



Into the Wild with Leon Lorenz

P10

ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOAT

Your weekly source of news, views and entertainment

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Hoo - hoo is ready for the New Year?

An excursion with the dogs took an unexpected turn when my sister and I saw not one but three owls on Sunday afternoon. Two were camera shy and I was unable to capture them. One appeared to be a pygmy owl, and I hope to capture it yet. The other was too far away to identify, but this third owl, a gray owl, hung out long enough for me to capture proof. /ANDREA ARNOLD

Tourism Valemount now managing Visitor Centre

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

The new year is bringing new changes to Valemount's Visitor Information Centre (VIC). The Village has handed management of the centre to Tourism Valemount, a non-profit that promotes tourism in the Valemount area.

Located at 735 Cranberry Lake Road, the centre is in the same building as the Village offices.

The Village began operating the centre in 2018, when Wendy Dyson, the owner of Adventure Management

Services, the company who previously ran the centre, retired.

In an email to The Goat, CAO Anne Yanciw said it is highly unusual for a visitor information centre to be run by the local government. Typically, they are managed by the municipality's chamber of commerce, or a destination marketing organization – a type of non-profit which promotes tourism to an area – she said.

Village staff hope the change will translate to a financial gain for the Village, Yanciw added.

"We expect that the cost of a contract to provide the services will be less than the cost [for] the Village to staff

and operate the VIC," she said.

Tourism Valemount marketing director Marcie Down was unavailable for an interview by presstime. However, Yanciw said she hopes visitor information services will improve with Down at the helm.

"Tourism Valemount is first and foremost a tourism organization, with a passion for and experience in tourist services," Yanciw added. "The Village has neither of those – we deliver water, sewer, roads and so on. We were not able to give VIC the love that Tourism Valemount will be able to."

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Regional District adopts voting transparency bylaw

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George board of directors adopted a bylaw amendment requiring that votes in opposition be recorded in meeting minutes by default at their December board meeting. The adoption of the amendment follows months of discussion about how recording votes may affect transparency and directors' privacy, the first version of the amendment having been discussed in August.

That first version was narrowly dismissed by the board in a 7-6 vote on the grounds that disclosing how directors vote may lead to more harassment from constituents and media, as well as concerns that the practice may discourage directors from voting in the minority.

In response to these concerns, Director Kyle Sampson tweaked the amendment so directors could opt out of having their "no" vote recorded, though opposing votes will still be recorded by default. The board gave first, second and third reading to this amendment during their November meeting.

The board officially adopted the amended bylaw on December 19th.

Electoral Area H Director Dannielle Alan, who has previously spoken to The Goat about her opposition to the bylaw, reiterated her concerns.

"I was one of the few that voted in opposition [during the November meeting], and I was contacted by a local paper," Alan said. "It proves my point that this is an opportunity to exacerbate divisions, instead of providing transparency."

The amended bylaw took effect immediately upon adoption.



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REGIONAL DISTRICT of Fraser-Fort George

NOTICE OF MEETING

2025 Budget Deliberations

The Board of Directors start **2025 budget deliberations** on **Friday January 24, 2025 at 9 am**. The Committee of the Whole agenda with budget details will be on rdffg.ca by January 16. Individuals and organizations can comment on this budget by:

- addressing the Board of Directors at the January 24 meeting (register in advance at 250-960-4444 or 1-800-667-1959)
- emailing budget@rdffg.bc.ca

Registrations or emailed comments must be received by January 23 at 12 pm.

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Robson Valley Rec Centre receives \$280K for repairs

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) board of directors approved allocating \$280K from the Community Works Fund to the Robson Valley Recreation Centre in McBride during their December 19th board meeting.

The money will be used to replace metal cladding fasteners on the building's exterior, replace doors and windows, repairing corroded canopy columns, and replacing exterior concrete slabs, among other improvements to the building's exterior. The repairs are estimated to cost \$330K in total, the remaining \$50K of which will come from the Local Government Capital and Planning grant.

Constructed in 1983, the Rec Centre was last renovated in 2007 when the Regional District moved its gym to the second floor and upgraded the changing rooms. The Regional District has been setting aside money for improvements to the building's roof for the last few years, according to a staff report submitted to the board in November.

The Regional District hired contractors from McElhanney Ltd, Chernoff Thompson Architects North and Mons Aase Roof Inspections to complete an assessment of the roof in August 2024. They identified areas for improvement that would cost \$2M in total.

However, the Regional District will only be completing the most urgent repairs – such as replacing the roofs over entrance canopies and replacing the building's exterior metal cladding fasteners – in 2025. The Regional District will discuss funding for other building maintenance projects with the Rec Centre's Community Consultation Committee, a group of local residents, government officials and District staff, throughout the next year.

Additionally, RDFFG staff predict that over the next 20 years, the Rec Centre will accrue \$7.2M in maintenance costs which will not be covered by the Centre's annual budgets. In light of this, the RDFFG is working with the Community Consultation Committee to produce an asset management plan – that is, an investment portfolio that will generate revenue for capital improvement projects – over the next year.

During the board's December meeting, Electoral Area H director Dannielle Alan said she was relieved to hear the building's roof and exterior cladding do not need to be replaced entirely.

"If we just do the maintenance and exterior that we're talking about, [it] will prolong the building's life and reduce other funding requests," she added.

Valemount director Owen Torgerson said he was happy to hear roof improvements would cost less than he had expected.

"If you don't have a roof, you don't have a Rec Centre," he said. "Thank you to staff for identifying a much more financially amicable maintenance program."

Now that funding for the project has been approved, Regional District staff will work to find a contractor who can complete the work this spring or summer, according to the November staff report.

In an interview with The Goat, McBride Mayor Gene Runtz said he was impressed that staff found a cost-effective way to improve the building.

"Many of the things that were initially talked about weren't required to be done. They've concentrated on the main things that needed to be done for the short and long term, and did it very well and very concisely," Runtz said. "They're great to work with."

He added that the Rec Centre is a valuable facility for McBride residents, and he looks forward to seeing an asset management plan for the building drafted later this year.

In Loving Memory of



Jill Tracy Philpott

May 12, 1964 – December 14, 2024

It is with heavy hearts and deep sorrow that we announce the passing of Jill Tracy Philpott (nee Mader), beloved wife to Stewart Philpott, and devoted mother to Sydney and Madiline. Jill peacefully passed away on Saturday, December 14, 2024, surrounded by the love and warmth of her family. Jill was the very definition of a fighter and fought courageously a nearly five-year battle with cancer.

Born on May 12, 1964, third child of John and Marilyn Mader of Sydney, Nova Scotia. Jill was the youngest of three and is survived by siblings Michelle and Kelly. Jill was a woman of strength and grace, a loving partner to her husband Stewart, and a dedicated mother to her two wonderful daughters, Sydney and Madiline. She lived her life with passion and purpose, always putting the needs of her family first. Her unwavering commitment to her loved ones, along with her hardworking nature and inspiring spirit, left an indelible mark on all who knew her.

To her husband, Jill was a wonderful wife, friend and partner. To her daughters, Jill was a mother, a guiding light, showing her daughters the value of kindness, perseverance, hard work and strength. She was loved.

Jill leaves behind her husband, her two amazing daughters, and her sister, brother and loving family members across Canada. Though she is no longer with us, her spirit will forever remain in the hearts of all who had the privilege to know her.

Loved by many, including her in-laws and their families, her legacy of love and devotion will continue to live on in the hearts of her beautiful family and friends. She will be dearly missed! In this time of sorrow, we take comfort knowing she is at peace. At her passing she was surrounded by the love of those who meant the most to her.

May her memory continue to inspire us, as she inspired so many during her remarkable life.

An intimate service with close family members has been held. A scattering of her ashes will take place with family in Nova Scotia later in the year.

For those wishing to do so, in lieu of flowers or cards, please consider donating to the McBride Hospital Auxiliary.

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CN train derails near Tete Jaune

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

CN crews responded to a train derailment east of Tete Jaune on December 28th, according to the company. A train car carrying grain was derailed upright. There were no reports of injuries, leaks or fires, the company said.

The cause of the derailment is under investigation, according to CN. When asked, the company did not respond with a timeline for the completion of the investigation.

The Goat will publish more details as the story unfolds.



IN MEMORY OF

**Lt. Col. Charles Henry Leake
(Charlie Leake)
CD, RCAF [ret'd]**

Jan 18, 1932 - Dec 8, 2024

With sad hearts, we announce Charlie's death, at home in Comox, December 8, 2024. Loving wife, Pat Leake, and family are grateful for all the messages of love and support received.

We will gather for a memorial in McBride (Snarly's hometown) May long weekend, 2025.

Editorial



By Spencer Hall
Editor & Owner
goatnewspaper@gmail.com

Robson Valley's sole veterinarian has retired... what now?

With the retirement of long-time local veterinarian Dr. Vogel and the closure of the Valemount Vet Clinic in fall 2024, the Robson Valley finds itself without a practitioner to provide veterinary care to pets and livestock.

Robson Valley residents aren't the only people coping with a lack of veterinary care.. The entire province is facing a long-standing vet shortage, which has only worsened since the COVID-19 pandemic, due to people welcoming more pets into their homes during the days of physical distancing.

According to a 2023 study commissioned by the BC Cattlemen's Association, the shortage of veterinarians disproportionately impacts large animals, as well as animals in rural and northern areas in the province.

The study found that of the 1800 veterinarians estimated to be working in B.C., just between 250 and 300 provide care to large animals.

