The Valley VOICE

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"Your independently owned regional community newspaper serving the Arrow Lakes, Slocan & North Kootenay Lake Valleys."

RDCK shows full support for slaughterhouse in the Slocan Valley

by Jan McMurray

Support is growing for the Slocan Valley Abattoir Co-operative (SVAC) and its $1.7 million project to build a slaughterhouse. The project will allow West Kootenay farmers to comply with the new Meat Inspection Regulation, which requires that all meat animals be slaughtered in a certified facility.

MLA Corky Evans and SVAC chair Kenyon McGee made a presentation to the RDCK board on January 26, asking for a letter of support and financial aid if possible. The board voted unanimously to write a letter indicating full support for the project.

The RDCK can grant funds only to non-profit societies, so the request for financial aid could not be accommodated. However, Area E Director Josh Smienk said he would be granting funds to the non-profits in his area so that they could purchase a membership in the co-op.

Area H Director Don Munro said that food security and protection of the Agricultural Land Reserve were identified as top priorities in the Official Community Planning process underway in the Slocan Valley. He encouraged all directors to "get the information out and garner as much support as possible district-wide."

The co-op plans to hold public meetings in February around the region it intends to serve – roughly from Revelstoke through Nakusp, Slocan and Castlegar to Trail, and the Kaslo area, Nelson and Salmo.

To fund the project, the group is confident that it will obtain a $150,000 government grant and will be seeking others. The group also has a goal of selling 200 memberships by this fall, when they aim to have the slaughterhouse up and running. A co-op membership costs $500. The co-op model allows for one member, one vote, which McGee pointed out prevents big business from taking over.

Evans had come to the RDCK board a year ago, informing the directors of the impending legislation and asking if any of them were interested in helping with the abattoir project. Slocan responded, so some Slocan councillors and Evans visited some certified plants in the province. The Village secured a $10,000 grant for a business plan. The plan was written by Jeremy Lack, owner of Mad Dog Farm in Thrums, with the assistance of Slocan Valley experts Dave Anderson of Legendary Meats and Mike Mills, a cattle farmer.

The group had initially hoped that the slaughterhouse would be constructed on a piece of property just outside Slocan that is owned by the Village. However, Slocan residents did not support that location, so the co-op went searching elsewhere. It is now looking at a piece of crown land about a mile or so north of Lemon Creek and off Hwy 6. The property is an old Highways quarry site.

Jeremy Lack says there are many positives to this site – it is in the middle of the catchment area, with good drainage, all season access, and power nearby on Hwy 6. It is a mile from the nearest neighbour and is not visible from the highway.

However, acquiring crown land involves an application process and First Nations consultation. McGee told the RDCK board that it would be "tough" to get the land, but Lack pointed out that the government recognizes the need for a slaughterhouse in the area. Lack said the group would prefer leasing the land rather than purchasing it, to cut down on the initial outlay of capital, but "it's still very much up in the air."

McGee told the RDCK board that the new regulation had resulted in meat farming in the area to come to "a screeching halt." He said the co-op's studies show that farmers will start up again and will increase production if the project goes ahead.

The facility will provide 13-15 full-time jobs, according to McGee. The business plan also speaks to the potential of support industries, such as livestock transport, and feed and supply merchants.

The facility will handle livestock slaughter for small producers in the area, for both certified organic and conventional meat. There will also be a cut and wrap facility, certified to organic standards. To deal with waste, there will be an incinerator for the Specified Risk Materials (SRMs), more commonly known as the brain and spinal cord of cattle. These are the parts associated with BSE or Mad Cow Disease. McGee mentioned that a byproduct of the incineration was very useful in specialized pottery making. All other waste will be composted.

McGee said the facility would be unique in that farmers would be guaranteed to get the same animal they brought in from out the other end, which he claimed was not the case at most BC slaughterhouses.

RDCK Director John Kettle asked Evans why he didn't fight against the law. "You are going to spend $1 million to fix something that is not broken," he said. "What is becoming systemic in BC is that we are getting legislation based on fear. There is no science that says people have died from eating meat they bought from their neighbours."

Evans had to agree with Kettle, but said he spent one year putting a lot of energy into getting the law changed. That failed, so now he is working to make sure "we can carry on with the business we do here."

McGee said this was "a deal that was made way above the provincial government's head." Evans confirmed that the regulation is a result of negotiations between Canada, US and Japan during the BSE crisis.

The co-op invites anyone interested in helping with the project in any way to email them at svac@shaw.ca or call Kenyon McGee at 250-226-7615.

Nakusp Rotary, in conjunction with Mirror Theatre, presents the *Lady Pirates of Captain Bree*, February 15 & 16 at the Nakusp Arena. Details on page 11.

Rural representation lost in proposed new electoral boundaries

by Jan McMurray

At a public meeting in Castlegar on January 16, the BC Electoral Boundaries Commission heard loud and clear that the Kootenays do not want to lose an MLA and that the proposed boundaries split up communities.

Of the 16 members of the public who made presentations to the commission, only three said they were generally happy with the commission's recommendations. These three people, however, did concede that adjustments were necessary to keep communities together.

The Columbia-Kootenay region currently has four electoral districts: Nelson-Creston, West Kootenay-Boundary, Columbia River-Revelstoke, and East Kootenay. The commission has proposed reducing the number of ridings to three, as our region is experiencing declining population. The proposed three districts are Kootenay East, Kootenay South and Kootenay West. Most of the current Nelson-Creston riding is in the proposed Kootenay West riding. However, Kaslo and north to Cooper Creek are in Kootenay South; and the rest of the Lardeau Valley, from Howser through to Galena Bay, is in Kootenay East. Salmo and Area G, and part of Area F of the RDCK have also been put into Kootenay South rather than Kootenay West, where they feel they belong.

Andy Shadrack, Regional District Director for Area D, asked the commission to consider increasing the number of seats province-wide to 85 so as not to diminish rural seats. He also asked the commission to keep the communities of Area D together, rather than splitting them up into Kootenay East and Kootenay South. He wants the Nelson-Creston and West Kootenay-Boundary ridings to remain the same, and suggests that the commission bring back a Columbia-Shuswap seat, as the Columbia River-Revelstoke riding is too large.

Don Scarlett of Kaslo echoed Shadrack's plea to keep the communities of the Lardeau Valley together. He pointed out that the federal electoral boundary had cut off the Lardeau, and that the residents there never see or hear from their MP. He also said these communities should be in the same riding as Kaslo, and Kaslo should be in the same riding as Nelson.

Gary Wright, RDCK chair, said the RDCK board wanted four seats to remain in the region, and suggested that the commission take another look at the Columbia River-Revelstoke riding, a "huge area" that is "horribly over-represented."

Corky Evans, current Nelson-Creston MLA, appealed to the commission to go back to the legislature and say that the mathematical formula they must use to do their jobs, based on demographics, no longer works and will result in a colonial style government rather than one that represents the people. "The rural voice is restricted. Rural people are voiceless whether they are the government or not because of the demographic shift," he said. He concluded by saying, "If you ask me to represent a larger area, I won't run again, not because I don't love this work but because I won't fail the people."

Andre Carrel of Salmo agreed that effective rural representation is essential, as laws regarding land use affect urban people much differently than rural people. He gave the example of power-producing dams, which benefit urban residents but have negative impacts on rural residents. He asked for 85 seats province-wide and said he supported the BC-STV system.

The argument for more rural representation in the legislature came up again and again. Rita Moir of Vallican stated, "We need our MLAs to be speaking up for our local resources. If we lose our voice, our farms, our chickens, then we're becoming the place for people to buy their second homes. Representation by population can no longer speak to the fact that without rural voices, all farms will be mega-farms, houses mega-houses and resources extracted for the people who can make the most money out of them and not create any jobs."

Marcia Braundy of Vallican pointed out that although the legislature received a report last year stating that food security would be the most important issue for the next decade, the Gateway Project is paving over massive amounts of organic farms and agricultural land. "We can't look to our representatives only to represent the people because someone has to represent the land."

Ed Conroy, former Kootenay-Boundary MLA, said he was very disappointed to see the number of seats decrease. He agreed with MLA Evans and other speakers that the urban/rural divide is stronger than the political left/right divide in terms of representation in the legislature, and this needs to be resolved. "I would hope that you would give us four seats at least until we can figure this whole thing out in terms of the urbanization of our province." Conroy pointed to the frequent provincial government announcements like the recent one on the $14 billion in transit improvements for the Lower Mainland and Kelowna. "What about us? Who's going to speak for us? We can see from these announcements that the urban areas are over-represented."

Conroy gave some examples to show the importance of representation for rural issues. As a livestock producer, he told the commission that agriculture in the region has been negatively affected by the new regulation requiring that meat animals be slaughtered in a certified facility. "Unless we are properly represented, we won't have people to speak to that."

Electoral boundaries are reviewed once every eight years. This time, the commission was charged with proposing new boundaries for both the current first-past-the-post electoral system and for the BC-STV system recommended by the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. The commission could increase the number of MLAs to a maximum of 85, up from the current 79, but had to propose the same number of MLAs under the two types of electoral systems.

The commission has recommended 81 MLAs. It has proposed reducing the number of MLAs by one in three districts with declining population (the Columbia-Kootenay, the North, and the Cariboo-Thompson) and increasing the number of MLAs by one in five of the more urban ridings.

During the next provincial election in May 2009, British Columbians will vote in a referendum on the BC-STV system.

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Vallican Whole School evicted from Vallican Whole community centre

by Art Joyce

The Vallican Whole school, which has been a part of the Vallican Whole community centre since its inception 35 years ago, has been asked to leave the building. The Rural Alternatives Research and Training Society (RARTS) board, who are responsible for managing and maintaining the centre, informed the West Kootenay Education Resources Society (WKERS) board that manages the school of its eviction in a letter dated June 25, 2007, giving it a one-year notice. WKERS board members are unhappy with the decision.

RARTS spokespersons Joanne Ellis and Moe Lyons say the basis for the decision was that the school was preventing them from fulfilling the society's mandate to provide rural education services to Slocan Valley residents. The RARTS incorporation states among its objectives that the centre be "available to any person or persons who wish to use them," a public access provision the document states is "unalterable." The school has grown, says Lyons, not so much in class size as in the amount of "stuff" it has acquired. This makes it both physically and emotionally difficult for teachers and students when the centre is required for other events and the school must be packed up.

"We understand that it's a community centre and we've always tried to accommodate them to make it accessible to the community," says WKERS board member Jane Medlar.

Medlar says her board has been frustrated by RARTS' unwillingness to reconsider their decision or even meet to discuss it. Recently RARTS offered to meet with WKERS but only for assistance with the transition, not to reconsider the decision, which it considers "irrevocable." Medlar says meeting under such terms is unacceptable as it implies an acceptance of the eviction.

"This is a decision that we came to after a long, long discussion, like about two years at least," says Lyons. "We tried to figure out ways to continue our mandate as a community centre and include the school and we came to the conclusion that it just wasn't possible."

Lyons says WKERS acknowledged in a letter shortly after they were informed of the decision that the situation wasn't working for them, either. WKERS board member Chris Berger says the letter was seeking ways to make the situation run more smoothly, not of accepting eviction as the solution to the problem.

RARTS board member Joanne Ellis says that with the school's presence, access to the centre for use by the community is limited to one day per month for the 10 months school is in session, and three months during the summer.

"Since I've been involved all we've done is work on the building. We have a mandate we'd like to honour. We want to create our own rural training programs out of the centre. We own a building but we have no access to it."

There is also the issue of replacing the $1,200 per month rent paid by the school. When asked if RARTS has other clients already signed on, Ellis says no. However, she says she has already had individuals say things like, "Great, I can teach music there again." She believes a great need exists for rural training programs and foresees no difficulty filling the space.

Berger, who is also a member of RARTS, says it's not the school that's preventing them from holding more community events, and questions the wisdom of evicting a paying tenant with no contingency plan. She says the centre sits mostly empty during the summer months when school is out. Berger would like to see some credit given the school for hundreds of hours of volunteerism, fundraising, and investment they have put into the centre.

"We put in lots of in-kind contributions, like the playground, which was $25,000, the pavilion was $15,000, the basement was $30,000, not to mention we look after the snowplowing and parents cut and supply all the wood."

Lyons says RARTS has kept extremely good records and can make a good case for its being the primary caretaker of the building, though she acknowledges the school's contributions. She says the loss of rental income from the school argues for how important a decision this is to RARTS. Ellis says she has heard only overwhelming support for the board's decision.

"Nobody in their right mind would give up guaranteed revenue unless there was a really good reason," Lyons adds. "We don't want to be cast as the villains of the piece. We love this building – it's so beautiful, and we love the community. We want this centre to be everything it can be, and we're passionate about it."

It appears that WKERS board members and parents of students are equally passionate about the school remaining in the centre.

"We've put everything into that building, not thinking about building our equity somewhere else," says Berger. "My son is still there, and teachers at WE Graham say how impressed they are with kids from the Vallican Whole School. The parents all would really love to stay there. We just want to talk to them (RARTS) and we haven't been able to do that."

Slocan Valley south survey results reflect residents' planning concerns

by Art Joyce

The Area H South Advisory Planning Committee (APC) has released the results of over 700 surveys that were mailed to Electoral Area H South residents by the RDCK in November 2007. Area H South ranges from rural Slocan City south to South Slocan.

The survey was meant to gauge public opinion about the area's resources and quality of life, such as the protection of farm land and water quality, as well as where commercial and industrial uses should be located. The survey finished with the question of whether residents support the development of an Official Community Plan (OCP) and land use planning in Area H South.

Results show that 50% of those who responded were in favour of the development of an OCP, 28% would like more information, and 20% were not in favour of an OCP. A petition was presented to the RDCK board on December 8 by Peter Ferguson of the Slocan Valley Concerned Citizens Forum, asking that a referendum be held "to determine if the majority choose to have their land planned and zoned by the RDCK..." The petition included 1,581 signatures with 1,069 Area H South electors (68%), and the remaining names either disqualified or not verified as residents. Almost half of Area H South electors signed the petition.

Contrary to the wording in the petition, RDCK is not currently establishing OCP policy or zoning regulations, but is in the process of gauging public opinion about the OCP process through surveys and public consultations. These are hosted by APCs made up of volunteers. The Area H South APC will address the need for more information through an upcoming newsletter and a public meeting.

The survey results paint an interesting picture of the south valley. Unlike the north valley, 88% of respondents indicated they are full-time residents, with 3% part-time and 9% whose primary residence is elsewhere. Residents' stability was high, with 63% residing in the south valley for 10 years or more, 11% for 5-10 years, 9% for 3-5 years, 12% for 1-2 years, and 5% for one year. A majority are property owners, at 93%, with 5% renting.

Agricultural issues rated high on the list of concerns, with 82% rating as 'important' or 'very important' protection of agricultural lands from residential or commercial development. A further 80% would like to see agricultural activities strengthened.

Water concerns are equally important, with 80% saying they 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that the RDCK should take steps to manage the increasing recreational use of Slocan River, with about the same percentage agreeing to riparian protection zones to ensure water quality.

As to the RDCK regulating the location and development of industrial and commercial operations, 75% of survey respondents said they agreed. When asked what areas they see as ideal locations for commercial development, 39% chose Playmor Junction, 20% said 'population centres,' 17% said 'adjacent to the Village of Slocan,' 16% at Slocan Park, 15% at Crescent Valley, 13% at Winlaw, 5% at Passmore, while 9% responded 'nowhere' and 14% said 'anywhere.'

The need for affordable housing was rated as 'very important' or 'important' by 61%, with 18% calling it 'slightly important' and 18% 'not important'. Seniors housing (independent living) was rated by 34% as needing to be promoted, while 27% said assisted living for seniors, 18% said small-scale townhouses for families, 18% said small-scale manufactured home parks, and 3% said secondary suites or small detached dwellings.

Of those asked whether the RDCK should support more family services such as childcare and/or a family centre, 71% said they 'agree' or 'strongly agree', while 18% disagreed.

Although 54% felt that transit services were 'not necessary' and 46% felt current service is good, when asked what the main transportation system improvement should be, 57% said 'more frequency of buses', 6% said 'more bus stops' and 37% said 'other'.

