

Spring dew drops

P8

ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOAT

Your weekly source of news, views and entertainment

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Red Dress Day

Latisha Marsden says she joins the walk every year that she's in town for all that have gone missing around here and down the Highway of Tears. "It's important to stand up and raise your voice, and let other people know what's actually happening here, and maybe one day, it'll make a difference." See more photos on P2. / RACHEL FRASER

SD57 may cut school counsellor in Valemount

BY ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

Valemount parents are concerned that rural schools may bear the brunt of impending budget cuts following news of a \$2M deficit in the School District 57 budget. In particular, the District's proposal of cutting the school counselling position shared by Valemount's Secondary and Elementary school has drawn criticism from parents.

Funding for counselling services is dependent on a school's full-time enrollment levels, Superintendent Jameel Aziz told The Goat. The number of students enrolled in Valemount schools only qualifies its schools for one-eighth of a counsellor – that is, counselling could be provided for one hour out of the eight-hour school day.

"Rural high schools typically do not have full time counsellors," Aziz said. "There's no doubt that a full-time counselling role would be providing a service to students [...] it's just that we are funded by the Ministry of Education and Child Care, and the funding that we receive does not provide enough for a full-time counsellor."

Valemount Secondary School receives money from grant programs for rural schools, according to Aziz. This money could be put towards covering the cost of a full-time counsellor, he said.

Without school-provided counselling, many Valemount students may be left with no other option, worries local parent Isla Jackman.

"We don't have other privatized counselling opportunities, or ways to do really fun activities that kids are having through schools," Jackman said. "If they start cutting all those extras, we really miss out in the rural area. That's where we lose out on equity."

Jackman worries that by reducing rural school funding, the District will lose hard-won progress in making education more inclusive and accessible to rural students. For example, the enhancement of supports for Indigenous students was an important step in improving inclusivity, she said. She also remembers a time where families were forced to move away from Valemount to communities with more access to mental health care, and says this has become a less common occurrence since counselling services were introduced.

"This feels like we're taking five steps backwards," Jackman said. "I would hope that they don't want to go back to that, and yet here they are chopping us again in a way that doesn't feel fair or equitable."

Jackman's concerns were echoed in a letter sent to the District board by Jennifer Scheller and Stefanie Han, board members of the Parent Advisory Councils for Valemount Secondary School and Elementary School, respectively.

"As residents of rural areas, we face unique challenges, including limited access to professional services such as school counsellors, support workers, and distance education resources," Scheller and Han wrote. "These services are not just amenities for us; they are essential lifelines for our students' mental health and future prospects in education and employment."

Scheller and Han added that the District's information on the budget lacks a detailed breakdown of spending, though it includes pie charts that lump costs into broad categories. They requested a clear breakdown of administrative costs, transportation costs, and clarification on how much funding is designated for rural schools versus how much is actually sent to the schools.

The Goat reached out to Scheller and Han for comment but received no response.

Jackman said she found information about the budget hard to interpret, as well. She said the District should have better communication with rural schools, especially given that Valemount school employees all serve a crucial role in the

CONT'D ON P2



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May 5th is Red Dress Day – the National Day of Awareness for Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people (MMIWG2S). In Valemount, an annual walk is held, and locals – most of whom walk for someone they’ve lost – gathered at the Village office to walk for their loved ones, or in solidarity. “Chances are, if you know an Indigenous person, they’re related to someone who has gone missing or been murdered. That’s how common this is,” said organizer Sherry Tinsley, addressing the small crowd. While they walk for awareness, they also walk for justice. Tinsley said, “There is a history of these crimes not being investigated as thoroughly ... people have targeted us knowing they can get away with it.”



The walk began at 11 a.m. at the Valemount Village office, heading east on 5th Ave through downtown, circling back via 7th Ave. / RACHEL FRASER



The Village of Valemount sign decorated with placards, a drum, and a red dress in preparation for the walk. / SUBMITTED BY SHERRY TINSLEY



Sherry Tinsley stops traffic as the walk crosses the highway. / RACHEL FRASER

SD57 counsellor Cont'd from A1

community. “It just makes me so sad. We’ve got the best teachers and the best principals that we could possibly ask for at this point,” Jackman said. “To lose money is like kicking the legs out from under something so good.” Jackman hopes other parents will email the District with their concerns, and reach out to MLA Shirley Bond. In a statement sent to The Goat, Bond said she is concerned about the potential reductions to rural school funding in the District. She says she’s been in touch with Valemount’s mayor and Superintendent Aziz. “It is important for our residents to have their voices heard and I urge them to write to the School Board and the Minister of Education. I will be writing to the Minister as well,” Bond wrote. “It shouldn’t matter where you live in British Columbia, students deserve the best educational opportunities possible.” Valemount Mayor Owen Torgerson is also advocating for the counsellor position to be retained. “Rural areas lack access to mental health services due to geographical isolation and fewer resources,” Torgerson said in an email to The Goat. “Having a counsellor in Valemount provides accessible support for students who may not otherwise have access to mental health care and allows for early identification and intervention, which can prevent more severe problems from developing later in life.” Torgerson added that he is in ongoing discussions with Superintendent Jameel Aziz about the issue. Bob Thompson, school board trustee member for the Robson Valley, confirmed that the District is considering cutting the counsellor position. “We’re hoping we can find some way not to do that, because they’ve made a tremendous difference in both schools in Valemount,” he said. Thompson added that the District is prioritizing classroom funding as it considers reductions. “One thing we are dedicated to doing is keeping the cuts out of the classroom, so the cuts come from other places like the school district office,” he said. “It’s not a good situation. But our goal this year is to make the cuts necessary so that we don’t have to

make any more cuts next year.” Thompson said he is doing his best to advocate for rural schools, alongside Mackenzie trustee Rachael Weber. However, he added that districts across the province are feeling the pinch of inflation, and every school in School District 57 is likely going to see cuts. “Nobody likes it, there are complaints everywhere,” he said of the proposed cuts. “And we do have to come up with another \$330,000 [to balance the budget] and we have to find some place to cut it from, so we’re not done yet.” Thompson encourages Robson Valley residents to contact him at trustees@sd57.bc.ca, or by calling the phone number listed on the District’s website, where calls can be directed to him. Aziz said more details on the budget may be provided at the school board’s next public meeting on the 14th. “It’s a very, very challenging situation that we’re in. I’m not for a moment suggesting that the needs of students within the community do not warrant high levels of counselling,” Aziz said. “We are providing information to the board so they can make the decision in a balanced and fair way on what it is that needs to be eliminated from the budget.” The Goat reached out to the principals of both Valemount Elementary and Secondary School for comment, but did not receive a response.

Valemount Marina Association
Annual General Meeting
 May 22nd 7pm upstairs at the
 Valemount Curling Rink.
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Public health services share early childhood resources at Early Years Fair

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

Robson Valley Community Services (RVCS) held its annual Early Years Fair at the Valemount Elementary School last Wednesday, showcasing the resources available for parents of pre-school-aged children.

The fair is a product of a close collaboration between many organizations in the area, said RVCS Supervisor of Child and Family Services Isla Jackman. Representatives from Northern Health, the Valemount Public Library, and the Child Development Centre of Prince George and District (CDC) displayed information about their organization's services in two rooms at the school.

"Information is power," Jackman said of the resources available at the fair. "Once you have knowledge [of resources], you know how to access them."

Presenters at the fair agreed that awareness of resources is important for parents of early-year children.

"Our services are only offered until the littles go into school," said Regan Daoust, a physiotherapist at the CDC. "And it's really hard to find private occupational physiotherapists that work with children specifically. That's why these fairs are so important for us to attend, because [parents] wouldn't know otherwise that they have [services] right here."

Sam Thew, an occupational therapist at the CDC, also said addressing potential concerns about a child's development before starting school is crucial.

"If we [start therapy] sooner, we're more able to

make changes to ensure that they are meeting their developmental milestones, to set them up for success for kindergarten," said Thew.

Both Thew and Daoust said parents should schedule an appointment with a therapist if they have concerns about their child's development. Occupational therapists focus on fine motor and visual motor skills, as well as attention and cognition, Thew said. Physical therapists work on gross motor skills, and a child's musculoskeletal and neurological systems, said Daoust.

"Parents can refer for any of the services at the Child Development Centre," Daoust added. "They don't need a doctor's referral [...] they could simply go to our website and submit a referral."

Early intervention is key in dental care as well, said Community Dental Hygienist Frances Leboe. Northern Health offers free oral assessments of children's teeth, according to her. While these assessments are not a replacement for regular dentist visits, they are a valuable resource so parents can catch cavities or other problems before they develop into more painful and hard-to-treat conditions for children, she added.

Bernita Nesjan, a public health resources nurse, had an array of resources on children's health and safety – including immunization, feeding small children, and car seat safety, among other topics. Nesjan said parents can make an appointment at the Valemount Health Centre and speak with a public health nurse about any questions they have on child health and safety.

"If there's other [specialists] that we need to bring in,

then it's really easy to make a referral," Nesjan added. "When we see them in our regular child immunization clinics, we'll refer them to the Child Development Centre if they need speech therapy or occupational therapy [...] we screen for all of that, as well."

