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# Fully Booked

**Busy summer in store  
for library's Louie**

## **Education**

**COTR sowing seeds for  
Kootenay Farm School**

## **Agriculture**

**Farming column highlights  
valley industry**

## **Business**

**Black Bear Books enters  
new territory**

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**Letters to the Editor**

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A harrowing deployment to Iraq left Misty Louie preaching a message of resiliency and making the most of every opportunity.

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## Guest From the editor

**P**aula Carpenter doesn't exhort Crestonians to "shop locally" with empty words or guilt trips; she gives them tangible reasons for spending money in her store. When they give her their business it's not out of self-sacrifice but because they're getting the goods and services they want.

Not bad for a small-town niche retailer whose primary competition comes from the biggest of online behemoths.

"Part of it is so many of our customers know that they can get it from Amazon or that they can have it brought to the border, but it essentially means the difference between having a bookstore in our community and not having a bookstore in our community," says the owner of Black Bear Books. "So many of our customers will tell us, 'We could go that route but it's so important to us to have a bookstore in our town that we choose to shop locally."

"The other part is . . . our turnaround time is completely competitive now with Amazon, and they don't have to get their passport out. They don't have to drive anywhere out of the country. It's right here.

"Then there's the social aspect of it . . . the relationship we have with our customers. So many of them we know by name. We know their tastes. We know what they like. There's a component that's very personal that you don't get ordering online. Most of our client base values that."

Carpenter returned the customer loyalty by investing in the store's future this spring. A renovated, new location on Canyon Street made its debut last month. It's roomy, well-appointed, comfortable and includes a kitchen in which local ingredients are incorporated into lunch menu items and baked goods. A new juice and smoothie bar run as a sideline by one of her employees will augment the specialty coffees and other beverages already available.

Oh, and she still carries books too, though the best sellers are the ones she doesn't carry.

"Special-ordering books is about 70 per cent of our book business," Carpenter says. "We pride ourselves on being able to search out things that people haven't been able to find for years. We pretty much go to the ends of the Earth in tracking down a special order for a customer.

"(And) things are coming in very quickly. The turnaround time used to be weeks because of our location in the valley."

Speaking of which, Creston's proximity to the United States border and all that entails – easy access to retail stores in Idaho and Washington, close-to-par currency and frequently free shipping of online purchases to Porthill – is "always going to be a factor for all of the businesses in Creston," she admits.

But judging by Black Bear's new quarters, she's confident in her ability to retain a local market share, if not expand on it, by being sensitive to client needs and not taking customers for granted.

"We do have a really strong customer base," Carpenter says. "We are a really well-supported store locally. People love their bookstore here and we love our customers. We're hoping the new location may invite others in that maybe haven't been in before.

"We're definitely here to stay."

That might go double for her and her family as far as living in the Creston Valley. Carpenter spent her early childhood on what, at the time, was the "third-largest cattle ranch in North America," near Merritt, and always knew she wanted to return to B.C. one day. A 2008 driving tour of the province in search of a place to move from Alberta led to a choice she's never regretted.

"I knew I wanted to stay in the mountains but I got tired of having only a month-and-a-half of summer every year. I started looking around B.C.," Carpenter recalls. "Creston was one of the last places that I had come through. I'd never been here.

"Drove in – it was August, early evening – and immediately fell in love with it, loved the layout of the valley. It was absolutely stunning.

"Loved the size of it. It's the place you want to raise a family, where you're not the only one looking out for your children. It's that feel of a community to me."

Within 48 hours she decided to move here – love at first sight, you might say.

On that note of endearment, let's get on with the rest of this July issue of *I Love Creston*. ■



# Check it out

***That's what Misty Louie wants more LKB members to do with the Creston Public Library***

**F**emale Canadians like Emily Carr and Margaret Atwood are among the favourite authors of Misty Louie, who began her personal summer reading program with the latter's *The Blind Assassin*.

Louie herself has a story to tell, though she doesn't do so with paper and ink or even digital files. Hers is more the style of a discussion circle for girls run this spring at Prince Charles Secondary School.

"My biggest thing for every youth that I mentor is resiliency," Louie says, "because you can't control life. You can't control bad things that happen to you but you can control how you deal with it."

“Like, how do you stay mentally fit? How do you stay emotionally well? How do you stay physically fit, eating right, exercising? It is a very Ktunaxa way of looking at life.

“I think sharing my story and letting them talk about their stories helps them withstand all of this.”

## “I think sharing my story and letting them talk about their stories helps them withstand all of this”

Louie withstood six years of active duty with the United States Air Force (USAF), including more than five months under fire in Iraq in 2011. She returned home to Creston in February thankful to be alive to tell about it, and to accept meaningful yet considerably less life-threatening challenges such as a summer job as a liaison between the Creston Public Library (CPL) and Lower Kootenay Band (LKB).

In addition to promoting First Nations use of library resources, Louie is using this stint in the valley as a platform for her message of seizing the day, an outlook moulded by her deployment to Baghdad as

an intelligence analyst. She endured numerous rocket attacks that left her with a greater appreciation for the privileges and opportunities afforded North Americans.

“When I came back I was a very angry person,” she says. “It took a lot for me to settle down and get

back in civilian life. I was really irritable when I came back from that place to people here complaining about things . . . like they had a bad day because their iPad wasn't working or because they were running a little bit late.

“When somebody's trying to kill you in a different place and you come back here, those things don't seem significant anymore. I became irritated with those kinds of people. Like, ‘You have an amazing life. Just stop it,’ you know?”

Louie can laugh about it now but the point hasn't lost its punch.

“I try to tell people that, especially young people that fight over boys or rumours or something stupid,” she says. “There's little girls trying to go to school in Afghanistan or Iraq that are getting killed just for trying to learn. You have no idea how beautiful your life is here.”

“They have so many opportunities that they don't take advantage of because they're too busy complaining about life instead of living it.”

Louie is fully engaged in the latter. Still enlisted in the USAF reserves, she's begun a path she hopes will lead to the University of Washington's registered nursing program. In the meantime Louie is acting as a part-time nursing assistant for the Ktunaxa Nation while working two days a week for the library. She's also running a female youth camp for the Ktunaxa in July.

Born in Crow, Mont., Louie moved to the Creston Valley at age 6 and graduated from PCSS in 2005. After a year at the University of Calgary she took advantage of dual citizenship to join the USAF, stationed at Pearl Harbor.

She was trained in computerized ground support before being sent overseas.

“We got rocket-attacked a lot,” she says. “Huge rockets. One hit really close to us. It was really, really scary. It shook our little trailer. Shrapnel was coming down. Pieces were flying. That stuff’s really dangerous too. If you don’t get killed by the rocket you could get severely injured by the shrapnel.”

“It was very close to where we were sleeping in the middle of the night one night. I was kind of used to the attacks by this point. You just roll to the ground and put your helmet on . . . (and run) to the bunker.”

“There isn’t very much sleep. You kind of learn to work every day without sleep.”

Louie relied on her First Nations faith and her colleagues to pull her through.

“You just pray that you wake up the next day,” she says. “Camaraderie was the best part of my deployment because you weren’t in it alone. You had your coworkers, who became your family by the end of your deployment.”

Louie was promoted to staff sergeant back at Pearl Harbor, charged with training troops to do her job, “teaching the technical stuff but also preparing them mentally and emotionally for what they might face,” she says. “That gave me a great perspective on how to lead.”

