

Residents discuss veterinary shortage

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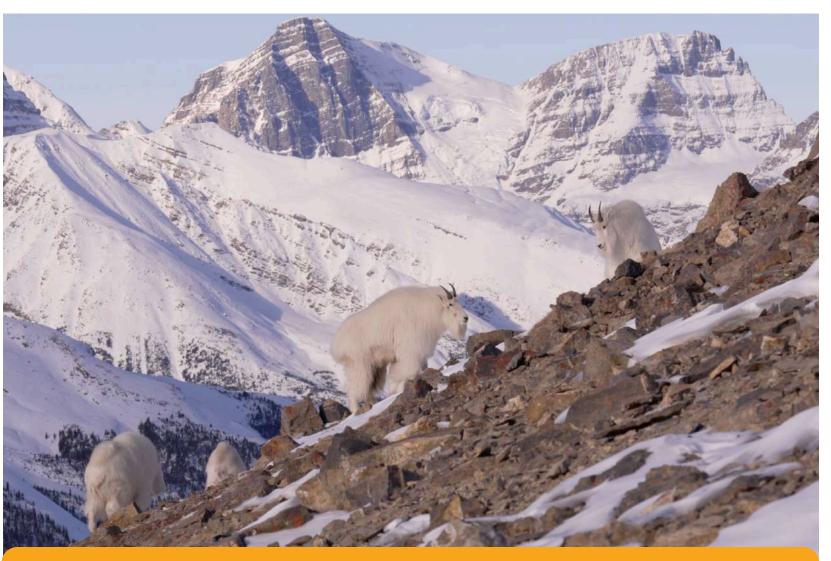
Government aid negotiations reach deadlock: Village of Valemount

By Abigail Popple, Local JOURNALISM INITIATIVE Reporter, RMG

Months-long efforts to lobby the federal and provincial governments for financial support have come to a standstill, according to a press release written by the Village of Valemount and consultancy firm Strategies North. Valemount Council hired Strategies North in November to develop and execute an Economic Recovery Strategy to recoup the costs of nearly three-week-long highway closures following the Jasper wildfire. The strategy recommended lobbying the provincial and federal governments to provide the roughly \$1.5M needed to recover from the highway closures and the cost of hosting Jasper evacuees. Strategies North first appeared on the federal lobbyist registry in January, and shortly after began lobbying the B.C. and Alberta governments.

Only the Province of Alberta has committed to providing financial support to the Village, according to the press release. In April, the Alberta government announced that the Municipality of Jasper could include Valemount's

costs for hosting evacuees in its financial aid requests to the Alberta Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services. If granted, the Municipality will pass those funds along to Valemount. However, the B.C. government says it will not commit to providing financial aid



Researchers investigating "alarming" decline in local mountain goat population - A Prince George biologist looks to track local herds for answers. Read more on P9

to the Village.

"Diana Gibson, Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation, been unresponsive to Valemount's requests, according to the release. In an email to The Goat, CAO Anne Ministry of Tourism under the ministry's Resort Municipality Initiative than the previous two years - puts local businesses and non-profits in a tough spot, Yanciw said.

stated on behalf of government that this kind of recovery funding was not something that the Province provided nor was it supposed to," the release reads. Likewise, the federal government has

Yanciw said the economic impact of the highway closures outpaced that of COVID-19. The resulting loss of hotel revenue - coupled with the Village receiving much less funding from the

Local hotels collect the Municipal

and Regional District Tax, a

CONT'D ON P2



Valemount economic recovery ...Cont'd from A1

tax added to the purchase of short-term accommodation, according to Yanciw. That tax is submitted to the Province, who then returns it to the Village – which is how Yanciw knows hotels saw a 17.10 per cent decrease in the amount of taxes collected in 2024.

Not only does this mean hotels were selling less stays in rooms, it also resulted in less money from the Ministry of Tourism, said Yanciw. The money Valemount receives from the Ministry of Tourism's Resort Municipality Initiative is calculated based on year-over-year Municipal and Regional District Tax, so last year's decrease in that tax means less money for Valemount. That money would typically go to non-profits to fund infrastructure projects meant to improve the village's tourism sector, but now non-profits will have to do more with less, Yanciw said.

These negative economic impacts are also a concern because it makes Valemount businesses and employees less able to weather other economic downturns, such as the forthcoming closure of the local mill, Cedar Valley Holdings, Yanciw added. "When businesses and non-profits are all working with reduced revenues and

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funding, there is less ability for a community to withstand the closure of a significant employer," Yanciw wrote. "There are fewer jobs available for those laid-off employees to go to."

Mayor Owen Torgerson echoed Yanciw's comments.

"My only goal is to ensure Valemount remains vibrant with places open for business," Torgerson said. "Every dollar of the requested \$1.5M will be reinvested into the community to ensure our sustainability not just for this year but lay the foundation for decades to come in the region."

McBride pitches in



New residents of McBride, Frankie Scharft and husband Isaiah Escobedo along with children Logan and Sophia and dog Fred used the community clean up on Saturday to familiarize themselves with their new neighbourhood and meet people. The family will officially make the move in the summer and is excited for all the opportunities the move will allow for. Looking around at the mountains, a vast change from lower mainland scenery, Sharft asked if she would ever get tired of the view. / ANDREA ARNOLD





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William and his grandma Jesse Schafer spent some quality time helping clean the ditches in McBride during the community clean up. /ANDREA ARNOLD

FRIDAY, MAY 16, 2025 - THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025

McBride Council: 2025 budget, Community Forest governance, Pioneer Days

By Abigail Popple, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter, RMG

McBride Council discussed the 2025 budget, Community Forest articles of incorporation and Pioneer Days support during its regular meeting on May 6th.

Mayor Gene Runtz called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. Councillors made two amendments to the agenda. First, they removed the night's delegation – RCMP

Corporal Kelly Barrie had been scheduled to present crime statistics and discuss traffic regulations, but was unable to attend. Second, they decided to discuss bylaws and policies first, because financial consultant Karen Stahl was not feeling well and Runtz wanted her to be able to go home early.

Then, councillors adopted the minutes of the April 22nd regular meeting. The minutes note that the April 22nd meeting had a brief recess for councillors to discuss a resolution related to the McBride Community Forest Corporation. Councillor Tina Bennett asked why the minutes do not say who called for the meeting to be recessed.

"We missed that, but nonetheless it happened," said CAO Jeanette McDougall. She added that they have to record that the meeting was recessed in the minutes, even if they did not record who moved and seconded the resolution to recess.

Runtz said he was the one to call for a recess.

"I felt that the meeting had very quickly gone in the wrong direction," he said. "I saw the CAO was upset. I said, 'Just a moment,' and went and had a discussion with you [McDougall], then came out and went ahead with the meeting."

Councillor Joe Kolida said he remembered McDougall asking to speak with Runtz in her office, and that the recess should have been voted on.

"The recess wasn't handled right. I don't know if that's my fault or not," Runtz said. "It's something that just came up, and I felt that that needed to happen to carry the meeting and not get things out of line."

Council voted to approve the April 22nd minutes, with Kolida voting in opposition. Then, Council moved on to discuss bylaws and policies.

Five-Year Financial Plan

Municipalities must adopt a five-year financial plan – which includes the budget for the current fiscal year, as well as the four following years – each year by May 15th. The plan was available for public consultation over a 10day period starting on April 25th, but the Village did not receive any feedback or questions, according to the staff report on the plan.

Council previously reviewed drafts of the five-year financial plan, and Stahl said she had made some minor changes to the budget since then. She said some numbers have been lowered slightly after comparing the budget with the Village's most recent audited financial statements.

Bennett asked if there would be room in the budget to employ a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or another senior-level staff member at the Village. McDougall said that would require a tax increase, or drawing from the budget to support the Legion.

McDougall said Legion support could be discussed in a future Committee of the Whole meeting, and that there are grants available for infrastructure projects such as improving Kolida Park.

Council gave first, second and third reading to the 2025-2029 Five-Year Financial Plan.

Tax Rates

Municipal tax rates must also be adopted before May 15th of each year. The tax rates bylaw was available for public consultation over a 10-day period starting on April 25th, and the Village did not receive any questions or feedback on the bylaw, according to the staff report submitted to Council.

Council gave first, second and third reading to the 2025 Property Tax Rates Bylaw.

Community Forest Amendments

The McBride Community Forest Corporation must receive Council approval before amending the articles which govern the corporation, because the Village of McBride is the sole shareholder of the corporation. The corporation asked to revise the articles to require a majority of the directors be present in order to approve a transaction of business. Additionally, the corporation asked to remove the article pertaining to the revocation of resolutions during meetings.

These amendments were previously discussed at the April 22nd meeting, when staff recommended seeking legal advice before approving the amendments. Legal counsel recommended amending the articles as requested. The legal advice also said the mayor can reconsider a motion within 30 days of it being voted on, so the April 22nd vote approving of the amendments could still be discussed by council during the May 6th meeting.