Other areas of high concern in the survey include maintaining the rural landscape through the regulation of lot sizes, and concentration of higher density housing in designated areas.

Correction:

In our December 5 edition, we published a letter from Donna Campbell that we entiled "Referendum needed on cell phones." It should have been entitled "Cellphones?? / Hazard."

We apologize for any confusion created by this error.

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SPP Forum hosted by NDP notes drastic drop in income levels since NAFTA

by Art Joyce

The Prestige Inn Lakeside in Nelson was packed to standing room only January 18 with nearly 400 people eager to learn about the SPP (Security and Prosperity Partnership). NDP Trade Critic Peter Julian explained the SPP, a trilateral agreement between Canada, the US and Mexico he says will bring prosperity and security only to the corporate elite, not ordinary working Canadians.

The Nelson forum was the 24th stop on a national tour by Julian to alert the public to the impact of the agreement on Canada's ability to set its own standards in over 300 policy issues. Other members of the forum panel were Nelson City Councillor Gord McAdams, President of West Kootenay Labour Congress Al Graham, co-op radio host and food security activist Jon Steinman, and peace activists Laura Savinkoff and Bud Godderis.

The SPP aims to 'harmonize' Canadian policy with the US in areas of energy, food and health standards, security, foreign affairs, military, immigration and environmental protection, among others. In many cases this will mean lowering standards and allowing substances dangerous to the food supply such as bovine growth hormone that are allowed in the US. The Canadian Council of Corporate Executives has been the prime movers of the agreement, and are among the select few admitted to the secret negotiations. Most MPs have not been briefed as to the details of the agreement. Julian said the NDP have had to file numerous requests for information with the Canadian government and showed the audience a number of SPP documents that have been released but were mostly blacked out.

Julian said that as a rookie MP he recalled sitting in on early committees discussing NAFTA and the same rationale is being used to justify SPP: an increase in free trade will bring "unprecedented prosperity" to Canadians. Julian demanded proof. After an 18-month "battle" with Statistics Canada for data on earnings since NAFTA was instituted in 1989, figures were finally released last fall.

"Sixty-six percent of Canadians have seen their real income drop," said Julian. "For those in the poorest class, it's been catastrophic. It's no secret why there are poor Canadians sleeping in the streets and parks in this country."

The wealthiest 20% of earners now earn half of all income in Canada and have seen their income rise an unprecedented 20% since NAFTA. Other families haven't done so well. For the upper middle class ($40,000-$60,000), real income since 1989 has fallen: they are working 52 weeks per year and being paid for 51. The lower middle class ($20,000-$40,000) has seen an even more severe income drop, losing an average two weeks per year of income. Those in the poorest class, earning $20,000 or less, have lost six weeks of income per year. In the US, economists have said actual earning power is the lowest it has been since 1928, with Canada not far behind. The majority of jobs created since free trade are temporary and part-time, with no benefits, no pension, no job security and a 37% increase in personal debt levels.

Julian then explained to the audience the top reasons for Canadians to reject the SPP as follows. It is anti-democratic by nature. Lowering standards on pesticides and other harmful industrial chemicals will mean an increased incidence of disease and stress on the healthcare system. SPP security provisions will mean an erosion of civil rights, including 'no fly' lists and detainment without charge or legal counsel. Our military will gradually come under US command. Foreign workers could be brought in as temporary labourers, undermining Canadian wages and labour standards. Bulk water exports are a real possibility under SPP. Once these start, Julian said, the tap can't be shut off due to the Chapter 11 clause of NAFTA, which allows corporations to sue for compensation. Canada could be required to ship 60% of its oil and natural gas production to the US even during a domestic shortage.

"The SPP is NAFTA on steroids. What the SPP does is turn us irretrievably down the road of deep integration with the US," Julian told his audience. "We're not talking about a negotiation of equals, we're talking about a sellout of unprecedented proportions."

Julian noted that the NDP have so far been the only party to oppose the SPP and call for a full parliamentary debate and vote on the agreement. Although this has not happened yet, the NDP were successful in getting the first parliamentary hearings on SPP during April and May 2007.

During a question period following the panel presentation, someone asked what the exact mechanism for stopping the SPP would be. Alex Atamanenko urged voters to sign the petition against adoption of the SPP. "Imagine the effect if each of 308 Members of Parliament were to receive a petition with 200 names on it." Julian said a referendum would be the first choice but that Harper's government was unlikely to allow this. He pointed out that the SPP agenda was first adopted by Paul Martin's Liberals and "aggressively advanced" by the Harper Conservatives. "We want the next election to be a referendum on the SPP," said Julian. "We need a parliament where the majority will stand up and say no to the SPP."

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BCGEU calling on government to enforce highways maintenance contracts

by Art Joyce

If you've been feeling like highways maintenance isn't what it used to be, you're not alone. The BC Government Employees Union (BCGEU) has just issued a draft resolution to all municipal councils in the province calling for "enhanced monitoring and audits of work performance." The BCGEU has also produced a 7-minute video on highways maintenance guidelines contractors are required to fulfill and a citizen's checklist.

Contractors are required to abide by a 223-page maintenance manual issued by Ministry of Transportation. There are 117 staff across BC whose job is to monitor and assess highways contractors in 28 service areas. The BCGEU, which represents 2,500 highways workers, is accusing the government of introducing a "self-regulatory model by contracted service providers."

According to ministry guidelines, in the winter, contractors must remove slush and broken compact snow within two hours of a snowfall measuring four centimetres or more, with complete removal of loose snow and slush within two days. Contractors are required to lay sand and ice-removing chemicals in advance when weather reports call for major snowfall. Steep hills, corners and mountain passes are to be given priority. During the summer, potholes on major highways must be repaired within 48 hours, or within 14 days on less travelled roads. To view the checklist, go to www.bcgeu.bc.ca/highways.

The ministry uses a proportional system of assessing highways contractors, with 50% of the ranking from the local ministry staff's ongoing monitoring and review, 30% from a regional assessment conducted by ministry staff outside the area, and 20% from local stakeholder groups. These groups typically include representatives of local government, trucking companies, RCMP and others with a strong interest in highway maintenance.

New Denver Mayor and RDCK Chair Gary Wright met with the Assistant Deputy Minister of Transportation at the UBCM convention last September to express Village concerns. Members of local Village governments and the regional district were invited to the meeting. Top of the list was the Shelter Bay ferry service, with a request for more runs or extended hours to cope with the increased traffic. Also topping the list was having someone from local government appointed to the stakeholder committee.

Mayor Wright is satisfied so far with the Province's response, which will include installing electronic billboards alerting drivers to their expected waiting times at Revelstoke and Shelter Bay. According to Nakusp ministry spokesperson Bruce Lintott, there will also be cameras installed at the ferry landing to help crew increase loading efficiency. Wright was appointed to the stakeholder committee, which meets with the ministry twice a year for input into contractor assessments, in addition to the ministry's internal reviews. Residents are encouraged to report concerns and complaints both to the Village and the local contractor's (YRB) office.

New Denver council received the BCGEU package for review while Silverton council adopted the resolution unanimously. Wright noted that the BCGEU typically steps up its publicity in advance of contract negotiations for its members.

The road and bridge maintenance budgets in recent years have been: $316.7 million for 2005/06, $328.2 million for 2006/07, and $342.3 million for 2007/08. The value of the most recent contract for the Central Kootenay district (which includes the Slocan Valley and Arrow Lakes) signed in 2004 was $16,167,159. The previous contract value was $17,585,435. Contracts are signed for a 10-year term.

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Deadline for applications is 4:00 PM PST February 8, 2008.

Interested applicants should forward a detailed resume to:
Debra Stewart, Human Resources Coordinator, Suite 300, 445 13th Avenue, Castlegar, BC, V1N 1G1 or dstewart@cbt.org.

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Candidates will possess experience in Community Youth Development, working with youth, and have a broad knowledge of the Canadian portion of the Columbia Basin.

Closing date for submissions is 3:00 p.m. PST on February 15, 2008.

Inquiries may be directed to:

Megan Catalano
Columbia Basin Trust
Suite 300, 445-13th Avenue
Castlegar, BC V1N 1G1
Phone: 1-800-505-8998
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Central Kootenay Regional District

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The Regional District of Central Kootenay is now accepting proposals for funding consideration from the Community Initiatives & Affected Areas programs sponsored by the Columbia Basin Trust. Funding for 2008 is to be used for new initiatives or the enhancement of existing programs and is open to all non-profit/not-for-profit community groups.

Application forms are available at the Regional District of Central Kootenay main office, at all member municipal offices, or can be downloaded from our website at www.rdck.bc.ca/corporate/grants/cbt.html.

Deadline for submissions is 4:30 p.m. PST on March 19, 2008.

Completed Applications must be submitted to:

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For more information, please contact Trish Gerald:
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Voices from the Valleys

Open letter to Richard Caniell

I must say that I agree wholeheartedly with much of what you write and the sentiments you express in your long letters to the *Valley Voice*. I cannot, however, abide by your math skills. In the last issue of the *Voice you* claimed that a 53% increase in the value of a property listed at $250,000 would come to $500,000. This is a big mathematical error. The correct value after a 53% increase in a $250,000 property would be much closer to $382,500, which is significantly less than the half million you came up with. Your error could mislead people. Please check your figures before releasing them to the public.

Other than that, keep up the good work.

Andrew Rhodes
New Denver

Just don't go there

We are two Kootenay residents who thought it important to share with our community our experience of attempting to go on vacation via the United States.

We went to the Nelway crossing, and of course were not attempting to smuggle anything or cause any kind of trouble. They searched through all of our belongings. They asked if we had ever been denied access into the US at any time. My partner had, and explained it was because he was caught with marijuana at the tender age of 16. Back then, he was instructed to go back to Nelson to get documentation from the courthouse proving that he was a minor when this past 'incident' occurred. He did that and they let him through. Then they questioned me. I admitted to smoking marijuana sometime in my past, because I simply don't believe in lying, even to a red-faced border guard, and explained that it was for medical reasons because I have a crippling arthritic disease which causes pain and inflammation all over my body.

They proceeded to fingerprint both of us twice, take multiple pictures from a web cam and what felt like mug shots with a polaroid. They made us sit in a cold building for 3 1/2 hours. The person in charge made several phone calls inquiring how to do the paper work and use the computer program.

There are now two files an inch thick for Homeland Security on us, and we have no criminal histories. We both feel like we were treated like criminals, just short of being handcuffed, and we knew that if we made one peep, that the situation could have gotten much worse. In the end, we were charged with 'habitual smoking' and they told my partner he would have to appear before an immigration judge somewhere in Washington in order to be let back into their country. And me...this border officer told me to wait at least two years before attempting to apply for a pardon, which I would pay thousands of dollars for, and I asked "Why two years?" and he said that they needed to "evaluate" my behavior before I would be considered for re-entry.

So the point here is not to encourage anyone to lie. We just want to warn people about how we were treated so that our communities can make informed decisions about where to travel, or safely travel through, and encourage folks to attend the SPP meetings and learn as much as we can about our government's plans for the future of our own country. I hope and pray that someday our world will be in Peace and people won't be forced into these dismal roles of oppression.

We're treating this experience as a blessing and a wake-up call.

Two Peaceful Warriors

Open letter to Kaslo mayor and council

No, we do not need a bylaw enforcement officer in this community. We do not need to have a big city mentality rule in a small community. This is not Vancouver, Calgary or, dare I say it, Toronto.

By the way, when did having a computer become a condition of "citizenship" in Kaslo? I found out about your electronic poll by accident. More transparency, please. The use of electronic polls to inform decisions does not cover the whole community.

Margaret Watson
Kaslo

Moderate Hazard?

Regarding the recent report that geostability mapping for terrain instability in the Perry Ridge area found "no significant hazards" and that "some areas of high hazard were found but these were adjacent to nearby 'low hazard' sectors and thus averaged out to have only a 'moderate' hazard."

I have seen other reports in which this averaging-out formula is applied to hazardous terrain and I can see no justification for averaging out, except to supply pseudo-scientific approval for logging operations.

Too harsh a judgement? Maybe. But let's see how the averaging-out formula would work in a real life situation. Johnny Jones is picking huckleberries in a low hazard area. Mary Brown is picking huckleberries in a high hazard area, in which she is killed in a landslide.

But wait, she's not really dead. When you average her death with Johnny's life, you can see right away that this averages out to a 50% mortality rate. Mary is only half-dead and Johnny is half alive.

Jane Lynch
Shutty Bench

Ask Richard?

Subsequent to reading Hal Wright's dilemma on the focus of finding a fresh start in a new municipality and then reading one more of Richard Caniell's letters, I have got to state it is my belief that Hal Wright should bend before Richard Caniell's unquestionable knowledge about all things and persuade him to find a new township in support of him and his family. One that needs a transit system, please.

I read the *Valley Voice* the largest part of the time and Richard Caniell's letters seem to be filled with a great quantity of information on all and everything, so it is with certainty in my view that he (Richard) could without doubt find Mr. Wright and his family unit and all his worldly belongings a new habitation.

I also think that Jan and Dan should give Mr. Caniell a feature column in each paper offering expert advice on the entire plight of our planet and its tribulations.

This is my expert opinion.

Wanda Palmer
New Denver

Sandon winters unsettle the mind

Winters are long and dark in Sandon and they unsettle the mind. The newest quirk is Mr. Wright's scheme (successor to the under-appreciated outdoor derelict bus display) is to take 'his' train, 'his' power plant, 'his' city hall and his family and move to a more welcoming clime. He is a bit premature in that there are legal issues he has re-opened which as yet are unsettled.

While I cannot speak to the whole 35 years of Mr. Wright's so-called restoration work, I know we took over a museum without water or fire protection and unfinished on the inside. I have observed over the last 12 years of my Sandon Historical Society membership that Mr. Wright has restored bugger all. The city hall has remained partly painted baby bottom pink, the power plant certainly needs paint, the site in areas looks like an industrial dump and in a petty fit of pique he has made it a point to move a large tank against the rear museum entrance, making it unusable.

Of course he sees a regional park as a threat. There will be new stability and creative energies to establish a first class recreation/heritage site. Sandon will become what it always had the capacity to become. Mr. Wright's time has come and gone like most of Sandon's citizens. Whether he stays or not, he will just be a memory and his plaintive complaints will only be blowing in the wind.

Lorna Obermayr
New Denver

Disturbed by the Kaslo mayor acting alone on council business

During the January 22/08 council meeting, Councillors Leathwood, Jones, Hewat and Vass all voiced their objections to the mayor's recent action of responding to an email that was addressed to "Mayor & Council." A member of the public had sent the letter to the mayor's private email address.

Council members stated they were only made aware "after the fact" of what the content of the public query had been, as well as the mayor's response. Mayor Holland stated he was expressing his personal view but signed his response "Mayor of Kaslo." A further discussion will be taking place in council chambers on this matter.

If a resident forwards correspondence to an elected official, addressed to and intended for the "Mayor & Council," the item should be forwarded to all council members, or the resident should be advised to send it to the Village of Kaslo.

Was Mayor Holland's response to the public query the official council position on the issue? Why was the original letter from the resident and the mayor's response withheld from council when it was signed "Mayor Holland?"

When Pete Vass expressed his personal view as a private citizen while he attended a public event that included other council members, he was banned from voting at committee meetings and attending public functions on behalf of council.

Is there not a double standard here?

Larry Braley
Kaslo

Why FSA testing?

One wonders about the real motive for Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) tests in BC schools, given that they are used by that ultra-conservative think-tank, the Fraser Institute, to rank schools and publicize that ranking in newspapers. Consider these words from Professor George Lakoff about an American parallel:

"Once the testing frame applies not just to students but also to *schools*, then schools can, metaphorically, fail – and be punished for failing by having their allowance cut. Less funding in turn makes it harder for the schools to improve, which leads to a cycle of failure and ultimately elimination for many public schools. What replaces the public school system is…private schools. The wealthy would have good schools – paid for in part by what used to be tax payments for public schools. The poor would not have the money for good schools. We would wind up with a two-tier school system, a good one for the 'deserving rich' and a bad one for the 'undeserving poor.' (From his book *Don't Think of an Elephant!*)

We know the Socred-retread 'Liberal' government worships at the altar of privatization, as does the Fraser Institute. We know the right wing in the States has deliberately set up think-tanks to get Republicans into office and conservative ideology into popular consciousness, and that they've been so successful at doing so that "eighty percent of the talking heads on television are from the conservative think-tanks," according to Lakoff. And we know that right-wing think-tanks and foundations in Canada are following the U.S. model (see "The Man Behind Stephen Harper" in *Walrus* magazine, October 2004, http://www.walrusmagazine.com/articles/the-man-behind-stephen-harper-tom-flanagan/).

