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Funding for new live fire training centre in Valemount

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

The Valemount and District Volunteer Fire Department is among nine departments selected by the Fire Chiefs' Association of BC to receive funding for the establishment of a live-fire training centre for the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George.

Located in a lot off of Loseth Road, Valemount's live fire training centre has been in the works since 2016, said Fire

Chief Rick Lalonde. However, a COVID-related work stoppages and the retirement of the engineer tasked with signing the building's occupancy permits have put roadblocks in the longtime plans to officially start training at the centre.

As such, Valemount firefighters have been sent to Quesnel to receive live fire training – a practice which not only costs money for the department, but is also a big ask of volunteers, said Lalonde.

"People have to book time off work to go to these things," he said. "So people don't

go out of town for training because it's just not feasible to take time off."

Typically, a training session lasts one or two days, Lalonde explained. When that session is out of town, that means paying for hotel rooms, transit costs, and making sure enough firefighters are still in Valemount to keep the department running.

Now, with the acquisition of \$30,000 in grant money, the Fire Department will be able to pay for inspection costs and hire an engineer to sign off on necessary permits

so that training can take place closer to home. The grant money will also go towards a forcible entry prop: a metal door that will be placed near the training centre for firefighters to practice safely opening heavy doors. Finally, the Department will also construct a fence around the lot on which the centre is built to address security concerns raised by the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George.

"It's been close to up and running," Lalonde said of the current centre.

CONT'D ON P7



Tyler Welfing of CarveWel Creations from Vernon carved three different sculptures in the lot next to the brewery during Winter Fest Saturday. Residents could watch the figures come to life over several hours. Welfing is also a wood carver and several wood carvings were on display. See more Winter Fest photos on P10. / LAURA KEIL

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Business Profile: New residents want to empower clients financially

By LAURA KEIL

How much money do you need in order to retire at your desired age?

Rev. Dr. Tapiwa Huggins Gusha, PhD, and his wife Lisa Mupandenyama are hoping to help connect residents with that number and to other investment and savings opportunities as licensed financial reps operating out of Valemount.

The couple can help broker investments, insurance, mortgages and more. For those looking for additional income, the couple says people can become brokers themselves with World Financial Group, a multi-level marketing company based in the U.S. with offices in Canada and around the world.

The pair, who just moved to Valemount with their children, are passionate about their work as financial brokers, and hope to help local residents improve their financial standing. The Goat sat down with the couple recently to learn more.

What made you decide to move to Valemount?

Tapiwa: We decided to embark on a journey to be travelling nurses. At the beginning of 2023 we moved from Winnipeg and were deployed in Fernie, B.C. When our contract ended in January 2024, we had the opportunity to renew, but we said no, we want to get a feel for other places, so they ended up posting us here. We love B.C. BC is naturally beautiful with the rivers, mountains and everything else.

So you're trained as nurses and then you also have some education and financial things. What is your background or education?

Tapiwa: My professional background, I did sociology and philosophy before coming to Canada. I was teaching

at the university (in Zimbabwe). We have a background in finance, business management, accounting, but we did not find it very interesting to work in the financial industry with the banks back home. While we were in the process of settling (in Canada), we met somebody who introduced us to the (North American) finance industry. The guys from the World Financial Group, they were trading brokers, and we listened to them (and we thought) this might be a good idea. They recruited us. We did the training and passed our government examinations. We are licensed to work in Canada.

I am also an ordained minister.

So you were a professor, and then you became a nurse and you're a minister. You've got quite the resume!

Yeah, in some of these developing countries, people end up doing everything because you learn one thing and after graduating you realize there are no jobs.

What is the financial license called?

It's called LLQP (Life License Qualification Program)

Is there a parent company you're working for?

We're independent brokers but working under a big company - World Financial Group.

What do you want the end result to be for the people that you serve?

Basically, what motivates us to help families is to have better financial futures. What we realized after living here is that people here in Canada work extremely hard. Immigrants it's worse: they do four or five jobs.

Sometimes people lose their jobs and people have nothing to show that they've



Rev. Dr. Tapiwa Huggins Gusha, PhD, and his wife Lisa Mupandenyama are hoping to help connect residents with investment and savings opportunities as licensed financial reps operating out of Valemount. /LAURA KEIL

been working. Not only that, sometimes people without enough knowledge of how to invest, how to save for their retirement, (are) working and working, up to 80 years old, not because they love to work, but because they can't afford to retire. And so the whole idea is to help families to have better financial features. In Canada here, according to the current statistics, 51 per cent of all Canadians, they live pay cheque to pay cheque.

The average Canadian is going about \$21,000 into consumer debt. That's not something meaningful (like a mortgage) that's just consumer debt.

So how can you help people like that though. Because if they don't have money to invest, how can you help them?

When we sit down with a client we analyse their income. One of the things is a lot of people can't save, can't invest not because they don't have money. They don't know where to invest.

Some clients are in debt. But after sitting down with them without any additional income, just working with the income they have, we say "No, why are you keeping a mortgage of three per cent if there's an institution to give you a mortgage at 1.6 per cent? Why are you keeping your car insurance at this institution?"

So we direct people to the organisations, institutions that give them the best value for their money. By doing so, just by analyzing their income, we can help the family which was not able to save \$500 a month to start saving \$500 a month.

If you start right now saving your \$500 in a (high-interest) institution, taking into consideration a 15 per cent interest rate,

what it means is that by the time you reach 65 years, you will have say \$750,000. And you'll be able to retire. This is possible. This is empirical. We do the calculations.

We do an analysis of your income. We tell you where to invest, where to cut, that kind of coaching and direction. So a lot of people who work will have enough money, but they don't know how to optimize their investments.

Walk me through the process. So if I call you and say I need help with, I want you to analyse my finances and help me make better decisions. How does it work? Do I have to pay you a fee?

So basically, when somebody calls us to say they want us to come and help them, we sit in a physical meeting. We do a presentation of about 20 minutes (where we show) the ways we can help them, our services. Then we show them the opportunities. We can also help the client fill in the (investment) applications with their (desired) institutions.

You're not limited to just that one institution's funds, right? You can shop around?

Yeah. This is possible mainly because all the institutions that we work with pay us the same. So our duty is to the client and we direct them to the company we feel gives our client the best service. Our loyalty lies with our clients. If you walk into a company, into a bank they try to sell their products and they don't tell you about any other products. But we shop around.

This interview was condensed for brevity.

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Robson Valley produce delivery goes electric

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

Village Greens, a Valemount-based hydroponic gardening project, is in the midst of establishing new sustainability initiatives with the support of a ReDi Grant from Columbia Basin Trust. The organization has purchased an electric car and solar panels with grant money received in November.

In an interview with The Goat, Village Greens founder Korie Marshall explained that the purchases are in line with the organization's goal of providing a sustainable, local food source for Valemount and surrounding communities.

Established by Marshall and other members of the Valemount Learning Centre, the project initially developed from a Northern Development Initiative Trust grant to build a hydroponic container in which to grow leafy greens. Interested parties may subscribe to the Village Greens program on the Valemount Learning Centre website, or greens can be purchased on a one-off basis by visiting 1295 Gordon Road on Tuesdays from 3 to 6 p.m.

However, subscribers can't always drive to the pickup spot in Valemount, Marshall said; Village Greens staff began driving long distances to accommodate these subscribers.

"We have a couple clients that have mobility challenges and we try to deliver to them, and people wanted [subscriptions] in say, McBride or Dunster," she explained. "Having to spend both the time and fuel to get there made it a little cost prohibitive."

So when Columbia Basin Trust began accepting applications for its Resident-Directed Grant Program, Marshall and Village Greens staff jumped at the chance to get an electric vehicle.

"Being sustainable, especially in remote areas, generally means lots of upfront costs," Marshall said. Now that the electric vehicle has been purchased, the organization is one step closer to having a comprehensive greens delivery service, she explained.

Marshall is also looking forward to installing solar panels: hydroponic containers can be costly to power in the winter, so the solar panels will help the project remain sustainable and affordable.

In communities like Valemount, where residents generally rely on one grocery store, it can be hard to access a variety of affordable, nutritious food, Marshall pointed out; in providing a wide array of produce, Village Greens organizers hope to address this.

That observation is more than just anecdotal. Northern BC, in which the area served by Village Greens is located, leads the province in household food insecurity, with some 16.6 per cent of residents experiencing some level of food insecurity, according to data from the BCCDC.

Amelia Gallant, a Population Health Dietitian for Northern Health, explained that food insecurity is associated with a number of health concerns.

"We're seeing a very strong link between depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, those types of things, and household food insecurity," she said. "Some studies have shown that there's a humongous health care cost associated with household food insecurity, up to 76 per cent higher for food insecure adults compared to those with sufficient access to healthy food."

In rural and remote communities, it's common for residents to drive long distances to get to the nearest grocery store, Gallant added – and those costs can pile up.

Just as food insecurity can have knock-on negative health consequences, community projects like Village Greens can have a variety of positive impacts beyond just feeding people, Gallant continued.

