

March 2016

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Feature

Meet the Creston Valley Chamber of Commerce's new executive director

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HISTORY

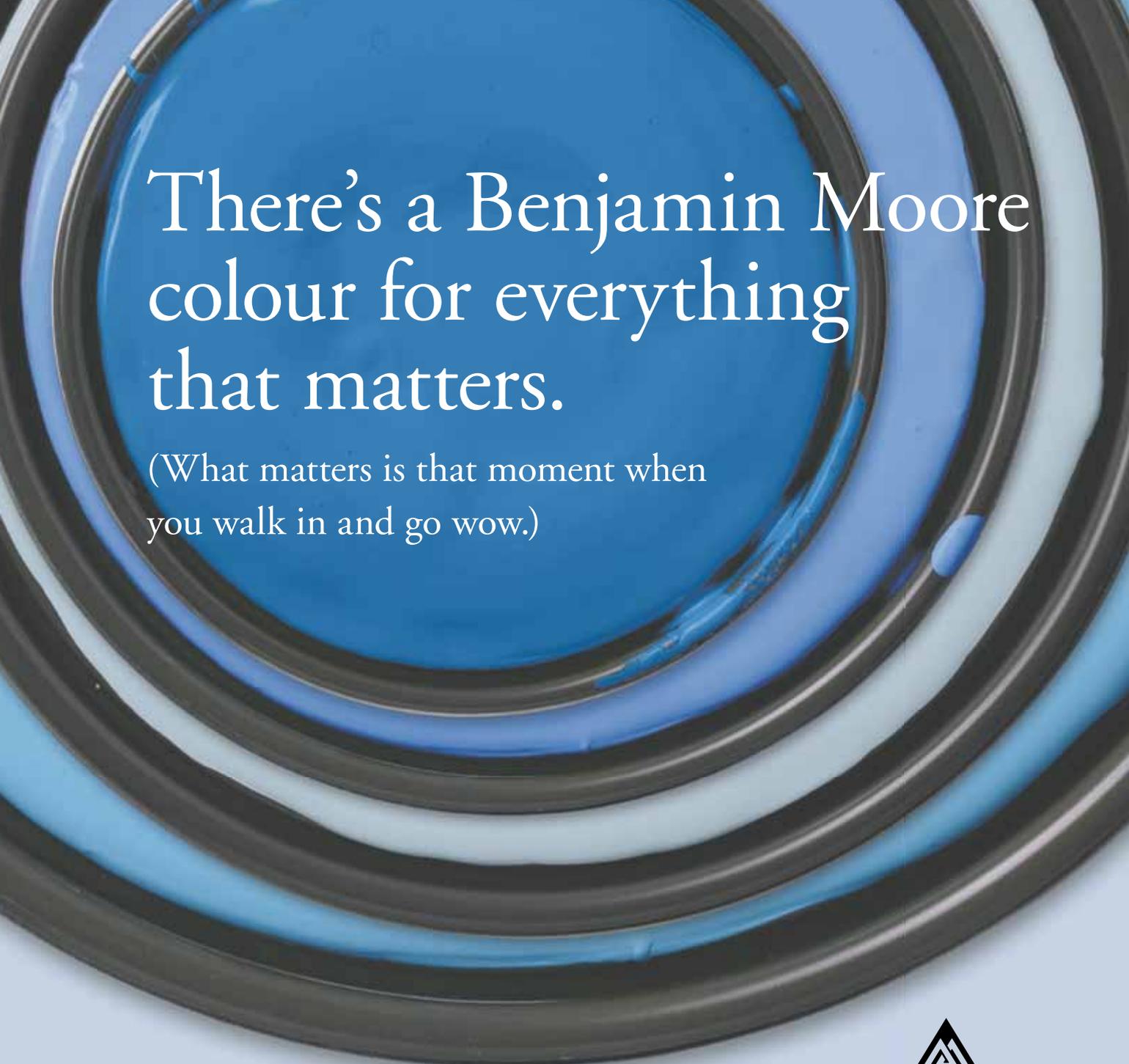
Tracking changes in Creston journalism

ENTERTAINMENT

Footlighters play a Cinderella sequel

SENIORS

The life and times of Bertha Reiten



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SENIORS

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Wendy Franz Photo

FEATURE: NEW CHAMBER DIRECTOR

Mike Fitzpatrick assumed the role of Creston Valley Chamber of Commerce executive director last month, and plans to make the chamber and business community stronger than ever.



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The Magazine

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BUSINESS SAFETY

Fire Safety Tips for the Workplace

Fire Prevention

Keep your work area free of waste paper, trash and other items that can easily catch fire.

Check on your electrical cords. If a cord is damaged in any way, replace it. Try not to lay cords in places where they can be stepped on, as this will contribute to deterioration of the protective outside coating.

Don't overload your circuits.

Turn off electrical appliances at the end of each day.

Keep heat producing equipment away from anything that might burn. This includes copiers, coffee makers, computers, etc.

In the Event of a Fire

Upon finding a fire, call 911 immediately and don't hang up with the emergency responder until told to do so.

Close doors when exiting to help limit the spread of smoke and fire throughout the building.

Never use elevators during an evacuation.

Follow the escape plan and meet at a pre-determined place outside of your building and away from danger. Conduct a headcount to ensure all of your staff has evacuated.

The best way to ensure the safety of your staff is through fire prevention and preparation. Talk with your staff about fire safety in the workplace today.

Did You Know?

The BC Fire Code prohibits the use of drop bars, chains and even double



key locking devices on exit doors at any time. These types of features are a threat to the employees, public and responders safety during an emergency. Be sure to use proper locking mechanisms compatible with the doors in the building that you intend to secure.

Door hardware such as "panic" hardware and automatic door closures shall be maintained for the life of the door. A good rule of thumb is that a door shall remain "as is" from the date of installation in accordance with the BC Building Code. It is common to see manual hold-open devices employed (door wedges) or self-closures removed after the installation of the door is complete. This can severely jeopardize the safety of building occupants during a fire emergency. It is mandatory that a business

keeps record of all fire and life safety system inspections, testing and maintenance on site for review by the Municipal Fire inspector or Fire Prevention Officer.

When contracting a technician to service your business' fire protection systems (alarm panel, sprinklers, fire extinguishers, standpipes, fire pump), it is required by the Town of Creston Fire Services Bylaw No. 1774, 2011 that the fire protection technician is certified by the association known as the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC (ASTTBC). Alarm panels can also be inspected and tested by a technician recognized by the Canadian Fire Alarm Association (CFAA).



TOWN of CRESTON

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Nothing but **NATURE**

Story by: Naomi Larsen
 Photos by: Wendy Franz

Rachel Beck and Jessica Shearer believe everyone deserves a happy, healthy life and that the beauty and abundance of natural world can be one of the best healers.

To share those beliefs with others, in June 2014 the duo, along with Ginger Fulop, opened the doors to their new Cook Street store, Tilia Botanicals.

Both Beck and Shearer are fully qualified medical herbalists with more

than 30 years of combined experience in the field of herbalism.

The easiest way to describe a medicinal herbalist is someone who formulates medicinal tonics with plants to heal ailments. They take a holistic approach to illness, treating the underlying cause of disease rather than just the symptoms, stimulating the body's natural healing ability. It is one of the oldest forms of traditional medicine.

Beck received her training both in Canada and the U.K. and received

a four-year degree, while Shearer received her training in Vancouver, also receiving a four-year degree. Both have been trained in medicine and herbalism, thus allowing them to recognize health problems.

"Our whole store is made with herbs," Beck said. "Or else with natural ingredients."

The store includes a fully stocked herbal apothecary where people can purchase custom blended tinctures and remedies.

“We also have premade things that are available off the shelf,” she said.

Tilia stocks a variety of foods and teas such as lavender and/or cinnamon infused hot chocolate; scone mixes including lemon verbena, blueberry, lavender and white chocolate, as well as a variety of spices and food items. Also in stock are essential oils and all natural, organic cleaning supplies.