The Harper government gets political advice from the Calgary School, professors from the University of Calgary who take their cues directly from the Republican party (*Walrus* magazine, October 2004). The Calgary School's founder is Professor Tom Flanagan, who, according to the *Globe and Mail*, will lead the Harper campaign strategy in the next election. He is one of two professors from the Calgary School who are affiliated with the Fraser Institute's Calgary office.

Could it be that the Fraser Institute and their ilk pushed the government to adopt FSA testing, and that this was part of a much larger agenda? It could be the thin edge of the wedge. We should be aware that in the American model on which the Fraser Institute and the Calgary School base their strategy, the plan for many decades has been to orchestrate a conservative political takeover by manipulating every aspect of public life, from education to environment to health care and further. It's very well thought out, and we should be looking for the signs.

Anne Champagne
New Denver

LETTERS POLICY

The Valley Voice welcomes letters to the editor from our readers. Please mark your letter "LETTER TO THE EDITOR." Include your address and daytime phone number.

Letters should be no longer than 500 words. Letters may be edited. Please email your letter if possible.

We will not knowingly publish any letter which is defamatory or libelous. We will not publish anonymous letters, nor may you use a pseudonym, except in extraordinary circumstances.

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Voices from the Valleys

Response to Erika Bird

The large notice about the Kaslo Community Forest posted by Erika Bird in the last *Valley Voice* begs a response. I speak here for myself, not for the KDCFS board.

No one should be surprised that the board has not publicized details of contract negotiations with the new KDCFS Woodlands Management Team and potential litigation initiated by Barry Rempel. Employment and legal matters must be kept in camera until they are resolved.

Erika also confuses simple disagreement between board members with abusive behaviour. Disagreement and debate is normal and necessary in any organization with big responsibilities. However, in 2004 I became involved with KDCFS issues because I was shocked by the abusive tone of letters and print advertisements posted by individuals who later became board members. Two years of controversy and division in the community followed, marked by disregard for the wishes and concerns of the public, and failures of public meetings – including an AGM. On the board itself, some directors abused others verbally and in writing.

When I was elected to the Board 16 months ago, I was determined to help restore civility and respect. By the time Barry Rempel departed three months later, that goal was achieved. There has been disagreement – often heated – but once a decision has been made, we move on. The board understands that its job is to represent the varied interests of the entire community in administering an extremely valuable asset that also happens to be our backyard.

Any volunteer board of directors that has such an important and large job will at times fall behind in duties that seem less urgent. Communication with the community has been delayed and managing the KDCFS website has been a headache. However, the website is presently under construction by a recently engaged local web designer, and outreach initiatives like the Residents' Advisory Committee are underway. I invite everyone who wants to see the Community Forest managed well to let the Board know your concerns and wishes, and to consider being nominated for director prior to the upcoming April AGM.

Donald Scarlett
Kaslo

Leave New Denver alone, Telus

Let me give warning of a Telus trick. I contacted the chairperson of the Yale West Business Association, Carolyn Shaw, in Chilliwack who told me about their protest by residents, business owners and employees against the installation of a cell tower in their area. While the City Council considered the petition from a strong majority of people in the district, Telus said nothing – it postponed and postponed again its installation. Many thought they had succeeded in fending off the tower, but Telus was just waiting. It only took seven months for the energy of resistance to die down and then Telus suddenly came in and erected the tower before the protesters could re-group.

Since then, demonstrations using electro-smog meters have shown city residents how far the cell-phone pulsations travel. The chairperson could show, through the use of the meter, cell-phone electromagnetic radiation at one kilometre from the tower, with its radiation penetrating thick walls.

The concern about a one-km radiation span greatly affects Centennial Park and even the school. On this subject, there are important things I've learned. Over 100 scientists and researchers from the Harvard and Boston University Schools of Public Health have called cell towers "a radiation hazard." An enlarging recognition of hazards to children has led the Vancouver School board to bar any installation within 305 metres of a school.

I am very concerned not only for the health of all of us but particularly for our children, whose developing brain and body systems are especially vulnerable. What Telus did in Chilliwack is likely the very plan Telus has for New Denver – postponements (three times now) in the face of substantial resistance with the intent to sweep in and put up the tower in the spring or later in the year. On Vancouver Island, after much protest, the cell-phone company they were fighting came in at night. I feel pretty outraged by these sneaky, bullying tactics and call on Telus to rest on their billions in profits and leave us alone!

Carolyn Parker
New Denver

Doggy doo in Kaslo

I wasn't going to wade into the doggy controversy but after being attacked two out of the last three days by unleashed dogs, here goes.

Every day, rain or shine, I go for either a bike ride or a walk (it clears my head and keeps me beautiful). For years I've walked around Kaslo, always on public streets or recognized trails. Until recent years, I was never obstructed or disturbed on my walks.

In recent times this has changed – people with dogs!

I can't tell you how many times I've been barked at, growled at, charged and tracked by undisciplined loose dogs. Heck, I was even bit once in the heel. In every case I've been either on a public road or marked public trail, minding my own business, doing what I have every right to do.

Sometimes I've been hassled by dogs with their owners in tow. Every time I've engaged these owners I've been told their dog is friendly – even the one that bit me! Inevitably, in these situations, the owner tries to put the blame on me. I'm told that I'm either "afraid" of the dog, or I am in some way putting out bad "vibes" the dog is picking up, or I am "distrustful." For some odd reason the dog, who is ill-trained, and the owner, who is irresponsible and does not have control of its pet, are never at fault.

Fact is: it doesn't matter if I'm the orneriest, cussiest, ugliest, dog-hatingest SOB in town. As long as I'm minding my own business and am not trespassing on anyone's private property, I have every right to walk on streets and trails without being hassled, by people or their dogs.

Dogs can be trained not to harass, attack, charge or unnecessarily bark at people. Owners can be trained to take responsibility for their dogs. I'm certainly not giving up my walks.

Alas, here in Kaslo, there are a lot of dog owners who just don't get it. Perhaps the solution is to start throwing owners in the dog pound with their errant dogs, or maybe make the fines so prohibitive that owners finally start taking responsibility.

These are your dogs, not mine. They are your responsibility, not mine.

By the way, on my walks over the years, I've seen dozens of bears. No bear has ever barked at me, charged, growled, harassed or in any way impeded my walks. Apparently the bears are well trained. Now maybe some real attention can be paid to the dogs!

Will Webster
Kaslo

MLA appeals for public support of abattoir

Some years ago, before the last election, the provincial government passed a law that said after September of 2007 it would be illegal for a citizen to butcher an animal and sell the meat to their neighbours. Very few people knew about this law. I learned about the law after I became an MLA when a feed store owner expressed her fear that people would stop raising cows and chickens and pigs and, naturally, stop buying feed. Naively I told her that I doubted that any government would do something so short-sighted and offered to look into her concern.

Unfortunately I learned that my local feed seller was correct. The law existed and the date was fast approaching when it would be a criminal act to engage in 'farm gate sales' of meat.

For two years, Opposition members of the Legislature and various farm groups and consumer groups and food security groups tried to get the law changed. The Liberal government delayed the implementation of the law and offered some seed money to people who wanted to build a certified kill plant, called an abattoir, but refused to withdraw the legislation.

I attended many public meetings from Vancouver Island to the Cariboo to Nelson with farmers concerned about going broke once their ability to sell meat was made illegal.

Two years ago I discussed this issue with the Regional District of Central Kootenay and asked if any municipalities or rural areas were interested in trying to promote a certified abattoir in their area. The directors from Slocan City and the Slocan Valley expressed interest in such a plan and discussions began leading to an application to build a plant near Slocan City to serve an area (roughly) from Nakusp to Trail.

A co-operative has formed to manage the project and a business plan has been written and suitable land is being negotiated with various ministries. Persons interested (as consumers or producers or ancillary businesses) in seeing a certified abattoir built in the West Kootenays can contact Jeremy Lack by email (preferred) svac@shaw.ca or phone 250-399-4809 for more information or membership.

As a politician, I still think it is wrong-headed public policy to outlaw farm gate sales. As your MLA I am now convinced that I cannot change the provincial government's mind on this issue and that our best way to sustain a local food supply is to work together to build a certified plant. I am supportive of the co-op's plans and I will work to assist them to achieve their vision.

There is a lot riding on our ability to solve the local meat production problem. If we fail, my local feed seller will go broke as her customers go broke. As farmers lose their ability to make income they will abandon their land to subdivisions and recreational sales and the Agricultural Land Reserve will become meaningless as "food land."

The directors of the co-op trying to build a certified plant cannot do it on their own. They need support and members to have any chance of success. I hope all citizens interested in a safe, local food supply will take an interest in this project.

Corky Evans, MLA
Nelson-Creston

Gullible's Travels: Being the adventures of Gomer Gullible, an honest and guileless soul in Kaslo & Area D

This tale, related to me by GG, may take several letters to complete due to space constraints in this paper and the subject matter covering several events and topics that are seemingly unrelated but have a common thread throughout. This part of the tale begins with the last issue of the VV wherein it was reported that the CCG recommends hiring a bylaw enforcement officer for the Village of Kaslo. Just a tiny flea of a blurb, hardly worth scratching, except it left the impression, on our hero, that some significant group of people make up the CCG and this multitude wanted a bylaw enforcement officer.

Now, Gomer read this and it seems he had been vaguely interested in the CCG for some time because he suspected them of minding his business. He had seen their ad, on cable 10, inviting people to meetings but they didn't say where the meetings were. The ad also said the CCG is thought of as a 'think tank,' but they didn't say who thought of it that way and Gomer Gullible was always a little skittish about things that involved thinking.

Anyway, phoning the Village office revealed which councillor represented the Village on the CCG, so, plucking up his courage, Gomer gave him a call. As it turns out, the CCG was only seven people – seven. A conversation ensued (sometimes heated on Gomer's part) and then the councillor revealed that a 'poll' indicated a majority of support for the hiring of an 'enforcement officer.' "What poll?" Gomer asked. "Why, the 'poll' on the Village website," came the reply. Gomer allowed he'd never heard of it and asked, "how many people voted?" "About 19" came the reply. "Hmmm," Gomer scratched his head, "not exactly a huge turnout." "Well" the councillor replied, "that's the trouble with Kaslo, people just won't get involved."

Next Gomer struck up an email dialogue with another councillor but must have ticked him off too because, after a while, he said "get it straight, this is the part where you vote, I voted a long time ago." Stupidly, Gomer asked "where can I vote, is there going to be a referendum?" Then came the answer, "No, you can vote on the Village website." "Thanks," said Gomer.

Arriving at the Village of Kaslo 'official website' (he found he had to wear gumboots due to the depth), sure as cats, there it was, 'the poll' and the question: "Are you in favour of the municipality employing the services of a permanent part-time Bylaw Enforcement Officer, for an annual estimated cost of $35,000?" Yes or No. "Splendid," thought Gomer and, voted NO, and then phoned and emailed a few people who have since voted. Next, because it was such fun, he voted again and again and again probably about 10 times in all!! Later, slowly, like a melting glacier, it dawned on him. "This isn't fair," he thought. "There has been no discussion about this, no information. Most people don't know about the poll and some don't have computers and maybe I wasn't supposed to vote more than once." So he decided to write a letter to the mayor and this is what he wrote. Dear Mr. Mayor, if you're going to have an electronic poll, you should have a disclaimer before the question. Here, let me help with the wording: "This poll is complete bullshit. Use it if you like but since anyone from Kaslo to Timbuktu can vote, as often as they want, it's a complete joke and as mayor and council we should all be ashamed of ourselves and resign for even allowing it on the web-page but we won't because we can say 'oh we didn't know' and you're gullible enough to believe anything. Have a nice day."

Gary Cockrell
Kaslo

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CBT ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM ACCEPTING SMALL AND LARGE GRANT APPLICATIONS

Columbia Basin Trust's (CBT) Environmental Initiatives Program (EIP) is now accepting both small and large grant applications for community-initiated and supported environmental projects in the Columbia Basin. The EIP supports projects that address human impacts on local and regional aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

The Small Grants program involves a shorter application and is designed for non-technical project requests under $5,000. The Large Grants application, which is longer and more technical, is suited for larger projects requesting funds up to $20,000.

For a detailed program description, eligibility criteria, or application guides and forms, visit the CBT website at www.cbt.org or phone 1-800-505-8998.

Completed applications, for both Small and Large grants, must be received no later than March 7, 2008 at 3:30 pm PST/4:30 pm MST.

Support during proposal development is available through The Land Conservancy and Columbia-Kootenay Fisheries Renewal Partnership. Contact the CBT office in Golden for details at 1-800-505-8998 or 250-344-7065, or email golden@cbt.org.

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Village of Slocan holds All-Candidates Meeting for upcoming by-election

by Don Currie

A byelection on February 2 to fill a seat on Slocan Village council is being contested by three Slocan residents. The candidates, Ray Caouette, Hillary Elliot and Jamie Ingram, introduced themselves and appealed for votes at a well attended all candidates meeting on January 17 at the Silvery Slocan Community Hall. The meeting was chaired by Councillor John Gates.

In her opening statement, Hillary Elliot said, "the Village is ready for change and I am ready for that change." Elliot has lived in the Kootenays for 10 years and is now a resident in Slocan where she works part-time as a teacher and writer and is active in seeking funding for community programs. She said she has strong communication skills and is willing to devote the time required to be a councillor. She pledged to familiarize herself with council minutes, procedures and bylaws. Elliot said she was open to new ideas and would canvass the community to become familiar with community concerns.

Former mayor Jamie Ingram, a local construction contractor, said he moved from a small town in Saskatchewan 17 years ago after purchasing the local hotel. He said he was re-entering local politics because he believed there was need for better communication between council and the public. He was concerned about rising water rates and taxes. He said that when he left office in 1999 the Village had $1 million in reserves and this had fallen to $145,000. He claimed that this year the Village will break even or incur a small deficit and felt his past experience on council would be useful in turning that situation around.

Ray Caouette has owned property in the Slocan Valley for 23 years and recently moved to live in Slocan. He said he has watched the town struggling, and was concerned about restoring transparency so that people "can have a bigger role in deciding what is going on." Caouette said he was in favour of more council meetings to deal with a growing volume of Village business, and that council was required under its Procedure bylaw 550 to meet twice monthly where it only meets once a month. He said the Village had a small tax base and should be encouraging small business and construction of new homes.

The first question put by residents to the candidates was their vision of where the town should be in the future. Elliot said her main priority would be to find out where the town wants to go and would be going door to door to find that out. She is for economic viability through diversity, a problem in single industry towns. She said the Wellness Centre should be completed because it was good for the town.

Ingram said in the future the town should draw back from its current level of spending, be more prudent and get a handle on expenditures. He said a vision of the future comes from the people, expressed in an Official Community Plan (OCP), which he believes should go forward.

Ray Caouette predicted that in the next five years the Village will be confronted with losing its industrial tax base and it was important to get ready for that now. He was in favour of policies to encourage more housing construction. He called for an audit to determine actual Village reserves. Expressing concern that council missed out on obtaining a $225,000 grant for water improvements because there was opposition to water meters, he said council must become more active in obtaining grant money.

In response to questions and comments about Slocan Lake and the Slocan River, all candidates recognized the importance of preserving Slocan Lake and the surrounding natural environment. Elliot said she was active on a committee to preserve the health of the lake, but it was not true that her group was opposed to motorboats.

Caouette predicted that if there was a mill closure the town would be confronted with working with Provincial Forestry and Parks for a clean up. He said Slocan has only 2.5% control over lake access and should be proactive in "looking after its own backyard."