"When we talk about healthy eating, it's more than just nutrition," she said. "It's not only foods that provide nutrients [...] but also the ones that connect you with your culture and traditions, and to your community as well." Local food initiatives can go a long way in building that sense of community, she added.

But the responsibility for feeding a whole community can't rest squarely on the shoulders of local food security initiatives, Gallant and Marshall agree.

"People are busy and burning out," Marshall said of



The Village Greens Chevrolet Bolt. /ABIGAIL POPPLE

nonprofit organizations in the Valemount area. More robust funding from the Province and federal government, she said, could help organizers establish a more long-term, comprehensive network to address food insecurity in the area.

Likewise, Gallant said that food insecurity is too complex an issue for local initiatives to address on their own.

"You can build these really great community food security programs, and they have a lot of value: they build vitality, they build resilience in the community, there's a lot of togetherness and community connections," she said. "But at the end of the day, [experts] recognize that food security is an income issue. And those community food programs aren't a long-term, sustainable solution for that."

Still, Marshall hopes that local organizations will be able to increase their capacity to further address the issue of food insecurity. "There's a lot of goodwill between organizations, and an acknowledgement that we can't actually do more than we're doing at the moment," she said. "And maybe we will in the future."

MCBRIDE COUNCIL NOTES

McBride Council - Mosquito control, mobile dental support and upcoming conferences

By ANDREA ARNOLD

McBride Mayor Gene Runtz called the McBride Village Council meeting to order at 6:00pm on Feb 13th.

Mosquito control

Dirk Lewis from Morrow BioScience presented to council regarding nuisance mosquito control options for the community. The presentation provided council members with information as to what is possible through targeted treatment of floodwater areas.

New loader

Council authorized up to \$259,501.75 be borrowed, under Section 175 of the Community Charter from the Municipal Finance Authority of BC for the purpose of purchasing equipment for Public Works. Specifically, a 2024 Hyundai HL930A Wheel loader plus both the Tysea wheel loader pickup broom and the gutter (side cast) broom attachment. Also, council agreed that the loan is to be paid off within five years with no rights of renewal.

Mobile Dental care

Council agreed to have staff provide a letter of support to Ashley Flavelle for her grant submission to Northern Interior Rural Divisions regarding a health promotion program that would target the dental care needs of children in grades K-7. Flavelle is in the process of applying for funding through a variety of grants in order to allow her to finance this project.

Grad attendance

Council directed Administration to respond to the

2024 Graduation Class confirming the attendance of Mayor Runtz at the Graduation/Awards Ceremony on Saturday, June 22, 2024 at 2:00pm at the Robson Valley Community Centre.

Retirement recognition

Council directed staff to write a letter of appreciation in recognition of Kim Nordli, Health Service Administrator on her retirement after over 18 years of service.

Golf simulator support

Council directed staff to provide a letter of support to Wes Keim for a grant submission on behalf of the Robson Valley Recreation Centre to Active Communities Grant Program regarding the purchase and installation of a golf simulator.

Conference attendance

Council approved the attendance of all council members as well as the CAO at the 2024 Federation of Canadian Municipalities Annual Conference and Tradeshow being held June 6-9, 2024, at the Calgary Telus Convention Centre.

Council approved the attendance of Mayor, Council and CAO to the 2024 North Central Local Government Association AGM & Convention in Smithers BC on May 13-16.

Tourism grant support

Council voted in favour of supporting a grant application submission from the Village of McBride to Pacific and Economic Development Canada's Tourism Growth Program in the amount of \$165,000 in order to leverage existing funds allocated to tourism sector development. The program priorities include projects that increase visitors to smaller communities and rural

areas and projects that support active outdoor tourism. Council further voted to support the overall grant management.

United Way

Councillor Kolida brought forward a late item. He asked to discuss the United Way program "211." In summary, the program allows individuals to call or text 2-1-1 and for 24/7 365 day a year free and confidential access to information about local supports and services community for any situation, such as food banks, income assistance programs, legal resources, mental health and low-cost counselling, shelter information, or other help.

He said he had only recently heard about this program and thought it would be an asset to the community of McBride and area. He said that he had seen a presentation on their services and that with some guidance, the United Way could have posters and information all around town. He made a motion to have staff provide the United Way with a list of businesses that may be interested in helping spread the word. The motion was carried.

In Camera

Council moved to an in camera meeting for consideration of matters of the Community Charter related to Section 90 (1) (c) labour relations or other employee relations and Section 9 (2) the consideration of information received and held in confidence relating to negotiations between the municipality and a provincial government or the federal government or both and a third party.

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 6:57pm.

Opinion



By Laura Keil
Guest Editor
lauraishere@gmail.com

Water/sewer money should be earmarked for water/sewer

Last week the Goat reported that the Village of Valemount collected \$2.4M in sewage fees and \$1.4M in water fees. Turns out, that was only in 2023. The total amount over the pipeline was far greater.

Last month, I received my yearly utilities bill and it increased by \$200, an eight per cent increase in sewer fees, seven per cent increase for water and 5.5 per cent for garbage. Last year, it increased by \$100. I find it rather odd that the Village, despite collecting an enormous amount of unbudgeted revenue, is continuing to raise utility fees on its residents without explanation.

The only explanation it has given comes from the 2020 report Improving Asset Management at the Village of Valemount

report which mandated certain increases (eight per cent for sewer, seven per cent for water) over the coming decade to account for the replacement of ageing infrastructure.

Obviously that plan did not account for the millions of unbudgeted revenue from pipeline customers in subsequent years.

This Modus Operandi of Council would be like me running editorials from four years ago verbatim. Things have changed, and our responses need to as well.

If \$3.8M of that money were invested (and keep in mind, that's just the 2023 revenue), even a modest interest rate of 3 per cent would add \$114,000 a year to village coffers. I'm guessing that would just about eliminate any increases to

taxpayers.

At the very least, some of that money should go towards an updated asset management plan, which could then instruct the village what it should do based on its current financial reality.

I understand the Village needs to cover its butt, but it needs to be accountable to taxpayers while doing so. Council hasn't decided what to do with this money yet. It's currently sitting in surplus and may be moved into reserves. Given the tax increases, it's my opinion that the additional sewer/water net revenue from the pipeline should be earmarked for sewer and water, not be moved into general revenue for the Village to use for other purposes.



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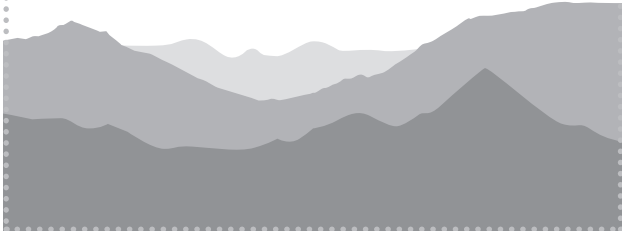
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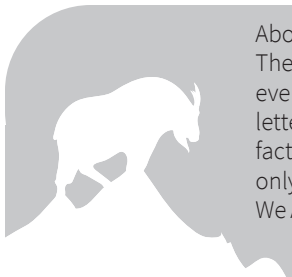
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UNDRIP a "land-grab" masquerading as reconciliation

Dear Editor, I feel compelled to comment after reading your February 8th, 2024 editorial about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Please recall that infamous phrase from the World Economic Forum "you will own nothing and you will be

happy". The UNDRIP, together with Canada's Bill C-15, is one of the key strategies being employed to dispossess us of our lands. It is a massive land-grab masquerading as reconciliation and restitution.

Perhaps we should be more careful about making public declarations

which "acknowledge that we are on the unceded territory of -- fill in the blank -- peoples." If the well-meaning and kind people who make these declarations think that this is just a symbolic gesture and that these public statements have no bearing on our own private properties, or on any of our

activities on the land, think again.

I would encourage you to put the name Ron Vaillant together with the term UNDRIP into your search engine and learn more about the real ramifications of this trojan horse.

Monika Schaefer
McBride, BC



Pete Amyoony has lived, worked and gardened in the Dunster area for over 40 years. He tries to deal with the "down to earth nuts and bolts of organic gardening" in his columns.

Gardening
with Pete

Mulches in your garden and orchard

In today's column, I would like to touch upon the use of mulch in your gardens and around your trees and shrubs. This is one of the most natural ways to protect your plants and trees from freezing and thawing cycles in the winter and early spring. It also helps to hold moisture around the roots during prolonged dry periods in the summer. Most mulch will also break down over time and with the help of earthworms and thousands of little "buggies" in the soil become wonderful food to nourish your plants, shrubs and trees.

The first place to look for mulch is right around your home and yard. Shredded newspapers can be used under other more attractive mulches. The papers were once trees and for many years now the ink on them no longer contains lead and other toxic chemicals but is mostly vegetable based. If you want to kill weeds or grass around your trees or plants, you

can use whole sheets of newspaper spread three or four thick on the soil with a few inches of overlap. Then cover the paper with wood chips, shavings, stone or other materials to make it look more attractive. Grass clippings, rotted leaves, lawn thatch and other yard rakings can be used around all your trees and plants.