“Everything is made with organic ingredients or if we can’t get organic they have to be without pesticides or chemicals,” Beck said.

Much of Tilia’s supplies are locally grown. If they can’t be grown locally, they try to get it mostly from B.C. or Canada. However, some of their herbs must be imported from overseas.

A highlight of the store is their custom blending bar where customers can create

their own shampoos, conditioners, shower gels and massage oils.

“You can add your own essential oils and create your own blend so it smells the way you want it to smell — or not smell.”

Beck says the blending bar allows the customer to be actively involved in the creation of their own personal products.

“Why shouldn’t we be able to make something that is uniquely for you?” she asked. “I think we’ve lost that in our world where everybody has to conform.”

Why try natural healing?

“Your health,” Beck said. “And the health of our planet ultimately.”

Tilia believes switching to all natural ingredients keeps toxic items from going down the drain and creates less pollution, as well as healthier children.

“Studies are now showing that every baby born today will have 200 toxic

chemicals in their umbilical cord blood,” Beck said. “That’s frightening. It has to stop. And it can stop.”

While both Shearer and Beck encourage and promote natural healing, they also state it’s not a replacement for modern medicine or doctors, but rather an addition to.

“(And) we want it to be a part of all of your life, not just when you’re sick,” Beck said, adding with a laugh, “In fact, we think you should put herbs in everything.”

Since opening the store, Beck said there have been so many great success stories from customers who were dealing with various health issues, but she said one story in particular stood out in her mind.

“A midwife had recently sent a woman’s husband to us because she was threatening to miscarry at

“Everything is made with organic ingredients or if we can’t get organic they have to be without pesticides or chemicals.”

Left: A blending bar allows customers to add personalized scents to body products. Opposite, top: Owners Jessica Shearer and Rachel Beck. Opposite, bottom: Cooking mixes and products.



seven and a half months,” Beck said. “He was asking if there was anything we could give her. So we put together a remedy for her and she went full-term. They had nothing to offer her or to stop it, so to see her husband and to give him this custom blend and hold his hand and tell him we were going to send her lots of love and energy and hope for her — to have that connection was so powerful. It makes it all worth it.”

Tilia offers classes in many aspects of the herbal culture from how to make soap to personal care items.

They work with the College of the Rockies with many of their courses.

“I teach the herbal medicine program for the college and have for 15 years so we partner with them as well as we do some of our own classes,” Beck said.

Classes and workshops include pamper classes where you can learn how to use herbs for skin care and beauty to pre and post-natal care. They also offer children’s workshops.

“We also do Herbies Saturday where once a month for about 10 months of the year people get to be a herbalist,” Beck said. “We go out and collect herbs that are harvestable at that time and they learn all about them, what they’re used for and we make them into things.”

To find out more about the classes or about the store itself, visit the Tilia Botanicals Facebook page, call 250-428-8866 or visit www.tiliabotanicals.com. While you’re there, sign up for their monthly newsletter. The store is located on the corner of 16th Avenue South and Cook Street. ■



BY ANY OTHER NAME

The word Tilia is another word for what many call the linden tree — a very popular plant in medical herbalist circles.

“It’s an amazing plant: it’s great for the nervous system, it’s used for heart conditions, nervous conditions, it’s an all over great plant,” said Jessica Shearer. “And it smells amazing. We thought it was a great fit.”

Rachel Beck added the concept that it’s a tree and trees put down roots and gives

shade and comfort was also a big seller for the business’ name.

“We liked that, it feels like a place where people can come and fill comfortable and supported and nurtured,” she said. “That’s what we wanted.”

Both Shearer and Beck wish to thank the community for all of their support.

“We’re really honoured to be a part of our community and have our customers trust us enough with their health and the health of their families.” ■



Membership Key to Strong Chamber

Story by: Naomi Larsen

New Creston Valley Chamber of Commerce executive director Mike Fitzpatrick is no stranger to the Creston Valley.

With a deep-rooted family connection within the community and surrounding area, Fitzpatrick has spent many a holiday over the last three and a half decades relaxing and enjoying all the town has to offer nestled in the shadow of the Skimmerhorns.

Fitzpatrick, who took over the position Feb. 15, made Creston his home about six months ago, moving from the hustle and bustle of Calgary's city life as an employee with Canada Post.

From that life Fitzpatrick brings with him a background of commercial sales, project assessment, strategic planning, budgets and new business development.

"I've done a lot of things," he said from his office, surrounded by months of paperwork and a temporary lack of Internet connection. But the minor setback doesn't hide his excitement for the job ahead.

One of the first items on his agenda is focusing on building membership. Currently the chamber has approximately 150 members; however, a recent business survey by the Regional District of Central Kootenay shows the Creston Valley area to have around 940 businesses.

"That's means there's a lot more membership potential than what we originally thought," Fitzpatrick said. "And we employ one person to get out to all those areas to talk to all those people and relationship build a solid membership."

"The main purpose of the chamber is to build up and promote a good community and we do that through our membership."

Fitzpatrick said he couldn't emphasize enough the importance of being a member of the Creston Valley Chamber of Commerce.

"That was once of the reasons I took on the job," he said. "I just don't want to see the chamber lose its strength in the Kootenays."

Fitzpatrick and his board of directors are working on a strategic plan to try and build membership growth. He says a strong local business community creates a strong local economy.

"A strong business community is what attracts other businesses," he said. "The main purpose of the chamber is to build up and promote a good community and we do that through our membership."

Fitzpatrick also mentioned membership isn't just for businesses; individuals can become members, as well as well as non-profit societies.

"We then have greater and greater strength and influence," he said. "If we show a weak business community such as vacant storefronts people think twice about doing business here. We want to change that."

Fitzpatrick said he's excited about the challenge — especially with the help of a "really exciting fresh board with a lot of enthusiasm."

"I hope we pick the right path forward and I'm pretty confident that we will," he said.

So why is it important to be a member of your local chamber of commerce? Simply said: a voice.

"Most local businesses are looking for a return on their investment, the chamber of commerce, so whether that's promoting the visibility of their businesses within the community so they increase sales and improve bottom lines or advocacy. They need a voice and the best way to do that is for me to talk to businesses. That's my priority. It's important we network."

Fitzpatrick said there's so much in the way of assets, information and education throughout the valley and its residents, it's "amazing what people bring to the table," he said. "We have to find a way to work together and turn the chamber of commerce into a business community centre."

Fitzpatrick said he's confident this will be the case.

"I believe that the success of the chamber will be determined by our strategic development moving forward and the major respected dynamic community influence. We have to focus not just on traditional business issues but our overall financial health

in this community. And this will be done starting first with dialogue.”

For more information on the chamber of commerce or how to join, Fitzpatrick invites community owners and residents to pop into his office or log onto the

chamber of commerce website, www.crestonvalleychamber.com.

“If you haven’t talked to your chamber manager or you haven’t been down here for a while it’s time to do,” said Fitzpatrick, who

replaces former executive director Jim Jacobsen. “Come visit me for a coffee.” ■

The Creston Valley Chamber of Commerce, which also runs the Visitor Centre, is located at 121 Northwest Blvd. and is open daily from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

“We have to focus not just on traditional business issues but our overall financial health in this community.”

Wendy Franz Photo

Creston Valley Chamber of Commerce executive director Mike Fitzpatrick in the chamber’s lobby, which hosts regular art exhibits.





From the Mayor's Desk

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

Door Always Open

Since my election as your mayor in December 2008, I have made sure to have an "open door" policy, by which people feel free to drop in and meet with me. In addition, I keep posted office hours which are usually scheduled for Monday, Tuesday and Thursday of each week, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Citizens often make an appointment during these time slots to discuss their concerns or ideas with me. For those of you who may not know, my office is adjacent to the front counter on the main floor of Town Hall and I encourage you to drop in if you have an item to discuss, or even just to say hello.