In the case of her liaison position, “leading” means creating a higher library profile on the reserve and heightening awareness of library resources among LKB members as part of chief

librarian Aaron Francis’s focus on growing partnerships.

The CPL is well-used by children through biweekly visits by Yaqan Nukiy School but adult patronage is low.

Louie aims to make the library even more welcoming by increasing the First Nations collection, adding Ktunaxa signs, promoting membership cards and writing a monthly column for the LKB newsletter, “to let the band members of Lower Kootenay know that this is their library too.”

She’s co-ordinating a summer-long First Nations art display through the Creston Valley Arts Council and

contributed to a National Aboriginal Day celebration at the CPL in June.

Funding comes from a grant obtained by the LKB, so Louie reports directly to both the CPL board and LKB council, of which her father, Jason, is the chief.

“I’m really happy that I could come home and do all these things,” says Louie, who envisions a career as a civilian nurse being called to hotspots around the globe to help in times of humanitarian crisis. ■

“They have so many opportunities that they don’t take advantage of because they’re too busy complaining about life instead of living it”





## From the Mayor's desk

Story by: Ron Toyota, Mayor of the Town of Creston

# Environment initiatives abound in Creston Valley

Last month Labatt Brewing Company (Columbia Brewery) and the Town of Creston co-hosted an environmental awareness forum.

The event was initiated by brewery general manager Murray Oswald as his company was participating in a worldwide environmental awareness

forum organized by the United Nations. He wanted to promote the event with a local, Creston Valley focus.

About 35 individuals gathered for four hours to listen to presentations about how local businesses and organizations are addressing environmental concerns with common-sense ideas that result in real cost savings.

Highlights of the event included the following discussions:

- Chief Jason Louie explained his culture and how appreciating the simple gifts of nature (water, air, land and animals) is important in the daily lives of Lower Kootenay Band members.

- Interior Health and Creston Valley Hospital are utilizing daily practices to be more environmentally friendly. Additionally, they are piloting a "solar wall" concept in order to save on energy costs while providing more efficient heating.

- Our Creston and District Community Complex is using the latest technology to provide energy savings in the new indoor aquatic centre, curling rink and hockey arena.

- Wynndel Box and Lumber utilizes energy savings systems and also has strong planting and reclamation programs to restore their woodlands.

- The College of the Rockies is aggressively expanding its greenhouse program and providing locally grown foods for our "10-mile diets."

- The Creston Valley Food Action Coalition has the C.V. Farmers' Market and Harvest Share program in full swing.

- The Columbia Brewery outlined its energy saving programs.

- Fortis expanded on its grant programs for energy savings.

The general consensus of forum participants was that we must continue with this type of local event to bring awareness to others in our community and promote and expand the sharing of workable ideas. Partnerships will be considered to make this kind of forum an annual event. ■

Ron Toyota can be reached by phone at 250-428-2214, e-mail at [Ron.Toyota@creston.ca](mailto:Ron.Toyota@creston.ca) or on the Web at [www.creston.ca](http://www.creston.ca).

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# Message from the chief

Story by: Jason Louie, Chief, Lower Kootenay Band

## Education key to progress, unity

**K**i'suk kyukyit (greetings) from the Lower Kootenay Band.

Time seems to be flying by with respect to my tenure as chief of the Lower Kootenay Band.

Some of the Yaqaan Nukiy citizens have embraced the initiatives of the leadership team; others have been resistant to the changes. Some say progress has been made; others say it isn't happening at all.

A price has been paid by the leadership team. The LKB leadership does what is necessary, not what is popular. I personally do not fault any of the previous chiefs or council members for past decisions and the direction in which they may have led the band. They did what they needed to do for the betterment of the community.

Today, First Nations politics have evolved into a complex system of new legislation and bills to which we must adhere. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development dictates the rules, and chiefs and councils play the game with little say in the creation of policies.

It is difficult to please those we serve from our community. However, having principles and ethics help in guiding what best suits the community of Yaqaan Nukiy. Hearing the frustrations of our membership has no easy remedy.

What I have seen historically in the Creston Valley is that isolation is not productive for anyone. The LKB leadership team has extended its hand to such organizations as the Regional District of Central Kootenay, Town of Creston, Creston Valley Hospital, Canada Border Services Agency, United States Customs and Border Protection and the Creston Valley Chamber of Commerce.

We have extended our hand to create a meaningful working relationship between our communities. We have also made a point to be recognized as

good neighbours by becoming involved in the community by participating in the Relay for Life, the Christmas food bank challenge, Santa Parade, Blossom Festival Parade and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Walk, to name a few public appearances.

There were no hidden political agendas; we simply wish to change history. We wish to remove barriers and educate the general public that we are a community with a legitimate government.

I would also like to commend Creston Valley Advance editor Lorne Eckersley for his professional coverage of LKB news and stories over the past couple of years.

There was a time not long ago I would read letters to the editor expressing negative views of the LKB and First Nations. Every citizen of this country has a right to speak their mind and political views freely. I am not naive and know at some point there may be a letter to the editor expressing displeasure in the future.

What I recognize is that building professional relationships and having a regular column in *I Love Creston* has proven to be effective. I have received numerous e-mails and phone calls from total strangers who appreciate the stories and updates from the band. This proves that knowledge is power.

I would like to quote Apsalooka Chief Plenty Coups in a speech to his children. Please understand that this statement was made in the 1800s and the language is not meant to sound racist but was meant to empower his people. Times were changing and so were his people.

"With education you will be the white man's equal; without it you will be his victim."

I believe this statement is true for all of humanity. In order to progress in this ever-changing world we must educate

ourselves and others about belief systems and values. If we look closely enough I believe that our values may not be all that different.

The Creston Valley (Yaqaan Nukiy) absolutely needs all of its citizens to work in co-operation to ensure this beautiful land will be here for future generations. We can make this a reality but we must make it happen with unity.

I never intended to do these chief duties to "show up" any previous chiefs. There is a job that needs to be done and I will do my best to get the job done.

I also recognize that sometimes your best isn't good enough. The tasks at hand have become tiring. Earlier I mentioned a price was paid. The price I have paid has been family.

Within my extended family a division has been created. With my spouse and children there are times when all they get is the worst of me. The person they get is exhausted, angry and distant.

The life of this chief is not what it may appear to be. Privacy has become a thing of the past. Anonymity is rare. However, I will always make time for membership and have met some great people who I call my brothers.

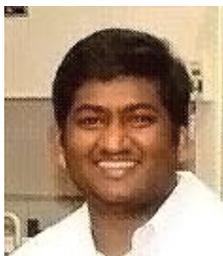
Being a "friend of Bill W." I have come to live by the saying, "one day at a time." I am a member of Team LKB. There is room for everyone on this team. I make no promises but to always do my best.

I know that the future is what we create today. The building of relationships ensures that tomorrow has promise for all valley citizens.

Be it an aboriginal person, those whose roots stem from Europe, Asians, blacks or Indo-Canadians, our future generations deserve better than what we may have experienced in our childhood. As in our national anthem, "we stand on guard for thee." We must stand together.

Once again, I thank you for reading and hope you all enjoy another beautiful Creston Valley summer. Until next time, taxa. ■

*Jason Louie can be reached by phone at 428-4428, ext. 235, e-mail at [mjasonlouie@gmail.com](mailto:mjasonlouie@gmail.com) or on the Web at [www.lowerkootenay.com](http://www.lowerkootenay.com).*



## Pharmacist Corner

Article submitted by: Srinivas Chalagalla B.pharm., Ph.D.

