussions about how the library can support people to access and navigate the emerging worlds of information and technology.”

All residents are invited to provide input into future library services by completing a community survey, which can be accessed via the library’s website at www.nelsonlibRARY.ca. Paper copies of the survey are also available at the Library until mid-May. The draft strategic plan will be available for public review and comment later this spring.

THE APPLICATION

On March 31, 2011, FortisBC filed its Residential Inclining Block (RIB) Rate application (Application) with the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) pursuant to subsections 58 and 61 of the Utilities Commission Act.

On October 19, 2010, the Commission issued Order G-136-10, which directed FortisBC to develop a plan for introducing residential inclining block rates that also incorporate a Lower Basic Charge (Customer Charge) in the immediate future and to file a RIB rate application with the Commission no later than March 31, 2011. The Application proposes to implement a default mandatory RIB rate for FortisBC’s residential customers. The RIB rate is composed of a Customer Charge and two rate blocks separated by a threshold level of consumption of 1,600 kWh per two-month billing period. The RIB rate would apply to new customers and those whose rates are set such that 95 percent of customers will experience annual bill impacts of less than 10 percent.

THE REGULATORY PROCESS

A Procedural Conference will be held at the Delta Grand Okanagan Resort, in the City of Kelowna, on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 10, 2011 to discuss procedural matters related to the Application.

PUBLIC INSPECTION of the APPLICATION

The Application is available for inspection at the following locations:

FortisBC Inc.
Suite 715 1955 Springford Road
Kelowna, BC V1Y 7V7
Telephone: 1-866-436-7847

BC Utilities Commission
Sixth Floor, 900 Howe Street
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2N3
Telephone: 604-660-4700

The Application is also available for viewing on the following web sites:

http://www.fortisbc.com
http://www.bcuc.com

REGISTRATION to PARTICIPATE

Those who wish to actively participate in the review process or processes should register with the Commission. Interested parties will receive copies of the Application, all correspondence and filed documents. Those not wishing to actively participate should register with the Commission as Interested Parties and will receive a copy of the Application’s summary. All interested parties should register with the Commission’s Decision.

Interveners and Interested Parties should inform the Commission Secretary, in writing, by May 4, 2011 of their intention to become Interveners or Interested Parties, and their intention to attend the Procedural Conference.

All submissions and/or correspondence received from active participants or the public relating to the Application will be placed on the public record and posted to the Commission’s web site.

PARTICIPANT ASSISTANCE/COST AWARDS

Any party interested in applying for a Participant Assistance/Cost Award is advised to review the “Interveners with Limited Financial Resources: Assistance/Cost Award Guidelines” to determine the options that could be available. For further information, please contact Ms. Erica Hamilton, Commission Secretary as follows:

Telephone: (604) 660-4700
Fax: (604) 660-1102
Email: Commission.Secretary@bcuc.com

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please contact Ms. Erica Hamilton, Commission Secretary as follows:

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Kootenay artists feature prominently in BC Interior Music Awards
Corrections

In a letter by Ed Nixon in our last issue entitled, “Our lives and freedoms are strictly controlled,” there was an error in a website address where you can find an article: “Why is marijuana illegal?” The correct website address is: www.drugwar.com/articles/why-is-marijuana-illegal/

Trying to understand smart meters

We have been given little clear explanation for the smart meters. BC Hydro is beginning to install on every household in British Columbia. I can understand that they want to encourage us to use less power during peak times to avoid blackouts. It enables more power usage during peak times. Now why would they do that? They hope to achieve this by recording our usage for different times of the day and charging different rates for those different times. I don’t really have a problem with this, but we have been given little information on how that is to be done. There are people in British Columbia that are able to achieve this “smarter” use of electricity. Shouldn’t it all have started with such energy saving devices?

BC Hydro’s continual rhetoric is their alleged wish to save energy. Then why send continual broadcast wireless signals to provide “real-time” information about our use of electricity? This is hardly a way to save electricity. Wireless signals use considerable energy. It could be compared to shooting bullets in every direction in order to hit a target – hardly an efficient way to hunt their game. Couldn’t the meter readings simply be stored in the smart meter and sent to the BC Hydro office before billing, perhaps via the telephone line or a customer’s internet connection? Heaven forbid that they should have to employ a meter reader to gather the readings for the odd house where other means of transmission are not set up! Why this obsession with “real-time” readings for the odd house where other means of transmission are not set up!

Kaslo & District Community Forest Society AGM

The emotional content of Kaslo & District Community Forest Society annual general meetings can be irresistible to behold. It seems half the attending members this year had been persuaded that the past KDFCS board of directors was a pack of scoundrels trying to make the income from the community forest magically disappear. The other half seemed to think that maximizing money from logging in our watersheds could cost us sustainability, long-term planning, diversification and opportunities for youth. The contrast between these viewpoints says a lot about the intensity of small town politics and the hard work of a few dedicated individuals who diligently marshalled shared visions.

The most contentious debate of the evening was over which of two methods should be used to ensure that a significant flow of cash from logging would be committed to community organizations. Those who distrusted the past board grew angry when the method was out-voted by a small margin. It’s interesting to note that the method proposed by the board would have guaranteed North Kootenay Lake communities and the method the so strongly advocated by the anti-board, pro-money group. It’s unfortunate that no one was in a mood to listen when Chris Webster and Andy Shadrack pointed this out before the vote.

The result of the board election at the AGM is a method for KDFCS decision-making in the coming year will be dominated by people who were opposed to the past board. The big question now is: Will the new board turn its back on already budgeted items – such as summer youth employment, water monitoring and long-term planning – in order to hand out a few more dollars to community organizations next year?

And will the new board be able to gain and hold the trust of the KDFCS membership?

Time will tell.

Don Scarlett, Kaslo (Past KDFCS board member and presumed scoundrel)

Time to focus on the children

Nelson Mandela has said, “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul and character than the way in which it treats its children.”

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) annually puts out figures comparing infant mortality rates in countries around the world. The latest figures attributed to Canada showed that we had slipped from sixth place in the world to 24th with 5.1 deaths per 1,000 live births less than one year old.

Another indicator of Canada’s dismal performance came in the latest UNICEF report which ranks 24 countries in the OECD in terms of children’s health, education and maternal well-being. The report showed that Canada has dropped to ninth place in children’s health, and 17th place in children’s material well-being, which includes family income and housing. Max Bernstein, chief advisor on advocacy for UNICEF Canada, states, “The level of family income is a major factor in promoting equality on all aspects of child well-being. Children pay the highest cost of inequality.”

It is clear to economists who study income statistics that Canada has become less and less an equal society during the past two decades, and the disparity between the wealthiest and the rest of us is shocking enough. But the income level of the poorest segment of our society is truly disgraceful in a country as rich as Canada.

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Don Scarlett, Kaslo (Past KDFCS board member and presumed scoundrel)
New Denver council, April 26: Smart meters to be discussed at May 24 meeting

by Michael Dorey

• In the absence of Mayor Wright, Acting Mayor Ann Bunka chaired the meeting.

• Administrator Gordon reported that BC Hydro representatives would be attending the May 24 council meeting to discuss smart meters.

Mary Anne Coules of BC Hydro wrote that she is “still trying to come up with a date” for Hydro to report to council on the power outages and resultant power surges of January.

• For RCDC news, Acting Mayor Ann Bunka reported on Mayor Wright’s final RCDC board meeting as New Denver’s representative. Wright has been on the RCDC board since 1991, and was chair of the board from 2004 to 2010. He has been New Denver’s mayor since 1989.

