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HIGH COUNTRY News

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From The EDITOR

This year we are looking to initiate a couple of new initiatives with the High Country News. The first is a couple of pages surrounding food. The focus of the page will be to promote and feature our local eating establishments (did you know there are approximately 75 restaurants in the communities within our service area?). It is also worth noting that the majority of these establishments are independently owned by locals.

We are also looking to promote our local retail establishments with a "shop local" directory, as well as maintain our "kidz page". We hope that you will enjoy the additional content and make use of the services these businesses offer to our communities.

For you artists and photographers, if you would like to submit your work to be featured on the front page we are always happy to give you a little extra exposure. Submit your work to info@highcountrynews.ca.

The High Country News strives to give our readers content that is relevant to your life, and connect communities, businesses, and residents with the ongoing events and initiatives that make this area such a great place to call home.

Thinking of home, at the time of this writing, we are eagerly awaiting the arrival of our first grandchild. Her due date is the 5th of February. Although this is somewhat of a personal note, it is in one sense a note of encouragement to our community. Our eldest son has been living in the area since the age of 11, and now at 26 has started a family. Seeing another generation emerge and become established

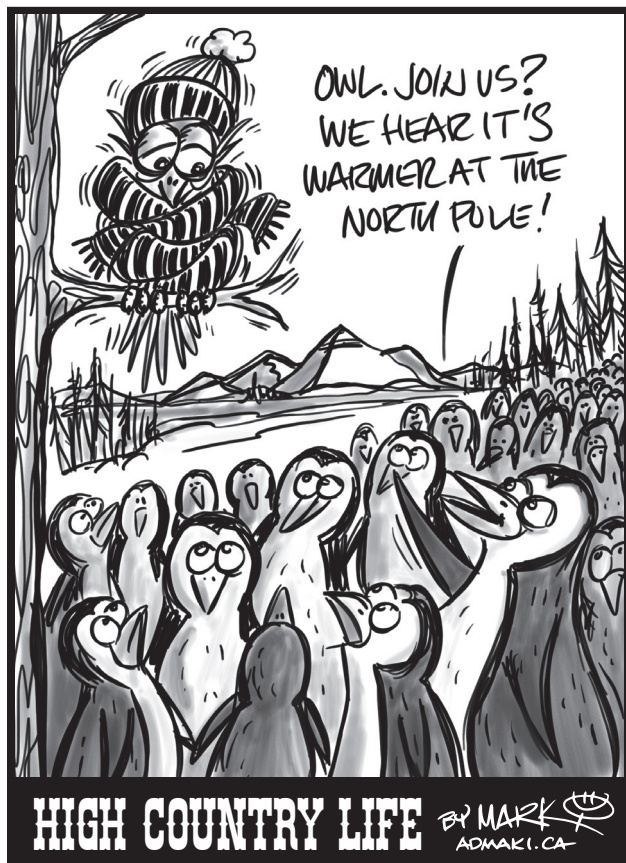
is a key foundation to a healthy community. It is also a testament to the numerous people that have invested and stood with him during those formative years. I trust that as we move forward in this year, we not only see the value in the investment of the next generation but also in sustaining and creating a place for all of the generations to be present in our community.

*From my family to yours,
Lowell Harder*

For more from the Editor, visit highcountrynews.ca

Artist PROFILE

This rare picture was taken in the courtyard of The River Dragonfly by amateur photographer Rod Burns. This feisty, feathered fellow was the size of the Mountain Bluebird and was protecting his prey.



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Obituary

Pelachuk, Sharon Hope

December 26, 1942, Cadomin, AB –
January 5, 2020, Calgary AB

Sharon Pelachuk of Calgary, Alberta passed away very peacefully in her sleep in her own bed, surrounded by love and support, in her dream home on Sunday, January 5, 2020 at the age of 77 years.

Sharon was born in Cadomin, AB on December 26, 1942. Before she passed away, she had the privilege of seeing her son Trever and his wife Susan, both happy and starting new chapters



in their lives. Her son Nathan had healed from the darkness of his youth, and Sharon lived to see him start a new path of dedicating his life to the healing of others. It is her heart that is present in her beautiful children. Sharon's strength and resilience

were ever-present in everything she did. She was cook, teacher, and biggest supporter of her children as they were growing up. Sharon had a generous heart and touched the lives of anyone who came in contact with her while still keeping her small circle of very close friends. Her joys in life were crafting, golf, the

quietness of the acreage, and her love and passion for animals – her rescued cat Smokie and Chica-Maya.

Funeral Services will be held at McINNIS & HOLLOWAY (Park Memorial, 5008 Elbow Drive SW, Calgary, AB) on Friday, January 24, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. Reception to follow in the Hospitality Centre at the Funeral Home. Condolences, memories and photos may be shared and viewed on Sharon's obituary at www.McInnisandHolloway.com. In lieu of flowers, memorial tributes may be made to Alberta Cancer Foundation, Provincial Office, Sun Life Place, 710, 10123 – 99th Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 3H1 Telephone: 1(866) 412-4222.

A tree will be planted in living memory of Sharon Pelachuk. McInnis and Holloway Funeral Homes, Park Memorial, 5008 Elbow Drive S.W., Calgary, AB T2S 2L5, Telephone: 403-243-8200.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND CLAIMANTS

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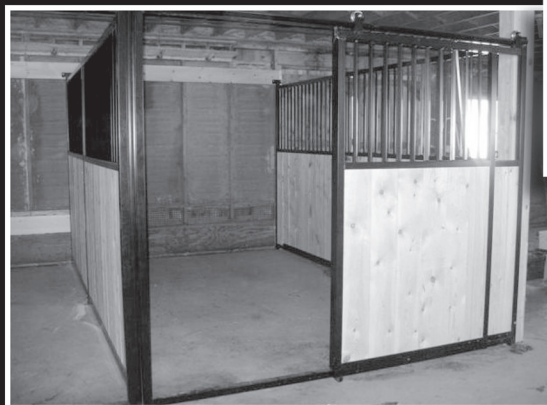
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An Interview With Local Artist Anna-Sophia Vukovich

Understand some of your work in this show was made in your home landscape of Alberta? What was that like?

This summer, I went back to Alberta, the province where I was born, for a self-directed residency on a friend's horse farm 10 minutes outside of Turner Valley. There was a perfect little shack on the property, and with some drywalling, I managed to convert it into a studio space that turned out to be very productive. The ranch is situated in the foothills of Western Canada, where the sky and land are enormous, and you can see for 100 kilometers to the mountains. You basically have a

360 degree view. It's also ranching land. I saw lots of deer, cows and horses, a moose, bears, and heard coyotes howling from my studio at night. I was there for the last two and half months, immersing myself in this landscape, a place that has always affected my work.

How do you feel like this landscape in particular affected the work in this show?

For me this geography is very powerful. I grew up going almost every weekend to the mountains. In the winters I used to cross country ski competitively as a teenager, and then in the summers I would go hiking and canoeing with my family and friends. The landscape imprinted itself on me. I can't say exactly how going back "home" after being gone for so long influenced these works, but there's a charged aspect, something of an emotional attachment

that I've been trying to bring into my work, as opposed to coming at it from an intellectual or cerebral point. Everything expanded. The marks became looser, and bigger, and the surface area of the pieces increased. So now the paintings are more of an immersion, as opposed to acting as symbols.

What are you interested in as an artist?

I'm interested in the joy and also the difficulties of life, and think a lot about how to navigate these experiences in a body: emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. What happens when you move inward versus outward, and how far can those expanses go? How does one find hope? How can one expand moments of time, and how does attention play into this? There are always things on the peripheries of our attention, which are actually

Obituary

Patterson, Theresa Geraldine

November 16, 1921 – January 6, 2020

Our sweet Mom went to be with angels on the morning of January 6 at the Rockyview Hospital in Calgary, at the grand old age of 98 years. Her Epiphany was to go to the Light after a brief illness.

Theresa is survived by her loving husband, Ed Poffenroth, also 98. Mom and Ed got married in May of 2014, after the great flood of 2013, so they had five great years together. She is also survived by her four children: David (Felicity), Louise (Eldon), Anne (Chris), and Don (Jill); grandchildren Ian (Illisha), Cathy (Steve), Mathew, Christa, Lindsie (Denis), Erin (Lawrence), Claire (Michael), Kelly (Otgo), Jamie (Nara), Tanya, Michael (Chelsey), and Jennifer; Great grandchildren Atlas, Hannah, Orion, Josie, Kian, Roanan, Gavan, Mateja, Healy, Michelle, Thomas, Levi, Wyatt, Maya and Ashton; her niece Dorothy (Keith), and sons Dale (Karen), Randy (Brenda), Rick (Pam), and children Riley, Evan, Anna, Claire and Keira; David Gant; and her sisters Jeannine and Lauren.

Theresa is predeceased by our Dad Arthur Patterson, to whom she was married for 66 years, great granddaughter

Cassandra, her sisters Lois and Fay, and brother Harvey.

She was born in Bassano, Alberta, to Royal and Janette Burrows, where she grew up with great gardens and the joys and sorrows and discipline of farm life. When she married Dad in 1941, she took up farming alongside Dad, raising cows, horses, pigs and chickens, driving the tractor and the team, and tending her garden and her 4 children, Grandma Edith and Dorothy, with the same devotion.

In 1960 the University opened in Calgary, and Mom was there in her new Volkswagen on opening day. She went on to teach Grade 3 at Red Deer Lake School for 18 years, and still greeted all her former students by name until the end of her life.

Theresa was always devoted to her community and her neighbours, her church, the Ladies Guild at Christ Church, the Millarville Hort Club, the Centennial Peony Bed and Gardening Under the Arch. Mom was Secretary-Treasurer of the Millarville Races for many years, calculating the odds at the Pari-mutuel Betting by hand. She

and her Mom Janette, her sisters and daughters took on feeding the judges at the Priddis and Millarville Fair for over 50 years with their famous lunch of baked ham, salads and homemade pies. The judges came as much for the lunch as for the judging!

Her life has gone from the Roaring 20's through the Great Depression, World

War II, to the Space Age and beyond. Her kind of grit and devotion and talent and loving values will not pass this way again.

Memorial Donations can be made in her name to the Anne Vale Memorial Scholarship Fund at the Millarville Hort Club, c/o Sheila 403-931-3989.

At Mom's request, a Celebration of Life will be held for her at Christ Church

Millarville in July 2020, when the peonies are in bloom.

To send condolences and view Theresa's Tribute Page please visit www.lylereeves.com. Caring for the family is Lyle Reeves Funerals of High River (Craig Snodgrass) 403.652.4242.



very important and are clues to other pathways and developments. So I think it matters what you give your attention to. I feel like a lot of the richness in life is not what our culture pays attention to.

How did you choose the title of this show, "Soft Signs?"

I've been working a lot with signage and everyday symbols like arrows, dashes, and other types of marks. Instead of using them as pointers to something very practical, like a "Turn right" signal, I've been working with how those symbols can be used to speak to this inner navigation that I am interested in. The "soft" comes from the fact that these inner conversations are never direct. They're quiet and they're subtle, and for myself, it's about trying to pay attention to subtleties, and having a conversation with things that are not as obvious. It's in a gentle, quiet space where I have found solace, a space that contains possibilities.

What inspired these works?

Going back home to where I was born inspired me, as there was this reunion with the past. I went hiking every weekend in Kananaskis and Banff, and immersed myself in this landscape that I have missed for a very long time. The quality of the air, the smell of the woods, the softness of the ground, the clarity of the rivers, and the power of the mountains are qualities that don't exist in large cities. These also

cannot be so easily quantified and are often overlooked in terms of their importance. However, having lived in New York and Toronto for the last 13 years, I can say that this landscape is extremely valuable and I hope we take note of this for future generations. Being there I felt free to try things out and to push myself in a different direction.

What do you hope people will experience when they visit your show at the gallery?

I hope people will have an experience of space, an experience of themselves in a larger context, and hopefully a sense of expansion.

Artist Statement:

For the last year few years my work has focused on the theme of perception, orientation and navigation. Using symbols from our everyday lives such as arrows, road dashes and other two-dimensional pictographic shapes, my paintings and drawings point to an inner landscape, to spaces and experiences that are subliminal, quiet yet powerful.

These pieces have been influenced by the enormity of the sky, the rolling expansive foothills and the humbling and peaceful presence of the Rocky Mountains. For the last three months I have been immersed in this landscape, creating work and exploring the terrain. I am interested in creating a visceral

experience of space, direction, and elemental energy which this geography holds for me. Rather than being fixed and directive, the work aims to instigate questions, investigate possibilities and hold paradoxes

Artist Bio

Anna-Sophia Vukovich (b. Calgary, AB) received a BFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University in 2008, and an MFA from Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts in 2016. She has participated in solo and group exhibitions in Canada and the United States. Anna-Sophia has been awarded residencies at Byrdcliffe Artist Colony (2019), Edward F. Albee Foundation (2018), Wassail Project (2017), Vermont Studio Centre (2016), and the Banff Centre for the Arts (2013). Art publications include "Lookie Lookie/ Ten painters on Doubt," "Studio Visit," "Friend of the Artist" and "Anti-Architecture", a collaborative zine with Kara Walker. She has won several scholarships, including a Toronto Arts Council Visual Art Grant, a Diney Goldsmith Fellowship Award and a professional development award from the Joseph and Anni Albers Foundation. Since 2016 Anna-Sophia has been living and making work in Harlem, New York and has also served as a part-time adjunct instructor at Rutgers University

Interview with Carey Wallace, Writer

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Red tape reduction is long overdue in Alberta. For years our province's government and systems have operated with an abundance of over regulation and redundancy, resulting in costly and oftentimes stagnant processes for both individuals and businesses. Every year, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) releases a red tape report card which all provinces use as a benchmark for their performance. Historically, Alberta has never received a grade better than a D, while similar provinces such as Saskatchewan have continually achieved grades of A+. Over the last three years, Alberta's grade dipped even further to an F as our province

became utterly bogged down with big overreaching government. To put Alberta's red tape burden into perspective, it is estimated that in 2017 the cost for businesses across the province to simply comply with all the regulations was over \$4.4 billion.