# Don't get burned by fun in the sun

There are two types of skin-damaging ultraviolet rays: UVA and UVB. Both are harmful and have been linked to skin cancer and aging but they vary slightly in their effects.

UVBs cause sunburns but don't go through windows. UVAs, however, are responsible for tanning and premature aging and can penetrate glass.

UVB levels vary throughout the year but peak in the summer. UVA levels tend to be constant with slight variations.

There is no standard for defining protection against UVA rays, so look for products containing reflective substances that act on all types of UV rays (zinc oxide, titanium

dioxide) or substances that specifically absorb UVA rays (avobenzone, terephthalylidene dicamphor sulfonic acid, drometrizole trisiloxane).

The labels of UVB sunscreen products include a sun-protection factor (SPF) number. The SPF is an indication of the relative amount of time during which you can remain in the sun with the sunscreen without getting a sunburn caused by UVB rays. The higher the factor, the greater the protection.

It is important to have both UVA and UVB coverage so choose broad-spectrum sunscreens that protect against both UVA and UVB, as well as an SPF of 30 or higher.

Sun safety tips:

- Limit sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are at their peak.
- Limit sunning during the first few days in the tropics or in high altitudes.
- Protect your eyes in the sun since it can induce cataracts. Wear good-quality sunglasses with UV protection, particularly in situations where there are large, reflective surfaces (e.g., ski slopes).
- Protect your skin in the sun with clothing. Wear a hat, long sleeves and long pants made of tightly-woven fabric.
- Don't sleep in the sun to avoid a very painful awakening.
- Always wear sunscreen in the sun, and don't forget to cover bald spots.

Sunscreen tips:

- Always use a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or more.
- Use water-resistant formulas.
- Apply the sunscreen at least 30 minutes before your exposure to the sun to enable it to penetrate the skin and repeat application 20 minutes after the exposure to ensure maximum protection.
- Apply a generous amount of sunscreen. Applying a thinner layer reduces the effectiveness of the product

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considerably. Repeat the application every two hours and after swimming.

- Sunscreens should not be used to increase the length of your exposure to the sun but to protect the areas of your body that are not covered by clothing.

Sunburn treatment tips:

- Avoid all sun exposure after getting sunburned.
- Protect the sunburned area with loose-fitting, light clothing or with zinc oxide ointment.
- Apply cold compresses to the area.
- Take acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) or ibuprofen (e.g., Motrin, Advil) to relieve pain, as needed.
- Apply hydrating cream or lotion frequently and abundantly on your sunburn except where there are blisters.
- Consult a doctor if you experience nausea, vomiting, fever, shivering or visual disturbances.

Did you know . . . ? Certain drugs and cosmetic products increase the risk of getting sunburn. Ask your pharmacist whether you need special sun protection because of any medication (such as antibiotics, diuretics, drugs for diabetes or hormones) that you may be taking. ■

For more information, talk to your local Shopper's Drug Mart pharmacists, Srinivas Chalagalla and Karl Mottl. Phone 250-428-9334 or e-mail [Asdm2284@shoppersdrugmart.ca](mailto:Asdm2284@shoppersdrugmart.ca).

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## New board leads T-Cats into 13th junior B season

Story by: Creston Valley Thunder Cats

The Creston Valley Junior Hockey Society held its annual general meeting in May with about 30 people in attendance.

Four members of last year's board of directors stayed on, three from years past rejoined and four new faces stepped up to become the 2013-14 executive.

Taking the role of president is second-year director Scott Veitch, who will be helped by vice-president Michael Moore (fourth year).

Susan McLarty (first year) will be the board secretary and events co-ordinator.

After taking a one-year hiatus, Melanie Bright (third year) is back on board in the role of treasurer. Also returning from a one-year hiatus is Joanne Endicott (13th year) as community relations director.

Also returning are game night co-ordinator Kelly Moore (fourth year) and billet co-ordinator Shannon Veitch (fourth year).

Chad Luke, a former board member from years past, has taken on the role of director of security.

New to the board are Debbie Keirn (director of fund-raising and merchandising), Todd Livingstone (transportation co-ordinator) and Ken Blow (director of personnel).

The new board is a good mix and the members are excited to see what happens this season, with coach Josh Hepditch remaining as the bench boss for another season.

This should be a competitive year as the Nelson Leafs are hosting the Cyclone Taylor Cup (B.C. junior B championship) in April 2014, so all teams in the Kootenay International Junior Hockey League will strive to reach the tournament in our "backyard."

Plans will be made during the summer months for events this season. Expect to see Jersey Night and Minor Hockey Night return to the Johnny Bucyk Arena along with other fan-based events. ■

*The Thunder Cats have a season ticket sale on. Contact Moore at [tcats@hotmail.ca](mailto:tcats@hotmail.ca) for more information or check out our Web site [www.crestonvalleythundercats.com](http://www.crestonvalleythundercats.com).*

# Farming 101 good fit for college

The identity of Creston's College of the Rockies branch took a hit with the demise of its centrepiece horticulture program due to declining enrolment. By 2014 – a full decade later – the campus may have a replacement in the Kootenay Farm School.

COTR facilitators Nigel Francis and Laura Hannant are preparing for an initial February intake of up to 15 students.

“Some of the other College of the Rockies campuses have programs that are sort of their flagship programs,” Hannant says. “We’re looking to develop it as a signature program for Creston.”

An eight-week mini-version earlier this year drew a waiting list and calls from those who did get in for more of the same.

“They said it was great but it needs to be longer,” Hannant says. “We need to learn about animal husbandry. We need to learn about record keeping. Teach us how to business plan. Teach us how to market.’ So that’s what we’re looking at developing.”

The urban-oriented Richmond Farm School of Kwantlen Polytechnic University serves as the model, with a

## New program touted as flagship for Creston campus

rural emphasis designed to appeal not just to local residents.

“We see the Creston Valley being a destination for education in small-scale farming,” Francis says. “We’re targeting people who are not necessarily coming from a farming background but want to get into farming on a small scale, operating a business of their own. Things like market gardens or small-scale animal husbandry, that sort of thing.

“We’re looking at a niche market in education to teach a niche market of agriculture . . . but hoping that it can grow and have a significant impact on the community.”

The curriculum will be divided into modules that can be taken individually by students who don’t need or want to commit to the full, year-long program. Community input into exactly how the farm school will be structured is welcome but it figures to be run on a part-time basis so students can maintain employment and will include classroom and hands-on components.

Some valley farmers have already offered their expertise, equipment and facilities, and a student plot, possibly run as part of an experimental farm in partnership with other groups, is also being considered.

Public demand is driving the initiative, which Hannant envisions being “intimate and responsive to needs.”

“We’re really interested in looking at how, as a college, we do programs that really serve the community,” Francis says, “and this seems like it could be a good way of doing that.”

It’s no coincidence the concept is arising as interest surges in local food production and whole food consumption, typified by the growth of entities such as the Creston Valley Farmers’ Market and Creston Valley Food Action Coalition

“We’re really feeling a groundswell that way,” Hannant says. “As local food culture grows and people get more interested in where their food comes from, it’s easier for a family to have an operation they can maintain themselves and make a living that way.” ■

*The college is collaborating with the coalition, Creston Valley Chamber of Commerce, Kootenay Employment Services, Prince Charles Secondary School, Lower Kootenay Band, Creston Valley Agriculture Society, East Shore Food Roots and Community Futures of Central Kootenay on a “community agriculture learning needs assessment” intended to further define specifically what sort of help people are looking for.*

*The study is funded by the Columbia Basin Trust, Town of Creston and Regional District of Central Kootenay.*



### The B.C. Weed Control Act imposes a duty on all land occupiers to control designated noxious plants.

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**For more information on noxious weeds check out this website:  
<http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/cropprot/weedguid/weedguid.htm>**

# Black Bear set for the long haul

**F**ollowing a brief spring slumber, the Bear emerged from hibernation bigger and better than ever – as in Black Bear Books, that is.