The people who come to see me have a wide variety of ideas, concerns and perspectives and I greatly value this diversity. To give you an idea, the following examples are some recent discussions that I've had with constituents on a wide variety of topics.

Recently, a gentleman (we'll call him Mr. D) walked into my office with a couple of items for discussion. One, he believed that he should receive a reduction on his water utility charge due to the Stage 3 water restrictions that were in place for four months in 2015. This gave me the

opportunity to explain that if we reduced all the water utility invoices, including his, we would need to address the issue of who would make up the resulting funding shortfall. It was also important to explain that during this period of water restrictions, operating costs were actually higher than usual due to our two well pumps being activated (to maintain reservoir levels) and higher labour costs associated with the immense chore of hand watering our downtown greenery. While our discussion never progressed to a mutually agreed upon conclusion, it was a great opportunity to discuss operating costs and service levels.

This concept was further discussed with Mr. D in the context of snow clearing and a perceived lack of adequate equipment. Our public works superintendent met with Mr. D to explain procedures. I'm proud of how this approach demonstrates our organization's commitment to being one in which people can express their opinions and concerns. While there still might not be agreement, an explanation that reflects practice informed by policy demonstrates a consistent approach to doing business.

Another gentleman, Mr. L, recently

dropped in to have a good discussion on decisions our current council has made. He didn't agree with some of these decisions and has ideas on how our community can become better by promoting some new ideas. I'm up for the challenging discussion that he has promised to resume when he returns from his extended trip to Mexico.

Some discussions held with constituents have resulted in staff reports being generated in order to address issues in greater detail at the council table. For example, we recently received requests to install water meters, so that those individuals who are away for numerous months of the year or who are "very low" users don't have to pay the established utility rates. Town staff is bringing a report back to council on the matter of water meters to inform the feasibility of such a measure.

My door is open, I welcome discussion and I consider varying viewpoints as a foundation to improved community building. While there may not be agreement on all the issues it's important that we pause to consider, in a meaningful way, those perspectives that are different from our own. Not to mention celebrating the common ground we discover and the achievements that are made along the way! ■

Reach Ron Toyota by phone at 250-428-2214 ext. 227, by email at ron.toyota@creston.ca or visit town hall at 238 10th Avenue North.



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Message from the Chief

Story by: Jason Louie, Chief, Lower Kootenay Band

Determination Makes Up for Ktunaxa Nation's Small Size

Ki'suk kyukyit (greetings). If there's one thing that I learned quickly in this role as chief, it is to seize any and all opportunities as they become available. Sometimes, program funding and grants can be a battle with neighbouring First Nations. Often times, due to the population of the Ktunaxa Nation we are the odd man out. This isn't due to lack of effort or not having a strong proposal for grants. We have always been a smaller First Nation. Despite our numbers, I can say with much confidence that we are the most determined.

Our determination and persistence pay off, and these successes should be celebrated. For far too long, indigenous people have battled substance abuse. I have come to a point in my life where the blame game does not solve any problems. I choose to be solution oriented and strategic with any and all issues. There cannot be blame pointed at white society for the alcohol and drug problems that our communities face.

Society in general needs to educate itself on the historical traumas that First Nations communities have experienced. The aftermath of the residential schools, the '60s scoop and many of the other injustices of Canadian Law. In essence, indigenous people were stripped of identity, family and home in an attempt to assimilate into mainstream society.

The injustices of the past need to be recognized and taught to all Canadians. For the survivors of this trauma, there needs to be strength and opportunities to heal. One such opportunity has presented itself to the Ktunaxa Nation through Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centre dollars.

There will be in the near future a facility that will promote healing through contemporary counselling methods, but more importantly incorporating traditional First Nations healing practices. We wish to set the operating standards high with incorporating a professional and transparent board of governors. The staff must have the credentials to counsel the clientele.

The location of the treatment centre is yet to be determined. The funding is intended for the Ktunaxa Nation member bands. With that in mind, the KNC leadership will determine

where the centre will be. Being from Lower Kootenay Band and knowing how beautiful this valley is, I cannot help but advocate for the location to be here.

As a First Nation community, we should dream big and plan for economic development prosperity. Those dreams are pointless if our communities are not well. Through holistic healing, we can begin the healing journey. Healing is a journey and not a destination. Unfortunately, we cannot help those who do not want to be helped. For those that do the hand is extended and help will soon be on the way.

This healing centre is bigger than the Lower Kootenay Band and the Ktunaxa Nation. The centre will service all B.C. First Nations. The journey to get to this point was a very long and difficult struggle. There were many involved in this process and many behind the scenes struggling to make this a reality. That dream is one step closer to reality but still many hoops to jump through but we will make it happen.

In the past I have been down and out, nowhere to go and searching for my soul. Everyone's rock bottom is different but it's safe to say that dark place presents two options: stay there and die or fight to survive. Some don't make it out of that dark place but in the near future there will be a place to go and give hope for a better life.

Thanking you in advance for your attention to this matter and for your support. Much love and happiness to you all! ■

Reach Jason Louie by phone at 250-428-4428 ext. 235, e-mail at mjasonlouie@gmail.com or online at www.lowerkootenay.com.

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Story by: Tammy
Hardwick

Manager - Creston
& District Museum
& Archives

A History of Journalism (as told through the Creston Review)

When you go through as many old newspapers as I have, as often as I go through them, you start to notice some pretty interesting things about how journalistic style evolved over time. The *Creston Review*, which operated from 1908 to 1983, is an excellent illustration.

In its early years, the paper's main purpose was to promote the Creston Valley, even if doing so meant running down someone else. Its publisher, editor and reporting staff were all encompassed in one person, owner and founder John J. Atherton, who was not shy about sharing his opinions. If he liked you, you knew it. If he felt you weren't quite measuring up, well, you knew that, too.

"The time is drawing near when the Erickson Gun Club will begin their program of usefulness and pleasure for the coming season. There should be more enthusiasm displayed in [this] matter. We are not deprecating the existing membership roll of the Association, for there is no town in the Interior that can show so large a

membership for its population. But there are many young men, recent arrivals, who should be urged to accustom themselves in the use of a rifle for national defensive purposes. There are many old soldiers and reserve men of the British army now in our town who would be of valuable assistance both in teaching the young idea how to shoot and in organization matters." (*Creston Review*, March 4, 1909)

Atherton sold the newspaper (or lost it in a card game, depending on whose version of the story you believe) in 1911, and it underwent a bewildering succession of editors, publishers and owners over the next 25 years. Editorial style and content changed almost as quickly, but one thing remained constant: the Local and Personal columns.

Local and Personal columns comprised over half the local content of the newspaper. Ads from local businesses took up much of the rest, leaving very little space for what we, today, would consider a news story. But the L&P columns more than make up for it. Usually written by a correspondent in each

community, they were crammed full of details about the daily lives of the communities and the people in them.

"The Co-operative store asks all who wish to place orders for fertiliser to have them in by the 22nd, and thus be sure to get the carload prices.

"With replies due in by the 15th, the many at Erickson favoring Arrow Creek Irrigation are hoping to hear something definite concerning the project.

"Sam Lazachuk brought in his second coyote of the season. The hide is a likely looking one and at prevailing prices should get him \$12.

"Due to Miss McKelvey of the Review composing room staff being amongst the many who are laid up with the prevailing cold, this issue is gotten out under difficulties and will account for any shortage in the usual news content." (*Creston Review*, February 19, 1926)

Many of these news items are incomplete; a researcher needs to go through several weeks, months or even years of newspapers to get the whole story. This is, admittedly, not as convenient as today's journalistic style, where you get all the information, complete with back story, potential consequences and analysis, all laid out for you in 500 words. But for anyone who loves a little sleuthing, the old style is fascinating.