Kacie Harray, Children's Programmer at the Valemount Public Library, shared resources on early child literacy with parents. Parents can check out literacy kits from the library, which include fairy tales and other books for small children to read with their parents, Harray said.

The library also offers hand puppets, DVDs, and LeapFrog Learn to Read systems, Harray added.

This year is the first time the fair has been held at the school, according to Jackman. She values the partnership between RVCS and the school as it makes hosting events like the Early Years Fair more affordable for organizers, and more accessible for parents in the community.

"One of the biggest assets of rural small towns is if these kinds of people can all have a good, healthy, communicative relationship," said Jackman. "And that's something we've got here."

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From the Visitor Info Files

Did you know? Valemount is home to one of the longest chinook salmon runs in North America?

Every August, the chinook salmon make their long journey from the Pacific Ocean, up the Fraser River to spawn in Swift Creek. These mighty fish have a life cycle of roughly 5 years, and spend most of that life in the ocean. When they are hatched, the smolt live in the sands of their spawning grounds for about a year, preparing for their big swim. Salmon are anadromous, meaning they spend their life between both saltwater and freshwater. When the fish are at the end of their life and are ready to spawn, they leave the ocean, stop eating, and use all of their energy to make it upstream. These fish have strong homing instincts, so they will return to the same waters they were born in to spawn. Many salmon only make it as far as our grounds, but for some, their last "hoorah" is leaping up Rearguard Falls. So, make sure to stop by the spawning grounds this summer to see these magnificent fish, and stop by the Visitor Centre to learn more. Keep on swimmin'!

Civic Connection

Think you're knowledgeable about Valemount's infrastructure? Want to know more about local government? Like a good challenge?

May 12 to 18 is Local Government Awareness Week, and this year, the focus is Infrastructure. From May 13 through 18, there will be a link on the Village website to a quiz you can take. The names of everyone who completes the quiz will be entered into a draw to win 1 of 4 prizes.

Exceptions * while Village employees and elected officials are welcome to try their hands at this, they will not be eligible for prizes.

From the desk of the CAO

Street Cleaning

The Village has tentatively scheduled street cleaning for the week of May 6th to 10th, 2024.

Please try to avoid street parking to allow for removal of material by the sweeper.

Office Closure



The Municipal Office and Visitor Information Centre will be **closed** on Monday, May 20th, for Victoria Day. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Spring Clean-Up

The Village organizes support to assist residents in cleaning up their properties in time to enjoy the summer.

This year the Village of Valemount is offering curbside pick-up from May 21st to 24th, on the Village right-of-way, of household and yard waste, as well as scrap metal.

For more information or to book your curbside pick up, please call the Village at 250-566-4435 **before May 17th at noon**.

Traffic Flow Change

Village Council has approved a change in traffic flow at the intersection of 5th Avenue and Main Street, as well as Dogwood Street and main rail crossing. The purpose is to reduce the risk of an oncoming train while vehicles are stopped on the rail tracks.

This change will be implemented this spring. Please watch for a change in signage and proceed accordingly.

Village of Valemount Job Opportunities

- Museum Assistant
- Visitor Information Centre Counsellor

Changes at Regional District Transfer Station

The Village has received notification of a change to the RDFFG recycling service provider beginning May 31st, leading to a temporary disruption in recycling services at the Valemount Transfer Station.

The Village will continue to pick up solid waste on the current schedule, and will monitor the volumes entering the waste stream during this temporary disruption. Should the current level of service not meet needs, we may consider alternatives to manage the extra volume.

As always, people are asked to refrain from illegal dumping of any products.

Like you, the Village is looking forward to enhanced recycling services when the new recycling contract is in place.

If there are concerns from individual residents regarding recycling, they are asked to call Darren Wahl, Operations Manager at the RDFFG at 250-960-4400.

CBT ReDi Adjudication Committee

Residents of Valemount and RDFFG

The Village of Valemount is looking for committed volunteers to fill vacancies on the CBT ReDi Adjudication Committee for the 2025 cycle of the program.

This is your chance to be part of the process that will make recommendations to Council on which non-profit projects should be prioritized in our community.

There are 4 upcoming vacancies on the Committee and the deadline for applications is 12:00 pm on May 31st, 2024.

Visit www.valemount.ca for more information on how to apply.



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Global Thoughts

BY GWYNNE DYER

The Second Time as Farce



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

“History repeats itself – the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce,” said Karl Marx.

He was talking about European history, of course, and here it comes again, a century later, doing a tribute act to the 1920s.

In Germany, we have had a replay of Hitler’s failed coup attempt of 1923. The first of three trials opened in Stuttgart this week, targeting nine alleged ringleaders of the ‘military wing’ of the far-right ‘Reichsbürger’ group who were arrested two years ago on charges of high treason, attempted murder, and membership of a terrorist organisation.

Further mass trials will follow in Frankfurt this month for the ‘political wing’ and in Munich in June for what the prosecutors chose to call the ‘esoteric wing’. There’s a clue there, if you are paying attention. These would-be emulators of Adolf Hitler are not actually ex-stormtroopers hardened by years in the trenches. They are nasty but marginal fantasists.

Another clue lies in the name of their leader, a 72-year-old self-styled aristocrat calling himself Heinrich XIII, Prince Reuss. They really did want to take over Germany and remake it as a neo-fascist state, they really did hate

the Jews, and at least some of them were willing to kill, but they were never a serious threat.

In Italy, where the other great inter-war dictator, Benito Mussolini, seized power and created the world’s first fascist state in 1922, there is already a neo-fascist in power. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni formed her first government in 2022, but she uses no violence, she’s loyal to the NATO alliance, and she seems almost harmless.

Maybe she’s just biding her time, but there are no gangs of fascist thugs beating people to death and no political prisoners. Life in Italy is pretty normal, in fact.

So it is in Spain, although you wouldn’t think so if you listened to the People’s Party (PP), the increasingly hard-right, ultra-nationalist opposition to Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez’s Socialist Workers’ Party. The PP calls him a “psychopath”, a “traitor”, and a “terrorist sympathiser” who deserves to be “strung up by his feet,” but it obeys the law.

Claims that the Spanish prime minister’s wife is really a man and that her family runs the drug trade in Morocco were so hurtful that Sánchez took five days off to ponder whether he really wants to stay in politics. However, it’s really just the online rules of engagement leaking into

the real world. There’s no new Franco plotting an armed fascist rebellion.

And in Poland the ultra-nationalist, militantly religious Law and Justice Party was voted out of power last year despite claiming that the opposition leader, Donald Tusk, is planning to give half the of Poland to Russia and bring “German order” to what’s left. (You know, exactly like the Nazis did).

The point is that the Law and Justice Party didn’t win, and neither did the PP in Spain. Meloni only won by pretending very hard not to be a fascist, and the Reichsbürger in Germany were just a comic opera group (albeit with loaded guns).

Marine Le Pen in France may come closer to winning the presidency on her 4th try in 2027 than ever before, but her Rassemblement National party has achieved that by ditching almost all of its extreme- right policies except for its trademark hostility to immigration.

Americans may elect Donald Trump this November and Canadians may elect Pierre Poilievre next year, but Europe is not leading a charge to the right.

Israel, Hamas and the Elusive Cease-Fire

BY GWYNNE DYER

Hamas did not need a cease-fire. It had already demonstrated that Israel could not eradicate it. It had achieved its primary goal of wrecking the anti-Iran alliance that was brewing between Israel and the major Arab Gulf states. And it doesn’t care about how many Palestinians get killed; they are all ‘martyrs’ for the cause.

So why would it have agreed to a cease-fire that isn’t permanent?

Israel’s Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu was and is absolutely committed to continuing the war. He declared on Saturday that with or without a cease-fire “We will enter Rafah and eliminate the remaining Hamas battalions.” His job and perhaps even his freedom depend on the war continuing.

But Israel cannot force Hamas to settle for less than a permanent cease-fire either, so there we are: perma-war. Except that if you can plausibly say “This can’t go on forever”, then logically it must one day come to an end. Which day depends on one of these three men changing their minds: ‘Bibi’ Netanyahu, Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar or Joe Biden.

Sinwar has already thwarted the Israeli-Arab alliance foreshadowed in Donald Trump’s ‘Abraham accords’.

What remains is to restore Hamas’s position of absolute political dominance in the Gaza Strip. For that he needs a permanent cease-fire accompanied by a full Israeli withdrawal from that territory.

This has been his unwavering demand in every negotiation for a cease-fire, and it’s hard to see why he would ever change it.

‘Bibi’ Netanyahu’s political career should have ended in disgrace seven months ago, when he failed to foresee and prevent the devastating October 7 attack on Israel. But he is a genuine political wizard who has manipulated popular outrage at the attacks into support for a war of vengeance – again led by him – against the authors of that atrocity.

Netanyahu also faces a probable conviction on corruption charges if he loses office. This is not a man who will act in the higher interests of the nation; he will cling to power at all costs.

To stay in office Bibi must continue the war at least until some sort of ‘victory’, so he cannot possibly compromise with Hamas’s demands. That’s why he is currently determined to attack Rafah, the last relatively intact city in Gaza. It’s no Stalingrad, but symbolically it serves his purposes well enough.