Bunka said the “retirement ceremony” for Wright at the board meeting was very moving, and all directors had an opportunity to comment on Wright’s tenure. The council praised his good governance combined with humour, his leadership examples in politics, his desire to give constituents the best deal possible, and his acumen and ability to save money in his municipality while encouraging progress.

As noted by both RCDC and Village representatives, Wright has succeeded in achieving large infrastructure and water system improvements while minimizing tax increases and maintaining the tax base.

Councillor Béliveau is very enthused and proud of the line-up of artists she’s put together for the 2011 season. Talents were found throughout the West Kootenays, Kamloops and Alberta. The exhibits are officially starting on May 18 with Bryn Stevenson, a young self-taught artist from Nelson, who is showing his Majestic Mountains. Anne always has been impressed by the way Bryn handles the oil paints with his knife. He gives so much texture and depth to his landscapes.

Councillor Greensword will continue as alternate, as well as West Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital District board representative until the elections this fall.

Councillor Greensword reported that the water reservoir had been used this winter, and had been used this winter, and he hopes to continue as alternate, as well as his acumen and ability to save money in his municipality while encouraging progress.

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Regional District recycling bins changed at all local depots

starting by RDCK

Starting May 1, residents of the Villages of Nakusp, New Denver, Silverton, Slocan and Areas H, I, J, K and the City of Castlegar will be utilizing new recycling bins at local recycling depots.

The recycling program will remain the same, but the type of collection bins will change. The Regional District has worked with the service provider, Waste Management, to come up with a more efficient and cost-effective option. The change from a roll-off collection system to a front load bin system will be more efficient for transportation, as recyclable materials will be collected in a compaction truck. Residents using the depots can recycle the same items as before, but will deposit all recyclables except glass in commingled bins. There will be a separate bin for glass.

“Moving to this new front loading collection system makes sense,” stated Walter Popoff, RDCK director for Electoral Area H and the chair of the West Waste committee, the governing body that directs resource recovery efforts in the specified area. “This service change will mean increased efficiency and allow us to reduce our costs. As a service provider, Waste Management continues to demonstrate their commitment to improving service in the RDCK while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimizing their environmental footprint.”

The new agreement with Waste Management contract also includes a commodity rebate for cardboard, newspaper and mixed paper. This will allow the RDCK to recover a greater portion of the depot system costs through the value of the materials collected. The new bins will be in place at all recycling depots in the west sub-region by May 1.

During the transition, Waste Management will ensure that recycling bins continue to be available to the public for recycling. Specifically at Slocan and Winlaw recycling depots, one roll-off container remains onsite until the new bins arrive.

“Under the old system all the materials were actually commingled,” says RDCK Environmental Services Coordinator Nicole Wand. “It gets baled in Castlegar and shipped to Kelowna for sorting. The new bins mean hauling less air and more recyclables, so it will mean less trips.”

Items that are accepted in the west sub-region recycling program include: mixed paper, metal food cans, cardboard (flattened), newspaper, glass and rigid food grade plastics displaying the numbers 1-7 (no styrofoam).

For more information visit www.fdrck.bc.ca

Getting in the swing

WE Graham’s Destination Imagin Nation team, the Pin’l Panthers, with their silver medals at the provincial finals in May 19 2011.

Congratulations to the WE Graham Destination Imagin Nation team, who brought home the silver medals at the provincial finals held in Richmond on April 16. They won the regional competition in March, hosted by WE Graham School.

With the provincial silver win, the team qualified for the Globals in Knoxville, Tennessee. They won’t be able to attend this year, but are already fundraising for next year.

Destination Imagin Nation is the world’s largest creative problem solving program for K-12 youth. Teams are given open-ended challenges, and present their solutions at tournaments. Teams must think on their feet, work together and come up with solutions that satisfy the requirements of the challenges.

“Participants gain more than just basic knowledge and skills – they learn to unleash their imaginations and take unique approaches to problem solving,” states the website (www.destinationimagination.org).

Studio Connexion offers exciting new season of art in Nakusp

submitted by Anne Béliveau

Another year at Gallery Studio Connexion and proprietor Anne Béliveau is very enthusiastic and proud of the line-up of artists she’s put together for the 2011 season. Talents were found throughout the West Kootenays, Kamloops and Alberta. The exhibits are officially starting on May 18 with Bryn Stevenson, a young self-taught artist from Nelson, who is showing his Majestic Mountains. Anne always has been impressed by the way Bryn handles the oil paints with his knife. He gives so much texture and depth to his landscapes.

From June 8 to July 2, Boujie Elzina from New Denver is bringing a lifetime worth of experience through her recent drawings, paintings and sculptures. Also from the same place, photographer Katja Oljuscha Granther is gracing the gallery with her new series A Delicate Light from July 6 to July 31.

Then Ed Kemp, an animal painter from Wetaskiwin, Alberta, will show his new paintings from August 3 to 28. He will be followed by his daughter Barbara Maye with her new work entitled Asanas inspired by last year’s beautiful series Llunio.

You can see her artwork from September 1 to 24. As a personal motto, Anne likes to feature a francophone every season. This year, David Langevin from Kamloops will honour the quaint space from September 30 to October 15. Langevin and his blues band also have agreed to do a benefit dance for the Cinéfil Cinema Club on Saturday, October 1.

An additional show is being planned for the students of Barbara Maye on Friday, May 13 in the evening and Saturday May 14 in the afternoon. Maye’s student show arose from the ALFA Guild obtaining a CKCA mentoring grant for Maye to teach guild members.

Studio Connexion is located downtown Nakusp at 203 Fifth Avenue NW. It is open Wednesday to Sunday from 12 noon to 4 pm or by appointment.
Slocan Valley farmers group producing local food guide

submitted by Malin Christensson

Where do you get local seeds or manure for your garden? Is there someone in your community who has a love of the Slocan Valley? Who could you ask about how to keep honeybees? There is lots of interest in gardening and eating local food, yet sometimes it seems both a mystery and an illegal activity to follow a 100-mile or 10-mile diet. Soon a local food guide for the Slocan Valley, produced by the Slocan River Valley Farmers, will help to connect farmers and consumers.

The local food guide is being compiled this spring in a printed and online version, and will be added to the existing directory at www.slocanvalley.com. A Kootenay-wide directory, Our Growing Community, is being put together as well.

The Slocan River Farmers hope that the local food guide will facilitate backyard food production and strengthen the local food system through connecting consumers with farmers. The distribution and promotion of the guide will also help to raise awareness of the benefits of local food for carbon emission reduction, health and the economy.

Many individuals and organizations are working on food security, and the local food guide could facilitate more networking among farmers, businesses and groups.

Besides the joy of eating your own produce and the health benefits of fresh, natural and less processed food, there are many other reasons to eat local food. The David Suzuki Foundation lists eating locally as one of the top 10 things we can do to reduce our global footprint.

When we buy a local food product, the local food guide can facilitate a higher percentage of our food dollar. This money is then circulated many times throughout our communities, strengthening our local economy.

The Slocan River Valley Farmers was established in 2007 in Winlaw with the purpose of creating a thriving and viable ecological farming community in the Slocan River valley. The farm group operates autonomously as well as being a part of the Kootenay Organic Growers Society (KOGS). If you’d like to be included in the local food guide for the Slocan Valley – from Playmor junction to Hills – please contact Malin at 250-355-0053 or malinchristensson@hotmail.com.

“Unresolved issues” in Sandon put a stop to signage project continue

The RDCK press release states: “The RDCK was looking for a feasible interpretive signage project in the community as a pilot project and will hold pursuant funding for the project until such a time as a common purpose can be agreed to by all involved parties.