Council unanimously approved of the amendments. Bennett asked why the mayor was allowed to initiate the reconsideration of a motion that had already been voted on. Runtz said he had asked for legal counsel on the amendments because he was confused, and after receiving clarification he wanted to discuss the amendments with Council again. Bennett asked to have a session with the Village's lawyer to have the reconsideration procedure explained in more detail. McDougall told Runtz the discussion period was meant to start before Council voted on the amendments.

"You just put it forward for reconsideration – that's your authority as mayor," McDougall said to Runtz. "I did run it by legal. We've already voted on this matter. Discussion was to be closed on this matter." Kolida and Bennett both said they would benefit from a meeting with a lawyer to learn more about how motions can be reconsidered. Runtz said staff could arrange a meeting, and McDougall offered to contact the lawyer.

Pioneer Days

Secretary of McBride Elks/Royal Purple Kathy Molendyk wrote a letter asking for Council support for Pioneer Days, an annual summer event being held from June 6th to the 8th this year. Molendyk asked for road barriers on Main Street, and said the organization will apply to host a beer garden and will place an outhouse events. She requested that the Village trim the grass in the horseshoe pits and possibly add more sand, and asked if the infield at the ballpark would need more shale and leveling. She added that there will be horses at the Pioneer Days parade, but they will be kept off the grass and volunteers will clean up any horse manure that is left behind.

Council approved Molendyk's request for support, contingent on receipt of insurance.

Kolida asked if there would be a way to provide a generator for the McBride Elks during Pioneer Days. McDougall said she would research it.

Councillor Bennett asked if there was another way to block off Main Street in case people miss the road signs the McBride Elks put up. McDougall said staff could contact the RCMP to ensure the roads are safe and orderly throughout Pioneer Days.

Council also approved the McBride Elks' beer garden application, and moved to donate \$250 to the organization to support Pioneer Days.

Housing Society Partnership

The McBride and District Housing Society is applying for seed funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in order to purchase and develop property at 210 Horseshoe Lake Road. The application requires audited financial statements, but the Society cannot afford auditing costs by itself. As such, the Society requested entering a partnership with the Village and using the Village's audited financial statements in the application.

The Village entered a similar partnership agreement with the Society in 2022, the first time the Society applied for seed funding, according to the staff report. Kolida asked if the partnership agreement had been reviewed by a lawyer. McDougall said it has not been reviewed yet.

"Any change that would be made would be ... the dollar amount and date, just the particulars," she added. "If there's any material changes – which we don't expect – that would be brought back to council for review." Kolida asked if McDougall would be working with lawyers while making changes to the agreement, and she said she is in touch with lawyers and will consult them on any changes to the agreement.

In-Camera

Council proceeded to an in-camera session to discuss matters related to Section 90 (1) of the Community Charter:

(k) negotiations and related discussion respecting the proposed provision of a municipal service that are at their preliminary stage and that, in the view of the council, could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the municipality if they were held in public. Runtz adjourned the open session of council at 6:48 p.m.

Village's accumulated surplus, which is already being used to install fencing around the cemetery.

"We wouldn't want to increase our operating costs too much beyond [the cemetery]... that would be a further draw from the accumulated surplus," she said. "We're trying to keep the operational spending at the bare minimum level for next year."

Stahl said this year's three per cent tax increase allows the Village to keep up with inflated operational costs, and would not generate enough revenue to hire a CFO. Kolida asked if the Village would be able to afford a CFO in case it needs one within the next six months. McDougall said she acts as the CFO, and the Village also employs an accountant. However, the Village could afford to hire a CFO if they eliminated the accountant position.

Bennett and Kolida thanked McDougall for her response.

Bennett said the McBride Legion had previously asked Council if the Village could support some of the Legion's projects. She asked if there would be money in the by the beer garden. She also asked for the keys to the pavilion, in order to access electrical outlets during

Charlie Leake Memorial Social

Sunday, May 18, 2025, 3 pm at Charlie Leake Airfield, McBride, B.C.

Lt. Col. Charles Henry Leake, CD, RCAF [ret'd] died December 8, 2024. You are invited to join the family to honour the life of Charlie (Snarly) Leake.

Light refreshments will be served as we raise a glass to Charlie. We look forward to your presence as we celebrate his life and legacy.

Per ardua ad astra. (Please note: Parking is limited at the Airfield.)

Organic Feed

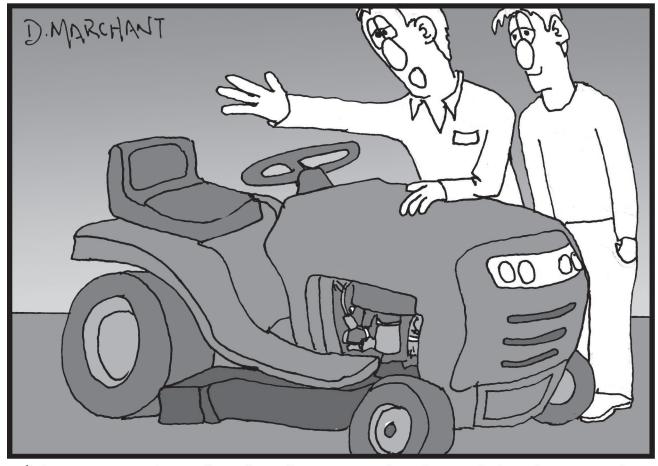
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Valemount RCMP Report: April 2025

Submitted by Cpl. Nicholas Theoret, Valemount RCMP

The Valemount RCMP responded to a report of a collision on Highway 5 involving a passenger vehicle with 4 occupants and a semi tractor and trailer on April 14th.

On arrival officers learned that 2 of the occupants in the passenger vehicle were deceased and that witnesses stated that the driver of the semi was driving in the oncoming lane prior to the collision and the driver of the passenger vehicle was unable to react in time.

At this time the driver of the semi is being investigated for criminal charges related to the deaths of the 2 occupants of the passenger vehicle. While conducting routine patrols on Highway 5 on April 25th, an officer with the Valemount RCMP conducted a traffic stop with an uninsured vehicle.

While speaking with the driver the officers noted that there was an open container of alcohol in the vehicle and conducted a roadside sobriety test which resulted in a 3 day driving prohibition of the driver and impoundment of the vehicle.

While conducting their investigation the officers also located 8 unstamped contraband cigarette packs which were seized.

On April 30th, the Valemount RCMP responded to a report of a head on collision on Highway 5. On arrival, officers found that a Northbound passenger vehicle had crossed into the southbound lane and struck a southbound pickup head on.

The passenger vehicle caught fire immediately after the collision and witnesses were unable to approach the passenger vehicle to attempt to get the occupants out.

Once the fire was extinguished it was confirmed that there was only one occupant in the passenger vehicle who was deceased.

Witnesses on scene advised the officers that they did not know why the driver of the passenger vehicle crossed into the oncoming lane and that the driver of the pickup attempted to avoid the collision, however by the time the driver of the passenger vehicle entered the oncoming lane, it was too late.



Global Thoughts BY GWYNNE DYER

Afrikaner 'Refugees'

As my flight landed in South Africa on Sunday, I looked in vain for the plane that was due to take off with the first 49 white, Afrikaans-speaking 'refugees' of the many thousands who are supposedly going to find safety from racist persecution in Donald Trump's United States.

Then I realised that they were probably taking a charter flight from a different terminal. It would have been a lot cheaper to buy them tickets on a scheduled commercial flight, but the notion of 'refugees' demands a certain amount of drama and this piece of theatre needed all the help it could get.

They aren't actually refugees. They are bit-players in a secular passion play staged by Trump, probably at the suggestion of his more-or-less-faithful sidekick Elon Musk, who grew up very rich in apartheid-era South Africa and shares Trump's belief in the 'Great Replacement' conspiracy theory.

Musk, of course, is also fighting his own private battle against the Great Replacement by having as many white babies as possible. You'd think the world's richest man would realise that his goal could be more efficiently achieved by artificial insemination (and a modest trust fund for every successful Musk baby), but it turns out that he prefers the human touch. Another way to get up white numbers, especially in the United States, is white immigration, but that is quite tricky because white people in most other countries don't want to move to the United States. You can see why not, given the violence, the politics and the dreadful health care system, but it therefore puts a very high premium on white refugees.

Getting around Trump's ban on asylum for refugees was easy, but there will still not be an avalanche of white South Africans arriving in the United States because the great majority of white South Africans live quite comfortable lives. Three decades after the end of apartheid the average white South African still has twenty times the wealth of the average black South African.

Two particular grievances drive South Africans arriving in the United States this week and those who may follow. One is the belief that whites, and especially white farmers living on isolated farmsteads, are being killed just because of their race. The other is an allegation that white-owned farms are being expropriated without makes expropriation without compensation possible in extreme circumstances, but it has not yet been used at all.

Gwynne Dyer is a Canadian-born independent

journalist whose column is published

in more than 175 papers in 45 countries.