This leaves only Joe Biden to end this war, and he could

certainly do it if he chose. Israel is so dependent on American arms, money and even direct military support (as in the recent downing of almost all the Iranian missiles launched at the country) that it really could not say no.

An American intervention imposing a permanent cease-fire would not just bring down Netanyahu. (His coalition would instantly break up.) It would have to include the sidelining of Hamas, the creation of an independent Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank, and American security guarantees for everybody in the region.

Biden’s nostalgia for an older Israel is doubtless a factor in his reluctance to intervene, but any sane American president would be reluctant to make such a huge and risky commitment. It could easily blow up in his face, and there is no gratitude in politics.

On the other hand, non-intervention just prolongs the war and accelerates the erosion of Biden’s political support at home. When faced with a choice between damned if you do it and damned if you don’t, doing it is sometimes the better course.

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Goat River bridge structurally sound after collision: Ministry



The Goat River bridge deck was littered with lumber and the wreckage of a semi on the evening of Tuesday, April 30th. Although structural damage was initially suspected, the Ministry of Transportation confirmed that closer inspection has cleared that concern. The bridge has been cleared and re-opened for traffic.

/PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY MADISON ROBINSON

BY ANDREA ARNOLD

The Goat River bridge, located 39 km west of McBride on Highway 16, has been reopened for regular use.

Initial concerns regarding structural damage following a single vehicle incident shortly after 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday April 30th have been cleared, according to the Ministry of Transportation. Donovan Gee, Bridge Area Manager for the Ministry of Transportation Service Area 20 confirmed that there was no structural damage sustained by the bridge.

“It was all cosmetic,” he said. “There is damage to a couple of posts and some of the railing. There are temporary barriers put in place for safety.”

Gee says the pieces needed to rebuild the damaged section of bridge will have to be made to spec so they will take a few months before they are available.

The damages to the bridge were caused when a semi truck travelling east, carrying a load of lumber lost control and crashed on the bridge. The load of lumber was spilled across the road. The truck and trailer slid to a stop also on the bridge creating a complete barricade.

Once emergency services were on site, the truck driver was seen talking to paramedics.

Initially, RCMP told travellers that the closure could last up to 12 hours as an inspection of the bridge is needed before it could be reopened.

By early Wednesday morning, one lane traffic was moving through the site directed by a flagging crew and clean up was in process. Crews worked quickly to clear the bridge of accident debris and boards. Within a few days, the bridge was reopened for regular traffic flow.

The barriers will remain in place until the repairs can be made.

McBride receives over \$24K for Emergency Operations Centre improvements

BY ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

The Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness granted the Village of McBride over \$24,000 last month.

The money will be used to expand the Village’s Emergency Operations Centre to have six workstations, more laptops and monitors, a mobile printer, and mountable radio units for improved communication during emergencies, according to the Ministry.

Additionally, all Village staff will receive basic emergency operations training. Five staff members will be trained to play a key role in emergency operations: there will be one operations manager, one emergency planner, two people in emergency logistics, and one person working as an information officer, the Ministry told The Goat.

The Ministry was unable to say when this training will take place. These roles follow the Province’s Emergency Operations Centre Guidelines, said the Ministry.

The operations manager will oversee McBride’s Action Plan for emergencies, as recommended in the Guidelines. The emergency planner will develop the Action Plan and maintain other documentation for the Emergency Operations Centre, while logistics managers will provide the facilities, services, personnel, and other equipment needed for emergency operations.

Village CAO Jeanette McDougall did not respond to any of The Goat’s repeated requests for comment.

New tech at McBride Hospital



Members of the McBride Hospital Auxiliary, Mary Hooker, Pat Elliott, Ida Kohn, Carol Hammar and Eleanor Johnson stand with Dr. Buriento to show off the McBride and District Hospital’s newest piece of technology. The purchase of this small scale ultrasound machine was a combined effort between the Auxiliary’s fundraising, a grant from the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and money from the hospital.

The process began in February 2023 when the Hospital Services Administrator at the time, Kim Nordli, put in the request. Nordli saw the need as point of care ultrasound resting is becoming the standard of care for evaluating patients and all new medical school graduates have the training to use the machines. The use of the machine can provide initial diagnosis so that appropriate treatment can begin to stabilize patients prior to transfer to higher level of care. The McBride Hospital Auxiliary meets the first Monday of each month in the education room at the hospital at 3:30 p.m. New members are welcome. Their next fundraiser is the Annual Strawberry Social on May 30th. /ANDREA ARNOLD



During the final night of the season for the McBride Legion BINGO gave out \$1683.80. The progressive jackpot, just over \$700, went to Jayden Flynn. Money in the jackpot had been collected throughout the season and needed to be won on this final evening of the BINGO licence. Plans for summer BINGO nights are in progress. /SUBMITTED

Local artists take space to create as artists-in-residence in Wells BC

BY RACHEL FRASER

Local musicians Amy Braun and Ian Griffiths, with local playwright and actor Miwa Hiroe, recently spent 10 days hosted by the Sunset Theatre Society in Wells, BC. From April 6th to April 15th, 2024, they participated as artists-in-residence as part of its Exploration Series, a grant-supported program whose aim is to produce new Canadian plays.

Artist residency programs provide an opportunity for creatives to be away from the distractions of day-to-day life and focus on creating. The Society owns a residence directly adjacent to the theatre where it hosts visiting theatre professionals.

Amy and Ian perform as HALF/ASIAN with Amy the CODA, a synth-pop duo inspired by their formative experiences of straddling two worlds: Ian's as the son of a Chinese-Canadian mother and Amy's as the daughter of a deaf mother, growing up signing as her first language. Amy vocalizes in English, with choreographed signs, over Ian's '80s Casio keyboard and vocal harmonies. On tour in 2021, while playing a show at the theatre, the duo had the opportunity to get to know the folks who run the Exploration Series. They offered the opportunity to spend 10 days each year over three years in Wells to develop a project called "Between Two Worlds," incorporating their music and stories. They were also completing an album of material to be released in early May of this year, called "Formless", as well as recording brand new material for an upcoming album.

Miwa came into the mix after the three worked together on the Wishbone Theatre musical production "Showdown." Miwa pitched Amy and Ian on a collaboration on her next play, "Hallowed Be Thy", and they extended the invitation for Miwa to join them, shifting their focus from their original project.

"It was really loose," Miwa said. "We knew we wanted to work together – we'd worked together on Showdown, and really enjoyed each other's company, but that was as much as we'd really figured out."

Miwa came away with a completed draft of her new script, a piece centering on a little girl who Miwa said is "dreaming these beautiful and grotesque dreams," as a means of grappling with and processing her lived experiences, and her mother who is recalibrating the belief systems she was raised with. The script tries to incorporate lightness while exploring heavy themes, aspects of our experience that we can't explain, the subconscious, even death.

As a starting point to collaborating with Amy and Ian, Miwa had access to their back catalogue of material, but about four days into the stay, she sat in to listen to their new songs with a list of scenes needing music. She immediately found that each of their songs had a place they fit perfectly. By the end, she said that all the new album is incorporated in or around the play, and that because the songs are also still in their creation period, they have the flexibility to take on new meaning through this collaboration. A song originally written about Fortnite (a hugely popular online multi-player video game) has transformed into a Halloween nightmare dance number for Miwa's play, the lyrics translating to a completely different context.

"The cool thing was we went there to work pretty independently," Miwa said. "They had a project that they were working on, a musical project they were trying to wrap up, and I had a script I wanted to write, and we knew we wanted to integrate the project

somehow, but it wasn't discussed thoroughly."

"I see the meanings of a lot of songs differently already in the context of 'Hallowed Be Thy'" Ian added,

Amy agreed. "It's going to make my signing performance for the new album really heavily influenced by the stories that Miwa's telling. It'll be really interesting to see how much of the themes cross over into our festival performances and our music videos."

In addition to the visual story-telling element that Amy's signing brings to HALF/ASIAN with Amy the CODA's musical performances, Amy will be choreographing actual dance numbers with Miwa for the play, and Ian will expand the existing songs into a complete score.

It's not a musical in the sense that people will be singing their lines, Ian clarified, but it will integrate music, dialogue, masks, and dance. And maybe even puppets. "I'm excited for how dynamic it's going to be," said Miwa.

At the end of the 10 days, the theatre hosted a cold reading of Miwa's draft script. Actors from nearby Barkerville volunteered to read, giving Miwa, Amy and Ian the opportunity to sit in the audience, observe what they were creating, and receive feedback from experienced theatre professionals. A lot of actors typically live in Barkerville, employed for historical re-enactment, but as luck would have it, there was also a film being shot at the time of the reading. The community of Wells was also invited to the preview, so approximately 10 locals showed up to watch.

"The exploration series has always offered that - something at the end (where) you can show what you've done, or you can ask for feedback or whatever. Ian and I didn't do that last year, because it wasn't really applicable to what we were working on, but it was so cool to be able to use that part of the series," Amy said.

Wells, with a population of only 218, has a rich artistic tradition. Established around gold quartz mining in 1933, miners who were also musicians were purposefully sought out to participate in the mining company's dance band and orchestra. Barkerville Historic Site, only 8km away, also had a strong arts and literature tradition in its heyday, and now employs professional actors to bring the past to life for visitors.