Back in the 1970's, Ruth Stout (then in her 70's) was writing about growing her entire garden under a mulch of straw and hay. She covered the whole garden with a deep mulch and only parted it enough to plant her seeds or transplants. As soon as the plants grew, she tucked the mulch in around them and left no soil exposed. As the mulch rotted, it fed the soil and the plants and then next year she added more mulch while never turning her soil! If you are interested, I have a 20-minute VHS video of her method that I am willing to lend out. (Call me at 968-4334 or email at peteam@telus.net)

You can also buy bags of mulch at garden centers, but I find them so expensive if you have a large area to cover. Ones such as bark mulch will break down much more slowly than the common ones you find at home such as grass clippings. Always be careful if you want to use cedar mulch, as it is toxic to many plants and will really slow the growth of many others. It would do just fine if you want to create a mulched path through the woods.

Mulch helps to soak up and retain moisture when it rains (less runoff), controls weeds that rob nutrients from your trees and shrubs, keeps roots cool in summer and protects them from the freeze-thaw cycle in winter, provides nutrients, encourages earthworms and even helps to lessen disease and insect problems. Try using mulch on your gardens and around your trees this year and you will more than likely see a difference in the health of your trees and plants.

Global Thoughts

BY GWYNNE DYER

Navalny Murder

Vladimir Putin's regime had been assassinating Chechen warlords, defectors from the Russian intelligence services and sundry wayward oligarchs for years, but its first political murder was the hit on high-profile journalist Anna Politkovskaya, who was gunned down in her Moscow apartment in 2006 -- and so it has been ever since.

The murders are sometimes public and brazen. The leader of the opposition to Putin's dictatorship, Boris Nemtsov, was killed in 2014 as he crossed the bridge from Red Square to the south bank. Four bullets in Nemtsov's back and all the security cameras in the area turned off 'for maintenance': it was a clear message to all protesters.

Which bring us to the latest death, that of Alexei Navalny last Friday. Putin's henchmen had already tried to kill Navalny once in 2020, smearing his underwear with the novichok nerve agent. He was evacuated to Germany and made at least a partial recovery, but as de facto leader of the democratic opposition in Russia he felt obliged to go back.

It was a mistake, although a very brave one. As soon

as he got off the plane back in Moscow in 2021 he was arrested, and the regime set about dismantling the modest political network that he had managed to create.

Navalny himself disappeared into the gulag, surfacing in various prisons from time to time. As he said himself, he would be in jail until he died or the regime ended.

Well, it was the former, and there is no reason to doubt that he was killed on Putin's orders. Nothing as important as that happens in Russia without Putin's say-so.

It doesn't matter whether Navalny died from poisoning, from the after-effects of a beating, or from malnutrition and exposure. If Putin had not wanted him dead, he would still be alive. QED.

The Russian internet is already filling with speculations about why Putin killed him when he was already neutralised. Navalny posed no serious threat to the Russian strongman any more (if he ever did), and one would have thought that Putin didn't need any more negative publicity. But that ignores the role of Putin's injured vanity.

Strongmen hate to be mocked, and Navalny's specialty was slick, sarcastic videos

portraying the Great Leader and his cronies as massively corrupt and incompetent nobodies who had stumbled on great power almost accidentally but were determined to keep it.

Putin was so obsessed with Navalny that he could never bring himself to mention the man's name in public, but he was no longer a threat. The repression in Russia in the past few years has been so harsh that almost everybody is keeping their heads down now. The revolution has been postponed indefinitely, and Navalny died in vain.

This begs Lenin's famous question: "If not now, when? If not us, who?", but nobody wants to answer it right now. There's a war on: most people close ranks, and those who know better keep their mouths shut. This doesn't mean that Putin will be in power forever, or that Russia can never be a modern democratic society. Of course it can. It might have made it the first time, in the 1990s, if Boris Yeltsin had not been a venal drunk and the United States had not ensured his 're-election' to the presidency in 1996.

There will be another chance for Russia sooner or later, and another after that if they mess it up again. And one day there will be statues of Alexei Navalny in Moscow.



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



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VALEMOUNT COUNCIL NOTES

Valemount Council – Mobile Dental Unit, Pump It Up grant support & new film policy

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

Mayor Owen Torgerson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Council voted to strike Village Entrance Sign Proposals from the agenda. The current entrance sign is nearly 20 years old and has visible rot on the top and lower portions of its structure, so Council is looking to replace it with a more weatherproof material. Additionally, given concerns that the current sign obstructs the view of drivers exiting the nearby Tim Hortons parking lot, Council is exploring simplified archway designs.

After adopting the amended agenda, Council adopted the minutes of the previous meeting.

There was one delegation: Valemount Secondary School students Madelyn and Rozina Shaw, who gave a brief presentation about the BC Youth Parliament (BCYP). In December, the two had attended the BCYP with financial support from the Village of Valemount; Madelyn said she hopes the Council will continue to support Valemount students who would like to participate in the BCYP.

With no unfinished business to attend to, Council moved on to correspondence for action.

Mobile Dental Unit Grant Funding

Councillor Hollie Blanchette, who works for Northern Health, recused herself from Council’s discussion of providing a letter of support for Northern Health to apply for a grant which would fund the creation of a mobile dental unit. The unit would provide pediatric dentistry services to children in Robson Valley. It aims to supplement the Northern Health’s Fluoride Varnish Program – which provides basic oral health screening to children one to five years old – by providing dental services to children in grades kindergarten through seven. Councillor Hugo Mulyk, who seconded Councillor Pete Pearson’s motion of support, said that he couldn’t be happier to support the project.

Project Pump It Up Request for Grant Support

Blanchette returned while Torgerson recused himself, being an appointed member of the Valemount and Area Recreation Development Association (VARDA). Project Pump It Up, an ad hoc committee of VARDA, requested a letter of support for an application to the Northern Development Initiative Trust Community Places Grant. The grant, if awarded, will go towards designing and building an all-wheels park and pump track. The motion was carried with unanimous support from council.

VARDA Request for Pacifican Grant Support

Councillor Blanchette’s motion to provide a letter of support for VARDA’s Pacifican Grant application, seconded by Mulyk, carried with all in favour. The grant would fund a feasibility study of recently-acquired property at Swift Creek, to determine how the property could be used to best meet the needs of Valemount residents.

Valemountain Days on Village Property

Torgerson returned to council. With no discussion, council approved a request for use of the Valemount Sportsplex for the 2024 Valemountain Days festival, to take place on June 7 through 9.

Valemount Community Sports Day Association Sportsplex Master Plan

Torgerson remarked that he hopes for extensive community input on the creation of a master plan for sports grounds in Valemount.

“If there are other amenities, facilities identified for that property [...] [I hope] that is at least put on a radar of some form,” he said, though he added that he is looking forward to hearing all input from the community.

The motion passed with all in favour.

Council proceeded to discuss items in its reading file.

Quarterly Report

This is the first quarterly report the Village has produced, explained CAO Anne Yanciw. The graphics and content will be refined over the next few reports, she said.

The report is meant for council members to have a concise way to look at measurable services such as the taxes that Valemount collects for the regional district and data from agencies such as the RCMP, Yanciw continued.

Accounts Payable Quarterly Report

This is the last accounts payable report that Council will receive.

“I’m quite sure we’re the last community in BC that does this,” Yanciw said. “It’s a holdover from pre-community charter days.”

Yanciw explained to The Goat that the accounts payable report was detail-dense, but did not provide much helpful material for Council-related decision-making. The new quarterly report, while not meant to replace the accounts payable quarterly report, will include the Village’s budget and actual spending to provide context for any financial decisions the Council makes; however, the Council primarily deals with governance decisions, hence the elimination of the accounts payable quarterly report.

Clean Air Task Force

Ryan Olson was appointed to the Clean Air Task Force for a one-year term with unanimous approval from Council.

“I’d like to thank all of the citizens who put their name forward for this committee,” said Blanchette. “Hopefully at some point we’ll be able to have more on the committee, because they’re a great value.”

Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan

Council approved staff to

CONT'D ON P7

www.valemount.ca

Village of Valemount Accessibility Committee

The Village of Valemount is seeking volunteers with relevant experience to fill vacancies on the Accessibility Committee. The Committee members are to be comprised of 4 members of the public representing the following:

- 2 members representing persons with disabilities or individuals who support persons with disabilities;
- 1 member representing seniors
- 1 member representing the Indigenous community

The applicants will be invited to sit on the committee for a one- or two-year term.

The Accessibility Committee is a “Select Committee of Council” and its role is to make recommendations to Council regarding matters related to accessibility, including identifying and preventing barriers to individuals in or interacting with the Village and developing an accessibility plan.

If you are interested in being part of the committee, please submit a brief statement expressing your interest and relevant experience, as well as any pertinent background information.

