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What a ride!

'Legendary' cowboy Duane Bruce
has few regrets from a life spent
on the rodeo circuit.

Entertainment

Field set for Creston's
Best Singer finals

Junior Hockey

T-Cats poised to make
deep playoff run

Mayor's Desk


Spring opening planned
for Ramada Inn

Creston's
**Best
Singer**
2012


Top 20 Finalists
Page 16 & 17



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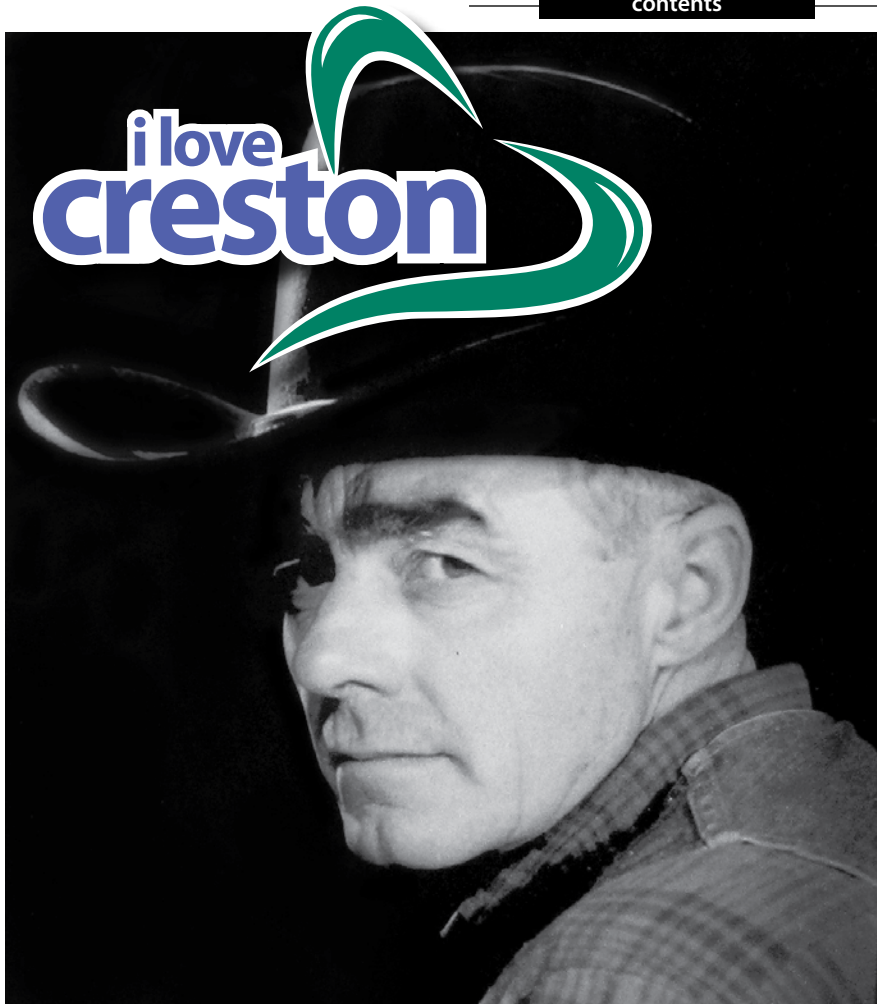
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The Magazine

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Letters to the Editor

Letters to I Love Creston Magazine may be emailed to office@ilovecreston.com or mailed to Box 143, Creston, BC, V0B 1G0. Letters may be edited for clarity and space.

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Guest From the editor

Vern Gorham is a victim of his own success. The man behind the Creston's Best Singer contest has created a franchise that is sweeping the Kootenay entertainment scene and, in the process, outgrowing its valley roots.

Gorham heard some jeers Jan. 19 when he informed the audience at the 2012 Creston Audition Show that the inaugural Kootenays' Best Singer contest would not be held in Prince Charles Theatre because it wasn't big enough. That may have disappointed the local sell-out crowd but the anticipated high demand for tickets is good news for a guy who's banking on these productions to pay the bills.

Unlike most performing arts events in this community which are non-profit, volunteer ventures, Best Singer is Gorham's primary source of income and, as such, requires the biggest venues. Those would be in Cranbrook and Trail, where theatre capacities, at 700-plus, are more than double that of the PCT.



Photo by: Jeff Banman

Vern Gorham, the man behind the Creston's Best Singer contest.

"I don't want my contest held in ordinary gyms or skating rinks if I can help it," Gorham says during a break from preparing for the Creston's Best Singer finals Feb. 9. "There is nothing like singing in a place that was meant to be sung in. An arena or gymnasium usually has awful acoustics and hard, uncomfortable chairs. I want my events to be a showcase of talent and, at the end of the night, to be an experience that won't be soon forgotten. The setting and ambiance found in an auditorium are part of that experience."

The Kootenays' Best Singer will be declared on a yet-to-be-determined Saturday in June after more community contests are held to go along with those already staged in Creston, Nelson and Grand Forks.

"I need to run six contests in the next six months in communities that I have never run a contest before," he says. "The first contest in a new town is always the hardest so I have my work cut out for me.

"It's kind of stressful sometimes. This is my sole source of income aside from a bit of DJing, so this is how I feed my family. But, in spite of the stressful nature of building these contests from scratch in communities that I don't know and that don't know me – and don't initially trust me – I'm having the time of my life."

Gorham's first step is holding private auditions to identify candidates willing to "slay the inner chicken inside of them" by getting on-stage. Many of the contestants have never even sung publicly before.

The format for the Kootenays' Best Singer will be similar to that of the Creston shows, though he's undecided about whether to invite each town's top two singers or just the best. Judging will be conducted by impartial outsiders.

"I am going to try to bring in a recording artist or two from Alberta that I have connections to. Depends how much it will cost to get them here," he says. "Either way I will probably end up bringing in judges from outside of the Kootenays to eliminate any possible perception of bias."