Whites are 7% of South Africa's population, but they are only 2% of the murder victims. Almost all of the farm murders occur in the context of armed robberies gone wrong, and black farmers are equally affected. Forty-nine white farmers were murdered in 2022-23, but bear in mind that most farmers are white: 85% of the country's farmland belongs to whites.

South Africa is burdened by a particularly bad history of oppression and inequality which it will take generations to alleviate. The great majority of its people try to behave well, but it has the usual case-load of exceptions: the feckless, the cruel and the greedy will always be with us.

I'll give the last word to an old friend, a white South African who shared the African National Congress's struggles in the old days. "If you had told me in 1984 (the height of apartheid) what South Africa would be like now," he said, "I would have been delighted. If you had told me the same thing in 1994 (the first free election), I would have wanted to cut my throat." Same information, viewed from different time perspectives. They are doing the best they can.

compensation.

White South Africans on the far right and the MAGA hard right in the United States believe both those things, but they are both untrue. No farms have been expropriated without fair compensation. A new law



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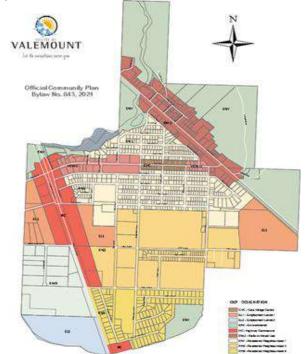
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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

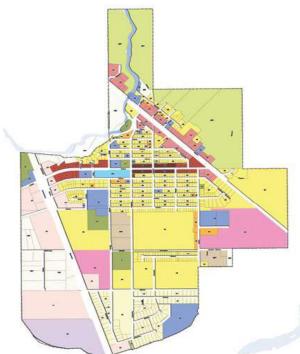
Please Take Notice that a **Public Hearing** for Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw 904, 2025, and Zoning Amendment Bylaw 907, 2025, will be held:

Tuesday, May 27, 7pm, Council Chambers, Village Office 735 Cranberry Lake Road, Valemount, BC

1. Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw 904, 2025 proposes to update the policies for Short-Term Vacation Rentals in the RN1 designation. This Amendment is applicable to the RN1 – Residential Neighbourhood 1 designation (pale yellow).



2. Zoning Amendment Bylaw 907, 2025, proposes updates to regulations for Short-Term Vacation Rentals, Accessory Dwelling Units, Home Based Businesses, fencing and definitions. This amendment is applicable to the entire Village of Valemount.



At the Public Hearing, anyone who deems their interest in land to be affected by the proposed Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw 904, 2025 or Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 907, 2025 shall be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard. Comments may be made in person at the Public Hearing. Written submissions can be submitted by email to <u>publichearing@valemount.ca</u>, or via letter to the Village of Valemount. Written submissions will be accepted until noon on May 27, 2025.

2025 Property Taxes

Tax Notices for 2025 will be mailed out prior to the end of May. If you do not receive your notice by mid-June, please contact the village office.

Remember to apply for the Home Owner Grant every year: go to a Service BC Centre, call 1-888-355-2700, or apply online at <u>www.gov.bc.ca</u>.

Potential Postal Strike

Plan ahead!

- Postal service and financial institution practices affect when funds are delivered to the Village and may result in a penalty
- Non-receipt of a tax notice does NOT excuse property owner from payment
- Post marks on mailed remittances will NOT be considered as date of payment
- Property taxes not paid by the due date will receive a 10% penalty on the amount owing
- Mail that is lost or delayed by a delivery service will NOT be excused from penalty
- This penalty is mandated by Provincial legislation: councils do not have the discretion to waive or reduce
- There are several accepted forms of payment that do not rely on the mail: in-person (cash, cheque, debit), bill payment, credit card (via www.valemount.ca), and e-transfer

2025 Spring Clean Up: May 20 - 23

The Village of Valemount is once again offering curbside pickup of household waste, yard waste, and scrap metal.

Acceptable Items: Household waste, cooking stoves, dishwashers, washers, dryers, mattresses, yard waste.

Prohibited Materials: Furniture, hazardous materials, liquids, chemicals, items with freon (fridges), electronics (e.g. TVs, computers, stereos), demolition, land clearing, or construction waste.

Pickups **must be booked** with the village office at 250-566-4435 **before noon on May 20**. Items must be placed curbside on village right-of-way **before noon on May 20**.

More info and complete list of acceptable/prohibited items available at <u>www.valemount.ca</u> > services > garbage & recycling.

Civic Connection

We at the Village are grateful to all of you who came to the Open House on April 30 to learn about major initiatives and projects that impact you. We are especially appreciative to those who came to learn about water metering. We hope you all came away with an

increased understanding of water system capacity, fire flow risks and increased system needs.

Thank you to everyone who attended for all of the thoughtful questions and comments. We use them to continue to work on providing you the best service possible.

For anyone unable to attend but interested in the information provided, please drop by the village office to pick up materials or check <u>www.valemount.ca</u> for links. ~From the desk of the CAO

FireSmart Neighbourhood Recognition Program

FireSmart Canada developed the Neighbourhood Recognition Program to officially recognize neighbourhoods that have taken critical steps to reduce their risk of wildfire. The Program is designed to encourage local, self-organized groups of neighbours to implement solutions for wildfire safety that protect people and property from wildfire.

Step one: Neighbourhood residents form a FireSmart Neighbourhood Committee. Next, the Local FireSmart Representative (LFR) completes a Wildfire Hazard Assessment on shared spaces within the neighbourhood and helps the neighbourhood committee develop a FireSmart Neighbourhood Plan.

Citizen involvement is the cornerstone of FireSmart! Please consider signing up to be a member of the FireSmart Neighbourhood Committee. For more information on how to get involved, contact Valemount's FireSmart Coordinator / LFR, Michel Woodman, at <u>fsc@valemount.ca</u>, or visit <u>www.valemount.ca</u> > emergency management > community preparedness.

Water Metering: Coming Soon!

The Village has been approved for a grant to implement universal water metering. This program will contribute to fairness in billing, allow for faster leak detection, reduce the costs of water infrastructure and service provision, increase access to grant funding, and, very importantly, improve water conservation and monitoring as we face increasing wildfire risks. Please look for more info on <u>www.valemount.ca</u> > News.

Volunteers Needed!

The Village requires volunteers for several important community boards and committees. Get involved and help shape our community!

• Accessibility Committee: Represent people with disabilities or those who support

All correspondence and materials submitted in response to this Notice will form part of a public record. All written submissions and verbal presentations must state your name and area of residence. Anonymous submissions will not be accepted. The author's phone number and email are not relevant and should not be included in the correspondence if the author does not wish this personal information to be disclosed.

Digital copies of Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw 904, 2025, and Zoning Amendment Bylaw 907, 2025, are available at <u>www.valemount.ca</u> > News. Paper copies will be available for viewing at the Village Office during regular hours until May 27, 2025.

people with disabilities in their work or personal life. Help develop a Village Accessibility Plan to make our community as inclusive and accessible as possible.

- **Community Foundation Board**: Co-administer a Community Foundation grant program with a substantial balance to distribute to the community.
- **Clean Air Task Force:** Explore options to protect and improve village air quality. Look for the Clean Air Website link on <u>www.valemount.ca</u>.

Visit <u>www.valemount.ca/committees-of-council</u> to learn more about each of these unique opportunities, and to access the **Committee Application Form**. You can also pick up a form in person from the Village Office, or call and we can guide you through the process. Submit your application by email to <u>corporate@valemount.ca</u>, in-person at the Village Office, or by mail to Village of Valemount, PO Box 168, Valemount BC, V0E 2Z0.

Village Office Hours

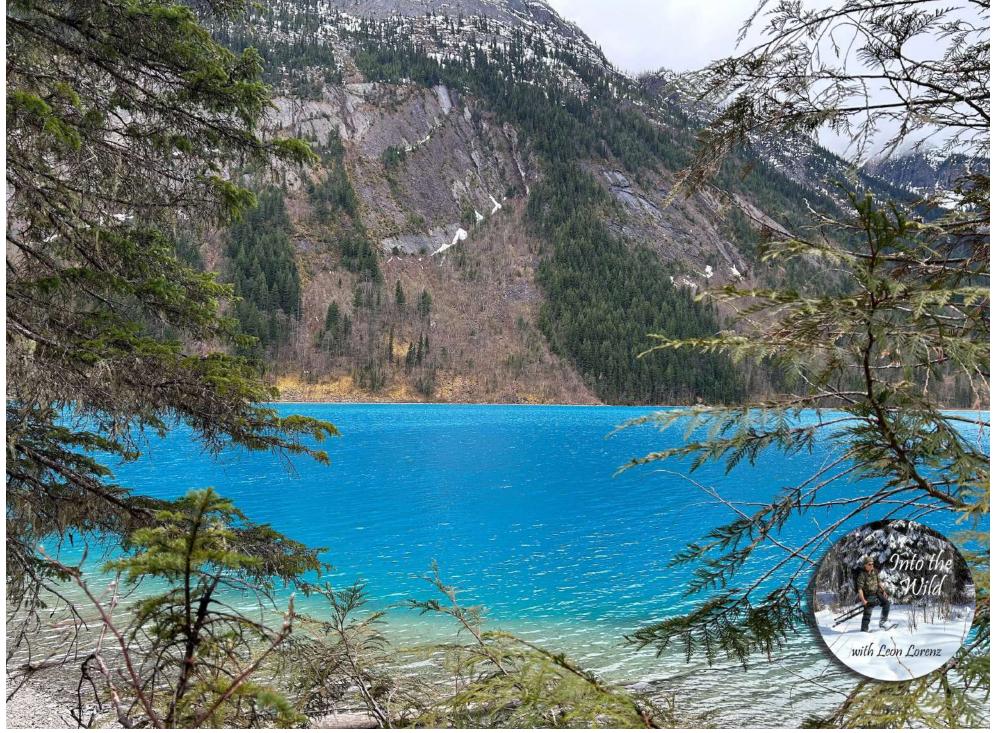
The Village Office is open Monday to Friday, except statutory holidays. Hours: 8:45am to 12:30pm & 1:30pm to 4:15pm Closed May 19 for Victoria Day.