Any personal information collected will be used to assist in appointing individuals to this committee pursuant to the Local Government Act 218 (3), and will only be used for related purposes. Your personal information will not be released except in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Any questions about the collection of your personal information may be referred to the Information and Privacy Coordinator, Village of Valemount, 735 Cranberry Lake Road, Valemount, B.C. V0E 2Z0.

Please ensure your statement of interest is received by, or emailed to, the Village Office no later than 4:00 pm, on February 23, 2024 and is addressed to:

Krista Etty
Planner
Village of Valemount
planner@valemount.ca

Civic Connections

Do you have a plan in place for when an emergency strikes? This includes reviewing with your family what everyone does when the unexpected happens.

Do you have an emergency egress plan if a fire occurs? Do your children know what to do?

If an evacuation occurs, do you have a go bag ready to grab? Do you have a plan to communicate with family members if the evacuation occurs while you are all away from home?

Some excellent resources for being prepared include [Making an emergency plan - Canada.ca](#) and [Make an Emergency Plan - Canadian Red Cross](#).

Being ready before something happens is good insurance. And like insurance, we all hope we don’t need it, but if we do, we are very glad we have it.

From the desk of the CAO

Campfires

As the wildfire season approaches and the effects of the winter drought become evident, residents of Valemount should keep a few things in mind when enjoying a backyard campfire. Regardless of what is contained within the Village bylaw (currently being amended), Provincial regulations restrict the size of your campfire to no larger than 0.5 metres high and 0.5 metres in diameter.

Your campfire must be contained within an enclosure that is a minimum height of 15cm and no higher than 50cm. Your campfire must not be closer than 6 metres (including above) to the property line, a road, or anything combustible.

ANY FIRE bigger than 0.5 metres is considered at least a Category 2 fire and requires a permit within the Municipal limits that is issued by the Village of Valemount Bylaw Enforcement Officer. These permits are extremely difficult to get at this time.

Brush up on your fire knowledge by coming in to the Valemount Information Centre or examining the following on-line information resources: www.valemount.ca, www.bcwildfire.ca, www.firesmartbc.ca. Please spread the word in our efforts to keep Valemount wildfire-free.

Business Façade Improvement Program

This program is funded by Northern Development Initiative Trust and provides grants to business owners, non-profit societies or home-based businesses for renovation, restoration and redesign of commercial façades that are located in the Village of Valemount Downtown (5th Avenue), Railtown (Main Street) and Highway Corridor (Hwy 5 South) area. Each building is eligible to apply for an annual grant for up to 50% of façade improvement costs to a maximum of \$5,000. For more information visit: www.valemount.ca/services/grants-funding

CBT ReDi Grant Public Input Meeting & Online Survey

Learn about the projects applying for funding and vote for the applications you support this year at the CBT ReDi Grant Public Input Meeting. It will be held on Sunday, March 3rd, 2024, from 1:30pm to 4:30pm at the Valemount Secondary School’s auditorium, 201 Ash Street.


The online public engagement survey will be available from February 27th to March 6th, 2024 on www.valemount.ca/redi.

2024 Columbia Basin Trust ReDi Grants Adjudication Committee Meeting Schedule

➤ February 22, March 7 and April 18, 2024

Meetings are at 6:30 pm at the Village of Valemount Council Chambers (735 Cranberry Lake Road, Valemount)

The Columbia Basin Trust ReDi Grants Adjudication Committee Meeting schedule for 2024 is posted at the entrance of the Municipal Office, and on the Village of Valemount website. Please note that meeting dates and times may change. Approved changes will be posted on the front door of the Village Office and at www.valemount.ca.



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ReDi Grants
RESIDENT DIRECTED

A PROGRAM OF
Columbia Basin trust

DELIVERED BY
VALEMOUNT
Let the mountains move you

New live fire training centre Cont'd from P1

“That’s why they picked us (to receive grant money). It’s just an excellent thing.”

Comprised of two shipping containers, one stacked on top of the other, the centre will simulate fires in multi-storey houses, Lalonde explained. Firefighters can practice suppressing a fire from downstairs as well as upstairs; they will also have the opportunity to train with combustibles such as diesel fuel and gasoline, and to practice putting out dumpster fires.

There’s still some red tape to contend with: Lalonde said that some department members will have to be recertified to provide training, and the building still needs occupational, electrical and gas permits. However, the centre should be up and running by the end of the year. Because live fire training typically takes place during cooler weather to reduce the risk of heat stroke and wildfire, Lalonde predicts that the centre will see its first training session in October or November. Once it’s operational, the centre will also serve nearby fire departments who need live fire training

A crucial page of the playbook

Lalonde explained that the reception of the grant coincides with updated Minimum Training Standards for BC firefighters – a manual typically referred to as the “Playbook,” among firefighters. The new standards require live fire training for more departments, he said, so it’s important for training centres to be accessible to remote communities.

BC Fire Commissioner Brian Godlonton agreed that access to training centres is crucial. “Live fire training is critical to ensure that firefighters are maintaining their skill set so they are prepared to safely respond to fires within their local communities,” he explained.

“The Province’s intention was to partner with local governments so they could apply for this grant funding,” Godlonton added. “Successful candidates would then be in a position to build live fire training courses for not only the community where it’s built, but so the neighbouring communities would be able to travel less distances to train.”

The Province will continue to work with local fire departments by communicating with the Fire Chiefs Association, Fire Prevention Officers’ Association of BC, and the Union of BC Municipalities, he concluded.



Constructed from shipping containers in 2016, Valemount’s live fire training centre will provide firefighters with hands-on experience in navigating house fires. The department will also install a freestanding door for forcible entry training. /ABIGAIL POPPLE

Valemount Council Cont'd from P6

apply for the maximum amount of \$20,000 under the UBCM Active Transportation Planning Grant, to create a Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan.

Pearson said he believes the plan will be a great start to developing an amalgamated trails system in the community.

Torgerson remarked that the former mayor of Fernie told him that the city was able to find more funding for trails after they had instituted a master plan; Torgerson looks forward to seeing whether Valemount will enjoy similar developments.

The motion was carried with unanimous approval.

Amendment to Travel Allowances Policy

Council approved amendments to the travel policy which guides staff and council when claiming expenses for Village-related travel. The travel claim form has been altered so that information on the vehicle used and fuel consumed during travel is no longer required; additionally, vehicle allowance rates will now be based upon guidance from the Canada Revenue Agency.

“We’re taking dollar figures out and putting CRA best practices in, so the policy will automatically change as federal legislation changes,” explained Torgerson.

Finally, an amendment has been added to clarify that miscellaneous expenses will be reimbursed with supporting receipts, rather than being included as part of the per diem rate.

The motion carried with all in favour.

Film Policy

This policy provides a framework for filming practices within the Village, including a permitting process and safety considerations for the use of pyrotechnics, drones, and fire.

“They say BC is Hollywood North, so let’s get everybody coming here to make films,” said Blanchette.

The film policy is the first to be presented to Council by Economic Development Officer Orlanda Goodell; Torgerson thanked Goodell for the thorough language of the policy.

The motion to approve the policy carried with all in favour.

Village Rental Property Pet Policy

In 2023, the Village purchased a rental property and fostered an agreement with Northern Health to rent the building to health professionals working in the

area. There have since been requests to allow pets in the residence, so the Village proposed a Pet Policy to allow tenants to keep one dog or cat on the premises.

Blanchette recused herself from discussion as she works for Northern Health.

The motion to approve carried with no discussion; Blanchette returned to Council.

No new business was identified for discussion. Council moved on to reports.

In-Camera

Nobody came forward for the public comment period, so Council moved to an In-Camera meeting for consideration of two items per Section 90 of the Community Charter. (a) personal information about and identifiable individual who holds or is being considered for a position as an officer, employee or agent of the municipality or another position appointed by the municipality, and (e) the acquisition, disposition or expropriation of land or improvements, if the council considers that disclosure could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the municipality. With that, the open session of Council concluded at 7:36 p.m.



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REGULAR HOURS

MON-SAT: 9 AM - 5:30 PM

New emergency equipment for Valemount village office

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

The Village of Valemount has received over \$150K in funding to purchase and install a back-up generator for the municipal office, as well as portable satellite internet equipment which can be used for communication during emergencies.

The money comes from the Columbia Basin Trust’s Community Readiness Program. Will Nixon, Senior Manager of Delivery of Benefits and Manager of the Community Readiness Program, explained that the program helps basin communities bolster their emergency infrastructure.

“This program really came out of a need to give basin residents the ability to help themselves and be safe during these times of natural crisis,” Nixon said. He added that Columbia Basin Trust has strong relationships with local governments in the area, which helps the Trust address municipalities’ needs.

“The ability for local government to reach out and tell us what’s important in the community [...] is really where quite a few of our ideas and programs come from,” he said. “The Valemount mayor and council are absolutely fantastic to work with.”