The Canyon Street fixture relocated a couple of blocks up the road to a den more than two-and-a-half times as spacious and stocked with all the refreshments anyone – even a starving bruin – could wish for.

“We have maintained the integrity of the bookstore, something that was started by Alison Bjorkman,” Paula Carpenter says of the woman from whom she bought the business 19 months ago. “She did a wonderful job in the other location of having a place that appealed to people of all ages and provided a little something for everybody.

“(But) it was always my intention to expand in this way. It was just a matter of timing, looking for the right location.”

So what’s new?

“The coffee bar now has lunch – fresh, organic, local-made soups every day. We make them in-house,” Carpenter says. “We’ve incorporated our own in-house baking that also has an emphasis on organics and local (ingredients).”

A larger children’s section includes an enclosed play space within sight of a seating area where parents can sip beverages, dine and/or chat.

A family friendly environment was a priority for the mother of two (including a nine-month-old boy), whose professional background includes children’s services and early intervention. While engaged as a home-schooling mom outside the remote hamlet of Nordegg in the Alberta foothills, Carpenter

## New location enables bookstore expansion

also operated a lakeside retreat and children’s summer camp, and once owned a small café.

Ironically, Bjorkman moved from Nordegg the same year Carpenter arrived in the early 2000s. They met only briefly before Carpenter and her daughter, then 10, moved to Creston in 2008.

“I went into the bookstore and fell in love with it immediately,” Carpenter says. “Over the years I’d always said to Alison, only half seriously, ‘If you ever decide to sell, I hope you’ll keep me in mind and let me know.’ That opportunity came along and it all happened.”

After a one-week closure to get set up, Black Bear reopened for the first of June. Renovations were done by the partners of Carpenter and her two employees, plus her father, with an eye toward an open, homey atmosphere reflecting the valley’s laid-back lifestyle.

The store also encompasses a small secondary business owned by staff member Annaliese Pypers and two business partners, whose juice and smoothie bar will offer dairy-free drinks with raw, organic supplements while supporting local fruit and vegetable producers as well as customers with special dietary needs.

Carpenter is also expanding her music and card departments and introduced a line of cheeky, bear-themed apparel.

As for the book selection, “because we’re a small community we try to have a little of everything as much as possible,” she says. “We’re hoping

to always have something available in the store that you wouldn’t find anywhere else.”

In-stock sales actually represent less than one-third of her business, a trend that only figures to increase now that she’s connected with a major distributor which can expedite shipments within three to five days. ■

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# Making a difference in impoverished Guatemala

Story by: Maureen Cameron

Spending four months at 7,000 feet in eternal spring was a great way to live last winter. I volunteered with Project Somos near the town of Tecpan in the Central Highlands, a traditional Mayan territory in Guatemala.

Being my introduction to that part of the world and that level of volunteering, everything was new. You might have done similar or even more remote travelling and volunteering, so you know what I mean.

My senses were overwhelmed with the differences: language; colours; smells; sounds; traffic; and, cultural norms. I was open for it all – the delights and inconveniences, safety and health issues, the unexpected.

It was a mind-, eye- and heart-opener and I am grateful for having experienced it first-hand. (Yes, even for my parasitic visitors.)

As one of the most impoverished countries in the Americas, about 50 per cent of the Guatemalan population of 13 million lives in poverty. With unemployment at four per cent, even the employed live in poverty.

The child labour rate is 30 per cent and, in 2005, an estimated 370,000 children were orphaned or abandoned and living in state institutions.

My friends Heather Knox and Greg Kemp of Vancouver responded to this situation after much research. Knowing their efforts were seemingly small in a world with so much



*A neighbor in Chivrabal who said "Gracias por Guatemala"*

need, they nevertheless followed their hearts to act and found people willing to join them with financial and emotional support, guidance, resources and volunteering.

The result, through Vancouver-based Compassion Fruit Society, was Project Somos, with land to create their vision.

Work is under way to create a village based on a family-centred model in which children will grow up in a home with a Guatemalan foster mother in a beautiful environment, encouraging their health, happiness and learning.

During my time there I witnessed what had been done in two years by

volunteers of all ages as well as paid local workers.

Two eco-homes are just about finished and a perimeter wall has been built with adobe bricks from the land. There are workshop areas, an organic garden and a playground area. Share cropping is happening in the local community, events are organized that include area residents integrating with the local school, celebrations and ceremonies take place with the Mayan elders, government officials come on tours, and school groups and volunteer tours are booking time to come and help, most from Canada.

Ecological and financial sustainability are two of their guiding principles.



Four of 49 children visiting on a Children's Day at Somos from the local school.

How this is playing out is evident from their Web site, and there's a standing invitation for anyone who wants to participate. The long-term goal is to replicate this initial village in other locations.

Three months later I'm still integrating the nuances of what I saw, felt and learned there, and the deep affect it had on me for having said Yes to the opportunity.

I was surprised just how many other volunteers I met who visit regularly or had moved to Guatemala to contribute their skills for the basic needs evident there.

I was touched by older folks who, upon finding out I was volunteering for a children's village, would take my hand, look me in the eye and say, 'Gracias por Guatemala.' I felt inadequate for my small part in receiving such genuine gratitude.

I began to sense in a new way the importance of taking action in this world when one is drawn to do so, no matter where.

Yes, I would go again, with my Spanish improved, to learn more about the culture, about development and most of all to help at Project

Somos and what they have embarked on.

For now, though, this group, like many others, needs people to help with fund-raising or other support that doesn't necessitate travelling there.

The Web site [www.projectsomos.org](http://www.projectsomos.org) is where to check out their story and ongoing news, and they have a Facebook page as well.

Watch for an evening of fun being planned for Creston in the fall when some of us will share our volunteer and travel stories. ■

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# Ag Aware

Story by: The Creston Valley Agriculture Society

## ALR protection among society aims

**W**elcome to the first issue of Ag Aware, what will hopefully be a monthly column highlighting what is happening in the agriculture industry in the Creston Valley.

The promotion and awareness of agriculture and food production is an important part of the Creston Valley Agriculture Society's mandate.

The society was formed many years ago to support and address concerns of the area's agricultural producers. The membership is made up of representatives of the main commodity groups of the valley: beef; dairy; fruit; and, grain and field crops; as well as a member

from the C.V. Food Action Coalition, representing the C.V. Farmers' Market.

While not a large group, we get to discuss a variety of issues that affect the growers of the valley. Political and regulatory concerns that come down from federal, provincial and regional governments are always topics of discussion.

The society also acts as the local Agricultural Advisory Commission for the provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). All applications for subdivision in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) in the valley are reviewed by the society and our recommendation is considered by the ALC in making its official decision.

This has been one of the society's more time-consuming tasks in recent years. Pressure to break up our valuable agricultural land is constant. Did you know that only about five per cent of all the land in B.C. is in the ALR?

The society also provides an annual bursary to a graduate of Prince Charles Secondary School, aimed at students from an agriculture-based

family or a student who is pursuing an agricultural career through post-secondary education.