PO Box 168

735 Cranberry Lake Road

250-566-4435





It might have been a bit of a dull, wet and cloudy day when I took this picture earlier this month, however Kinney Lake in Mount Robson Park was anything but. Fine particles of ground rock (also known as glacier silt or glacier flour) absorb and scatter light that can give this striking blue colour. My wife and I didn't see much wildlife as we hiked along but we did spot a couple of mountain goats up on the cliffs at the end of the lake. /LEON LORENZ

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Supporting cancer research one step at a time

By Andrea Arnold

In April, McBride resident Rachel Rykes joined with 1854 other participants in the



Canadian Cancer Society's April Walk for Cancer. The goal of each participant was to walk 50 kilometres in 30 days, and together, raise \$400,000.

"This was personal for me," said Rykes. "I've lost several close family members to cancer, and with my dad's recent diagnosis of stage four metastatic lung cancer, I felt even more driven to do something meaningful."

To many, walking an average of just over one and half kilometres a day for a month might not sound like much of a challenge, but for Rykes, it was. 18 months ago she suffered a right middle cerebral artery ischemic stroke - (MCA) stroke occurs when blood flow to the MCA, a major artery in the brain, is disrupted, leading to a stroke - that left her with decreased use of her left side. It took approximately half a year of relearning the skill before she was able to walk on her own without the use of any aids. "Walking was something I could manage, especially now that I can do it again, and it felt like a good way to contribute," she said.

Due to a health related hiccup near the end, Rykes fell short of her own 50km goal, but plans to do it again next year. She intends to use the year to build up strength through events like the Colour Run in June.

Through the April Walk for Cancer, \$408,598.04 was raised. The Canadian Cancer Society's fundraising is ongoing. Donations can be made online at https://tinyurl.com/umexcyu8.

Although the one month challenge to walk 50km to raise money for cancer research is over, Rachel Rykes says she will continue to build strength in hopes of completing a similar challenge in the not too distant future. /ANDREA ARNOLD

Valemount Council: Village audit, 2025 budget, tax rates

By Abigail Popple, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter, RMG

Valemount Council discussed the Village's most recent audit, the 2025 budget and tax rates during its special meeting on May 8th. The meeting began at 12:30 p.m. with an in-camera session. Council held the meeting for consideration of three items per Sections 90 (1) (g) and (l) and 90 (2)(b) of the Community Charter to discuss matters related to:

(90)(1)(g) litigation or potential litigation affecting the municipality.

(90)(1)(l) discussions with municipal officers and employees respecting municipal objectives, measures and progress reports for the purposes of preparing an annual report under Section 98 [annual municipal report].

And 90(2)(b) 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, or between a provincial government or the federal government or both and a third party.

Mayor Owen Torgerson recalled the open meeting of council to order at 1:45 p.m.

Auditor's Report

Professional auditor with the firm KPMG, Corey Naphtali, presented his report on the 2024 audit to Council. According to Naphtali, the firm expects it will issue a clean audit report, meaning the Village's financial statements are accurate. Municipalities must prepare financial statements and have them independently audited once a year, then submit a copy of the audited financial statements to the Inspector of Municipalities by May 15th.

Naphtali outlined the changes in financial assets, liabilities and revenue from 2023 to 2024 in his presentation. According to him, the Village's financial assets totaled \$24.1M at the end of 2024, \$1.1M less than the end of 2023 where the Village recorded \$25.2M in assets. Additionally, the Village's financial liabilities increased from \$3.2M to \$3.9M. This means the Village had \$20.2M in net financial assets at the end of 2024, a \$1.8M decrease from the previous year's \$22M in net financial assets.

The Village had a \$1.3M surplus in revenue during 2024, though this was less than the \$4.1M generated in 2023, Naphtali said. The Village currently has \$45.2M in accumulated surplus, he added.

Torgerson thanked Naphtali for his presentation. Torgerson asked if asset retirement – that is, the

May 1st snowpack below normal: Ministry

BY ABIGAIL POPPLE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER, RMG

The Upper Fraser East region is seeing a drier-than-usual end to this winter, according to the latest data from the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship.

removement of equipment or infrastructure at the end of its life, which is recorded as part of organization's financial liabilities – would be impacted by inflation. "We will likely see it impacted by inflationary

pressures," Naphtali said. "On an annual basis, that number [the asset retirement liabilities] needs to be looked at, and we need to consider whether there's been a significant change in the cost."

He added that often, significant changes in asset retirement costs come from remediating the equipment that had previously been retired. The firm does not anticipate significant year-over-year changes in asset retirement costs due to inflation, though it may have some minor impacts, according to Naphtali. Torgerson thanked Naphtali for his response. He congratulated Director of Finance Lori McNee for her work on the financial statements and for receiving a clean audit. Council approved the audited financial statements.

Electricity Generator

Council approved entering a contract with Centre City Electric to install a generator at the municipal office, 735 Cranberry Lake Road. The contract is for \$386,000 plus taxes, and is included in the 2025 budget. The Village contracted Kamloops-based engineering consultancy firm XenonCyber Dynamics to help Village staff propose and select bids for the generator installation project. XenonCyber Dynamics reviewed the three quotes which were submitted to the firm's request for bids on BCBids. One quote did not meet the project criteria, according to XenonCyber Dynamics. The firm recommended contracting Centre City Electric, which provided quotes for two different types of generators.

Five-Year Financial Plan

Council approved the 2025 Five-Year Financial Plan, a provincially mandated plan outlining a municipality's budget for the current fiscal year and the following four years. Municipalities must adopt the plan by May 15th of each year in accordance with the Local Government Act and the Community Charter. Because councillors were scheduled to attend the North and Central Local Governments Association conference from May 12th through the 15th, Council held a special meeting to adopt the plan before the May 15th deadline.

Valemount's Five-Year Financial Plan was available for public feedback from April 4th through April 22nd. According to the staff report on the plan, staff did not receive any comments during this time. Council approved a third reading of the bylaw at its April 22nd regular meeting, and the Village has not made any changes to the bylaw since then, according to the staff report.

Tax Rate bylaw

According to the Community Charter, municipalities must also adopt a tax rate bylaw before May 15th each year. Council gave first, second and third reading to the 2025 tax rate bylaw at its regular meeting on April 22nd. Council approved the 2025 tax rate bylaw at the special meeting in order to adopt the bylaw before the May 15th deadline.

Plasma donation

At the most recent council meeting on April 22nd, Councillor Pete Pearson directed staff to write a resolution in support of building a blood plasma donation centre in Prince George. Canadian Blood Services closed its Prince George whole blood donation centre in 2015, leaving B.C. with just four donation centres in Victoria, Vancouver and Surrey. The lack of blood donation options for northern B.C. residents was on a meeting agenda for the North and Central Local Governments Association, which was included for information in the April 22nd Valemount Council agenda.

Pearson's resolution directed staff to draft a letter to Minister of Health Josie Osbourne and CEO of Canadian Blood Services Graham Sher in support of building a plasma donation centre in Prince George. Councillor Pearson thanked staff for writing the resolution. Council unanimously approved his request to draft a letter.

Adjournment

There were no public comments at the meeting. Torgerson adjourned the meeting at 2:01 p.m.



Board of Directors - Call for Applications

The Village of Valemount is currently accepting applications from community members interested in serving on the Board of Directors for the Valemount Community Forest Corporation <u>OR</u> the Valemount Industrial Park Corporation, for a one- or two-year term.

The **Valemount Community Forest** (VCF) supports the community by maintaining local control over forest resources, and creating local employment on behalf of the Village of Valemount.

The VCF Board of Directors meets on the $4^{\rm th}$ Wednesday of each month at 2:30pm, to assist with decision making for the Valemount

The **Valemount Industrial Park** (VIP) supports the community by creating local employment and economic diversity, and producing specialty wood products on behalf of the Village of Valemount.