Mike Mills, a local contractor, demanded to know the position of candidates on lot sizes. He said more houses in town will bring pressure from the provincial government to install a Village sewer system. All candidates said that due to high costs, they were opposed to the installation of a Village sewage system at this time. Hillary Elliot said she was looking for diversity in the local economy and was not opposed to more lots and more house construction. Jamie Ingram doubted, even if there were a house on every available lot, that it would solve the tax problem. He was opposed to growth in the number of absentee landowners and wouldn't want to see Slocan becoming another Christina Lake. Ray Caouette said more new house construction would be good for the town and would attract people looking for what Slocan had to offer.

Candidates were asked their views on a seniors housing project. Ingram said the proposal should be put to the people and if the town is prepared for the tax increases it could go forward. He was in favour of working with senior governments and the RDCK to get it. He said council had frittered away money on other projects. Hillary Elliot said she was for it, if the town is prepared to support it. Ray Caouette said the Village had to keep up with the times and seniors housing with various levels of support from assisted living to full care was necessary. He predicted that with the numbers of baby boomers coming into retirement, more people would be considering retiring to communities like Slocan and we needed the services.

All candidates expressed support for proposals that made the town more attractive to small business. Elliot said the question was tricky without an OCP in place. She said big industry was not the way to go, but that tourism, small clean industry such as Insight, and infrastructure such as a community centre and seniors housing would contribute to attracting small business. Caouette said there was much the council could do to encourage jobs to come to Slocan without getting into the "business to get business." He said the abattoir was an example and that it couldn't operate as a P3 (Private Public Partnership). He said the Village needed an ambassador to promote the town and let others know about the possibilities. Caouette said Slocan needed a Chamber of Commerce to promote business. Ingram said there were lots of viable businesses and thought the abattoir was a good proposal because it would provide jobs. He said Village council can't be responsible for job creation and that governments were not as efficient as business.

Candidates were asked their views on a proposed ticketing bylaw and the enforcement of local bylaws by a bylaw control officer. Ray Caouette said the Village should pass the ticketing bylaw to give a bylaw enforcement officer "some teeth" to deal with offences against local bylaws such as dogs at large and properties used as dumps. He said if we don't need law enforcement why bother with paying for the RCMP and the police. Caouette said he was opposed to vigilante methods and wanted neighbourhood disputes handled by someone trained to do that job. Hillary Elliot said that if the town has bylaws "we need a bylaw control officer." Ingram said he didn't see a major problem with the way things are and that "good behaviour can't be legislated."

A question was posed about the candidates' views on support to the curling rink and a recreational centre. Elliot said she would support improvements on the curling rink and would be active in getting funding to promote community projects such as a recreational centre and rink. Ingram said he was not now involved but had been for many years on the recreational commission board, including chair, and is a strong supporter of upgrades to the curling rink and a recreational centre. He said the town was confronted with choosing between several major projects – a seniors development, a recreational centre, a skate park – and the Village should pick one and get it done.

Caouette said the curling rink/community centre project was on the horizon and he was surprised to learn how much property and assets the Village owns. He said that if current conflicts between council and administration could be removed the town could get on with getting things done. He said the residents would be surprised at the amount of funding available if council went after it.

Several issues discussed at Slocan public meeting

by Don Currie

Mayor John Van Bynen kicked off a well attended public meeting at the Silvery Slocan Hall on January 24 by addressing remarks made at the all candidates meeting on January 17.

The mayor clarified the statement made by former mayor and byelection candidate Jamie Ingram that Village reserves had dropped from $1 million when he left office to $100,000 today. Mayor Van Bynen said that when Ingram left office in 1999, the Village had $816,000. Out of that, the Village was obligated to spend $514,000 towards the $1,214,000 water plant (government grants covered the rest). The Village also had to fund additional work and install a computer system. When the water plant was finished, the Village had $302,000 in reserves. Expenditures on the gazebo, boat ramp, wellness centre, upgraded municipal shop, sidewalks, and Village equipment and beautification left the Village with $100,000.

The mayor also took issue with the assertion of candidate Ray Caouette that council was required under Procedures Bylaw 550 to have two council meetings a month. He cited a section in the bylaw permitting one meeting a month under certain conditions. A close reading of Section 6(2) of the bylaw clearly states that council shall have two meetings per month but may depart from this rule if there is a statutory holiday or special event warranting the suspension or rescheduling of regular meetings. Van Bynen promised that council would look into it.

Residents aired complaints about water rationing in the summer. Councillor Septav said the water plant was designed to serve 4,000 people and was concerned water was being lost due to leaks in an old delivery system. Works foreman Jerry Simmons said a test was done on the whole town and three leaks were discovered and fixed. He said the problem was overuse by residents in the summer. Ray Caouette wanted to know why council had not received a $225,000 provincial grant that he said was available to upgrade lines, install a UV system with an option to install water meters. Councillor Gates said council was split over water meters and unanimity was required to receive the grant. Lauren Guerin proposed that instead of prescribed hours for watering lawns and gardens, council should institute a rule for water use on alternating sides of the street.

On the abattoir issue, Councillor Gates said that council had dropped the proposal because a door-to-door survey showed three to one in opposition. Mayor Van Bynen told the meeting that Slocan was no longer involved in the project and had handed over the grant money it was holding to the Slocan Valley Abattoir Co-operative (SVAC).

In answer to a question regarding the $40,000 in legal bills run up by council for a report from The Integrity Group: Education and Conciliation Ltd., Mayor Van Bynen said there would be a full accounting of costs incurred. Ray Caouette asked if the budget line for legal fees had been exceeded. Mayor Van Bynen said it was difficult to calculate how much would be spent on legal fees, adding that it would cost more in the long run if money wasn't spent when problems arose. Jamie Ingram said if council was going over budget it was required to amend the budget before writing cheques.

Mabel Bone wanted to know what was being done to restore the Women's Institute Hall. Mayor Van Bynen said council was still waiting for a decision from Heritage BC about a heritage designation for the building. Councillor Septav said Heritage BC was attending a meeting in Nakusp, where the matter would be discussed. Council said that Joyce Johnson was looking after the local heritage committee and was making plans for another meeting with heritage expert Bob Inwood of Nelson.

The mayor said although he was opposed to the idea, council would consider a proposal by Ray Caouette to permit residents to subdivide lots into 45-foot parcels rather than the current requirement of a minimum of two 30-foot lots. Councillor Septav said even if Interior Health approved of septics on 45-foot lots, he was opposed to the idea.

There were several questions on the Wellness Centre and staffing it with a nurse practitioner. Council said it was in touch with UBC and Kelowna and had registered with those programs for a nurse practitioner but nothing had happened. Council said the Wellness Centre renovations were under $100,000. Councillor Septav said that without the expenditures on the Wellness Centre, the Village would not be in a position to attract a health practitioner.

Council has not altered its position on an Overall Community Plan (OCP). The Village will not proceed until after the RDCK has completed its OCP. Crown land grants need to be finalized first.

Responding to questions about the derelict hotel, John Gates, Local Assistant to the Fire Commissioner, has sent an Order to the owner, who had 21 days to respond. After that, council would proceed to board up the premises. Administrator Eunice Ludlow has been in contact with Bill Walkley the Regional Fire Commissioner and the lawyers.

Responding to several questions on budget overruns exceeding $100,000, council explained that cost overruns were due to land purchases and legal costs. The Village is not in debt, has over $100,000 in reserves, has received $96,000 in gas tax funding, and has millions of dollars worth of real estate.

The complete council answer sheet is available at the Village office.

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New Denver council, January 22: Cell phone poll to be held in February

by Leah Main

•The question for a residents' poll regarding Telus cell service will read: "Are you in favour of cell phone transmission installation within New Denver's municipal boundaries?" The poll, for New Denver residents only, will be held February 7 & 8, with the dates to be advertised as soon as possible under the direction of CAO Carol Gordon.

•The Heritage Values Workshop council agreed to sponsor at its last meeting has hit a snag. Heritage Society BC has clarified that their grant will not cover travel and accommodation expenses for the workshop leader. Staff will explore whether a cost-sharing partnership with surrounding municipalities and/or regional district will be possible to offset these costs, and will review the situation at the next meeting.

•Council will look into options for a safety alarm system for the Village office.

•Mayor Wright reported that Columbia Basin Trust has increased the amount of money available through its Community Initiatives funding, and has changed the guidelines on how the funds will be distributed. CBT now requires that recommendations for distribution of this funding be made by a volunteer stakeholder committee, rather than by municipal councils. Council finds this requirement to have some accountability weaknesses, and resolved to request exemption from this requirement.

•Rumi Nakabayashi, attending Lucerne School, will be offered a contract to organize a Local Government Day at the school as a way of assisting her in raising funds to attend the Future World Leaders Summit in Washington, DC March 30 – April 5.

•CAO Carol Gordon is authorized to apply to attend the MATI 5 (Planning) course this year, and Mike Simpson was authorized to attend two courses at the Water Supply Association of BC symposium in mid-February. The courses will give him the credits he is required to get annually to maintain his water system operator certification. Council stated its commitment to supporting ongoing education for staff.

•Council agreed to apply for funding under the Canada Summer Jobs 2008 program for a student position, based on a wage rate of $9.50/hour unless the BC minimum wage is set at a higher rate.

•Council agreed to write another letter asking the Province to do something about the deteriorating condition of the ambulance dispatch centre in Kamloops, which serves the Interior and Northern BC. Council wrote a similar letter several months ago. Another letter will be sent, and will include a query regarding the previous letter.

•Councillor Bunka brought to council's attention a request from the BC Fire Fighters Association and the International Association of Fire Fighters for support in their efforts to get BPDEs, which are dangerous chemical-based flame retardants found in everyday household objects, banned on a federal level. Council agreed to write to the Prime Minister, with copies to caucus and to MP Peter Julian (NDP Critic on International Trade).

•Councillor Greensword reported on the Security and Prosperity Partnership meeting held recently in Nelson. Information discussed there included how initial meetings between government representatives of Canada, the US and Mexico have now grown to include corporations and representatives of the military. The North American Competitive Council has formed, and provides politicians with ongoing direction on security and prosperity issues. However, the deliberations of this body are not open to public scrutiny, and there is a growing body of concern about the effect of this on Canada's ability to establish independent policy. Council will review the materials Greensword brought back, and will discuss the issue at the next meeting.

Silverton council debates updating unsightly premises bylaw

by Art Joyce

•Mayor Everett introduced for discussion the Nuisances and Unsightly Premises bylaw, which has not been updated since 1969. Councillor Provan wondered why the Village was bothering with the bylaw when it couldn't afford to hire a bylaw enforcement officer. Village administrative staff would be required to enforce it. Councillor Wiseman felt the definition of "accumulation of building material" was too vague and open to interpretation. "At what point does it become rubbish? How do you determine the time frame?" Councillor Laktin pointed out that some residents stockpile building materials for hobbies. There was some discussion of whether the bylaw needed to stipulate that building materials be neatly stacked and under cover. Councillor Provan said, "It does open up a can of worms, because there's all that material stacked by the arena that's been there for three years." Councillor Bell doesn't want dirt, gravel and mulch included as 'rubbish' because of its value for peoples' gardens and yards. Councillor Laktin raised the issue of fire hazard from accumulated materials during the summer months. Councillor Wiseman noted that if the Village makes rubbish a fire hazard issue it becomes the jurisdiction of the Fire Commissioner and Fire Chief, which provides greater enforcement capacity. Councillor Provan said she would support the bylaw in that case.

During public and press time, resident Ty Capelle said, "This is a village of a couple hundred people, why do we want to burden ourselves with so many laws? I would like to see the village live by example, not by law. If someone needs help, the village could offer to help them clean up." Mayor Everett said every spring the Village sends out letters to residents asking for their compliance, and that there are already several Village-sponsored cleanup events: a spring cleanup, an Arbor Day in the fall, and electronics recycling. Councillor Wiseman said the Village isn't interested in threatening residents but that having a bylaw in place gave them a last resort for enforcement. "Most people do respond if you just send them a letter."

•Council unanimously passed a draft resolution on highways maintenance contract enforcement submitted to municipalities across BC by BCGEU. The resolution calls for the Ministry of Transportation to conduct "enhanced monitoring and audits of work performance of contractors," and report its findings semi-annually to the community.

•The mayor attended a Fire Department meeting with New Denver. Recommendations included a small increase in the honorarium paid to the Fire Chief, and increasing reserves next year for equipment replacement. New Denver council would like to work with the Village to coordinate a more effective way to deploy equipment located in Silverton, combine equipment use and share costs. Councillor Provan asked whether Silverton owned the building being used for the fire department and who pays its expenses. Mayor Everett said under the terms of its contract, the fire department is responsible for maintenance and operating costs. The annual budget for the department is about $63,000. Silverton owns the building but New Denver pays the expenses. Fire hall insurance is covered by Silverton.

•Councillor Wiseman reported that according to contractor Laurie Hicks, the start date for hall renovations will be between March 1-15.

•Mayor Everett reported that the public works truck has been repaired by Nelson Ford under warranty, with an estimated $22,000 worth of work done. The Village will only be required to pay towing charges and about $100 in service fees.

•The July 1st Committee request for a Village grant to offset the costs of its fireworks display was approved in the amount of $500.

•At the suggestion of Councillor Wiseman, a motion was passed that Palmer Computer Services be asked to service and upgrade the office computers to a limit of $300.

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VILLAGE OF NEW DENVER
PUBLIC NOTICE
CELL PHONE SERVICE POLL

Residents and **Property Owners** in the Village of New Denver are requested to take notice that an informal poll will take place in the Village of New Denver on Thursday, February 7, 2008 and Friday, February 8, 2008, at the New Denver Municipal Office located at 115 Slocan Avenue, New Denver, BC, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The poll is open only to residents and property owners within the municipal boundaries. The Council of the Village of New Denver will honour the results of the poll, but residents are advised that the poll is not binding on the part of Telus. The question for the poll is:

"Are you in favour of cellphone transmission installation within New Denver's municipal boundaries".

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Habondia invites input at kitchen table meetings

submitted

Women around the West Kootenays have been gathering around kitchen tables to talk about housing, loans, and investments.

"It was fun," says Susan VanRooy who hosted a kitchen table meeting in Argenta. "All I did was set a date, call up some friends, and decide what to serve. The Circle of Habondia Lending Society provided some open-ended questions, and the conversation got lively and interesting."

"The Circle of Habondia Lending Society is ready to grow as an organization. We have a ten year track record providing micro-loans to local women. We really want to know how women from all walks of life feel, see, and hear their own reality and the potential we have to make a difference," says Laverne Booth, co-ordinator of the kitchen table process.

Women who would like to attend a kitchen table meeting in the next couple of weeks are asked to call Community and Cooperative Development Services at 250-226-7879 or 227-9552. There will be a report back to the community in early March.

Bob Dubreuil of New Denver's Silvery Slocan Historical Society accepts $1,500 in CBT funding from Lynda Lafleur for the design, fabrication and installation of interpretive signage describing the restoration of the *Lancet* at the museum.

CBT Community Liaison Lynda Lafleur (right) stopped off at the Hidden Garden Gallery January 22 to present a cheque for $1900 from the CBT Sponsorship Program to gallery directors Terri Freeman (middle) and Martha Nichol (left). The gallery accepted the cheque on behalf of several New Denver area community groups who combined resources to purchase a digital media projector.

Lucerne School hosted a Basketball Play Day on January 26 for the senior boys teams from Lucerne, Nakusp, Mt. Sentinel and Rossland. Lucerne's team lost to Nakusp 59-49 and won against Rossland 54-37. Mount Sentinel won both games it played, against Nakusp and Rossland.

Slocan to retrofit Village hall

by Jan McMurray

The Village of Slocan has received funding to improve the energy efficiency of the municipal hall.

Jim Abbott, MP for Kootenay-Columbia, presented Slocan Councillor John Gates with a cheque for $136,000 for the project on January 19 in Nelson. The funding comes from the Canada-BC Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF), to which the Village made application last year.

The project will include installation of a geothermal heat pump for heating and cooling, and the addition of high-density insulation. On the grounds, a berm will be built to block the cold wind from the lake.

Village of Slocan Councillor John Gates accepted a cheque for $136,000 from MP Jim Abbott to retrofit Slocan village hall.