Village CAO Anne Yanciw elaborated

on how the latest round of funding will benefit Valemount. Should there be an extensive power outage, the new equipment will allow the Village to both continue its typical municipal operations and activate an emergency operations centre, she said. In 2021, the Village also purchased a backup generator for the community hall, which Yanciw said could serve as a warming centre in the event of an extended power outage.

The Village is currently tendering documents for its new backup generator. It is already in the process of purchasing a Starlink satellite, but Yanciw said that supply chain issues have made it difficult to predict when the satellite equipment will be installed.

Elsewhere in the Columbia Basin, the program has already been used extensively, according to Nixon. He pointed to last year’s wildfire season as an example.

“A lot of our emergency reception centres, or even community halls that would be considered unofficial emergency reception centres, turned into areas where people would go to get clean air with proper filtration,” he said, adding that communication infrastructure from the program also saw plenty of use from basin residents.

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McBride council looks into mosquito control

By ANDREA ARNOLD

During the Feb 13th McBride Council meeting, Dirk Lewis from Morrow BioScience presented an outline for nuisance mosquito control.

Lewis said that in order for a community to proceed with a program, a feasibility study needs to occur and the area surveyed to determine which areas are the most likely to act as hatching grounds for mosquitoes. He said there are different types of mosquitoes, and they focus specifically on those that breed in floodwaters during snow melt.

“Mosquitoes travel up to 10km to find food sources,” said Lewis. “So if the community proceeds with action, you would need to look at treating a very large area in order to be effective.”

He said that treatment of the area does not mean there will be no mosquitoes, but that a good program would result in less mosquitoes.

Councillor Joe Kolida expressed concern about the use of pesticides and the overall effect on the ecosystem. Lewis assured council that the agent they use, Bacillus

thuringiensis or BTI, is only effective on the targeted population. He said that the amount of BTI they use is small enough that it does not affect other living organisms.

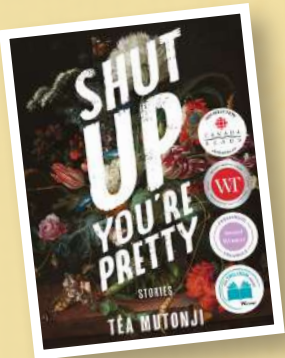
Also, Lewis pointed out that there are different types of mosquitoes. The processes used to combat floodwater/freshet mosquitoes would not have an effect on those that hatch from ponds further from flood zones. This means that those that provide a food source for birds and other animals would still hatch, and not have an effect on the food pyramid.

The steps prior to having a pest management program in place takes about 6 months and includes the feasibility study, effective scope and establishing community sentiment (elector asset process). As the area that would need to be treated around McBride includes Regional District jurisdiction, an agreement would have to be reached with them as well.

The cost for a program varies drastically due to land size and treatment needed, but Lewis said that on average, treatment runs about \$90,000/year.

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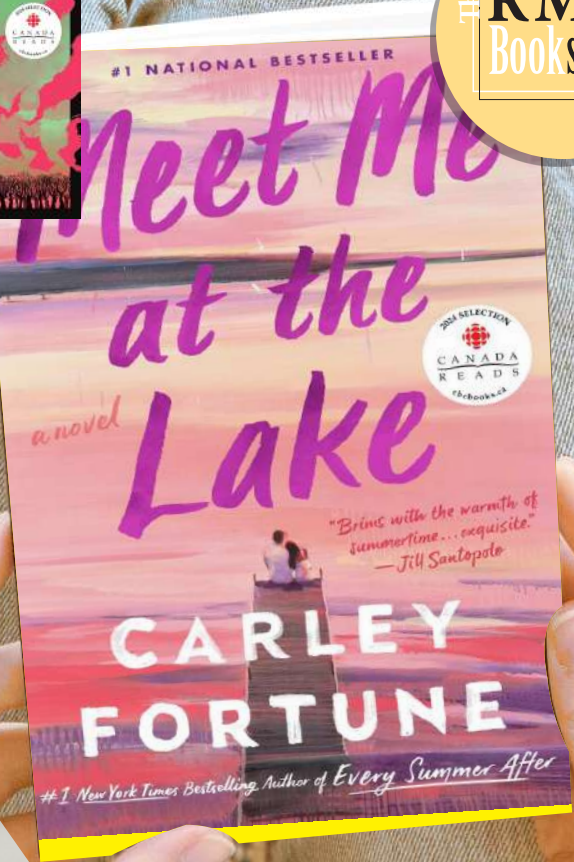
SHUT UP YOU'RE PRETTY
In Tea Mutonji's debut story collection, a woman contemplates her Congolese traditions during a family wedding, a teenage girl looks for happiness inside a pack of cigarettes, a mother reconnects with her daughter through their shared interest in fish, and a young woman decides to shave her head in the waiting room of an abortion clinic. Tinged with pathos and humour, they interrogate the moments in which femininity, womanhood, and identity are not only questioned but also imposed.



BAD CREE
Mackenzie, a Cree millennial, wakes up in her one-bedroom Vancouver apartment clutching a pine bough she had been holding in her dream just moments earlier. When she blinks, it disappears. But she can still smell the sharp pine scent in the air, the nearest pine tree a thousand kilometres away. She continues to accidentally bring back items from her dreams that are eerily similar to real memories of her older sister and Kokum before their untimely deaths. It becomes clear that these dreams have terrifying, real-life consequences. Desperate for help, Mackenzie returns to her mother, sister, cousin, and aunts in her Alberta hometown. Together, they try to uncover what is haunting her before anyone is harmed.

CANADA
READS

CANADA READS
TITLES NOW IN
STOCK!



MEET ME AT THE LAKE

Fern Brookbanks spent just 24 hours in her early 20s with the aggravatingly attractive, idealistic artist, a chance encounter that spiraled into a daylong adventure in Toronto. The timing was wrong, but their connection was undeniable: they shared every secret, every dream, and made a pact to meet one year later. Fern showed up. Will didn't. At 32, Fern's life doesn't look at all how she once imagined it would. She's back home, running her mother's Muskoka lakeside resort—something she vowed never to do. The place is in disarray, her ex-boyfriend's the manager, and she needs a plan—a lifeline. To her surprise, it comes in the form of Will, who arrives nine years too late, with a suitcase in tow and an offer to help. But how could she possibly trust this expensive-suit wearing mirage who seems nothing like the young man she met all those years ago? Will is hiding something, and Fern's not sure she wants to know what it is.

Located at 1170 5th Avenue, Valemount, B.C. (ACROSS FROM THE IGA DOWNTOWN)



Tykes tourney



Valemount's U7 (tykes) hockey team participated in a four-community tournament in Jasper last weekend, facing off against teams from Jasper, Grand Cache and Sherwood Park. The players from each community were split onto two teams and each team played three games Saturday and one game Sunday. Congrats players! /LAURA KEIL

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WINTERFEST 2024



A joyful evening celebrating the cold season took place downtown in Valemount Sat. Feb 17th. The night included rock-paper-scissors matches with Olaf the mascot, bouncy castles, crafts, ice carvings, smores, hot chocolate, a dance party and more. /LAURA KEIL

Fundraising for Project Pump It Up Continues

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

Project Pump It Up has earned nearly \$10,000 ahead of its application to the Northern Development Initiative Trust Community Places Grant.

An ad hoc committee of the Valemount Area Recreation Development Association, Project Pump It Up aims to create community spaces for wheeled sports such as cycling, skateboarding, and roller skating. The first project is an all-wheels park and pump track, explained committee chair Sean Kelly. The park would be open for cyclists, skateboarders, and scooter users, along with other wheeled sports hobbyists. He hopes that such a space would foster community connections and provide more opportunities for Valemount residents to access outdoor activities.

Reception from the community has been positive, Kelly said. “They’re such community spaces, and I think a lot of people are seeing the value that they would bring to Valemount.”

Kelly’s co-chair, Maggie Inrig, agreed. The pump track will provide Valemount residents

with the opportunity to exercise, she said, but will also be a boon to tourism in the Village.