By the mid-1930s, the L&P columns were little more than lists of who was visiting whom, and had been relegated to the social pages along with the bridal shower and wedding party news (if you consider long,

**“School Board Resolution
‘Adenoids, Tonsils, Dollar for
Dollar Grant,’ Approved —
Creston Badminton Club
Refused Auditorium”
—1941 Creston Review headline**

tedious descriptions of dresses, bouquets and gifts “news”). But modern-style news articles were becoming much more prevalent. By then, the Review was under the leadership of longtime owner and editor Herbert K. Legg, who strived (successfully, judging by the awards the newspaper won) to make the paper the best small-town newspaper in the country.

Journalistic style still had some bizarre trends to go through before it would become what we know today. For example, there was the period when all the article’s main points had to be highlighted in the title. The result is very long composite headlines that contain more information than entire articles in the old L&P days, featuring some very strange combinations: “School Board Resolution ‘Adenoids, Tonsils, Dollar for Dollar Grant,’ Approved — Creston Badminton Club Refused Auditorium” (*Creston Review*, October 24, 1941)

With a headline like that, the only way to figure out what is going on is to read the article (which, ironically, makes no further mention of adenoids and tonsils).

W5 is a fundamental principle of journalism today, and has been for decades. Information about who, what, when, where and why (plus how) has to be front and centre. Today, we see all of that in the first couple of paragraphs. In the 1950s, it was often crammed into one sentence.

“With \$31,500 not in the operational budget but to be used as capital expenditure, the village council Monday night gave full discussion to four main projects: sewerage, water system, roads and sidewalks, with finance chairman, D. W.N. Fraser feeling that if the sewerage system was completed this year, using approximately \$23,217.84 of this year’s revenue the balance of capital expenditure between \$8,000 and \$8500 was not enough to carry out other necessary public capital projects.” (*Creston Review*, March 17, 1955)

Another major change between the early days and today is the use of quotes from the newsmakers themselves. This became a staple of reporting by the 1970s, and is in almost every news story published today. Partly, that gives people a chance to speak for themselves. Mostly, it lends an authority



The use of photographs is another major change from the early days of local newspapers to today. This photo, of MLA Frank Putnam, is one of the earliest local photographs to appear in the *Creston Review*; it was published Aug. 5, 1938.

to the information and helps prove that the newspaper got the facts right.

John J. Atherton never used quotes from newsmakers. But then, he wasn’t likely to get slapped with a defamation lawsuit for presenting his opinion as “fact”. He also wouldn’t print a retraction if someone criticised his journalism; he routinely fired back with articles blasting the critics, by name, as “narrow-minded, unjust” and “insignificant mollycoddles” who used a “sneaky put-up job” to get their way (as quoted in a June 1909 running fight against those who opposed liquor stores and bars).

And, granted, today’s right-to-privacy laws would probably frown on newspapers publishing details about individuals’ private lives (though, given what one sees on Facebook, one has to wonder why privacy laws were invented in the first place). Nevertheless, when it comes to sheer volume of information, and real entertainment value, I have to admit that I miss the old journalistic styles. ■



Axel Marini Photo

Jason Smith (left) and Brian Lawrence will reprise their roles as Cinderella's ugly stepsisters in *The Stepsisters' Revenge*, running March 17-19.

Footlighters Theatre Society presents

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Stepsisters Set for Revenge in Sequel to Footlighters Hit

By: Footlighters Theatre Society

Creston audiences have already enjoyed two comedies — the melodrama *The Great Ice Cream Scheme* and the farce *Nana's Naughty Knickers* — as part of Footlighters Theatre Society's 21st season, but the laughter isn't over yet.

The season will conclude with the March 17-19 production of *The Stepsisters' Revenge*, a locally written sequel to the troupe's locally written *Cinderella*, which sold out its entire run in December 2014.

"People who saw *Cinderella* are still talking about it — its popularity practically begged for a sequel," said Jason Smith, who is co-directing with Gillian Wells.

Smith wrote the play — based on characters created by *Cinderella* writer and director Frank Goodsir — in the summer, and the Footlighters board approved its production in place of the previously announced *Other Desert Cities*.

"We wanted to produce it while some of the original cast members were interested and available — and while the first was still fresh in people's minds," said Smith.

Audiences will see Smith and Brian Lawrence reprising their roles as, respectively, the ugly stepsisters Lady Violet and Lady Petunia, who have been imprisoned. But their Mummy (the returning Jennifer Adams) helps them escape from prison so that they can get back at Cinderella (Anna Payne), who is now married to Prince Charming (Jesse Moreton) and mother to the dozen orphans the happy couple adopted at the end of *Cinderella*.

The sisters' plan is aided by Frankenstein's Monster (Kevin Boehmer) as they go up against a Knight (Logan Thompson), a Wizard (Gary Atha) and an Enchantress (Natascha Sundby) — and, of course, the Fairy Godmother (played again by Gail Kitt). The cast also includes Gwen Benty, Morgan Benty, Suzanne Chubb, Darlene Knudsen and Peter Simon, along with more than two dozen children, who play, among other roles, the adopted children of Cinderella and Prince Charming.

Woven through the hilariously tantalizing story of greed and hope are songs easily recognizable from musicals including *The Sound of Music*, *Annie*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Mame* and more.

"But most, if not all, of the lyrics are new," said Smith. "The songs not only help tell the story, but they add a whole new level of humour." ■

Shaking Things Up on Local Acres

By: Acre Shakerr Contracting

As spring inches along into our valley and winter's grip eases up, the blankets of snow retreat into the soil, troublesome ice packs become puddles and rain clouds begin to swell and soak us once again. Ah, spring! New life begins to feel the sun warming on exposed dirt, enticing green shoots and budding to immerge. Now is the time for closer examination of small creeks and streams; with mountain runoff beginning, these can swell quickly and erosion of banks and upstream blockages can plug up culverts and cause further damage to fields, forestland and maybe even dwellings and outbuildings. With our changing climate and our seasons, perhaps our culverts and driveways may need upgrading before total loss of access occurs. A faulty culvert can lead to unexpected collapse and sloughing in and around your streams.

As a rural property owner, I see firsthand the aftermath of our winter storms in the treetops. There are broken limbs still hanging in the canopy, cracked tree trunks and even uprooted timber.

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The forest floor is littered with branches, pinned down saplings and shoots. All of this is part of a natural process; however, it can create a hazard to us. Last summer, as two massive wildfires raged near Creston's residents, they fed on this natural selection of forest debris, so a further look at this may be in order. With simple cleanup and some thinning of your forestland, a barrier can be made without invasive, unsightly clear cuts scarring the land. An added bonus to this process is a healthier forest with sunlight feeding the new up-and-coming trees and shrubs, culling of damaged or decaying trees and a safer place for your family to wander and enjoy. After all, we live here for the natural beauty of our mountains, forests and our own backyards.

As livestock is ready to move out into our pastures, it's also important to see how our fences are holding up. Trees can fall across fence lines and loosen up or even break them. Repairs maybe in order to ensure the critters are not roaming freely on someone else's pastures! Be sure to check the posts for decay as well.

As more and more uncertainty is put onto global farmland, causing skyrocketing food prices right here in our valley, perhaps another look at our own soil is worth the exploration. I tell you, there's not much better reward that pulling a fresh carrot from your own dirt, as the first bite reveals a flavor that is seldom had from any store-bought carrot! Matter of fact, it's pretty much the same with any of your homegrown veggies! I encourage you all to take advantage of our sunshine hours, pure clean soils, fresh water and the healthy food you can grow at a fraction of the market costs. If you have the land available but it's grown over and rough, there are options that can turn your plot into a living food bank!

With all of today's marvelous inventions and machinery, there's only one thing that can really make the difference — your willingness to engage with your land and spot these issues before they become a real problem. I encourage you to get out there when the sun is shining and check out all the corners of your property and enjoy the wonders and surprises that it may hold. ■

For a free consultation, contact Ian at 250-428-6367 or acreshakerr@gmail.com. Offering low impact excavation solutions to the west Kootenays and beyond!