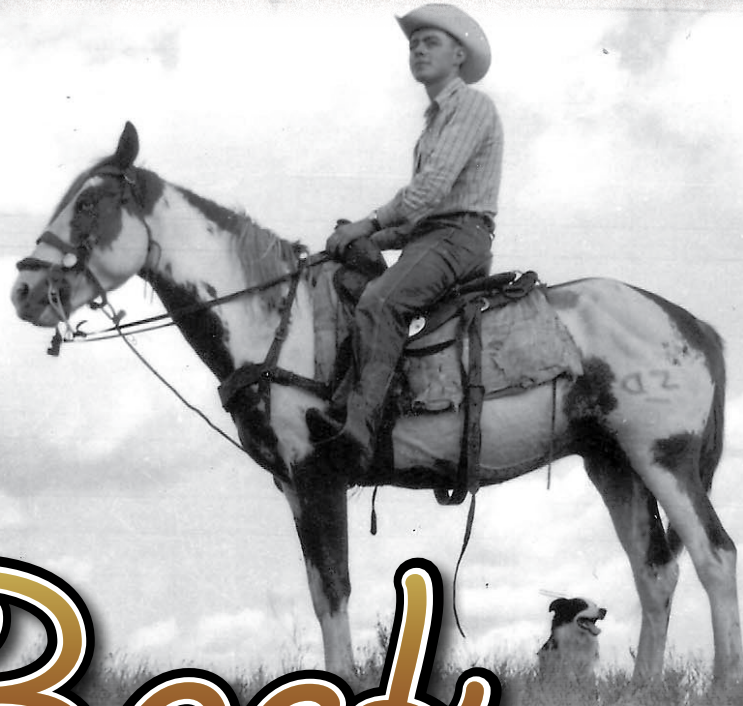
A grand prize of \$1,000 is up for grabs, "plus a bunch of recording studio time to record a song we will have written, plus a music video produced by the Creston film group. All of this costs a fair bit of money and I hope to be hitting up some big corporate sponsors to help out.

"If I can pull this off," Gorham continues, "then I think I would have a difficult time finding anyone who was having a more rewarding experience in their vocation than I will be. Even now, as I have the privilege of listening to these amazing, talented singers in my contests, I often have to pinch myself to see if I haven't died and gone to heaven."

For more on Creston's Best Singer, look for the story inside the pages of this edition of *I Love Creston* magazine.

Profiled in the February issue, meanwhile, is a man who could easily be considered "Creston's best cowboy." Duane Bruce, an Albertan now semi-retired in Canyon, is a recent inductee into the Canadian Professional Rodeo Hall of Fame's Legendary Achievement category. The Legends class was established in 2005 to honour career cowboys whose achievements don't quite qualify them for full Hall of Fame status but whose contributions to the sport are worth remembering just the same.

So saddle up and mosey on into the following pages for this and much more. ■



Back at the Ranch

After learning the ropes as a bronc rider on an Alberta farm, Duane Bruce – professional cowboy, movie extra and Rodeo Hall of Fame honouree – retired to one in the Creston Valley

Duane Bruce has crossed paths with a posse of NHLers, some of them onetime stars with the Calgary Flames. He's also brushed shoulders with Hollywood heavyweights like Brad Pitt, Anthony Hopkins and Jackie Chan.



Older brother Winston, father Lawrence and Duane.



Now he's got his own claim to fame: membership in the Legendary Achievement wing of the Canadian Professional Rodeo Hall of Fame. The Creston Valley cowboy counts the honour as a highlight of a career spent pounding the pavement throughout western North America in search of the perfect eight-second ride.

But perhaps the best aspect of a life devoted to saddle bronc riding is not so much athletic as social. At 72, the Alberta native has long since given up competitive rodeo but the sport remains forever in his blood, and the human ties he fostered over the decades are as strong as ever.

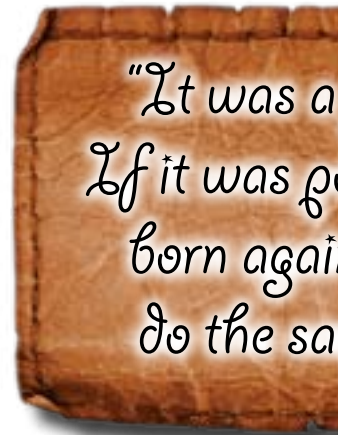
"It was a great life. If it was possible to be born again I would do the same thing," Bruce says in the dining room of his Canyon ranch house. "Rodeo's by far the biggest family in the world as far as having friendships and acquaintances – a lot of great people. I have true friends everywhere."

Bruce has done ample reminiscing since the 2011 Hall of Fame induction ceremony in Calgary. He considers 1963 his finest season, going to the fabled National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas as one of the top 15 saddle bronc riders in the world.

Not that he always measured success by numerical rankings. Just living the life of a cowboy, and eking out at least a partial living doing so, realized the childhood dream of a farm boy from east-central Alberta.

"I grew up listening to rodeo talk, how to ride buckin' horses," Bruce says. "My dad was a bronc rider. He always had (farm hands) wanting to learn how to ride. It was part of the deal. You got some advice you were not going to get any other place.

"As a kid you'd hear guys talk about these rodeos" – Pendleton, Colorado Springs, Houston, Calgary . . . legend rodeos they called them, the premium stops on the pro circuit. "All the kids were drawn to the conversation like a magnet. You'd sit and listen to all of this and absorb all these things. Being 10, 12 years old, you never forget.



Pendleton Rodeo 1962.



Ponoka Old Timers Rodeo 1981.

“That’s where I want to go,” Bruce recalls thinking.

He got there, not without much practice and many hard knocks, but also due in large part to the informal education he received back at the ranch, which he quit school to work at full time as soon as he was old enough – around 15, he reckons.

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“All these things become natural to you,” Bruce says, identifying the secret of a champion in his eyes: the artistry must become second nature. “If you have to think when

you’re on that bucking horse, it’s too late.”

Bruce was 12 when he mounted his first steer. Two years later he won 28 bucks at a local rodeo and might have thought he’d won the lottery, if they had lotteries back in the 1950s.

“It becomes a part of your life, just like if you were born in Rossland

you’d be a skier,” says Bruce, who spent countless hours with big brothers Winston and Clayton and their father, Laurence, in a farmyard pen with a home-made bucking chute, literally learning the ropes year-round. (Laurence and Winston, a former rodeo manager of the Calgary Stampede, were inducted into the Rodeo Hall of Fame in 1995 as a builder and contestant, respectively.)

By the time he was 18 Bruce had qualified for the Alberta pro tour and the next year he entered the big leagues in the U.S.

“It was a great education,” he says. “All these guys you grew up hearing stories about, here they are. All of a sudden I was trying to beat these guys. You’re totally in awe.

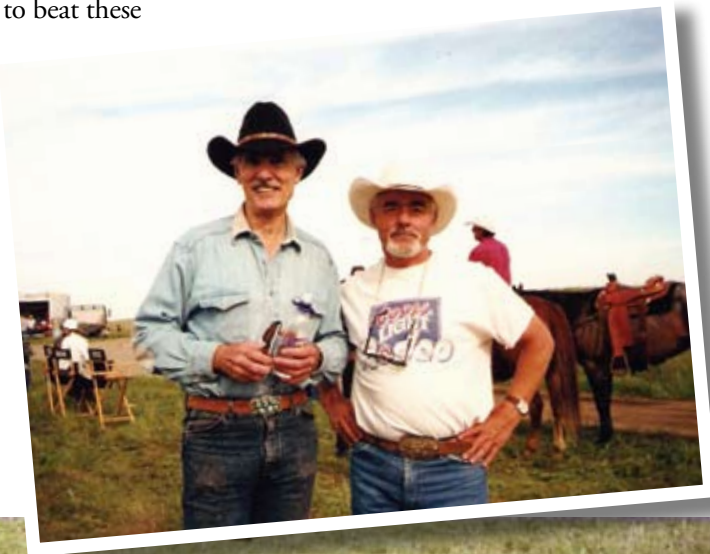
“Once you settle down and things turn around you’re OK.”