Many residents of the Robson Valley raise livestock – either to sell, for our own food, or for enjoyment. Veterinarians are crucial to the agricultural industry and provide critical medical care and consultation with farmers in order to prevent disease and further treatment. Without a vet in our area, our agricultural sector and our food security will suffer.

Many of us in the area also own pets and are concerned for their wellbeing now that our only vet has entered into a well-deserved retirement. The closest veterinary clinic is located in Jasper and has a limited capacity for patients and services due to the damage the clinic sustained during the Jasper wildfires this summer.

It simply isn't feasible for pet owners to drive over three hours to Prince George or Kamloops to receive veterinary care, if those clinics even have the capacity to accommodate us.

This dire situation will require collaboration from multiple levels of government in order to find a solution that works for our region.

In December, the Province announced a \$1.4 million program — known as the Regional Recruitment and Retention of Veterinary Service Delivery for Food Animals program — which is aimed at

recruiting veterinarians to B.C., with a focus of bringing more vets to northern and rural areas.

While local governments can't access the funding themselves, the Province encourages them to partner with veterinarians so they can access the funding to ensure the area has adequate veterinary services.

How can we attract a vet to move here?

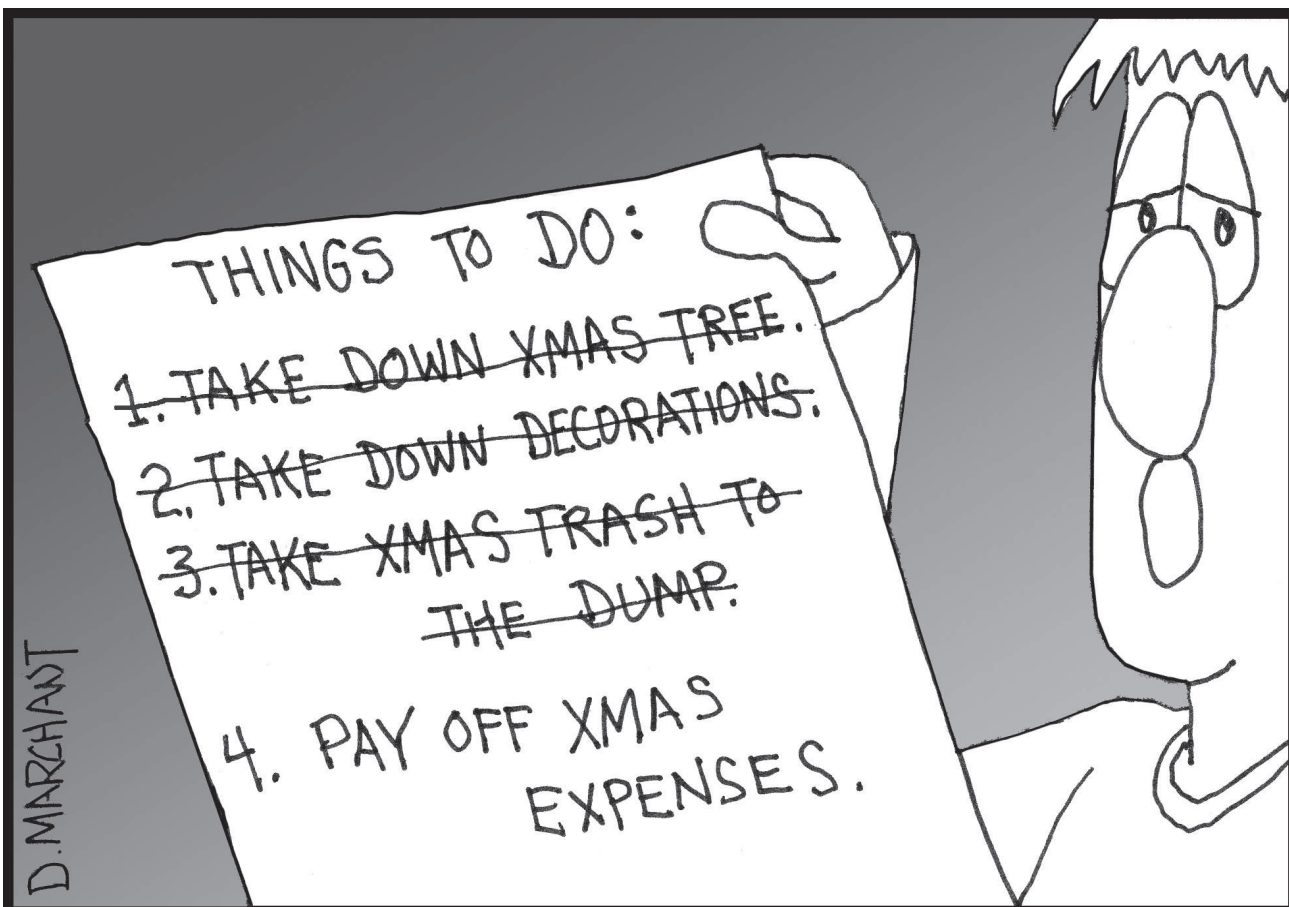
The Robson Valley is a beautiful area that offers many outdoor recreation opportunities, but is arguably one of the best kept secrets of the province. Staff and councillors should (quickly) establish a task force aimed at recruiting a veterinarian to our region. The task force could include local residents and could explore the possibility of attending veterinary conferences to promote the area to veterinarians looking to start or move their practices.

The Villages of McBride and Valemount could also look at partnering with a veterinary practice in either Prince George or Kamloops to access funding from the Regional Recruitment and Retention of Veterinary Service Delivery for Food Animals program to build that clinic's capacity to serve the Robson Valley.

Staff should also evaluate recruitment methods used in other communities with a higher number of practicing veterinarians to see if some of these methods could work here.

If a vet were to come to the Robson Valley, they would likely need to establish their own practice. Staff should proactively evaluate if there are any current barriers to vets looking to establish a clinic in either community. They could also look at providing housing, similar to what the Village of Valemount did last year in an attempt to attract healthcare workers.

It is up to us, our local governments, our Regional District and our MLA to collaborate and put the work in now to attract a veterinarian to our area to provide the medical care our pets and livestock desperately need.



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Mark Carney wants to be Prime Minister, and it would be horrible for democracy.

It started purely as an Ottawa rumour mill, but since the inevitable end of the Trudeau saga is here, suddenly it appears that the man has bitten. If you do not already know, meet Mark

Carney, the likely next leader of the Liberal Party, Loyal Opposition, and maybe future Prime Minister of Canada. Governor of the Bank of Canada during the Harper years, he was held up as a bulwark of objective monetary policy and non-partisan civil service. The Harper years were economically stable, at least in comparison to other advanced economies, and the state we are in now. Laurentian elites made sure that Carney got as much credit as possible, they simply could not let Harper claim this as his success.

But that is not all. After completing his term as Governor of the Bank of Canada, he went on to become Governor of the Bank of England. Surely few people could claim such macro-economic

accolades. So why would it be such a bad idea for him to become leader of the Liberal Party and by extension, a potential future Prime Minister of Canada? Well to put it simply...“drain the swamp.”

Donald Trump is not the first populist politician to gain power by railing against clueless elites, nepotistic classes and bloated government employee payrolls. He will not be the last. Why?

Well to be honest...because this is exactly what reality is. There will always be an anti-democratic tendency in your educational and political elites. This tendency is to believe that a small group of people with “higher IQs” (or often time simply impressive degrees) are actually better at organizing simple dumb people’s lives than they are themselves. Now, to a degree this is true. It would be unwise to get ride of medical doctors or engineers completely. But there is an

equal moral hazard in making these classes invincible to any pushback or accountability. After all, human beings are human beings, and everybody has their ideological blindspots. This is why democracy is the “worst form of political system...except for all of the others”.

A Liberal Party headed by Mark Carney proves Trump, and other populists, right. Far from being an institution of objective math and econometrics, the Bank of Canada is but another Federal Laurentian Liberal honey pot, with positional appointments based, not on abilities, but rather who you know and who you secretly pledge Party allegiance to. It proves that ever single government office of the Federal Government has fallen to Partisan capture by the “natural ruling” party of Canada. In short, I have no idea why it would be considered a good idea, neither

CONT'D ON P8

Global Thoughts

Canada: Trudeau Bites the Dust

BY GWYNNE DYER

Gwynne Dyer is a Canadian-born independent journalist whose column is published in more than 175 papers in 45 countries.

Donald Trump excels in every field, including surrealism. Leonard Cohen sang “First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin!” but it’s completely outclassed by Trump’s “First we take Greenland, then we take Canada!” And he’s going to take the Panama Canal too!

It’s probably just bluster and nonsense, but it has already taken down Justin Trudeau, Canada’s prime minister for the past nine years. His resignation on Monday was the delayed consequence of a row with his deputy Chrystia Freeland last month over his ‘weak’ response to Trump’s threat to slap a 25% tariff on Canadian exports to the US.

The actual annexation threats came a bit later, and most Canadian journalists assumed that they were just a way of scaring Canadians into accepting the new tariffs or making other concessions. They’re probably right, too – but what if they are wrong?

The Greenlanders were simply bemused by Trump’s offer to buy their country, as was the Danish government, which looks after the island’s defence and foreign affairs. Nevertheless, Copenhagen increased its defence spending on Greenland by \$1.5 billion. And the Panamanians just shrugged.

The threats may all be empty, and they certainly reveal an ignorance so profound that it may qualify

for ‘protected cultural status’ with UNESCO. However, what seems faintly comical viewed from abroad is taken seriously by some people in the United States, and they are thicker on the ground in the circles around Trump than anywhere else.