A 90-year-old theatre that has been and seen many things, the Sunset was purchased in 2000, and restored to become the heart of the Sunset Theatre Society. They hosted their first season in 2006.

The Exploration series also goes back that far, though Sunset Theatre's Director of Presentations Julia Mackey says they've only received funding for the last 5 years. Dependent on funding from Canada Council for the Arts and BC Arts Council, she said the Society can provide a creation fee for the week to 10 days artists stay in residence, plus a travel stipend, per diem and accommodation, as well as the theatre to play in and technical and administrative support.

"It's a beautiful 90-year-old haunted theatre," said Ian. Legend has it an old miner benevolently haunts the place, encouraging people to play the piano. The group agrees there is a feeling of not being alone, of performing, when the theatre appears to be empty.

The group said the residency was so well set up for their needs and offered independence, space and time to create. "It's like 'Here's the keys to the theatre,'" Ian said.

"We'll keep it warm in there for you." Amy added.

"We were completely away from all of our everyday



Miwa Hiroe, Amy Braun and Ian Griffiths, with dogs Ponyo and Max, in front of the Sunset Theatre. / SUBMITTED

stuff, we were staying in an apartment where we didn't have any chores. Like all we had to do was feed ourselves and work on being creative. The Exploration series achieved its point (by) going there with a nebulous idea and getting to explore an idea, and then create something out of that, (through) the time and space you have to explore it" Miwa said.

Miwa expressed how much the story was influenced by the experience. "If I had written this at home, it would have turned out to be a different story."

Mackey says they look for eclectic works, prioritizing new plays from underserved voices, and rely on their network of artists to find the right groups. She says also consider applications from those with well-thought-out play projects that are viable for funding, and that the waitlist is currently sitting at about a year.

The play is scheduled to premiere in October 2025. Part of the deal is that the Sunset gets to host the opening show, though of course there will be shows in Valemount and McBride.

"It's a really wonderful and original script that our audience was really compelled by," said Mackey

HALF/ASIAN and Amy the CODA's musical material will also retain its own identity as an album released separately but also likely in the Fall of 2025.



(Left) HALF/ASIAN with Amy the CODA practicing under the stage lights inside the Sunset Theatre.

(Right) Miwa Hiroe in front of a panel of actors prepared to "cold read" her draft script, "Hallowed be Thy." / SUBMITTED



Spring Tea for Seniors Housing Project

By ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

The Valemount Senior Citizens Housing Society held a fundraiser for its Ash Street housing project last Sunday. The Society sold eighty \$15 tickets to a spring tea event at the Royal Canadian Legion Valemount Branch to raise money for purchasing furniture, landscaping the building's yard, and building a gazebo, according to Dianne Mickelson, one of the event's organizers.

Mickelson, along with Lilian Basarba, Brenda Funk, Sandra Hudson, and Ellen Duncan, make up the fundraising committee for the Ash Street Housing Project.

The committee has been planning the fundraiser on-and-off for years since COVID disrupted their initial plans to have a spring tea, Mickelson and Duncan said. Duncan has been collecting used tea sets for years to host teas for the Seniors' Club and Senior Citizens Housing Society.

"We all took turns in making [food]," Duncan said of the committee's preparation for the fundraiser. "We had a meeting where we all brought a sample and tried it and changed a few things. My cousin in Kamloops, Marina Cochrane, ran all around town buying teapots for us because we needed so many."

Duncan also lent several hats to the event – attendees who wore a "tea hat," adorned with flowers, rhinestones, or other embellishments, were eligible to enter a drawing for donated home decor items. Those who didn't bring their own hat borrowed one of Duncan's.

Mickelson said the social aspect of the event was a bonus of holding a spring tea fundraiser.

"We had a virtual tea [during COVID]," Mickelson said. "And then we thought, 'You know what? It's time, people are ready for a social.' And tickets sold out, so it was a good social event."

Attendees agreed that the tea was a good opportunity to socialize. Heather Funk, who came with her daughters Lily-Belle and Brianna to support the event, said she was there to support housing for seniors and her mother Brenda's work on the fundraising committee.

"More affordable housing for seniors is necessary," Funk said. "It's needed so they can stay in the community."

Carol Bustin travelled from Tete Jaune to spend a fun afternoon while raising money for seniors.

"This is a kind of throwback thing," she said about attendees' tea hats. "It's fun. I remember my mother having these little rolled up sandwiches with the crusts cut off at her afternoon tea."

Yolanda Schiller, a Valemount resident, agreed that the food and ambiance were a highlight of the fundraiser.

"Seeing the imagination and creativity of everybody in Valemount is nice," Schiller said. "Springtime is here, it's a gathering time for the ladies."

The spring tea will be an annual event, said Mickelson and Duncan. The Valemount Senior Citizens Housing Society will have another fundraiser in the fall, and it will likely be another social event, said Mickelson.

"This year was a steal of a deal at \$15 a plate," said Mickelson. "But it's worth it when you see all these people here."



Residents from Valemount, Tete Jaune, and Dunster gathered at the Valemount Legion on Sunday to raise money for the Valemount Senior Citizens Housing Society, and to socialize with one another over tea and pastries. All eighty tickets were sold, said organizer Dianne Mickelson. / ABIGAIL POPPLE



Valemount resident Shirley Gonyou shows off her hat, on which she affixed LED lights and flowers. She plans on making a Christmas-themed hat for next year's tea, she told The Goat. / ABIGAIL POPPLE

In Loving Memory of

Hazel Balcaen



Hazel Jean Balcaen, born March 13, 1942, in Brighton Township, Ontario, peacefully passed away on April 15, 2024, surrounded by many of her children and grandchildren. Hazel was predeceased by her loving husband Robert (Bob) on February 19, 2024, parents Gordon and Eunice McMaster, sister Doreen Tunny, brothers Neil and Gordie, and granddaughter Chantel Robinson. She will be greatly missed by her children Ward, Corrine, Lee, Margaret Robinson (Rodney), Lisette Doucette (Martin), grandchildren John and Diana Balcaen, Josie and Kim Robinson, Charlotte and Natsha Dickerson, Oscar Doucette, great-grandson Maklan, brothers Alan (Lola), Gene (Trudy), Rob (Linda), sister Helen Dube, as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Hazel grew up in Brighton Township, where her parents lived and worked in the agricultural industry. Hazel's sense of adventure prompted her to join the Royal Canadian Air

Force where she served as a Fighter Control Operator. During her basic training in St. Jean, Quebec, Hazel met the love of her life, Bob. They were married in a Quonset hut used as a Catholic Church on base while stationed in CFB Clinton.

In 1968, Hazel and Bob moved to McBride where they raised their growing family. When Bob started Balcaen Electronics, Hazel was by his side, supporting him with this endeavor and working as an integral part of running the business, especially in the early years. Prior to rejoining the workforce in 1987, Hazel returned to high school to expand her academic skills, taking classes alongside her children and their friends.

Hazel's independent spirit led her to drive or fly long distances to visit family and friends, either on her own or with children in tow. Her spirit of adventure also inspired her love of cooking. Hazel could often be found in her kitchen creating the family's favourite recipes.

For 22 years, she proudly worked as a dietary aid at the McBride and District Hospital, serving delicious hot homemade food to patients and staff who were extremely grateful for the tasty meals she provided.

As a proud member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Hazel also served on the Legion Ladies Auxiliary where she helped prepare dinners for numerous McBride celebrations such as weddings and birthdays.

A voracious reader with an insatiable curiosity about the world around her, Hazel often researched everything from complex medical issues to the lives and music of the Bee Gees. Long drives through the Robson Valley with Bob were a favourite pastime for Hazel, and they would always be delighted to see deer, owls, Canada geese, swans and other wildlife. The couple also loved traveling together in their motorhome, visiting family and friends throughout western Canada.

Hazel was especially close to her older sister Helen, with whom she shared a birthday just two years apart, and they visited often throughout the years enjoying many insightful conversations and loads of giggles.

For many years, Hazel courageously adjusted to complex medical issues that she faced with grace, determination, resolution and a steel resolve to maximize her quality of life, while never complaining about the hand life had dealt her. Hazel and Bob led full lives during their 63 years together, so deeply connected that they were separated by Bob's death for just eight weeks. Now, they are on another journey together.

These words fall short in describing the profound loss and sadness felt by Hazel's large and loving family. Hazel was

so proud of her children and grandchildren, all who will be comforted by so many memories.

The Balcaen family thank their many friends who visited Hazel during her stay in the hospital. Thank you to Dennis and Irene Rejman, Olivia Vizza and Valerie Watson, and Eva Westlund who visited often bringing tasty goodies for Hazel to enjoy. Thank you also to the many friends who supported Hazel and Bob so they could live safely in their home.

The family expresses deep gratitude for the compassion, kindness and professional care Hazel received during her recent stay at McBride Hospital and brief stay at Kamloops Hospice Society. We are forever grateful.