“Director Popoff recognizes the heritage values and importance of Sandon and once outstanding community issues have been resolved, will move forward with further investigation and options for what is the best way to move forward within the community and the potential development of a heritage conservation plan.”

Ballroom dance classes offered in New Denver

submitted by Fran Wallis

Did you know ballroom dancing burns 300 calories an hour, painlessly elevates the heart rate, helps sustain mental acuity besides being big fun? Ballroom dance instructor Fran Wallis is once again offering classes to help you hone your skills and cut loose at the same time.

These classes will all be at a beginner/intermediate level, starting Tuesday, May 3, at 6:30 pm; Wednesday, May 4, 6:30 pm; Thursday, May 5, 8:30; Wednesday, May 11, 6:30 pm; Thursday, May 12, 8:30; Thursday, May 19, 8:30; Thursday, May 26, 8:30. The cost is $30 per person, youth/teen $25, two classes $50. Singles are welcome.

If the fee is difficult for you in these tough economic times, please let Wallis know what you can comfortably contribute. Everyone is welcome. Hope to see you on the dance floor soon!

Pre-registration is required; contact magic@redmtn.ca or call 250-358-2448.
Draft budget presented to Nakusp council, April 26, 2011

by Jan McMurray

A preliminary draft of Nakusp’s 2011 budget was presented to council by Acting CAO Lynda Tynan at the April 26 council meeting.

The budget presented includes a total of $8,400 more taxpayer dollars. The debt service budget was cut by $1,000, or one percent increase in tax dollars. However, there are still some items on council’s wish list, so the increase in tax dollars could go as high as that. The debt service budget is finalized, Tynan estimated in a telephone interview.

At the council meeting, council agreed with the staff recommendation to borrow $698,276 to re-finance the 2006 hot springs loan, and to borrow $108,000 to pay for the Village’s contribution to the projects of the Emergency Services building.

Tynan explained that it is a good time to borrow, because interest rates are very low. She also explained that the Village currently has a very low debt load ($377,666) and has over $7 million in borrowing power.

Nakusp and the consultants likely recommended that in 2006, faced with major renovations at the hot springs, it was decided to borrow internally. A total of $648,276 was taken out of five different Village reserve funds to pay for the renovations. “It was a good decision to borrow the money internally in 2006, because borrowing rates were high,” explained Tynan in the interview. “However, it put pressure on the capital reserves, and now it’s time to re-prepare, while interest rates are low.”

Council has agreed to borrow $698,276 to pay back the reserve funds, and to pay the $500,000 project to protect the source of the hot springs water in 2011. This debt will cost the Village about $38,500 per year over 20 years. A contribution of the long-term debt load of 15 municipalities about the same size as Nakusp puts Nakusp in second lowest place now, and sixth lowest after borrowing $698,276 to re-finance the hot springs loan. This borrowing will bring the Village’s long-term debt load up to $1,075,942.

Halcyon Assisted Living Society (HALS) is inviting Expressions of Interests (EOI) from qualified contracting companies for the renovation of a suite at Halcyon House, an Assisted Living facility in Nakusp. Interested parties may request an electronic version of the EOI package by emailing ASLCS@ASLCS.com. The deadline for submitting an EOI is Friday May 27, 12 noon. If you have any questions please contact Mark Brunton, Executive Director at 250-265-3674-ext. 210

Tynan explained that replenishing the reserve funds and paying off this debt over time will significantly save tax dollars because reserve funds have been low, some capital items have been paid for out of the operating budget, which is usually funded by dollars. “For example, we put away money every year in the Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund so that vehicles can be replaced when necessary. When we take that money away with internal borrowing, when a vehicle needs replacing, the taxpayers have to come up with the money,” she explained. “So spreading it out over time will save significantly.”

Paying for capital items through the operating budget has resulted in a deficit in the operating budget. The deficit was $277,255 at the end of 2009, and is expected to have grown in 2010. Financial statements for 2010 are not yet complete.

Tynan said most of the capital items that have been paid for out of the operating budget are the Village’s contribution to the projects financed by grant money. Part of the agreement with the grantors of the Emergency Services building, for example, was that the Village would contribute $200,000 in kind. “This was direct labour by Public Works, so it still needs to be paid for,” she said. Council had asked that $158,000 be put in the budget to pay for this. Instead, they have agreed with the staff recommendation to pay for it with $50,000 from the Fire Equipment Reserve and to borrow the balance of $108,000. Debt servicing on the $108,000 comes to about $5,500 per year.

Nakusp Hot Springs reaches out to the community

by Jan McMurray

In May and June, local residents are being enticed to the Nakusp Hot Springs with an art display by Nakusp Elementary students, displays by community groups, and special rates.

The Nakusp Hot Springs has partnered with Nakusp Elementary School on the “I Love My Nakusp Hot Springs ‘Paint a Tile’ Festive Event.” All NES students will paint a clay tile showing what they love about the hot springs property. “We’d like to work with Nakusp Elementary again in the fall, but integrate nature walks for the kids as well,” she said. “We hope to extend it into the high school and the public community – having walks with themes at the hot springs, and perhaps a poetry reading in the forest. We have lots of hopes and dreams to become a better resource to the community as far as quality of life goes.”

Hot Springs ‘Paint a Tile’ Festive Event will be at the Legion Hall May 16, the tiles will be on display at the hot springs. Displays by community groups, and displays by Nakusp Elementary students, the winners are George Gracie, please call P.A.L.S. at 250-265-4679.

Nakusp Citizen of the Year Banquet

The Awards ceremony will be at the Legion Hall May 7, 2011, Saturday.

The winners are George Harding and Hazel Rossman.

Tickets are at Barton Insurance for $16.00. There will be a meal served by the Legion Ladies w/ dessert. sponsored by the Nakusp & District Rotary Club.

Nakusp & THE ARROW LAKES

Tynan said that the Village’s water and sewer reserve funds are healthy, and that the Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund and the Fire Equipment Reserve Fund are well established and will be “back on track” once they are replenished. What the Village does not have is a Capital Reserve Fund for things such as street repair. She recommends that council establish this fund by bylaw, and to develop a long-term capital plan. “Nakusp is in a healthy place and will be for years to come with some good planning now,” she said.
Whole School gears up with full slate of spring activities
submitted by The Whole School

The children, parents and teachers of the Whole School have been busy gearing up for spring.

The Whole School’s annual spring market is coming up on Saturday May 14 from 11 am to 4 pm on the school grounds. Vendors and artisans from the community will have tables set up and will be selling their beautiful creations.

There are so many talented and unique artists in the valley that the spring market is always full of amazing works of original clothes, jewelry, crafts and art. There will be live music, stories and songs for kids, a clown act, face painting, a barbecue concession and lots of fun.

The school will also be running a Read, Set, Learn event with Jennifer Rolfs (as the kinder teacher) at the market between 1:30 and 3:30 pm. This is a special event for preschoolers ages 2-5 and their families to help support early literacy activities in families and communities. There will also be a multi-family yard sale on the Whole School grounds on Saturday May 28.

The school held its annual open house on April 21 to celebrate Earth Day with the community. The students collaborated on a variety of wind-related activities and crafts to share what they have learned about weather with the new families visiting. It was a great opportunity for the kids to inspire the new families visiting. It was a great opportunity for the kids to inspire

Award-winning film screening in the Slocan Valley
submitted by Warren MacDonald

Looking for an inspiring solution to a seemingly impossible humanitarian dilemma? Then check out The Garden at the End of the World, a film by award-winning Australian filmmaker Gary Caganoff, dealing with the complex issues facing Afghanistan. The film screens at the Trails Guild building in Appledale Tuesday, May 17, 7 pm.