Ag Aware

Story by: Randy Meyer,
Creston Valley Agriculture Society

The winter is fading away and spring is upon us once again. The El Niño weather pattern this winter provided a very mild season, even by Creston standards. Much needed moisture fell throughout the winter on our non-frozen fields, ensuring that our upcoming crops will have a good supply of ground moisture to start the growing season. The mountain snowpack is also much better than the last couple of years.

Local greenhouses have their plants started so that when outdoor gardening weather arrives, they will have a wide variety of plants ready for us to plant in our gardens. I predict that with the recent higher costs of imported food we will see a significant increase in the amount of local food that will be grown this year. Please support our local greenhouses and garden supply outlets. This is an important part of agriculture in our valley too.

This time of year also brings a new crop of baby farm animals. Beef calves are being born on many farms around the valley. The past few years have seen increased cattle prices, so all these calves are an important commodity in our valley. That being said, it appears we are past the “peak” of the current supply/price cycle and increasing supplies will likely lower cattle and beef prices over the next few years. The Canadian cattle industry is largely supply and price controlled by what happens in the U.S.A. It is our largest export market, purchasing a large percentage of Canadian cattle, so what is happening there will happen here as well. Its national cattle herd is roughly 10-11 times the size of Canada’s.

With the good prices received by producers the last two or three years, the U.S. has increased its breeding herd and thus the new calf crops coming up. Therefore the upcoming available beef supplies are starting to have a negative effect on prices paid to producers. I recently read that the increase in the American herd

in the last 18 months is roughly equivalent in size to the entire Canadian cattle population. There is no doubt that prices will decline for consumers and producers alike.

That is partly why Canadian cattle industry groups, as well as pork, grain and oilseed associations, were supportive of Canada signing onto the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal with other countries recently. They are all hoping and expecting increased trade opportunities for our Canadian agriculture commodities to partially offset our dependence on the American market. As with all trade deals, there are winners and losers, and all the details are yet to be determined. Ratification of this deal may be up to two years away, and is subject to other countries doing the same. Time will tell if it is a good deal for Canadian agriculture or not.

With Easter coming up soon, many people celebrate with a family feast. I would encourage all of you to source as much as possible of your Easter meal from local producers. Local hams, turkeys, vegetables and other food are available from local growers if you know your farmer. The more demand there is, the more likely the availability will increase in the future. Also, check out the once-a-month winter farmers’ market at the rec centre. There will also be one more market in April, before resuming the weekly outdoor market in May. Eat local, and be Ag Aware! ■

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Staying Involved at 92 Years Young

Submitted by: Maureen Cameron,
Therapeutic Activation Program for Seniors
Community Liaison

Ninety-two years young — that's probably how Bertha Reiten might put it with a laugh and that big smile as she peers up mischievously.

We remember the day at the Therapeutic Activation Program for Seniors when Bertha came dressed to the nines for her 90th birthday, replete with a birthday top hat. Since then, we've come to anticipate her eagerness to dress up for the occasion

and participate in themed celebrations, performances at Swan Valley Lodge or as one of the "calendar people" in our TAPS annual calendar. For the 2016 version, she was one of the December motorcycle mamas and in 2015 the blushing bride.

Having recently relocated from Wynndel, we met at her new home in Creston, a cozy apartment suiting both her need for quiet and her desire to easily get out to places and be around people on her own. With hearing, sight and mobility changes and challenges, her independent spirit and

drive to live life day by day continues to serve her well. She appreciates the usefulness of a walker now, a cane when needed, riding the transit bus, going on the TAPS bus to programs and sharing meal times. She gets lifts from friends to events and visits old friends in Yahk, where she lived for a few years prior to Wynndel. She appreciates the TAPS daily-check-in phone calls to see how she is and if she wants to attend the program or events that day, and to schedule pick up times.

People see her as an inspiration as she knows how to keep herself involved in what matters to her. She has always figured out how to be independent on her own terms and that includes being proactive in getting help from friends and community. You might see her walking down Canyon Street with her walker, attending the Wynndel Coffee House, which she does regularly, or perhaps grocery shopping.

Given all these references to self reliance, it's not surprising to find she spent much of her life on farms, from New Brunswick to Alberta to British Columbia:

"I've moved many times," she says, and "lived a farming life for most of it."

Some of you reading this can imagine and appreciate what it would take to grow up farming from the 1920s onward: resiliency, hard work, resourcefulness and the ability to meet challenges. She shared some of her memories of daily farm work with milk cows, including being hired by other farmers to help them (she apparently had a way with cows). Learning household skills and becoming the bread maker in the family, 15 loaves a week was not unusual, she says.

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“My dad confessed in later years that I was a better cook than my mother.”

Folks around here have more than a few stories of her baking and canning passion, I'm sure. A neighbor in Wynndel tells of a time Bertha brought them some jelly and wouldn't say what it was made of and insisted they guess. “Delicious” was all they could say, then she revealed it was pear-skin jelly. She had made canned pears and knew the skins were not to be wasted.

It seems pretty obvious from some of her stories that her delight in life includes surprising or teasing people and enjoying a good laugh with friends. She's been known to dress up as a monkey, a leprechaun and I wonder what else! Handy with her hands, she is no stranger to sewing, crocheting and more.

She talked of walking two and a half miles each way for school and her mother made sure they had hearty lunches. She left school at 15, not happy with what they wanted her to learn and declared that she had already, and was confident she could keep learning whatever she needed to know. It was of value to her that she learn in her own way.

Life, of course, has presented its trials, with the loss of her parents, the death of two husbands and three of her six



Submitted Photo
Verna Gordon (left) and Bertha Reiten sharing a joke.

children at an early age. She shakes her head slowly saying that she is the only one alive of her birth family.

“I didn't think I'd live this long,” she says, then laughing, “I certainly don't feel like 92.” ■

The Therapeutic Activation Program for Seniors is operated by Valley Community Services. For more information, call 250-428-5547 or 250-428-5585, or visit www.valley.services.

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Under 30 and Travelling!

Story by: Shelagh Redecopp
Travel Insurance Broker, Safe Travels

Working or volunteering abroad?
Gap year? Backpacking?
Hostelling?

In all the excitement of planning for the trip, getting your travel insurance in place is one of the less attractive parts of the plan; but so critical and with such devastating consequences if not done properly.

There are many travel insurance plans available and you have only to Google travel insurance to see a never-ending list of options. Are they all the same? Yes... and no. Huh? Read on.

Travel insurance plans are all the same

in their basic structure, just like cars all have the same basic components that make them run. For example, all travel insurance plans are dependent on MSP remaining active while you are gone. You must get permission from MSP to extend your BC Medical if you are leaving the province for more than six months.

But that's about where the similarity ends:

Price: They are NOT all the same. Youth travel insurance can start at under \$1 a day to as much as \$3 a day.

Coverage Choices: Do you want medical coverage only or do you need a package

that includes trip cancellation and interruption? What about baggage? Does it cover your laptop and phone?

Sports Exclusions: Are you a sports enthusiast? Does your policy fit your lifestyle and cover you while scuba diving, trekking or backcountry skiing? Does the policy cover remote evacuation?

Travel Advisories: What areas of the world are you travelling to? What advisory exclusions are a part of your plan?

Medical Exclusions: You're young and healthy? You should still review stability clauses and exclusions with an expert and be sure you understand what is not covered.

Medical Emergencies: While all travel insurers request that you call their 24-hour medical assistance companies if you need to seek medical attention, some are more stringent than others about when you do this. You need to be aware of your responsibilities and what happens to the claim if you don't call. You might be in for a bad surprise!