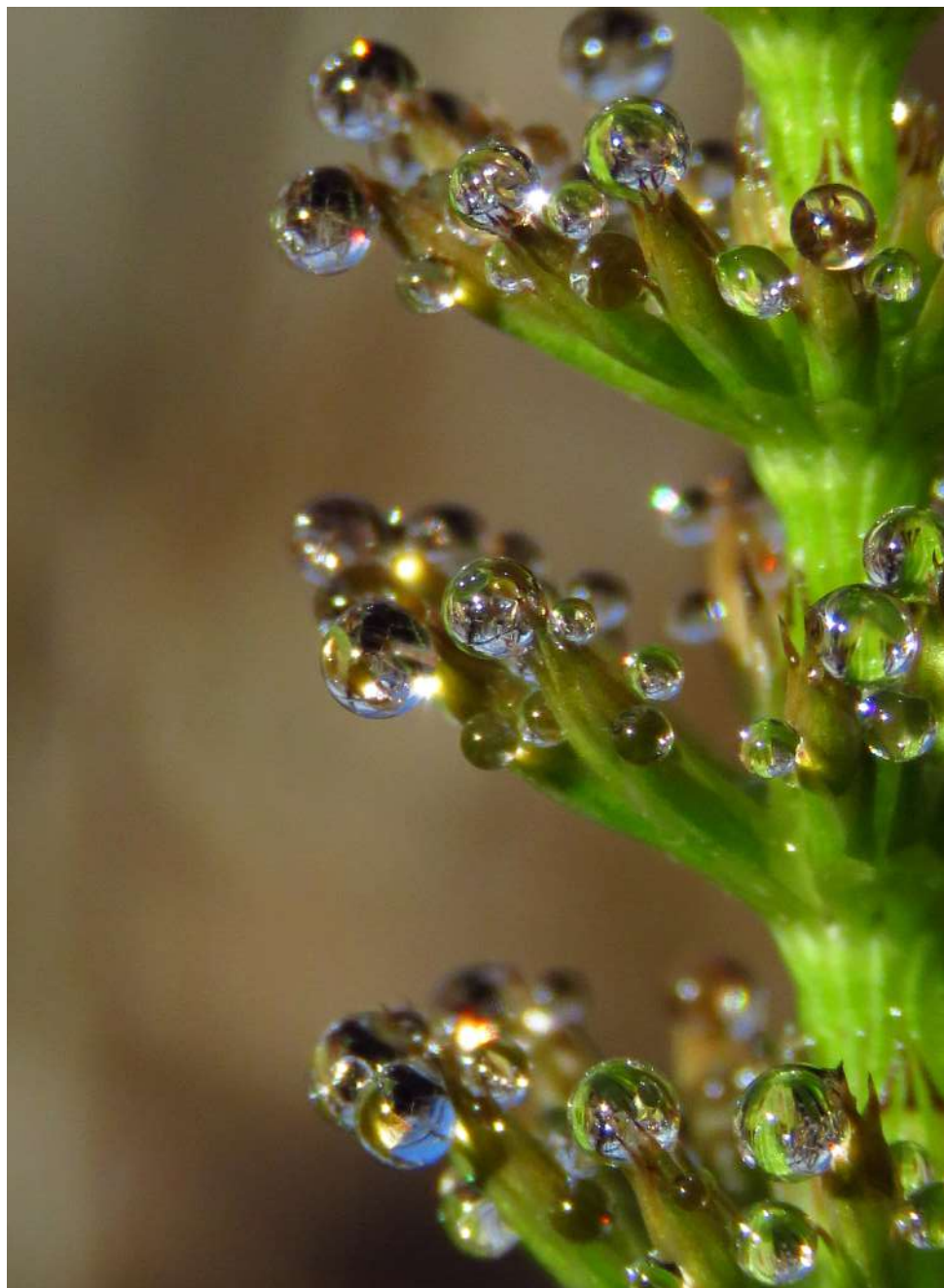
In lieu of flowers, donations in Hazel's honour to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 75 or the McBride and District Hospital Auxiliary are greatly appreciated.

Everyone is invited

to celebrate the lives of Hazel and Bob at a community barbecue on May 18, 2024, at the Steve Kolida Park in McBride.



Nature's diamonds



A frost prevented these dewdrops from evaporating quickly. As they basked for a short time in the sun, they glittered like finely hung diamonds. /ANDREA ARNOLD

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CALIFORNIA Fresh Mandarins 907 g

2lb

3.99 ea

POWERADE Sports Drinks 710 mL plus deposit & recycle fee

2/\$2

CLOVER LEAF Flaked or Chunk Light Tuna 170 g

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HÄAGEN DAZ or NESTLÉ Ice Cream or plant based frozen dessert 400 mL - 450 mL

4.99 ea

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Friday, May 10 - Thursday, May 16

The Tete Jaune Lodge is pleased to announce that the Riverside Cafe has re-opened!

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Come check out Bill's new menu featuring delicious dishes from our new smoker! Call: 250-566-9805

Northern farmers share concerns on new vegetable production regulations

BY ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

At the beginning of this year, the BC Vegetable Marketing Commission expanded its General Orders – the legal framework which ensures food safety, market regulation, and safe transportation in the vegetable production industry – to apply everywhere in the province.

Previously, the Commission only regulated producers below the 53rd parallel latitude, which encompasses the area south of Quesnel. Now, northern B.C. producers who produce 1,000 pounds or more of vegetables will pay levy and service fees to the Commission, and annually pay for a license fee – a change which has drawn some criticism from producers in the north.

The change was made in anticipation of rapid growth in the northern agriculture industry as climate change makes larger agricultural operations more viable in the area, said the Commission's General Manager, Andre Solymosi.

“The Commission feels that it would be inappropriate to regulate vegetable production in the south but not in the north because of an arbitrary line,” he added. “It was believed that [the change] would be a step in the right direction to expand to the whole province, so that everyone can experience the benefits of the regulatory environment.”

These benefits include marketing regulations that contribute to financial stability for producers, Solymosi said. The Commission designates marketing agencies – groups of licensed producers – which allow for the coordinated marketing of vegetables.

“Agencies harness the collective marketing power of producers and are the means by which the Commission achieves its main policy objective of maximizing producer returns,” the Commission's website reads.

“[Agencies] provide producers with the ability to organize themselves to maximize the opportunities and investment options not normally available to smaller producers.”

Solymosi told The Goat this coordination helps the Commission maximize returns for producers, and ensures the safe processing of vegetables.

“It's about providing some structure that improves economic stability and viability [for producers],” he said.

No Reason Not to Expand

The Commission did not consult with northern producers before deciding to expand its General Orders, according to Solymosi.

“It makes sense that we expand it,” Solymosi said when asked why the Commission did not consult producers. “There's no reason why not to expand it. We could have

done some consultation, but it was felt that this was the way to go.”

This lack of consultation is in part what prompted criticism from producers and representatives in the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. At their April 18th meeting, District Directors Dannielle Alan and Victor Mobley raised their concerns.

“There's no provision for a member from [the north] to take part in the vegetable commission's decisions,” Alan said of the changes. “You're imposing rules, regulations and costs on people who have no representation on the Commission.”

Mobley agreed, and said the change came out of left field and will heavily affect small businesses in the area.

In a follow-up phone call with the Goat, Mobley – himself a producer – said he feels the Commission's expansion is a government overreach that will negatively impact smaller producers.

“1,000 pounds is a micro-producer, essentially. So they're trying to take over any small producers,” he said. “But the board members are massive producers down in the Fraser Valley.”

Mobley estimates his farm produced over 2,000 pounds of vegetables last year, and most of that revenue went towards buying more seeds and supplies. Introducing new licensing fees will cut down on his already-thin profit margin, he said.

Alan told The Goat she is concerned about a lack of northern representation in the Commission's decisionmaking process.

“[They're] making unilateral decisions without representation from northern growers,” she said. “Until this year, there was no marketing agency application fee [...] now they've instituted a \$20,000 agency application fee. Same thing with the \$6,000 producer shipping fee.”

Mobley added that poor communication regarding the expansion leaves him wondering how effectively they can be enforced.

“The reality is, noncompliance will be super high,” Mobley said. “That puts us in violation of provincial law [...] no one really knows what's on the books.”

Andrew Adams, a producer in the Prince George area, said the rollout of the expansion was a surprise, and that communication with producers could be improved. However, he feels the regulations will ultimately benefit the B.C. vegetable industry, he said.

“Making farmers improve their production in terms of food safety, and where food is distributed, is extremely complex and extremely important,” Adams said. “It's ensuring that we have a robust food system that can meet the needs of the public safely. By having a price regulation, you ensure that farmers can actually grow and hopefully increase production here.”

Adams added that the Commission has been helpful in answering his questions about the Orders.

“The answered my emails immediately, and when I called, they answered, or got back to me relatively fast,” Adams said.

Despite his surprise at the Commission's announcement that Orders would be expanded, Adams understands the reasoning behind it, he said.

“Climate's changing, technologies are changing, production is changing,” Adams said. “I kind of expected this to happen at some point.”

Adams added that he hopes the Commission will expand its board to include northern representatives.

Transition Year

In his interview with The Goat, Solymosi could not confirm whether the Commission's board will add a seat dedicated to northern producers. The Commission is treating the next year as a transitional period, he said, during which time feedback from producers will be used to refine the Orders and the Commission's governing structure as necessary.

“If it makes sense going forward, it's under the Commission's authority to determine what elective model would actually benefit the industry,” he said. “If [a northern producer board seat] is something that would add value, then maybe that's something the Commission will consider going forward.”