Bruce and his newlywed wife Rose (who died in 2006) had the first of their two children the

same year he made it to Vegas, all of which represented a huge life transformation.

“All of a sudden I went from going down the road with three or four guys together, where you split all the expenses, to paying everything myself,” he says. “I had a wife and child and they were along. We travelled like that for three or four years down in the States through the summertime. I’d come home (to Calgary) and work in the wintertime.”

Bruce topped up his rodeo income in the off-season by working on oil rigs or in the sheet metal business, which wound up becoming his second career.



On the set of the TV movie *The Virginian*, 1999. (Above) Dennis Weaver and Duane Bruce.

"I knew rodeo was a great sport to be in but I was never going to make enough out of it that I could ever have anything in the end," he says. "What's going to happen to me when I'm too old to get on bucking horses? I need something."

"I had achieved many of the things I set out to do but the one thing I had not achieved was an education. I realized I needed to get a trade, and I did."

He left the U.S. tour after a few seasons and stuck with pro rodeos in Canada that he could get to on three-day weekends approved by his employer.

His rodeo earnings, though never lucrative, spiked in '63 – enough to cover travel expenses and entry fees.

"My best year was probably \$8,000," he says. "The year I made the finals that's probably what I won. That would have paid everything."

"The only thing I ever got from a sponsor was (from) the maker of Lee jeans. They used to give me two pairs of pants and two shirts every year, and that was like heaven."

The perks may not have been great but the cowboy life was all he had known since he was a lad. His dad rode broncs in the Calgary Stampede and was known as one of the best in the land, according to his son, but couldn't make a living at it either.

"We were raised really poor," Bruce says. "All the kids had their love of riding horses (because) that's all we had for transportation. It came naturally. You always had to be breaking horses to ride, (and) they would buck."

Bruce quit the pros to attend trade school about the time a college rodeo tour sprung up, and in 1970 he became the first Canadian inter-collegiate saddle bronc and all-around champion. Then came the old-timers tour where he won the Canadian 40-plus title in 1977 and made the world finals eight times, finishing second in '80 and '81 in Las Vegas. ("Always lost by a point. Couldn't quite git 'er. That's life," he says.)

He would add the Canadian 50-plus crown to his resume before giving up the sport – though not for good. Unable to stand being on the sidelines, he attempted an ill-fated comeback.

"I went back and got on two more (bucking horses) when I was old, and I shouldn't have," he says, for the first time expressing anything remotely associated with regret. "The last one broke my back in 1992. That was a mistake. I never

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Lonesome Dove, TV series 1995.



Convict Cowboy, TV movie 1994.



Children Of The Dust, TV miniseries 1994.

should have done that. All for the love of the game, I guess.

“It’s like maybe mountain climbing or anything else. When you’re thinking about something could happen – ‘I could get hurt’ – more than you think about making the ride, then it’s time to quit. If that starts to bother you, pretty soon it’s going to happen.

“I was lucky . . . my spinal cord wasn’t affected. That was four months getting over that. I was 52 – time to check out anyway.”

In the meantime Hollywood had come calling, allowing Bruce to establish a sideline as an on-screen wrangler and stunt double in western flicks filmed in the Canadian

Rockies and foothills. The first was Goldenrod in 1976 featuring Tony Lo Bianco and Donnelly Rhodes. Then came Chautauqua Girl, a CBC production in which Bruce had a few lines.

“The first one I worked in with anyone of any significance was Wilford

Brimley in Blood River, him and Ricky Schroder,” he says. “I was part of a posse. I actually showed up in a scene or two around the breakfast table.”

Bruce also worked with John Cusack (The Jack Bow), Dennis Weaver (The Virginian), Pitt and Hopkins (Legends of the Fall), Sidney Poitier (A Good Day to Die), Randy Travis (Texas Rangers) and Chan and Owen Wilson (Shanghai Knights). He also appeared in several episodes of the Lonesome Dove mini-series.

“Movie actors are professionals and they recognize us guys, the horse people, as being professionals (too),” Bruce says. “We could get horses in the spot and make them do things that a lot of people couldn’t do, so they classed us on their level. We got along really good with the movie stars.

“Brad Pitt came over the first day I was on the set and he said, ‘I see you’re new here.’ He shook my hand and said, ‘I’m Brad Pitt and I hope

you enjoy the set and have a good time.’ He didn’t have to do that.”

Bruce got his last casting call in 2000, four years after moving to the Creston Valley.

“I needed to get back to my heritage,” he says. “I’m farm-ranch raised. This is a long ways from a farm ranch but I’ve got horses and corrals and barns and 10 acres and I can ride in the mountains if I like.”

He picks up as much sheet metal work as he wants while easing into retirement, which includes wintering in Yuma, Ariz., with a longtime friend, who is also from a rodeo family.

“We ride horses and go to two or three different rodeos” in Arizona, Bruce says. “You stay involved in your sport because that’s my people. You never lose your love for your chosen event.