It’s not enough to say that they’re just yanking our chain. That’s probably the right answer, but you’d feel really stupid if they really did mean some of it and you woke up one morning to find American troops in your street. On the other hand, what could you do to lessen that possibility that wouldn’t look equally stupid?

It’s the same dilemma you always have when dealing with the threats of madmen real or fake. Let’s just look at the bright side, which is that Trump’s threats have finally forced ‘Governor’ Trudeau, as Trump mockingly calls him (implying that what he governs is just an American state) to resign.

That is good news because it opens up a faint possibility that Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre will not be the next prime minister of Canada. An election is due no later than October, and so long as Trudeau was in the race Poilievre was the sure winner.

Poilievre (not a francophone despite the name) is not really a Canadian Trump, though he shares most of the same ideas. He’s smarter and more presentable, more like US Vice-President-elect JD

Vance but just as much a part of the extreme right.

Here’s his take on Canada’s governing Liberal Party, as middle-of-the-road as it could be. “First they were communists, and then they became socialist, and then they became social democrats, and then they stole the word liberal, and then they ruined that word. They changed their name to progressives, and then they changed their name to woke.”

As long as ‘crypto-Communist’ Justin Trudeau was in office, Poilievre seemed bound to win, not so much because ideological rants are the Canadian style but because Canadians had really come to loathe Trudeau. The intensity of the hostility to him in otherwise calm and reasonable people was astonishing.

People found other, more sensible-sounding reasons to dislike Trudeau, whose government did as poorly as most other elected Western governments in coping with Covid and the subsequent runaway inflation. However, I have long been convinced that they really hated Trudeau because he was irredeemably smarmy.

Now that he’s gone and the Liberals will have a new leader, there’s at least a small chance that Poilievre will not be the next prime minister of Canada. Otherwise, by the end of this year all of mainland North America will be ruled by the hard right – except Mexico, of course.

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Robson Valley residents concerned over lack of vet services

By ANDREA ARNOLD

When long-time Dunster-based veterinarian Tom Vogel announced his retirement in the middle of December, the community — while understanding that it was time for this move — flooded social media with concerns.

With services no longer available in the Robson Valley and the Jasper clinic only able to provide limited services, local pet owners are looking at long and expensive commutes to have animals treated, or to even acquire medication.

Robson Valley pet owners are having to look beyond Prince George and Jasper for services. Falling Star Ranch owner Birgit Stutz commented in a post that clinics in Prince George are hard to get into.

Farmers with livestock are now having to consider what they will do in a case where a large animal in labour needs assistance, or contracts colic or another illness. How far will they have to transport their animals for medical services? In the case of labour, the arrival to help may be too late.

Westwinds Mobile Veterinary Services out of Prince George has been visiting McBride periodically in recent years. The clinic provides opportunities for scheduled appointments, but is not able to provide emergency services, unless practitioners happen to be in the area at the time.

The demand for support from the Villages, both McBride and Valemount, as well as the Regional District of Fraser Fort George was evident through online conversation on Facebook. Letters have been sent by concerned residents suggesting options and requesting that the Councils work to advocate for a solution.

Valemount Mayor Owen Torgerson confirmed that at the recent North Central Local Government Association and Union of BC Municipalities conventions, the Village of Valemount supported resolutions brought forward by Regional District Fraser-Fort George and Regional District Bulkley-Nechako to address veterinarian shortages in northern BC. These resolutions have

resulted in action by the Province to increase veterinary services to rural B.C.

In response to the outcry on Facebook, RDFFG Area H Director Dannielle Alan confirmed that the Regional District has been working alongside the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako to advocate for more resources for training and help for new vets setting up large animal practices in rural BC.

“We have repeatedly met with the Ministries of Agriculture and Education and will continue - the current situation for pet owners and agricultural producers is untenable,” she said.

Alan also directed residents to sites that explain what the Province has committed to regarding the issue.

“We will be continuing to push for more,” she said.

In March 2023, the Province announced as part of StrongerBC's Future Ready plan they were permanently doubling the number of subsidized seats for B.C. veterinary students attending the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVN) at the University of Saskatchewan. This commitment increased the subsidized seats from 20 to 40 through the initial investment of \$21.8 million over three years.

In addition in the middle of 2024, The International Credentials Recognition Act came into effect. The act allows for easier, more transparent and faster processes for those international qualified professionals to pursue and achieve credential recognition, no matter where they were trained. The requirement for Canadian based work experience has been removed for several professions, including veterinary practice.

On December 12th, 2024 another news release by the Province announced a new program with the aim of attracting and retaining livestock veterinarians in rural parts of the province.

Northern B.C. will be the primary focus of this program, providing veterinary clinics that provide livestock care with recruitment and retention of veterinarians and registered veterinary technologists, as well as funding for equipment and training.

Also of interest to the Robson Valley at this time, is the

statement that the program will also help build local partnerships to improve strategic planning for veterinary services in under-served communities and regions. However it's not a simple application process.

In an interview with The Goat, B.C.'s Chief Veterinarian Dr. Theresa Burns said while local governments can't access funding through the program by themselves, there is an opportunity for local governments and community organizations to partner with veterinarians interested in establishing a clinic in the area.

“These can be [groups] like Farmer's Institutes, non-profits, rural community organizations, and local and First Nations governments,” Burns said.

“The veterinary practice doesn't necessarily need to have a brick and mortar facility in that town or village, but they do have to be willing to support providing veterinary services in that community, whether that's immediately or after they've accessed the funding to build that capacity,” she added.

The financial strain on new graduates is already enormous, so the prospect of opening a new clinic, or even taking over an existing practice is often impossible without support from outside sources. The consensus of the voices heard on social media is that active recruiting and support from local government for anyone who shows an interest in setting up a rural practice is imperative.

The first intake for applications for this program ends on January 15th, 2025.

While the lack of vet services is a concern across the valley, the support and appreciation for Dr. Vogel's services are being expressed valley wide. Boxes for cards and notes have been placed at various locations in McBride, Dunster and Valemount.

“Village of Valemount expresses gratitude to Dr. Tom Vogel for his commitment and professional care for large and small animals throughout the Robson Valley during his remarkable service as veterinarian,” said Mayor Torgerson. “We wish him all the best as he moves forward into a well deserved retirement.”

The Goat was unable to reach Dr. Vogel by presstime.

www.valemount.ca

IMPORTANT UPDATE: VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

There are exciting changes happening at the Valemount Information Centre! Visitor information services will be managed by Tourism Valemount. The main upstairs entrance to the building will provide access through two separate doors - one for the Municipal Office and one for the Visitor Information Centre and public restrooms. The Visitor Information Centre will be closed for approximately two weeks to facilitate the transition. Starting January 15, 2025, citizens are invited to come view the refreshed centre.

The Village of Valemount is confident that Tourism Valemount will continue to provide excellent support to our community and visitors, and we wish them all the best in this new role!

ANNUAL WES HUDSON LIGHT UP CONTEST

The most festive streets this season are 7th Ave, 9th Ave, 3rd Ave, and 4th Ave! These streets have the greatest number of houses decked out for Christmas - great job! Congratulations to the winners of the 2024 light up contest. Prizes will be mailed out.

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Residential: | Commercial: |
| 1st Place - 1123-9th Ave | 1st Place - Home Hardware |
| 2nd Place - 1290-8th Ave | 2nd Place - Caribou Grill |

A few other residential properties we want to recognize for their amazing displays are: 1185-8th Ave, 1260-4th Ave, 1380-4th Ave, and 1101-7th Ave. Stand out commercial properties are: Three Ranges Brewing and Valemount Health Clinic. Thank you to everyone who took the time to light up Valemount!

Municipal Office Hours

Open Mondays to Fridays
8:30am to 12:30pm & 1:30pm to 4:30pm
Closed for Statutory Holidays

HELP US GO GREEN

As part of our ongoing efforts to improve and adapt, the Village is exploring ways to phase out printed newsletters in favour of an online format. This shift would help us save on printing and postage costs, while reducing environmental impact. The recent postal strike highlights the challenges of relying on traditional mail, and we want to ensure our updates reach you in the best way possible.

The January newsletter is available at the Village office and on our website, www.valemount.ca/news/newsletters. If you still require a printed newsletter, we would love to hear from you! Please let us know by calling the Village office at 250-566-4435 or sending an email to csc@valemount.ca. Thank you for helping us create a more sustainable future.

LICENSING REMINDERS

Please ensure to renew your business licenses and animal licenses before January 31st.

If you are providing any professional, personal or other service for gain or profit within village limits, a business license is required. Applications may be referred to other departments or agencies as required. Applications can be obtained by visiting the Village Office, Mondays to Fridays, between 8:30am to 12:30pm and 1:30pm to 4:30pm, or online at www.valemount.ca/business/business-licensing

Any business with a commercial kitchen must prove that annual cleaning of the grease interceptor has taken place, prior to issuance of a business license. An invoice from a qualified service provider will be accepted as proof of meeting this requirement; alternatively, a date-stamped photo of the interceptor may be provided for approval by the Building Inspector prior to a license being issued. The invoice or photo must be dated within the last calendar year.

CBT RESIDENT DIRECTED GRANTS

Are you ReDi? The 2025 cycle of the CBT ReDi Grants in Valemount is here and funds available are approximately \$493,000 for projects to improve our community, so dream big and get involved. The application window is now open. Please visit www.valemount.ca/redi for more details, and contact the Village of Valemount Grant Clerk, Taggart Wilson, to discuss your project ideas.

HOUSING NEEDS REPORT

In the Fall of 2023, the Province of BC introduced several pieces of legislation related to housing. Bill 44 introduced changes to the Local Government Act updating requirements for Housing Needs Reports. Local Governments must adopt an interim Housing Needs Report by January 1, 2025.