The Garden at the End of the World “is a film that is both a documentary and a travelogue of a journey through a ruined land. It is stark in its contrasts of the impacts of war with the everyday lives of people trying to create new lives, of a ruined city and the bare beauty of the mountains, of the conditions in the country and the efforts of one woman and potential new students to the school.”

The Whole School children are really excited to be sharing some of their new skills with the community. They have learned a myriad of new art forms over the winter and their works are on exhibit at the Cedar Creek Café until May 9.

Working with Whole School Parents, their teacher and a few artists in the community the children have learned contour drawing, experimenting with pop-up art and printmaking, been inspired by the Eastern Woodland art movement and food art. They have been watching at looks of butterflies seen underwater, and explored the design and creation of mandalas. They also worked with Gregg Stone, who inspired the watercolours and Tara Harvey of Arty Mountain Mosaics, who inspired the mosaics on exhibit.

For more information call 250-226-7737.

Local businesses win family-friendly awards
submitted by SIFCo

Paul Kelly and daughter Beatrix from Cedar Creek Café were on hand at the West Kootenay Early Years Conference to receive the Family Friendly Business Award along with the Dr. Donald Ellis Dental Clinic in Castlegar, El Taco Restaurant in Nelson, Frog Peak Café in Creston Valley, Vienna Café in Nelson and Waves Hair Design in Nelson.

These businesses were nominated by customers for their efforts to provide an accessible environment where children and families feel welcome and supported. Employers were also credited with the Family Friendly Employer Award for providing family-friendly human resources practices from child care and play areas, to parental leave. Winners in this category were the Kootenay Kids, Trail FAIR Society, and Pacific Insight. Kootenay Country Co-op was recognized as a Family Friendly Business and Employer.

These Awards are sponsored by the West Kootenay Early Years Council and on behalf of the Council were presented by our Credit Union partners: Aron Burke, Kootenay Saving Credit Union, Tom Atkins, Brian Pooh, Bradley Roulston, Nelson and District Credit Union, Denise Maier, and Heritage Credit Union.

For information on becoming a Family Friendly Business or Employer call Dorothy Kaytor: Early Years Regional Coordinator at 250-352-6786 ext. 200 or email at childfriendly@thecoop.ca.

Cedar Creek Cafe and Frog Peak Cafe were two Slocan Valley businesses that recently received family friendly awards.

©Valley Voice
COMMUNITY FOREST

Kaslo Community Forest holds Annual General Meeting

by Jan McMurray

The Kaslo and District Community Forest Society held its AGM on April 21.

Elected to the board were Dick Martin (107 votes), John Addisson (105), Hans Hansen (102), Greg Lay (76), and Bruce Freeman (71). Ken Butt (58) and Chris Webster (50) were unsuccessful. Continuing board members include Steve Anderson, Steve Fawcett, Donna Cormie and Erin Land.

In a very close vote, (47-45), the KDCFMS membership decided to give back to the community based on profit, rather than on a per cubic metre amount.

The resolution that passed was submitted by the board. It commits 20 percent of profits earned in the year to community disbursements, with an equal amount committed to the legacy fund, for a total of 40 percent of profits going back to the community.

By voting for this resolution, the membership struck down the submitted by the board removes every measure of financial performance from the board. “Everything you receive is totally at the discretion of the director,” he said. Freeman added that the resolution could lead to cutting forests for profit. “We could lose money on every tree cut and I think that’s morally and economically wrong,” Freeman said.

After a lively discussion, the vote was taken by a show of hands and the board’s resolution passed by two votes. The fourth resolution, also submitted by Freeman, which would have instituted voting on the resolutions by secret ballot, was also defeated.

Steve Anderson explained that under the current society bylaws, as soon as a member asks, the membership can vote on whether or not to vote on the resolutions by secret ballot. A suggestion was made to include this in the ad for the AGM next year.

In 2010, the community forest logged approximately 10,000 cubic metres of wood (four cutblocks), bringing in over $850,000. Standing timber inventory was increased by 50,000 cubic metres, for a total of 60,477 cubic metres “in the bank.” In co-operation with Blackwell & Associates, the community forest carried out fuel reduction projects at Cooper Creek, Davis Creek Park, and the Lardeau townsite.

A big project in 2010 was the long-term strategy, which will guide the five-year plan, scheduled to be done in 2011. Also this year, the community forest will expand its water monitoring program from five streams to 14 streams, thanks to $30,000 of funding secured by RDCK Area D Director Andy Shadrack. Another project the board is pursuing is to host a symposium with other community forest groups in the area.

The organization ended the year 2010 with a $167,000 surplus. Community disbursements of $27,000 were distributed. Treasurer Bruce Freeman’s written report states that the new management contract with only one manager should save about $15,000 per year. It also states that the community legacy fund was established within the Community Fund of North Kootenay Lake Society (CFPNKL) and will now show a 300 percent improvement in interest performance. A surplus of $100,000 is forecast for 2011.

Kaslo Trailblazers nearing completion of trail network

submitted by Tammy Horick

In March, the Kaslo Trailblazers held their annual general meeting and reviewed the year’s activities.

The three major accomplishments in 2010 were rebuilding the Buchaman Lookout Tower, completed in partnership with Columbia Basin Trust, Kalesnikoff Lumber and the Forest Action Account; rebuilding an old mining trail on the south side of the Kaslo River and connecting it to the Kaslo water line service road, which will be a new three-kilometre loop added to the Kaslo River Trail when it is completed in 2011; and adding flower beds, a sidewalk and improved curbing around the cenotaph on Water Street in Kaslo, completed in partnership with the Kaslo Royal Canadian Legion, Western Kaslo Trailblazers nearing completion of trail network

submitted by Roca Mines Inc.

Roca Mines Inc. announces that it has arranged a $2.5 million private placement with strategic investor SeAH Holdings Corp., a company based in Seoul, South Korea listed on the Korean stock exchange. Proceeds from the offering will be used to restart production at the MAX molybdenum mine and for general working capital.

The financing is to comprise 10 million units of the company at a price of $0.25 per unit, each unit consisting of one common share and one half of a share purchase warrant. Each full warrant will be exercisable into one common share of the company for 12 months following closing at a price of $0.30. Closing is subject to satisfactory due diligence and Republic of Korea and Canadian regulatory approval. No finder’s fees will be payable in connection with this private placement.

SeAH has 14 domestic and 22 overseas subsidiaries/operations with business areas in special steel producing, pipe manufacturing, IT and energy. SeAH Bested Corp., the largest subsidiary of SeAH, is known as the number one special steel maker in South Korea. The company mainly produces products for globally renowned automakers and shipbuilders.

Having carried out much rehabilitation, planning and engineering it remains management’s goal to restart production at the MAX molybdenum mine and to continue to advance its permitted 1,000-tonne-per-day expansion plans. Molybdenum oxide currently trades at approximately US $17 per pound.

For more information or to donate contact kaslotrailblazers@gmail.com.

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- Fothall (Cutting Permit 106) Status: CP Submitted
- Wensley (Cutting Permit 108) Status: Harvested

Wensley Creek Interpretive Forest Trails Project:

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The Castlegar Garden Club’s annual plant sale will be held on Saturday, May 7, from 9 am to noon at the Castlegar Station Museum, 400 13th Avenue. The club’s Garden and Nature Fest will be held May 14 at Twin Rivers Park.

Gardening across the Kootenays

submitted by Castlegar Garden Club

“You must know...that I look upon the Pleasure which we take in a Garden, as one of the most innocent Delights in Human Life...”