“Maybe some people do. I never did.” ■

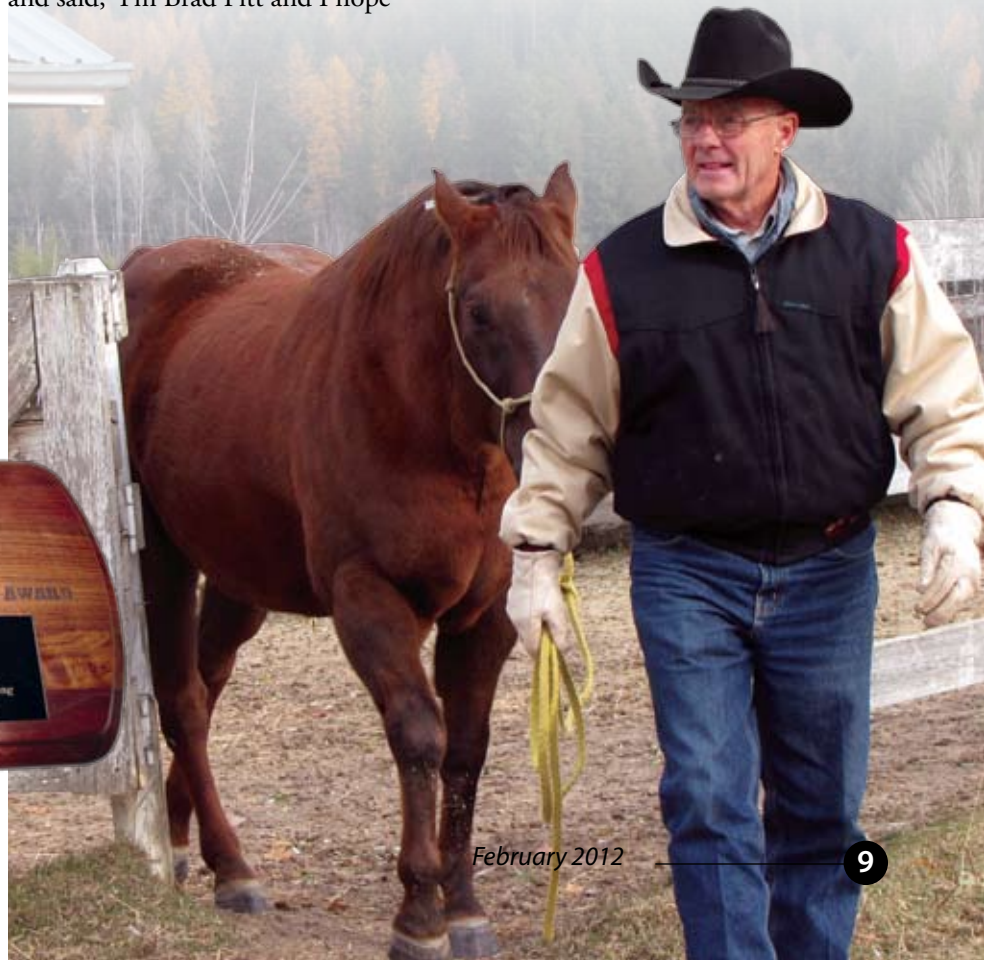
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Canadian Professional Rodeo Hall of Fame belt buckle and plaque

awarded to Bruce for his legendary achievements.

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From the Mayor's desk

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

What topic would you like me to write about?

Since October 2009 I have submitted 28 articles for *I Love Creston* magazine. In these articles I have covered a wide array of topics, from building stronger relationships with the Lower Kootenay Band to council's achievements over the previous three-year term.

However, the single toughest aspect of writing these monthly articles remains the act of choosing a topic that is both fitting and timely. As such, I'm challenging those who read these articles to contact me directly with suggestions for topics that will be of interest to you and others.

Crestbrook Gardens is a new housing development for seniors and persons with disabilities. The 24-unit project, which opened Nov. 1, was the result of a partnership

between BC Housing Corporation, Columbia Basin Trust and the Town of Creston.

For information regarding availability and eligibility, please contact the

Canadian Mental Health Association for the Kootenays at 1-800-257-7756; they have offices in Cranbrook, Trail and Nelson.

Five key factors typically influence or determine eligibility for tenancy:

- Seniors age 55 or older, or persons with a disability.
- Pets are not permitted.
- Property is non-smoking.
- Maximum gross annual income

"The single toughest aspect of writing these monthly articles remains the act of choosing a topic that is both fitting and timely"

cannot exceed \$33,780.

Personal assets may not exceed \$100,000 (not included are RRSPs, personal effects including a vehicle, etc.).

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The rent is determined by a formula closely connected to 30 per cent of a tenant's annual income.

The Ramada Inn and conference centre, with restaurant, has a tentative opening date of May 15. Last month I had an opportunity to tour this three-floor facility, which will have 71 rooms. I was impressed with both the room layout and size, and the third-floor views will be amazing.

Additionally, there are main-floor rooms available for persons with physical challenges or those who require longer-term accommodation.

The separate restaurant (Ricky's All Day Grill) will have seating for 100 in the dining area and 30 in the lounge, plus outdoor patio space.

Much favourable interest is being reported by several organizations and people for booking the venue later this year, once construction is complete.

The Creston Valley Health Working Group (Physician Recruitment Committee) that I have the opportunity to participate in, along with a dedicated team, achieved great success in 2011. A new physician has been recruited from Africa and is practising at the Osprey Medical Clinic (located in the Creston Valley Mall on Northwest Boulevard).

Additionally, three locums have been recruited to provide coverage for existing physicians in the valley.

With ongoing attendance at recruiting events, coupled with the dedication of our talented physician recruiter, we hope for more favourable news regarding physician recruitment this spring. Keep an eye on the CVHWG "quick link" on the town Web site: www.creston.ca.

Policing in the Creston Valley is provided by the RCMP and we are covered by a provincial agreement that provides our local detachment with 13 officers plus civilian staff. On Feb. 8, results of the latest Canada Census will be announced.

If the Town of Creston exceeds an official population of 5,000 we will automatically be moved from a provincial agreement to a municipal

agreement which would see major changes to our local policing. Stay tuned.

These are a few topics that may interest the reader. Let me know what you think. Thanks. ■

Ron Toyota can be reached by phone at 250-428-2214, e-mail at Ron.Toyota@creston.ca or on the web at www.creston.ca.

Check out our new web cam, go to www.creston.ca and then click town web cam.

Creston Valley Business Buzz



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Vegetation management on dikes at CVWMA

Story by: Carla Ahern, Director of Communications, Stewardship and Education Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area

Dikes are important structures in flood protection, and at the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area they are also used to manage water levels within the various pond units.

It is extremely important that the dikes are maintained and inspected to ensure they are structurally sound and working properly. With over 30 kilometres of dikes within the CVWMA, it is a big job.

Vegetation management on dikes in Leach Lake and Corn Creek was undertaken in October/November 2011. The CVWMA conducted this in accordance with the B.C. government's Environmental Guidelines for Vegetation Management on Flood Protection Works to Protect Public Safety and the Environment (available online at: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/public_safety/flood/structural.html).

These guidelines for flood-protection dikes are determined by the public

safety need for visibility for inspection, access for efficient operation and maintenance, minimizing detrimental effects on dike fills and bank protection. We encourage you to check out this document for further information as to why we need to manage vegetation around the dikes.

When the dikes were first constructed at the CVWMA in the early 1970s there was no vegetation cover along the sides or anywhere near the dikes. Over the years, vegetation colonized the side slopes of the dikes in certain areas.

Brushing (removing vegetation from the side of the dikes) has taken place at various locations over the years. Some dikes have not been brushed for several years and, as a result, thick shrubs and large trees have grown on the side slopes in many areas. This has been posing operational hazards for CVWMA staff and made it difficult to visually inspect the dikes for leaks and conduct repairs.

Subsequently, dike brushing was undertaken in October/November 2011 to remove the vegetation off the side slopes in the Leach Lake and Corn Creek areas to increase visibility for dike inspection and provide better and safer access for efficient operation and maintenance of the dikes.

Significant leaks were found along dike 3 in Corn Creek marsh and dike 5 in Leach Lake north of pond 4 during the spring of 2011, and repairs will be required.

A section of dike 5 at Leach Lake had large trees growing on the crest and the dike was no longer accessible.