Find a Travel Insurance Broker: A good travel insurance broker has multiple product lines to choose from so that they can fit your travel needs to the right plan. A good broker will also spend time advising you about the policy specifics: eligibility, exclusions, B.C. medical requirements, medical assistance procedures and will advise you to read your policy. Working with a broker is more than a two-minute conversation all about price. However, once the broker understands your "story" and knows what you need, they will probably be well-placed to find you the best price...so it's a win for you all around! ■

Shelagh Redecopp is a Travel Insurance Broker for Safe Travels, specializing in snowbird travel and medical insurance. She can be reached at 250-581-0058 or shelagh@yoursafetravels.ca.

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What You Need to Know About Cleansing

Submitted by: Vital Health

The effects of chronic exposure to stress, chemical pollutants, poor diet and environmental toxins take a toll on our health.

Let's face it: We live in a toxic world and we cannot deny it. Here are the facts:

- Today, there are between 300 and 500 chemicals in the average person's body that were not present before 1920;
- There are more than 75,000 synthetic chemicals on the market today and each year there are thousands of new chemicals sold or used in new products;
- Each and every second 310 kg of toxic chemicals are released into our air, land and water by industrial facilities around the world, which amounts to approximately 10 million tons each year. Of these, over two million tons are recognized carcinogens; and
- Each year, air pollution prematurely kills up to an estimated 16,000 Canadians. This means air pollution leads to more premature deaths in Canada than traffic accidents, but generates less media attention and less government action.

Ideally, it would be great to avoid all of the pesticides and other chemical pollutants; however, this is simply not feasible. Therefore it is up to us to take responsibility for our own health and well-being and the first step toward optimal health is cleansing and detoxification.

Most people in Canada start out with vibrant health, but by age 30 begin to develop "minor" irritations. These small problems become more serious, causing our health to fall into further decline. Eventually, chronic disease sets in and even everyday activities can cause pain or suffering. There are countless benefits to total body cleansing. After completing a cleanse many people report increased energy, improved digestion, weight loss and a feeling of better overall health.

How do you eliminate toxins? The body has seven channels of elimination which are directly utilized to eliminate toxins:

Liver — changes or detoxifies harmful toxins into substances that can be safely eliminated from the body;

Colon — eliminates toxins from the liver as well as the waste that has accumulated in the intestines;

Blood — flows through the vascular system and carries oxygen and nutrients to the cells of the body while removing harmful waste;

Lymphatic System — eliminates poisons from cells through a network of vessels that extend throughout the body;

Skin — eliminates waste and toxins through perspiration;

Lungs — expel toxins through breathing (such as carbon dioxide). Deep breathing stimulates lymphatic flow to eliminate toxins; and

Kidneys — receive water-soluble waste from the liver, so that they can be further filtered and finally eliminated through the bladder.

What should you look for when choosing a total body cleanse?

Always look for products that are "clean", meaning free from binders, fillers or excipients. You also want to ensure that the products are free from harsh ingredients. Herbal laxatives such as cascara sagrada and senna are commonly used in herbal cleansing products. These can become addictive over time and lead to a lazy bowel. It is better to use products that contain gentler options, such as magnesium hydroxide or triphala. Last but not least, you do not need to fast, drink strange juices or follow a restrictive diet. A good herbal cleansing program should be formulated to work regardless of diet or lifestyle. ■

References: David Suzuki Foundation. 2006. *The Air We Breathe: An International Comparison of Air Quality Standards and Guidelines*. Available at <http://bit.ly/1QTI16H>.

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Seeds, Spring and Surprises!

Story by: Diane Tolleson

Seeds are a great lesson in life. They have no idea they are going to become a flower, a tree or even wait years before sprouting. They just are. They grow in the ideal conditions without even “knowing” when that will be. I liken that to my journey at this time. I also see many others in the same mode, of what, when and where is life taking me, and just letting it be seems to be the answer. As Eckert Tolle says, the power of *now*.

As I now make my fifth move in a year, I feel life taking me where I am supposed to be, back to Creston. I have met so many newcomers in the last year that

I feel there is a real healing community coming together in this valley and I am so happy to be part of it!

have said, “I was drawn to Creston, without having any explanation as to why.” I feel there is a real healing community coming together in this valley and I am so happy to be part of it!

Spring is on the way and with that comes a new sense of wanting to get outdoors and be one with nature, start our gardens, enjoy the sun and come out of winter hibernation. I feel fortunate that I got to hibernate at the lake this year, yet with spring, I feel moving back to Creston is the best thing I can do for my inner garden and growth at this time. So when you are planting your gardens, know that they are a reflection of the growth in your life as well. Our gardens

nurture us and keep us in tune with Mother Earth.

Surprises — some people like them, some people don't. I feel open to surprises and at the same time, like to know what it's going to be! Like presents, we never know what is in the package. When it's something we really wanted we feel so happy! When it's a surprise that we don't like, we may have to act like we do like it! Not wanting to hurt the giver's feelings, we act excited and thank them (at least I do). We never know, but we may be able to gift the gift to someone else that needs it more. To me, in that way, the flow of giving continues. My big surprise is the opportunity came for me to move again, and it all happened within less than 24 hours. That's how the universe can change one's course and give you nice surprises, if you are open for them!

I would like to offer again the five free numerology readings to the first five people that respond to my article. I had some folks get back to me, but I did forget to add that they are free! I will give you your soul and personality numbers, which can help you understand what your doing here at this time.

In-joy each moment! ■

To learn more, contact Diane Tolleson at dianetolleson709@gmail.com or visit through-my-eyes.ca.

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Soggy to Stinky, Dikes to Poop

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

The end of winter and the start of spring usually evokes a sense of... sogginess. Things are melting and rains are falling, making the gumboot a necessary accessory (not complaining — coastal girl here).

Soggy conditions can mean that the dike along the south end of Duck Lake off Channel Road (the only dike that the public can drive on at the CVWMA) becomes, well, soggy! As the frozen ground melts, the surface of the dike becomes soft and muddy. To limit the negative impacts that vehicles can have on the dike surface when road and weather conditions are bad, you might see temporary road closures. Pedestrian traffic will always be welcome and the road will reopen to vehicles when conditions are favourable. We appreciate everyone's understanding and if you have any questions or concerns, you can feel free to contact us.

This time of year is more than just soggy! It is a time when wildlife reappears in large numbers — migrating ducks, swans and geese make an appearance on any open water available, male red-winged blackbirds start singing to the ladies, many of the swallow species reappear after a winters absence. It is a lovely time to shed the winter doldrums and breathe in spring.



I go down to the centre regularly during the off season to check things out, making sure there are no problems and that there are maps outside the door for those travelling through that

don't know the trails so well. Sometimes I find myself picking up garbage — not so nice — and I wish people wouldn't litter but usually there are only one or two pieces. What really fries my grits, though, since you asked, is people who leave their dog's feces right on the boardwalk around the centre building. I went down the other day and found three large deposits right on the path. Come on people! Clean up after your pet. Why would you think that was OK? I cleaned it up — not so nice times 10 — and I really wish people wouldn't do this. I don't blame the dog.

Dogs are allowed at the CVWMA and they have to be on a leash — for those of you who choose to ignore the signs, it is true. It is a natural setting out in the wetland, and I think it's expected there might be wild animal poop on the trail. But please, do not leave your dog's poop on the trail. The last thing someone wants is to step on a stinky mound. So even out on the trails, although we are in nature and poop is natural, please pick up after your pet or at the very least move it off the trail (the classic stick flick works well).

Not meaning to rant here, but it is a problem that seems to be getting worse and is very discouraging. I am encountering more and more dog poop along the trails, on the boardwalk and in parking lots, than I ever have before. So no matter where you are at the CVWMA, or elsewhere for that matter, please be responsible for your pet and their deposits. For the majority of people reading, I am preaching to the choir, but I hope the minority is listening too.