That is why we promised Albertans during last year's April election that we would reduce one-third of all red tape across the province. As a United Conservative government, we collectively believe that the best way to achieve a prosperous society where both individuals and businesses can freely thrive is for government to get out of the way, rather than in the way. After nine months in office, we are still committed to that mantra. Since taking office, we have passed the Red Tape Reduction Act which established an Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction. We have also held roundtables across the province – with one in Canmore – and launched a public online submission website. To date, we have received 4501 ideas for red tape reduction through this portal, implemented 130 of them, and are well on our way to addressing another 240 of them.

Notably, we have: made building codes freely accessible rather than for purchase, harmonized oil rig classifications with other provinces, legalized liquor consumption in provincial parks on long weekends, allowed bed and breakfasts to serve meals other than just breakfast, streamlined multi-ministry not-for-profit grants into single multi-year grants, dropped all of the procurement exceptions to interprovincial trade under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), created digital personal identifications, modernized craft liquor legislation opening up 3x the current market availability for Albertan businesses, and allowed automobile insurance pink slips to be accessible online.

After all this work, I am proud to announce that the CFIB has given our province a non-failing grade for the first time in history! Our 2020 red tape report card achieved a grade of B-. We still undoubtedly have a long ways to go before we achieve an A+, but we are optimistic that our province is finally on the right track. In four years time, Alberta should truly be the freer and faster moving economy that we have always claimed to be.



MLA Miranda Rosin's Constituency Offices

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Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri
100 pm - 5:30 pm

Canmore:

206-1080 Railway Ave

Office Hours:

Monday - Friday
9:00 am - 4:30 pm

Springbank Off-Stream Reservoir (SR1)

We are in "hearing preparation" mode and are also wrapping up our submission to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. This is a tremendous undertaking and we are appreciative of the broad network of local residents, experts and community groups that have come together to work on this issue.

We expect to qualify as an intervenor in the NRCB hearing process and we will be asking members of the community to join with us. Rather than individuals intervening within the community, we plan to act as the umbrella organization for Springbank and area concerns. Ideally, we will aggregate community concerns and ask for funding to get

expert studies and testimony. We plan to raise health concerns, air quality issues, water quality issues, dam safety and wildlife concerns, to name a few. If any of these are hot button topics for you, please send us an email: president@springbankcommunity.com to join us in this process. If you know anyone that lives adjacent to or near the SR1 footprint, please forward them this newsletter and encourage them to get in touch with us.

Bow River Dam: Glenbow East Option

Alberta Environment and Parks is currently assessing the three options for dams on the bow river. AEP will continue to accept public feedback at its project email: aep.bowbasin@gov.ab.ca. For more information, refer to the project page at talkaep.alberta.ca/bow-basin.

ROCKY VIEW COUNTY | DIVISION ONE COUNCILLOR UPDATE



f COUNCILLOR MARK KAMACHI

@MARKKAMACHI

CHECKMARKK.CA

MKAMACHI@ROCKYVIEW.CA

OFFICE: 403-949-3343 | CELL: 403-861-7806



Greetings once again. It only seems like yesterday that I was wishing you a Happy New Year. How are the resolutions coming along? As for me, so far so good. I've been exercising regularly, eating better (although my passion for Powderhorn French fries is my kryptonite), getting more than 6 hours of sleep per night, focusing on my career and have finally planned a family-time vacation. 2020 will be a challenging and rewarding year should I maintain my promised resolutions all whilst performing my duties as your councillor. Wish me luck. As for you, remember, looking after #1 should be your #1 priority although it's easy to neglect #1.

Sanctioned Councillors

By this reading, a judge's ruling at the Calgary Courts Centre on January 22, 2020 will have occurred regarding the sanctions the majority of Council had imposed on councillors Crystal Kissel (Div 9), Samanntha Wright (Div 8) and Kevin Hanson (Div 3) back in June of 2019. Please visit the following link to get details on how this all came about:

<https://www.rockyview.ca/NewsEvents/News/tabid/145/Article/1609/Council-Details-Censuring-Action.aspx>

Bragg Creek Chamber

I want to thank the board and members for their warm hospitality at their January 15, 2020 monthly meeting. And to also express my sincerest thanks for their understanding as I had to

postpone my previous appearance due to family matters. It's understanding and care that make me feel so proud to be part of this amazing community.

The highlight of the night was the last minute guest appearance of Rocky View County's Chief Administrative Officer, Al Hoggan. It was during a discussion I was having with him earlier where I threw out the invite and he jumped at the chance to sit down and meet business owners and residents face to face. And this wasn't his first foray into town.

He made it clear to the audience that not only himself but his senior staff will be made more accessible to the wants, needs and questions of ratepayers as we move forward. A promise I will hold him to. To me, he and his staff have been nothing short of a godsend as I have relied on their experience and expertise to help understand the many complexities of this job as your councillor.

During the meeting, Mr Hoggan was able to bring more detail and clarity to a number of topics that were covered that evening: our revised Land Use Bylaw (LUB) will be coming forth for public engagement in the weeks to come; talks between our Tsuut'ina neighbours are continuing and plans for a revised design for the 4-way intersection are being sought; the RVC Recreation Governance Committee (comprised of your councillors) will be revealing Administration's plans and details for our new Recreation Master Plan soon; flood

mitigation is still moving ahead; the new draft of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP), which will help guide the County's growth, will be out in March for public input. For details and schedules on our MDP, please visit:

<https://www.rockyview.ca/BuildingPlanning/PlansUnderReview/NewMunicipalDevelopmentPlan.aspx>

A priority of your Council, Staff, and Administration is to improve customer service and communication. We have been seeing positive results and hearing back from residents in that regard and we thank you. But we will continue to improve and that was something Mr Hoggan made clear. So please take his word for it and do not hesitate to reach out to him should the need arise. Really. Of course you always have me at your disposal as well.

Canadian Badlands Tourism (CBT)

It is with great pleasure and excitement that RVC has partnered with this organization. CBT is the largest municipal tourism partnership in Canada, with over 60 municipal members across East Central and Southeastern Alberta. This initiative will help promote Rocky View County as a tourism destination for local, national, and international visitors.

Until next month get involved in your community. Join a board. Volunteer at an event. Or support a local business. In the meantime, keep checking the RVC website for all the latest.

– Cheers, Mark





Message from the President of the Springbank Community Association:

Happy New Year! At the Community Association, our 2020 priority is to improve connections within our community. We are working through a few ideas, including:

- Evolving our social media into a community hub by sharing local stories, events and more. As a first step, we are introducing a "Volunteer of the Month" section.
- Improving our newsletter to bring residents relevant information. Are there topics you would like to see from us that aren't currently being covered?
- Reaching out to our local schools to hear what those 2000 students are up to and sharing out with our community.

We challenge our community to:

- Ask how can we be better neighbors this year:
 - How well do you know your neighbors?

- Do you have elderly neighbors in your community that could use some help with snow removal or spring clean up?

- Do you have a neighborhood watch program setup on your street or within your community? Go to cparcw.ca/about.html for more info.

- Do you have a community contact list, in case of emergency, to reach out for help or share suspicious activity, or just to connect with your neighbors?

• Celebrate one another – share stories of kindness and generosity within our community on our FB page – visitor posts welcome!

- Photos, videos from our community are encouraged! Take a picture at your local event and share it with us at www.facebook.com/springbankcommunityassociation.

- Give a shout out to a great coach, teacher or child in our community.

Springbank Community Association: Community Volunteer of the Month

Karen Tereposky is a linchpin in the strong and growing Springbank Soccer Club. When Karen's own daughters were becoming involved in soccer, she noticed that there were too few female coaches. In typical Karen style, she did something about it. Karen started

coaching grassroots soccer in 2007 and has since coached or assisted on boys and girls' teams U8-U15 in tiers 1 to 4, as well as with the Zone 2 Alberta Winter and Summer Games teams. After coaching in Springbank from 2011-2014 and also serving on the SSC Board, Karen coached with two city clubs before returning to coach in her community. Her Coach Education includes: NCCP FUNDamentals, Learn to Train, and her Alberta Provincial C License. She also plans to complete her Children's License next year.

Karen encourages her players to take risks, regardless of the result. Because of this "it's okay to fail" philosophy, her players quickly develop excellent ball control and skills. More importantly, these young women develop confidence and belief in themselves under Karen's guidance. On top of contributing countless hours to Springbank Soccer Club and being a role model for her players, Karen is a mother of three and an Employment & Insolvency Lawyer at Field Law.

Thank you, Coach Karen for your substantial contribution to making Springbank a great place to live and play.

If you would like to nominate a great local volunteer for our "Volunteer

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of the Month”, send an email to news@springbankcommunity.com.

Rockyview Schools Trustee Update for Springbank and Area schools:

Alberta Education is in the process of rewriting and updating curriculum and it is important that we reflect upon what it is that all citizens need to have as a common reference point for decision-making related to science, math and engineering as it affects our daily lives.

The increasing speed, scope and breadth of scientific, technological and engineering advancements will continue to impact cultural norms, values, economics, and work. I read an interesting document on K-12 education: A Framework for K-12 Science Education - Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas (2012) (www.nap.edu/download/13165).

I have included this report for you as I believe as a society we should be discussing – “What do we really want from our education system?” Increasingly, schools are being asked to take on roles that have not been the traditional roles of school. Schools are also being asked to educate a wider

range of student abilities. All of these choices impact educational outcomes and costs. Many of these decisions have been by default and not by design, in my estimation.

A look at a schooling within other countries show an array of differences

- The number of hours in the school day
- Access to private tutoring in the evening
- Free lunch programs
- Age at which differentiated programming begins
- Education and management of special needs students
- The land base upon which schools are built
- Teacher training
- Use of outside specialists in instruction

All of us want a world-class educational system, and we are nervous about tinkering with a system has demonstrated success, that has established standards and pathways to certification. At the same time, we are witnessing economic pressure on our systems, a challenge to the status quo at the post-secondary levels

where industry is actively recruiting our brightest students and providing in-house training and support. We are witnessing increasing number of university graduates who are unemployed or underemployed, and where many students have no seat at the university as entrance requirements have been elevated to unrealistic percentages.

I believe the time has come for public discourse on the role of schooling and what society values in the education of its children.

Budget Cuts

For the remainder of this school year we will not see the impact of the recent budget cuts. However, in the 2020-2021 and possibly the 2021-2022 school year, we will see impacts. I taught during the Klein years. We got through it. We will get through this round of cuts.

Our staff and administrators are some of the best in North America. They are knowledgeable, caring and committed. So, despite what the economy has in store, your children are in good hands.

*Submitted by Judi Hunter,
RVS Trustee Ward 5*

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Thinking Outside The Box!

Don't follow the herd! Most investors deal with *myopic* financial advisors. That is, they have a very narrow view of the Investment World (i.e. usually just Canada). They also tend to follow the conventional wisdom of diversifying portfolio risk by allocating 20% to 80% of their portfolios to fixed income assets (i.e. bonds). For a lot of the time that approach is simply **WRONG!**

Risk Tolerance vs Volatility

Investors are conditioned to focus on perceived RISK as opposed to what they should be focused upon, which is VOLATILITY. Sometimes mutual funds go up and at times they pull back, BUT over time, mutual funds increase in value. The choice of mutual funds makes a huge difference to the returns that you can realize over time. The more volatile funds increase the most. Less volatile funds do not increase as much as the more volatile funds.

Should you stay or should you go?

Stay Invested, 'Except For Recessions,' where the markets can drop 20% to 40%. We want to be on the sidelines for those recessions.

Listening to the talking heads in the media could cause you to leave too early. At the moment the risk of recession is very low and the Stock Markets are making new highs.

Loss of Purchasing Power

Understanding the relevance of purchasing power is typically problem number one for investors. Many investors fail to realize that their income needs will rise significantly, due to the effects of inflation, to just maintain a *Constant Standard of Living*.

The **actual** cost of living is increasing at a rate far higher than the core inflation rate that the Government gives us. In many instances it is increasing in excess of 10% annually. If you want to see the data to backup that statement, please contact me and I will be happy to give you my sources.

Home Country Bias

Every now and then the Canadian Stock Market has a really good year, i.e. 2016. Generally, the Canadian Stock Market

lags (see performance for 2015, 2016, 2017 and YTD 2018). Unfortunately, most of my colleagues have *Home Country Bias*. They stick with what they know which is limited.

In the 1st quarter of 2018 the Canadian Stock Market as represented by the TSX index ranked 77th out of 93 equity markets.

The Centre of Global Power has shifted - Go Global

Four to five thousand years ago the economic power was centred in the Orient. China was the World's economic centre. Since then the economic centre moved westward to the Middle East, then Europe, i.e. Spain, Portugal, Britain then to North America in the 18th Century. The economic centre has now moved back to the Orient.

Let Global Mutual Fund Managers make the decision as to what allocation should go into cash, fixed income,

equities and in which countries. They have access to the necessary information to make those decisions long before the investing public does.

I consider Bonds (i.e. traditional fixed income) a four-letter word - Conventional Wisdom is Dead!

Traditional bonds are *inversely* related to interest rates. That is, as interest rates *drop* bonds go *up*. When interest rates *rise* bonds go *down*. Bonds, that are supposed to be safe and secure, especially for those approaching or in retirement *dropped an average of 8%* in the first quarter of 2018 as interest rates rose. Where was the protection?

There is a 60-year interest rate cycle. Interest rates peaked in 1980 and began to drop. Interest rates bottomed in 2010, went sideways until late 2015 then began the next 30-year rise.

In a slowly rising interest rate environment, expected over the next 20 - 30-years, bonds will not be a safe place for investors.

If your portfolio suffers from some or all of these failings call us for a review of your capital accumulation and preservation strategy.

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Springbank Friday Morning Seniors Mixed Curling League

Norman Nelson was on hand at the Christmas lunch on Dec. 13 for the presentation of the Nelson Memorial Trophy to the winning team of the Fall Session Round Robin Tournament. Pictured are Norman Nelson, Brian Davies draw master, Tim Presber skip, Doreen Charbonneau lead, Shirley Tajcnar 2nd, Fritz Perschon 3rd, sparing for Mary JaNe Hunter.

95 year old Norm Nelson was an active curler until this current season, skipping many teams to victory over the years. The trophy was given to the league, a number of years ago, by the Fisher family, as a memorial to Norm's wife who was also an avid curler.