While dikes in Corn Creek and Leach Lake are not considered flood-protection works, they are utilized to manage water levels within the pond units, so it is important that they are in good repair.

Some concerns have been raised over bird-nesting habitat being removed. It must be kept in mind that the structural integrity of the dikes is

Smile... February is Pet Dental Month



Some dental facts to chew on...

- ✓ Periodontal disease affects approximately 95% of dogs.
- ✓ 85% of cats over 1 year of age show signs of dental disease.
- ✓ The key to periodontal disease prevention is to control the accumulation of plaque.
- ✓ Periodontal disease can result in serious health problems including heart and kidney disease.
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critical to preserving the remaining wetland and that the dikes are artificial structures that were never intended to bear vegetation.

Woody vegetation encroachment is threatening wetland habitat in many areas and negatively affects several species such as the short-eared owl, black tern and red-winged blackbird. Also, woody vegetation encroachment (i.e. trees and shrubs) on wetlands provides perches for predators such as red-tailed hawks, ravens, eagles, etc., and for parasitic species such as the brown-headed cowbird. Predator species often prey on waterfowl nests and broods.

The brushing work was conducted well outside the nesting period so that bird species would not be affected. The amount of vegetation removed is fairly insignificant compared to the amount still present in the area and within the greater CVWMA property.

We acknowledge that the brushing is not esthetically pleasing at this time and we will be working to improve the situation by cleaning up debris along the top of the dikes as soon as the weather permits. In the mean time, please exercise caution and do not venture off the dikes into the recently brushed areas. ■

If you have any questions or comments feel free to contact us at (250) 402-6900 or e-mail us at askus@crestonwildlife.ca.



A newly constructed dike in Leach Lake in 1975.

Dike in Leach Lake before brushing - large tree and many shrubs growing along the top of the dyke.



Dike in Leach Lake after brushing - opened it up for inspection and for access.

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Maisie Matthews • Age 7

Art Classes for Kids is pleased to name **Maisie Matthews** *Little Artist of the Month*. It's always difficult to select a *Little Artist of the Month* because there is so much talent to choose from. The reason Maisie was chosen this month is because not only is she a great artist, she's got spunk like no other. Her personality brings a smile to the instructors face every time and that counts for a lot. Thanks Maisie for being so talented and entertaining!

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Creston's Best Singer contest produces 20 semifinalists



Photos by: Jeff Banman

Submitted

Prince Charles Theatre was packed to capacity Jan. 19 to witness a wonderful spectacle of local musical (and other) talents in a memorable night of singing.

The Creston's Best Singer contest is now in its third year, although the first contest was actually held less than 15 months ago in November 2010.

This night (also known as the Audition Show or quarterfinals) showcased a wide variety of singers – both young and not so young, female and male – singing many different musical styles. There were

30 singers in total ranging from nine years old to 77 years young.

For further clarification, the Audition Show is where audience members themselves get to act as the judges. The first couple hundred spectators received a scorecard and pencil with instructions to rate each of the 30 singers from one to 10.

All scorecards were gathered at the end of the night and the following day the votes were tallied under the strictest of security, as only the top 20 vote-getters would move on to the semifinals/finals to be held again at the Prince Charles Theatre on Feb. 9. The announcement of

the top 20 was delayed so that it could be made exclusively in the pages of this month's I Love Creston magazine.

As a side note there was very little difference in the vote count for the bottom 20 singers. Unfortunately, only the top 20 advance and thus the remaining 10 singers will have to wait for next year. But there was little difference so don't be discouraged, and please come back again in 2013.

In another exclusive for Creston, the Grand Forks "best singer," Cecilie Regenber, will be attending the semifinals/finals night in Creston.

“There was very little difference in the vote count for the bottom 20 singers”

For those who don't know, the Creston's Best Singer contest is now a segment of the Kootenays' Best Singer contest. Best Singer shows have already been held in Nelson and Grand Forks, and several more contests will be held in East and West Kootenay communities such

as Trail, Castlegar and Cranbrook in the next five months.

The top singer from each community will square off at a regional (all-Kootenay) contest to be held in June. Regenberg will sing the song she won the Grand Forks competition with when she appears in Creston this month. She is an amazing young singer and you will love hearing her perform.

Regenberg will also be scouting out the local talent to see who she will be competing against at the regional contest in June. ■

Tickets for the semifinals/finals on the ninth will be available at Black Bear Books and Kingfisher Quality Used Books. Prices are \$10 for adults and \$8 for seniors, students and children.

If any tickets are left they will be \$12 at the door. Last year only 20 tickets were available at the door and they were sold an hour before the contest started, so get your tickets early.



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 Strings - March 6 & 7
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Stars Concert:
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Schedule information:
www.crestonfestivalofthearts.ca



Creston's Top 20 Singers



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Simone Wiebe



Karen Jensen



Marybeth St...



Kelly Mehrer



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Katie Foy



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Alessandra Toniato



Treena Blackmore



Jesse Dumas
& Jarius Stonehouse

*Many thanks to Jeff Banman
for providing the photos.*

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ty

Creston's downtown grain elevators stand as a testament to valley's past

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

The history of the grain elevators in Creston actually precedes their construction by several decades. They were built to accommodate wheat and grain crops coming off the flats along the Kootenay River and, consequently, would never have been built were it not for the determined efforts of the people who reclaimed the flats from the annual floods.

Diking the flats was attempted, and failed, several times, starting in the early 1890s.

In 1934-35, the Goat River was diverted and dikes were built along the length of the Kootenay River, finally keeping the flats safe from floods and turning them into rich agricultural land – primarily grain fields. By September 1935 it was being predicted that the first wheat crop off the flats would amount to 165,000 bushels, with the land yielding as much as 35 bushels of wheat per acre.

This was not technically the first crop of wheat off the flats. Farmers had been gambling against the river for



many years and several crops were raised successfully before 1935. These, however, were fairly small – certainly nothing like the vast fields of grain planted after the diking was complete.

Enthusiasm and optimism ran high. There were a few poorer-quality fields but for the most part the grains grown on the Creston flats were high quality and high yield.

One major issue was the quota established by the Canadian Wheat

Board – the number of bushels of wheat that farmers were allowed to ship through the grain elevators. The board's quota was very low; only a few bushels per acre could be sent to the elevators. But the farmers in Creston were routinely getting much higher yields.

The farmers took a two-fold solution to the problem. First, they stored their excess wheat to have it on hand if the crops ever failed. They rarely did, so granaries filled with surplus wheat popped up all over the flats.

In 1935, the principal crops were wheat, barley, oats and rye. By the early 1970s, a shift to alfalfa, clover, potatoes and hay had occurred.

In 1971, the amount of wheat being shipped through the grain elevators had dropped so much that the United Grain Growers elevator (formerly Midland and Pacific) was sold to C. McNiven, and A.B.