The VIP Board of Directors meets on the $4^{\rm th}$ Thursday of each month at 3:00pm, to assist with decision making for the Valemount In-

As of May 1st, the region – which stretches from Valemount to Prince George – is currently at 71 per cent of normal snowpack, which the ministry describes as below normal. However, this April's snowpack was significantly higher than April 2024, when the snowpack sat at 59 per cent of normal.

These conditions are similar to what other regions are facing across the province. On average, B.C.'s snowpack this month is 71 per cent of normal, the Ministry says. Low snowpack compounded with years of drought throughout the province may contribute to further drought this summer.

However, seasonal runoff is projected to be normal in the Upper Fraser regions. While there is no elevated flood risk for this spring, the bulletin suggests visiting the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness website, which has a "Get Prepared for Floods" page.

"There are concerns for drought this season throughout the province due to longterm precipitation deficits, low snowpack and seasonal weather forecasts," the bulletin says. "Spring weather will continue to play an important role in summer drought conditions."

The Ministry will release another snow survey and water supply bulletin on May 22nd or May 23rd, depending on data availability.

Community Forest in accordance with VCF dustrial Park in accordance with VIP Policies.

Members will be notified in advance of changes to meeting dates and/or times. Directors are expected to attend meetings of the board, participate in board discussions, and vote on matters before the board.

Members will be notified in advance of changes to meeting dates and/or times. Directors are expected to attend meetings of the board, participate in board discussions, and vote on matters before the board.

Applications are available at <u>www.valemount.ca</u> > Village Office > Committees of Council, and must be submitted by **4:00pm, June 8, 2025**, referencing the following:

Attn: Corporate Officer Re: Application for VCF <u>OR</u> VIP Board of Directors

Applications can be submitted via email to <u>corporate@valemount.ca</u>, mailed, or dropped off in person at the Village Office.



735 Cranberry Lake Road PO Box 168, Valemount BC V0E 2Z0 Mon – Fri: 8:45am – 12:30pm, 1:30pm – 4:15pm T: 250-566-4435

Researchers investigating "alarming" decline in local mountain goat population



Prince George-based biologist with the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Kara MacAulay, will undertake the fourth study of the Robson Valley mountain goat population. Previous studies have shown a dramatic decrease in the local population of the species with researchers unsure of what is behind it. /BC GOV

By Abigail Popple, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter, RMG

Mountain goats have had a continuous presence in North America since they plodded across the Bering Strait tens of thousands of years ago, and the fluffy white creatures are ubiquitous on signs and statues throughout the Robson Valley. Despite their endearing place in local iconography, the valley's mountain goat population has been declining over the past few decades – and researchers are unsure why.

However, new research under way in the Robson Valley may give clues as to why populations are declining. Led by Kara MacAulay, a Prince George-based wildlife biologist for the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, the study will track 30 female mountain goats using GPS collars.

This is the fourth study on Robson Valley mountain goat populations, which have recorded an alarming decline in the number of goats since the first study in 1998, said MacAulay.

"There's about a 70 per cent decline in numbers from the 1998 survey to the most recent one [in 2021]," MacAulay said. "Other biologists are also noticing similar declines... it's really an unknown cause of decline. The same goes for the population in the Robson Valley – we don't really know what the decline is caused by."

One early theory was that overhunting could be

impacting the population, but the evidence has not shown that hunting is the cause, according to MacAulay. The mountain goat harvest has been kept under the recommended three per cent of the population per year, with very few females harvested, she said. Additionally, areas which do not allow hunting – such as Mount Robson Provincial Park and Alberta's Castle Provincial Park – have seen similar declines in their mountain goat populations, MacAulay said.

Other working theories for the decline include habitat changes or a lack of food making it harder for goats to survive and raise offspring, but it's difficult to speculate on the cause, according to MacAulay.

"We don't want to see declines in these populations, especially when we don't know the cause. If we can figure out the cause, maybe we can either stop or reverse that decline."

-Kara MacAulay, Biologist, Ministry of

Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship

So far, researchers have deployed 20 collars on local mountain goats, and they will add the remaining 10 collars next winter, according to MacAulay. The collars allow researchers to track the survival of goats by sending an alert when a goat has not moved for several hours. Researchers will then travel to the site where the goat was last recorded and determine its cause of death, whether it was health-related, predation-related, or a natural death caused by an event such as an avalanche. Researchers will also do one to two recruitment surveys a year, meaning they will use a helicopter to find collared goats and see if they have offspring with them. MacAula said this will help researchers determine if high juvenile mortality rates are behind the population decline. Conservation is the main goal of the study, MacAulay said. Aside from the socioeconomic reasons for preserving mountain goat populations – people travel from across the world to hunt goats in B.C. every year, according to MacAulay - they have cultural significance to First Nations and B.C. residents in general, she added. Once researchers identify the cause - or causes - of decline, they can work with local governments and the

Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to implement policy changes that may help sustain mountain goat populations throughout the province.

"We don't want to see declines in these populations, especially when we don't know the cause," MacAulay said. "If we can figure out the cause, maybe we can either stop or reverse that decline."

The research is funded through a grant from the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, a Victoriabased nonprofit which funds habitat restoration and studies on fish and wildlife.

The Foundation recently granted a total of \$8.6M to 110 projects throughout B.C., said CEO Dan Buffett.

"The goal is to improve outcomes for fish, wildlife and [their] habitats," Buffett said. "We know they've experienced lots of decline in many of those populations over the years. It's trying to return those populations and also to protect, restore and enhance habitat for those fish and wildlife species."

The mountain goat study is just the latest in a slew of projects the organization has funded in northern B.C., Buffett added. According to him, the Foundation also funded a project to remove unused roads in Sugarbowl-Grizzly Den Provincial Park in 2023 because they disrupted animal movement, and in the same year the organization worked with First Nations to improve caribou habitat near Kinbasket Lake.

The Foundation is funded through provinciallymandated fees for hunting and fishing licences, and supporters can donate online at hctf.ca. Occasionally, the Foundation funds projects that locals can get involved in, such as the annual B.C. bat counting project, where residents count bats at roost sites near where they live. However, Buffett says one of the best things naturelovers can do is spend time outdoors.

"Get out into nature – it's good for our physical and mental health, and helps us appreciate the value that wetlands and forests and grasslands have for us," he said. "You recognize that nature needs space, so it's important to protect it."

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Cedar Valley employees call for transparency in Community Forest

By Abigail Popple, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter, RMG

The Ministry of Forests will not intervene in the ongoing dispute between the Valemount Community Forest and Cedar Valley Holdings, according to a spokesperson from the ministry. Cedar Valley employees are currently circulating a petition calling for an audit of the Community Forest, as well as the restructuring of its board of directors.

The conflict went public in late April when Cedar Valley owner Jason Alexander announced the company would close at the end of June. According to Alexander, the Community Forest has been sending usable cedar to pulp mills in Prince George, while Cedar Valley struggles to access a sufficient supply of cedar.

Valemount Community Forest did not respond to The Goat's request for comment on the allegation that the organization has sent cedar to pulp mills in Prince George. The Goat reached out to Canfor to ask whether its Prince George pulp mill had a fibre agreement with the Valemount Community Forest, but did not receive a response.

Cedar Valley employee Simon Heiniger told The Goat he has concerns about transparency and accountability in the Community Forest. For example, the minutes of last year's annual general meeting have not been posted online, and the date of this year's meeting has not been announced, he said.

"I haven't seen any adequate response from them to any of this," he said of the Community Forest's reaction to the mill closure. "There's just a lot of accountability issues... I don't think we can keep going with the same board."

Heiniger's petition, which he said has amassed over 200 signatures, includes a request for regular community consultation forums with the Community Forest, as well as the publication of annual reports outlining its logging activities, community investments and profits. The petition also requests a formal guarantee that locally-harvested timber is made available to local manufacturing.

In addition to the petition, Heiniger contacted the Ministry of Forests to request support for Cedar Valley. In an email statement to The Goat, the Ministry said the company's fibre agreement with the Community Forest is a business-to-business agreement which the Province is not a part of. The Ministry says it will not provide a comment on the conflict. Heiniger said he is frustrated with the lack of response from the Province and the Community Forest.

"I hope that we can find a certain sense of community and figure it out, but it seems a little late for that," Heiniger said.

Heiniger says he will make a delegation to Valemount Council during its May 27th meeting. *The Goat will continue to follow this story.*

Valemount marches for Red Dress Day

"Each dress is a spirit that has been taken from us."



"May our sisters feel our breath on their faces from all four directions; May they inhale our love, capture our strength and find their way home to us." Sherry Tinsley (R) and Theresa Westhaver, with high school students Jennifer Stone, and Eliza Mitchell directly behind, lead the May 5th Red Dress Day march to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-Spirit people. /RACHEL FRASER

By Rachel Fraser

Every year on May 5th, Valemount residents hang red dresses, and paint red handprints over their mouths: bold symbols representing loss and injustice. The red dresses represent women, missing or murdered. So often, both.