The amount given each year varies, depending on funds available. In the past, the society held an annual Harvest Ball in late fall to raise money for the bursary. Currently we hold an auction of agricultural products donated by local growers and businesses at the Creston Valley Fall Fair in September.

The 2013 recipient was Alexandra Hayes, who will be attending university in Lethbridge.

In upcoming issues of I Love Creston we plan to highlight what is happening, growing or ripening in that particular month. In July, watch out for tractors and equipment on valley roads as many farmers will be harvesting and, in particular, moving the first cutting of hay.

Cherry growers will be getting ready for their harvest as well, so more traffic and pickers will be appearing in orchard areas. Tractor traffic does occur 24 hours a day, as various operations require early-morning or late-night activity, as well as during daylight hours.

The farmers' market on Saturdays will continue to be a hub of activity with a variety of local produce available. All sorts of leafy greens for salads, beets, early potatoes, raspberries and other early fruits will be ready, as well as meat, honey, baking and many other fine products. Please support our local growers of all commodities.

Also a reminder to plan on participating in and attending the fall fair Sept. 6 and 7. Our goal is for everyone to be more Ag Aware. ■

*For more information on the Creston Valley Agriculture Society contact Randy Meyer at 250-428-7013 or Kris Vanderweyde at 250-428-2920.*



Alexandra Hayes receiving the 2013 Ag Society bursary from Society president Randy Meyer.

# Wetlands teeming with activity beneath the surface

Story by: Andrea Chapman  
Acting Director of Communications and Education

When looking at an aerial image of the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area (CVWMA), it looks as if there is about one part water for every part of land within its boundaries. That is a lot of water and a whole lot more aquatic life within the large amount of space.

Wetlands are rich in diversity and far more populated than many other ecosystems on Earth. When you take a sample of the water, as many students who visit the CVWMA find out, a whole world of aquatic life zips, whirls and floats before your eyes.

Did you even realize all these creatures were lurking within the murky waters of the wetland?

Many times the life forms we detect in the water are suited with weird and wonderful adaptations that seem like perfect science fiction material.

Take the leech, for example. This wetland inhabitant not only gets a bad reputation as the number 1 reason humans rarely go swimming within the tepid waters, it also has some really interesting body parts that cater to its irksome characteristics.

The first adaptation that really helps this lowly bloodsucker is its ability to attach to its prey. Each end happens to be fitted with its own suction device. That's right; this stretchy, segmented relative of the earthworm has a sucker on the anterior (head) end and posterior (back) end, helping it really hang on for bloodsucking bliss.

In addition, the mouth has an anesthetic for undetectable feeding and an anticoagulant that stops the blood

from clotting. This allows the leech to drink its fill undetected, with blood flowing into its body like a faucet on full blast.

Every insect living below the water has some sort of mind-bending adaptation that suits it just right. Take the water scorpion and mosquito larvae, for instance.

Both have adaptations that allow them to breathe and eat at the same time, as each possesses a snorkeling device on the posterior end. This snorkel allows them to breathe air from the surface while the remainder of the body stays safely below the water surface.

Then there is the aquatic form of the damselfly and even the larval salamander. Both have external gills for raking the O (oxygen) out of the H<sub>2</sub>O. This adaptation provides the oxygen they need without having to break the surface and risk being caught by a waiting predator. That is, until a four-foot-tall, two-legged creature comes along wielding a dip net and a bucket, squealing with delight at the possibilities waiting under the thick carpet of duckweed.

Yes, a child on a dip-netting mission must be a menacing sight for a creature of the aquatic world. Luckily, though they may be caught, poked, prodded and watched at the CVWMA, they will always be released back to life as they know it – at least until the next time, when a group comes along to revel and scream at the creatures of the water. ■

*For more information about programs and special events, check the Web site [www.crestonwildlife.ca](http://www.crestonwildlife.ca). If you have any questions call 250-402-6908 or e-mail [askus@crestonwildlif.ca](mailto:askus@crestonwildlif.ca).*

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# No easy answers for interface wildfire threat

Story by: Daniel Gratton  
Forest Manager, Creston Community Forest

I attended a wildfire conference in Kelowna in April that was organized to mark the 10-year anniversary of the 2003 Okanagan Mountain blaze that destroyed 238 homes, 12 historic railway trestles and 25,600 hectares of forest.

That, however, was only one of 2,500 fires in B.C. that year. By the end of 2003 a total of 266,000 hectares were consumed, resulting in \$375 million in fire-suppression costs.

Looking back, we see that 2003 was uncharacteristically high in terms of forest fires and that for some



*An area treated in December 2010, located along the Big Bear Forest Service road at 1km.*



*An area immediately next to the treated area (above) showing how heavy the vegetation can build up if left untreated.*

years subsequent to this, wildfires have been comparatively low. However, we need to recognize that wildland/urban interface areas are continuously expanding.

A recurring message that several speakers delivered at the conference was that reducing the risk of wildfires is a shared responsibility and complacency is something we cannot afford. Communities need to take collective responsibility for the problem and we all need to develop new attitudes toward fire.

## “Wildfire is nature’s lawn mower.”

The majority of areas at risk are described as the Wildland Urban Interface. These interface communities exist wherever homes are built among trees and other combustible vegetation and are considered desirable places to live.

But what makes these areas so esthetically attractive also make them hazardous because the vegetation is nothing more than a source of fuel for fire. Each year the economic and

social impact of interface forest fires is immense and the problem continues to grow for obvious reasons.

In examining the history of our surrounding forests and the natural role that fire has played, we find that prior to the province's fire-suppression program (established in the early 1900s), fires occurred frequently, forming an integral part of maintaining a healthy and resilient ecosystem.

With the increasing wave of settlement, fire came to be seen as a danger. Successful prevention programs led to aggressive control and shutting fires out of many forested areas.

Fortunately, fire is now viewed as a natural element in any forest or grassland that simply cannot be eliminated. It is nature's way of recycling and reducing the amount of fuel that continuously accumulates on or above the ground.

To quote one fire behaviour researcher from the conference: "Wildfire is nature's lawn mower."

What we have done is unwittingly removed nature's ability to treat forests by fighting fires, resulting in a massive build-up of fuels. In the Creston Valley we historically

## The key to resolving the problem is working together to have a "fire-smart" community.

had "stand-maintaining fires" that burned, on average, every 20 years and supported forests of Douglas fir, yellow pine and larch.

The fire triangle illustrates the three elements required for a fire to ignite: heat; fuel; and, oxygen. If you remove one side of this triangle you extinguish the fire.

If the fire triangle concept is superimposed onto the wildland interface, we now have: human land use; an altered forest (fuels); and, disturbance (fire). Once again, removing one part of the triangle extinguishes the risk due to wildfires.

Of these factors, fuel is the only one that can be managed. Finding solutions to the interface is a challenge beyond the mandate and capabilities of any one agency or group.

The key to resolving the problem is working together to have a "fire-smart" community. Many presenters at the conference stated that the cost of treating the vast areas of B.C. is beyond what the province can afford, although the last presenter of the day denounced all of this by saying, "We can't afford to not solve the problem."

Money spent treating communities at risk would be far less than inevitably paying for fire suppression and insurance losses later on, and perhaps suffering loss of life.