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Staples had bought the United Grain Growers elevator at Wynndel. Only the downtown Alberta Wheat Pool elevator was still being used as a public grain handler.

Ten years later, the Creston Valley Advance reported that the Creston Valley was not shipping enough grain to justify keeping even the Alberta Wheat Pool elevator open. Its closure was scheduled for the end of the 1981-82 crop year. The land, well-suited to high-production diversified row crops, was considered too valuable for growing grain.

Over the next 15 years, occasional threats of demolishing one or both grain elevators would lead to rallies and meetings to save them and generate ideas for what could be done with them. As early as May 1981, a downtown redevelopment study suggested the elevators could

be given trellises, plants, walkways and so on and turned into a public market.

In 1997, the 1940 annex of the Alberta Wheat Pool elevator was torn down but the rest of the structure got a reprieve when it was purchased by J.R. Blackmore and Sons for grain storage.

Today, the elevators remain one of the most significant heritage sites in the Creston Valley. Their age makes them historic buildings in their own right but their significance extends much further. They represent an

agricultural industry that exists throughout Creston's history. They represent the determination of the people who reclaimed the flats, who established the valley's grain industry, who kept it alive despite the obstacles they encountered. ■

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

(Excerpt from A History of Creston Downtown Grain Elevators written by the Creston Mainstreet Grain Elevator Conservation Society and the Creston Museum and Archives. Copyright © 2008)



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Dragons and artists – just cause for celebration

Story by: Lori Wikdahl, Artist Director, Creston Community Arts Council

In China, celebrations have begun to breathe life into the Year of the Dragon. The Chinese New Year is celebrated in February and has 12 different yearly phases in its cycle, much like western astrology's 12 phases of the zodiac in our calendar year.

The dragon, however, is the exception, actually coming to life on Jan. 23.

We westerners view February as the dead of winter. Most of us spend our time trying to figure out how to beat cabin fever or the winter blahs. Some migrate like the birds, looking for the sun in the south, while others try to find just cause for a celebration.

A February event sponsored by the Creston Community Arts Council is just that. Dragons and Artists, a Chinese New Year theme night on Feb. 18 from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Rotacrest Hall, will be a fund-raiser for ArtWalk.

When the doors open for the evening there will be as many as 10 artists (myself included) of various



Artists & Dragons

Celebrate Chinese New Year in Creston
Saturday, February 18th • 7:00 pm • Rotacrest Hall, Creston

- Artists in action
- Artwork raffled
- Refreshments
- Entertainment

Tickets: \$10
 Available at **Black Bear Books & Kingfisher Books**

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mediums at work on pieces that will be raffled off at the end of the evening. As you watch them create you will be able to purchase raffle tickets for a dollar apiece, then place them in the draw box of the artist whose piece you've just got to have.

At 9:30 p.m., emcee Simon Lazarchuk will collect the boxes and the draws will be made.

At 7:30 the Red Jade Martial Arts studio will perform a dragon dance that will be followed by a martial arts demonstration.

Jason Deatherage and friends will provide the evening's music and refreshments will be available, with appetizers created by librarian Ann Day (a woman of many talents). There will be, of course, a fortune cookie for everyone.

Tickets for the event are \$10 and are available at Black Bear Books and Kingfisher Quality Used Books.

www.ilovecreston.com

As ArtWalk enters its 17th year it has a new driver at the wheel. Andrea Revooy, a ceramic artist in Creston, has taken over the helm from Nora McDowell and Frank Goodsir, who had been the event's organizers for the past 16 years.

Revooy was a participant in ArtWalk prior to taking on this new challenge. As a participant in this event myself I was happy to hear that someone was going to ensure the event continued.

Revooy has incredible enthusiasm and lots of new ideas which she hopes will create a "must-see" ArtWalk, not only for Creston Valley and East Shore visitors but the local community as well.

If you are interested in helping to organize the next phase of ArtWalk,

or participating in it, Revooy will be one of the artists at work on the 18th, giving the opportunity to meet her and hear her ideas, and an opportunity to find out what ArtWalk is all about.

The last fortune cookie I opened said: "The tide of change approaches." I'm looking forward to riding the waves. ■

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Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day Fun Facts

www.mydearvalentine.com

Valentine Cards

Every year around 1 billion Valentine cards are sent. After Christmas it's a single largest seasonal card-sending occasion.

Teachers receive the most Valentine's Day cards, followed by children, mothers, wives, and then, sweethearts. Children between ages 6 to 10 exchange more than 650 million Valentine's cards with teachers, classmates, and family members.

Valentine Flowers/Roses

Of the 73% of people who buy Valentine's Day flowers are men, while only 27% are women.

The red rose was the favorite flower of Venus, the Roman goddess of love. The color red stands for strong



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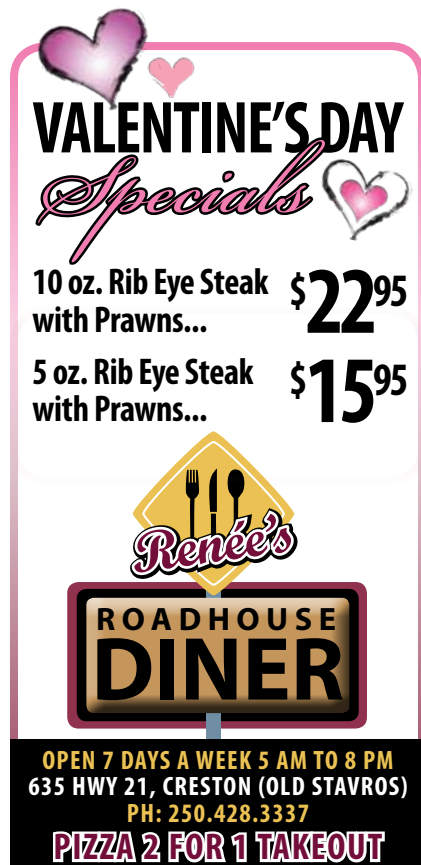
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romantic feelings making the red rose the flower of love.

Cupid

Cupid is a symbol of Valentine's Day. Cupid was associated with Valentine's Day because he was the son of Venus, the Roman god of love and beauty. Cupid often appears on Valentine cards and gift tokens holding a bow and arrows as he is believed to use magical arrows to arouse feelings of love.

Love Letters and Poems

Verona, the Italian city where Shakespeare's play lovers Romeo and Juliet lived, receives about 1,000 letters every year sent to Juliet on Valentine's Day.

The oldest surviving love poem till date is written in a clay tablet from the times of the Sumerians, inventors of writing, around 3500 B.C.

Wear your Heart on your Sleeve

In the Middle Ages young men and women drew the names from a bowl to see who would be their Valentine. They would wear this name pinned on their sleeves for one week. This was done so that it becomes easy for other people to know your true feelings. This was known as "to wear your heart on your sleeve".