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Employers spoke. . . . . .We listened

KOOTENAY CAREER DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY noticed that some local employers were facing challenges in recruiting, retaining and training employees. We wanted to get the local employers perspective on what they needed to face skills shortages and the looming labour shortage. The purpose of the project was to put the needs of local employers front and centre to develop human resource recommendations and strategies that reflect the labour market reality of our rural communities. Over the last year, KCDS listened to and recorded the "voices" of local employers, community stakeholders and job seekers in the communities of Nelson, Salmo, Kaslo, the North Shore, the East Shore and up the Slocan Valley to Slocan City.

How We Listened

- Steering Committee made up of 14 employers
- 110 employers & 227 job seekers completed surveys
- Focus Groups containing 38 employers were held
- Individual Interviews conducted with 25 employers/community stakeholders
- Local Labour Market Analysis
- Research – local and BC indicators

Learn more about local employer response and human resource strategies for our area. Watch for the user friendly report coming out on January 15th, 2008.

Employers Said

- 32.2% have experienced a high turnover of employees in the last 5 years
- 73.8% indicate they experience challenges filling positions
- 47.5% recruit workers from local region
- 41% want skills training for employees delivered locally
- 34% want human resource training for employers
- 65% indicate any or all of the following are impacting their ability to recruit and retain workers: lack of affordable housing, transportation and affordable child care

The Changing Face of Human Resource Planning

With the number of retiring baby boomers, the declining birthrate, the need for skilled workers and the coming labour shortage, employers will need to change their mindset *"from focusing on the traditional 'recruitment and retention' models to include issues of training, re-training, and productivity. We will certainly see traditional HR models change, with issues of retention also being more important than they have been in the past as competition for workers increases in the coming decades."*

Andrew Ramlo, Demographer, Planning Consultant, 2006

Facts

- By 2011 - 41% of the workforce will be between 45-65 years of age
- Since January 2007, B.C. has gained 80,000 jobs -- 95 per cent are full time compared to 65 per cent full-time job growth across Canada
- Currently the main drivers of B.C. job growth have been trade, construction, information, culture and recreation, and transportation and warehousing
- Analysts are predicting a moderate growth rate for the Central Kootenays
- BC's unemployment rate dropped to 4.2 per cent from 4.4 per cent in October
- The November unemployment rate for the West Kootenays was 5.8%

EMPLOYERS AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS CAN ACCESS THE REPORT:

- Online at www.kcds.ca
- Through hand-delivered "hard copies" to your business/organization
- Pick up at local Chambers of Commerce
- Pick-up at Kootenay Career Development Society
  Suite 203, 514 Vernon Street, Nelson
  352-6200 or 1 877-952-6200

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Slocan River Valley Farmers group forms to foster local food production

submitted

The Slocan River Valley Farmers group has been formed with the purpose of creating a thriving and viable ecological farming community in the Slocan River Valley. The group arose from discussions by about 10 people, mostly from Winlaw, who met recently to discuss further co-operation on farming.

Local food requires local farmers – farmers with access to land, opportunities for training, and improved financial stability. Slocan River Valley Farmers are working on equipment sharing and marketing strategies. There is a growing interest for farmer's markets, the '100 mile diet' and a desire to take control over our food supply.

The Slocan Integral Forestry Co-operative (SIFCo) receives the first $74,500 of a $125,000 CBT grant to help start up the community forest in the Slocan Valley. Pictured here are Stephan Martineau of SIFCo, Paul Peterson, CBT board member, and Lynda Lafleur, CBT Community Liaison out of Nakusp.

The Future of Food in the Kootenays conference in November pinpointed the need for local food production. As BC produces only around half of its food consumption (and the Kootenays probably even less) the region will be very vulnerable when oil or water scarcity reduce cheap produce from California or even Alberta. For future valley harvests, work must begin now to prepare the soils and build the necessary infrastructure.

The group's mission statement is: to supply the local community with ecologically grown food all year round; provide opportunities for farmers to access land; build upon and share infrastructure and resources; educate, train, and mentor new and emerging farmers; work substantially towards creating post carbon farm systems; improve financial stability for farmers; help farmers access equipment; co-operate on marketing and distribution.

Are you willing to buy more locally produced food? Do you own land that could be used for farming? Would you like to share your local knowledge, traditional tools, or other equipment? The Slocan River Valley Farmers can be contacted through Anne Warren at agrariangrrl@hotmail.com or Jade Summer at 226-6831.

Peak presentations coming to local Mountain Film Festival

submitted

The North Valley Mountain Film Festival is becoming an annual event here in the North Slocan. Building on the huge success of last year's event, organizers are preparing for another fantastic evening of films and photography.

The Mountain Film Festival will take place on February 16 at the Bosun Hall in New Denver. Doors open at 6 pm. The festival is sure to inspire the adventurer in everyone.

"We are excited about showcasing the incredible beauty of our backyard and the sense of adventure in our mountain communities," says Myles Berney, organizer and local photographer. "We have another great line-up this year, with lots of response to our request for submissions and a very special guest presenter".

The North Valley Mountain Film Festival will feature films about alpine climbing and skiing, such as Higher Ground, as well as a mountain biking film called Crux, and a Kootenay produced whitewater paddling film from Dainty Deathy. Slideshows of wilderness and adventure by local and visiting photographers will be shared. A healthy mix of professional and home-grown productions will bring awe, laughter and intrigue to the evening.

A highlight of this year's festival is Dan Griffith, who will present Seven in Seven. Dan Griffith has set an incredible world record by climbing the highest peaks on each of the seven continents in less than seven months. Entertaining and inspiring, his fascinating story will take us around the world to different cultures and new heights with the accomplishment of each summit.

Tickets for the North Valley Mountain Film Festival can be purchased at Silverton Building Supply, Ann's Natural Foods and Nuru. Last year the event sold out, so get your tickets in advance (adults $5 and students $2). Refreshments will be served.

Community members are invited to contribute representations of mountain culture, adventure and local wilderness to the Mountain Photo Showcase. Contact Kaitlan at 358-2547.

The North Valley Mountain Film Festival organizing committee would like to thank everyone for submissions to the festival, and acknowledge financial support from Slocan Lake Recreation Commission #6 and the Columbia Basin Trust for this community event.

For more info, call Myles Berney, 358-2200.

Lucerne student reaches for the top

by Jan McMurray

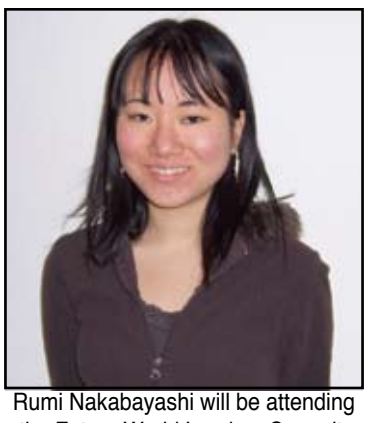
Rumi Nakabayashi, a grade 12 Lucerne School student, will be attending the Future World Leaders Summit in Washington, DC March 30-April 5.

"I'm very excited to go this – there will be about 400 students from around the world there," says Nakabayashi.

The Future World Leaders Summit is one of nine programs delivered by Presidential Classroom, a non-profit, non-partisan organization with a mission "to provide the highest quality civic education programs for outstanding high school students." Presidential Classroom was founded in the tradition of President John F. Kennedy, who challenged young Americans to be committed to public service.

In order to cover her travel, accommodation and tuition fees, Nakabayashi is holding a fundraising event on February 8 at the Silverton Gallery at 7 pm. There will be music by Miranda Hughes, Paul Gibbons, Erin Burkholder, Danika Hammond's violin quartet, Heather Huether, Judy Maltz, Daphne Hughes, Marion Bergevin and others. Sushi and chocolate cake will be served. Admission is by donation.

Nakabayashi is from Hyogo, Japan. This is her third year at Lucerne.



Rumi Nakabayashi will be attending the Future World Leaders Summit.

New classes for 2008 at the Threads Guild

submitted

The Slocan Valley Threads Guild is sponsoring seven new classes in February, March and April, all taught by local textile artists. The Threads Guild is located six kilometres north of Winlaw on Highway 6 at Perry Siding, and meets the second Wednesday of every month. The next meeting is February 13, 7 pm. New members are always welcome.

The Slocan Valley Threads Guild offers classes by local textile artists.

This time of year, Threads Guild members' interest groups, such as the wool dyers, basket makers and sock knitters, meet at the Threads Guild to share their projects, and the quilters have another fundraising quilt underway.

For the past 26 years Threads Guild members have maintained this heritage schoolhouse as an arts classroom, with much volunteer work and goodwill. Their photo album chronicles many events, shows and classes that have taken place there since 1981. The group is now up to 40 members, ranging in age from 23 to 83.

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For event information contact Myles @ 358 2200
To submit your photo to the Mountain Photo Showcase contact Kaitlan @ 358 2547
With generous support from the Columbia Basin Trust and Recreation Commision #6

Nakusp council, January 22: New logo approved for Nakusp

by Jan McMurray

•Council approved a new logo for Nakusp and will work towards its implementation, i.e. changing the letterhead, pins, vehicles, etc. Watch for notice of a public meeting where the new logo will be unveiled.

Pattie Adam, chair of the Nakusp and Area Development Board (NADB), made a PowerPoint presentation outlining the process a community committee went through, with the help of a consultant, to come up with the logo. The presentation included sample advertisements for Nakusp.

•Council will write a letter to Interfor, asking them to attend a public meeting to answer the many questions community members have. The request for council to write the letter was made at the 'Women of the Woods' meeting hosted by Arrow & Slocan Lakes Community Services, which Councillor Mueller attended.

•The wharf was shut down after low water exposed damaged wood and loose planking. "It was impossible to launch a boat, so we shut it down," reported CAO Bob Lafleur. He said WestMar, the engineering company that has been assessing the condition of the wharf, was to be diving the next day and reporting back to BC Hydro. Harry Brownlow of BC Hydro is scheduled to be in Nakusp on January 31. Mayor Hamling expressed concern that WestMar had recently provided a report stating the wharf was in usable condition.

•CAO Lafleur reported that he had a meeting scheduled with Willi Jahnke of the Nakusp Music Fest to go over the draft contract between the Village and the festival organization. Once they are in agreement, Lafleur said they would meet with other interested groups, such as soccer and slo-pitch, and come up with a maintenance plan for the fields.

•Councillor Mueller reported that the Columbia Basin Trust had come up with a new process for the Community Initiatives and Affected Area funding programs. She said the intent was to standardize the way communities handle the programs, but that communities could write a letter asking to be exempted from the new process.

Under the new process, applications for the funding must undergo community involvement and public meetings. Then a selection committee made up of community members makes recommendations to the local government, which makes recommendations to the RDCK board. Projects are approved at the RDCK board level.

Nakusp has always had a binding public vote to decide which applications for funding under the programs will be successful. Councillor Switzer noted that the new process would give Nakusp council and the RDCK board the right to overturn the vote. Council decided to write a letter asking to be exempted from the new process, and stating that it would like to continue with the way it's been done in the past in Nakusp.

•Sharon Montgomery of the Nakusp Museum Society attended as a delegation to clear up and apologize for a misunderstanding she caused about the archaeological study in the campground.

Montgomery explained that when she told council on December 11 that permission from the Village was not required for the project, she was referring to a consent form that had to be signed by the Museum Society and the archaeologist, but not the Village. However, Montgomery said, Horizon Heritage Consulting must obtain permission from the Village to do the work on Village property.

Council acknowledged that it had just received a letter from Horizon, asking for the required permission and describing the project.

Montgomery presented council with a map showing where the archaeological impact assessment will take place. She called it a "fringe area" of the campground, pointing out that there are only two campsites near the site.

Mayor Hamling wanted to know why they thought there were pithouses in an area so far from the lake, which would have been the transportation course. Montgomery replied that the lake was historically much higher.

In response to a question from Councillor Switzer, Montgomery said the Ktunaxa, Okanagan and Shuswap Nations had been consulted, and they had until February 15 to provide comments. They cannot, however, stop the project, she said.

Council noted that it had received a letter from the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council outlining the protocol for consulting with them. Mayor Hamling asserted that council could not make a decision until First Nations consultation was complete. Council decided to table Horizon's request for permission until the February 26 meeting.

Later in the meeting, Councillor Switzer made a motion to contact the three First Nations directly about the archaeological impact assessment "instead of leaving it up to the project proponent." The motion passed.

•Council received a copy of a letter to BC Ambulance Service from Nick Andriash, Regional Vice President of the paramedics' union. He explains that when people must be transferred out of Nakusp by ambulance and Nakusp only has one car staffed, a neighbouring community with two cars staffed is called to do the transfer. This results in the neighbouring ambulance workers receiving full pay for the transfer while the Nakusp workers are on their on-call pay of $2 per hour. He calls this "devastating" on the morale of the station workers and asks BCAS to re-examine its policy for the Nakusp station.

Council voted to have Mayor Hamling monitor the situation only at this time. Concern was expressed that council should not get involved too deeply with this issue, especially when it comes to the collective agreement.

•The Village will provide a letter of support to the Arrow Lakes Arts Council for the final approval of funding from the ArtsNow program for a Cultural Mapping project in the Nakusp area.

•Mayor Hamling reported that the RDCK will be paying her way to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) convention in Quebec City May 30-June 2. Councillor Dahlen expressed interest in attending as well. CAO Lafleur informed council of the policy that councillors can attend with expenses paid by the Village as long as they check in with the treasurer to make sure the funds are available.

•Council authorized an insurance appraisal of all its assets by Suncorp Valuations for $9,400.

•In response to a request from Charlie Wyse, MLA, Cariboo South, council decided to write a letter asking the Minister of Health and BC government to take action to improve the Interior and Northern BC Ambulance Dispatch Centre in Kamloops.

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VILLAGE OF NAKUSP PUBLIC MEETING

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 6, 2008
7 PM
VILLAGE AUDITORIUM

The Village will be holding a public meeting on February 6th to discuss the current situation at the Arena/Sports Complex.

Council is seeking input from residents and user groups to assist them in making the significant decisions that will affect the future of the Sports Complex.

We encourage all residents and user groups to attend.

Life coach launches Nakusp-based business

by Dan Nicholson

Michael Garvey is a solution-focused life coach. His vision is to advocate for the human spirit. His mission is to enhance the human experience.

"Navigating successfully through our lives requires that we acknowledge risks, confront challenges and face our fears," says Garvey.

He sees his job to be working with people to free them from negative thought systems that hold them back from achieving whatever it is that they desire. "I work with you to close the gap between where you are and where you want to be."

As an Erickson-trained life coach and a member of the International Coaching Association, he uses white board coaching and other creative processes to close the gap between your values and your circumstances. "I work with you to access your inner self, where the answers lay."

Garvey looks for clues to help people get their highest potential out of life in their words, speech and body language. "I'm really looking for what inspires you. I want to help you to close the negative emotional bank account and to open a heartfelt trust account."

He sees coaching as a form of communication, as well as an elegant vessel to help people negotiate choice and change. He loves to coach. "It's a hoot to see people connect with their inner passion."

One program available through Garvey's Human Navigator Business is *BLISScipline AIM* – a 28-day program of meditation and visualization. Says Garvey, "It only takes half an hour per day, and will habituate new behaviours that move you towards your goals. Best of all, it's free!" The program is delivered over the internet in a group situation that is international in scope. Garvey notes that he can also tailor a program to an individual's needs.

You can contact Garvey through his website: www.humannavigator.com or by phone at 265-9966. Email: coach@humannavigator.com.

Michael Garvey has launched his life-coaching business in Nakusp.

Ski racers meet in Salmo for Nancy Greene Race

submitted

Over 100 ski racers from Phoenix, Red Mountain, Whitewater, Salmo, and Summit Lake gathered at the Salmo Ski Hill for the first Nancy Greene Race of the season on January 20. The 23 Summit Lake Racers included young Sydney Bone, Adam Volansky, Reid Bateman, and Timothy Barisoff who were racing for the first time.