It was as true then, when Joseph Addison wrote this in 1712, as now... gardens and nature are good for the soul. He omitted the part about the back-breaking labour, but suffice it to say that the end result of love and labour in the garden is a delight.

In the Kootenays, the opportunities for enrichment are many. The season starts off with the always wonderful Nelson Garden Festival, on Mother’s Day weekend, May 7. On Victoria Day weekend, Kaslo celebrates gardens on Monday May 23, and New Denver charms us with their Garden Fest on May 28.

Balanced nicely in between, Castlegar keeps up the horticultural momentum with the second annual Castlegar Garden & Nature Fest, Saturday, May 14. Situated on the beautiful Columbia River, this open-air festival is sponsored by the Castlegar Garden Club and Castlegar Communities in Bloom, with vendors showcasing a large array of plants: berry bushes, herbs, rockery plants, shade plants, vegetable starts, annuals, trees, shrubs, garden art and treasures of all kinds.

Enhancing this year’s festival will be Baladi Bellydance, Mirage Middle Eastern Dance Ensemble, Mystic Dream Dancers, Titus Kanby, Twin Rivers Chorale, Wind River Trio, and more.

Come out on May 14 to the Twin Rivers Park/ Millennium Walkway (10 am to 3 pm) for a day of gardens, plants, nature and farming.

For more information, call 250-399-4439, email castlegargardenfest@shaw.ca or check out the listings on kootenaygardening.com.

And remember, the Castlegar Garden Club’s annual plant sale is May 7, 9 am-noon at the Castlegar Station Museum.

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Corazon, a Nelson-based youth choir with several members from the New Denver and Kaslo areas, performed at Lucerne School in New Denver and the Silverton Memorial Hall on April 19.

The Crescent Valley Volunteer Fire Department has a brand new $270,000 tanker. It can hold one-third more water than most other tankers, so is a welcome addition to the Slocan Valley, where the fire departments work closely together. Pictured here are members of the Crescent Valley department on the left, and Slocan Councillor Hillary Elliott, Crescent Valley Fire Chief Carl Nord and Area H Director Walter Popoff.
Nakusp celebrates the centennial of the SS Bonnington

by Jan McMurray

The 100th anniversary of the SS Bonnington was celebrated in Nakusp April 22 and 23.

On April 22, the Arrow Lakes Historical Society showed movies of the Bonnington, Minto and the Columbia River Drive.

On April 23, the Nakusp Museum Society hosted the Mirror Theatre presentation of Paddlewheel Days on the front steps of the Nakusp Public Library. Captain Sanderson, the first steamship captain on the Arrow Lakes, was played by Valley Voice publisher Dan Nicholson; Tom Abriel, leading businessman and community leader, was played by Martin Gibbons; and Blanche Jordan, wife of one of Nakusp’s most influential businessmen, was played by Janet Royko.

Following the presentation, a delicious cake made by Deb Guest was served.

The original banner from the Bonnington, made of hemp, was on display outside the museum. This was one of the treasures found in the museum’s storage room during renovations this past winter. The museum offered free admission, and had a record number of visitors (76) come through its doors.

The event was funded by CBT.

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September 30 - October 15: David Langevin

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The work of Lucerne School students during this year’s Writers Festival was showcased at a coffeehouse at the Silverton Gallery on April 20.

The Slocan Valley Arts Council’s Trash Art Challenge public art show was on display at the Passmore Hall April 29 and 30. Here, Copper Chris displays his fascinating piece “Preservation,” combining elements of copper and wood.
Author Caroline Woodward returns to Kootenay book tour

submitted

Writer Caroline Woodward returns to the Kootenays for a reading tour in May, with a pocketful of accolades for her adult novel, Penny Loves Wade, Wade Loves Penny (Oslanchik Books) and a listful of award nominations for her children’s book, Singing Away the Dark (Groundwood Books). She begins her Kootenay tour with a public reading from Singing Away the Dark at the Nakusp Public Library at 1:30 pm on Monday, May 9. On Tuesday, May 17, she will be reading for children at 1 pm at JV Humphreys school and for adults at 7 pm at the Kaslo Public Library, 415 Front Street.

Both books celebrate the humour, ingenuity, struggles and sheer doggedness of rural people, from little kids to grown-ups. Woodward uses classical myths and fears, from Homer’s Odyssey of the long trip away from home, to the child who walks one long mile through the dark morning to catch the school bus.

“The genre-crossing of classical myth with a contemporary love story...is larger than life,” says the Malahat Review of Penny Loves Wade, “and in Woodward’s hands, any exaggeration simply gives the story a playful edge.” The Vancouver Sun calls the story of the long-married Peace River ranchers, Penny and Wade, “delicateable and gripping.” The story of Wade’s long-haul truck journey around BC, and Penny’s trials keeping the home fires burning and the bills paid, immediately hit the BC best-seller list and became a book club favourite around the province.

Singing Away the Dark, illustrated by Julie Morstad, is the story of a six-year-old girl singing her heart out as she walks the long mile to the school bus. It’s just been shortlisted for two awards: the Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Award in Ontario for picture books and the Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Award for Best Illustrator by the Canadian Library Association.

“Beautiful on both a visual and a literary level, Morstad and Woodward are a match made in heaven,” says the Vancouver Sun.

Interior Health announces significant investment in residential care

submitted by IHA

Interior Health is pleased to announce that an additional $5.9 million will be available in 2011 to enhance the care provided to residents living in publicly funded residential care sites.

The investment will standardize the delivery of residential care across Interior Health and will be directed to staffing, education and quality initiatives. Particular attention will go towards enhancing care for residential clients with the highest and most complex needs.

“This funding will improve the quality and consistency of care for seniors, so that regardless of where clients live, they have access to the same standard and level of quality service,” said IH Board Chair Norman Eves through this initiative, the majority of Interior Health sites will see the hours of direct care that residents receive at all residential care sites will now meet an average of 3.15 care hours per resident per day. Care hours include the care provided by RNs, LPNs, Care Aides, and activity and rehab staff.

“While not all sites will see an direct increase in hours, I am very pleased that our broad investments in staff education and care planning will benefit all sites,” said Barry Penner, Interior Health’s vice president of residential services and accountability for spending. A $4 million to ensure residents at these sites were provided with the same level and quality of service. As a result there are no details as to how this will play out in area residential care homes.

This additional investment is made possible through the residential rate adjustments that took effect across British Columbia in January 2010 and 2011. All health authorities are allocating revenue generated through the new rate structure into residential care services, ensuring the continuation and improvement of quality and equitable care.

Interior Health funds 5,185 beds for residents requiring 24/7 support through facilities owned and operated by Interior Health and those operated by contracted private partners.

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Planting the seeds for a regional food organization

submitted by Jon Steinman

With the West Kootenay having become fertile soil for many innovative food system initiatives, another project is now underway which hopes to build the capacity within the West Kootenay to form a regional food system organization.

Often referred to as ‘food councils,’ ‘roundtables,’ ‘networks’ or ‘coalitions,’ hundreds of these types of regional organizations already exist throughout North America. These groups act to broadly support the interests of those who make a living within the food system and exist to help enhance access to healthy and tasty food for all residents.

For almost five years, Jon Steinman of Kootenay Co-op Radio’s internationally syndicated radio show Deconstructing Dinner has paid careful attention to global and local food systems here and abroad. After putting the radio show on hold last year, Steinman is now applying his experience on the ground to spearhead this project.

For the next couple of months, Steinman will be interviewing members of regional food organizations throughout North America to learn what works and what doesn’t when forming and managing democratic regional food organizations. For the purpose of this proposed regional food organization, the ‘region’ consists of the Creston Valley to the east, Grand Forks to the west, the US border to the south, and Nakusp and the north end of Kootenay Lake to the north. For Steinman, inspiration to engage in this work has also come from the many public presentations he offers across Canada.