Valentine Gifts

On February 14th wooden love spoons were carved and given as gifts on Valentine's Day in Wales. Hearts, keys and keyholes were favorite Valentine decorations on the wooden spoons. This Valentine decoration meant, "You unlock my heart!"

Amongst the earliest Valentine's Day gifts were candies. The most common were chocolates in heart shaped boxes.

The Valentine Heart

The heart is associated to Valentine's Day as it is considered the source of all human emotions. The custom of drawing a heart shape is supposed to have come from early attempts to draw an organ that no one had seen.

Birds

Lovebirds are often associated with Valentine's Day. These lovebirds found in Africa, are brightly colored and sit very close together with their mates, earning them their name.

Doves are also part of the Valentine tradition. These birds are symbols of love and loyalty because they mate for life.

Love knots

A love knot is a symbol of undying love, as its twisting loops have no beginnings or ends. ■

VALENTINE'S DAY SPECIALS

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New employment skills program for young adults coming to KES

Story by: Kootenay Employment Services

It's often difficult for young adults, aged 15-30, to find full-time employment in Creston. Perhaps they need to upgrade their skills to get the job they want or they may need help determining which jobs would best match their current skills.

Other barriers to finding a job or career can include lacking job search skills, not understanding how to assess their current skills, having young children to care for or having a learning disability. Any of these issues can make it difficult to move forward

toward employment.

Starting on Feb. 27, Kootenay Employment Services will be offering a unique two-phase, 15-week program called Making the Transition, designed specifically to give better employment skills to young adults who have left school.

The first phase of the program involves attending five weeks of workshops at the KES office. Participants will have an opportunity to upgrade their computer skills, including MS Word and MS Excel, and learn basic bookkeeping skills on the computer and for manual systems.

Participants will develop job search skills by creating resumes and cover letters and practising their job interview skills. The workshops also offer participants a chance to learn more about themselves through personality assessments and life skills coaching.

Certificates such as first-aid, Food Safe, Serve it Right and Workplace

Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) can be completed at the local College of the Rockies campus with funding provided by KES to further prepare them for the workforce.

Youths participating in the program will be paid a training allowance during the five-week workshop period. KES can help parents of young children access child-care subsidies through the Ministry of Children and Family Development to help free up the time they need to attend classes.

After completing the first phase, youths move into paid work experience with a local employer, as KES can offer up to 10 weeks of paid work placement.

To be considered for the program, young adults must first meet with a KES employment counsellor. ■

If you are interested or know someone who might benefit from this unique program, contact KES by calling (250) 428-5655 or e-mailing kesadmin@kes.bc.ca to set up an appointment. KES offices are at 119 - 11th Avenue North in Creston.

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Seeking balance through martial arts

Story by: Shifu Neil Ripski

The understanding of the self is the true path we are on when training in the martial arts. We are coming from different backgrounds because something about the arts draws us in. Whether it be for self-defence knowledge, general health or a spiritual journey, we all start for different reasons.

However, the differing reasons we start with all reward us with what we are looking for from the same path. This is why the martial arts feature so prominently in our minds as a way to maturity as human beings.

What is interesting is that what we generally think we are coming to the class for is most likely not where we will find the information and experience we are looking for.

For instance, the young man who comes wanting to learn to “fight” needs to understand himself more to realize why this idea is flawed, and should be sent to practise the softer side of the arts. Qi gong (pronounced chee gong) training, studying the relationships in your own body, starts to allow you to study the relationships you have with other people and ultimately yourself.

A person who wants to “fight” most likely has issues with self-confidence and/or their ego. They need to practise forms and meditate in order to learn about fighting.

Of course they too will spar and work on the combative side of the art but in order to be good at it they will have to understand themselves more clearly.

One of the things I find wonderful about the arts is the self-study. There is no greater or quicker way to find out who we are than to be placed in stressful situations.

“A person who wants to “fight” most likely has issues with self-confidence and/or their ego”

What is more stressful than combat? Even simulated combat? It is there we find out if we are cowards or over-confident, self-denying or self-gratifying, focused human beings.

Generally speaking the student who arrives with an idea of what they

want to learn does not realize that it is the counter-intuitive training that will teach it to them.

Tai ji people must see the martial side in order to receive the health benefits of the art as it changes the method of the body’s movement. The people who want to be fighters have to work on themselves to understand what they are really seeking.

In the hard seek the soft; in the soft seek the hard. Without balance we burn up or fade away.

Happy February! ■

Neil Ripski teaches kung fu and tai chi at Red Jade Martial Arts in Creston. He can be reached at 250-866-5263 or at www.redjademartialarts.com.

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Fernie or Kimberley await Thunder Cats

Photo by: Jeff Banman

Story by: Creston Valley Thunder Cats

Welcome to the last month of the 2011-12 Kootenay International Junior Hockey League regular season in Creston.

It is with mixed feelings that we reach this point in our season. It is an exciting time as the Creston Valley Thunder Cats continue to play a great game on the ice for the enjoyment of their fans.

For the volunteers it is nearing the end of our busiest six months of the year. (Trust me, the other six months are only slightly less busy.)

And, from my experience as a billet mom, it is bittersweet as you have come to accept the boys placed in your home as part of your family, and hopefully you have enjoyed having them in your home. Now the time is coming to let them go back to their real families. Many long-lasting friendships are born from billeting a player.

February brings us four regular season home games, one against each of our Eddie Mountain Division rivals. We couldn't have planned a better final four to take on.

The race for our division is not as tight as it has been in years past. The ones to watch are the Kimberley Dynamiters and Fernie Ghostriders as they battle for first place. Hopefully we can join in the battle too.

On Feb. 18, the last regular season game, we will be publicly retiring the jersey number of home-town Thunder Cats alumnus Travis Ludwar. We will be providing information and statistics from Ludwar's junior career at the game and hope that his local supporters will come out one more time to give him a hearty cheer.

Playoffs will be starting the weekend of Feb. 24. Please watch around town for a schedule or check out our Web site at www.crestonvalleythundercats.com.

Creston Valley will be facing either Kimberley or Fernie in the first round. Both of these opponents are truly worthy foes and the Thunder Cats will need all the fan support they can get to give the players the extra energy boost that only a home-town crowd can produce.

The boys and executive members have been out and about selling raffle tickets on a 2011 Chevy Cruze (or a TV with surround sound or one of eight cash prizes). We hope you've had a chance to pick up your ticket and support the T-Cats.

This raffle is our major fund-raising event of the season and local support is much appreciated. For those who have bought tickets, thank you and good luck. The draw will be made Feb. 26.

We hope that you enjoyed meeting the Thunder Cats in last month's issue of I Love Creston. Thank you to the staff at I Love Creston for being such amazing supporters of the Thunder Cats this season. The two-page layout looked awesome. ■

For more information visit www.crestonvalleythundercats.ca

Come out and cheer on your local Junior B Team!