At the December 10 Regular Council Meeting the Village of Valemount adopted an update to the 2022 Housing Needs Report which includes the Interim Housing Needs in schedules I and J.

The Interim report includes:

- five- and twenty-year housing needs;
- a statement about the need for housing in close proximity to transportation infrastructure that supports walking, bicycling, public transit or other alternative forms of transportation; and
- a description of the actions taken by the local government, since receiving the most recent housing needs report, to reduce housing needs.

To view the Housing Report, visit the Village website at www.valemount.ca/village-office/documents-publications/reports.



735 Cranberry Lake Road
250-566-4435 PO Box 168

Valemount Community Forest gets “wake-up call” in recent audit

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

The BC Forest Practices Board (BCFPB) found five significant non-compliances in the Valemount Community Forest (VCF) audit released on December 17th, including two non-compliances in wildfire prevention measures. VCF is taking steps to establish more thorough training and pre-work planning to avoid similar oversights in the future, according to General Manager Kalina Velez.

Based on observations of VCF activities from July 1st, 2021 through July 28th, 2023, the audit covered all VCF activities during a two-year timeframe, including harvesting, silviculture, construction and structure maintenance, among other activities.

While the audit found that VCF complied with most requirements set out in the Forest and Range Practices Act and the Wildfire Act, the number and scope of non-compliances found in the audit were “concerning”, according to the board’s report.

“The level of non-compliance found in this audit does not impart confidence that the licensee is adequately managing for legally required stewardship values,” the board commentary on the audit reads.

Two of these non-compliances were related to wildfire risk and protection. According to the audit report, the VCF failed to complete fire hazard assessments in a timely manner for 12 out of 18 cutblocks audited by the BCFPB – putting the community forest out of compliance with the Wildfire Act.

Additionally, the board found that the community forest did not establish fuel breaks – areas where wood and other fire fuel are removed, to prevent fire spread – around some slash piles it was burning, including three piles near the village of Valemount. In some cases, the fire spread beyond the slash piles and damaged trees in adjacent cutblocks.

“These non-compliances... point to systemic issues with the licensee’s fire hazard abatement practices,” the report reads.

Auditors also found issues with fire suppression measures. During the field audit, they discovered one water pump could not be started. While the contractor they were auditing had knowledge of fire risk and knew the procedure to follow if a fire started, the lack of a working water pump put the VCF out of compliance with the Wildfire Regulation.

Besides concerns over wildfire prevention and suppression, auditors found two significant non-compliances with the Forest Planning and Practices Regulation’s requirements for planning and designing bridges. Auditors found that three of the bridges the VCF had built lacked proper documentation – while they did not have concerns over the safety of these bridges, the report notes that the documentation process is important for ensuring that bridges are safe for industrial use.

In another case, auditors found that guardrails had detached from a bridge. According to the audit, the VCF was aware of the detached guardrails but did not repair them before using the bridges for industrial traffic. While the rails were not load-bearing and did not affect the structural soundness of the bridge, they provide drivers with a visual guide to know when they are approaching the edge of a bridge, the report says.

Finally, auditors found a significant non-compliance with the requirements for harvest reporting outlined in the Forest Planning and Practices Regulation. The VCF reported 24 harvested cutblocks during the audit period, eight of which were reported late or were missing information.

“As it affects one-third of cutblocks sampled, this issue is pervasive and considered a significant non-compliance,” the report says.

An “alarming” number of non-compliances: BCFPB

While forestry is a complex industry and any given operation may have a handful of issues, the number of non-compliances found in VCF’s operations were alarming, said BCFPB Chair Keith Atkinson. In his experience, the board typically finds two or three non-compliances – rarely does it find five or more.

“Once you get up over five to seven, we’re starting to get concerned,” Atkinson said. “Not only about the number of non-compliance issues, but the spectrum of them: it crosses over from the planning to the wildfire [prevention] to the reporting. It covers a few of the major categories that raise our concern.”

In particular, Atkinson expressed concern about the non-compliances related to bridge design and maintenance. The board has been focusing on increasing compliance with bridge safety and design practices across the province for over a decade, Atkinson said: in 2013, the board released its first special investigation on road and bridge practices, followed by a 2019



The Valemount Community Forest was found to be out of compliance on five issues, including wildfire preparation and bridge planning. The organization is taking steps to make sure these problems do not reoccur in the future, says General Manager Kalina Velez. /ABIGAIL POPPLE

investigation on bridge planning, design and construction.

While the 2019 report found that structural soundness and safety had improved, with over 90 per cent compliance with safety requirements, the board also found that one-quarter of bridges examined lacked completed plans. Additionally, only 74 per cent of structures had record drawings – part of the engineering plan that must be submitted for a bridge to be approved – and only 85 per cent of those drawings were accurate.

Incomplete or missing bridge plans are a problem the Forest Practices Board is still fighting today, Atkinson said. This is often because foresters increase the length of culverts in an effort to make them safer, according to Atkinson.

“When a road builder decides to overbuild a culvert and make it a more sound structure ... it’s a good practice, but not to the point where it becomes a span that needs an engineer’s approval,” he said.

This was the case in the VCF audit: two culverts had been expanded to be over six metres across, the length that classifies a structure as a bridge. Atkinson hopes forestry professionals will take note of this example and ensure all structures have proper documentation.

Wildfire prevention and safety is also top of mind for Atkinson – especially for operations near communities, as is the case with VCF. He found lack of fuel breaks and non-functional water pump worrisome.

“The burn piles skated a bit into standing timber – that’s really alarming. We need everybody to be paying attention to that,” he said. “Hopefully, we’ve come out of three years of drought and really bad wildfire seasons in the province. But out in the forests of B.C., we’ve got many years ahead of us with high risk conditions.”

According to Atkinson, the board’s auditing process included an extensive fact-checking process wherein the board worked with VCF management to make sure its understanding of the VCF’s practices was accurate. This is in part why the report was not published until recently – typically, audits have about a year of turnaround time between when field observations are completed and when the report is submitted, he said.

“We schedule our field season in the summer to get out on the ground,” Atkinson said. “Then we come back and work on things during the winter for reporting. So it’s typically an annual cycle for us, in a sense.”

All bark and no bite

While the BCFPB is tasked with ensuring that forestry operations are managed safely and sustainably, the board does not have the power to enforce its recommendations, said BCFPB General Counsel Nathan Murray. Legal consequences, such as issuing tickets or imposing fines, are left up to the Ministry of Forests, Murray said.

“Once in a while, a board report will trigger that process where the

Mark Carney ...Cont'd from P6

for pragmatic Liberal Party strategy nor for public faith in government institutions. And not just a passive Liberal, but actually right in the thick of Party Strategizing and Policy development.

Other than the Governor General, I can think of no office in Canada that demands more Partisan ambivalence. At the end of the day, Pierre Poilievre will make quick work of it....

"see...they are so arrogant the Liberals do not even try to hide the fact that the entire federal government workforce pledges them allegiance." You would think the Laurentian elites would have already learned the lesson. They were convinced the superior IQ and Harvard credentials of Michael Ignatieff would ensure the end of the Harper "usurpation". Alas, Canadian saw through an entitled parachute candidate who literally moved back after two decades just to become Prime Minister. But who am I to tell the Liberal Party how to steer their ship. I am just a concerned Canadian who is forced to realize our most important civil offices, even the ones that should operate purely on Math, are just smoke screens hiding the back-door deals.

Joe Nusse

Valemount, B.C.

VCF Audit ...Cont'd from P7

compliance and enforcement branch [of the Ministry] will see that report and think, 'Okay, there's something for us to go look at here,' and they'll pursue an administrative penalty or something like that," he said.

In an email statement to The Goat, the Ministry of Forests confirmed that the Ministry is reviewing the audit of VCF. However, the Ministry did not provide a timeline for when it would complete its review of the audit.

A wake-up call for VCF: General Manager

Regardless of whether the Ministry addresses the issues outlined in the report, VCF is taking steps to correct them, said VCF General Manager Kalina Velez.

"It's a wake-up call for us," Velez said of the audit. "Once you start operating on such a large land base, things get missed – not purposely, but it happens. It's nice to have an auditor come in and pinpoint our weaknesses and what we should be focusing on."

While Velez was not working at VCF during the audit period – she started her position as general manager in August 2024 – she says the audit's results are still relevant. Issues requiring immediate correction, such as repairing the broken water pump and ensuring bridges were appropriately documented, were quickly addressed by the community forest's previous management, according to Velez.

Now that Velez is at the helm, she has turned her focus towards drafting and revising policies that will improve the VCF's practices in the long term. For example, she has revised the pre-work approval process to include more detailed site mapping and a pre-work form with clearer expectations for safety standards, waste management, and risk assessment. Additionally, she hopes to hire experts who can supervise on-site operations once or twice a week. This will give VCF a chance to nip problems in the bud and improve its communications with contractors, Velez says.

Velez hopes that providing more thorough training and inviting questions and feedback from contractors will improve their practices without having to turn to punitive measures.

"Accountability on the contractors' side is definitely something I will be going after," she said. "But also, to be fair, we will provide them with very thorough, proper training to ensure they understand what the requirements are."

This training, along with an all-hands meeting to discuss the audit and the policies Velez is implementing, will take place sometime around April, she said. In the meantime, she is working with contractors to clearly explain the VCF's expectations for safety and planning, she says.

That kind of collaboration with contractors is crucial for forestry operations looking to improve their practices, Atkinson said.

"It's a complex world out there. You need to have a good team of professionals and managers to develop plans and see them implemented properly," he said.