The Regional District as well as the District C Farmers' Institute – which encompasses McBride – are taking advantage of the transitional year to share feedback with the Commission.

At the Regional District's April meeting, the board of directors approved a motion from Alan and Mobley to invite the Commission to a future meeting. Solymosi told The Goat the Commission is in the process of setting up a meeting with the Regional District.

Additionally, the District C Farmers' Institute passed a motion to form a committee on the expanded General Orders at their Annual General Meeting on May 4th.

“Our main goal is to gather everybody that is impacted [...] get these voices together to the Ministry of Agriculture and say, ‘These are our issues, and how it's impacting farmers up here,’” said Michelle Miller, President of the District C Farmers' Institute.

Solymosi said he has been in touch with Miller, and while the Commission was unable to send a representative to the Farmers' Institute meeting, the Commission will maintain an open line of communication with the Institute.

In the meantime, the Commission will post any updates to its website, bcveg.com, Solymosi said. Producers can also contact the Commission at info@bcveg.com, or at (604) 542-9734.

Consultation for new agriculture grant underway

BY ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

After 15 years of work, the Northern Development Initiative Trust has begun consultation on a grant intended for agricultural use in Northern B.C. The Trust has accumulated a little over \$600K for this grant, said Manager of Partner Programs Jordan Barrett, but this amount could grow to up to \$8M as the Trust collects more funds from land development.

Chief Executive Officer of the Trust, Joel McKay, gave an overview of the grant's history at the District C Farmers' Institute meeting on May 4th. In 2009, the City of Prince George pulled land from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) in anticipation of the city's airport expanding. However, the expansion never happened, McKay said – so the City struck a deal with the Trust.

“The deal to get it out of the ALR was that \$5,000 for every acre that was developed [on Boundary Road] would be put into a plot that the trust would manage,” said McKay.

If every acre on the road is developed, that will raise the grant from its current \$600K value to \$8M available for agricultural projects throughout the north, McKay added.

In a follow-up phone call, Barrett told The Goat the development of the grant is still in its early stages. Details on when the grant will be open for applications and which geographic regions will be eligible have not yet been determined, she said.

Over the next few months, the Trust will be soliciting feedback from agricultural producers throughout northern B.C. – starting with the District C Farmers' Institute, which represents McBride and Prince George.

“We'd like to have the agriculture community engage with us and say, ‘These are our issues, these are our priorities,’” McKay said at the Farmers' Institute meeting.


The Trust's board of directors has final say over what kinds of projects will be eligible for grant funding, said McKay. However, engagement with agricultural producers will give valuable insight into how the money can be most effectively invested, he added.

McKay and Barrett invite producers with feedback to contact them at joel@northerndevlopment.bc.ca and jordanb@northerndevlopment.bc.ca, respectively.

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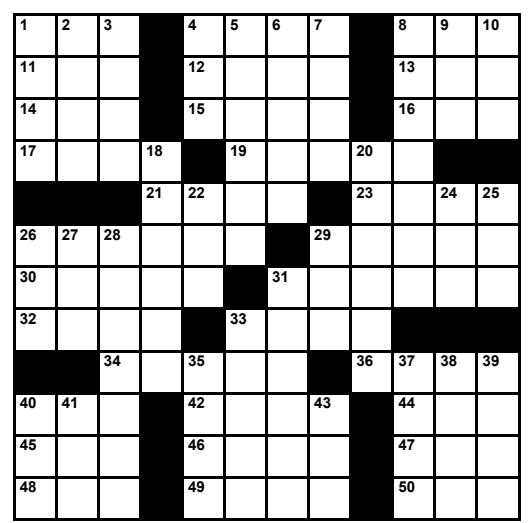
PUZZLES



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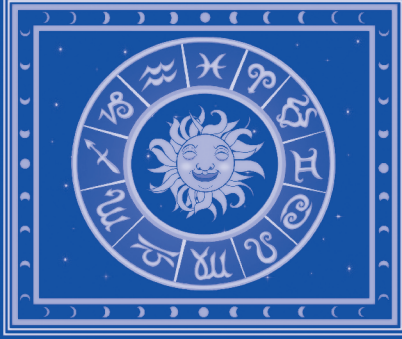
Answers on P13

- Across**
- Police officer
 - Set up shop
 - Light brown
 - "___ moment"
 - Combine
 - How old it is...
 - One on a golf scorecard
 - October ___
 - Blue
 - Agreement point
 - Herb in some pizzas
 - Unightly
 - Like a battery that's not working
 - Skin art
 - Girl, informally
 - A way to read fairy stories
 - Appease
 - Trial version
 - Amount owing
 - Boat sludge
 - In stitches
 - It may be smoked
 - Lifeless
 - Revelation response
 - Show of hands
 - Food choices
- Down**
- Oscar material, mostly
 - Scarlet or burgundy
 - Narrowly defeat
 - Mudbath locale
 - Cloakroom hanging
 - A while back
 - Peep out
 - Not quite on-point
 - Colorado city
 - "How I Spent My Summer Vacation" e.g.
 - Comes away with
 - Loftiest
 - In the past
 - Ad catchword
 - Like some funds
 - Senseless people
 - Word on a dollar bill
 - One of the largest trees in the world
 - Hair colouring
 - Presentation divider
 - "Ginger" drink
 - Unsalvageable after an accident



- Mafia
- Comprehending
- Challenged
- Ready for anything
- Takes in
- Senate big shot
- Pop's mom
- Sound processing unit
- Peer at
- About to arrive

HOROSCOPES



BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

New Moon in Taurus

In the week of the new moon in Taurus, a wave of ideas about tomorrow's finances will wash over. Change has always been the way of the world, but in some eras the changes came on balmy breezes of careful consideration, and in others they were rapid fires that cut up the scenery. We're in a season where every day brings hundreds of new ideas about making and spending resources. Steadfast principles lend footing.

still sorting out why you feel that way. You can't dance on thin ice forever. When you have the impulse to scorn, it's a defense -- a shield for your soft spots. You'll speak your mind at the perfect time.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Opposition fuels your determination. Sure, you want to do the right thing and prove your merit, too -- but you also want to get a particular reaction from a certain someone. You may not know why it matters, but the reasons exist and will be illuminated at the perfect time.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). This week comes with realizations about the value of your contributions. How can you seek equitable exchanges if you do not know how much your side is worth? You tend toward estimating too low. The more you see of the world, the better you get at presenting your work and asking a fair price for it.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll shout your goals and whisper your challenges. You might be surprised about who cares and will provide you with insights. There are many good ideas out there, but what will play through the entire life of a project? You'll be gloriously supported and achieve aims that would not have been possible from a constricted hold.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You'll be teaching again in some way, perhaps not formally, but others will be well aware they are learning from you. You're not one to overstep. Expertise should attract. It's a curious dance you've twirled in for ages. You'll coax out the best work and nudge past the pesky doubts that bloom. You'll learn more from the process than the "students."

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You do not fear a visit from uncertainty, as this is an inevitable part of life. Even so, it's not something you go out of your way to seek when your position is quite cozy. Today is different. The potential reward will seem worth the risk of leaving your comfort zone.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Memories of past missives flood the mind -- some yours, some theirs, both part of a haphazard web of relationships -- a net you will keep casting, and it will keep catching new people and experiences to learn from. It doesn't have to be perfect to be right.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll go for a particular goal, and you will achieve it. Don't worry about what happens before or after that. There will be costs leading up and losses on the other side. This is what marks the path of a fully lived process. Without the markers, we couldn't know the preciousness of what we hold.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). For curious explorers, not knowing quite where you are is a scintillating aspect of any adventure. The unknown is a recurring and enjoyable feature this week. Foreign sights, sounds and words are the spark of excitement. To make sense of things, you'll broaden your awareness, look for context clues and ultimately rise to new wisdom.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). While external sources can provide feedback, support and validation, you know not to rely solely on it. Neither is it a good idea to make your internal confidence the only source of motivation. Constructive criticism, differing viewpoints and a wellspring of knowing that's inside you will give you a productive balance.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your soul seeks to unravel life's mysteries through your own story. The impulse to bare your soul with raw honesty will bring about an experience that may not feel comfortable as you're going through it, but will enrich you nonetheless. You glow with truth's purifying fire.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Self-care is the cornerstone of your impact on the world this week. Nurture yourself to nurture those around you, spreading love through actions. Serving others requires tactful boundary-setting. Guide those who may not intuit boundaries naturally, ensuring mutual respect.