The handprints remind us that missing and murdered women can't speak. Their voices have been silenced, and they depend on those left behind to speak their names, tell their stories and advocate for justice.

"Each dress is a spirit that has been taken from us," said Sherry Tinsley, organizer of the Valemount march to commemorate the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirited People, also known as Red Dress Day.

"In many indigenous cultures, red symbolizes life, blood and the connection between the physical and spiritual worlds. [It's also believed] to be a colour spirits can see, making it a powerful symbol for remembrance and grief."

This day and these symbols bring attention to the fact that Indigenous women make up 24 per cent of female homicide victims, though they make up only 5 per cent of the Canadian population, according to Tinsley.

In addition to remembering those that have been lost, Tinsley is passionate about educating the young about the ongoing danger of human trafficking and predators. Whether it's getting into a cab alone in the city or going for a run on the highway, sometimes women don't come back. She has been organizing a local march since about 2016, she estimates.

Local Indigenous students Eliza Mitchell and Jennifer Stone, both 15, took the lead in bringing their classmates to join the march, and walked at the head of the column with the drummers, carrying signs. When they arrived at school that morning, they realized the day's significance and the school's planned participation in the march had been forgotten by the teachers and administration. They addressed it with their teacher and insisted on attending, which the school quickly facilitated, according to principal Derrick Shaw.

Their fellow students stepped up as allies.

asking. Like people who aren't Indigenous, which I thought was kind of iffy, but I think it was nice that they were showing awareness and they were showing that they care by doing that."

"For people who don't know what it is, I feel it's important to share it out," Mitchell added.

Regarding what makes it personal to her, Mitchell said "I feel like all Indigenous [people] are somewhat related. I go to the powwows, I go see some of my cousins. I dance with them, I do the culture with them, and they've lost people who were kidnapped or murdered."

"And we live on the Highway of Tears. I live right on that highway," Stone said. Both girls have a background of leadership and participation in commemorative and awareness activities around their culture and the injustices that affect indigenous communities, such as the Red Dress and Orange Shirt days. Orange Shirt Day, or the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, raises awareness about the experiences, and loss, of Indigenous children via Canada's Residential School system, and is commemorated annually on June 30th.



Corporation of the Village of McBride Advertisement for Bids

McBride Train Station – Accessibility Upgrades

Project/Contract: Project/Contract No.:

Option+

Valemount IDA

1214 5th Avenue

250-566-4594

McBride Train Station – Accessibility Upgrades 707-24

The Corporation of the Village of McBride, invites bids for accessibility upgrades at the McBride Train Station at 1000 1st Avenue, McBride, BC.

Submission Deadline: May 29, 2025 at 2:00pm

"I think the handprints really brought everyone together," Stone said. "I was doing mine; me and Eliza were just going to do ours, but then people started lining up More information and bid documents (and any amendments) can be found BC Bid website (opportunity ID 214251) -

https://www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca/page.aspx/en/bpm/process_manage_extranet/214264.

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CROSSWORD Answers on P13

Across

- 1. Two out of two
- **Quite cross** 5.
- 8. Mortarboard
- **11. Dollar counterpart**
- 12. Latish lunchtime
- "To what do I _____ the 13. pleasure..."
- 14. Beat setter
- 15. "Ciao!"
- 16. Rest room sign
- 17. Look as though
- 19. Conclude, with "up"
- 21. "No ___ luck!"
- 23. Play group
- 26. Rush hour concern
- 29. She's a deer
- 30. Sound in a cave
- 31. Ah me!
- 33. Caterer's dispenser
- 35. High end of many scales 10. Ink dispenser
- 36. "While You ____ Sleeping"
- 37. Realize
- **39.** Highest quality
- 41. Like two __ in a pod
- 44. Mesh
- Chicken order, some-**46**.
- times

- 48. No longer in effect
- 50. Sailor's assent
- 51. Bring into play
- 52. Cordoned-off space
- 53. Concurrence
- 54. Strenuous class
- 55. Madonna" (1968 Beatles hit)

Down

- 1. Fourposter, e.g.
- 2. Not just mine
- 3. Steadfast in loyalty
- 4. Condos, for instance
- 5. Large crowd
- 6. Not at any specific
- place
- 7. Venison source
- 8. Brief and concise
- 9. Amaze
- 18. Really bad coffee
- 20. It cannot be re-
- turned
- 22. Politeness
- 24. That boat
- 25. Vehicle weight mea-
- sure
- 26. Shoot the breeze

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

SUDOKU

Answers on P13

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

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

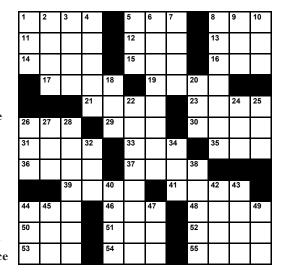
The Toughie

44 45

HOW TO PLAY

67. Vehement Across 1. Fast cat disapproval 8. Held on to 68. Show room 15. Delight spread 16. Indiana county or its seat 17. Taking advantage of very soft Down material 1. Wine class 19. Out for the night 2. Undergoes 3. Prefix with 20. Revisit the laces 21. Brit's WCs center 24. North Atlantic Treaty 4. Laboratory organization (abbr.) vessels 5. Heaves

- 26. Chowderhead



- 27. Pub quaff
- 32. Grant an interview to, e.g.
- 42. Angelic quality
- 43. Runners carry it
- 44. Joyful
- 45. Red _ (night flight)
- 47. Solitaire
- 49. Make as a bet

clean. TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You sometimes wonder if you're holding out for a gold standard

that doesn't really exist. But just because you haven't met it yet doesn't mean it's not out there. This week brings a gift in the form of a person who steps through your scene. With the slightest interest from you, they will bring their depth and sparkle to linger in moments of mutuality and magic.

Blossoms open in their own timing.

The evening primrose can bloom

in seconds, while the corpse flower

blooms in seven to 10 years and

only holds that pose for around a

day. The astrological symbol that

is the full Scorpio flower moon

reminds us that transformation

happens in its own rhythm, and

there's no need to go any faster or

slower than the pulse of nature.

After all, we can only ever be who

we are for one moment at a time.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). To separate the signal from

the noise, ask questions. Listen

twice. Clarify what you mean, and

don't assume others already know.

Matters of fairness, connection and

personal truth will arise. You'll feel

lighter and stronger because the story is straight and the motives are

Love the "now" you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). A relationship doesn't have to be perfect to be worthy of celebrating, or fighting for, or against, or a little bit of both, as love can send you soaring and plunging, too. The passions will balance. The important thing is you accept the complexity, willing to feel it all, and life will pay you back in moments of deep beauty.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're not some chaos pixie flitting from drama to drama -you are playing a long game here. You're taking it all in and letting the pauses stretch into silence that informs you. You analyze the whole emotional chessboard. You choose strategy over impulse, and compassion over strategy. Trust yourself. These moves are winners.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Love is never going to be completely clean or logical. Good relationships delight you but they also haunt you. What you're going through is universal, and yet so uniquely yours. It's a split-screen reality where your soul has one experience and your brain is also showing you other ways to see it, and it's all happening at the same time.

Flower Moon Can you relax into where you are? Rest assured, you're becoming the person you want to be, even though you're still outgrowing certain habits that tie you to the past. Celebrate the trajectory even before you hit the milestones. Those markers aren't important -self-belief is the thing that is.

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

In the Blossom of a

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There's someone you scare, not because you're intense but because you're deep, you're real, and you reflect them back with too much honesty. They can't keep a mask on around you for long, and that's both magnetic and terrifying for some people. The stillness of love is not for the faint of heart.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Restraint is a kind of superpower. If you can sit in a craving without smashing the glass to satisfy it, that's rare and regal. This week shows you giving old-world, velvet-gloved, powerin-the-eyes energy. You have so much going for you: control, selfpreservation, charm deployment and tension management.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You're facing a decision point, and the right choice might not be obvious -- or popular. If others don't understand yet, their confusion isn't a reflection on you, it's just that they haven't lived your life. Move forward boldly without justifying your choice to anyone. Once your confidence falls into place, everything else will, too.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You're developing a skill that will elevate both your work and your world. Even if it feels awkward now, don't stop. Mastery builds quietly, then all at once. Stay with -- you're closer than you think to finding your rhythm and making it feel like second nature.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Solitude will be your sacred space for transformation. Profound inner changes -- creative, emotional, even spiritual -- will happen as you carve out time to be alone with your thoughts. With the right amount of peaceful reflection, you'll bring a fuller version of yourself to the responsibilities of the week.

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS This year will be like riding a unicycle as life brings you endeavors that make you move through the world a bit taller, more reliant on your own balance and all with a grace that draws the admiration of onlookers. And though you may wobble at times, as long as you're moving forward, you're still going places. More highlights: someone besides you will be prioritizing your needs and feelings, and you'll thrive in this loving care. Feed your whims and be creative whenever possible. Your leadership will be recognized, rewarded and respected.