The Jan 10 - Mar 20 Winter Session is now well underway with 10 teams participating. This is an increase of 8 curlers over the Fall Session. A big thank you is due to Brian Davies who as draw master sets up the teams, the curling schedule and arranges for spares when needed. Thank you also to Tracey Cove who is our treasurer.

Since we are now using 5 of the possible 6 sheets of ice at the arena there is room for only 8 more curlers in the league for next season. With this in mind, if you are interested in joining this fun league for the 2020 Fall Session you might want to add your name to the spare list for the balance of this curling season so you are kept informed of registration information. Contact Brian Davies at briancapitalland@gmail.com or 403.861.2742.

Contributed by Shirley Tajcnar

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Bathroom Safety for Seniors

Falls are the leading cause of injury among older Canadians with 20-30% of seniors experiencing one or more falls each year. For senior citizens, the bathroom can be one of the most dangerous places in their home, which is why installing bathroom safety products is very important. Showers and baths in particular pose a serious threat. To prevent your loved ones from injuring themselves, we have comprised a list of 5 bath safety tips for the elderly.

Tip 1: Invest in Grab Bars

Many senior citizens struggle with their balance. Our clients often claim that their loved ones hang on to towel rails, but these rails are only built to support a few pounds. Towel rails can easily break under the weight of a person, almost always resulting in serious injury.

Unlike towel rails, grab bars are designed to support higher weight limits. We recommend installing grab bars in order to reduce your risks of falls in the bathtub or shower.

Tip 2: Install a Shower Chair

Grab bars are important safety tools while getting into or out of the shower or tub, but once in the shower, another safety measure is to sit while bathing. Shower chairs and benches come in many different styles and sizes. There are basic bath chairs and benches, to specialty chairs that can be ordered to meet your disability or condition. For example, if there is a neurological condition, you may want to look into bath chairs that help maintain trunk stability. If stepping into a shower is difficult, there are transfer benches and sliding transfer benches that can be installed into any size bathroom, even the very smallest. Ask for a home assessment and how we can make it safer to age in place.

Tip 3: Consider a Bath Transfer Bench

Transfer benches are perfect for people who struggle to get in and out of bathtubs. A transfer bench can easily be placed onto most tubs with 2 legs that stay inside the tub, and the other 2 legs stay on the outside. In some cases, a standard transfer bench will not fit in your bathroom due to the placement of the toilet, in those cases, tub mounted transfer benches are the perfect option.

Tip 4: Install a Bath Lift

A bath lift is a great way to have the ability to bath alone, without compromising

their safety. These tub lifts are battery operated and can easily be removed to allow other household members the ability to bath without the assistance of a bathtub lift. This is a great option for anyone who loves to soak in the heat of a bath and does not want to compromise safety.

Tip 5: Apply Non-Slip Coatings to Floors and Tubs

Mats that suction to the base of your tub are really tripping hazards in disguise. It is easy to catch a toe on a mat like that, resulting in a trip and fall. Many of our clients have the rough stickers on the tub, you know the ones shaped like fish or seahorses! However, these are very uncomfortable to sit on during a bath, and they are unsanitary as they are difficult to clean. An excellent option is a non-slip treatment that you neither see nor feel, that our experts can apply to most tub and flooring surfaces in under an hour.

Remember, there are many different ways to make daily hygiene easier and safer. If you would like more tips on how to secure a bathroom, please call us for your Home Assessment. Let our Home Comfort Experts help secure your safety with the best options for your consideration. Don't take safety for granted!

by Carla Berezowski,
Home Comfort Expert

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Alberta Securities Commission Warns Investors Of Top Investment Risks For 2020

A new year brings new investment opportunities, and investing is a great way for Albertans to achieve their financial and retirement goals. Some investments, however, are too good to be true – and the Alberta Securities Commission (ASC) is warning of the top six traps to look out for in 2020. These are based on investor complaints, ongoing investigations and current enforcement trends as identified by the ASC's Enforcement division.

Stock promotion related to new and emerging industries – “You don’t want to miss out!”

Scam artists capitalize on new and emerging industries as there is often limited information and history available, making it easier to spread false information. The ASC has recently seen increases in potential new scams related to cannabis, foreign exchange and, especially, cryptoasset investments. While new industries may give rise to a range of exciting investment opportunities, it is important to understand the risks associated with the business before investing your hard-earned money.

Affinity fraud – “You can trust me.”

Affinity fraud, where victims are introduced to scams by someone they trust, continues to be a major concern in Alberta. Scam artists often work their way into groups and organizations, building relationships with respected or influential members who they use to recruit new investors. Currently, religious affiliations and cultural groups, particularly in rural areas, are the most common associations used by these scam artists. Learn how you can easily recognize affinity fraud in your community and how to contact the ASC if you see any suspicious activity.

Exploiting a bad economy – “Cash out your traditional retirement savings, you’ll earn more!”

In a struggling economy, scam artists will often target those recently laid-off. A major life change can trigger stress about finances and the future, which can affect decision making. Many people will try to make up for what has been lost financially by investing in riskier investments in hopes of getting a higher return. Scam

artists will encourage those feeling financial pressure to cash out traditional retirement savings plans (e.g. pensions, LIRAs, RRSPs) for an investment with the promise of higher returns, ignoring any tax implications or the added risk of the ‘recommended’ investment. There is a relationship between risk and reward; generally, the higher the potential reward, the higher the risk. Be wary of any investment promising high returns that are marketed as low-risk – it’s another red flag of fraud.

Unscrupulous marketing – “Get rich quick!”

There is a relationship between risk and reward; generally, the higher the potential reward, the higher the risk. The number of complaints relating to private, high-risk investments that are marketed as low-risk are on the rise in Alberta. Often, salespeople will position the investment as an “exclusive opportunity,” or “how the wealthy make their money,” which is really just a high-pressure sales tactic. It’s your hard-earned cash; take the time to invest it wisely.

Unregistered individuals selling securities – “Registration doesn’t matter, I know what I am doing.”

The ASC continues to receive reports of non-registered individuals selling investments. Generally, anyone offering investments in Alberta must be registered with the ASC, and lack of registration is a key red flag of fraud. Yet, four-in-five Albertans do not check the registration of their advisor¹. Albertans can quickly and easily verify the registration of any advisor or organization by visiting the ASC’s consumer website: Checkfirst.ca.

Promissory notes

There has been a rise in reports of investors being promised better and safer returns than the stock market by loaning money through something called a “promissory note.” The fraudster will claim that the

promissory note – which is simply a “promise to pay” – is not a security, so they don’t have to be registered with the ASC. They will also claim that it’s safe because it’s a loan backed by assets like real estate. In reality, it’s a security and if you’re not on title the loan isn’t secured by real estate – more importantly, the “loan” may be just a scam.

“We strongly encourage Albertans to expand their financial knowledge in order to make wise investment decisions with our free, unbiased tools and resources on our website, Checkfirst.ca,” said Alison Trollope, Director, Investor Education and Communications. “Checkfirst.ca provides information on how to detect and avoid investment fraud, recognize the red flags of fraud and report suspicious activities to our public inquiries office.”

The ASC’s Enforcement division uncovers, investigates, and prosecutes breaches of securities laws with the objective of both stopping and preventing misconduct. Through proactive, fair, and visible enforcement action locally, and through collaboration with other securities regulators and police forces, Canadian and foreign, the ASC seeks to foster investor confidence and promote the integrity of Alberta’s capital market, thereby protecting the investing public.

The ASC is the regulatory agency responsible for administering the province’s securities laws. It is entrusted to foster a fair and efficient capital market in Alberta and to protect investors. As a member of the Canadian Securities Administrators, the ASC works to improve, coordinate and harmonize the regulation of Canada’s capital markets.

*Submitted by Susan Soprovich
Senior Advisor, Investor Education
Alberta Securities Commission*

¹2018 Alberta Investor Study, Alberta Securities Commission.



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Greetings from the HCRCWA in a new year and a new decade.

As part of our fanout messages we have often asked that members report suspicious behaviour to the RCMP. So exactly what would be considered suspicious behaviour. I guess you could always use my mother-in-law's rule which is "If I don't know you, you're suspicious". Let's see if we can provide something a little more practical.

The root word "suspect", as defined in Webster's dictionary, is "to believe someone guilty of something to his discredit without conclusive proof; to form a notion of someone not

necessarily based on fact". Again, like the Mother-in-law rule, this is not necessarily that helpful, although it does get closer to defining suspicious behaviour. Suspicion has a nebulous connotation – it will be different things to different people.

Guidance was presented by Kerry Sauvé who gave HCRCWA members the "How not to be a Victim" presentation a couple of years ago. His rule was "Don't look for a person who fits your personal profile of a suspicious person but look instead for suspicious behaviour". Georgia police give similar guidance stating that "People aren't suspicious; behaviour is".

If someone is obviously and forcibly breaking into a neighbour's house, most of us would view that as suspicious behaviour. And we would be correct 99% of the time. This is an easy one because it's clear behaviour that is against the law.

Then we get into little less obvious situations. Situations where we would intuitively consider behaviour suspicious because it is unusual, strange,

odd, not within the scope of an ordinary person's behaviour, and one that, in our personal judgement, we believe has or could have, criminal intent.

Then there is the case where an observer's feelings are more along the lines of "something didn't seem quite right", or their Spidey senses were tingling. I would suggest that is also an acceptable definition. It won't lead to something all of the time, but it could. If your sense of unease is strong enough, I would recommend reporting it. Let me give you an actual example.

Recently a HCRCWA member called me on the 931-2407 line to report that a man had come to her door around 6:00 pm. It was dark and he seemed polite enough. He said his car was stuck in the snow. However, some of his story didn't make sense to her and she didn't have a good feeling about it all. I asked if she had called the police, which she hadn't so I encouraged her to do that which she then did. She called me back a while later to report that the neighbours had also called

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the RCMP who promptly responded with 2 cars (Kudos to the RCMP).

Apparently, as relayed to me it turned out to be a person from Calgary who had taken a liking to the area (the foothills are picturesque as we know), and who liked to walk his dog while smoking cannabis. His "unusual" behaviour aroused suspicion among the neighbours enough to call the RCMP. I ran all of these definitions by Staff Sgt. Laura Akitt of the Turner Valley RCMP detachment who agreed with them all. "I'm a firm believer that if something doesn't feel right, call the RCMP. That's what we're here for. We will check it out. We want people to feel safe."

Given the above, let's give suspicious behaviour for HCRCWA purposes a few definitions: 1) any obvious criminal activity (e.g. break-in in progress) 2) unusual activity that, in your measured opinion, could be interpreted as having criminal intent, and 3) a softer definition whereby

you feel a significant unease that something just isn't right. In all these circumstances call your local RCMP.

I will close with another little vignette from the book "March of the Mounties" by Sir Cecil Denny. I've heard numerous theories over the years about how Calgary got its name. Here is Denny's telling of how it actually came about: "On my arrival the question of a name for the Bow River Fort came up. After many had been discussed, Colonel MacLeod mentioned an old castle in the Isle of Mull that once belonged to the MacLeod clan. It was called Calgary, which he stated meant in Gallic, 'Clear Running Water.' This so appropriately fitted the waters of the Bow and Elbow Rivers that it was immediately adopted by us all. That night it came out in orders that in the future the fort should be known as Fort Calgary."

Dave Schroeder
HCRCWA Board Member

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Legion Donations Collected by Maverick Law Delivered!

Maverick Law was accepting donations to our local legions (the Cochrane Legion and Legion #78 which is the local one for Redwood Meadows, Bragg Creek, Priddis area). We accepted donations in November and between what clients and Maverick Law donated, we raised \$200. Each legion will get a cheque for \$100 each.

Karen Bruens, President of the Cochrane Legion, on the left and Linda Macaulay, President of the Turner Valley Legion, on the right, accepted the cheques from Dave Ryan of Maverick Law.

Submitted by Carmen Ryan

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Busting Myths About Osteoarthritis

by Jennifer Gordon

BSc.PT, AFCL, BA Kin

Physiotherapist, Bragg Creek Physiotherapy

www.braggcreekphysio.com

What is osteoarthritis, otherwise known as OA? In short, OA is a degenerative joint disease that affects more than 20 million people across North America. The disease gradually breaks down joint cartilage, (the protective lining at the end of our bones, that provides a smooth joint surface), nutrition, and ease of range of motion. As the cartilage becomes thin, bone spurs may form and the joint surfaces rub against each other, causing pain, inflammation, stiffness and lack of mobility. This often painful cycle can impact one's energy levels, mood, and quality of life. However, the disease is manageable once you come to understand some facts over common myths.

There are four common myths that Physio Meets Science (Brien, D.W, Chapple, C.M et al, 2019) helps to dispel. *First myth: in the case of arthritis, the joint should be protected and not loaded.* It has been found that in people with knee arthritis, low

activity is associated with a greater thinning of the cartilage lining shown on MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). Moderate running, for example, has been shown NOT to worsen the structural progression of OA over a 2 year period. In fact, there was a higher probability of an improvement in joint pain and function (not considering the degree of OA, genetics, and other comorbidities).

Second myth: the worse the imaging looks, the worse the joint is. Imaging diagnostics such as MRI and X-rays are standard tools for the diagnosis of OA. However, only 50% of the people with radiographic OA have clinical symptoms. The assessment of a person's signs and symptoms may be more clinically relevant than the imaging findings, especially with regard to therapy.

Third myth: Conservative treatments are ineffective and only capable to delay joint replacement surgery. It has been found that education, lifestyle, dietary changes and exercise are the cornerstone of conservative management. Exercise can positively influence pain, muscle function,

body weight, cardiovascular fitness, mood and disease progression.

Fourth myth: is it believed that joint replacement surgery is inevitable. Disease progressions differ from person to person and are multifactorial. Many people reach the point where joint replacement surgery is not appropriate or necessary. Not everyone is suitable for surgery and it is advisable to progress through a progressive conservative management protocol in an effort to achieve the best physical function before surgery is considered.

Busting some common myths about this disease will lead to a better understanding of OA and could contribute to better lifestyle habits for people living with this disease. Physiotherapists are well equipped with the knowledge to educate patients and implement best-practice care for the ongoing management of this disease.