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS: You've already proven your grit, and now you get to win with exciting dances of commerce and politics, contributions that connect people, and projects that bring out the best in people. Discipline will push you to create fortifying habits. You'll meet audacious influences -- a thrill and an opportunity to build remarkable things in a group. More highlights: stylish upgrades for travel and domesticity, an odd meeting that opens love's horizons, and tickets to events that mark history books.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You don't claim to have a halo and are in fact very aware of your humanity this week. Still, there's a sense of being slighted, and you're

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		3	4		5	1	
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		6		5			
	1			8		5	2

Answers on P13

SUDOKU

HOW TO PLAY

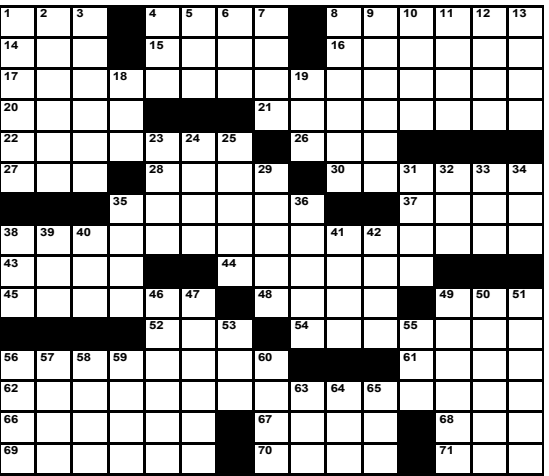
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

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

Answers on P13

- Across**
- Roadie's load
 - Rental car agency
 - Bouquets
 - Roman numeral
 - Grocery store need
 - Venus's sister
 - Celebration of future wedded bliss
 - Lamented
 - They get out early
 - Band-aid
 - Suffers from
 - Bard's nightfall
 - Sculls
 - Bawl out
 - Hebrew scriptures
 - "Money, money, money" singers
 - Given a much desired position
 - Potion
 - Safari country
 - Wild cards
 - Cash drawer
 - Line made with a compass
 - Software program, briefly
 - Chase
 - Strangeness
 - Teensy bit
 - Unable to offload a problem car
 - Small cylindrical structure
 - Polly, to Tom Sawyer
 - "Seeing red" feeling
- Down**
- Put down, slangily
 - Back of the house
 - Abbr. in a price
 - Opposing
 - Insignificant
 - Mark
 - Junior high subj.
 - Compete with a rival
 - Suffix with ideal
 - Rank
 - Off the straight and narrow
 - Rest
 - Exam for an advanced degree
 - No more than
 - Feed the kitty
 - Affirms
 - Payroll processing company
 - "Uh-uh"
 - "Well done!"
 - Rhine feeder
 - Milan-based fashion house
 - Mine passage
 - Tibetan priest
 - Follower of J.F.K.
 - Blood system
 - Bill
 - Ancestry.com's offering



- Floral addition
- Dictionary abbreviation
- Romance
- Plead for
- Disney character from Hawaii
- John Wooden's school
- Stick in one's craw
- Gushed
- Infinitesimal
- Parting shot, say
- Whooping birds
- Pressure unit, briefly
- Cry of disgust
- Abbr. on company letterheads
- Ornamental purse
- Chafes
- Critical hosp. areas
- Dwarf or giant, maybe
- Lemon or orange
- Suffix with Shakespeare
- Paper size

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1	C	O	P	4	O	P	E	N	8	T	9	A	10	N
11	O	N	E	12	F	U	S	E	13	A	G	E		
14	A	C	E	15	F	E	S	T	16	L	O	W		
17	T	E	R	18	M	19	B	A	S	20	I	L		
21	U	G	L	22	Y	23	D	E	24	A	25	B		
26	T	A	27	T	O	28	M	I	29	S	S	Y		
30	A	L	O	31	U	D	32	S	O	O	T	H	E	
33	B	E	T	34	A	35	D	E	36	B	T			
37	A	L	38	G	A	E	39	S	40	W	41	N		
42	E	E	43	L	44	A	R	I	45	D	46	A	H	A
47	A	Y	48	E	49	M	E	N	50	U	51	T	I	N
52	R	E	53	D	54	E	D	G	55	E	56	S	P	A

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SUDOKU ANSWERS

9	7	8	6	4	1	2	5	3
6	5	1	8	3	2	4	9	7
3	4	2	5	7	9	6	1	8
4	6	7	9	1	3	8	2	5
8	9	3	4	2	5	1	7	6
1	2	5	7	6	8	9	3	4
5	8	4	2	9	7	3	6	1
2	3	6	1	5	4	7	8	9
7	1	9	3	8	6	5	4	2

TOUGHIE ANSWERS

1	A	M	P	4	A	V	I	S	8	A	R	O	M	12	A	S
13	V	I	I	15	L	I	S	T	18	S	E	R	E	N	A	
19	E	N	G	A	G	E	M	E	22	N	T	P	A	R	T	Y
23	R	U	E	D	25	P	A	R	28	O	L	E	E	S		
29	S	T	O	P	32	A	P	34	A	S						
35	E	E	N	38	O	A	R	S	41	Y	E	L	L	A	T	
42	T	O	R	A	H	S			45	A	B	B	A			
46	A	W	A	R	D	E	D	A	49	P	L	U	M	J	O	B
50	D	O	S	E	53	A	F	R	56	I	C	A				
57	J	O	K	E	60	S	T	I	63	L	L	65	A	R	C	
66	A	P	69	P	72	G	O	A	75	F	T	E	R			
76	E	R	79	I	N	E	S	82								
83	S	T	U	C	K	W	I	86	T	89	A	L	E	M	O	N
90	T	U	B	U	L	E	93	A	96	U	N	T	99	I	R	E
100	D	I	S	S	E	D	103	R	106	E	A	R	109	C	T	S

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Community Events

Send us your event to ads@goatnewsmedia.com or call 250-566-4606. Use 40 WORDS or less and we will publish it FREE up to a month before

VALEMOUNT

FRIs **Family Place Drop-In** is moving to FRIDAYS from 9am-noon with Cat. 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) unless location otherwise stated. Registration not required. For more information call 1-844-324-2004 or email: events@rvcsbc.org.

May 10 – Mother's Day craft

May 17 – Sing along at Centennial Park

May 24 – Bouncy castle and tumble time

May 31 – Scavenger hunt at Centennial Park

WED MAY 8 from 10am-12pm at 99 Gorse St., the RVCS Anti Violence team would like to send out an open invitation to a gender inclusive event: Do's and Do'nuts of Dating. In support of Sexualized Violence Prevention Month, let's spark conversation about healthy dating and equality within relationships. No registration is required for this drop-in event. This will be a respectful, confidential safe space for discussion. More info please call 250-566-9107 or email events@rvcsbc.org.

THURS MAY 16 join the RVCS Indigenous Literacy Team for a walk around the community handing out moose hide pins and sharing in the knowledge of the Moose Hide Campaign: take action to end violence against women and children. We meet at the Valemount Elementary School for 10am and will finish around 11:30am at Centennial Park for a drumming ceremony with our local youth. For more information please contact 250-566-9107 or email events@rvcsbc.org.

SAT MAY 18th Celebration of Tourism 6pm-9pm at the Best Western Plus Valemount Inn & Suites. Presentations by local representatives and dignitaries. Networking opportunities, door prize, and music! Complimentary refreshments and appetizers. Cash bar (beer and wine). Please RSVP by May 14th: visitvalemount@gmail.com

SUN MAY 19th Swift Creek Chinook Salmon Send Off 12pm-2pm at George Hicks Regional Park. Activities for the family, BBQ, and vendors.

Ongoing Valemount Events

MON through FRIs The Valemount Seed Library is available in our lobby during business hours at RVCS Valemount (99 Gorse St). Office hours: Monday 10am-6pm and Tuesday to Thursday 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. For more information call 1-844-324-2004 or email: events@rvcsbc.org.

MON through FRIs the Free Food Farm Stand and Pantry are available for anyone who would like some free, fresh produce. We accept donations of unprocessed fruits and veggies also. 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. This initiative is supported by one-time grant funding through United Way BC. For more information 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.

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.

THURS from MAY 23-JUNE 13 12:30-2pm join RVCS and families for Sprouting Memories with our Families. We meet at the Valemount Community Garden (behind the secondary school on 201 Ash St) for social interactions and sensory exploration while planting a garden and watching it grow. This program is free, and is for ages 0-5 and their caregivers. Registration is preferred: 1-844-324-2004 or events@rvcsbc.org.

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 has a **thrift store** at 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 10am-6pm and Tuesday to Thursday 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.

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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, unless otherwise stated. For more information call 1-844-324-2004 or email: events@rvcsbc.org. Upcoming themes:

May 13 – Play at RVCS

May 20 – Stat Holiday: no FPDI today

May 27 – Bouncy castle fun at the RVCS play yard

THUR MAY 9 RVCS invites everyone to join us for a compassion walk as part of Mental Health Week 2024. Let's come together to promote mental well being, foster understanding, and spread compassion within the community on May 9th 1:30-2:30pm. We meet at RVCS (942 3rd Ave) in McBride and will stroll through the community.

FRI MAY 10 from 10am-12pm at 942 3rd Avenue, the RVCS Anti Violence team would like to send out an open invitation to a gender inclusive event: Do's and Do'nuts of Dating. In support of Sexualized Violence Prevention Month, let's spark conversation about healthy dating and equality within relationships. No registration is required for this drop-in event. This will be a respectful, confidential safe space for discussion. More info please call 250-569-2266 or email events@rvcsbc.org.

SAT May 11 **Annual Spring Trunk Sale & Vendor Market** hosted by the McBride Chamber of Commerce. 10-2 Junk in the Trunk Vendors - vendors sell from the trunk of their cars or the back of a pick up truck second hand items. Craft Vendors - been crafting all Winter and looking for an avenue to sell, here is your chance. \$10 per parking spot & the money goes into the budget for future Chamber community events. Spaces are limited and they go fast so book your spot now be either sending me a message or dropping into Mountain View Boutique downtown McBride.