- 28. Child's game 34. Rest
- **38.** Prison-related
- 40. Slimy garden pest

___ go!' 27. "Either he goes 6. Uzbekistan's 28. Government security agency, 7. Montana capital abbr. 30. Routine 8. Drivel 32. Born, in social notes 33. Bird in a clock 35. "Dawson's Creek" actress Holmes 37. Needles follow one 42. Flies alone 43. Language that gave us "plaid" 44. Cantina 47. Residual 48. Cooler 49. Relaxation destination 50. Savings plans, abbr. 52. Miami's county 54. Hombre's home 55. Combo of eight 57. Judd of "Taxi" 60. Colorful sewing products 65. Caught 66. Entangle

9. Fond du , 60 Wis. 10. On _ __ with (equal to) 11. Scattered, as seed 12. Nucleus dweller 13. Paris's Arc de Triomphe de l' 14. Key stroke 18. Circular veggie 21. Wrestling hold 22. Make _____ for it 23. "Veni, vidi, ____" 25. Power interruption 28. Idle 29. Dirty 31. Tennessee footballer 34. Gold units, abbr.

Sea

35. Metric wts. 36. French summer 38. "Forget it!" 39. Literary lioness 40. Slashes 41. Sweet 16 org. 44. "Ray" or "Ali" 45. Requiring secret knowledge 46. Caning material 48. Brightened, with "up" 51. Religious splinter groups 53. Board member: abbr. 54. Vocalize like a bird 56. Like some streets

58. 640 acres, abbr. 59. Baby lions 61. Protest topic, often 62. Laughter on the internet. abbreviation 63. Hispanic aunt _and the **64**. Family Stone

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It's easy to echo the values of the social world you move in, but true fulfillment comes from exploring what matters to you independent of the group. Go unscripted. Tread without a map. What seems like wandering is your feet answering the calling of a personal path. Your head, which is just along for the ride, will make sense of this later.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). This week, you may feel like you get places and yet never really arrive.



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ROBSON VALLEY & Community Events

Valemount

THUR May 15: Join us for the Baby Blossoms program, held one day a month, designed to provide parents with essential knowledge and practical skills to support their infant's development during the first three years. Each month, we focus on a specific aspect of infant care. Thursday, May 15th, 2025, from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM at the RVCS office in Valemount, 1444 5th Avenue.

May's Topic: Daycare Readiness. We will cover everything from packing lunches, drop-off/ pick-up routines, potty training, napping, breastfeeding, and comfort items as they pertain to daycare. For caregivers of children ages 0-3 years, this is a perfect opportunity to prepare for daycare and ensure a smooth transition for your little ones. Registration is preferred; please contact the office to sign up. This program is brought to you by the Infant Development Program.

THUR May 15: Join us for a live workshop hosted on Zoom by the Moose Hide

Campaign, a grassroots movement dedicated to ending violence against Indigenous women and children. Thursday, May 15th, from 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM at the RVCS office in Valemount, 1444 5th Avenue. This is a unique opportunity to learn more about the campaign, reflect on its powerful message, and stand together in solidarity. Moose Hide pins will be available during the event. This program is brought to you by the Indigenous Literacy Program and Anti-Violence Team Services. No registration required. Please contact the office for more information.

WED May 21 Sprouting Memories, a delightful experience where social interactions and sensory exploration come together in the joy of growing a garden! Perfect for children aged 0-6 years and their caregivers, this event promises to create lasting memories, foster a love for nature, and support child development. Starting May 21st to June 11th, 2025, from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM at the Valemount Community Garden, 201 Ash Street, Valemount. Registration is preferred; please contact the office to sign up. This program is brought to you by the Infant Development Program.

SUN May 25th The dynamic acoustic blues of Big Train. Lonnie Glass on guitar and Daniel Morel on harmonica bring traditional blues to our stage along with a set of Bob Dylan tunes for his 84th birthday. A local opening act will set the mood for the evening. Tickets are on sale online now at https://www.ticketleap.events/.../bigtrain-acoustic-blues and will be at Infinity soon. \$20pp.7pm at Valemount Legion Branch 266.

Ongoing Valemount Pancake Breakfast - Sundays

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

Cribbage - Mondays

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

Drop in and learn about astronomy through the Valemount Library''s ongoing series! 7-8:30pm

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

Virtual Fitness Classes at Peak Physio: Barre workouts Tuesday mornings at 7am Cardio Kickboxing Thursday mornings 7am We are adding yoga Monday nights at 7:15pm Above workouts are taught by a virtual instructor but held in our quaint gym space. Limited to 6 participants - pre-registration is advised. Kickboxing limited to 4 people. \$10 per session. Sign up online at www.peakphysiotherapy. janeapp.com or call/text 2650-566-4650

In-Person Fitness Classes at Peak Physio: High-intensity circuit training Tuesdays 7-8pm and Wednesdays 9-10am. Low-intensity circuit training Fridays 9-10am or Sundays 10-11am. Instructor Laura Smith. Sign up online at www. peakphysiotherapy.janeapp.com

Tween Scene Book Club - Every 3rd Friday Free book club for kids 9-12yrs. Sign up in library or give us a call 250-566-436.

Legion dinner and music nights - Fridays Dinner at the Valemount Legion 5:30 followed by music at 7 PM every Friday. Music varies by week and includes open mic, karaoke, jam sessions and special events.

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

May 16– Watercolor Painting May 23 – Puppets and Rhymes May 30 – Outdoor Nature Play

The Valemount Seed Library Mon-Fri

The seed library is available in our lobby during business hours at RVCS Valemount (1444 5th Avenue). Office hours: Monday 10 AM -6 PM and Tuesday to Thursday 8 am-4 pm. 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.

The Free Food Farm Stand & Pantry Mon-Fri

The stand and pantry are available for anyone who would like some free, fresh produce. We also accept donations of unprocessed fruits and veggies. The stand is accessible in the front lobby at RVCS Valemount (1444 5th Avenue) 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 info, THUR May 22: Drop in for a couple of hours of Bean Bag Toss! Thursday, May 22nd, 2025, from 1-3 PM at the RVCS office in McBride, 942 3rd Avenue. Join us for some exciting rounds of bean bag toss, X's & O's style. It's a perfect way to unwind, have a blast, and enjoy friendly competition with friends and neighbors. We will be outside, so please dress accordingly. Registration is not required for this drop-in event. This program is brought to you by the McBride Seniors Program.

FRI May 23: Free Art Morning: Caregivers

and children ages 0-6 years are invited to join us for a Free Art morning for children and their caregivers on Friday, May 23rd from 10AM-12PM at the McBride office, 942 3rd Ave. Registration is required, please contact us to sign up. This program is brought to you by the Infant Development Program and Family Literacy Program.

THUR May 29: Join us for Tech Drop-In and stop by 942 3rd Avenue on Thursday, May 29th, 2025, from 1-4 PM for some basic tech support. Come by with questions about using technology, and we will support you to learn more about your device. Registration is not required for this drop-in event. This program is brought to you by the Adult Literacy Program.

Ongoing McBride

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

May 21 – Lets play at Kolida Park May 28 – Aboriginal Awareness week, stories, toys and crafts

MON's Starting MAR 10: Join our workshop, How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk, a seven week program from 7 PM to 8 PM at the McBride Secondary School, 1300 2nd Ave. Learning these skills sets everyone up for success, fostering a harmonious and supportive environment for both you and your children. All supplies and workbooks will be provided. Enhance your communication skills and create a positive impact on your child's development. Registration is required, please contact the office to reserve your spot.

TUES ASL Sign Language Club 3:00-3:30 Basics & 3:30-4:30 Beyond Basics @ the McBride E-Free Church. Great for families, friends and cognitive brain stimulation. Contact Lonnie 250-569-7657

Dungeons & Dragons - Tuesdays

For ages 12-18, the classic fantasy storytelling game. Join us on Tuesdays 3:30-6pm, McBride Library. Bring D&D dice if you have them!

Children's Learning Series - Tuesdays 3:00pm starting with a story and snack, each week library staff will host activities under the umbrella of a variety of themes. Geared to ages 9-12. Please call 250-569-2411 or stop in to register children. More info on the website library@mcbridebc.org. April 1 is Games Galore, April 8 is an art collage, April 15 is the viewing and discussing the ground breaking animation techniques in Spider-Man Across the Spider-Verse (families welcome).

Sunshine Stories - Thursdays

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

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

German Conversation Club - Wednesdays

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

Writing Group - Fridays

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

New Games Cafe Night – Fridays 6pm

Meet up with others to enjoy board and card games. Suitable for casual players looking for a fun night out to hardcore strategists who love a challenge. Staff are happy to introduce new games at this time.

Free Food Pantry Mon-Thurs

Free food pantry at McBride RVCS (942 3rd Ave) that's available to all! Emergency top-up food is accessible to our clients and anyone who walks through the door. We share and accept donated foods that are safe and fresh for use. This project is made possible thanks to grant funding from United Way of BC and the residents of the Robson Valley! Contact RVCS at 1-844-324-2004 or email events@rvcsbc.org. The local Food Bank is also available: 250-569-3186.