To keep up to date on Duck Lake Road conditions and other happenings at the CVWMA, please sign up to receive our monthly e-newsletters by visiting our website (www.crestonwildlife.ca) or stay tuned to our Facebook and website news page. Thanks everyone! ■

Questions? Feel free to call 250-402-6900 (Admin) or 250-402-6908 (Wildlife Centre), or email askus@crestonwildlife.ca.

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Mounted Shooters Club Started

By: Pamela Sabo, President
Cowboy Mounted Shooters Association

A little snow is not enough to keep new members of the Cowboy Mounted Shooters Association of BC (CMSABC) from getting out to practice! CMSABC is a registered non-profit society. As of 2015, British Columbia has now joined Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba in offering this exciting fast-paced event. Ontario and Nova Scotia

have also recently organized their first mounted shooting associations.

Mounted shooting is currently the fastest growing equestrian sport in North America. The sport was created in the U.S.A. in the early 1990s and has grown tremendously since, with competitions and exhibitions being held at some of the largest equestrian events across North America. Thanks to the dedication of some individuals in Alberta working with the RCMP Canadian Firearms Program

(CFP) since mid 2000's, guidelines and recommendations were developed to allow this sport to be brought to, and enjoyed safely and legally in, Canada.

There are now clubs being created across Canada, and CMSABC is currently the first and only club to attain RCMP CFP Approved Shooting Club status in B.C. Prior to the formation of this club, the only legal option for a B.C. resident to practice or compete in this sport was to have a membership in an approved club in another province, have your RPAL, apply for Authorization to Transport (ATT) your registered firearms, and travel to some approved mounted shooting facility outside of B.C. Hence, my decision to bring this sport home to B.C.!

In this sport, mounted contestants compete in a timed event using two fixed sight 0.45 calibre single action revolvers designed prior to 1898, or reproductions thereof. Each revolver is loaded with specially prepared BLANK ammunition. No live ammunition or projectiles are permitted. There are no projectiles used to burst the 10 balloon targets, only black powder, which has restrictions regarding effective range of the burning embers, so as to ensure spectator





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safety. Some classes also involve the use of shotgun and rifle (also with specific blank ammunition), but these classes also initially include the use of revolvers and are attempted by more advanced experienced competitors, only as it requires an extremely well trained horse when the reins are dropped and both hands must be used on those firearms.

Minimum dress requirements for competition are described in the CMSA rulebook, but generally consist of traditional classic western clothing, including cowboy boots, cowboy hats (or helmet if preferred), long sleeved shirts and modern style jeans, which must be worn with chaps or chinks. Females are exempt from some of these rules if they prefer to wear 19th century-style full-length full skirt or dress.

A competitor must acquire a federal firearms Possession and Acquisition Licence as well as endorsement to that licence for the use of restricted firearms (commonly referred in the sport as an RPAL). Participants MUST be a member in good standing of an RCMP CFP Approved Shooting Club in order to acquire an ATT their registered firearms and BLANK ammo (only) to and from a CFO Approved Shooting Club Facility. These facilities or arenas used for practices and competitions by an approved mounted shooting club

must also make application to acquire certification as an approved mounted shooting facility. Membership in an approved provincial equine organization (HCBC in B.C.) is a mandatory requirement for a participating club membership, and Approved Shooting Clubs must carry club insurance as well.

There are a wide variety of levels of competition for everyone, ranging from novice to seasoned professional. Clinics introducing the sport to riders and horses green to this particular sport, as well as for intermediate and advanced participants, are being made available across the provinces, by the various clubs. Safety for horse and rider is paramount and is emphasized during horse training and firearms handling practices and competitions. There are no horse breed or size restrictions. Beginners are encouraged to take their time to learn to learn techniques to create a good foundation for a well trained shooting horse and to be both comfortable and safe in the sport before speed is added. The fact that a competitor is penalized five seconds for a missed balloon in this timed event makes accuracy a primary focus on initial training.

CMSABC is an affiliate of the international Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association (CMSA) and, along with some of the other Canadian clubs, competition points can be earned in order to attend

regional finals as well as the world finals held in Texas. We use their rulebook for our guidelines, except where Canadian firearms regulations override the U.S. rules (for example, in regard to barrel length and youth/wrangers).

As the first CFO approved mounted shooting club in B.C., and currently based in the Creston Valley, CMSABC's board of directors is working hard to develop our club bylaws and guidelines in order to bring this sport to other regions of the province. By amending our initial bylaws we will be able to create CMSABC chapters, which will save everyone immensely in initial costs of incorporation registration and club and member insurance, as well as eliminating the need for individual new clubs to apply for RCMP CFO approval. It will not happen overnight, but we are getting numerous inquiries from interested individuals across the province and are striving to take the time to create a solid foundation for the future of this sport in B.C. This article is intended to be just an overview of the sport and is not a comprehensive guideline. ■

The Cowboy Mounted Shooters Association of BC has a Facebook page and is developing an email list. A website (www.cmsabc.ca) is in progress and will have a basic information page up soon. For more information, email Pamela Sabo at info@cmsabc.ca, and she will call as soon as possible.

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Candice Chernenkoff Photo
Safety is an important part of snowmobiling.

Memberships Support Snowmobile Club

By: Kokanee Country Snowmobile Club

With an above average snowpack, this season has been nothing short of awesome for many avid snowmobilers in the Creston Valley. The Kokanee Country Snowmobile Club has

been busy grooming trails, keeping them smooth and well maintained for everyone to enjoy.

“We have been noticing a variety of users enjoying the fresh groomed trails including many skiers, snow shoers, snowmobilers and snow bike enthusiasts,” says Trish Drinkle, KCSC president.

Some of these users who are not club members have contributed a donation as a form of gratitude for the hard work being done, which is most appreciated. These would be non-snowmobilers or tourists visiting the area briefly. There is a huge need for local snowmobiler support; however, with a goal of 100 members this year, KCSC is putting out a request for more local support. KCSC wishes to send out a huge thank you to the 60 members who have purchased their memberships. The highest form of support and appreciation comes in the form of a membership, for membership numbers are a huge factor when negotiating for land usage, and providing the support and dollars

needed to keep the snowmobile areas around the Creston Valley safe, well maintained and protected, including the funds needed to clear staging areas.

KCSC has hosted many events this season, including an Avalanche Skills Level 1 Class, ladies ride and weekly youth backcountry safety and avalanche orientation outreach Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. at Kootenay Speed Shop.

An upcoming events is the March 6 poker ride and avalanche awareness day with fun games, awesome prizes and great food! Bring the whole family for this event that will not only be filled with fun, but there will be transceiver (beacon) searches, probing contests and team events to sharpen the avalanche awareness and safety skills for back country snowmobilers. Creston Search and Rescue will be in attendance helping provide outreach and support for snowmobilers in the Creston Valley. ■

For more information, visit kcsc-bcsf.silkstart.com/cpages/home, or contact Trish Drinkle at 250-428-7531 (Kootenay Speed Shop) or 250-402-3179.

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Thunder Cats Ready for KIJHL Playoffs

By: Creston Valley Thunder Cats

This year's edition of the Creston Valley Thunder Cats heads in to the 2015/16 Kootenay International Junior Hockey League playoffs with high expectations for a long postseason run.

That shouldn't be a surprise for most Thunder Cats fans, who knew good things were in store after a franchise-best 8-2-0-0 record in their first 10 games. But every season has its ups and downs, as well as a fair share of unexpected surprises.

"It's a long regular season and there are times where during the year where it can be a grind on the players physically," says Thunder Cats head coach Jeff Dubois. "Part of having a successful year is keeping things consistent, even when you're dealing with injuries or going through those natural cold streaks that come up at some point every year. And the most important factor there is having great leaders who keep the entire team focused and moving in the right direction."

This season, Dubois has been able to depend on a leadership group of five captains who have helped keep things moving in the right direction.

Thunder Cats captain Jackson Bruce-Fuoco and assistants Carson Cartwright and McConnell Kimmitt were tabbed as team leaders at the outset of the season while forward Nick Kovacic and defenceman Maverick Lynes were added to the group in January.