Velez echoed Atkinson's sentiments.

"The guys are doing really well. They're trying, and there's improvement I can already see," she said. "Ultimately, we're all in this together."

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Silage plastic



Twine



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Fatal snowmobile incident in Valemount

BY ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

A woman was killed in a snowmobile incident in the Allan Creek area, a snowmobile trail near Valemount, on the morning of December 28th. According to RCMP media relations officer Madonna Saunderson, the RCMP received a call about the incident at 9:50 a.m. that morning.

Search and Rescue were called and found the victim, Saunderson said. She added that there is nothing to indicate the death was suspicious.

The BC Coroners Service confirmed that it is investigating the incident. The investigation is still open and a cause of death has not yet been determined. The Service was unable to predict when the investigation will be complete.



GO CANADA GO!

The Robson Valley Recreation Centre in McBride was abuzz with excitement on New Years Eve as approximately 100 people gathered to specifically support two players of Team Canada at the World Juniors. Tanner Molendyk, #6 and Sawyer Mynio, #7. Molendyk started his hockey journey in McBride and learned how to skate in the Rec Centre. Mynio's dad grew up in McBride and the community has embraced the young player as well. /ANDREA ARNOLD



The tournament ended early for Canada after a loss to Czechia in the quarter finals. Molendyk (left) was named one of Team Canada's top three players along with Captain Brayden Yager and goalie Carter George. Following the second game of the tournament, Molendyk was named player of the game for Canada.



New kid on the block: Trade Studio Co. opens in Valemount

BY RACHEL FRASER

Valemount's newest salon, Trade Studio Co., offers a fresh option for those looking to elevate their aesthetic. Tiara Rich opened her new salon at the beginning of October, between the climbing gym and Vale Coffee on Main Street. Rich renovated and decorated the space herself, in a boho-minimalist style. The service menu includes the full range of hair services as well as lash and brow treatments. Spray tanning has just been added to the salon's offerings.

While she's always wanted her own salon, the road to this accomplishment has been winding. Originally from McBride, Rich's hair journey started before the end of high school. She was accepted to hair school in grade 11 and took courses by correspondence to graduate early.

After working in Edmonton salons for a bit, she returned to the Valley, working at Unique Boutique until moving to Grande Prairie for several years.

Grande Prairie was a period of career growth and refinement. From there, Rich moved to Prince George, where she just did hair out of her home for friends while growing her family. During COVID-19, she took lash courses.

She was a stay-at-home mom after moving back to Valemount, and when she ventured back into the workforce, it was not in hair, but in unrelated business management.

"I decided (managing those businesses) wasn't for me and I kinda just did the really scary thing," she said about the decision to open her own salon.

Among the elements that make Rich and Trade Studio Co. stand out is the Redken product line, a unique higher end offering in the Valley, as well as the salon's focus on lash and brow services. These include brow shaping, lamination and tinting, lash lifts, tints and extensions. Brow lamination is like a perm for your brows, Rich says, shaping them up to look fuller and cleaner.

"I'm multi-certified in all styles of lash extensions, as well," she said. There are other practitioners offering some of these services locally, but not all, and not the full range all in one spot.

As a hairstylist, she also has extensive training in blonding and grey blending.

A key feature of Trade Studio Co. is that bookings are entirely online through the user-friendly platform accessed on the salon's website, <https://trade-studio-co.square.site/>.

Rich said she can take walk-ins if she's in the salon and has the availability, and that the salon has a cell phone she keeps with her if people need to get in touch, but she noted that the booking platform shows all available spots with the ability to book up to an hour prior to the desired appointment, and provides details on the services with the full pricing breakdown.

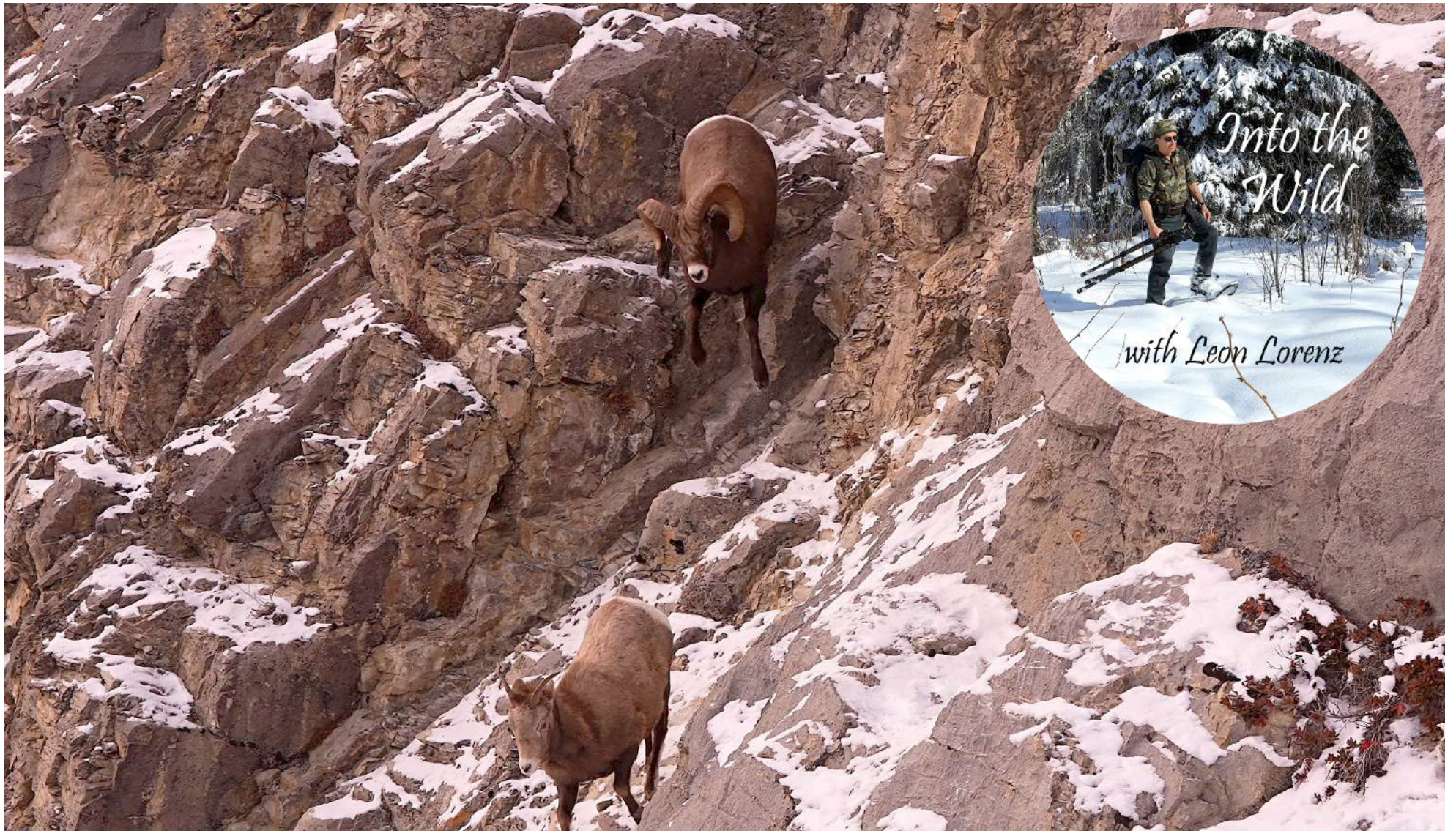
The salon doesn't have set hours for now, which allows a lot of flexibility to both Rich

and her clients. She is currently the sole stylist at Trade Studio Co., but hopes to bring on another stylist soon.

Rich is pleased with how business has been since opening. "It's been great. I really couldn't ask for anything better."



Tiara Rich stands in the vision she created at Trade Studio Co. /RACHEL FRASER



High speed chases by the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep often erupt during the rutting season with near vertical cliffs taken in stride. These difficult manoeuvres are made possible due to their amazing balance as well as the design of their cloven hoofs which is soft and spongy on the inside which grips the rocky and slippery sections extremely well. /LEON LORENZ

Jasper mayor reflects on turbulent year of wildfire, recovery

BY PETER SHOKEIR, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

As Jasper continues to recover from a wildfire that destroyed nearly a third of the townsite, Mayor Richard Ireland is optimistic about the New Year.

Although having dealt with various challenges such as establishing local government, COVID-19 and the Chetamon wildfire, the last year had proven “without question” to be his most difficult one as mayor.

Nonetheless, Ireland asserted there was “a degree of optimism and hope for the future.”

“People have certainly demonstrated lots of resilience and lots of patience until now,” he said. “And I think they are encouraged by the visible signs of progress – that is, lots being cleared up – and so they know that work is underway to be prepared for rebuilding in the spring.”

Another sign of hope is that site servicing has been completed for interim housing. The Alberta government has committed to providing 250 modular homes, with the first of these expected to come online early next year.

Ireland noted the municipality was not part of the procurement process and acknowledged there were some issues between the federal and provincial governments related to land leasing.

“We are hopeful that those things will get settled,” he said. “The prior assurances that we had was that there would be housing on the ground early in 2025, and for the benefit of the community, that’s what we’re hoping to see.”

As for the long-term rebuild, which will take years, Ireland said the municipality, through the Jasper Recovery Coordination Centre, would do everything within its power to facilitate this process. That includes assisting the insurance industry to help residents rebuild homes and working with Parks Canada to find accommodations for the necessary workforce.

During the first half of 2025, the municipality is expected to take over land-use authority from Parks Canada, a long-time aspiration that was accelerated by the wildfire.