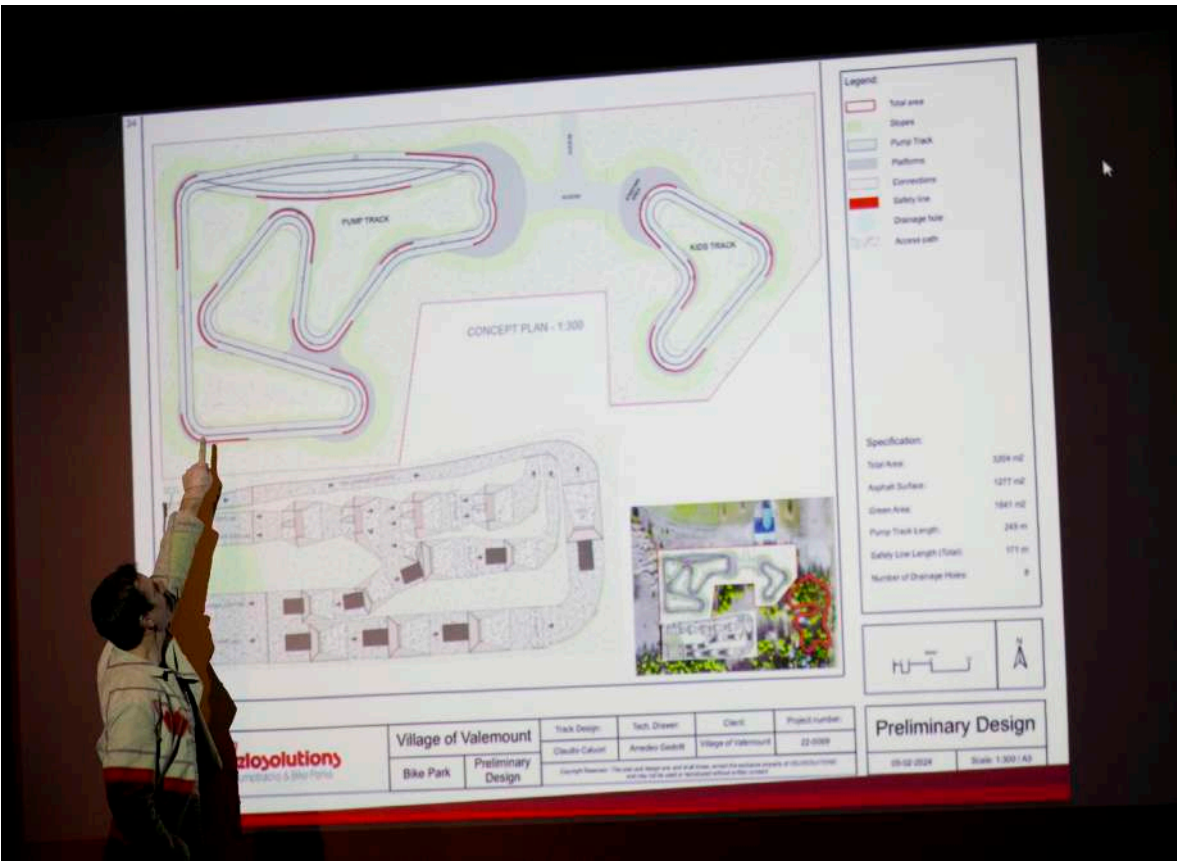
“It’s an all-ages, all-skill park, so it’ll be fairly accessible,” she said. “It increases health benefits for residents, but also is a tourist attraction, so it has multi-purpose benefits.”

Pump It Up organizers held their first fundraiser on January 6 in the form of an entertainment night and silent auction, with performers providing live music and comedy. The project raised \$6,000 that night alone, Kelly told The Goat. At the subsequent fundraiser on February 9, the Project raised \$3,000.

“Some grants require 20 or 30 per cent of what you’re [applying] for,” explained Kelly. He added that VARDA has contributed money so that Pump It Up could apply to the aforementioned NDIT grant, which would total \$23,000.

Pump It Up has also been supported by the Village Council, Kelly said. At the February 13 Village Council meeting, Council approved a motion to support Pump It Up’s application to the NDIT grant.

Next up on the committee’s fundraising plans is a raffle for an e-bike scheduled for early



Sean Kelly points to the initial engineering design of the pump track facility at a recent fundraiser. /LAURA KEIL

spring, organized jointly with the Valemount Volunteer Fire Department, said Kelly. The raffle will be announced on the VARDA Facebook page, along with any future fundraising

events.

On top of fundraising efforts, the committee is soliciting sponsorships from corporate or individual donors – these sponsors will have their name

put up on a board in the park, said Inrig. She explained that interested parties can reach out to projectpumpitup@gmail.com to discuss sponsoring the project.

PUZZLES

CROSSWORD

Answers on P13

- Across
- 1 Hockey stick wood

4 Credit card fee

8 What?

11 Sweet ____ (flower)

12 Geometric figure

13 Detergent brand

14 Sidekick

15 Squint

16 Colony insect

17 Guinness, in a bar

19 Doze

21 Civil wrong

24 Like some bookstores

27 Shower item

30 It's shed in sorrow

31 Lexus or BMW

32 Chickens and turkeys

34 Dogs and cats

35 Alternative word

36 Flight time announce-
ment, abbr.

38 Small pieces of matter

42 Computer memory

44 Archaeological find

47 Condensed moisture

48 Software program,
briefly

49 Congress testimony type

50 Spit contains it

51 Sulky state
- 20 Plain and
simple

23 The total of
something
- Down
- 1 Android
programs, for
short

2 Center of gov-
ernment

3 Angel's aura

4 Portable com-
puter

5 Form of "to
be"

6 "Time out"
hand signal

7 Make

8 Earphones

9 Ashes holder

10 Sombrero

18 Maximum

20 Juice source

22 Gym class material

23 Shed item

25 Pitcher part

26 A martini can come
this way

27 Gull

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10
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14				15					16		
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			21		22	23		24		25	26
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42	43			44	45	46			47		
48				49					50		
51				52					53		

- 28 Color
- 29 Crack
- 33 Advantageous
- 37 Source of nuclear energy
- 39 Handicap
- 40 Online option provider
- 41 Did laps, say
- 42 Criminal charge
- 43 Copy
- 45 Tram's cargo
- 46 St. Patrick's Day mo.

			8			3		5
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Answers on P13

SUDOKU

HOW TO PLAY

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

by Myles Mellor

Answers on P13

- Across
1. Stayed

4. He sang "I've Got You Under My Skin" with Frank Sinatra on "Duets"

8. Some are inflated

13. Former Brit. record label

14. Purdue, e.g., abbr.

15. Youngster in "The Jetsons"

16. She was famous for being replicated

19. Modern camera setting

20. One in the family

21. Walk about

25. Similar to a web

29. Plus-or-minus fig., abbr.

30. Omar of 'House'

32. Freed

33. Some computer keys

35. The "I" in "The King and I"

36. Two felines, one an internet star and the other a failed mouse catcher

41. City near Lake Tahoe

42. Laughing dogs of Africa

43. Short-tailed lemur

46. Paving stone

47. City in central Oklahoma

50. Improvised

52. Set the boundaries of

54. Some engines

56. Cry of pain

57. Two famous dogs

61. French king

62. Oil decision makers

63. Hallow ending

64. Noodles

65. Pinot Noir, for example
66. Hospital V.I.P.s
- Down
1. Calm

2. Affairs

3. Charge

4. Accept, as an excuse

5. Toronto's prov.

6. Health inst.

7. Hot spot

8. Shoe repair

9. One of the Furies

10. Sponges off

11. Blouse

12. Simon, for short

17. French for law

18. Evil

22. Criminal

23. Nimble

24. Period in history

26. Ain't correct?

27. Game of chance

28. Dutch cheese

31. Influences

33. Unformed

34. Bronco

36. Cubism pioneer Juan

37. It may be due on a duplex

38. Disentangle

39. Pay up

40. One of the major leagues, abbr.

44. "Aha!"

45. Small turnover

47. Delighted

48. More risky

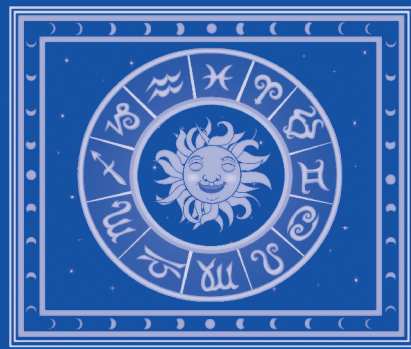
49. Greek city well known

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12
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61						62				63			
64						65						66	

for its historic sites

51. Brain membrane, the
_____ mater
53. Popular Aegean island
55. Trick
57. Start of an ode's title
58. Pixel density
59. Writer, Deighton
60. Half a blackjack
61. Old record

HOROSCOPES



BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

Pisces Season

Once upon a time, two fish swam toward each other in the manner of a Dr. Suess poem about the Zax. "Who's in whose way?" snapped the South-Going Zax. "I always go south, making south-going tracks." Welcome to the season of "something's got to give" -- and give it will. Let's keep throwing energy toward empathy and inclusion, toward acceptance of self and others, toward "please" and "thank you" and "let's..."

ARIES (March 21-April 19). If this were a journey through a landscape, this would be the rocky part, which is actually much easier to cross than soft, mushy stuff that would have you slipping and sliding. Here, the work is hard, but your feet can find purchase, and every step brings you closer to your destination.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Those who know the rules and break them amaze you. Those who don't even realize there are rules, less so. You might go so far as to wake them up with the information: There are always rules. As for you, it's a week of strategy. You'll follow and bend; you'll break judiciously.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). As much as you love smart people and intelligent interactions, you also recognize, in the full range of communication, that too many high-minded exchanges can get exhausting. You'll recognize points in the week when the scene can be elevated with informality. Connections happen when everyone is relaxed and not thinking too hard.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). The main reason to be mellow and patient now is not that it will make another person's experience more positive (though it will). It's because you'll feel wonderfully in control of your own behavior, and you'll own the confidence that comes with that.