WED MAY 15 seniors are invited to join us for an afternoon of

collaborating to make a collage to show the passage of time in one's life. This creation will be on display over Pioneer Days at the Valley Museum in McBride. 1-4pm at 942 3rd Avenue (RVCS). No registration required for this free activity.

THURS MAY 16 join the RVCS Indigenous Literacy Team for a walk around the community handing out moose hide pins and sharing in the knowledge of the Moose Hide Campaign: take action to end violence against women and children. We meet at the McBride Centennial Elementary School for 1pm and will finish around 2:30pm at Steve Kolida Park for a drumming ceremony with our local youth. For more information please contact 250-569-2266 or email events@rvcsbc.org.

WED MAY 29 - It's that time of year again! From 10:30am-12pm come join RVCS for Donkey, Donuts & Grandparents at the backyard of RVCS (942 3rd Ave). This special time is designed for elders and the animals to connect and mutually benefit from each other's company. Adults only. Brought to you by the Adult Literacy and Better at Home Seniors programs. There may be an appearance from a bunny and goats also. More info: 1-844-324-2004 / events@rvcsbc.org.

FRI June 14 **McBride 2&5km Color Fun Run/Walk/Wheel** @ 1pm at the Elementary School. 8 week training begins April 22 Contact Jodie Lukow for more information 250-230-8035.

Ongoing McBride Events

MONs **ASL Club** meet weekly at the EFree church McBride. 12:30pm - 1:30pm. Beginners welcome! Contact Lonnie Lorenz if you have questions 250.569.7657

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.

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.

THURS – every first Thursday of each month join members for another Men's Shed McBride meeting at 942 3rd Ave at 3pm. Men's Shed aims to improve members' physical and mental health through a safe and friendly environment where men can work on meaningful projects, at their own pace and in the company of other men. We welcome a diverse and inclusive community! Email mcbriedemenshed@gmail.com for more info.

BLUE RIVER

May 1st-31st It's **"May Madness"** in Blue River -- residents will be holding yard sales throughout the month! Items for sale will include furniture, antiques, and some vehicles. Call Norma at 250 673-8230 for more information

DUNSTER

SAT May 18 11:00-1:00 p.m. **May Dunster Farmers Market** @ Dunster Community Hall. Vendors and Buskers welcome no charge. Concession available. For more information call Loretta 250-968-4453 or Pete 250-968-4334.

SAT June 29 Annual ice cream social @ Dunster Community Hall.

SAT from JULY 6-SEPT 28 Saturday Farmers' Markets @ Dunster Community Hall.

HAVE AN EVENT?

Let us know!

CALL: 250-566-4606

EMAIL: ads@goatnewsmedia.com



*Through the Lens
with Leon Lorenz*

In early spring the male ruffed grouse stake out their territory and locate a suitable low perch like a fallen tree where they will spend many hours each day trying to lure in a female with their drumming. This year I heard my first grouse beating out his love call on February 16th. This particular grouse would start his drumming at 2:30 in the morning near our home when I'm trying to get back to sleep. /LEON LORENZ

Valemount Legion Poster & Literary contest winners

SUBMITTED BY VALEMOUNT LEGION BRANCH #266

Branch 266 of the Royal Canadian Legion sponsors an annual Poster & Literary Contest for local students to encourage remembrance through visual art and the written word.

Student entries are collected and judged in the community and cash prizes and certificates are awarded to the top three entries in each category and age group. The first place winners are then sent on to be judged at the zone level with the winners from Burns Lake, Fraser Lake, Mackenzie, McBride and Prince George. Zone winners then move on to provincial and possibly national judging.

Last month, Branch President Pete Pearson was able to present certificates to students awarded at the Zone level at both schools.

This year, Ariana McKirdy won 1st at zone level for her black and white poster and Adalie Anthony was last year's winner for her black and white poster.

Branch 266 thanks all the teachers and students for their work and support of the contest every year.



Left to right, Adalie Anthony, Tobi Gee, Rachael Markham, Harper Bustin, Branch President Pete Pearson and Hailey Addis./ SUPPLIED



Regular Events:

Friday Night Dinners w/ Weekly Special
5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Sunday Pancake Breakfast 8:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Bingo- Second Thursday every month Doors at 6:00 p.m.

Coming Events:

May 9 Bingo

Friday May 17 Comedy w/ Spencer Hall & Friends

May 25 Happy Trails, Prospector Bluegrass show. Tickets on sale now.

General Meetings:

Third Tuesday of each month @ 7 p.m.

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

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Spring Maintenance

Valemount IDA
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REGULAR HOURS **MON-SAT: 9 AM - 5:30 PM**

Sprouting Memories

With our Families *in Valemount*

Brought to you by the RVCS Infant Development Program

Bring your children to plant seeds!
Nurture and care for them as we watch them grow.

Program Details:
When: Meet on Thursday, May 23rd from 12:30-2pm and again each week until June 13th
Where: The Valemount Community Gardens

Registration is not required.
For more info please contact:
250-566-9107 or email events@rvcsbc.org

- Sensory and developmental opportunities
- Grow with nature and your family
- Learn about serve and return interactions
- Enjoy a variety of activities such as singing
- Future dates for harvesting TBA!

Visit my website to see all of my featured listings: www.valemountmcbri listings.com. A great resource for your property search in the valley.

LARGE LOT OR SMALL ACREAGE?

Shelly Battensby

REALTOR



DIFFERENT BETTER

5925 Whiskey Fill Road VALEMOUNT

\$518,000



Tucked against a hill, this 3-acre property feels like a world away and yet is only minutes from town. Featuring a 2001, 2-bedroom home, open-concept living, a covered deck, and a fully fenced yard with a rock fountain, garden space, and a 2-bay workshop, this property offers great value in a great location.

4995 Pitney Road VALEMOUNT

\$489,000

REDUCED!



Just a few minutes south of town, this modern, 3-bedroom home offers privacy and comfort all in one. Sitting on 2 acres, the property has plenty of space for a garden or play space. The home was built in 2021 and features a covered deck, bedrooms on each end, and central, open-concept living.

701 Dominion Street MCBRIDE

\$415,000

NEW!



At just over 0.3 acres, this town property could be your own garden oasis. Fully fenced and bordering greenspace on one side, you'll have all the privacy you need in your landscaped backyard. The 3-bedroom home is family-friendly, well cared for and move-in ready. This home checks all the boxes.

820 Beaven Crescent VALEMOUNT

\$465,000



Imagine 0.66 acres within town limits, a custom kitchen, covered deck with hot tub, and hardwood floors. Now imagine the life you could have here. This home is available for quick possession and is in move-in ready condition. The paved driveway leads to a 2-car garage and the yard is fully fenced with a garden pavilion and greenhouse.



RE/MAX HALL OF FAME

2023 100% CLUB AWARD



RE/MAX CORE REALTY

CELL: 250-566-1086 OFFICE: 250-645-5055

SOLD

FOR SALE

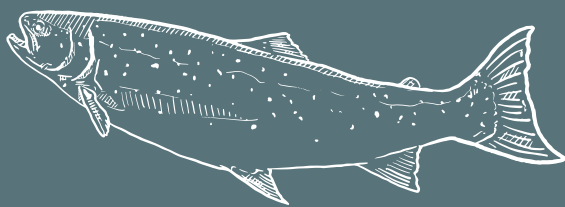
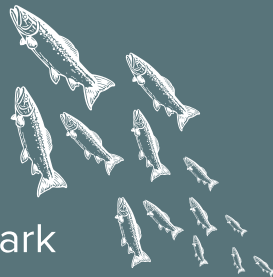
Swift Creek Chinook Salmon



Send off

Join us on May 19th! 12pm to 2pm

George Hicks Regional Park Activities for the family BBQ & vendors



Join us Saturday May 18th

for a

Celebration of Tourism

6pm-9pm

The Best Western Plus Valemount Inn and Suites

Presentations by local representatives and dignitaries

Complimentary refreshments and appetizers

Cash bar (wine and beer)

PLEASE RSVP BY MAY 14TH: visitvalemount@gmail.com

Networking opportunities, door prize draw, and music!



Tourism VALEMOUNT visitvalemount.ca

BUY LOCAL PHOTO CONTEST

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING VALEMOUNT'S VIBRANT COMMUNITY OF ENTREPRENEURS AND BUSINESSES.

HOW TO ENTER:

1. POST YOUR PHOTO ON INSTAGRAM

2. USE

#BUYLOCALVALEMOUNT2024

3. TAG @TOURISMVALEMOUNT AND THE BUSINESS

4. MAKE SURE YOUR INSTAGRAM PROFILE IS SET TO PUBLIC

SNAP A PICTURE OF YOUR VISIT OR HAUL AND POST IT TO INSTAGRAM TO NOMINATE YOUR LOCAL FAVES AND FOR A CHANCE TO WIN PRIZES!

- UNLIMITED PHOTO SUBMISSIONS
- PHOTOS MAY BE REPOSTED BY @TOURISMVALEMOUNT SOCIAL MEDIA
- WINNERS DRAWN JULY 1ST 2024