Ireland noted this transfer would require the municipality to develop a planning department, work

with Parks Canada to configure the rebuilding guidelines that were announced several months ago and get the province to have a change in the Order in Council that created the specialized municipality of Jasper.

Developers will continue to submit applications to Parks Canada for the time being. Ireland assured it would be a seamless transition for developers once the municipality takes over.

As for the upcoming summer season, Ireland said they were working on plans with industry to potentially provide camp-style accommodation.

“The visitor economy is heavily reliant on a workforce, and we need to be able to accommodate those people in order to restart our economy,” Ireland said.

While Jasper is several hundred rooms down for visitor accommodation because of the fire, Parks Canada has promised to have the major campgrounds ready in time for summer.

This month, Jasper’s recreation facilities are reopening following over a year of renovations, which were delayed due to the wildfire. The renovations included upgrading changing areas for the Aquatic Centre and Jasper Arena while adding new dressing rooms for the arena.

Ireland described the completion of this project as “a great relief.”

“I have every confidence that people will be really impressed with the product that is now available to them and available, of course, to people from all over the province who come here for tournaments,” Ireland said.

One project the municipality is putting the brakes on, at least temporarily, is procuring electric buses for its transit system. Ireland said they would know more in the spring once interim housing was installed and see whether there will be a greater need for transit.

“Council has, I think, quite properly, put some of those considerations on hold for now, because the landscape is so uncertain,” he added.

With municipal elections coming up in fall 2025, Ireland has yet to announce whether he will run for re-election and plans to leave that question until late into the summer next year.

“So much can change between now and then, both in my personal life and in the life of the community,”

he said. “I am fully engaged in getting through the challenges that we face right now, and I think I will continue to be so engaged until well into the New Year, and so I will come back to a consideration of the election in 2025 when the timing is right.”

According to Ireland, next year’s candidates will – as always – need to demonstrate a strong commitment to serving the community, and the question of who is qualified will ultimately rest with residents.

As a message to Jasper, Ireland offered similar words that have gotten the community through the past five months, ones that encourage the resolve needed to face the current and coming challenges and surmount them.

“Resilience is a word that has been used repeatedly, and it is absolutely appropriate,” he said. “Our community has shown a great amount of resilience, and I think we’ll continue to do that, and we’ll need to continue to do that.”

The other quality that Jasperites will require as they move forward is unity.

“We are in this together,” Ireland said. “We will only get through this together, and as long as the community continues to work together to demonstrate their resolve and to show their resilience, then I think we will get through this.”

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PUZZLES



CROSSWORD

Answers on P13

- Across**
- Wheel centre
 - At the summit of
 - Hoedown participant
 - Practice
 - Close by
 - In a previous time
 - Fishing equipment
 - Playground provocation
 - Journey part
 - Vineyard fruit
 - Blood brother, e.g.
 - "Mighty" trees
 - Olympic rings, e.g.
 - Fly's feeler
 - Over again
 - Links rental
 - Supervise
 - Asian cuisine
 - Agreement point
 - Inhospitably cold
 - Japanese, e.g.
 - Pussycat's partner
 - Snacks on
 - Expected
 - Retainer
 - Pine (for)
 - Raw metal
 - Satiated
- Down**
- Incomplete jury
 - Software customer
 - Early software version
 - Relating to a mountainous range in South America
 - Darjeeling or oolong
 - Propulsion blade
 - Get ready for a test
 - Milk measures
 - Paleontologist's estimate
 - Daybook
 - Lyrical
 - Warnings
 - Complicated problem
 - Except for
 - Square dance call
 - Be obligated
 - Perform
 - Nope
 - Followed
 - Cleared

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- Casual affirmation
- Pagan symbol
- Distinctive air
- Essential item
- Not on
- Itty-bitty
- Trick taker, often
- Sentence starter

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

Warming Up the Cold Moon

This week that begins with the Cold Moon will be warmed with opportunities for togetherness. The table of life will give its goodness in the manner of family-style dining. There's plenty of bounty to go around, though don't expect to be served. Get in there and serve yourself. You don't have to take whatever is offered either. What you put on your plate is up to you; you can take two scoops of some and none of others -- as long as you do it with a smile, no one is judging.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You have your heart set on a destination. See it in your mind's eye, articulate its features, and give into its magnetism. You'll also need more momentum. It always helps to be positioned at the top of a downhill slope. What can you do to clear obstacles, reduce resistance and illuminate friction? The smoother the path, the faster you'll go.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Life's ups and downs are best shared with true friends who are there through it all. You know you're with people who are good for you when you feel free to be exactly as you are -- no need to pretend you're feeling better or worse than you do. Their presence softens hard situations and makes wonderful experiences more vivid.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The problems were not all yours, but you had to solve them anyway because life is, among other things, unfair. At least taking on those responsibilities gave you something, including skill, knowledge and strength. Now you can focus on your most important relationship -- the one you have with yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're attracted to the people who can most help you. The best part is, you don't need to know much about them for this to be the case. It's completely intuitive. People you like will like you back and be good for you, too. As a river flows to the sea, a match of values will flow naturally to a confluence of interests.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Though there's much that's working in your life, you're planning an escape from one particular scene. You're well aware of the need for change. At times you feel it in your bones. Planning an escape doesn't mean abandoning everything; it could be as simple as carving out small sanctuaries in your day.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). A little good fortune becomes a lot when you lean into the momentum. It all starts with an alignment of what you want to do and what you have to do. The work is easy and fun, so all you have to do is keep it up because it's the repetition that will matter most, bringing results that multiply into something remarkable.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You may feel a little stuck in the current chapter, but that feeling is not going to last forever. Even as you meet your responsibilities, you're laying the groundwork for something bigger. Think of this as your preparation time. Keep that vision of freedom alive; it's your compass.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Stay aware of the qualities you bring to the table of life. If your No. 1 fan is you, you're in a good position. If you're concerned about sounding conceited, just keep your self-care, admiration and celebration private. The key here is not to bother fitting in. Trust that the ways you are different will benefit others and elevate the scene.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). There was a time you wouldn't have been able to express your thoughts and wishes with the clarity you achieve now. Such an indicator, though subtle, is a testament to the growth that matters most to you. Don't wait until you hit the obvious markers to celebrate your progress.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Our attractions often have something to do with unfinished business. If we were hurt in a particular way, it is normal to be drawn in by the chance to learn how to avoid, conquer or tolerate that dynamic so it's no longer an impedance to our progress. This week, it's all about learning lessons and processing unresolved emotion.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your motivations change, and it's good to know where they currently stand so you can find the best ways to incentivize yourself. Trying new things will be worthwhile. Free trials are the best, but small investments are also favored because maybe the thing that most helps you stay on track with your goals costs money. You never know until you try.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Every day, in some small way, you are new. The people around you who know you in a certain role will be slow to adapt to your current iteration. They only see who you were when the relationship was being established. Adding new people to your social world enforces your growth into the person you want to be.

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS: This year, you lose the fears of the past. Worries will be debunked. Old, anxious patterns will be undone and replaced by truly effective methods of keeping your internal weather beautiful, peaceful and fair. You'll notice that people look up to you more than ever, and the attention you lavish on others will make a difference in the world. You'll constantly be issuing invitations and praise, impacting others to a degree you wouldn't have imagined. More highlights: three extra cash bonuses, and you'll travel in style.

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SUDOKU

HOW TO PLAY Answers on P13

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember. You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column or 3x3 box.

The Toughie

Answers on P13

- Across**
- Hillesum, author of diaries during the Nazi occupation of Holland
 - School orgs.
 - Argyle, for one
 - Quivered
 - Carpentry tool
 - Slow gait
 - Short-legged dog
 - aging cream
 - Goals
 - It's part of Europe
 - Corp. exec.
 - Prudential competitor
 - Grass cutting implement
 - On the ground
 - Stopped sitting
 - Summoned
 - Gala gathering
 - South American countries
 - Scent
 - Diner orders
 - Land measures
 - ranch
 - John Travolta dance movie
 - Was gloomy
 - Four quarters
 - Home to Bohemia
 - Austrian painter Schiele
 - Versatile
 - Type of Greek architecture
 - Ward (off)
 - "Très ___!"
 - Kind of fairy
 - Imagines
 - Systems
- Down**
- PC user's bailout key
 - Pronoun
 - Severed
 - Boo Boo's mentor
 - Madrid park
 - Where the gas goes
 - Goes with Spumanti
 - What a spider will do
 - Munchen, e.g.
 - Night sky feature
 - Pause
 - Gold units, abbr.
 - Cook's tour stop
 - French summer
 - Mil. bigwig
 - Food thickener
 - Grime
 - It comes easily to hand
 - Bygone despot
 - "Divine Comedy" writer
 - Reno calculation
 - Undisguised
 - Stand up to
 - Cornell of Cornell University


| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 62 | | | | | 63 | | | | 64 | | | |

- Links
- Ultimatum ender
- Gulf emirate
- Dish served on toast
- End of the year month, for short
- Horned grazer
- Janis Joplin's "Me and Bobby ___"
- Air purifiers use it
- Dangles
- Starts, for business purposes
- Diamond stats
- Gr. 1-6
- Try to spot, with "for"
- Privy to
- Give as an example
- Flunking letters
- Cuban revolutionary

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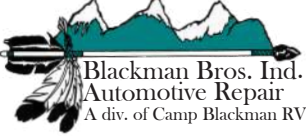
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| 48 | F | E | E | 49 | A | C | H | E | 50 | O | R | E | | | | | |
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SUDOKU ANSWERS

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TOUGHIE ANSWERS

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Valemount

Sat-Sun Jan 11-12th Come celebrate **VARDA's 20th Anniversary!** We're kicking off this celebration with what started it all: the winter snowmobile season. VARDA will be hosting a weekend-long celebration featuring free trail passes for everyone throughout the two days and an evening banquet/celebration on Saturday evening. More details TBA.