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We've added more options to help you reach your New Year's fitness goals

Bragg Creek Physiotherapy has just introduced new fitness equipment to help you get a handle on your New Year's resolutions. Take a spin, row or lift your way to your fitness and health goals. Try personal training or take one of our circuit classes and let our certified personal trainer guide you to better health. Drop in and say hello, or call us for more info today.



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TRAIL TALK!

Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association

XCBC Upcoming Events

Join XC Bragg Creek Ski and Bike Society (XCBC) this winter for two fun ski events on the trails in West Bragg Creek!

Test your endurance on Saturday, February 8 with the inaugural 2.4 Hours of Adrenaline "Fruit Loops." This event is open to skiers ages 10 to 110 (and older!). The challenge is to ski as many loops as possible on the links off West Crystal Line in 2.4 hours. Individuals and teams are welcome. Find more information and registration will be up soon on zone4.ca



On March 7 and 8, 2020, the Alberta Youth Cross Country Ski Championships (AYC) return to our community for the 9th time. Skiers ages 10 to 13 from across Alberta and Western Canada will compete in both classic and freestyle events on the trails in West Bragg Creek. Don't miss the fun costume relay on Saturday afternoon! Registration for this event is now open at zone4.ca/register.

Both Fruit Loops and AYC include competitive cross country ski races on the West Bragg Creek day use area.

Our club would like to thank the volunteers and local businesses who have always supported us so generously over the years. We appreciate your help!

If you would like to get involved with Fruit Loops or AYC as a volunteer or a sponsor/donor, please contact Ann at anns@safari.ca.

Funds raised will support local athletes and the Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association grooming team.

For further information on any of these articles, or any other items, please contact info@braggcreektrails.org



This will be my last time writing in the capacity of Chamber president. Our by-laws state for the presidency role to be changed every two years, unless of course, no one puts their name forward. There have been two individuals who have put their name forward to carry this role.

At our next meeting on the 19th of February we will be conducting an election to decide who will carry this important role for the next two years as I will be stepping down.

It has been an honour and privilege to serve our community in this capacity over the past 2 years. We have endeavoured to promote Bragg Creek, its business community, and the diverse services it offers its residents and visitors. I am looking forward to continuing to focus on my businesses and be of service to this great community and area.

Our next meeting will be at the Country Wood, February 19th at 7:00 pm. It is always a great time of networking and shared initiatives.

Lowell Harder

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Bragg Creek Centre

Hello Creekers,

Did you know that the Bragg Creek Community Association will be 62 this year? That is almost half the age of Bragg Creek itself! Since 1958 the BCCA has been the core of this community. In 1968 we became a charitable organization and the original Community Hall was constructed. Sadly, 30 years later the Community Hall was destroyed by fire. September 2000 saw the grand opening of the Community Centre as you know it today and for 16 years this new Centre provided year round events, programs and services to the residents of the Greater Bragg Creek area. Then in January 2016 the Centre was tragically struck again when the fire suppression system suffered a break in the sprinkler lines causing the auditorium to flood. Due to extensive damage and upgrades required, the Centre was forced to close for 10 months. Rocky View County generously funded \$75,000 toward the repairs but the BCCA was left with costs that totalled approximately \$200,000 - draining both our operational funds and reserves. With commitment and perseverance by board members, staff, and community volunteers we have been tirelessly working to regain momentum to get our beautiful Community Centre out of the red and into the black!

Become a Member, we need you!

The Centre is the hub that brings our community together. By purchasing

a BCCA annual membership you directly contribute to the success and sustainability that keep our doors open for programs, events, concerts, church, childcare, fundraisers, community gatherings such as Remembrance Day and funeral services, the list goes on and on... buy a membership and show your support/dedication to the amazing community in which you live. Membership has its perks so call, email or visit us today to get your membership.

403.949.4277, program@braggcreekca.com
Family membership \$40/year. Senior Family or Single membership \$25/year. Senior 60+ \$15/year

Upcoming Events

Bragg Creek Performing Arts presents Hillsburn

February 8 - Doors open @ 6:30pm and Concert @ 7:30pm. Adults \$35, Senior/Student \$33

Hillsburn's indie-rock sound draws on the songwriting focus of folk music, and combines it with a pop sensibility. The band's performances are dynamic, energized, and emotive. You won't want to miss this band that is already on its way to becoming a national treasure.

Tickets available at www.bcpc.ca

Comedy Night in the Creek!

February 15 - Doors open @ 6:30pm Showtime 7pm, Tickets \$25 online, \$30 at the door

Get your laugh on! One night, 3 comedians. Join us for an evening of hilarity as we turn the auditorium into a stand-up comedy club!

Featuring: Adam Blank, Malik Ellassal and Brad Semotiuk

Tickets available at www.eventbrite.ca, Cash Bar (*This is an 18+ event)

Family Movie Night - Wonder Park

February 28, Members FREE, Non-members \$5/person

A fun night for the whole family! Have the kids dress in their PJ's, grab their pillow and a favorite stuffy so they can get comfy while you all watch a movie on the big screen. *Parental supervision required

Programs

Adult Pickleball: Tuesdays 7:30 - 9:30 pm, Drop in rates: Members \$5, Non-members \$8

Co-ed Adult Ball Hockey: Wednesdays 7:30 - 9:30pm *NEW*, Drop in rates: Members \$5, Non-members \$8

Leave the chill of winter and come in for some easy-going fun.

Bring your own plastic or fiberglass stick. *Eye protection is recommended.

Walking Club: Wednesdays, meet in foyer 10:30am, All abilities welcome, FREE

Rumble & Roar: Thursdays 9:30 - 11:30am, Member \$2/child, non-member \$5/child, coffee provided, please bring your own mug

Artsy Afternoon: Thursdays 1 - 4pm, Members FREE, Non-Member \$5

Lego Club: Feb 24, 3:30 - 4:30pm (third Monday of each month until May 18, 2020), FREE.

If you have a program or event idea or just a comment in general, email us at program@braggcreekca.com or call 403.949.4277.

Stay warm!

Your BCCA Staff and Board



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A Great Year

by Pastor Dave Zimmerman
www.braggcreekchurch.ca

I don't know why the new year needs to be set up to create anxiousness. It's interesting how after what is supposed to be a nice season of re-centering with family, gratitude, and generosity we move straight into the pressures of goals for the new year. We need to "do better", secure a corner office, lose 10 pounds and learn Portuguese. Let alone all the pressure around the unknown: Where is the economy going? What's happening on the world stage? etc. It's no wonder that many of us walk around wide-eyed and feeling somewhat hollow. Can I suggest some ancient wisdom that might actually be really relevant today in order to help us through this season even when it's SO cold? It comes from the Apostle Paul: *"Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! ...Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.*

Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise." (from Philippians 4)

Three simple practices to push back the worry, anxiousness and the pressure life seems to throw our way: *Rejoice, Replace, Reclaim.*

Rejoice is what Paul starts off with. What are you grateful for? What has brought you joy during this season? When was the last time you said thank you to God or others?

Replace is the practice from verse 6. This more about surrendering. Life happens, stuff happens that is out of our control and rather than spending more time worrying (captured in the old English phrase, "a dog worries a bone,") chewing, gnawing, over and over again, why don't we go ahead and give it to someone who can actually

do something about it? God is up all night anyway so you don't have to be. Surrender it, replace worry with prayer.

Verse 8 help us with the final practice, Reclaim. Reclaim our thoughts. This isn't a repeat of gratitude, this is now focusing on one thing right and what could be. This about taking control of our thoughts. I've heard one person compare our thoughts to an air traffic controller, some planes need to keep circling, some even get diverted to another airport if need be. Not all thoughts need to land, you can send them on. Keep only what is excellent, lovely, admirable... So how about we start the year off exercising these practices instead of all the other things crowding your life and mind.

Till next time, Dave

If you have questions or would like to go deeper into conversation, please feel free to contact Pastor Dave

Also small business owners of the area don't forget to join us for lunch Feb 26th at the Hub.



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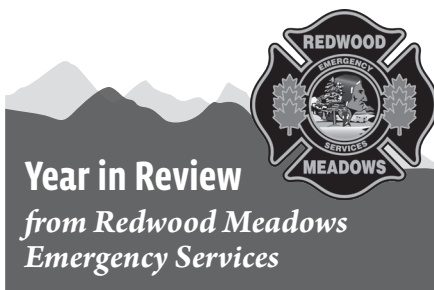
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Year in Review from Redwood Meadows Emergency Services

2019 was a busy year for Redwood Meadows Emergency Services (RMES), here's a breakdown on what we did:

Your volunteers responded to **280** calls for service throughout the year. On average, that's a call every 31 hours all year long. Responders get up from bed, watching TV, doing things with their families, or, for many, working at their paying job to answer the call. They drop everything and jump into action every time a 911 call is made in our area.

Of those 280 calls, **139** of them (or 50% of total call volume) were for medical responses to aid residents and visitors of our area. This is why we maintain Primary Care Paramedics on our staff and ensure their training is kept up to

date on everything from the current hot topics in pre-hospital care to the most mundane and 'normal' ailments or injuries we might come across.

The next most common type of call we attended was rescues, of which there were **72** (or 25% of total call volume). This includes everything from motor vehicle collisions to backcountry rescues to unlocking a car with a person (or animal) in distress inside.

Following that were actual fire responses, which numbered **37** (roughly 13% of total calls). Anything actually on fire (or a call type which could have led to a fire, i.e. alarm bells ringing) is in this category. 2019 was unusual in that there was little in the way of a dry season so we didn't see as many outdoor fires as in past years. This doesn't mean that it won't come back with a vengeance, as is plainly obvious in other parts of the world right now. We're going to continue our aggressive push for fire safety and prevention as all fire departments do.

The second-last category is hazmat (hazardous materials) responses, which counted for **6** calls or just over 2% of

the total. Things like odors of natural gas or gasoline, or illness from carbon monoxide or other gases or products are included in this category.

Finally, there were **26** (9%) calls we just can't categorize into one of the above groups. These are things such as special hazards calls (electrical problems, trees down on structures/power lines, etc), helping other agencies (assisting police with an incident, or sending our specialized gear to assist in another town or district), and general service calls (picking up debris on the road, etc).

In addition to responding to calls, RMES members attended **48** 3-hour training nights (all but 4 Tuesday nights of the entire year), and the standby shifts we staff every weekend of the year (and various holidays in between).

In total, RMES volunteer firefighters contributed a total of **13,105** hours of service in 2019. Thank you to our members' families for supporting them (and the community) through this extensive commitment.

Until next month, stay safe!

Join Us At Our Upcoming Community Events!



BRAGG CREEK
community church

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Sunday Service 10:00 - 11:30am

at Bragg Creek Community Centre

Pastor Dave Zimmerman • braggcreekchurch.ca



Ladies Bible Study

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Monthly Business Lunches

Wed, Feb 26, 11:30-1:30pm

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Movement Is Medicine!

Great news! Over the last decade there has been endless scientific research produced that goes in depth to show the many benefits of being active and developing strength in overcoming injuries and illness. Let's dive into a few components of both of those categories.

Starting with injuries: It is important to not be afraid to continue strength and exercise regimes with an injury both new and old. That being said, there are proper ways to do every movement that are both specific and non-specific to body types. It is important to see your healthcare professional to get

expert advice on which movements will provide the best care for your body.

Active care means doing something that involves you and not someone doing it for you. Some good examples of how movement can be used as medicine are: mobility exercises, strength exercises, endurance exercises, balance and even things that we all love to do like running, Tai Chi, Yoga, cross country skiing and much more. Incorporating these into our recovery phases of care allow the body to heal much faster.

We all know that exercising or going for a run is good for the heart, but, why is that and what is happening? Bringing your heart rate and breath rate up allows

more oxygen to enter the blood stream. If we think of oxygen as a nutrient, then blood that is very nutrient-dense will allow better recovery from injuries as well as strengthen the cardiovascular and respiratory systems.

On a normal breath of air, we tend to be short and shallow. Air does not enter the base of our lungs which is a very common site for disease. However, when we exercise or have active movement in our day, this forces us to increase our breath and allow the air to fill the lungs and in turn provide that rich nutrient-dense blood to enter the muscles and help strengthen them. Being active can help with many things beyond just strength. It can help by balancing hormones, improving digestion, clearing mental fogs, as well as helping with weight management. By engaging in movement and exercise we stimulate hormones such as endorphins, insulin, melatonin, oxytocin and many others. These all have different benefits and functions. Endorphins will help with decreasing stress, depression, and will help boost self-esteem. Insulin regulation will be improved and, as a result, a decrease in diseases in certain organs (like the pancreas) can occur, as well as proper utilization of extra sugars in the body, aiding in weight management.

Melatonin is released through exercise and most potently in the morning. It has the function of aiding proper sleep and helping to reduce any bad free radicals that enter the body in our daily life. Melatonin contains anti-oxidant properties which in turn help keep our organs free of disease.

As you can see, being active has many benefits, not just in muscle development, but internally with our organs.

Creating a mentality of rest and inactivity can turn into a hard habit to shake. So, if you have old injuries, seasonal discomforts, or simply lack motivation, don't wait. Take that extra step and get moving through those complaints. We at the Bragg Creek Chiropractic Clinic love to see our patients out on the trails being active. Come in and let's work together to get you moving again!