February Home Games
All game start at 7:30.

SaturdayFeb. 4. Columbia Valley
FridayFeb. 10Fernie
FridayFeb. 17Kimberley
SaturdayFeb. 18Golden

Playoffs Start Feb. 24!

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Dark chocolate – a health-giving wonder

Story by: Maya Skalinska
Master Herbalist, Registered Herbal Therapist

This is the month when it seems like we're surrounded by chocolate. From grocery store displays to advertisements, messages are clear: buy chocolate this Valentine's Day.

I say it's a pretty good excuse to treat ourselves with this amazing health-giving food . . . as long as we choose the right one: dark chocolate, with cacao content of 70 per cent or higher, nothing less.

For centuries cacao bean has been the "food of the gods," sacred in many cultures, considered a superfood and bearing medicinal properties. Cacao is the main ingredient in dark chocolate and it is the cacao bean that carries all the health-giving components.

Before I go into all the wonderful health benefits of dark chocolate, remember that I am only talking about dark chocolate containing at least 70 per cent cacao. This is very important, as all the studies are based on minimum 70-per-cent cacao content and chocolate without any fillers.

Chocolate made from low-quality cacao beans that are mass-produced, like those used in production of popular brands of candy bars, have absolutely no health benefits. And due to the fillers, synthetic flavours and highly processed sugars, these products only cause harm to our health.

Also, milk chocolate only has 35 per cent or lower cacao content so it does not qualify as a "good for you" choice. Even candy bars claiming to be "dark chocolate" most often only have 50 to 55 per cent cacao, so read the labels if you want any health benefits from your chocolate.

OK, back to the health-giving gifts dark chocolate has to offer. It is truly a food for the heart due to its high magnesium and flavonoid content.

The magnesium helps to relax the heart and the whole muscular system. The flavonoids are potent antioxidants which help lower high blood pressure, reduce cardiovascular disease and lessen the risk of strokes.

Many studies have also linked the high antioxidant levels with lowering the LDL (bad) cholesterol while leaving the HDL (good) cholesterol unchanged.

"It's a pretty good excuse to treat ourselves with this amazing health-giving food"

Pretty good so far, for a delicious treat, and it only gets better. Dark chocolate contains an amino acid called tryptophan, a nutrient essential in serotonin production, which is your feel-good neurotransmitter.

Not only does it make you feel good, dark chocolate releases two other neurotransmitters. One is PEA, short for phenylethylamine, and the other is anandamide. PEA is naturally released in our brains when we're in love. Anandamide is named after "ananda," which means bliss in Sanskrit. It is the chemical responsible for an elevated state of mind.

All these components give chocolate an absolutely brilliant chemical structure. No wonder we give chocolate as an offering of love.



So if you are planning to purchase chocolate for your loved ones you might as well choose the health-, love- and bliss-giving kind of dark chocolate. Considering cacao production's dark history with slave trade, purchasing chocolate that has the Fair Trade stamp helps ensure equity, especially since the cacao bean is grown in some of the world's poorest regions.

These days, all Fair Trade promoting companies only deal with the highest quality cacao beans, so it's always a safe choice, and worth every penny. ■

Maya Skalinska is a master herbalist and a registered herbal therapist offering iridology, herbal medicine, nutrition consultations and flower essences in Crawford Bay and at Vital Health in Creston. For more information or to book an appointment call 250-225-3493.

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Out & About

Submitted by: www.crestonevents.ca

February 4

Creston Valley Thunder Cats vs. Columbia Valley Rockies

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**February 10
Creston Valley Thunder Cats vs.
Fernie Ghostriders**

Watch exciting Junior B Hockey action!
Location: CDCC
7:30pm
Contact: Joanne Endicott
Phone: 250-428-3965
www.crestonvalleythundercats.com

**February 10
Friday Night Supper at the
Legion**

Bring your friends! Everyone is welcome.
Location: Legion,
6pm
Contact: The Legion
Phone: 250-428-4252

**February 10
SAMS presents: The Jazz
Council**

Location: Snoring Sasquatch
Doors open at 7pm
Show time at 8:00 pm
Contact: Louise n'ha Ruby
Phone: 250-424-5571
www.snoringasquatch.com

**February 17
Creston Valley Thunder Cats vs.
Kimberley Dynamiters**

Watch exciting Junior B Hockey action!
Location: CDCC
7:30pm
Contact: Joanne Endicott
Phone: 250-428-3965
www.crestonvalleythundercats.com

**February 18
Creston Valley Rod &
Gun Club Annual Wild
Game Dinner**

Dinner, Fundraiser and Trophy Awards
Location: CDCC
Doors open 4:30 pm
Trophy Presentations 5pm
Dinner 7, Dance 9
Contact: Mike Keeling
Phone: 250-428-7329

**February 18
Creston Valley Thunder Cats vs.
Golden Rockets**

Watch exciting Junior B Hockey action!
Location: CDCC
7:30pm
Contact: Joanne Endicott
Phone: 250-428-3965
www.crestonvalleythundercats.com

**February 18
Artist and Dragons**

*Celebrate Chinese New Year in Creston.
Artists in action, Artwork raffled,
Refreshments and Entertainment*
Location: Rotacrest Hall
7 to 10pm
Fundraiser for Creston Arts Council
and Artwalk

**February 18
Creston Judo Club - 1st Annual
Seafood Dinner Fundraiser**

Creston Judo Club fundraiser
Contact: Rick
Phone: 250-428-7425

**February 24
Friday Night Supper at the
Legion**

*Bring your friends!
Everyone is welcome.*
Location: Legion, 6pm
Contact: The Legion
Phone: 250-428-4252

**February 24 to March 11
Creston Music Festival 2012**

Adjudicated Classes
Piano - Feb 24 & 25,
United Church Hall
Strings - Mar 6 & 7,
Presbyterian Church
Stars Concert - Mar 11,
2:30,
PC Theatre
Contact: Gail Reed
Phone: 250 428-2076
www.crestonfestivalofthearts.ca



**Creston Valley
Gleaners
Hours of Operation**

Main Store Tue & Fri 9:30 am to 4 pm,
Thurs 4 pm to 7 pm, Sat closed

Gleaners Truck Tue & Fri 9 am to 4 pm,
Thurs 4 pm to 7 pm, Sat closed

Food Bank Tue & Fri 9 am to 1 pm
Drop-Off Mon to Fri 6 am to 6 pm
Sat & Sun 3 am to 6 pm

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Jeff Banman - 250.402.6482

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www.jeffsphotosnmotion.com

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How to Enter:

Step 1 – 'Like' our Facebook page!
Step 2 – Submit your article by emailing it to website@ilovecreston.com.
Step 3 – If we publish the article in the Daily Buzz or use it in anyway, your name will be submitted into the draw.

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