“Most often, the core of what I speak about when I’m on the road are the amazing food initiatives happening right here in the West Kootenay,” he says. “When I step back and observe just how all of these pieces making up the food system come together to support one another, I see tremendous potential to propagate an even more vibrant and resilient food system within our regional community.”

While food councils are often involved with advocating for policies which support more resilient food systems, Steinman says that at this point, the focus for this preliminary research is how a food council might function in the West Kootenay.

“We have a geographically unique region and there’s likely no cookie-cutter food council model to apply here,” says Steinman. “However, by examining the different roles and functions employed by other regional food organizations abroad, we can avoid having to reinvent the wheel and instead cherry-pick best practices from Canada and the United States and apply those successes to what we believe will work here.”

The intended outcomes of this work will be a draft strategy for forming a democratic regional food organization (council). This strategy will then be submitted to regional stakeholders in June for feedback, and by July, it’s anticipated that a final strategy will be developed alongside a broad coalition of regional support.

Despite this preliminary work being more research-based, the most important intention of the work, suggests Steinman, is to “lay down the foundation for the formation of an organization which can act as an ongoing community consultation, one that will constantly evolve with the ever-changing realities and interests among our food community and support our ability to eat really good food!”

For more information contact jon@steinman.com.

New computer literacy workshops offered for seniors

submitted by Chris Nichol

The Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy has received funding from the Government of Canada’s New Horizons for Seniors Program to develop six new computer workshops for seniors and purchase a mobile laptop lab.

The workshops will include:

Getting to Know Your Computer, Working with Photos, Shopping and Banking Safely Online, Caring for Your Computer, Introducing Facebook, and Introducing Skype.

These three hour workshops will be offered in the spring across communities in the West Kootenay and Boundary regions. The mobile laptop lab will visit five communities.

For more information or to register contact Chris Nichol 355-0032.

Saving for new regional hospital(s) drives taxes up

by Jan McMurray

The West Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital District (WKBRHD) board has decided to collect $1 million from taxpayers this year to replenish the reserve fund for facility replacement.

The reserve fund had $3 million in it before the recent expansion project at Kootenay Lake Hospital in Nelson. About $1.5 million of these reserve funds were used for the Nelson emergency room expansion and CT scanner suite.

WKBRHD Chair Marguerite Rotvold said the board felt the reserve fund should be built up again, even though “we don’t know when we’ll be replacing facilities, and we don’t know if we’ll be building two new facilities or one new facility.” A long-standing item of discussion around the board table is whether to build a new regional hospital in a central location or to replace the hospitals in Trail and Nelson when the time is due, estimated to be within the next 20 years.

The tax requisition for the regional hospital district this year will be $3,625,764, compared to $2,306,941 last year. Taxes on a $250,000 property will be $57.03 this year, compared to $36.68 last year.

Rotvold explained that whether or not taxpayers will contribute to the reserve fund is decided on an annual basis. She said the fund was initiated four or five years ago, and no contributions have been made for the last two years.

Interior Health representatives are scheduled to make a presentation regarding the process for facility replacement at the June WKBRHD board meeting.

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COMMUNITY

George Harding and Hazel Rassman are Nakusp’s Citizens of the Year. Come celebrate with them on May 7 at the Legion Hall. Tickets are available at Barton Insurance.
Selkirk College announces new president
submitted by Selkirk College

After many months of diligent work by a search committee, the Board of Governors and Davies Park executive search firm, Selkirk College has found the person with the experience and the leadership attributes necessary to lead it successfully into the future. Angus Graeme has been appointed as President and CEO of Selkirk College.

“A board of governors has many important responsibilities in providing leadership to the college, but none surpasses that of hiring a president and CEO,” explained Selkirk College Board of Governors Chair, Stefan Lehmann. “Selkirk is a very special institution in a unique part of Canada. We entered into this search believing that it would take an extraordinary person to assume the leadership role at our college. We believe that we found exactly what we were looking for.”

Graeme has extensive experience in post-secondary education. He began as an instructor at the college, followed by successful service as Department Head, School Chair, Dean and Vice President, Academic and Student Development. He has a Masters of Arts in Leadership and a Doctorate of Education. Graeme has been appointed as President and CEO of Selkirk College.

Nelson Public Library receives gift of fibre art
submitted by Nelson Public Library

The Nelson Public Library has received the gift of a beautiful quilted fibre work donated by the artist. The early work by visual artist and former Nelson cultural ambassador Angelika Werth, entitled City Parks, now hangs in the library’s bright, spacious stairwell. Flowers, shrubs, and houses climb a hillside against a textured sky in this large hanging constructed of silk and mixed fibres.

After working for Yves Saint Laurent in Paris, France and receiving a degree as Master Dressmaker-Designer, Werth immigrated to Australia, then to Canada. Her multiple solo exhibitions include her Waistcoat/Wastecouts exhibition at the Alberta Craft Council in Edmonton in 2006, and the Craft Council in Edmonton in the Canadian Craft Museum in 2008. Werth’s current work is from Royal Roads University, is known to the communities of the region and has been a dedicated and loyal employee of the college for almost 20 years. Graeme replaces Marilyn Lascombe who led the college for the last 10 years prior to accepting the leadership position at New Brunswick Community College.

CBT offers students community service awards
submitted by CBT

Basin residents who have taken a hiatus at least one year after completing high school and wish to continue their education within the region are invited to apply for Columbia Basin Trust’s (CBT) College Community Service Awards.

Awards are based on volunteer community service rather than academic standing. The deadline is June 17 to submit an application to the applicant’s college.

“These awards provide financial assistance to mature students while rewarding and encouraging volunteerism,” said Neil Muth, CBT President and CEO.

Twenty-two awards are offered to Basin residents attending Selkirk College, College of the Rockies, Revelstoke Centre of the Okanagan College and Valemount Campus of the College of New Caledonia.

Applications are available at each college and online at www.cbt.org/csa. For more information contact Linda McInnes at lmcinnes@cbt.org or 1-800-305-6998.

Arrow Lakes Teachers support Honduran teachers’ struggle
submitted by Arrow Lakes Teachers Association

Since the June 29, 2009 military coup in Honduras, Honduran teachers’ organizations have been on the forefront of the struggle to restore democracy to the country. The Arrow Lakes Teachers Association has donated $300 to support the Honduran teachers in their struggle.

As a consequence of their efforts, Honduran teachers have borne the brunt of much of the state and paramilitary violence against members of the resistance, suffering assassinations — including teachers gunned down in their classrooms — beatings, imprisonment, and mass firings.

In recent months the de facto regime’s education minister has attempted to roll back many of the gains achieved by the teachers. As a result, five teacher organizations representing 60,000 teachers in the country were on strike for two weeks to defend public education and their collective contract.

On March 29 the government announced the application of strong sanctions against teachers not returning to classes and has characterized them as “vandals” accusing them of infiltrating state security forces and causing violence. Canada and the US and many of its allies recognize this repressive right-wing government and are silent in condemning the human rights abuses that continue.

For more a complete update on the Honduran crisis and how you can voice your support go to the website for Vancouver-based Codevelpment Canada – Building Partnerships for Social Justice at www.codev.org.

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Mud-bogging now a punishable offense
submitted by Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

Ripping around in the bush and harming Crown land on an ORV (Off-road Vehicle) might seem like recreation to some people, but in BC it is a crime.