In recent years, several B.C. communities have received funding for fuel treatment projects. Funding sources have included the Union of B.C. Municipalities and the Columbia Basin Trust. ■

*For more information about what needs to be done to reduce the risk of wildfires in and around the Creston Valley, contact the Creston Community Forest or Town of Creston.*

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# The many incarnations of downtown Creston

Story by: Tammy Hardwick  
 Manager - Creston & District Museum & Archives

**B**etween a presentation I gave a few weeks ago at Crestview Village and a social studies assignment at Prince Charles Secondary School this spring, I've had plenty of opportunities lately to talk about some of the changes Creston's downtown area has seen.

It's not just the stores and buildings that have changed: Creston's entire commercial district has relocated – several times.

Creston's first commercial district was merely a small steamship landing, just a little ways north of town and about halfway across the flats. In those days (the mid-1890s), most people were not coming to Creston. They were simply passing through on their way to the booming mining districts around Kootenay Lake.

So we had a little platform on the riverbank where people could unload their belongings from the steamship that had brought them up from Bonners Ferry and load them again onto a different steamship that would take them farther up the lake. The

platform was surrounded by tents that served as offices for the steamship companies, advertising their services on rough, poorly-spelled signs nailed to posts.

All the mining activity soon attracted the attention of the railway companies, which began building into the Creston Valley.

Again, Creston was not their destination. They, like the people, were interested in the mining boomtowns. They, like the people, were going to Kootenay Lake and beyond. But even though Creston was not the railways' destination, the tiny community here definitely benefited from their impending arrival.

Hotelkeepers and storekeepers rushed to take advantage of the large numbers of people who would be coming through Creston on the trains. They pre-empted large tracts of land and quickly built stores and hotels, hoping to attract new settlers and trigger a real-estate boom, with the newcomers of course buying their land from the longtimers for considerably higher prices than the speculators had paid.

So Creston, by 1897-1898, saw its second commercial district grow up around the railway. This was the location of the first Creston Hotel, owned by R.J. Long. There was at least one general store and maybe even a candy store.

It's really too bad that it was all around the wrong railway.

The Great Northern was the first railway to pre-empt land and survey a route through the valley, and that survey is what triggered the original building boom of downtown Creston.

The GNR route, coming north from Bonners Ferry, followed essentially what is now Highway 21, so the commercial district was built down around Fourth and Fifth avenues, in the area of Dr. Marling's old veterinarian office. Unfortunately, the GNR ran into some political and financial issues and, being an American company, could not build north of the border until they got those issues sorted out.

While they were doing that, the Canadian Pacific Railway built in from Lethbridge. Its route went through at the top of the hill so everything moved up. The second commercial district was so short-lived that we don't have a single photograph of it.



*The steamship platform and office tents at Goat River landing: Creston's first commercial district.*



*Looking down the hill from the CPR station platform, with the Munro Hotel (now the Kokanee Inn) on the left: Creston's third commercial district.*

The CPR station was built at the top of what is now lower Canyon Street, just across the tracks from where the Creston Valley Farmers' Market is held today.

The third commercial district developed immediately below it: The Munro Hotel (now the Kokanee Inn) was built in 1898, as was Frank Campbell's Queen's Hotel, soon to be taken over and enlarged as Bob Long's second Creston Hotel.

City directories from 1899 list a total of seven hotels and five stores as well as various other services. Most of these would have been located down the hill from, and within a few blocks of, the CPR station.

Even as Creston's third commercial district was being built, though, there was a move toward the fourth. The CPR station was on the west side of the tracks so it faced away from the downtown area farther down the hill and toward what we now consider the main street. It wasn't long before other businesses began looking in that direction too.

The Methodist Church was built in 1906. The first Catholic Church was built way up on the corner of 10th Avenue and Hillside Street in 1907. The Creston Mercantile store, one

of Creston's largest, was built on the corner opposite the train station the same year.

In 1908, spurred by an imminent huge sale of fruit lands, more buildings went up along the north side of Canyon Road: a furniture store; a restaurant; and, a couple of boarding houses.

There was still plenty happening down below the tracks, though: a waterworks office; a newspaper office; Pacific House hotel and restaurant; S.A. Speers's store (in its first and second locations); a barbershop; the public school; a small high school; and, more. All these were located in the commercial district behind the CPR station.

But the move to a downtown above the tracks was inexorable. The Bank of Commerce moved out of its original location in the Munro Hotel below the tracks and into the mercantile above the tracks, and a few years later built a new building on Canyon Road.

The south side of the street became increasingly built up: Bevan's Garage; a doctor's office; a real estate agency; and, the first fruit co-op's office.

More businesses lined the sides of Victoria Avenue (now 10th Avenue

North). The main street expanded toward the northwest as well, beyond the mercantile: the Imperial Bank; a couple of office buildings; and, the Presbyterian Church.

Speers, whose general store had been located below the tracks since 1907, moved up onto the main street in 1919. He didn't just move his business; he dragged up the entire building and attached it to one he'd just built (now RE/MAX Discovery Real Estate and the former home of Black Bear Books).

In 1920, Charles and Annie Rodgers built the Grand Theatre on the corner of Canyon and Barton Avenue (now 11th), and a few years later the Premier Garage extended the street even farther to the east. A block-and-a-half to the southwest was the mill yard of Creston Lumber Company, built about 1898, periodically enlarged and, by 1920, owned by C.O. Rodgers.

There were still plenty of changes to come, though, because outside of those few blocks both above and below the CPR tracks, most of what we now think of as "downtown Creston" was orchards. ■

*For more information contact the Creston and District Museum and Archives by phone at 250 428-9262, e-mail at [mail@creston.museum.bc.ca](mailto:mail@creston.museum.bc.ca) or the Web site [www.creston.museum.bc.ca](http://www.creston.museum.bc.ca).*

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When looking for a qualified contractor, use all available resources. Word of mouth recommendations from others who have had similar work done

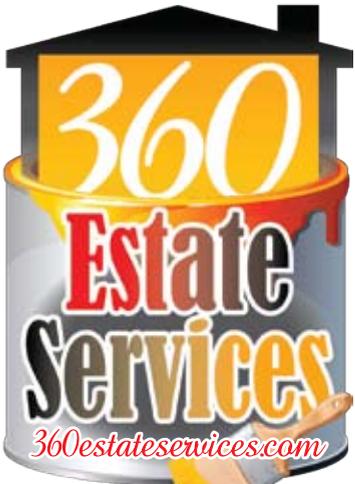
recently, information from local licensing agencies, and Internet resources like [www.handycanadian.com](http://www.handycanadian.com) are all helpful tools.

To narrow down possible candidates, request each contractor's business license number and check it out with the local licensing office. The law requires contractors to have a licence.

Make sure each candidate carries public liability and property damage insurance. Take the time to check with the insurance agency to verify the policy is still in force.

Another basic requirement, one every contractor with employees should meet, is the provision of Workers' Compensation. Any sub-contractor hired by the contractor should also be covered.

If the contractor is uninsured and/or has uninsured employees don't even consider hiring them. Otherwise, you could be sued and held monetarily responsible for worker's



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# Home & Garden

injuries sustained while on your property.

Check with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) to discover which contractors or firms they represent may have had complaints filed against them.

Ask each candidate how long they have worked in the area, and whether or not they have experience with projects similar to your own. If so, get the names of homeowners they completed the projects for and contact them. Verify the information, and ask about the quality of work, and whether or not they would ever use the services of the contractor again.

Do not be concerned about possibly offending the contractor by requesting such information. Reputable contractors will not be offended because they will have nothing to hide.