TUE Jan 14th The Indigenous Literacy Team is having a Drop-in Gathering on January 14th from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM at 1444 5th Ave. Let's welcome the new year in a good way! Coffee and snacks will be provided. No registration required, please contact the office at 250-566-9107 or email events@rvcsbc.org for more information.

THUR Jan 16th Men in the community are invited to join us for A Men's Games Night at the new RVCS office in Valemount 1444 5th avenue from 6:00pm-8:00pm for an evening of games, laughter and connection. Pick your favourite games and make it a night to remember! No registration required, please contact the office at 250-566-9107 or email events@rvcsbc.org for more information.

Money Matters Workshops on Jan. 21, 28, Feb. 4, 11, 18 from 6:30 to 8:30pm at the Valemount Learning Centre. Call 250-566-4601 to register or for more info.

Ongoing Valemount

Pancake Breakfast - Sundays

Pancake breakfast at the Valemount Legion Sundays 8 to 10:30 am. By donation!

Cribbage - Mondays

Join us every Monday at the Golden Years Lodge for a game of cribbage! 1pm. Everyone welcome.

Drop-in pickleball - Sun, Mon, Tues, Thurs

Drop-in pickleball at the Community Hall at noon Sundays, and 8:30am Tuesdays and Thursday. Also 6-8pm Mondays and Thursdays at the high school.

Crafty Stitchers - Sundays in December

Sundays 1-3 pm Crafty Stitchers meet downstairs at the Valemount Public Library, all welcome! Call 250-566-4367. Library closed for the holidays Dec. 24-Jan 2nd.

Oldtimers drop-in adult hockey -Sun & Wed

Co-ed drop-in hockey 6:30-9pm. Cost is \$20 per game. Seasonal rate available. Sundays 6:30pm and Wednesdays 8pm.

Personal Tech Help - by appointment

Hosted by the Learning Centre Need help with your ipad, tablet, phone or computer? Schedule your one-on-one appointment 250-566-4601 or email learn@valemountlearningcentre.org

Old-time Music - Wednesdays

Oldtimers band and music night at the Golden Years Lodge in Valemount 7pm every Wednesday. All welcome! Play music, listen or dance.

Choose to Move WED's Starting Jan 22nd anyone over 55 is invited to our 12 week activation program. Join us each Wednesday from 1-3pm for a free flexible program that is designed to give you the support and motivation to get moving. You will get

a personalized plan from trained activity coaches, a chance to meet new friends while becoming more active and given tools to help build healthy habits that last. No matter your ability Choose to Move helps you make small changes to have a big impact on your health and well-being. Registration is require please contact the office to sign up 250-566-9107 or email events@rvcsbc.org for more information

Astronomy Course - Wednesdays

Drop in and learn about astronomy through the Valemount Library's ongoing astronomy series! 7-8:30 every Wednesday. Library closed for the holidays Dec. 24-Jan 2nd.

Valemount Coffee House - Thursdays

Free Drop-In/Coffee House at the Golden Years Lodge the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month 10 am -2 pm. It's open to everyone regardless of your age. If you currently have mobility issues, call CARE-A-VAN 778-915-8550 for a ride in the accessibility bus.

Drop-in curling Wednesday & Friday nights

7pm at the Valemount Curling Club. \$10 drop-in fee after \$10 membership. Brooms provided, just bring clean shoes!

Tween Scene Book Club - Every 3rd Friday

Free book club for kids 9-12yrs. Sign up in library or give us a call 250-566-436.

Legion dinner and music nights - Fridays

Dinner at the Valemount Legion 5:30 followed by music at 7pm every Friday. Music varies by week and includes open mic, karaoke, jam sessions and special events. Check under the Valemount events list at right or the Legion facebook page for details about specific dates. No music Dec 27th this month.

Family Place Drop In Program - Fridays

If you have questions, are looking for parenting resources, or just need to chat, you can join us in person 9am-noon every Friday in Valemount at 1444 5th Ave. Our weekly targeted programming is a great way for kids ages 0-6 (with their caregivers) to play, connect, explore, and learn!

January 10 – Tobogganing
January 17 – Indoor Scavenger Hunt
January 24 – New Years Dance Party
January 31 – Let's Make Soup!

McBride

Send us your events!

Ongoing McBride

Family Place Drop In Program If you have questions, are looking for parenting resources, or just need to chat, you can join us in person 9am-noon every Monday in McBride or Friday in Valemount. Our weekly targeted programming is a great way for kids ages 0-6 (with their caregivers) to play, connect, explore, and learn!

January 13 – Tumble Time
January 20 – Painting fun
January 27 – Snowman Sensory Bin

ASL Sign Language Club

Tuesday's 3:00-3:30 Basics & 3:30-4:30 Beyond Basics @ the McBride E-Free Church. Great for families, friends and cognitive brain stimulation. Contact Lonnie 250-569-7657

Fibre Artists

On Wednesdays the McBride Library host the Fibre Artists' group 10am-12pm: come knit, sew or crochet with us! Beginners welcome. Online option available – call the library for info on 250 569 2411.

Book Clubs for Adults

The McBride Library holds two monthly book discussion clubs for adults Thursday afternoons 1:30pm. Call 250 569 2411 for info.

Dungeons & Dragons

For ages 12-18, the classic fantasy storytelling game. Join us on Tuesdays from 3.30-5.00pm at the McBride Library. Bring D&D dice if you have them!

Rolling with ADHD

WED's starting Jan 15th through to Feb 5th Our Family Support Program is hosting a **Rolling with ADHD** program, this is an 8 module series that covers practical strategies and tools for families. Do you support a child with suspected or diagnosed ADHD? Our Family Support program is hosting Rolling with ADHD. Whether you're looking to relearn skills or develop new ones, we welcome you to register for this informative and engaging eight module series where we learn about the dynamics of ADHD and executive functioning skills. Communication and building connection is key! We will be running afternoon 12-1pm and evening 7-8pm options. Please contact the office 250-569-2266 or email events@rvcsbc.org for more information and to register.

Sunshine Stories

10:30-11am Thursdays. An early literacy program for children ages 0-5 and caregivers. Songs, rhymes, stories and fun! In partnership with Decoda Literacy.

Tuesday Night Jam - McBride

Now playing in the CN Station Lobby, 6:15-8:30pm. It is an open jam; musicians, singers, and onlookers welcome. For more information call David at (250) 569-2569.

German Conversation Club - McBride

Join us on Wednesday 11:30 - 1:00 at the McBride Library for a fun German language conversational class with Lilly. All levels and abilities welcome, from beginners to advanced. For further details, call the library on 250 569 2411.

Writing Group - Fridays

Our Writing Group for adults meets every Friday afternoon at the McBride library 1:30-3pm. We tend to chat for the first 30 minutes about what we are working on, then we sit silently for an hour to write. Our writers are working on a range of things – novels, memoirs, poems, short stories, dissertations. Writing something? Join us!

Dunster

Community Potluck Lunches hosted by the Dunster Community Association again this winter at the Dunster Community Hall. The first one will be on Saturday, January 18th. Then they will be on the first and third Saturday of February and March. (February 1st and 15th and March 1st and 15th – Mark them on your calendar!) The Doors open at 11:30 am and Lunch will be at 12:00 noon Sharp. **The Annual General Meeting of the Dunster Community Association will**

be held at 1:30pm after the pot-luck on Jan 18th You can purchase your 2024 DCA Memberships then.. For more information contact Pete Amyoony 250-968-4334 or Loretta Simpson 250-968-4453.

Fibre Arts Meet Up Thursdays at the Dunster Schoolhouse!! Starting Thursday Jan 9th. Drop in with whatever you are working on, anytime between 10:00am -2:00 pm.

Schoolhouse Cafe will be starting up with hot soup and treats starting Wednesday January 15th from 11:00am -1:30pm.

Seniors for Climate Action get together on Wednesday, Jan 22 from 10 am-2pm at the Dunster Schoolhouse. More info coming soon.

Poetry Workshop, Wednesday, Jan 29th at the Dunster Schoolhouse from 10:30am -12:30pm

Blue River

Send us your events!

Tete Jaune

Ukrainian New Year

Jan 11th Tete Jaune "Malanka" (Ukrainian New Year) at the Tete Jaune Community Hall 5:30pm. Advance tickets only available at Infinity Office and Health. Meal includes perogies, cabbage rolls, sausage, borscht, bun and dessert. Adults \$30, Seniors \$25, Children \$18.

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Alberta NDP leader says UCP has been “exceptionally slow” when it comes to Jasper’s wildfire recovery.

By PETER SHOKEIR, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

During a Friday (Dec. 20) media roundtable, the former mayor of Calgary criticized the slow rollout of interim housing for displaced residents and recovery workers. “All these months later, and we don’t really have a solution on interim housing,” Nenshi said.

In late July, the Jasper wildfire promoted the evacuation of 25,000 people and destroyed nearly a third of the townsite. Nenshi described the disaster as “a defining moment for the province” and expressed his appreciation of first responders and Alberta’s emergency response system.

While he had no criticism of the immediate response, he was critical of the UCP government’s handling of interim housing.

The UCP government has promised 250 modular homes, with the first anticipated to start coming online in early 2025. While the sites have been serviced, the province is still working to secure the land leases from Parks Canada.