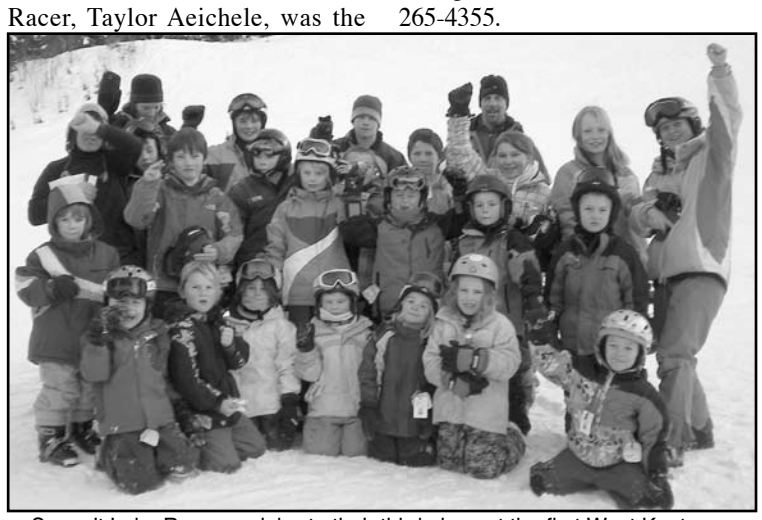
All agreed they would do it again, commenting on the ease of the Salmo T-bar, which threatened to throw the adults off into the bush, and actually lifted one unfortunate Summit Lake Racer off the ground. Solomon stated emphatically that he had not been fooling around.

Salmo had a firm base, with 15 centimetres of fresh snow on top. Jude Nicholson-Chodat mentioned that the course, a modified GS, "was a little bit sketchy because of the ice." At -8˚ C, the sun on the hill was a welcome sight.

Seasoned Summit Lake K1 racers Erin McLeod, Claire Jackson, Adam McQuair, and Connor McQuair followed through the gates with demonstration runs. They had spent the previous day training at Whitewater with other K1/K2 racers. Claire stated that she "really learned to turn," finding her centre and rolling her ankles. Adam commented on practicing with a single ski, using both edges.

The non-competitive nature of the program encourages sportsmanship and skill development, but individual times are clocked. Summit Lake Racer, Taylor Aeichele, was the fastest female on the hill, and former Summit Lake Racer (now skiing with Red Mountain Racers) Katelyn Horning, had the third fastest time. Katelyn said she misses both the Summit Lake coaches and skiing with her friends.

Coaches and volunteers are busy preparing for the upcoming Summit Lake Nancy Greene Race on February 9. Anyone who is able to help should call Trish McQuair at 265-4355.



Summit Lake Racers celebrate their third place at the first West Kootenay Zone team race of the season at Salmo Ski Hill.

Burton, Fauquier and Edgewood upgrade internet service

by Jan McMurray

The community high-speed internet service in Burton, Fauquier and Edgewood is about to improve, thanks to more than $47,000 in federal-provincial funding under the Canada-BC Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF).

Kootenay-Columbia MP Jim Abbott came to Nakusp on January 19 to make the announcement.

Burton and Edgewood will receive more than $32,000 to improve their systems. Fauquier will receive $15,000 to bring its service to people who cannot access it now because of mountainous terrain, densely wooded areas and other obstacles.

Peter Klopp, project manager for the Fauquier Communication Centre Society said, "We are planning to install another radio on the existing main tower at the centre. Its purpose is to provide connectivity to customers who cannot be reached by our present facilities and at the same time to create an access point to link up residents on our side of the lake who have been without service until now."

He says the group also plans to create a 'hotspot' that would provide internet access for tourists and travelling business people at the ferry landings and on the ferry.

"Fine-tuning the present and future system to provide a more consistent and equitable service to customers will also be one of our priorities during this phase," said Klopp.

Fauquier's application for funding under the federal-provincial MRIF program also makes provision for the training of local volunteers in the setup, provisioning, and upgrading of the Trango radio equipment.

"An engineer from the Okanagan will assist us in our attempt to accomplish these goals set out in our application for MRIF funding," said Klopp.

New equipment for Nakusp auditorium

by Jan McMurray

The new audio/visual equipment for the auditorium at the Nakusp Sports Complex has arrived.

"We are really pleased that we have been able to provide this equipment for the auditorium," says Cultural Conference Centre Committee (CCC) member Beth McLeod. "We really look forward to seeing user groups benefit from its use for many years to come, and hope that its presence leads to increased usage by local and visiting groups."

She says the portable stage will be set up in time for the February 6 public meeting on the arena, and volunteers, Village staff and the contractor are working hard to have the audio/visual equipment operational by then as well.

The CCC is a committee of the Cultural Community of Nakusp and Area Society. This audio/visual enhancement project is just the first phase of a bigger plan the group has for the auditorium.

"We hope to have a few minutes to talk about the project at the February 6 arena meeting and get some input from residents and user groups," said McLeod.

The actors in Nakusp's famous Rotary Dinner Theatre, on February 15 and 16 this year, will be the first performers to test-drive the new equipment.

New equipment includes a portable stage, a 30-foot-long theatre curtain, which can be used as a backdrop and to block light coming in from the windows, a sound system that can be set up anywhere in the facility, and a projector, which will be permanently mounted from the ceiling and will project onto a permanently mounted 12' x 15' motorized wall screen.

Members of the Cultural Conference Centre Committee (CCC) pose with the new audio/visual equipment for the auditorium at the Nakusp Sports Complex. The equipment represents the first phase of an ongoing revitalization program.

Rotary Dinner Theatre

submitted

The Rotary Club of Nakusp's tenth annual dinner theatre features 'The Lady Pirates of Captain Bree,' a musical, performed by Mirror Theatre.

The lady pirates capture a British sailing vessel with swashbuckling action, lots of fun, and captivating tunes until the Royal Navy makes the scene.

The evening will include a great dinner, a 50/50 draw and lots of fun and laughter. So come out and enjoy, and don't forget to come in costume if you like.

Dinner Theatre tickets make great Valentine's Day presents. Impress your sweetheart. Tickets are on sale at Barton Insurance.

FSA testing can be harmful to your child's learning

The Ministry of Education has been administering Foundation Skills Assessment tests to students in Grades 4 and 7 since 2000. Teachers are so concerned about the negative effects of these tests on student learning that they are asking parents to request that their children be withdrawn.

What is the FSA?

The Foundations Skills Assessment (FSA) is a set of annual provincial tests in reading comprehension, first draft writing, and some aspects of numeracy. These tests do not count toward students' marks in any way.

Who writes the FSA tests?

The ministry expects most Grade 4 and 7 students, except some students with special needs and beginning ESL students, to write the tests. Parents may request the principal to excuse a student.

When are the FSA tests?

This year FSA tests will be given to students between February 4 and 15, 2008.

What do teachers believe?

Teachers believe in fair, effective, reliable assessment. Teachers know that students learn in different ways and at different rates. Teachers work with students in classrooms every day, constantly assessing in diverse ways in order to support learning. Teachers strive to meet the needs of every student and foster students' love of learning.

Why are teachers concerned?

The FSA tests do not help students learn or teachers teach.

These tests take valuable time away from teaching and learning. Hours and hours of practising for the tests takes time away from richer, more meaningful learning experiences.

These tests are expensive. They take money away from priorities such as textbooks, support for students with special needs, science equipment, and library books.

The results of these tests are misused to rank schools and to promote American-style approaches to educational reform.

What can you do as a parent?

- Request that your child be withdrawn from the FSA tests by writing a letter to the school principal. Simply tear off and sign the sample letter, and give it to your child's principal.
- Discuss the FSA tests with the teachers at your child's school.
- Talk with other parents about the negative effects and misuse of FSA tests.
- Bring the issue to your Parent Advisory Council.
- Raise concerns with your local school trustees.
- Go to the BCTF web site *bctf.ca/fsa.aspx* for more information on teachers' concerns and the FSA tests.

A message from the Arrow Lakes Teachers' Association

Dear Principal,

I am requesting that my child, _____

_____ ,

be withdrawn from all parts of the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) tests.

I am concerned that these tests:

- take time away from teaching and learning
- are misused to rank schools
- take much-needed resources away from classrooms and schools

I understand that the ministry provides instructions to principals on how to exempt students from the FSA tests if they receive a letter from parents requesting that their child be exempted. I prefer that my child be engaged in meaningful learning activities during the testing times.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Sincerely,

Parent/guardian signature

Kaslo council, January 22: Provincial building purchase goes ahead

by Jan McMurray

•After hearing a delegation speak in favour of the municipality purchasing the provincial building, council voted to move forward with the purchase. Council accepted the takeback lease as is, pending final review of the document, which was scheduled for a special meeting on January 29 at 4 pm. The municipality will proceed with the borrowing through the RDCK.

Aya Higashi, Donna Cormie, Greg Lay and Rob Lang formed the delegation. They suggested that a public committee be struck to assist in the process.

•Council will submit the following resolution for consideration at the Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments (AKBLG) conference: that the Province of British Columbia be requested to create a new Residential Tax Class to reflect non-resident property owners.

•Council will submit an updated funding application to the provincial Towns for Tomorrow program for the Kemp Creek Reservoir Rehabilitation project. The total project cost has recently been estimated at $180,000. The Village will cover $48,000 of this.

•Council received the results of the RDCK's investigation into providing a fire protection service from Coffee Creek to Schroeder Creek. Questionnaires were sent out to residents of Ainsworth/Woodbury and to the lease lots/Fletcher Creek. RDCK staff recommended against pursuing the new service, as only 40 of 140 questionnaires were returned, and only 11 people indicated a willingness to volunteer as a firefighter. Kaslo fire chief Larry Badry, however, feels that a door-to-door delivery of the questionnaire would change the outcome and show much more interest in the service. This is being planned for the spring.

•There will be a Citizens' Advisory Committee meeting on February 7 at 7 pm to review the original OCP and all referrals. Blair Weston of FortisBC will be invited to speak about energy efficiency.

•Council received an email from SmartGrowth BC dated January 9. Tom Lancaster had returned as manager of advisory services and was going over the draft OCP with Erin Welk. Welk has been facilitating the OCP process in Kaslo in Lancaster's absence.

•Funding of $29,000 from the Community Health Promotion Fund has been approved for the Community Garden, a project of the North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society.

•The Kaslo & District Public Library board of directors wrote to inform council that relocation of the library to accommodate City Hall restoration was not acceptable to them. They have estimated that relocation and leasehold improvements could cost as much as $120,000, which they do not have. However, they say they "strongly support the restoration of City Hall to a functional building that meets the community's needs. Creative collaboration to maintain the library in City Hall during restoration will be necessary."

Council voted to inform the library board that council considers the library facility to be an integral component of the Kaslo City Hall building.

•Council received a request from Pennco Engineering Ltd. of Nelson, on behalf of Vern and Harry Klapper, to consider dedication of Rainbow Drive to Village right of way status. The Pennco letter states that this must be done in order to legally create access to future development in the area. The letter was referred to the Development Services committee and to the public works foreman, who will provide a report to the committee.

•The CAO and mayor were authorized to sign a Letter of Intent with BizPal, a provincial program that provides information online for businesses. Through BizPal, people can find out the permit and licencing requirements of all three levels of government for a given type of business.

•A memo from Deputy Clerk Susan Van Zandt regarding a business licence bylaw review was referred to the Municipal Services committee for recommendation to council.

•A meeting co-ordinated by the RDCK for recreation and park organizations was scheduled for January 24 in council chambers. Efforts were being made to have a report done on the arena facility, as the ice plants are nearing the end of their lifespan.

•All municipalities are soon to be required to track 'Tangible Capital Assets' in their accounting. CAO Sawyer will contact municipalities in the area to discuss sharing the cost of a consultant to help them all meet this requirement.

•CAO Sawyer will attend MATI 5 – Community Planning for Non-Planners in March at the Naramata Centre.

•The pro-forma Kaslo & District Public Library Association lease, a copy of the lapsed lease, and library board and staff comments will be sent in for legal advice.

•The head gasket blew on the fire department's Engine #2. Fire Chief Badry arranged for Slocan's old engine for $200 per month while Kaslo searches for a replacement. The replacement vehicle was referred to budget discussions.

•Council received acknowledgement from Interior Health of Councillor Rich Jones as Kaslo's community health representative.

•A resident wrote to ask if staff evaluations had been done prior to November 30, 2007, as resolved at the January 23, 2007 council meeting. She will be advised that they were not done, as the organizational review done with Gordon McIntosh recommended a different course of action.

•A proposal from Kootenay Waste Services to renew the contract for one year for waste collection in Kaslo was accepted. The contract price for the year is $28,080.

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Kaslo & District Community Forest Society Residents' Advisory Committee Meeting

is open to all residents of RDCK Area D and Kaslo. Please join us at 7 PM Wednesday, February 6 at the KDCFS office (Provincial Building upstairs) if you wish to discuss any of the agenda items that were submitted:

Specific:

- watershed protection, including seeking an FIA grant for detailed mapping of streams, springs, water diversions and intakes in domestic watersheds in the license area and adjacent private property
- recreational trails and development as a part of all cutblocks; incorporating recreation into all planning
- making KDCFS information available to the public, including effective use of the website
- educational programs such as the Stewardship Educational Program, a booth with maps and plans at Winter in the Forest or May Days, and meeting annually with key groups in the community for short presentations
- a policy that harvesting activities will create no negative visual impact from the town area and travel corridors
- fire interface planning and education; a block layout to demonstrate how to protect property and the community and proper fireproofing demonstration on blocks adjacent to private property
- build permanent access roads, not just for the duration of the cutting permit

General:

- Public consultation and forest planning
- funding for community activities
- local economic benefit
- benefits to smaller communities
- non-timber resources in the woods
- innovative forest practices

Unacceptable:

- RAC to review and approve the RAC Terms of Reference

Copies of the RAC Terms of Reference are available outside the KDCFS office or contact Ronnie at the KDCFS office (via 353-9677 or kcfs@netidea.com).

Kaslo contributes to District Literacy Plan

by Jan McMurray

About 20 people attended a January 23 meeting in Kaslo to gather community input on the development of a Literacy Plan for School District #8 (SD8).

The BC government has mandated all school districts in the province to create a District Literacy Plan by July 15 this year, as part of its goal to be the most literate jurisdiction in the world. The 'four pillars' of the plans are early learners, school-age children, adults and aboriginals.

The Kaslo group discussed the programs and facilities already available to these four groups in their community, and where they would like to see the four groups in terms of literacy in the next two to three years. The group also identified what was going well, the gaps, and possible actions to strengthen literacy in the Kaslo area.

The meeting brought out that Kaslo is well positioned, with its school, preschool, Selkirk College and a public library.

To help develop the plan, SD8 has put together a District Community Planning Team with representatives from the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL), Selkirk College, and the Board of Education (formerly known as the board of school trustees or school board).

Because SD8 (Nelson-Creston) is so large, the district recognized the importance of gathering input on a community level. Meetings took place in January in the five communities in the district that have a CBAL literacy co-ordinator: Kaslo, South Slocan, Salmo, Nelson and Creston. All meetings were co-facilitated by the literacy co-ordinator and a representative of the Board of Education's education committee. Kaslo's meeting was led by Barb Szuta, CBAL literacy co-ordinator for Kaslo and area, and Kristi Crowe, SD8's literacy facilitator.

Information from the community meetings will be compiled at a meeting of the District Community Planning Team in February. During the months of March-June, a draft will be written for community feedback and the plan will be finalized.

Barb Szuta, CBAL literacy co-ordinator for Kaslo and area, and Kristi Crowe, SD8's literacy facilitator.

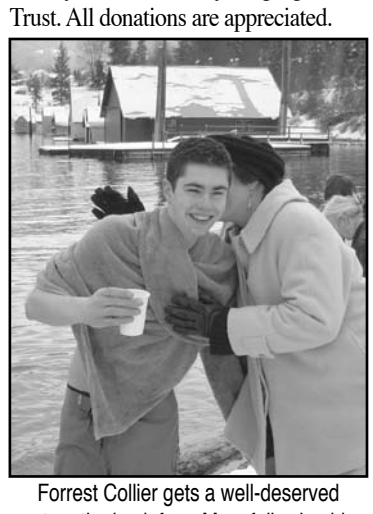
Helping Hand Trust forms in Kaslo

submitted

Recently, concerned citizens of Kaslo got together and identified a need for a fund to help Kaslo and area adults to travel for medical treatment. A committee was formed and the "Helping Hand Trust" was born.