Narrow your candidate list down further to determine which contractors to get bids from; get bids from at least 3, but the more the better. ■

## Plants that Do Well in Shady Places

Hostas and Lily-of-the-valley are a great perennial for the garden. Other perennials include forget-me-nots, monkshood, bleeding hearts, and bluebells. Ferns are the kings of the shade garden. There are a variety of ground covers such as, periwinkle,

lungwort, various ivy species, bunchberry, creeping buttercup, and sweet woodruff.

Planting too close to tree trunks will rob nursery plants of nutrients. There are wild plants, such as mosses and mushrooms which do well near the trunks of trees.

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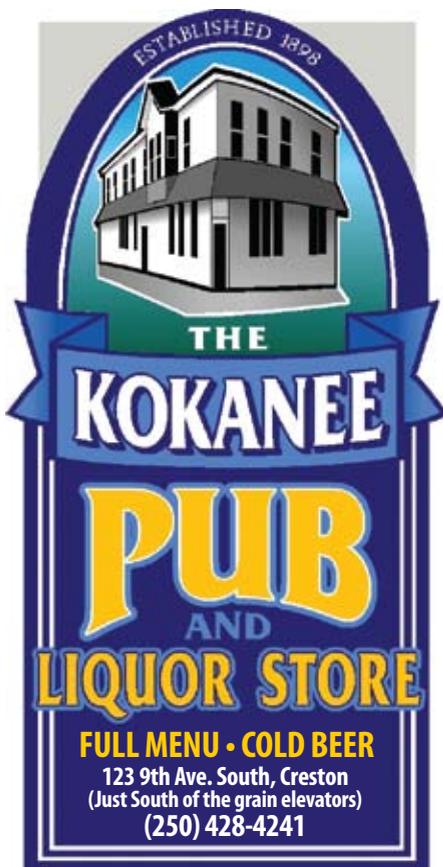
Story by: Kootenay Employment Services

It's Friday afternoon and the staff at Kootenay Employment Services is debating which new logo design we feel will represent ourselves in the community.

Logos and tag lines are all around. We wear them on our clothes and baseball caps, stick them on our cars on bumper stickers or even tattoo them onto our bodies.

These images are powerful and connect us to a specific company and, as well, our experience with that company. There are not too many people around who see a large golden M and don't think of McDonald's hamburgers.

Logos can remind us of a first date, a breakup, places we've been and even places we like to eat.



Companies that have spent hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars on ad campaigns expect to imprint their company image on the public's minds. At KES, our advertising budget is only used to advertise specific programs; we don't have extra funds to create an ad campaign.

## "Logos and tag lines are all around"

As a non-profit organization we are a lot more concerned about helping people than about logo design, which brings us back to our Friday afternoon round-table review of new KES logos. The gist of the conversation revolves around summarizing what we do in a few simple words or a visual image.

We make a list of some of our services:

1. We help people who are not ready to look for work by offering pre-employment workshops, training and opportunities to take certificates in first-aid, WHIMIS, forklift, Serve it Right, etc.
2. We help people who are unemployed find work or self-employment.
3. We help people access funds to gain skills for employment (truck driving, computer courses, trades, health care aides, etc.).
4. We help people maintain their jobs and/or grow their businesses.
5. We help people with disabilities gain skills for employment, find ways to increase their work hours

and find funding for assistive devices.

The list starts to get longer and longer as we try to include all the services we provide and all the groups we try to serve in the community and regionally throughout the Kootenays.

We get stumped. How can we condense all we do into one sentence or three key words?

We try to get to the essence of what we do. We boil it down to the first three words of each service on our list: "we help people."

Great, maybe that should be our new tag line. But then we realize that's too vague. We could be any non-profit organization whose mission includes helping people, whether it's by offering sports, social services, thrift stores, medical clinics or counselling services.

## "Logos can remind us of a first date, a breakup, places we've been and even places we like to eat"

The conversation circles back onto itself and we realize there is no design, no tag line, no magic word that will let people know all that we do. We can let people know we help with employment and self-employment, that we can help the unemployed, the employed and the employers. And that's why we wrote this article. ■

*If you think we can be of help to you, call us at 250-428-5655 or drop by our office at 119 - 11th Avenue North in Creston.*

# Ambassador imparts water wisdom

Story by: Sara Huber, Water Smart Ambassador-Town of Creston & RDCK

The Columbia Basin Trust's Water Smart Initiative has the goal of reducing water use by 20 per cent among participating communities by 2015.

To reach this goal, the Town of Creston and Regional District of Central Kootenay hired me as a summer student to promote water conservation in the Creston Valley.

I am passionate about the environment and water conservation in particular. Because of this passion I will be continuing my education, pursuing a master's degree in sustainability.

The following figures summarize water use by sector.

This peaking factor is what we try to reduce. If not, we are forced to design water and waste-water systems to deal with these peak events, which is financially challenging and a burden on taxpayers.

If we are diligent about reducing our water consumption and peak usage declines, pump sizes, treatment at the waste-water plant and operational costs can all be reduced, and the design lifespan of existing infrastructure can be extended.

As part of my job, I educate the public about simple ways they can reduce water usage without significantly changing their lifestyle, thereby protecting the environment and keeping taxes and unnecessary infrastructure upgrades in check.

In order to promote water conservation through the Water Ambassador Program, I offer multiple initiatives:

1. Free outdoor household water assessments in which I analyse soil conditions, watering practices and needs, and increase efficiencies. During the assessment, homeowners are offered free hose timers or rain sensors.

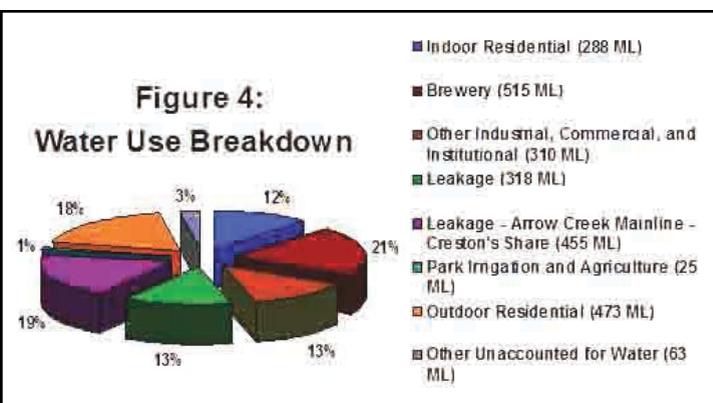
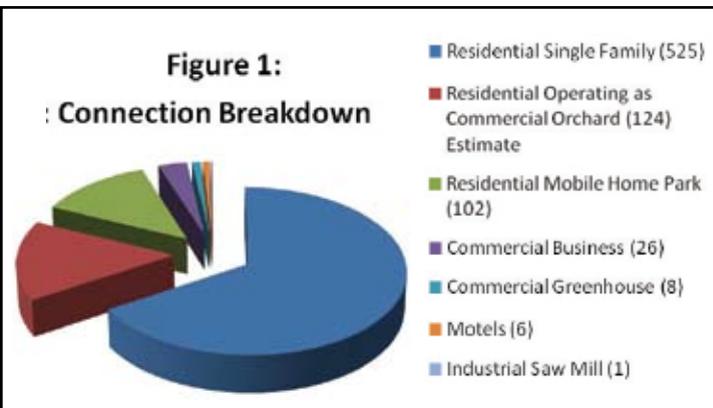
2. A school educational program in which I educate students in grades 4-6. The first school to take part this year was Erickson elementary. The students

learned numerous ways they can conserve water in their homes.