As the weather improves and camping season starts to get underway, more people will head out to responsibly enjoy the forests and range lands for recreational purposes. Unfortunately, irresponsible off-riding with ORVs, motorcycles or 4x4s, sometimes referred to as “mud bogging,” disrupts the ecological foundation of BC’s natural areas. In sensitive sites, the damage can be catastrophic.

“Most people use Crown land responsibly, but the damage caused by mud bogging is not only ugly, it has negative effects on precious fish and wildlife habitats,” says Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.

Violation tickets for mud bogging are $575, and other penalties may include towing or impoundment of vehicles, jail time and expenses related to habitat restoration.

Terry Wardrop, land and environmental coordinator for the ATV Association of BC says his group is cooperating fully with the ministry. “We are big believers in responsible riding and environmental protection… and are pleased to see enforcement aimed at the few riders who fail to respect the land and trails.

The public are encouraged to report suspicious activities and environmental damage to the province’s toll-free, 24 hour Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPPP) line at 1-877-972-RAPPP (7277) or from a cell phone *7277.

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COMMUNITY
Mt. Sentinel students offer slideshow on Quest for Community

Submitted by Deb Corbett

This past January Grade 12 students from Mount Sentinel Secondary submitted in the Quest for Community Program visited Ouxaca (pronounced wah-haak-kaah), Mexico. The students will be sharing their adventures at a slide show talk Thursday, May 5 at 7 pm in the Slocan Park Hall. A minimum $5 donation is requested. The Quest for Community Program is a social justice academy that facilitates experiential learning opportunities for students to discover what makes communities healthy, vibrant, and sustainable places. This amazing learning experience was not only about trying to improve someone’s lifestyle, but to experience and work in different communities to see how they function and what they need to succeed.

During the program the students worked both local communities as well as in Nelson, Vancouver’s downtown Eastside and then ended the school term in Ouxaca for a busy two-weeks. This event brought together government agencies, biologists, and interested citizens says Crystal Klym, Coordinator for CKIPC. “It offered the opportunity for local residents to network, learn about the latest invasive plant issues, and find out more about CKIPC.”

Keynote Speaker Katie Spellman from the University of Alaska Fairbanks gave a fascinating presentation on how Mt. Sentinel students offer slideshow on Quest for Community

Submitted by Central Kootenay Invasive Plant Committee

What aquatic invasive species should we be on the look out for? How should we manage invasive plants after wildfire? How are youth and communities being engaged in management?

Eating at the Fat Frog at the Slocan Lake Golf Club

All I can say about the weather is that this is the mildest ‘November’ I’ve ever seen around here. By the way, how ‘bout those Canucks? They kind of make me want to take up golf, speaking of which, last Wednesday Vincent Obe invited me out to the Slocan Valley Golf Course to have dinner.

Vincent is the new proprietor AND chef at the restaurant there. He has named his restaurant FAT FROG. I got there very early so I could have a long undisturbed view of Slocan Lake. The view south from the clubhouse is just plain spectacular. Maybe the best.

Vincent met me and I asked him a few questions about his background. His passion for fine food began early. As a young boy he often visited his Great Aunt Herminie. Lunches were quite a production at her house. As a young boy he often visited his Great Aunt Herminie. Lunches were quite a production at Herminie’s. The meal would begin early. As a young boy he often visited his Great Aunt Herminie. Lunches were quite a production at

Highway 6 from New Denver to Hills to be resurfaced

Submitted by Ministry of Transportation

Okanagan Aggregates has been awarded a $3.4-million contract to resurface approximately 11 kilometres of Highway 6 from New Denver north to Hills.

As part of this project, shoulders will be widened to improve pedestrian/cyclist safety and approximately six kilometres of local area side roads will be improved. Local roads to be improved include Red Mountain Road, Bonanza Creek Road,

wildfires affect invasive plants. She discussed how fire creates optimum conditions for invasive plants to grow, and provided suggestions to land managers on how to manage invasive plants after fire given the heavy 2009 and 2010 fire seasons in BC.

Vince’s objective at FAT FROG is to serve “simple gourmet food with integrity,” and if Wednesday night was any indication, this dude is going to make that happen... he knows exactly what he’s doing, and very much enjoys the work. He’s passionate about serving excellent food and wants his customers to be happy. On Wednesday he was assisted in

orders. Phone in, then pick up your

curried chicken, or specials that will occur according to Vince’s whim.

Vince clued me in to all the above information while moving about the kitchen. Watching him, it becomes obvious that he knows exactly what he’s doing, and very much enjoys the work. He’s passionate about serving excellent food and wants his customers to be happy. On Wednesday he was assisted in

the kitchen by Kody Bowman, and the lovely Paula Shandro was the smiling server.

I’m telling you, you’ve got to go to FAT FROG, watch Vince in action, and have an excellent meal! And by the way, what happens at FAT FROG... STAYS at FAT FROG! ENJOY!

FAT FROG is open from 11:30 am to 8 pm six days a week. Closed Monday. GO THERE!

Vince’s objective at Fat Frog is to serve “simple gourmet food with integrity,” and if Wednesday night was any indication, this dude is going to make that happen... he knows exactly what he’s doing, and very much enjoys the work. He’s passionate about serving excellent food and wants his customers to be happy.

Andrew Rodics, Food Editor

At the Slocan Lake Golf Club

Open from 11:30 am to 8 pm six days a week. Closed Monday.
The report contains several other recommendations, and was referred to the Municipal Services Committee.

At a City Hall meeting April 19, Chris Thompson was hired as project manager on an as needed basis. The next phase of the project is the library – quotes worth $41,311.25 were accepted for designing, a survey, a drainage study, drywall, painting and plumbing work. Counting in these quotes, Deputy Clerk Carol Hughes reported that the project is over budget by $25,851.10, due to “situational changes” being planned. Geothermal and sprinkler installation is not yet complete, but Andy Pritchard reported that he has completed his work on the windows and doors.

A notice from Parks Canada informs council of a delay in approvals in the National Historic Sites Cost-Sharing Program. Kaslo has a grant application in for the City Hall project.

A law will be drafted to include the new RCMP office and the campground in Specified Sewer Area #1. Permanent sewer connections will be made to both facilities. The council was notified that in the case of a Village boundary extension to include the airport, the Ministry of Transportation will retain Kaslo as part of the airport’s boundaries, and be required to take responsibilities for the Kaslo Airstrip from the present Village boundary to the airport property.

Mayor Lay and the CAO were authorized to sign tenure documents presented by the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources for the Municipal Services Committee.

The full balance of $2516.68 set aside by the municipality for Communities in Bloom will be transferred as a grant, separate from its annual grant, to the Chamber of Commerce for administration of the program and expenditure on Village- sponsored projects.

Three amendments were made to the Kaslo Recreation Committee mandate. The maximum application amount was reduced from $1000 to $500. First consideration will be given to applications for activities that originate within the Village. The definition of recreation was also changed: “Recreation is considered to be activities which promote well-being.”

Each year, the Village provides a $500 bursary for a JV Humphries graduate. This year, there will be three bursaries from the Village, as the school has $800 in unclaimed funds from the Village from previous years.

Kasco Jazz Etc. was granted a one-hour extension to 10 pm on their park use permit for the festival, July 29, 30 and 31.

An agreement between Service BC and the Village for occupation of shared space in the Kembell Memorial Centre for August 10, 2011 to August 12, 2011 at a cost to the Village of $84 per month was approved and signed.

A development permit to paint the exterior of the Blue Belle Bistro was approved, subject to Heritage Permit Area colour design guidelines.

A thank you letter will be sent to the Mayor and Council for its generous contribution of six flowering Snow Goose cherry trees for Kaslo boulevards.