Premier Danielle Smith said during a Dec. 14 radio interview that provincial officials were “very, very frustrated” with the federal agency on this issue and threatened to convey her frustration to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

“We are trying to do everything we can to get people in their homes, and we’re getting caught up on regulatory processes from Parks Canada, [which] doesn’t want to cut down a tree [and] doesn’t want to extend the boundary of Jasper so that we can put up temporary housing,” Smith said.

Nenshi noted the provincial government has had a hard time working with Parks Canada and the Municipality of Jasper and how it was important to recognize people’s expertise.

“I know that there was a point where the province was being very difficult on the form of interim housing they needed,” he said. “It had to be permanent single-family homes on particular land that was not particularly good urban planning or good for the future growth of Jasper, and so you should never let the need to move quickly ensure that you’re getting a bad solution.”

He added it was possible to not just provide immediate solutions but also address the chronic housing shortage that has plagued Jasper for years.

During her radio interview, Smith also criticized Parks Canada for not doing enough fire risk reduction work prior to the wildfire and not being willing to work with the province to clear deadwood on the west side of town.

“We try to work collaboratively with our federal counterparts, but at this moment,

Parks Canada is a real problem,” Smith said.

She added the province may have to find ways to “take matters into our own hands” if the agency didn’t get more “realistic” with protecting communities in Alberta’s national parks.

The federal government has repeatedly denied that poor forest management played a significant role in the Jasper wildfire.

Nenshi accused Smith of going back “to her summer talking points around forest management.”

“It’s very clear that we need to modernize forest management across the province and across jurisdictions in the world,” he said. “Climate change means that the threat of wildfire is even more real, and our forest management processes have not kept pace with where they need to be.”

The NDP leader has asked Jodi Calahoo Stonehouse, shadow minister of Forestry and Parks, to look at better forest management practices that need to be put in place to increase resilience against wildfires.

“But this province is not interested in doing that,” Nenshi said. “They’re just interested in throwing blame rather than saying, ‘This is what we would have done’ or ‘This is how we’re managing provincial lands in a smarter way.’ Nah, they just want to blame the feds and own the libs. That’s the only thing they’ve got.”

UPCOMING EVENTS & NEWS!



REGULAR EVENTS:

- Friday Night Dinner** served 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Friday Night Music** most Fridays 7pm-close!
- Sunday Pancake Breakfast** 8:00 to 10:30 a.m.
- Bingo** - Second Thursday of every month. Doors open at 6 p.m.

COMING EVENTS:

- FRI Jan 10th OPEN MIC 7pm**
- FRI Jan 17th - JAM NIGHT 7PM** hosted by Ernie
- FRI Jan 24th - OPEN MIC 7PM** hosted by Rachel
- FRI Jan 31st - TBA**

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General Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month 7pm

Hall Rentals: available for events, meetings, seminars. Call 250-566-1115 or email valemountlegion266@gmail.com

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 266, 970 Main Street, Valemount
Underage patrons welcome until 10pm

Valemount Eatery Hours Guide

Updated January 6th 2025



BoShay's Bistro
M-F 8am-3pm & M,W,Th 5-9pm
250-566-0154



Caribou Grill
Open 4:30-9pm. Closed Tue, Wed
1002 5th Ave / 250-566-8244



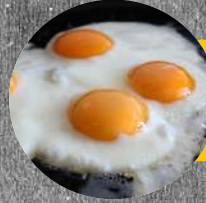
Summit Grill
Open 7 days a week 4-9pm
Located in Best Western Plus Valemount



Valemount Legion Branch 266
Friday dinner 5-8, music 7-10
Sunday pancake breakfast 8-10:30
970 Main Street / 250-566-4343



Glacier Fire Pizzeria
Mon-Sat 4pm-8:30pm
250-566-9090



Abernathy's
Open 6am-1pm 7 days a week
250-566-9199



Vale Coffee
Reg Hours: Th 9-2, Fri-Sun 7-2
info@valecoffee.ca / valecoffee.ca



IGA Deli
Mon-Sat 8am-8pm
Sun 9am-5pm



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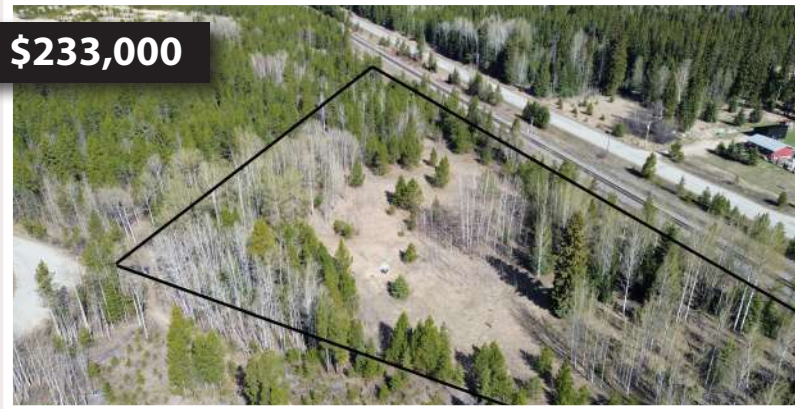
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Sitting on a gentle rise with the world out your window is a 1500 sf bungalow on 74 ac. just minutes from town. The main yard is landscaped with a fenced garden, greenhouse, mature trees, and expansive lawn. Step inside the inviting home to find a large, updated kitchen with an eat-in area and island cooktop. Opening onto a separate dining room with French doors to your deck, and a spacious living room with a wooden vaulted ceiling, large stone fireplace with mantle, and views that go on for days, this home is all about gathering. This home is comfort personified and would look really good on you.

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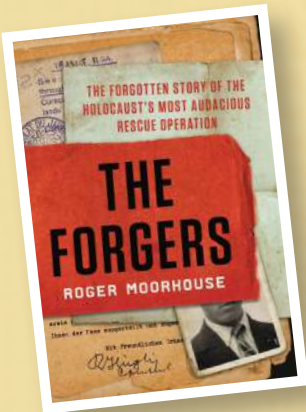
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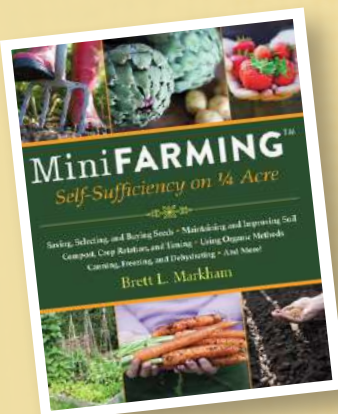


THE FORGERS

Between 1940 and 1943, a group of Polish diplomats in Switzerland engaged in a wholly remarkable—and until now, completely unknown—humanitarian operation. In concert with Jewish activists, they masterminded a systematic program of forging passports and identity documents for Latin American countries, which were then smuggled into German-occupied Europe to save the lives of thousands of Jews.

BY **ROGER MOORHOUSE**

HISTORY



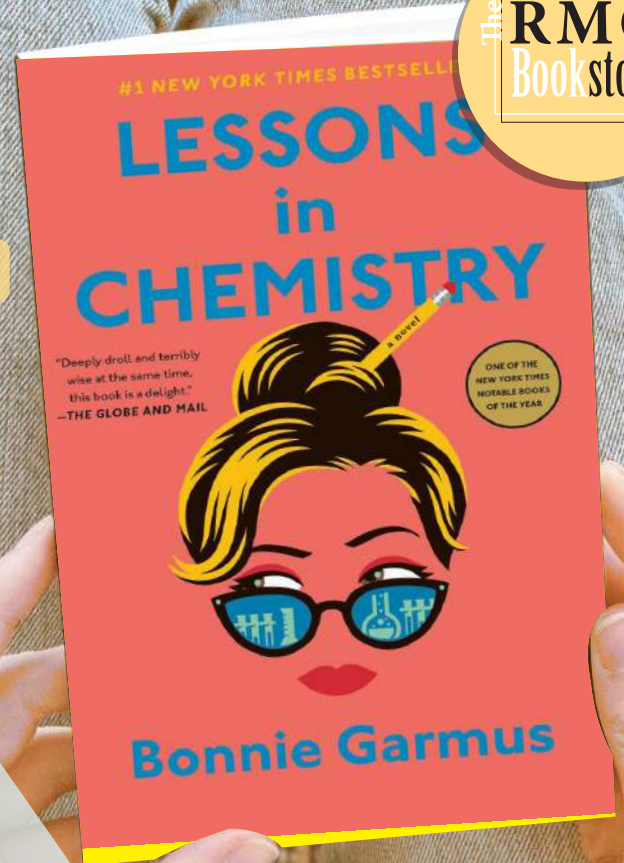
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BY **BRETT L. MARKHAM**

FARMING



LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY

It's the early 1960s and Chemist Elizabeth Zott's all-male team at Hastings Research Institute takes a very unscientific view of equality. Except for one: Calvin Evans, the lonely, brilliant, Nobel Prize-nominated grudge holder who falls in love with—of all things—her mind. True chemistry results. Like science, though, life is unpredictable. Which is why a few years later Elizabeth finds herself not only a single mother but also the reluctant star of America's most beloved cooking show, *Supper at Six*. Elizabeth's unusual approach to cooking ("combine one tablespoon acetic acid with a pinch of sodium chloride") proves revolutionary. But as her following grows, not everyone is happy. Because, Elizabeth isn't just teaching women how to cook. She's daring them to change the status quo. Laugh-out-loud funny, shrewdly observant and studded with a dazzling cast of supporting characters, *Lessons in Chemistry* is as original and vibrant as its protagonist.

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