The trust organizers are very grateful for the response to their fundraising activities, including some generous private donors, those who donated at the Kaslo Singers Christmas concert, which raised over $340, those who supported their raffle, and to the Hospital and Emergency Services Christmas Dinner for its donation.

Members of the group are Larry Badry, Dave Boland, Ian Einer, Dr. Frouws, Mary Johnson, and Elizabeth Scarlett. Please feel free to talk to any of them about the group, or to let them know if you know of someone who needs their help. There are several people who have already been assisted by Helping Hands Trust. All donations are appreciated.



Forrest Collier gets a well-deserved pat on the back from Mom following his plunge into the frigid waters of Kootenay Lake for the Langham Cultural Society's annual Polar Bear Swim fundraiser. Doug and Denise Porter of Eric's Meat Market also deserve a pat on the back for helping Forrest raise over $1,000 for the Langham. In recognition of this record-breaking contribution, Forrest, Doug and Denise were all awarded lifetime Langham memberships and tickets to upcoming Langham shows.

Notes from the RCMP

THE FOLLOWING REPORTS ARE BASED ON PRESS RELEASES AND MAY HAVE BEEN EDITED

The Kaslo Ambulance Service was called to the Duncan Dam in Meadow Creek on Saturday, January 12 to attend to a snowboarder who had suffered a serious leg fracture. The snowboarder had been on BC Hydro property and police remind the public that persons caught on private property will be charged with trespassing.

Kaslo RCMP are seeking tips related to a stolen water sampling station that was located on Glacier Creek, north of Argenta. The sampling station was situated below the bridge at kilometre 22 on the Glacier Creek forest service road. The equipment is described as black plugs, wires and cylinders which are approximately six inches long and one inch in diameter, with Barologger and Levellogger printed on the sides.

Anyone with information on the above stolen items is asked to call Kaslo RCMP at 353-2225 or Crimestoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS.

Proposed KDCFS Bylaw Revisions

Society members and interested general public are invited to attend a meeting of the KDCFS to discuss proposed revisions to the bylaws. This review of the bylaws and revision recommendations follow from a resolution passed by the membership at the May 2007 AGM.

Copies of the proposed bylaw changes are available for your convenience outside the Society office on the 2nd floor of the Provincial Building.

A presentation of the proposed bylaw changes will be made by members of the Bylaw Review committee struck by the Society.

Your views and inputs are important to us.

Date: Feb. 15, 2008
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Kaslo Seniors Hall

Board of Directors, Kaslo and District Community Forest Society.

Get Outta Town

with Peter Roulston

From rails to groomed trails

Lately I was down the valley at the Slocan Valley Co-op getting groceries and gas when I noticed some happy folks skiing past along the Slocan Valley Heritage Rail Trail. Papa was hauling the kid in a 'pulk' and Mama had the pack, and it looked like such a fine example of quality Kootenay time...

Over the past few years the abandoned rail grade has been vastly improved and revived for non-motorized use with the aid of a large grant and countless hours of effort and devotion by local enthusiasts. New this season is mechanical grooming of the 50-odd kilometre route from Slocan City through to Crescent Valley for both 'classic' ski and 'skate' styles. This is an enormous advantage in that it keeps the surface conditioned and safe and at least triples the progress of any skier or snowshoer out there.

I spent an afternoon last week with an old friend in the brilliant cold sunshine on this wonderful trail. The big advantage of this rail route is that it has excellent, well-signed access at many crossings and allows the most timid novice skier a chance to sample as much as they choose of a variety of historic, scenic or serene trail sections. There are a number of plowed parking areas with great trail maps to show individual areas plus the entire route overall.

I connected with my partner at noon in Winlaw at the café and soon after we drove down to park by the river across from the school. In deep winter there can be some shady stretches on this route and being a cold day we elected to head south to Lebahdo Flats and return, skiing 'classic' going and 'skate' style returning. The Slocan River had shelves of ice all over it and hoar frost coated the shrubbery. This is also a popular dog-walking route away from traffic concerns and seems perfect for towing kids on sleds.

After getting back to the cars we drove north to Perry's back road after a much needed stop at Fomi's Bakery, just north of Winlaw. Perry's access is also plowed and is handy to the Threads Guild and the bus stop shelter. Here the valley still lends itself to good sun exposure so we skied north to Larson Ranch out on that big flat and saw an eagle patrolling the river for late lunch. Other animal sightings included cattle, horses, dogs and that cheerful family of big black pigs.

There is a growing flock of some 70 swans that winter in the river between Slocan City and Lemon Creek, some of whom I've spotted on Slocan Lake in past winters. Ducks and geese do just fine here as well. A lone coyote watched us sliding by from way up on a sunny bluff where some ravens circled. Although much of the rail trail crosses wild zones there's also a nice mix of small cabins and rural farm settings to admire in passing.

With all these good access points you can easily get several people or so and a couple of cars to allow a longer one-way tour from car to car. Even better, go green and figure out the bus connections that allow you to park and ride up or down the valley for the one-way trip back to your starting point. Actually I'm not totally sure if the bus is cool with carrying ski gear (risk or liability?) but that would be something to clarify.

The sun set and did things ever get cold suddenly. The slight north wind helped with the ski back south to Perry's crossing plus the grade does descend a teeny bit from one end to the other. I think that Slocan City is about 16 metres higher in elevation than Crescent Valley, so the downhill sensation is mostly in your mind, but anything helps. If anyone does know the railroad and the river elevation changes over the 50 kilometre distance it would be neat to know for cycling and kayaking too.

While we de-skied and loaded up, one of the volunteer dudes came cruising past on a sweet new four-stroke snowmobile, packing and track setting the trail with this amazing rototiller-groomer-tracker attachment behind the machine. This investment has made all the difference and ensures that this rail trail will keep active residents happy all winter.

Peter Roulston owns the Bicycle Hospital in New Denver and likes trails and people that are well groomed. 358-2133

Financial Forum

with Debbie Pereversoff

Don't blink – life goes faster than you think!

Thinking about what I should write for this week's article, I began reminiscing more than 25 years ago to the time that I started dating my husband. The interest rates were in the very high teens – great if you were a saver, but brutal if you were just starting out in life. Jobs were scarce. If you had a job, you hung on for dear life – there were always a hundred more lined up out the door to take your place.

The thought of getting into too much debt was frightening – you just learned to 'live within your means.' Our parents' wisdom started to resonate – 'work hard, don't get in over your head and make sure you save a few dollars from every paycheque.'

Like most newlyweds, we struggled financially – always looking enviously at some of our friends who appeared to be doing better. We still made do with what little we had, saving for those big-ticket items like our first $1,200 stereo and our first $500 VCR.

We had access to credit cards but our inner voices kept telling us that we had to exercise caution. We knew that the credit card bill would have to be paid – in full – by the time the statement came the following month. There was no way we'd be carrying a balance and paying those exorbitant interest rates!

We made sure that part of our paycheques would go into RRSPs. We almost treated those contributions as another bill that had to be paid each month. A forced savings of sorts – but something that we felt we needed to do.

I happened to be watching the evening news the other day and it was reported that back in the early 1980s more than 20% of Canadians were diligently saving – either for retirement or just in general. Fast forward to today and a mere 1.4% are saving anything.

What is it about life today? We all seem to be working just as hard and it's commonplace for both spouses to be in the workforce. Incomes seem to be decent for most people, yet there is always 'more month left after the money.' I'm not certain if it's just a common thing that us middle-age folk experience, but the 'pace of life' seems to be running at warp speed these days.

All that I know is that we seem to be distracted in our quest to survive, keeping the bills paid, ensuring that we have a nice set of wheels and a decent roof over our heads, making sure we have every new gizmo and gadget that lands on the store shelves. We gotta have the latest computer gaming systems, IPODs, cell phones, Blackberrys and the list goes on. The struggles of our younger families are just as prevalent but they don't seem to fear getting into debt or biting off more than they can chew. No such thing as 'delayed gratification' – when they see something they want it – NOW!

As for saving for retirement – most younger couples admit that there are more important things they have to deal with right now and feel they can push it way down their priority list. Now, I don't want to appear like I'm aging myself but it is absolutely mind-boggling to see how 25 years goes by in a heartbeat. Whether you're age 20, 30, 40 or beyond, the struggles and the challenges in life are always there. There will always be something that commands a higher priority or diverts our attention.

If I can give you one piece of advice as we enter into this New Year – please, please start on a regular savings and retirement program. Prioritize it like another bill payment that you have to make each month. If your employer offers an RRSP payroll deduction – take it! Chances are you won't even miss the money and you will be well on your way to building your retirement nest egg.

The way people are spending money these days, if you were retired right now you'd be hard pressed to rely solely on the Old Age Security program that is paying just over $500 per month. The maximum CPP benefit is just under $900 – and chances are you'd be getting much less than that.

The ultimate dream for most people is to successfully go through life, creating a balance between family, career and pleasure. Ultimately, it means that we have to make some sacrifices and appropriate choices to ensure that we still live for today without compromising our tomorrow. As the latest Kenny Chesney country song goes, "Don't blink…a hundred years goes faster than you think."

Debbie Pereversoff CFP CSA is a Certified Financial Planner and Certified Seniors Advisor with her company The Affolter Financial Group Inc. in Castlegar.

Cool Eateries of the West Kootenays

with Andrew Rhodes

CutRite Meats has it all

Hello out there all you fabulous food fans. Boy do I have news for you! A few days ago I once again jumped in the company car and headed to Nakusp for the umpteenth time. On the way I saw a bald eagle at Box Lake and knew it'd be a good day. I was headed to CutRite Meats on the main drag in downtown Nakusp.

Hoss and Jill Cann, the owners and operators, started with a small butcher shop 12 years ago and have expanded to include a bakery, a deli-sandwich shop-restaurant, a pizzeria, a small specialty grocery store, a summer time ice-cream centre, and a coffee shop with specialty coffees and much more.

Hoss and Jill are Nakusp folks who met in high school, fell in love, and after getting out of high school got married. Hoss was a logger for 17 years during and after high school, then suffered an injury that kept him from that kind of work, so he and Jill started CutRite Meats in the back rooms of what is now their much bigger operation. They realized soon after opening, that in a small town you can't make a go of it just selling meat, so they expanded. They took over the front rooms of the building, doubling their square footage and giving them a front door on the main drag. They invested in big-time bakery equipment, and the front rooms became the bakery, the deli, the grocery store, the ice-cream centre and all the rest.

It's still called CutRite meats, so I'll start by telling you just a few of the meat items available. Hoss makes his own garlic rings, pepperoni, salamis, kielbasa (smoked turkey breast), beef sausages, pork sausages, mixed beef and pork sausages, all sorts of hot and mild Italian sausages, beer sausage. His organic buffalo sausages are honey garlic and "dinner sausages." By the way, his buffalo dinner sausages are the best sausages I've ever tasted. TRUE. Check them out and let me know if you don't love 'em. He's been making them for ten years, and I just discovered them a year ago. Go figure. By the way, he also makes his own turkey-cranberry sausages. His chicken comes from a small farm in Armstrong, which has a long waiting list of customers. There are boneless skinless breasts, roasters, fryers, all free range.

In the display case: BIG black forest hams, honey hams, capicollo hams, chicken breast meat, Montreal smoked meat, huge variety of salamis and cheeses, Bavarian meatloaf, ham sausages, worlds best bacon, Hoss's own homemade Farmer sausages.

Cheeses: Swiss cheddar, Edam, 3X havarti, monetary, blue, and more.

In the grocery area you'll find all kinds of little jars of imported treats: pickled garlic, German wine sour kraut, red pepper spread, and crunchy gherkins. Polish mustards? Hot, extra hot, mild and two kinds of imported horseradish. How about drunken green beans and a variety of meat rubs.

In another display case: breaded oysters, crab legs, tiger shrimp, prawns, lobster tails, muscles, clams, bacon-wrapped scallops.

Jill looks after the deli and is a completely self-taught deli owner and manager. She knows the names of all her local customers AND the kind of sandwiches and soups they like. All the sandwiches are on bread BAKED FRESH DAILY! Choose a Kaiser bun or a sub. All fresh. Every day there are two soups available to team up with your sandwich, which might be a Montreal smoked beef and Swiss (my choice) or go with ham and cheese or turkey and Swiss. There's a seafood sandwich, a club you can get with cranberry, house style (loaded ham and turkey), roasted chicken, turkey honey mustard melt. And lots more. All with choice of veggies.

There's too much more to say. Twenty flavours of hard ice-cream in the summer. There are line-ups! Don't forget the half dozen salads made fresh.

Hoss and Jill also cater all kinds of events. Let them know.

I've left out so much, but if you go there you'll be amazed at how much Hoss and Jill have to offer. They are friendly people, and I have a new favourite place in Nakusp.

WHAT – VALENTINE'S ALREADY?

Yes, Valentine's Day is coming at you and already you've got to get her a gift to make up for that Christmas thing. Forget candies or chocolate 'cause she's already too fat and still mad about what you said at the New Year's party...

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The "Audio/Visual Enhancement Project" for the Auditorium at the Nakusp & District Sports Complex is a partnership between the Village of Nakusp and the Cultural Community of Nakusp & Area Society's Cultural Conference Centre Committee. The CCC Committee is pleased to say that we are nearing completion of this project and at this time we would like to thank our funders: Columbia Basin Trust (Community Initiatives & Community Development), Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance, Columbia Power Corporation, BC Hydro, RDCK Recreation Commission #4, Village of Nakusp, RDCK – Area K, Nakusp & Area Community Foundation, Nakusp Roots Music Society, Nakusp Rotary Club, Arrow Lakes Queen's Committee, Mirror Theatre and Royal Canadian Legion Branch #20. Thank you also to the Village staff and our contractors for your dedication and enthusiasm. We encourage all residents and user groups to attend the public meeting to discuss the current situation at the Arena/ Sports Complex and provide input to Council regarding significant decisions that will affect the future of the Sports Complex - to be held by the Village of Nakusp at 7 pm on Wednesday, February 6th in the Auditorium.

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NAKUSP GOLF CLUB has a business opportunity available for operation of the Kitchen and Licenced Restaurant facility running from April to October every year. Information package by contacting Nakusp Golf Club, Box 148, Nakusp, B.C. V0G 1R0 or knishida@okanagan.net. Closing date Feb.15/08.

Personal Classified Ads start at $8.00
Call 358-7218 for details

CARD OF THANKS

With the help of many hands, we managed to assemble 44 hampers this year, serving 108 people! Many private individuals, groups and organizations contributed gifts, food, time and money to this project, as well as ongoing food cupboard support throughout the year. In no particular order, we wish to thank: St. Mary's Church, Slocan Valley Lion's Club, Kootenay Spoons, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 276, RDCK, Slocan Valley Covenant Church, Slocan Valley Women's Institute, Nelson Food Cupboard, Slocan Valley Rec, Endless Harvest, Fomi's Bakery, Evergreen Foods, The Maple Leaf Store, Slocan Valley Co-op, Gaia Natural Foods, Winlaw Mini Mart, Slocan Village Market, Fulla Beans, W.I.N. Thrift Store, SHARE Nelson, WalMart, Mountain Sky Soap, Women's Institute, Polestar Calendars, RARTS, Mount Sentinel Senior Secondary School, W.E. Graham Community School, St. Andrews Church, Slocan Lake Stewardship Society, Crescent Valley School of Music, Smiling Otter Kayak and Canoe, Springer Creek Forest Products, the firefighters who came to fight the forest fire this summer, and the many private individuals who donate food gifts and cash!

From W.E. Graham Community Services Food Cupboard

COMING EVENTS

DRAWING & SCULPTURE focusing on Hands & Feet! Explore these expressive parts of the human body through drawing and clay. 6 Classes starting on Wed. Feb. 20 @ Silverton Gallery 6:30-9:00PM. For registration and/or information contact: Elly Scheepens phone: 358-2689.

SLOCAN VALLEY THREADS GUILD NEW CLASSES - Register now for workshops at the Threads Guild in February, March and April. Seven new classes, taught by local textile artists include: Nature Dyes, Design with Needle Felting, Collage, Knitting with Kathy, Surface Design with Procion MX Dyes, Sew Much Smarter, and Devore A to Z. Small classes, hands-on projects, some materials supplied. For more information, please call JC Bradford 250.355.2475.