EO (July 23-Aug. 22). Though you're endowed with many talents that can be applied to making your part of the world a more pleasing place to move through, there is one gift that stands out from the rest: your gift for making people feel special. With your sharp mind and creativity, you've elevated much, but friendships are your greatest work of art.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Before you step out of your comfort zone, you'll assess the risks and benefits. You'll consider possible outcomes with the aim of making an informed decision. Then you'll do what you wanted to do in the first place because your desire is far more compelling and exciting than the intellectual processes included in "due diligence."

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're not out to win the Nobel Prize, but you'd like to leave things better than you found them. You're on

the right track with your simple strategy: determine the next right move and do it. For most of the week, it will be unclear what the right move is. Fear not -- your best is all you can do, and it will definitely be enough.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). When you see others struggle, you act immediately to remedy. And when it's you who is struggling, don't hesitate to ask for and accept assistance. You wouldn't want to rob anyone of their chance to help. Helper's hearts need workouts to stay vital and healthy. Well-being will be on the upswing.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). It's not that you're more than your body, rather it's that you're something else entirely. You animate your body and use it to get to new environments. You care for it, demand things of it and enjoy it, too, all the while realizing it's your vehicle, not your being. The distinction will be meaningful this week.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). In the same way a whisper can speak louder than a shout, turning things down will amplify them. This week features fewer appointments in which more is accomplished. Budget cuts give you more to invest. By editing you grow in style, impact and energy. The only thing not to edit is relationships. Go full on and all in.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll have the opportunity to serve some justice. While it would certainly rectify a balance, it might not be worth your time and energy. Where is your effort going to forward your goals? "In taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior." -- Sir Francis Bacon

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Planning is a pleasure because it invites you to bring your fantastic imagination to the party. The bright ideas are flowing. Sure, they will be more ambitious than you might be able to reasonably execute, but that's what makes them so exciting. And even if you get halfway there, you'll be much further along than you would have been without a plan.

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS: A stressor is lifted, and the subsequent relief will open you to a cascade of good fortune, starting with your personal life. Your work crosses into altruistic territory, affording you the opportunity to live your values and apply your principles toward a positive impact. More highlights: You'll establish a new practice that gives you a useful philosophy and empowering outlook. Years of having your finger on the pulse of a special interest will pay off. You'll participate in dazzling social events.



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45	A	P	P	46	O	R	A	L	47	D	N	A
48	P	E	T	49	M	E	R	E	50	S	U	M

SUDOKU ANSWERS

4	9	7	8	2	6	3	1	5
6	2	1	3	5	9	8	4	7
5	8	3	4	7	1	6	9	2
9	3	8	2	1	5	4	7	6
2	4	6	9	3	7	5	8	1
7	1	5	6	8	4	9	2	3
1	6	9	5	4	2	7	3	8
8	5	2	7	9	3	1	6	4
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1	S	A	T	4	B	O	N	O	7	F	A	10	F	12	S
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VALEMOUNT

MONs **Family Place Drop-In** is on Mondays from 9am-noon with Hannah. Come for the connection with other families, parenting resources and fun for you and your 0-6 year old children at RVCS (99 Gorse St). For more info call

February 26 Pink shirt day awareness and activities

THURS Feb 22 The Wardens live at the Valemount Community Theatre. Doors at 7, show 7:30. Reg. admission \$30, student/senior \$25. Tickets available at Infinity or www.valemountarts.org.

SAT March 9 Pet First Aid Certification Course. See barkfirstaid.ca to register.

MON March 11 @ 4:00pm **Valemount Public Library Annual General Meeting** Downstairs at the Library. Board positions available. Refreshments will be served. Everyone is welcome.

Ongoing Valemount Events

TUES, WED, THURS **StrongStartBC** at Valemount Elementary School 11:30-2:30 starting Oct. 3rd. Free drop-in program for children 0-5 years accompanied by their caregivers. Enjoy play-based early learning incl. songs, stories, art and more. Stop by the school for more info.

WED **Oldtimers band and music night** at the Golden Years Lodge 7pm. All welcome! Play music, listen or dance.

TUES & FRI Drop-in soccer at Valemount Secondary. Age 12+. \$5 and waiver must be signed.

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

WED & SAT **Yoga classes** for every body. Hatha yoga Wednesdays 6:30-8pm. Yin Yoga Saturdays 9-10:30am. Breathwork, strengthening and relaxation. \$15 drop-in or 10-class pass \$120. Please bring mat, props. Call/text 250-566-1740.

THURS Senior women are invited to register for the RVCS **Reflections, Repair, Revival** a guided counselling group for female seniors to speak safely around experiences of violence and trauma, in the company of others with shared experiences June 29th & July 6th from 3-4pm. Registration is required: 1-844-324-2004 or email events@rvcsbc.org.

FRI Join us for Seniors Drop In at the Valemount RVCS office (99 Gorse St) Escape the cold and join us indoors every Friday for Seniors Drop-In. Learn how to knit a mini tree and mini hats, relax the mind and body during Zumba/ meditation, and play your favorite board game. I hope to see you there! January 19th from 2pm-3pm. No registration required.

TUES and FRI at 7 PM **Curling and Drop-In Curling** Valemount Curling Club 98 Elm St. Clean shoes required.

SAT 10am-11:15am **Creative writing group**. Join us for writing and friendly conversation at the Rocky Mountain Goat office. Everyone welcome. Contact Laura for more info at lauraishere@gmail.com / 250-566-5135.

SUN 1-3 pm **Crafty Stitchers meet** downstairs at the Valemount Public Library, all welcome! Call 250-566-4367.

SAT 10am-1pm the Valemount United Anglican Church have a **thrift store**, on 7th and Cedar!

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

MON through FRI the **Valemount Seed Library** is available in our lobby during business hours at RVCS Valemount (99 Gorse St). Office hours: Monday to Wednesday 8:30am-4pm, Thursday 10am-6pm and Friday

8am-4pm Come take free seeds to grow in your garden this summer. By saving seeds, we can maintain genetic diversity, adapt to changing environmental conditions, and save money by not having to purchase new seeds every year. Made possible with funding from CBT. For more info call 1-844-324-2004 or email: events@rvcsbc.org.

MON through FRI Contact the Valemount RVCS Office to book your **Community Garden Plot**. Cost \$25/year, Volunteer 8hr/year, tools provided. Contact 250-566-9107 or email events@rvcsbc.org for more info or to sign up.

MON through FRI the **Free Food Farm Stand and Pantry** are available for anyone who would like free, fresh produce. We accept donations of unprocessed fruits and veggies. The stand is accessible in the front lobby at RVCS Valemount (99 Gorse St) and is available to everyone- just help yourself! Emergency top-up food is accessible to our clients and anyone who walks through the door. Call 1-844-324-2004 or email: events@rvcsbc.org.

MCBRIDE

MONs **Family Place Drop-In** is on Mondays from 9am-noon at RVCS (942 3rd Ave). Join for connection with other families, parenting resources and fun for you and your 0-6 year old children. No registration required. For more information call 1-844-324-2004 or email: events@rvcsbc.org. Upcoming themes:

February 26 Show your support early and wear a pink shirt and play with play-Doh

WED's Starting February 7th to March 13th Join us for a Six Session **Healthy Cooking Program Food Sense** that is Free of cost. Cook simple & delicious meals, Share tips in the kitchen, Learn how to read nutrition labels. Held at the McBride Secondary School in the Foods Room (1300 2nd Ave) from 4:30-7:30pm. Children 13 and up are welcome with adult accompaniment. Registration is required please contact the office register 250-569-2266 or email events@rvcsbc.org . This program is brought to you by the RVCS Adult Literacy and Family Support Program.

WED Feb 21 **Advanced Care Planning workshop** hosted by The McBride Old Age Pensioners Organization (OAPO) 1- 3pm at the common room of Beaverview Lodge in McBride This workshop will include going through the Ministry of Health booklet called "My Voice" which give information and forms for advance planning for your health care, representation agreements. wills, Power of Attorney and other issues that are best dealt with early. If you would like to attend we advise you to get a copy of "My Voice" booklet" ahead of time so you can look through it. They are available free at the Public Health Office in McBride (next to the hospital) from Monday to Thursday from 9am, to noon and 1pm to 4pm. At the workshop, will be the Public Health Nurse Ashley Flavelle and the former Notary, Linda Fry to answer questions and explain your options. A great workshop for all Seniors! For more information call Pete Amyoony 250-968-4334 or e-mail peteam@telus.net.

Ongoing McBride Events

MON through THURs, McBride RVCS (942 3rd Ave) now has a **FREE FOOD PANTRY** that's available to all! Emergency top-up food is accessible to our clients, preschool program and anyone who walks through the door. We share and accept donated foods that are safe and fresh for use. Contact RVCS at 250-569-2266 or email foodsecurity@rvcsbc.org. The local Food Bank is also available: 250-569-3186.

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

TUES **Chess Club** - 5-6pm at the McBride library. All ages

and abilities welcome.