*By Ryan Derochie
Bragg Creek Chiropractic Clinic*

Bragg Creek Chiropractic Clinic

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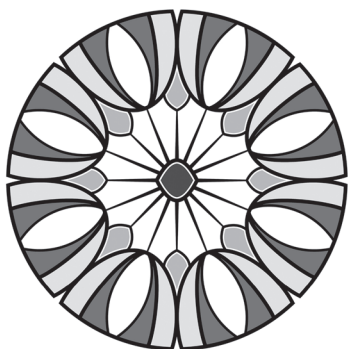
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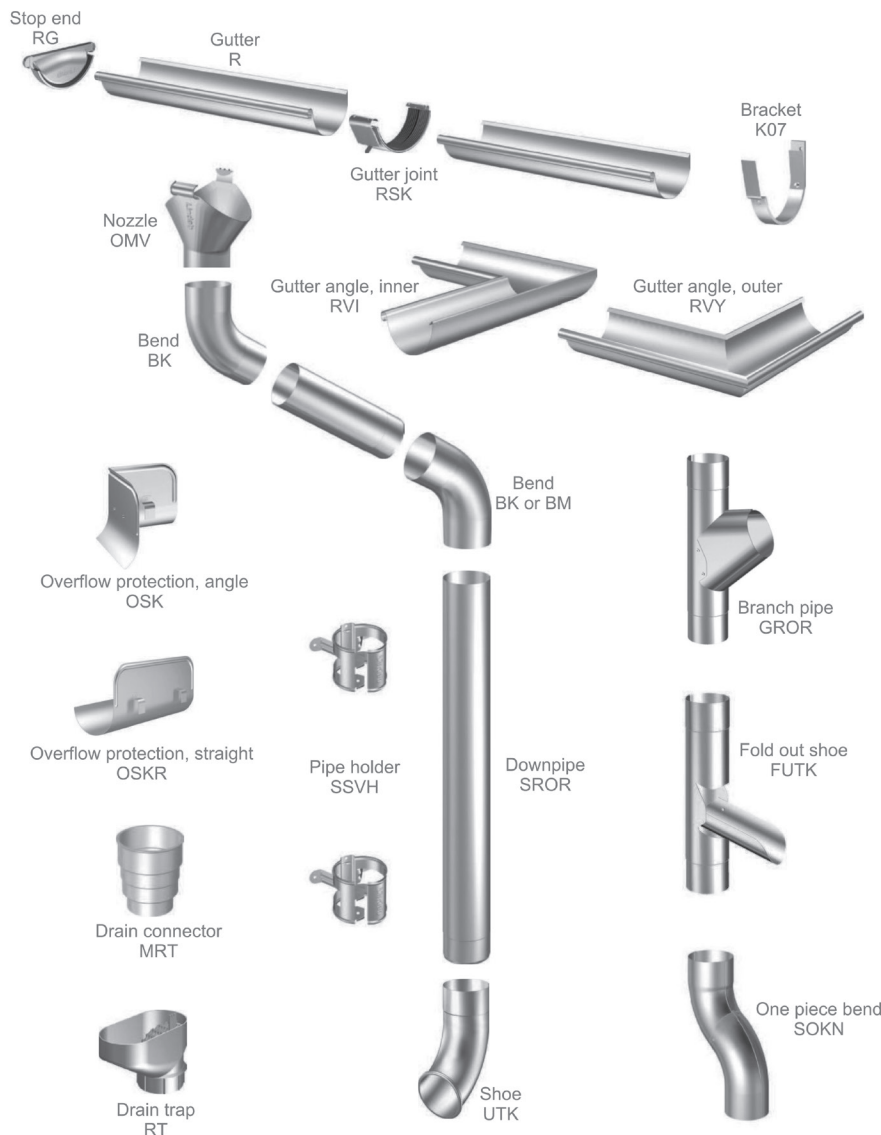
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Councillor's UPDATE

Foothills County

Suzanne Oel, Councillor, Division 4



No further Postal Address changes this year: As you may know, some areas of Foothills County have had changes to their postal addresses over the last few years. We recently checked with Canada Post to see where they are at regarding the remaining addresses. They indicated that they have completed replacing the old green mailboxes with the new community boxes and, at this time, do not plan to convert any more of the Foothills postal addresses to the 911 addresses in 2020. This may resume in 2021, but nothing is currently planned.

Critter Reminder: A number of cougar sightings in the Priddis area have been posted to Facebook recently. Any time of the year, we have a high cougar population in the west area of the County, as we live in their territory. So, just a reminder to avoid attracting the animals to your yard and thereby prevent encounters or conflicts. More info: www.alberta.ca/cougars.aspx

Light Trespass Enforcement Mechanism: At our Council Meeting on January 8, our council and administration had a discussion on how to deal with a growing issue of complaints about Light Trespass that is done with the intent to harass neighbours or consequently disturbs quality of life. While we have a Dark Sky Bylaw in place and request compliant, downward-shining lighting on all new builds, we need a means to follow through with complaints. Our Dark Sky Initiative Committee has made a lot of effort to share information and the reasons to consider choosing thoughtful lighting, by explaining the effects of light pollution on our observatories, health, creatures and country living. In no way are we diminishing a resident's right to light. Just use what is needed on the property and keep the light from trespassing, extreme brightness and offending neighbours. When complaints are received, we take action with Bylaw Officers contacting residents to advise of the concerns. However, we are looking for a more effective response, especially to address the harassment forms and bright lights showing up in the telescopes in the areas around the observatories. Some options include adding to our Dark Sky Bylaw or Land

Use Bylaw or Community Standards Bylaw. As many of our councillors have received complaints, our council conversation resulted in a request that a meeting with our solicitor be arranged to obtain a legal opinion on issues surrounding light trespass and associated enforcement. For more info on this subject, please visit: www.darksky.org/our-work/lighting/lighting-for-citizens/lighting-basics/ and www.darksky.org/light-pollution/lighting-crime-and-safety/

Airbnbs in Foothills County: Airbnb type rental agreements are currently not permitted by Foothills County and contravene the Land Use Bylaw. Our Land Use Bylaw allows for Bed & Breakfast and Secondary Suite developments, but not this short-term, usually whole-house rental aspect. At our Council Meeting on January 8, we discussed the matter as many Airbnb's are open for business here. While some are quietly operating, some are experiencing enforcement due to complaints. Resident opinion varies and can be strongly in favour or opposed. In the interest of discussing this current trend and how it may play out here in Foothills County, our council asked for administration to investigate how short-term rentals could be regulated



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by the municipality. This matter may be highly contentious among neighbours, so we will gather more information and decide if this will get onto our staff action list and then eventually lead to public consultation, or not move forward at all.

2020 Federal Carbon Tax cost to You and our Municipality: Feeling the cold from this long winter? You may warm up quickly when you check your January natural gas heating bill and see the Carbon Tax hitting you on this essential resource. Not only will you pay personally on this bill and on fuel, in 2020 the tax will cost Foothills County \$350,000 the first year and may increase to \$1,000,000 per year, ongoing. We've heard that there may be some kind of rebate, but are not sure how this is going to roll out and how much staff time it will take to deal with it. Sigh. The Alberta Provincial Government is fighting for us by bringing on the legal action. Please contact your MLA and MP to share your opinion.

Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA): is an independent association comprised of Alberta's 69 counties and municipal districts, of which Foothills County is a member. Since 1909, RMA has helped rural municipalities achieve strong, effective local government, and has provided advocacy and aggregated business services. Members meet twice a year in Edmonton to bring business forward and collaborate with the full membership, our organization and Provincial Government. Additionally, we meet twice a year with our local RMA Zone 1 members, including the 13 rural municipalities located in Southern Alberta.

For Other News & Updates:
Please visit my website: suzanneoel.com
facebook.com/councillorSuzanneOel
Best Regards, Councillor Suzanne Oel

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Priddis Early Learning Program - PELP: Open House for new registrants for the 2020/2021 school year is on Thur, Feb 6th, 6:00 to 8:00pm. An overview of the program will be provided and open general registration. Please bring the personal information sheet and \$50 registration fee to secure your spot. If there are more children than spaces available, a lottery will take place. Please check out the website or email for more information. pelppreschool@gmail.com or pelppreschool.wixsite.com/pelp/registration

Parent & Tot Playgroup: We are looking for someone to take over the coordination of this monthly event. There is not a huge commitment involved: opening up the hall, toys and play area setup and take down.

The drop-in playgroup meets the first Friday of each month at the Hall. Indoor activities include playing with tunnels, slides, an obstacle course, basketball, enjoying refreshments, etc. The next date is Feb 7th from 10:30 to 11:30am. No fee is charged to attend. If you are new to our community with a young family, this is a great way to get to know your neighbours and find out what programs are available in the Priddis area. Please contact priddiyoungfamilies@gmail.com. This event is also listed on the PCA website, www.priddisalberta.com.

Priddis Community Rink: Priddis Panther ice crews are working diligently to clear the snow and maintain the ice for everyone's enjoyment.

Helmets are mandatory. For general skating, check the Priddis website for weekly hockey practise times and shinny events.

At the Skate with Santa event on Dec 15th, Terry French, director of the Spruce Meadows Leg Up Foundation, presented a \$20,000 cheque to the Priddis Community Association for the rink rebuild. Priddis area residents are one step closer to getting their rink rebuilt thanks to Spruce Meadows.

When using the rink, please show your appreciation of this great facility by putting garbage in the containers provided.

Priddis Hockey: Priddis Panthers Pond Hockey is in full force. The Panthers are thrilled to have 100 registered participants and welcome over 25 brand new players to the sport. The ice is reserved weekday evenings for Priddis Pond Hockey practises between 6:00-8:30pm. For more information on joining this pond hockey league, contact Dave Thompson at 403.921.3640 or email priddishockey@gmail.com

The success of our community program is due to the amazing parent volunteers. A big thank you goes to our hockey parents in supporting their child's hockey participation and the re-building of the community rink this past summer.

Priddis Time Capsule: In July 1967, Priddis residents decided to commemorate Canada's Centennial with a time capsule. Three young boys from the community were chosen as stewards, being 3rd generation residents of the Priddis area. On the 50th anniversary, an official ceremony was held at the 2017 Stampede Breakfast, and two of the three stewards were available to open the time capsule, Scott Stewart and Kevin Stanton. Close to 1,000 people were in attendance that day, including Lt.-Gov. Lois Mitchell.

The PCA will be holding another Time Capsule Ceremony at the 2020 Stampede Breakfast on July 5th. If you are interested

in helping to coordinate details of the ceremony, selecting stewards, items to be placed in the capsule, etc. please contact priddissecretary@gmail.com

Renew your Membership: Don't forget to renew your membership. Family and Business memberships were due Nov 1st. Renew by printing off the form(s) online from our website. Submit it with payment by mail or drop it off at the Priddis Store. Go to www.priddisalberta.com. How easy is that?

Booking the Hall: To view or book the Hall, contact Mike, the Hall Rental Director at PCAhallrentals@gmail.com. Check priddisalberta.com for availability, pricing and updates.

Staying Connected: Did you know that along with The Priddis Community Association's webpage we have a few Local Facebook pages to keep the community connected? These are great resources for seeing what is going on in the community, asking questions, finding out about local businesses and so much more. Be sure to check out the following Facebook groups:

- Priddis Community Association
- Priddis Moms Connect
- Priddis Buy and Sell
- www.priddisalberta.com
- www.facebook.com/Priddismoms

Looking to volunteer in our community and meet new people? Many helping hands are always needed for PCA functions. Anyone interested in volunteering is requested to make their interest known to any Board Member listed on the website www.priddisalberta.com



Terry French, director of the Spruce Meadows Leg Up Foundation - next to Santa - presented a \$20,000 cheque to the Priddis Community Association for the rink rebuild in the Foothills County hamlet. Photo provided by Susan Warren.

Old Time Hymn Sing

Longview Bible Fellowship

127 Kee Drive, Longview

6:30-8:00 pm

February 23, 2020



We are now into our new year and your library has been busy with plans.

Since January, the Leighton Art Centre has turned our library into a mini art gallery with paintings by local artists. You can see their paintings till the end of February. Come and see if you can identify some of the landscapes.

The first week in February, Wednesday, February 5th from 3 to 5:30, young folk are invited to participate in a Deconstruction Laboratory where incapacitated electronic devices will be taken apart. As we all know, looking at inner workings can be very instructive. The bits and pieces will then be used in a Millarville School art class and you will be able to view their art in the library in the spring.

Of course our very own storyteller Kelley Nutbrown will be back at her usual last Thursday in the month, February 27 at 10am to tell some of her favourite stories to the preschoolers. Storytime always has something new.

Do you like to read magazines? We have two new subscriptions: *Today's Parent* and *Brain Space*. You can check out our magazines just like our books, and we are looking for some donors. Maybe you would like to donate a subscription to a magazine? If so, just call Natasha Grusendorf, our Librarian, and help our little library out.

Our library would only be open two days a week if it were not for our volunteers. If you love reading you can help keep our library available by volunteering to help. Call 403.931.3919 and leave your name and call back number. You will be welcomed.

How about some book suggestions for these cold months when being indoors is easier than being out. One of the first book clubs to be formed in our area is The Country Dozen. This month they suggest *The Gown* by Jennifer Robson. It is a novel based on the construction of Princess Elizabeth's wedding gown in 1947. It affords a unique look at postwar London. Mysteries are often a favourite genre and this month we look at the choice of the Macavity Awards. Yes, these awards are named after the mystery cat in T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* and they recognize superior mystery writing. *November Road* by Lou Berney is available in our Marigold system. A runner up was *If I Die Tonight* by Alison Gaylin and it is available in Millarville. Gaylin's book also won the 2019 Edgar awards, a mystery writers of America award named after... guess who?

Check us out at Millarvillelibrary.ca. To get to our fabulous book selection both locally and provincially, scroll down to "Your Library online."

It's easy to get a book sent to our library if we don't currently have it by using this service right from your own computer. P.S. If you check out our site you will find out just how tall the largest snow woman measured was. She was phenomenal.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to see updates.

Parent Child Assistance Program Provides Support For Mothers At Risk

With the opioid epidemic continuing to grow steadily, the Rural Foothills area has also seen the effects. McMan Calgary and Area has a unique program aimed to support our community with women who are struggling with addiction.

The Parent Child Assistance Program is a service that supports women who are pregnant as well as women who are up to 6 months post-partum. The women must acknowledge drug and or alcohol use during their pregnancies. This program offers support to women who want to parent their children and be the best parents they can, by providing early intervention services such as in-home support and community connections. By participating in the PCAP program, the risks associated with prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol reduces the possible permanent affects associated with prenatal exposure in utero.

This program is a branch of McMan Calgary and area, with an office based in the Foothills area. Originating from the University of Washington, this program is based on a three-pronged approach of relationship building, harm reduction, and trauma informed care, which has shown an 80% success rate in reducing the number of future births exposed to drugs and alcohol.

If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction you can self-refer to PCAP by contacting Christine Rachar at 403.650.9042.

Submitted by Christine Rachar

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We Are Red Deer Lake United Church!

We are Red Deer Lake United Church, an inclusive and affirming community of faith – people of all ages, perspectives, and stories, who gather to connect with God, each other, and ourselves, and find in Jesus a new way of being human and alive in the world.