3. Public events such as the Creston Valley Farmers' Market. Look for me every Saturday between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. when I welcome your questions and give an opportunity to discuss water conservation strategies.

Through each of these strategies I hope to help residents lessen the burden on our water resources during the summer months. I look forward to working in this community and meeting many of you in person. Until then, be Water Smart. ■

*As part of the initiative, the town is offering a \$50 residential rebate on all high-efficiency, 4.8-litre-or-less flush toilets. If you are interested in this program, call Town Hall at 250-428-2214 or stop by Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to fill out a rebate form. The town is planning to extend this promotion to the commercial sector to help motivate higher water users to reduce their consumption.*



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# An evening of comedy fit for the whole family



Story by: Footlighters Theatre Society

**W**hat happens when you cross a U.S. boy scout, a feisty hotel owner, a less-than-trustworthy businessman and a group of man-crazy quilters? Simply, an evening of comedy fit for the whole family, when Footlighters Theatre Society kicks off its 19th season with *Headed South* from the Great White North.

Running July 11-13 at Prince Charles Theatre, *Headed South* tells the tale of Waldorf Inn owner Barbara Seville (played by Zoe Fenrick), who has only three days before wily Lynden Renege (Jon Smith) and his two henchmen (Greg and Morgan Benty) throw her and her staff out in the street.

As the end seems near, Asa Hearts (Jesse Moreton) accidentally stumbles across the inn on his way to Florida, offering a flicker of hope that all is not lost.

The play is the most recent in a long string of comedies, often melodramas, put on by the group in the summer.

This one is anything but typical, however, with songs and extra jokes added throughout.

“We expanded on the script and injected some modern humour into it,” says director Jason Smith. “That’s really allowed us to make this into something that will be fun for a wide range of people to watch.”

This may be Smith’s directorial debut but he’s far from a stranger to the stage. His first Footlighters production was *South Pacific* in 2007, and he’s since played villains in two melodramas and *Aladdin*, and performed in the ensembles of *The Quest for Quasi* and *Annie*.

**“We expanded on the script and injected some modern humour into it”**

For the past four years he’s taken on the challenge of creating the sets for most productions.

“I thought it was finally time to direct,” he says with a laugh. “It’s been a challenge – particularly since this show has a cast of 20 – but it’s so fulfilling to see my vision come to life.”

Assisting Smith is Gillian Wells, who recently made her Footlighters debut in the ensemble of *Annie*. She’s always had a love of theatre and has enjoyed the opportunity to try something new, as well as watching the actors grow in their roles, something the audience is sure to notice.

“They’ve put so much thought and energy into making their characters come to life,” she says. “It’s been a real pleasure to see how they’ve developed since we started rehearsals.” ■

*Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for students/seniors and \$5 for children under 12, available at Kingfisher Quality Used Books, Black Bear Books and at the door. Each performance begins at 7:30 p.m.*



## “Sole” searching about children’s foot problems

Story by Jesse Moreton, BSc DC

As with many of my previous articles, the idea for this month’s topic stems from experiences I’ve had in practice.

Recently I’ve been approached by some parents with concerns about their children’s feet. I suspect there are other parents who have similar concerns.

Foot biomechanics are different in kids than in adults and thus their feet have to be treated differently.

It doesn’t take much observation to see that kids’ feet both appear and are used differently. As toddlers begin to “toddle,” they waddle under a wide base of support. Their legs are angled outward and their feet are flat.

Over time, arches develop and walking starts to become more adult-like.

The most common problems with kids are persisting flat feet and in-toeing. Parents should be reassured that having flat feet is normal. The main arch of the foot does not fully develop until six to 10 years of age. Orthotics should not be considered until at least age 6 as the foot is still undergoing development.

Some studies have shown that going barefoot actually reduces the incidence of having flat feet as an adult. The idea is that the foot needs motion and muscle activation for proper arch formation. When the foot is braced with rigid shoes, the

foot loses motion and the muscles are inhibited.

If flat feet persist past six years of age, a flexible orthotic may provide benefit. Orthotics would especially be indicated if the child is athletic. Orthotics would support the arch and improve walking and running performance.

**“It doesn’t take much observation to see that kids’ feet both appear and are used differently”**

In-toeing is another common observation in kids. Many treatment options exist. None of them have been shown to be very effective. These include shoe modifications and exercising specific muscles. The best option is to have good shoes.

So what’s a good shoe? First and foremost, a child’s shoe should have a flexible sole. This allows for the mobility and muscle activation needed for good arch formation. The sole should also be non-slip.



There needs to be enough room for the toes and forefoot, and the upper part of the shoe should be light and breathable. Raised heels should be avoided. Whether the shoe has princesses on it or not should be the last consideration. (Try telling that to a four-year-old girl.)

In summary, let kids run around in bare feet as much as possible. When shoes are needed (as is often the case when going out), follow the guidelines listed above. If you notice persistent flat feet, in-toeing or other problems past six years of age, it’s time to bring them in for a checkup. ■

For more information call Moreton Chiropractic at 250-428-3535 or visit [moretonchiropractic.blogspot.com](http://moretonchiropractic.blogspot.com).

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# Mountains, ways and immortals

Story by: Shifu Neil Ripski

Chinese characters are made up of what are called radicals. Put together, these small pictographs become characters that are generally much more than simple words, instead implying whole ideas when viewed in context.

One of the less talked-about characters is the character Tao usually translated as “the way.”

The character Tao has two radicals. The left side of the character 道 is the radical for a path or road and the right side is actually a picture of an old man wearing a hat. The implication is that the Tao (in the context of Taoist philosophy and subsequently martial arts) refers to

the path followed by the old men in the hats.

Well now, of course we need to know who the old men are and why they are wearing such weird hats. It is referring to the Taoists of ancient

right side is the character shan or mountain, so it is literally the people of the mountains or old men of the mountains that are referred to as immortals.

Taoists tended to retreat from society to the mountains in order to attain an understanding of the Tao or the way of nature. In solitude they could observe reality for what it really is and as such learn how to fit in with reality in a way that makes sense.

**“In Chinese culture the aged are revered, not set aside. They are revered for their wisdom and knowledge”**

times who generally had retreated from the world and, yes, had pretty snazzy hats as well.

In Chinese culture the aged are revered, not set aside. They are revered for their wisdom and knowledge accumulated over a lifetime or many lifetimes of experience, so those who show great wisdom in their old age are looked to as honoured teachers and are asked to help the rest of us find the way.

The Taoists have always been seen as close to nature and people to be looked up to for their wisdom, for it is they who pass on the wisdom of the ancients to the current generations. When considering the martial or philosophical paths it is these people we seek out to increase our understanding and help us along the way.

It is this feeling of revering wisdom of the aged that I truly respect in Chinese culture and feel that our

**“When considering the martial or philosophical paths it is these people we seek out to increase our understanding and help us along the way”**

There are many characters related to this one which generally represent paths to find wisdom or the people who are following the path.

An interesting one of these characters is Xian 仙 translated to English as “immortal.” The left side of the character can be seen as the radical ren or person and the

own society could do well to learn something from. Our own valley has its fair share of 仙, if only we look for them. ■

*Neil Ripski teaches kung fu and tai chi at Red Jade Martial Arts in Creston and also teaches tai chi at the Wynndel Community Hall. He can be reached at 250-866-5263 or at [www.redjademartialarts.com](http://www.redjademartialarts.com).*

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