Dunster

The Dunster Community Spring Market will take place at the Dunster Hall this coming Saturday, May 17th from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. There will be lots of bedding plants, home baking, and miscellaneous goodies. We will also have our usual "Buy Local Burgers" and hot dogs as well as coffee and juice available for lunch. There is no charge for vendors so all vendors are welcome. We are looking for volunteers to help at the burger booth this summer when the regular markets begin the first Saturday of July and run each Saturday until the end of September. For more information call Pete at 250-968-4334



Drop-in pickleball - Sun, Tues, Thurs Drop-in pickleball at the Community Hall at noon Sundays, and 8:30am Tuesdays and Thursday.

Crafty Stitchers - Sundays

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

Personal Tech Help - by appointment

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

Old-time Music - Wednesdays

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

Astronomy Course - Wednesdays

call 1-844-324-2004 or email events@rvcsbc.org. McBride

McBride Open Gate Community Garden Annual Spring Plant Sale - Saturday, June 7th from 10:00 am until 1:00 pm at the garden behind the McBride Elks Hall. (Pioneer Days Weekend) We usually have a great selection of bedding plants as well as house plants and cuttings and perennials to fill up your garden and greenhouse. Once again, we are asking for donations of extra plants, cuttings and divisions of your plants on the day before the sale or the early morning of the sale by dropping them off at the garden on Second Avenue. This is our big fundraiser of the year to to help keep the garden going. To volunteer or for more information, please call Pete at 250-968-4334 or Dorothy at 250-569-3343. Thanks for your support!

Tuesday Night Jam - McBride

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

Fibre Artists - Wednesdays

On Wednesdays the McBride Library host the Fibre Artists' group 10 AM-12 PM: come knit, sew or crochet with us! Beginners welcome. Online option available. Call the library 250 569 2411.

Book Clubs for Adults - Thursdays

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

Residents explore solutions to vet shortage

By Andrea Arnold

On Saturday May 10th, 17 residents of the Robson Valley met at the Dunster hall to discuss the current lack of veterinary services throughout the valley. They were joined by Dr. Jodyne Green and her business manager from Green Mobile Veterinary Services and Dr. Isa Gasser, a McBride resident who has recently completed her schooling and is working for Westwinds Mobile Veterinary Services. Both of these veterinary practices are located in Prince George.

The group addressed goals spanning from short term to long term. An immediate need identified by the group is small animal services to keep animals up to date on vaccines, and provide a way for x-rays, blood work, general check-ups and the dispensing of medications.

Prior to the meeting, a valley resident who wished to remain anonymous told the Goat that she has had to make three out of town trips in two months for situations just like these.

"We had to go to Kamloops for an emergency as the clinic in Jasper burned and their services were limited," she said. "Our cat needed x-rays and blood work." Following that trip they had to go to Jasper a few times for more routine appointments.

"My one cat has travel anxiety so she threw up and wet herself on the trip going both ways," she said. "Normally I would have anxiety medication for her before travel, but could not get any beforehand."

Ann Schwartz of McBride has offered her grooming building for rent, providing a location for visiting vets to see animals. Dr. Green and a representative from Westwinds have both visited the facility and agreed that it could work as a location for small animal appointments as an immediate solution.

For larger animals, there have been, and could be more mobile vet clinics hosted at private homes. Jesse and Annie Spangler in Tete Jaune have hosted a vet clinic twice.

"Last fall and again this spring, the Murdoch Veterinary Clinic from PG came to our house for an equine vet clinic. - Dr. Morgan Kelly," she said. "We had about 10-15 horses for the clinics but their manager told me they had a lot of requests for dogs and some for cats as well." Spangler said that the Murdoch clinic manager also mentioned that they are looking for a place they could rent where they could do small animal vet care on a more regular basis. "They seem keen to do what they can to help the community," said Spangler.

Prior to the meeting, McBride resident Trevor Potts wrote letters to two vets in PG that have mobile clinics, one being the Murdoch clinic, explaining the situation and extending an invitation to the valley-wide meeting that was held Saturday afternoon to discuss needs, potential solutions, and suggestions.

Murdoch's manager Kate Peebles, responded with some promising information regarding one of their vets, Dr. Abdallah Fahmy. He is willing and able to offer cat and dog care once he has completed the final portion of his exams. The letter stated that once that happens, they will start working toward finding a location where a transient clinic can be established and they will determine what services they can offer.

She explained that the ideal location would have a small lobby and a separate small exam space. Power, water (sink), access to a bathroom, and two folding tables would be needed. She also said that although it has been discussed, retrofitting a trailer as a mobile unit is not an test day (and results) so we can send him out to your area."

The second letter was sent to Green Mobile Veterinary Services Ltd, and the response came from Marilyn Ireland, Business Manager. Ireland said that a few years back they made several trips to McBride but were met with inconsistent support. The pair committed in the letter to attend the meeting.

Following the meeting, Goat Editor Spencer Hall was able to talk to Dr. Green directly.

"We would have a full day booked, but then the day before we were coming out, half of them would cancel," said Dr. Green. "I didn't feel that we were getting a sustained response to be able to make it a feasible option."

Dr. Green said that she wanted to attend the meeting to provide the veterinarian perspective, give some guidance, so that the group is well informed to be able to address and manage the situation. Having owned her own business for 15 years, Dr. Green was able to provide not just insight to the vet aspects of the problem, but also the business side. She sees it as a veterinary distribution issue, which she says is a national problem. Rural areas do not usually have enough work to sustain more than one vet, but it is a huge commitment as permanent oncall emergency responsibilities are also included.

"Anything I ever enter into I want to be committed to the long term. This will take commitment from both sides. The community has to be committed to supporting veterinarians, whether it's myself or someone else that is coming into the community."

- Dr Jodyne Green, Green Mobile Veterinary Services

She feels that the shortage of medically trained personnel in rural communities for both humans and animals is a big problem. She thinks that one idea is to get people, in this case veterinarians, into these communities so they can see what the communities have to offer. The experience of getting that sense of community can help bring them to these areas and help keep them long term.

Dr. Green has committed to providing a level of limited service to Robson Valley residents in the near future. The exact timing is unknown. She first must find a time period within her working schedule to be available to come provide some immediate services that are needed: vaccines, medications, minor health concerns. Going forward, Dr. Green wants to build relationships with pet owners in the Robson Valley to provide veterinary services on a continuous basis.

"Anything I ever enter into I want to be committed to the long term," she said. "This will take commitment from both sides. The community has to be committed to supporting veterinarians, whether it's myself or someone else that is coming into the community."

She also addressed the importance of keeping vaccines up to date. Not only is it important for preventing outbreaks of contagious diseases, it is also a requirement in most boarding facilities.

She encouraged residents to establish relationships with vets outside the valley, and to be prepared to travel in order to do the best thing for your animal.

Westwinds Mobile Veterinary services have been visiting the valley for several years, providing large animal care, as well as some small animal appointments to either one central location or directly to people's homes.

There are many people who are concerned about their animals, of all sizes, in the in between times.

"We definitely need a vet in the valley," said Valemount resident Gavin Mracek. "We have a lot of animals and ranching is hard enough. Without a vet as backup it is extremely risky now."

For people who have working dogs that are a part of their livelihood, the thought of an errant stick or a run in with the wrong kind of fence is extremely stressful. Doug and Samatha Palmer have made the trip from McBride to PG to the Murdoch clinic.

"We have working dogs, and minor cuts and injuries are common enough," she said "But five or six hours for a simple thing or an antibiotic is a challenge and a deterrent. God forbid an actual emergency came up which is only a matter of time —two hours away is too far."

People who have had to say goodbye to their furry family members have had to experience several hours in vehicles during the sad time.

Dunster resident Shara Gustafson recently went through this experience.

"We had to drive all the way to Hinton to euthanize our sweet 15 year old dog," she said. "It was a long 2.5 hours back home with her lifeless body in the car. It sucked."

Looking hopeful

Those gathered on Saturday, along with the help from Dr. Green and Dr. Gasser created lists of what is needed to not only open, but maintain a successful clinic. They discussed possible locations - the large building at the intersection of HIghway 16 and Main street in McBride, and the previous vet clinic in Valemount, weighing both pros and cons of each. They also talked about the feasibility of kitting out a mobile clinic.

The issue of funding was also discussed. The suggestion that the Villages of McBride and Valemount own the clinics and vets rent the space was presented. Grants, and contributions from local donors could help with the cost. Donations of supplies, skills, labour and discounts would also provide a way to set up a site for reduced cost.

At this time, the Goat does not have information as to the timing of any upcoming mobile vet services, but will inform readers once more information becomes available. If you have questions about what services are available by the clinics mentioned above, please contact the clinics directly.

option for them at this time. "Rest assured we are anxiously waiting for Dr. Famhy's



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**Some eateries opted not to take part in this feature

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