Those five veterans have each played a key role in the team's success both on and off the ice.

"Our leadership group this year really has been outstanding," says Dubois.

"All five guys care a ton about winning and doing things the right way, plus it's a blend of really great personalities.

"Jackson is a guy who we had identified as our captain at the end of last season and he's done a great job. He's a team-first guy 100 per cent of the time and I think he really makes our younger players feel at home.

"Carson is one of the top players in our league and he really has the respect of our whole group. McConnell is a terrific young man who seems to just be getting better and better every month.

"Nick and Maverick are both guys who we felt needed to be recognized as leaders because of how hard they work and how they both pick up their games when things aren't going well. They both find ways to contribute in the room and we count on both of them so much for the work they put in defensively."

With those five captains in place, Dubois and assistant coaches Bill Rotheisler and Kyle Sherbaty always know that they can count on a positive and hard-working team environment.

"Whenever we've gone through some adversity this season, one of those guys has stepped up and made a contribution or a big play to get us to

where we need to be, and that's really impressed me," says Dubois.

"These are young men who are just growing into adults, and having the responsibility of being a team leader thrown on them can be tough. It's not like there's a book you can read that gets you ready for having to lead a group of 23 guys. But the maturity and character of our leadership group has been very impressive, and they're a big reason why I think we have an excellent chance to go deep into playoffs and hopefully bring a KIJHL championship back to Creston." ■



Jeff Banman Photo

Thomas Cankovic on Feb. 20.

Come out & cheer on your local Junior B Team!

For team updates and playoff game schedule visit: crestonvalleythundercats.com

Thanks to everyone who supported the Creston Valley Thunder Cats by purchasing tickets for our Annual Raffle!

And the winners are...

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Walking in Circles

Story by: Shifu Neil Ripski

So there I was, standing in Rome under the arch of the Pantheon, alone. I had come back to see it after living in the city for nearly a month, teaching workshops at Heaven Fight Arena — the largest martial arts facility in the country. I had a few more days left to walk the streets and steep in the ancient world I had always wanted to see. So there I stood under the huge pillars at the entrance and could see the rain falling through the oculus at the centre of the building. What an amazing place, even without the original statuary of the Roman gods in the alcoves. (It was originally a Roman holy place but was taken over by the Vatican and made into a church. Although this has now preserved it to modern day.)

So what to do? Alone, standing amongst the pillars of Rome with my life coming apart at the seams? I started to walk.

They say the circle walking found in baguazhang came from the Long Men (Dragon's Gate) sect of Taoism on Wudang Mountain. It was called "rotating in Worship of Heaven" (Zhuan Tian Zun) and was used to induce trance states in moving meditation. It was during his training in the Long Men sect that Dong Hai

Chuan learned this method and had an enlightenment moment that helped him find the way to combine his martial arts and circle walking into the beautiful and complex style he built. Which later came to be known as baguazhang.

I started to walk and press my hands towards the ancient pillars, staring, as they say, "into the distance," and tried to let my troubles fall away. My marriage was falling apart and the heaviness in my chest was like a stone. I was not training baguazhang as it turned out that day. I was walking circles looking for myself. I can remember as I began to settle down inside that the morning tourists were leaving me alone and soon started to disappear to me. I began to heat up and saw the steam rising from my wet coat, making a fog in my vision between here and there. Soon I could not feel my feet any longer.

I can see clearly in my mind the details of that pillar, the old cracks and weatherworn stone, ancient graffiti and glyphs of people long dead stating, "I was here." The sound of my breath became like a slow rumble in my chest and then it happened. It was like I stopped walking but the world kept rotating around me, the pillar and the background scenery gently moving around my stationary position. I could see my hand outstretched towards the pillar but it almost felt as if it was someone else's palm, as though I was just an observer in this body right now.

I remember stretching my neck and opening it fully and feeling my shoulders so soft and round settled into my back. It was like everything stopped in me. The world rotating and my hand outstretched, the steam coming from my arms and floating upwards like smoke. My eyes were watering, I remember, and a few droplets of rain ran down my cheeks. I was there, but not there. Alone but not alone. I was in a place of real true quiet.

Finally, my legs came back to me and were tired, my waist was aching and my mouth wished for water. I stopped the world from rotating and shook my head. The weird Canadian tourist walking circles around the pillars finally stopped being so strange and I saw the sun come out through the clouds between the buildings. I sat on the ground and drank from my water flask and drank in the place as well as the water. When I realized I had a smile on my face I knew that the one thing you can always count on is your training. The old stories are not just fairy tales but point directly at the truths that training can give you. By no means do I think I am an enlightened person, but tapping into the strength within even for a brief moment has showed me I can live with myself. Besides it is only for a short time we are here, best do something with it of import!

Thanks, Dong Hai Chuan, to every teacher who helped pass on and keep the art alive. It is saving my life in more than one way. ■

Shifu Neil Ripski teaches Taichi and Kung Fu for all ages at Red Jade Martial Arts in Creston. Contact him at 250-402-8384.

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Home & Garden

Your Home Security Checklist

Homeowners should familiarize themselves with the most common risks for break-ins, thefts, fires and other mishaps that can occur in homes today.

"Home security doesn't necessarily mean hard-wiring alarms and installing cameras. While those are certainly options, there are often simple steps you can take to decrease the opportunity for crime or accidents to occur," says Marian Barry, a broker-owner with Royal LePage True North Realty in Fort McMurray, Alberta. She recommends this checklist to protect your investment and to develop a comprehensive home security plan:

Make your home an undesirable target for would-be criminals. The best way to prevent crime is to reduce the opportunities around your home and property. Keep windows, doors and vehicles locked. Ask a neighbour or house sitter to check your home every day while you're out of town. Avoid broadcasting your latest purchases – break down packaging from new purchases before taking them to the curb. Ensure entrance ways, windows and doors are clearly visible and not obscured by trees or shrubs.



Be aware of crime in your area. Subscribe to a local police department blog or social media feed. Read your local newspaper. Talk to your neighbours.

Prepare against fire and adopt fire-safe habits. Install new batteries in smoke detectors every fall and keep loaded fire extinguishers scattered around your home. Periodically spot check around the home to assess the fire-safe habits of

occupants. Look for electrical problems such as overloaded circuits or exposed wiring. Fire prevention involves both fire-safe surroundings and fire-safe habits by everyone.

Conduct a risk assessment. List things about you, your home and your location that make you susceptible to crime, fires and other accidents. Include your own observations, gather information from police, neighbours and insurers. Rank your list to show where your greatest security weaknesses lie. Match those risks to an appropriate security system in terms of technologies, complexity and cost.

Promoting consistent and mindful security habits and developing awareness of your greatest risks will help you to protect your investment for years to come. More information is available at www.royallepage.ca.

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Home & Garden

Start Renovations with the Bathroom if Planning to Age in Your Home

According to a study by Houzz, more than 50 per cent of seniors would prefer to stay in their homes as long as possible rather than moving into assisted living centres. With baby boomers in Canada expected to make up 23 per cent of the population by 2031 (age 85+), it is crucial that age-related issues be addressed early, as accessibility can be a serious cause for concern, particularly in multi-level homes.

Fortunately there are simple home renovations that can address many of

the concerns associated with aging in place.

Upflush plumbing systems are an ideal solution that can solve some concerns and help homeowners extend their time at home. These systems are quick to install and are more budget-friendly than traditional bathroom renovations as there is no need to break the concrete or the walls to complete extensive plumbing work. The Sanistar for example, is a small, all-in-one toilet and pump

unit that takes up little space; leaving more room for other accessibility requirements like handrails, walk-in baths/showers and wider pathways. With its pumping capabilities and above-floor installation, the unit can be placed almost anywhere in the house from the attic to the basement.

More information on upflush toilet systems is available online at www.saniflo.ca or toll-free at 1-800-363-5874.

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