SUPERBOWL PIZZA! Fat Kat's will stay open Superbowl Sunday (Feb. 3) so you can order delicious pizza. Delivery in New Denver and Silverton. 358-2272.

VERNON ROCK BAND REDFISH, whose new album, recorded in Nashville, will be playing a show at the Dam Inn in South Slocan on Saturday, Feb. 9th.

THE ALFA GUILD GALLERY will be holding their AGM on Feb. 17th, at 1:00 p.m. in Betty Falhman's Studio. All members are encouraged to attend and anyone else who is interested.

THE KOOTENAY DANCEBEAT SOCIETY presents a Social Ballroom Dance at Brent Kennedy School, South Slocan on the second Saturday of every month until June. Mini Lesson 7:30pm, Dancing 8 pm - 11 pm. Everyone Welcome! Cost $5.00. For more info www.dancingbeat.org

Join Larry Z. at 4TH ANNUAL GROUNDHOG JUMP into Slocan Lake - 12 noon on Sunday Feb 3rd at Silverton Resort. Warm up around the fire.

PASSMORE COMMUNITY HALL would like to invite you to celebrate a Valentines Pancake Breakfast with them. We will be hosting the Event on February 10 from 9:00-12:00. Hope you can join us!

YOGA AT THE DOMES - Times have changed to Monday mornings 9-10:30 (intermediate flow), Thursday afternoons 4-5:30 (foundation & flow) and Saturday afternoons 1:00-2:30 (foundation & flow). Yoga keeps the body resilient! Come and experience your vitality in movement. For any questions call Madeleine 2475.

LUCERNE BASKETBALL SCHEDULE for February: Tuesday, February 5th - Jr. girls and Jr. Boys play against Trafalgar at 4:30 pm; Wednesday, February 20th - Sr. Boys play against Salmo at 4:00; Saturday, February 23: Jr. Girls Play Day starting at 10:00; Monday, February 25 - Jr. Boys against Trafalgar 4:00.

3 WORKSHOPS: How To Make Your Own Safe, Non-toxic Household Cleaners - Silverton: Sat. Feb. 16th, 10 am-3; in Slocan: Sat. Feb. 23rd 10 am-3. Can you imagine never having to buy another toxic household cleaner? Well, now you can – I'll show you how in this fun workshop. You'll go home with your own self-made, non-toxic and oh-sooo sweet smelling product plus you'll receive many other recipes you can make at home. Your instructor is Karen Dubreuil, cost $45, bring your lunch, everything else supplied. To register: Silverton Workshop - Karen 358-2828; for Slocan Workshop - Sandra Lindstein 355-0025. (Same workshop, different date & different location.) Last year's workshops were both full (15 people) so register early!

One-stroke painting workshop – Sat. March 8th 10-4 in Silverton – instructor is Karen Dubreuil, watch for more info in next issue or call now to register 358-2828, only 10 spots available for this workshop.

THE HUNGER FOR HAPPINESS - Learn EFT: an easy, painless and drug-free method for reducing food cravings. Silverton, Sat. Feb. 9, 1-5pm, with option for ongoing support. To register: Sue Mistretta 358-2177.

REIKI LEVEL I and II at Labyrinth Gardens with Reiki Master Fran Ure. Feb. 18-21. Just need a refresher? All healers welcome to attend for $25 per session. Call to register – 265-4123.

WHAT IS THE COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY? HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME? Find answers to these and other important water & hydro questions on February 27, 7PM, New Denver. Kindy Gosal, Columbia Basin Trust, will present THE COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY – RESHAPING OUR LIVES NOW AND IN THE FUTURE, followed by a short CBC documentary about the construction and impacts of Columbia River dams on our region. Co-sponsored by the Slocan Lake Stewardship Society. Watch for details in the next edition; location to be announced.

FOR RENT

OFFICE OR RETAIL SPACE - 16' x 24', next to Silverton Building Supplies on highway. $265.00/month. Call 250-358-2293.

MAIN FLOOR OF HOUSE for rent: three bedrooms, fridge, stove, dishwasher, washer & dryer, 1 car garage, private wrap around patio, 650.00 plus utilities. contact Shelly @ 250 542-4107 or ahoepner@shaw.ca.

HEALTH

FULL SPECTRUM BODY WORK offers deep tissue and stress reduction treatments in the privacy of your own home. For additional info and to book appointments please call 358-6808.

DR. PAUL M. HINTON will be providing chiropractic care at the Slocan Community Health Centre in New Denver every Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning commencing January 16, 2008. To book appointments, please phone 250-352-5135.

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NAKUSP GOLF CLUB - Permanent seasonal position available for the greens and grounds crew. Mechanical experience an asset. Contact Nakusp Golf Club, Box 148, Nakusp, B.C. V0G 1R0 or knishida@okanagan.net.

NOTICES

FOR INFORMATION ON AA MEETINGS contact Dave 358-7265; John 265-4924; Tonio 358-7158; Dave 353-2658; Joan 355-2805; Dan 359-7817; Bill 226-7705.

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Slocan Valley Rec brings in Iceland adventurer talk and show

submitted

It's not likely many of us will get to Iceland anytime soon. The next best thing will be adventurer Keith Collen's presentation on circumnavigating Iceland at the Slocan Park Hall Wednesday, February 13 at 7 pm. Admission to this Slocan Valley Recreation sponsored event is a donation to the Slocan Food Bank. If planning to attend, please call 226-0008.

Collen will relate his six-week personal odyssey of cycling more than 1,000 kilometres along the rugged coasts of Iceland, while his photos capture the country's desolate, ethereal beauty. The audience will follow his route along the west coast from Reykjavik to Akureyri in the northwest then onto the Vatnajokull Glacier in the southeast. Along the way he and his traveling companion encountered storms, floods, high water that forced them to carry their gear and even an attack by a goat.

The winter travel talk series has become a popular way to escape the blahs of a cold winter evening. It's a time to be transported to places you may only have dreamt of, or have been to and wish to relive. Slocan Valley Recreation offers two talks every winter. Give them a call if wanting to share your adventure.

Next *Valley Voice* **Deadline:** January 11, 2008

SLOCAN VALLEY RECREATION

CREATING A LANDSCAPE PLAN - With Bill Hillary Wed. Feb. 6th. Slocan Park Hall.
THE CHARITIES FILE- Sat. Februay 9th. Valiican Whole Community Centre.
GROOVE YOGA - With Peggy Frith. WE Graham School. Starts Feb. 11th.
CIRCUMNAVIGATING ICELAND - Cycle around Iceland with Keith Collen. Wed. Feb. 13th. Slocan Park Hall.
CREATIVE JOURNALING - With Kim Howard. Extra class. Sat. Feb. 16th.
PAINTING CHINESE LANTERNS - With Barb Wilson. Sat. Feb. 16th.
WED. NIGHT BADMINTON - Winlaw School Gym 7:00-9:00 p.m.
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Storytelling celebrated at Slocan's Family Literacy Day

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Family Literacy Day events in Slocan and Winlaw were great fun last Thursday as the kids from WE Graham School and the Vallican Whole celebrated storytelling in a variety of ways.

Barry Gray of the Proctor Storytelling Festival has been doing a series of workshops with the kids in Slocan to develop their skills. At a function in the afternoon at the school, he got the crowd warmed up with a Haida tale of Raven and Crow and then turned the stage over to the kids. Seven children got up and told their stories to the whole school. It was a mix of personal and family histories, animal fables and inventive remixes of famous characters in fictional settings. Then all of the kids had a chance in smaller groups to share their work. In the next few weeks Rita Moir will be continuing the narrative focus with a series of writing workshops funded by ArtStarts, some of which are open to the community.

In the evening, there was a community event at the Winlaw Hall. Barry Gray started it off and then the kids from the Vallican Whole had a chance to demonstrate the Stories in Motion project that Marguerite Wood has been facilitating with them since before Christmas. They did a beautiful job and all of their work on costumes and setting added a lot to the performance. A couple of WE Graham storytellers shared their stories and finally, Shelagh Lane of Nelson did a wonderful version of Goldilocks with her marionettes.

Big thanks to Fomi's Bakery in Winlaw for the delicious book cakes and pizza; thanks to the kids, facilitators and teachers for all their work; thanks to Jack Berry of Winlaw School for the display of the Winlaw Young Authors project and finally thanks to the staff and volunteers of CBAL Slocan Valley who help everything happen.

Silverton Historical Society receives $9,000 from the Columbia Basin Trust to fund a study on heritage resources and planning for their future. Historical Society members Ken Murray, Pat Harding, Wayne Gerow, Rick Tegler and Bruce Gardiner accept the cheque from CBT Community Liaison Lynda Lafleur at the interpretive centre.

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Gardening 101 from the North Kootenay Lake Food Security Project

A gardening column in February? Why of course – the seeds for many plants can be started indoors mid-February and your seed orders should be in or ready to go ASAP. Astonishing Fact: our current food system is 90% dependent on oil, and cheap oil if we want the prices to stay the same. What will we do as price and availability of food is affected by looming oil prices? Plant seeds! Support your local farmers! Always buy local!

February Gardening: Mid-February start peppers and eggplant seeds in warm, sunny window. Peppers as seedling starts like to be kept moist, although once in the ground they will tolerate dryer soil. As long as seedlings don't have temperatures below 12˚C , peppers are good to go indoors. Eggplants require hotter temperatures for germination – at least 24˚C and will require good heat throughout growing season.

The end of February and beginning of March is when the garden really starts. You can start your hardy greens like kale, chard, radicchio, beet greens all as seedlings. Most are pretty standard for temperatures and soil, not below 15˚C and nutrient rich soil. Make sure your potting mix is ¼ good organic compost. You can also start veggies like cauliflower, broccoli, fennel, leeks, onions, parsley and cabbage at this time.

The North Kootenay Lake Food Security Project is thrilled to announce that in our second year we are literally moving from the desk to the dirt with a 'Lawns to Gardens' project! We will be doing a contest to pick two-to three lawns that would like to be gardens as well as providing the resources and knowledge for current gardens.

If you don't have space where you currently live, get a community garden membership for $5 and get on the list to have a plot. Contact Sarah Heard for memberships at the Kootenay Lake Hostel in Kaslo. If you have never gardened before, be sure to know there will be many around to give you tips and advice. Nature is most forgiving and all she needs is love, water and sun to provide nutrients for us. Stay tuned for more gardening tips as the days get longer and our thumbs start to itch.

Local Resources: Kaslo Home Building Supplies (Irly) carries all your seed, soil, compost, and gardening needs and is now carrying West Coast Seeds. Laird Creek seeds are available at Sunnyside Naturals. See also www.stellarseeds.com and www.bcseeds.org

KDCFS News
January 2008

The Board of Directors of Kaslo & District Community Forest Society (KDCFS) publishes periodic newsletters to the Society membership and general public. The last update was published January 15, 2007. Subsequently the Board held a public information meeting on March 8 and an AGM on May 16.

Finances, Harvesting & Forest Management

2007 was marked by financial austerity, a hiatus in timber harvesting and a large expenditure of time by the Board associated with setting up the new Woodlands Management structure. We are pleased to report good news in all three areas.

Although the timber market is much worse than it was a year ago, due to the high Canadian dollar and slump in US housing starts, the financial position of the Community Forest has improved. Unsustainable levels of spending by the KDCFS during 2005 and 2006 required a moratorium on community disbursements during 2007, but recent logging income will allow the Board to consider a prudent level of disbursements in 2008.

Despite delays caused by a severe fire season, timber sold to Porcupine Wood Products (PWP) is now being harvested on CP 10 (above Kaslo Airport) and CP 13 (Shutty Bench). The road into CP 13 was constructed by CJ Logging and the harvesting of these cutting permits will be completed by Settle Holdings and Sunshine Logging. PWP is a regionally significant company with a history of operation and employment generation in our area. All the contractors involved are local. Income from this most recent harvest activity has covered the expensive CP13 road building and is now beginning to replenish our depleted cash reserves.

Following its introduction to the membership at last May's AGM, the new Woodlands Management Team (Rainer Muenter, Richard Marchand & Dave Karassowitsch) came up to speed and effectively managed timber sales, logging and road building despite the interruption caused by local forest fires. The Board has found this team of professional foresters highly competent, cooperative and sensitive to the needs of the KDCFS as operator of a Community Forest.

Changes During 2007

The Board itself has seen changes. Kim Planidin was appointed by the Board to fill the vacancy remaining from the May 2007 AGM and Steve Fawcett replaced Dave Russell as the RDCK appointee. In both cases, the Board openings were advertised and a fair and transparent process was used to select the successful candidate. It has also been a Board priority to put an end to the atmosphere of controversy and division that dogged the KDCFS in past years. Although we have faced serious and challenging issues, meetings of the Board and its relationship with the general membership have been marked by cooperation and respect since the 2006 AGM.

The illness of KDCFS Office Manager Ronnie Carmen during the summer of 2007 presented a challenge, but with help from the Management Team the Board was able to get essential work done and keep the office open. Ronnie has now returned to work and we are pleased to report things have returned to normal. Regular office hours are 9AM – noon and 1 - 4 PM Wednesdays.

PCFA News and Issues

The Probationary Community Forest Agreement (PCFA), which expands the KDCFS operating area and more than doubles our annual cut, has been approved at the regional level and awaits Ministerial signature. The Board is grateful for the valuable public input received during the PCFA application process. The expertise and resources provided by the Woodlands Management Team will be well suited to the increased responsibility and workload associated with the new license.

Some public comments made during the PCFA application period expressed concern about the creation of a legacy fund, which would create a permanent pool of capital to fund community organizations into the future. The Board implemented a resolution of the KDCFS membership at the May, 2007 AGM to create a legacy fund. It was viewed as a means of reducing the risk of politicization and the threat of community funding interruptions due to the cyclical nature of the forest industry or unsustainable spending.

Other comments suggested that the proposal for KDCFS to exert jurisdiction over non-timber resource harvesting might restrict the activity of local residents. KDCFS and its Board are accountable to the community. Reserving control of non-timber resources in the Community Forest license area through the PCFA is the only way the traditional rights of local residents can be preserved. Without this control, the non-timber resources within our license area would remain at risk of overexploitation and abuse by outsiders.

Providing local employment opportunities is an ongoing priority for the KDCFS. So is maximizing financial returns to the whole community. Compromise may be necessary if local bidders are not competitive. Rapid changes in markets, mill operations and the contractor workforce over the past few years have required the Board to keep an open mind and adjust its policies as it strives to provide the greatest possible overall benefit to the communities of North Kootenay Lake.

Cutblock Development

In order to ensure operational flexibility, the KDCFS must develop new cutting permits equivalent to one or two years of harvest in advance. Because very little planning or development work was done in the last few years, the Board has made development a priority for the Woodlands Management Team and that work has begun. The Forest Stewardship Plan is a government requirement for cutting permit approval. This document, which outlines our future harvesting objectives and strategies, will be available for public review in the spring.

Please Join Us

The KDCFS Board meets at 7 PM on the second Wednesday of each month upstairs in the Provincial Building. All of its meetings are open to the public and interested residents are encouraged to attend. Delegations are now invited to speak to the Board, though notice is required (delegation forms are available at the office).

All eligible area residents are invited to become KDCFS members (cost: $5.00) and to consider seeking election to the Board. No forestry experience is required for Board candidates because the Board uses the expertise of the Woodlands Management Team to administer the forest license. However, an open mind and a willingness to consider the views of others is a requirement. New directors will be elected at the Society's AGM, tentatively scheduled for mid April.

Public Input

As part of its outreach to members, the Board has created a Residents' Advisory Committee (RAC), which will be a source of detailed information about Community Forest activity and provide input or feedback to the Board. The RAC, which is open to all residents of RDCK Area D and Kaslo, will meet at least twice a year. Anyone can attend an individual RAC meeting or become a regular participant. The inaugural RAC meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, February 6 (see separate advertisement). Feel free to suggest concerns and discussion items at any time to any KDCFS Board member, or Ronnie Carmen at the KDCFS office (via 353-9677 or kcfs@netidea.com).

KDCFS Board members:

Stan Baker
Donna Cormie
Steve Fawcett
Suzan Hewat
Patrick Mackle
Rob Mitchell
Kim Planidin
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Brodie Whitney

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