Upcoming Events and Programs:

Inspired Conversations: Climate Crisis

Friday, February 21 at 7pm

FREE PRESENTATION & CONVERSATION: “The Spirituality and Ethics of the Climate Crisis” with Rev. Dr. Bill Phipps.

Climate change is no longer a four letter word – it is a spiritual and ethical matter. It prompts compelling questions about our interdependence with all life, particularly our relationship with our planetary home. Climate change has a dramatic influence on all

dimensions of our life, challenging our fundamental values, including hyper-consumption, relationships with each other and the Earth, the design of our cities and neighbourhoods, and how we understand the gift of Creation. Join Rev. Nick Coates of Red Deer Lake United Church and internationally-known speaker, activist, minister, and former head of the United Church Rev. Dr. Bill Phipps for an evening of inspired conversations on why the climate crisis is a spiritual issue we must address.

Special Music: Bluegrass & Gospel

Sunday, February 23 at 10:30am

Our music program is expanding with a number of special performances on Sunday mornings. On February 23, join us for bluegrass and gospel songs that are sure to get your toes tapping. If you play an instrument or enjoy singing, contact our Music Director Antonina Cox at music@reddeerlakeuc.com. Musical events such as this require only a short-term commitment and are great way to meet other musicians.

On The Edge Concert Series: Scott Ainslie, Renowned Blues Guitarist & Singer

Friday, March 6 at 7:30pm

Scott Ainslie is a multi-award winning blues and roots guitarist, singer and story-teller, who has spent more than 30 years exploring the roots of American music, from both sides of the colour line . . . from the old-time Southern Appalachian fiddle and banjo traditions, as well as Black Gospel and Blues. He plays a variety of acoustic instruments with affection, authority and power. Doors open at 6pm and a light supper will be available for purchase. Concert tickets are \$25 and available at redeerlakeuc.com/tickets.

Getting to Know Us

Join us for a few Sundays at 10:30am to get a sense of what it is we're about. Come early or stay after the service on Sunday – there's always coffee and community to be enjoyed. This is a safe place to explore faith and spirituality, even if you have doubts or questions. We promise to be friendly and kind.

For more information, please contact us at 403.256.3181 or office@reddeerlakeuc.com

Reddeerlakeuc.com

Sun services start: 10:30am

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February 16th • 9:15am
HOLY EUCHARIST

February 23rd • 9:15am
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March 1st • 9:15am First Sunday in Lent
HOLY COMMUNION

March 8th • 9:15am Second Sunday in Lent
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Square Butte Community

And That's Not All Folks

Join us on Friday, April 24th for a rare opportunity to enjoy the music of Murfitt & Main". These BC songwriters have been writing and performing their music for well over a decade.

"Their writing and composing brings voice to the landscapes they've travelled, the heartaches they've had (and the whiskey they've shared!). it's these common threads

which knit their music together into a rich tapestry of song and story"

Murfitt & Main have just released their third album "Little Bit Gone". After years of sharing their music in roadhouses, concerts and festivals, they are taking part in the Foothills Bluegrass Festival this spring and have added our Community Hall to their tour! Tickets are only \$20 for the concert followed by a lunch before you head home to reminisce about the music you enjoyed. Save the Date: Friday, April 24th and stay tuned for future ads and information!

Here's To Country Heroes

As a community our thoughts and prayers go out to all our neighbors and

friends who laboured to feed livestock, horses (man, they go through a lot of hay), dogs, cats and kids, and kept everyone warm while folks struggled outside to keep equipment working in the January cold snap.

Furnaces and fireplaces worked overtime to keep us comfortable as we went about the necessary routines and responsibilities in our lives. Winter soups were on the stove and long underwear came out of the closet. Hats and toques, heavy socks and felt liners were paired with woolen scarves and insulated mitts as we dressed in so many layers that we began to look like Sasquatch (maybe it's not a myth, just Prairie people trying to stay warm).

Check us out at: Squarebuttehall.com



Every second Tuesday of the month (Sept to May) at 7:30pm a speaker is arranged to talk and share their knowledge with the club. We meet at the Millarville Church house. Our next meeting is on Tuesday Feb 11, 2020 at 7:30pm. We will be learning about winter bird feeding. Kris from the Wild Bird Store will be sharing her knowledge and bringing some items for purchase. Our club sponsors a scholarship for post secondary or adults who are enrolled in courses horticulture related. You must be a resident in the Foothills county. For more info and applications, please contact Carol Poffenroth at poffenrothcarol@gmail.com. Also please remember to like us on Facebook! Whether you are a novice or expert in landscaping or gardening, join our club. It is only \$15 /year. We welcome new members. For more information email svirgo@mithril.ca or call Sheila at 403-931-3989.



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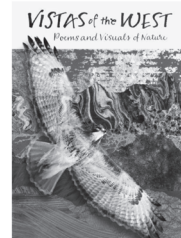
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Sheri-D Wilson, Poet Laureate of Calgary

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and no charge for members

* With funding support from Rocky View County



TURNER VALLEY & BLACK DIAMOND News

Hello, Diamond Valley. Well we survived a couple weeks of brutally cold weather in January. I'm not looking forward to my next utility bill, with the furnace going off every 15 minutes or so during that cold spell, but not much can be done about it. The kids are off school for **Family Day Week**, which is February 17-21. What does family mean to you? It doesn't necessarily mean blood relatives. It's the people you can confide in and trust, and have fun with. Hopefully this Family Day you can find some fun with the family.

During **Alberta's twice-yearly Family Fishing Weekends**, no fishing license is required. Albertans and visitors are invited to fish on water bodies with open fishing seasons (not in national parks). We went to Chain Lakes last year and ice fished, it was quite an experience. Keep in mind that fishing regulations still apply. For more information, check out mywildalberta.ca.

Sheep River Library offers Natured Kids, a program for parents and kids aged 3-5. Essential skills will be introduced to families through games, songs, and activities out in nature. Join them for one hour of fun in the sun, rain, or snow, so dress for the outdoors. This program runs Wednesdays from 12:45-1:45 Jan. 29-March 18, and again from April 22-June 10. Please register at the Library for these sessions. The phone number is 403.933.3278.

It was sad to hear that **Literacy for Life** has had to close its doors as of the end of 2019, after 20 years of operation, due to reduced funding. They have been talking with other agencies to explore ways that literacy programs can continue in the Foothills, and the Sheep River Library has stepped up to the challenge, continuing programs such as the above.

The last Tuesday of the month is **Family Fun Night at the Turner Valley School**. Sponsored by the United Church in the Valley, this is a free night with physical activities and a chance to meet with other families. The event runs from 6-7:30 and is held in the school's gym. For more information, go to UnitedChurchintheValley.ca.

Our towns sponsor a **Free Family Shiny** on Family Day. This year it will run from 10-11am at the Outdoor Rink in Black Diamond, which is up behind Oilfields High School. Helmets are mandatory on the ice. Sounds like a great way to start the day, for more info, the Arena's number is 403.933.5272.

Turner Valley Legion is hosting their annual Valentine's Day Children's Party on February 15. You must register for this event so that they can be properly prepared for it. The Legion is a fabulous place to come anytime and bring your family, no membership is required, just sign the guest book when you come in. For more info and to register your child(ren) for the Valentine's Day Party, please call 403.933.4600 or drop by.

Diamond Valley Boys and Girls Club offers a licensed preschool, after school programs, school break programs, and opportunities for teens. Their mission is "to provide a safe, supportive place where children and youth can experience new opportunities, overcome barriers, build positive relationships and develop confidence and skills for life". They have been operating since 1997 and I have heard nothing but positive remarks about the Club. To find out more, drop by, they are located upstairs from the Oilfields Arena in Black Diamond, or call 403.933.4066.

Thinking of a new furry, four-legged addition to your family? **Petsmart Charities is holding their annual National Adoption Weekend February 28 - March 1**. Come to the Petsmart in Okotoks to check it out. Or contact any one of our **Animal Rescue Societies** to adopt your life long buddy. You can look up High Country SPCA right here in Turner Valley, Okotoks Pound Rescue, Heaven Can Wait in High River, or the Cochrane or Calgary SPCAs. I have adopted all of my furry little friends throughout my life through Rescue Societies and have not regretted it once as my animals have given me unconditional love and happiness!

It is **Winter Walk Day** throughout the province on February 5th. It's a good excuse to get out into the fresh air and sun and get moving. Many of us hibernate in the cold months but it sure feels good to get out, even for just a short time. To learn more about Winter Walk Day, go to winterwalkday.ca. We are also blessed to have the Sheep River Ramblers Walk, Hike, and Snowshoe Group, through the Library, and you can walk indoors at the Oilfields High School during the week when the weather is too cold to be outside. You must sign a form and get a

visitor's pass, for more info, call the school at 403.938.4973. And Sandy McNabb up in Kananaskis Country has lots of cross country ski trails of all levels. We used to cross country ski as kids with the family and the peace and quiet, the exercise, the beauty of nature, and the family time was always a pleasure, not to mention the hot chocolate to keep you warm.

At different times of the year, we are fortunate enough to see deer, moose, elk, bear, cougar, and bobcat both in and around town, as the surrounding area contains several wildlife corridors. These corridors are important habitat for many wildlife species, and we must remember that we need to share these spaces with the original four-legged inhabitants. Usually these animals move through town without incident, however, it is important to remember that they can become aggressive if they are injured or if they feel threatened or challenged in any way, particularly if they are travelling with their offspring. **DO NOT approach wildlife. Keep your distance, and keep your pet on a leash, for your safety and theirs.** For more information, visit the following sites: Alberta Bear Smart, Cougars and Humans, or Human Wildlife Conflict.

Sheep Creek Arts Council has many different programs to keep you occupied this winter season. They offer painting, quilting, and much more. Visit sheepcreekarts.ca for a full list of programs. They are located at 133 Sunset Boulevard in Turner Valley. And right next door to the SCAC is the **Valley Neighbor's Club**. They offer floor curling, bridge, line dancing, bingo, dance lessons, and host several luncheons and other events throughout the year. Drop by to see what goes on at the Valley Neighbor's Club.

There are some great concerts this month to enjoy with your family. Beneath the Arch is putting on The Bros. Landreth on February 8. The Gift of Music Society is hosting WindSync on February 7th, and On the Edge Concert Series presents Scott Ainslie on March 6. All these shows are held in the Foothills and the cost is nominal. I have been to lots of these shows and have always been impressed with the talent being presented.

If you have any events happening in the month of March that you would like to see in the High Country News, please email me at elaine.w@telus.net. Any not for profit organizations, we would love to hear from you! **The deadline for this issue is February 15.**

Happy Family Day!
Elaine Wansleben



Longview Library

The library Board wishes you all a very Happy New Year. We hope you will make coming to the library a big part of it. We hope, too, that you will peruse our bookshelves, enjoy the art work of local artists and admire the creativity of the young children in the area.

The library's mandate is to provide a life-long learning centre for the community of Longview. Please check out the latest in fiction and non-fiction, which arrive in the library each month. We encourage you to make use of the inter-library loan system which provides great access to a vast number of books. Should you need help with this, Lynda our librarian would be very happy to help you with us.

Unfortunately, the programs slated for December had to be cancelled because of the snow. They will be rescheduled sometime in the future. Watch for these.

Good Reads:

Olive Again by Elizabeth Strout (Pulitzer Prize winner) continues the saga of our beloved Olive Kitterage. The story returns to the seaside town of Crosby in Maine. The book animates the ordinary, the special gift of Strout's. Olive touches everyone around her, and the novel is very moving and touching.

Another is *Lilac Girls* by Martha Hall Kelly. This book would appeal to lovers of Kristen Hanna's *The Nightingale* and

Doerr's *The Light We Cannot See*. It is a moving story, based on real people and events during the Second World War. The saga crosses two continents as a New York debutante finds herself extremely involved with the fate of

two Polish girls. It is to be made into a documentary to be released in August.

Happy Reading!
Sylvia Binkley, sliv@telus.net

Outside projects don't have to wait until the summer In fact, some projects are best done in the winter!

There are several methods we employ to deliver a quality project in even the worst weather:

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There are several benefits to working through the winter:

- Frozen ground means heavy equipment leaves less impact on the landscape
- Frozen ground means no mud-related problems
- Falling snow doesn't shut down a site like rain does
- Cold weather enables better outdoor carpentry as the wood isn't subject to swelling and shrinking common in the spring and summer.
- Forestry work is less hazardous and more efficient

Whether it's carpentry, excavation, pavers, natural stonework, or forestry and arborist work, consider moving forward with your project this winter and say goodbye to spring and summer weather delays!

Don't wait until spring, CALL US TODAY for a no obligation consultation and estimate!



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Pre-Listing - Test Reports & Property Inspections

If you live on an acreage and plan on selling in the near future, if at all possible, you should have and provide current well and septic tests. Having both will ensure current, accurate information is provided to potential buyers and improve the marketability of your property. There is nothing more frustrating than handling enquiries about the pumping rate or condition of an acreage water supply as it is usually the first question that comes up and it is of top concern to prospective buyers. So why second guess what the status is, or worse yet, not have any information about your well, water chemical makeup, and condition of your septic system. Even though a buyer may still do their own tests (at their expense), by you having up to date reports on these systems, you can then list your acreage and have your property promoted with confidence about the accuracy of the information and additionally improve and speed up the decision process by prospective buyers.

Another important preparation area for listing and selling your property is the condition of your property overall and how home inspections both help and frustrate the selling process.

It is useful to clarify the difference between a pre-listing home inspection and a pre-purchase home inspection although the difference may seem obvious.

Like the name suggests, the pre-listing home inspection is undertaken prior to a property being put on the market and is organised and paid for by the seller. In contrast, a pre-purchase home inspection is organised and paid for by the prospective purchaser of a property, usually once a purchase contract has been negotiated between the parties and is a condition of the purchase.

There is debate over the prudence of a seller doing a pre-listing inspection by a property seller. Some brokers and agents suggest that buyers not rely on any pre-listing inspection reports made available by a seller to a buyer as the assumption is the seller may not have rectified all faults identified in the pre-listing report or possibly the seller did not hire one of the better inspectors to do a thorough job of identifying problems that a buyer would expect their chosen inspector to find. Also the report may be stale-dated if done months or even years in advance of going to market and new problems may have arisen on the property since that time. And of course the issue of air quality, mold testing etc, may not have been covered as part of a basic pre-listing inspection.