A letter from Dr. Halpeny of Interior Health states that the public health nurse position in Kaslo has been filled, after a regrettable delay in posting the position.

Jim Yount sent an email inviting us to his previous review regarding an economic development strategy for Kaslo. This was referred to the Municipal Services Committee to recommend to council a response outlining council’s support of economic development activity in the village.

The report recommends that time is of the essence in constructing a new Kaslo fire hall regardless if the RDCK assumes responsibility for the Kaslo VFD or the Village of Kaslo continues to have responsibility for it.

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MOTHER'S DAY PANCAKE BREAKFAST Slocan Legion Hall, 502 Harlton St., Slocan, Sunday, May 8, 2011, 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon. Cost: $6.00 Children 6 & under $5.00.

A message. Sponsored by SD10 & Ministry of Education.

YOU ARE INVITED to the Slocan River Stenographers AGM, 7:00 p.m., Passmore Hall, Thursday, May 19. Refreshments will be served.

APEX’S BICYCLE will be on display at the Cup & Saucer on May 13 from 10 am -12:30 pm.

MARVELOUS MOTHER’S DAY BUNCH AT The Cup & Saucer Cafe, Silverton. This Sunday May 8. Your choice of Eggs Benedict (Classic, West Coast, Florentine) served with potato Rosti or Crepes (Choco-Banana, Berry Bouquet) served with fresh whipped cream & fruit salad. $15 per plate, includes coffee. By Reservation Only. 11am to 2pm. Call Loving Spirit 773-753 or The Cup 265-4797.

HAND & SOUL WELLNESS CENTRE offering: Chakra Painting on May 11 (7-9) $20, Family Constellations on May 14 (9:30-4:30) $55. ‘Don’t Waste your time at the Chiropractor’s Office’ workshop on May 17 (10:30-noon). Ongoing Chi Kung and Yoga thru May. Call 358-2177 or visit www.handandsoul.ca for more information.

PROCEEDS TO SLUGS. Phone 358-7200.

12TH ANNUAL SPRING MARKET: Get ready for The Whole School’s 12th Annual Spring Market on Saturday, May 14 from 11:00 to 4:00 at a beautiful new location – 5041 Hwy 6, Winlaw. Live music, kids crafts & games, BBQ concession, plant sale, local vendors, face painting, clowns, and a lot more! Only $2.00 per adult (door prize!). If interested in vending, call Kaylene (250) 226-7599. See you there!

YOUR CHOICE OF:

Silverton - May 13 at 7:30 pm
Nelson, BC on May 7 at 1:30 pm.

Nonna (Grandma) Jo is on an errand to the Legion in Nelson, BC on May 7 at 1:30 pm. Thank you to the ladies of the Legion in Nelson, BC on May 7 at 1:30 pm.

Two BEAUTIFUL BABIES into the Storms/Cordoni families.

May 22, 2011. Nonna (Grandma) Jo is on an errand to the Legion in Nelson, BC on May 7 at 1:30 pm. Thank you to the ladies of the Legion in Nelson, BC on May 7 at 1:30 pm.

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ONE BEDROOM CABIN on the waterfront in Nakusp. Quiet person, NS, NP 560.00 plus monthly. References required. 250-675-2661 or 250-265-1149.

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NOTICE! BINGO is CANCELLED on
Friday, May 6, 2011 due to renovations
happening at the Bosun Hall. The next Bingo
is requesting applications for Bingo...
SLOVAN VALLEY RECREATION


DOWN TO EARTH AGES 5 TO 7 – Kids exploration with Rita Corcoran. Begin Sat. May 21.
OXACA TALK – Join the kids from Quest for Community. Thurs. May 5, Slocan Park Hall.
RAIL TRAIL POKER PEDAL – Move For Health Day. Sunday May 15, 11 am at the Wistown Station of the Slocan Valley Rail Trail.
SEWING A SPRING APRON – With Ellis Four. Threads included. May 17 & 24 (Tues.).
SPRING TENNIS LESSONS – Begin May 18 or June 1.

PROMO, EDUCATION AND TRAINING VIDEOS
- Spring Tennis Lessons - Begin May 18 or June 1.
- Raffle Fundraising - to help our local health care.
- Fundraising - to help our local health care.
- and enthusiastic people interested in doing volunteer work - both fundraising and non-fundraising - to help our local health care.
- Join us the 2nd Thursday of the month (not July and August).
- We meet in alternating homes in South Slocan/Valley area. Call us at 250-359-7489 and enjoy a meeting to see what we are about.


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‘Hard folk’ artist Chris Gheran to perform in Nakusp

submitted by Jackie Bourgaize

Born into white-collar management, singer-songwriter Chris Gheran never felt like he fit in, but now he has found his ‘hard folk’ voice and has just released his third album Calgary. Chris and lead guitarist Tyler Stephan will be performing in Nakusp’s Bonnington Centre on May 22. Doors at 7:30, concert at 8 pm.

“The influences of old-school folk musicians like Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan resonate in his insightful lyrics and meaningful music,” wrote Andy Williams in The Gauntlet. Lisa Wilton of the Calgary Sun noted the influences of Dylan and The Beatles in his mostly acoustic recording Coup d’etat. His new album blends these influences with classic country by the likes of George Jones, Conway Twitty and Hank Williams. “Gheran’s earnest but fun-loving style breathes new life into historical subject matter, making it accessible to even the rawest folk music cadet,” commented Christine Leonard in BeatRoute.

Gheran’s first album Monster (2008) rocks out his hard folk band style. Coup d’etat (2010) is a solo collection of unique perspectives on war, society and sweet love. His third album, Calgary, released March, 2011, is much like the city – if you don’t like the music, wait for the next song.

Gheran played in Medicine Hat’s Tongue on Post Festival in January this year. He also performed six shows at the 2010 Calgary Folk Music Festival and hosted their 2010 youth songwriter contest. Earlier this year, Gheran’s opening act complemented the Wailin’ Jennys in the beautiful Knox United Church in downtown Calgary. In 2008, he opened for Jonathan Richman with a phenomenal solo set in concert at the Martha Cohen Theatre in the Calgary Centre for the Performing Arts as part of Sled Island 2008 and was asked back in 2009. Gheran has been interviewed by several Calgary radio stations, and was chosen to perform at Kelowna’s Rockanigan in 2008 and 2009.

Tickets can be purchased at Bon Marche for $15 or online at www.chrisgheran.com

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Tickets can be purchased at Bon Marche for $15 or online at www.chrisgheran.com

Proposed bylaw to regulate raves dies

by Jan McMurray

The RDCK has decided to drop the idea of a ‘mass gatherings bylaw.’ Last July, the RDCK board asked staff to draft a mass gatherings bylaw after the Village of Kaslo asked the board for help controlling raves. Last year, raves were held in the rural area surrounding Kaslo on both the May Days and Jazz Fest weekends, when events are happening in town. Kaslo council has concerns about the strain on the Village’s emergency services when two large events are happening at the same time in the Kaslo area, and has concerns about safety and security at the raves.

Although RDCK staff prepared a draft bylaw in consultation with RCMP and IHA, and presented it to the RDCK Rural Affairs Committee on April 7, the staff report accompanying the draft bylaw recommended that it be dropped because of the “limitations for enforcement of a mass gatherings bylaw on Crown land...” The staff report explains that Regional District bylaws do not pertain to Crown land, so “the RCMP would need to provide enforcement through trespass or some other relevant mechanism on provincial land.”

Both the RCMP and Interior Health support the bylaw, states the staff report, but concerns were expressed by event organizers over additional costs that would be imposed by the bylaw.