WED **Free Drop-in Pickleball** 7:30-9pm @ the McBride Hightschool. Everyone welcome (grade 8 and older) Bring clean gym shoes. Equipment and basic instruction provided. No experience, or high level of fitness required. Come have fun.

WED Free Parent Workshop **How to Talk so Kids Will Listen** starting Oct 25th from 7-8pm at the McBride Centennial Elementary School limited spaces Registration is required contact RVCS at 1-844-324-2004 or email events@rvcsbc.org for more information.

THUR & FRI **Weekly Adults' Programs** at the McBride Library: Fibre Artists (Thurs, 10:30am), Writing Group (Fri, 1.30pm). Call 569 2411 for details.

MON & WED it's time to **Dance during Community Fitness** with Jodie at the Elks Hall. Twice weekly from 7:15pm-8pm this drop-in program offers free admission to seniors and youth. Other age groups are invited to pay by donation or pay what you can. Call 250-230-8035 for info.

DUNSTER

WED Mar 6 **Dunster Fine Arts School Society Annual General Meeting** Monthly Director's Meeting to follow at the Dunster Schoolhouse 5:30 to 7:30 pm Everyone welcome. Agenda items can be sent to Nancy at nancy@dunsternancy.ca

SAT Mar 9 10am-3pm The **Annual Seedy Saturday** presented by the Open Gate Community Garden in McBride @ the Dunster School.Vendors will be selling seeds, plants, garden decoration and all sorts of prepared products made from our local agricultural bounty and informative presentations throughout the day. Bring seeds to participate in the big seed swap table. If you or someone you know would be interested in being a vendor or presenter please reach out by email to pggardens@hotmail.com

Ongoing Dunster Events

SAT Dunster Community Association **Saturday Pot Luck Lunches** at the Dunster Community Hall 11:30 to 1:00 Lunch served at 12:00 noon sharp Coffee, tea and juice provided. Donations to the Dunster Community Association gratefully accepted Hope to see you there! contact: Pete Amyoony 250-968-4358

- * March 2nd
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Home testing kit replaces pap smears in B.C.

By Laura Keil

The dreaded pap smear has long dogged women and people with cervixes, but a new home testing kit promises to eliminate the uncomfortable medical procedure and provide more accurate results.

The self-screening program launched in BC Jan. 29 and is being administered by BC Cancer.

"This more accurate, comfortable and convenient way to test will encourage more women, and vulnerable populations like trans people, across the province to get screened, including in more rural and remote communities," said Premier David Eby. "By working together, we can eliminate deadly cervical cancer in B.C. in the next decade."

Women and people from 25 to 69 with a cervix can choose to order a kit to self-screen for the human papillomavirus (HPV), the leading cause of cervical cancer, or have their screening sample collected by a health-care provider. The kit is then mailed back and the results provided to the person's health care provider in four to six weeks.

This is an expansion to the pilot program launched in 2021. The self-administered HPV test means that patients can self-collect a sample at home or at their health-care provider's office.

A positive HPV test helps flag if a person is at risk for developing abnormal cells of the cervix, so those cells can be detected and treated early to prevent cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women globally. Rates of cervical cancer are among

the fastest increasing among females in Canada but it is preventable through immunization and screening programs. Nearly 99 per cent of cervical cancers are caused by high-risk HPV.

HPV is transmitted through intimate skin-to-skin contact and can cause a variety of cancers. Only long-term infection with high-risk HPV can cause pre-cancerous changes to the cells of the cervix, which can develop into cervical cancer if undetected and untreated.

The Province says self-screening removes obstacles such as cultural barriers, history of trauma, the need for transportation, child care and booking time off from work for traditional testing.

"As someone who has experienced trauma, I avoided Pap tests because I did not feel safe or trust anyone to do this procedure," said Bianca Michell, Tache (father)/Yekooche (mother), Lusilyoo clan. "When I did a Pap test, it was always traumatic and it took a long time for me to recover mentally and emotionally. Today, with the at-home HPV self-screening test, survivors like me can do a self-test where and when we feel safe. I was able to access this test through the Carrier Sekani Family Services and the BC Cancer pilot project and ended up needing further testing. This saved my life."

The HPV test also has a higher sensitivity and negative predictive value than the current pap test.

"Whereas pap tests detect changes to the cells of the cervix that have been caused by HPV, HPV testing can detect the presence of high-risk types of HPV before cell changes have occurred," said Dr. Gina Ogilvie, Tier 1 Canada research chair in global control of HPV-related diseases and prevention, University of British Columbia,

and affiliate scientist, BC Cancer.

The Province is making HPV testing its primary screening method because it detects the virus before it can cause cancer and is more accurate and accessible. The transition to HPV screening by a medical-care provider will be phased in over the next three years by age group, starting with people 55 and older. All self-collected samples will be processed using HPV testing.

"When I first saw the ad on social media for the cervix self-screening pilot, I thought I'd give it a try. I'm so glad I did," said Christina Price, BC Cancer pilot study participant from Port Alberni. "I found out I had a high-risk type of HPV and ended up needing a procedure to remove the cancerous tissue from my cervix. We caught it early and I'm now cancer-free. I'm grateful this opportunity was there for me."

BC will be the first jurisdiction in Canada to launch this self-screening test provincewide and one of the first to fully implement HPV testing as its primary screening method.

To order the self-screening kits visit: <https://www.screeningbc.ca/cervix>

People will still receive a letter in the mail when they are due to screen. They can then request a kit directly from the cervix-screening program by phone at 1 877 702-6566 or online at the link above. They are also still able to receive a pap test.

Results will be sent by mail or online to both the patient and their health-care provider within four to six weeks from the time the kit is mailed in. You can also see your results online through Health Gateway.

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sweetest serenade

Nourish your Body. Fuel your Life.

By Amy Pawliuk, Registered Nutritional Therapist

Hi I'm Amy, your local holistic nutritionist.

Holistic means whole. Our whole body works together. If one part of our system isn't working properly or getting the nutrition that it needs it will impact other systems in our body and our over all wellbeing.

Our bodies only have what we give them to work with. You would never put gas in a diesel motor, right?! Nor would you expect it to take you all the way to Vancouver on a 1/4 tank of fuel! What you put in your own body is no different! If you are not fueling your body appropriately, it will not be able to function how you would like it to.

I believe in giving our bodies what they need and eating enough (and enough of the right things.) Bodies have an incredible ability to heal when we remove what is causing the damage and provide the nutrition needed to repair.

I grew up right here in Valemount and am proud to call it my home. I have had years of my life where I did not feel well and did not do anything

physical at all. I have struggled with exercise induced migraines, hypoglycemia, random nausea and feeling very unwell without being able to find answers.

I am also stubborn and found many of my own answers through food.

I no longer feel the need to carry Advil and peppermints at all times to deal with the random nausea or migraines. I manage my blood sugar well so that the spikes (and resulting crashes) don't require me to always have food with me. Fewer crashes also mean fewer cortisol spikes, more stable mood and improved energy allowing me to enjoy the things I love to do.

Not everyone has the ability or desire to sort things out for themselves and this was a driving force behind getting my diploma in nutrition and becoming a Registered Nutritional Therapist. I absolutely love helping people to feel better in a way that is realistic and maintainable.

Most of us were not taught what we need to know about food and healthy eating. So much of what we actually were taught was wrong. I hope to bust many myths around food and the beliefs that we have tied to it.

I look forward to sharing on subjects such as basic nutrition, blood sugar, healthy weight management, gut health, the importance of including certain things in our diet, dealing with fatigue and lack of energy and of course I will bring you tasty, healthy recipes and useful tips and tricks to help you to feel your best.

Make sure to follow me on social media or check out my website so you don't have to wait a full month to hear more! I post useful information, recipes and simple ways to help incorporate more wellness into your lives.

If there is something you would like me to cover please send me a message on social media or an email, I would love to hear from you!

Learn more by visiting my website wildwellnessholisticnutrition.com



Amy Pawliuk is a registered nutritional therapist residing in Valemount. You can find her on Instagram and Facebook @wildwellnessholisticnutrition. /FILE PHOTO

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This spotless 3 bedroom, 2 bath home has been extremely well maintained and is move in ready. Over 1250 sq ft of living space includes a bright skylit kitchen with a breakfast bar and open to a cozy dining room. Master bedroom has ensuite and walk-in closet. Spacious living room has a pellet stove keeping heating costs minimal. Large fenced yard, carport, storage shed and a covered patio. Close to schools, arena and a short walk to downtown. This home won't last long!



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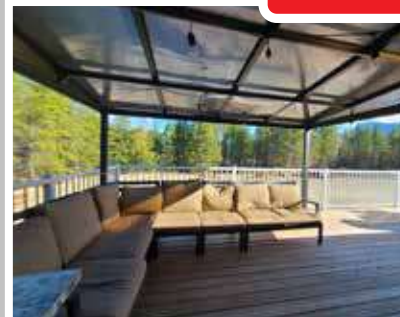


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