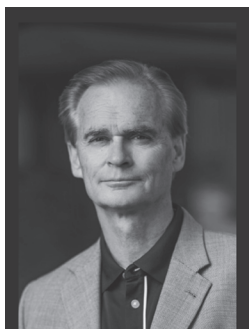
My perspective on pre-listing inspections is certainly that they can be very useful and could be informative to a prospective buyer if offered for review, but I feel a buyer should also do their own property inspection as part

of their due diligence. The main reason that I suggest that a seller consider doing a pre-listing inspection is so the seller can become aware of any issues or deficiencies in advance and hopefully rectify any significant issues as well as any smaller items as reasonable before going to market. For instance a pre-listing inspection may surface electrical, plumbing or mechanical issues, roofing problems, potential water damage or damage behind showers & baths, and even help uncover mold or material rotting issues in older dwellings.

Another significant issue the seller needs to confirm in the selling process is the type of basement structure that exists – concrete or preserved wood. If the basement walls are completely covered this may not be obvious but if you are unsure, an inspector can verify this. Many a deal has gone sideways with people assuming the basement is concrete and are surprised to find out through the inspection process that the basement is a preserved wood basement.

The advantages of a pre-listing inspection and the reason it is so important to catch faulty items and correct any issues prior to listing are twofold. Firstly, it improves the chances of a deal proceeding with a buyer not backing away because of issues found. And secondly, it can avoid downward negotiations by a buyer requesting compensation for items highlighted that the buyer would need to attend to when purchased. This is important because it sometimes happens that a buyer will over estimate the costs of repairs whereas a seller can check and compare various vendors to do any repairs in advance of listing and look for the most cost effective remedies. Also, when larger issues show up on a home inspection report for a buyer, they may consider walking from the deal if a seller will not compromise on monetary compensation.

It is my opinion that a pre-listing inspection often pays for itself in being fore-warned and fore-armed about possible problems in the home itself that could negatively affect the sale of one's home.



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SHEEP RIVER LIBRARY

"[Judith] passes The Sow's Ear [café] and tries to peer inside but the blinds are lowered. Judith even visits the library with its impressive display of local quilts hanging from the walls. (p.239)" - The Sow's Ear Café

Sometimes when reading a book, you come across an unexpected treasure: the answer to a long-held question, or the solution to a pressing mystery, or perhaps a description of a place you have been to that is uncannily accurate. Sometimes, the words just leap off the page because you realize that the description is very close to home: it is about your local library and as with the quote at the beginning of this article, the quilts are more than likely yours as well. The novel, *The Sow's Ear Café*, by local author Holly Quan, is full of many wonderful depictions of our local area throughout the year, in all its

glory. The novel, published in 2017, was the result of Holly's masters level diploma program through Humber College's Creative Writing Program. If you have not read it yet, we can put a copy from our collection in your hands.

Our winter programs are off and running with some additions to those in the program guide published last month. There is now an additional Zumba class on Monday mornings at 10:00. There is a \$5 fee for this drop in class. On Thursday, April 2 at 7:00 we have photographers and intrepid explorers Ian Wilson and Jacinthe Lavoie returning with their multi-media presentation, *Exploring Newfoundland*. This 45-minute multimedia presentation is a mix of vivid images, traditional music, and entertaining stories from colourful coastal villages, to whales playing in the surf and puffin life through the summer. After the presentation Ian and Jacinthe welcome questions and shared memories of this special place.

If you are interested in knowing how to access the e-resources that are free with your card, Jan and Gita will show you how on Thursday February 6 at 7:00. Along with e-books and audio books

there are thousands of free newspapers and magazines at your fingertips. Movies, music, reference materials and language learning can also be accessed at no cost with your library card. Come and find out what you are missing out on!

In a recent article in the Western Wheel, singer-songwriter Julia Roar made mention of the Diamond Valley Songwriters Group under the leadership of Al Doc Mehl and Eva Levesque. This group holds its monthly meetings at the fireplace in the library. If you are interested in this or any other local group that regularly meets at the library, please check our website for details.

I will leave with another quote from *The Sow's Ear Café* which aptly captures how unique our library truly is:

Lucie explains to the trio that she's new to this endeavour and doesn't have her own pair of snowshoes. *"We don't either, we borrow them from the library,"* Janet explains, *"They have an outdoor program; they organize summer hiking and winter snowshoe and ski trips, and they even have telescopes you can sign out." ... That's crazy, the library rents snowshoes. (p. 251-252)*

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A Stitch In Time Saves Nine

by Andrea Kidd



Little things go unnoticed. We have one extra day in this year. Just one day slipped in, unnoticed amongst 365 others. It will be an ordinary day, a Saturday. We won't notice it because, as usual, it will be after Friday and before Sunday. It will be an extra day in the month and in the year, but not an extra day in the week.

46 B.C. was also a Leap Year. Unlike 2020 A.D. it did not go unnoticed. Ninety extra days were slipped into the calendar that year.

Even in those days, when it was generally believed that the earth is flat and that the sun goes around the earth, the astronomers and mathematicians knew it was necessary to make adjustments. Slipping in a day here and there was necessary to keep the calendar in sync with the solstices and equinoxes. So the scholars did their calculations and advised when to insert a leap year.

By 46 B.C. these minor adjustments had not been made for many years. No one had really noticed at first. It was an extraordinarily busy time for the Roman Empire. There was territory to be conquered, governed and organized; generals were vying for superiority, slaying or poisoning a contender for power; rulers were being deposed at an alarming rate. Those that did hold power had to watch their backs for treachery. Who had time for calendar watching? Such an insignificant matter was left unattended. But by 46 B.C. that one extra day had not been inserted for so long that it required the insertion of three months to catch up.

Some had noticed that holidays were falling at odd times. Some didn't notice

because it was happening so gradually, like climate change. Certainly it was much colder in May than it used to be and grandfathers were remarking that they never used to have such hot weather in November.

But the farmers did not have a calendar on the wall. They knew what time it was. They looked at the sky, listened to the birds and the streams, sniffed the air, tasted the fruit, rubbed the wheat kernels through their fingers, examined the buds on the trees and tested the soil with a spade. They read the signs that were all about them, cues given by the animals, plants and the earth itself. They knew what to do and when to do it.

However, it was difficult to set appointments, make plans and agree on contracts. Administration was suffering.

Something had to be done! So, in 46 B.C. (though no one knew it was 46 B.C. back then because Jesus Christ had not yet been born) Julius Caesar called in a Greek astronomer and mathematician, called Sosigenes, to come up with a solution. He did the calculations and figured that an extra ninety days should the trick!

Not surprisingly, this did not go unnoticed. One extra day among 1,460 seems insignificant, ninety extra days in one calendar year seemed preposterous to many people. Cicero made a joke of it, saying that Julius Caesar was ordering the stars to rise and fall according to his new calendar.

It does pay off, in the long run, to take care of small details before they become unmanageable. As my Mum used to say, "A stitch in time saves nine(ty)!"

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The Habits of the Financially Confident by Phil Goddard



The results of the annual IG Financial Confidence Index were recently released and they revealed some common habits of financially confident Canadians that we can all learn from.

About the Index

The IG Financial Confidence Index is conducted annually in partnership with Ipsos Canada to understand Canadians' attitudes and levels of confidence towards their personal finances. IG is proud to support this effort as part of our Empower Your Tomorrow program, which builds the financial confidence of Canadians through financial literacy by conducting workshops and providing resources to groups in communities across Canada.

What the results say about financial confidence

The Index provides some great insights into how Canadians feel about their finances. The results show that having financial confidence is tied to having a plan, reviewing it regularly, and proactively adjusting it to keep up with life's changing circumstances. The financially confident demonstrate these three habits:

- 87% regularly review their finances. The point of a regular review is to make sure you always know what is in your plan and how it is performing. By staying on top of things, you eliminate surprises. And that leads to improved confidence.

- 84% feel they are securing their financial future. Having a financial plan helps you manage finances today and keeps you on track to secure your future.

- 86% feel they are making good financial decisions. Every purchase, every payment, and every investment is an example of a financial decision. It's easier to feel confident about each one when there is a plan guiding all of your choices.

Your financial confidence and well-being

IG believes that we all benefit from greater financial literacy and the confidence it can bring. From the proactive service we provide to our clients to the workshops we conduct in communities across the country, to the charities we support, our goal is to give everyone the tools they need to enjoy all of life's possibilities.

That's also why we created the IG

Living Snapshot This easy-to-use online tool is for people who do not yet have a comprehensive financial plan but are keen to understand their level of financial well-being. Encourage family and friends to take the quiz so they can see where they stand today and how they can be more financially confident tomorrow.

Please feel free to contact Phil Goddard and he will show you how to access this tool & quiz and let you know what to look for.

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The Importance of Furnace Maintenance

The Importance of Regular Maintenance

You know that your car requires regular maintenance. You get the oil changed, rotate the tires, have the fluid levels checked, and complete other basic maintenance tasks regularly without waiting for something to go wrong with your car. So why wouldn't you do your furnace the same courtesy?

Far too many homeowners ignore the importance of regular maintenance for their HVAC system and simply wait until there's a problem to get repairs.

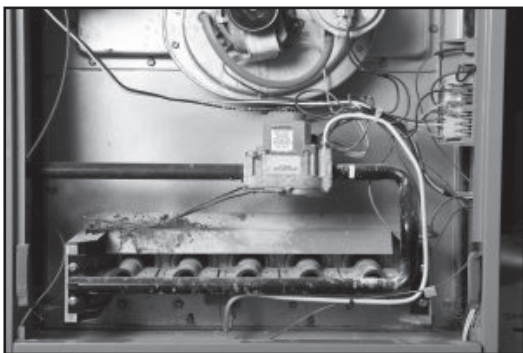
Here's why regular, annual furnace maintenance is so important for your furnace.

You're Dealing with Gas

The majority of furnaces in homes use gas to heat the air that's being pumped into the living spaces. When you're dealing with gas that's potentially dangerous like carbon monoxide, you really shouldn't cut any corners. Even if your furnace seems to be working

just fine, it could be leaking carbon monoxide into your home. Not only is carbon monoxide a combustion hazard — a single spark could set off an explosion if there's enough of the gas — but it is extremely dangerous to your family's health as well.

Exposure to carbon monoxide can cause headaches, dizziness, nausea, and long-lasting health problems, as it impacts the body's ability to get oxygen to the brain. In large amounts, carbon monoxide can even cause your organs to shut down and lead to death.



If you're having your furnace checked annually, an HVAC expert can check for cracks in the heat exchanger or any issues related to the pilot light and

igniter. They can also check current carbon monoxide levels around your furnace. Of course, even with regular maintenance, you should still have a carbon monoxide detector in your home for your family's safety.

Your Furnace Is More Efficient

A furnace that receives annual tune-ups is simply more efficient than one that gets ignored. During annual

tune-ups, your furnace's motors will be oiled to run more smoothly, filters will be checked and replaced, and your thermostat will be checked to ensure it is functioning accurately. All of these things can make your furnace more efficient, which allows it to operate using less energy and lowers your utility costs.

Your Furnace Lasts Longer

Just like performing routine maintenance on your car helps it to last longer, annual tune-ups for your furnace can prolong its life. Any parts that are wearing out can be replaced to prevent breakdowns and other expensive issues. And, because your furnace is working more efficiently, it's not straining to keep your home warm; less strain on the HVAC unit means a longer life for all of its parts and the unit as a whole. This can save you even more money in the long run, as you won't have to replace that furnace as frequently as you would without maintenance services.

When to Get It Checked

Now that you understand why regular maintenance is so important for your furnace, you might be wondering when the best time to do it is. Considering the extreme cold weather we just experienced, you should get it checked now to ensure it is efficient, safe and running well to take you into spring!

by Carla Berezowski,
Home Comfort Expert

Carbon Monoxide Debilitates, Kills

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How Is Your Mind Health: Why Do We Beat Ourselves Up?

To clarify, I mean with our words to ourselves. How many times during your day are you telling yourself:

How smart you are.

How amazing you are.

What a great job you are doing.

That you can do anything you put your mind to.

How beautiful you are.

How important you are.

What an inspiration you are.

Most people do not spend any time at all recognizing themselves for all they are doing. In fact, they tend to be looking at all of the areas in their life where they are lacking. If you looked at the thoughts going through your brain on an average day do you tend to bring yourself up, or knock yourself down?

It is so easy to look for areas in your life that you have not mastered yet and tell yourself that you are not good enough, that you should be working harder, if it was really important, you would do it. We tend to latch on when someone tells us we didn't do something good enough and then tell ourselves that we suck at doing that thing.

When you look around the world, which is so easy now with technology, we see glamorous people. Wealthy people. Fit people. Smart people. People who are changing the world. We look at our Facebook friends and see how happy their worlds are and everything they are accomplishing in their lives. We look at our neighbors and see their bigger houses. Driving down the street we see the people with exotic cars. We observe all of the vacations being taken, the jet-setting happening around the world.

It is very easy to forget that life is still 50/50: 50% good, 50% not so good. You see all the good happening for others and can fall into the trap of comparing and thinking you come up

short, which is natural. It happens to everyone. We are human, and therefore it's in our nature.

It happens in our everyday life. We forget to do something and we make it mean we are forgetful. We argue with our family, friends or co-workers and make it mean we aren't nice. We judge ourselves because we didn't get a "perfect" on our project and we make it mean we aren't smart enough. We go into debt and make it mean we are terrible with money and will never be financially secure. We over-eat when our goal is to lose weight and we make it mean we will never be able to lose weight. Others are better at parenting. Others have better kids. Others' relationships are better.

Whatever you are telling yourself, not all of it has to be true. We create these stories that make us feel terrible and we think we are just telling ourselves the truth, but we aren't. They are just thoughts...thoughts that rumble through our minds because we have been practicing them for years.

You have to know that your ideas about what is healthy, and right, and correct and how you take care of yourself are just your opinions. It is only a version that you have created in your mind. A story that you tell. A story you choose to believe. What if everything thing that you have done and everything you haven't done is perfect and part of the journey you were supposed to have? It doesn't mean that you don't try to do things better or keep trying to accomplish new things, but you let go of all of the negative self-talk you give yourself because it doesn't help and just makes you feel bad. As long as you are in love with an idea of you, then you miss out on the real you.

So notice when you are not being as nice to yourself, as patient with yourself, as loving to yourself, and give yourself a bit of a break. Think of what you would tell your best friend, and try telling that to yourself instead.

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Having The Talk

by Roché Herbst, M. A. R. Psych.



ADHD Diagnosis – Now What?

When a child receives an ADHD diagnosis they often take home a prescription for medication and maybe a hand-out titled “What is ADHD”? That’s it. Rarely do they get a clear, fact-based explanation of what it means to them. As a result, many children, teens and parents feel confused, stigmatized and ashamed of the diagnosis.

How To Explain It To Your Child

Be positive in your approach. You may have to modify this general

explanation of ADHD based on your child’s age and cognitive ability. The part in your forehead is the ‘operating system’ of your brain. It’s developing a few years slower than the rest of your brain. Everyone’s brain has things that are easier or harder to learn. If you’re playing Minecraft on a 2016 computer, it may be “glitchy” because it’s an older operating system. ADHD is kind of the same thing. The operating system of your brain is playing catch-up and makes it harder for the rest of your brain to do certain things. I know you can tell time, but feeling time is different. When you’re doing something you really enjoy, it might feel like you’ve only done it for a few minutes when you’ve actually been at it for half an hour. On the other hand, having to do something like take out the garbage actually only takes five minutes. For you it could feel like it could take half an hour because it’s not interesting.

Use Your “Brain Coach”

This is a term used for self-directed talk which does not come naturally to ADHD children when compared to their typically developed peers. Your brain coach is the voice in your brain that helps you get through things that are boring or difficult; to figure out what to do next; to identify what is a little, medium or big problem; to think about someone else’s thoughts before you say or do things. Have you ever yelled at your parents and realised afterwards that it was actually a small problem and then you feel bad afterwards? Your brain coach is like a YouTube video where you can see five seconds into the future. ADHD can turn its volume down.

Downside Of “Sugarcoating”

Be direct and help them to advocate for themselves. Most children will come to realise that ADHD is not a ‘super power’ or a ‘gift’, given the challenges it presents. A super power is not something you need or take medication in some instances for in order to manage your daily activities. However, I do acknowledge the ways that hyperfocusing and abundant creativity can be helpful.

How They Can Tell Their Peers

Give children the language to explain their ADHD. If not, they can turn it into negative, self-defeating comments onto themselves. The idea is to take the focus away from your child and to focus on their behaviour within the context. For example “my brain makes it hard for me to picture what I’m supposed to be doing and to pay attention to things that I’m not interested in.”

How To Tell Family And Friends

I often hear ADHD is just an excuse for bad parenting. This is false. Simply explain that ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition. It means that the frontal lobe or the ‘self-control’ part of the brain is developing about three years behind the rest of the brain. You can’t speed up the development of the frontal lobe by being stricter, or by punishing, or by telling a child to try harder. If your child had autism (which is also a Neurodevelopmental condition), would others be saying this?

Sources:

Saline, S. & Markhaam, L. (2018). *What your ADHD Child Wishes You Knew*.

Price, S.E. (2015). *ADHD: How to Parent a Happy, Healthy Child With ADHD*.

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Mortgage Matters

By Candace Perko, Mortgage Broker

Top Mortgage Stories of 2019

Liberal Government Launches First-Time Home Buyer Incentive

Love it or hate it, the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive—or FTHBI for short—was likely the second-most referenced term after “stress test” since the program was first announced in March. The incentive was launched in September and provides first-time buyers with an interest-free down payment contribution of up to 10% in exchange for giving up a matching percentage equity share in their home.

RRSP Home Buyers’ Withdrawal Limit Increased

At the same time the FTHBI was unveiled in the Liberals’ spring budget, it was also announced that the RRSP

Home Buyers’ withdrawal limit was being raised to \$35,000 from \$25,000. The changes to the program also allow first-time buyers in the same household to combine their withdrawals to access up to \$70,000 for their down payment, and starting in 2020 the program will be eligible to those who split from their spouse or common-law partner, even if they are not first-time buyers.

2019 Closes Without a Bank of Canada Rate Cut

Floating-rate mortgage holders hoping for a Bank of Canada rate cut this year were left disappointed as the bank sat on the sidelines leaving the overnight target rate at 1.75%. A strong domestic economy was enough to outweigh concerns over a slowing global economy and trade tensions throughout the year. The odds of a rate cut have been continually pushed further out, and market odds now only suggest a 30% chance of a cut by mid-2020, according to Westpac.

Falling Mortgage Rates

Those shopping for a mortgage towards

the latter half of the year were treated to fixed rates near two-year lows—even below most variable rates. Qualified borrowers shopping for an insured 5-year fixed rate in September could find rates as low as 2.39% vs. 3.24% in January. That’s a savings of \$43.14 per month per \$100,000 of mortgage, or more than \$4,000 over the five-year term. Economists at National Bank said the “free-fall in financing costs” seen this year was the most substantial since the third quarter of 2010.

Real Estate Recovery

With housing supply at record-lows and prices rebounding in most parts of the country, 2019 can be called the turnaround year for Canadian real estate. Home sales improved more than expected over the second half of 2019, and were on track to complete the year with a total of 486,000 sales—a 6.2% increase from 2018. Average home prices were also on track to end the year at around \$500,000, up 2.3% from 2018, according to the Canadian Real Estate Association.

Source: Canadian Mortgage Trends



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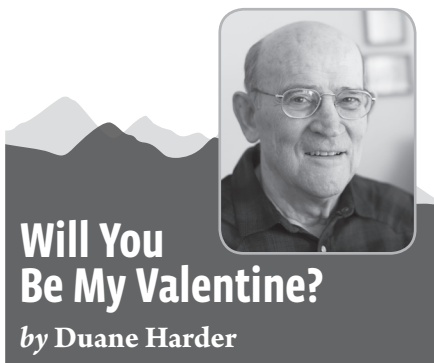

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For Charlie Brown, Valentines was a stressful time. His mailbox would remain empty without any Valentine cards. The pain of his loneliness and rejection would drive him to Lucy, his trusted psychiatrist, who, for 5 cents, would provide the necessary therapy.

Charlie Brown isn't the only one in our world who deals with loneliness and rejection. Just recently I read of a farm in upstate New York that offers visitors a "Horse and Cow experience." The "experience" consists of spending quality time petting, brushing, and even cuddling the animals.

Charlie Brown got a great deal. The animal experience cost \$300 for 90 minutes. But, we are told, the potential benefits are wonderful. The horses and cows at Mountain Horse Farms can, and I quote, "*feel your happiness, sadness or anxiety... these animals will respond to you without any judgment. The results will*

be relaxation, healing, awareness, comfort, mindfulness, improved assertiveness and confidence."

There you have it, Charlie Brown, for \$300 you won't have to put up with Lucy's homespun psychology. You can get help right from the "horses' mouth."

Mountain Horse Farms is just part of a growing trend where people are looking to animals to fill the loneliness vacuum of their lives. In fact, United Airlines recently announced it is limiting "emotional support" animals to dogs and cats. That policy change came in response to complaints from passengers and crew members about all of the "emotional support" pigs, turkeys, ducks, and even a peacock or two biting people and soiling the cabin.

Do animals have a role in dealing with past trauma? Yes they do. On one of my trips into Germany I was asked to see a young lady who had been through significant emotional, physical and sexual trauma. The rebuilding of trust began at an equestrian center.

The former U S Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy observed that we are in the midst of a "loneliness epidemic," which is causing a "*reduction in lifespan similar to that caused by smoking 15 cigarettes a day, and it's greater than the impact on life span of obesity.*"

In spite of all our social media platforms, we are lacking meaningful personal connections with other people. The

cure for loneliness isn't company, it is meaningful connection.

Unfortunately, we are part of a culture that is obsessed with individualism and personal autonomy. Back in 1979, a sociologist, Robert Bellah, set out to study the "habits of the heart" that defined the lives of the average American. After interviewing several hundred people he saw some emerging patterns. Most of them had no sense of community or social obligation. They saw the world as a fragmented place of choice and freedom. He called this "ontological individualism." He divides "ontological individualism" into two categories: expressive individualists and utilitarian individualists. The expressive individualists luxuriate in vivid personal feelings and rich life experiences while the utilitarian individualists seek meaning in the calculated pursuit of material interests. The two groups have one thing in common: LIFE IS ABOUT ME!

We live in a society where far too many are alienated, anxious, despairing, and lost. The real solution is not to pay \$300 to cuddle an animal. We need to re-engage with people.

A doctor referred a woman to me with the diagnosis of clinical depression. After two sessions I said to the woman, "I have a new prescription for you. I want you to select three seniors' homes and visit each one once a week. Learn all you can about the family, interests and life work of two people from each home. Do this for three weeks and then make another appointment." The lady "balked" at her prescription but finally agreed to "give it a try." When she returned in three weeks she walked into my office with a smile. She said, "Thank you, you helped me get out of myself."

Well, Charlie Brown, maybe you need to stop looking for Valentines in your mailbox and start depositing messages of encouragement, hope and appreciation in the mailboxes of others. May I encourage you to think of three people that could use a word of encouragement, an expression of appreciation or an acknowledgement of work well done. Take the time to send them a note and help brighten their day.

Happy Valentines to each of you!



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Out of the Rut *Chapter 113*



When I was six, we moved to Iran. The unknown. Blistering heat. Desert sands. Mystical monuments. Silver, turquoise, golden jewels. Dark eyes, hidden faces. Incense, Sumac.

An interminable plane journey. Short flights take us from London bouncing across Europe, finally landing in Abadan. The plane door opens and I am buffeted back by the dank hands of the night. The air here has a personality, it heaves with the immense subsiding heat of the day and hums with dust of the million motes swept between sand and sky. We are bundled into a waiting car and I fade rapidly in the arms of my parents, the endless black all around us... I surface to a semi-consciousness, feeling the vibrations change beneath me and the sudden movement of a different flavour of air across my lips. My eyes open slightly and I am aware of passing between two tall gates and skirting the edge of a dry fountain, its five-pointed concrete walls only a few inches high. The container is painted blue, but no water graces its face. Only seconds later we creak to a halt. This is our new home.

I blink and curl back deeper into sleep.

I blink and wake.

Everything is strange. The air tastes strange. The background noises are all unfamiliar. I hear a hum, something electric running somewhere? I hear the muted voices of a man and woman, but I cannot make out the words. Where is my Mum?

I throw back the sheet and light blanket that covers me and swing my feet to the floor. Glabrous beneath my toes, surprisingly warm, the tiles stretch the length and breadth of the room. They are softly speckled, light blue-grey. A window is shaded with a nondescript covering and I swing it aside to reveal blinding sunlight. Dropping the shade again, I turn and pad softly through this house, conscious of my breath filling my ears. Where is my brother?

The voices become rounder, fuller, and suddenly alive before me, my Mum and Dad are there! I run into their arms as we greet each other and the world drops into a semblance of normality for a moment.

We are in a village of maybe a dozen houses. The perimeter demarked by a 12-foot high chain-link fence. To keep out the jackals... and the nomad tribes. Beyond the fence I see naught but an endless, vast expanse of dirt and sand. There are small undulations and hillocks, the occasional tumbleweed, but other than that, nothing. Inside the fence, small bungalows are dotted about the carefully concrete-edged road. There is a eucalyptus tree in our back yard and very little in the front. Hedges delineate territory and a great metal tank with spider legs and a ladder rises up from the ground beyond our house. Rose bushes transplanted by previous enthusiasts dot the area before the front door. The heat is intense.

All the families here are ex-pats. Germans, Americans, English. We make friends and enemies. Most of us under the age of 10 get on well. I don't know what it's like for the adults. We don't like Mark Lidyard though. He and his mother, pale, pale-skinned with red hair and an abundance of freckles, so eminently unsuited to this climate. Their strangeness – none of us had seen colouring anything like that before – compounded by an inability to act like the rest of us. Small children in packs, vicious little things... we hide behind the denser bushes along the village road, hands loaded with mud bombs crafted from dirt beneath the nearest stand-pipe. As Mark walked innocently home, he was bombarded by a bunch of shrilly protesting kids, a bunch of hoodlums who scarpered right quick and were thin air before anyone else could catch a breath.

When school came around, we loaded onto a small bus. We sat on skin-scorchingly-hot plastic seats at the back, cradling our cheap carcinogenic plastic bottles of tepid water. My bottle was crimson, a latticed and lumpy imitation of woven reeds. The smell of cheap plastic lives in my nostrils. School was at the Sugar Plantation... somewhere not so far away, across a stretch of barren desert, within the confines of another, much larger, fenced village. I enter into another concrete building, finding my way to a small desk in a room that looks like a classroom. There is a great clock on the

wall before me, but it does not function alone. The teacher uses this to instruct us how to tell the time. She teaches things I already know. I'm bored.

Back home, in the afternoon, we go to the pool. Two minutes to walk down the road from our house to the Club House, where in days to come we will spend much time eating, socializing, playing snooker, admiring Persian jewellery, saying goodbye. Behind the Club House, a sauna and swimming pool. It is 115F outside and some days we are cooler on leaving the sauna than sitting in it.

There is a tame antelope tethered on the sparse grass beyond the pool and we play with her. We run the standpipe at the bottom of the slope beyond the pool and sit in the crater of cool mud we create. It is blissful. Walking back across the tiles by the pool blisters my feet. I'm too hot.

Later, sitting by the pool dangling feet in the sandy murky waters, my Dad draws a smiley face in livid pink lipstick all across my back. He takes a photo. The men from the mill dive into the pool and lark around racing and splashing. They build a human pyramid on the flat surface just before the base of the pool dives sharply into the deep end. I climb the limbs of these men to stand at the top, the fairy at the top of the Christmas tree! I dive into the deep end of the pool to the amusement of all.

Some days the water is so dark with sand that I cannot see my hand if I put it just below the surface. A frog hops in from the side and we watch its progress by tracking the bubbles it leaves bursting through the water's slick skin.

Some days it is so hot it is impossible to move. We stay inside, flat out on the cool tiles that line our house. We get a cat. My Dad is not an animal lover, but he is fascinated by cats' ability to land on their feet. The kitten is taken into the master bedroom held upside-down a couple of feet above the bed and dropped. She lands on her feet and looks at him "what's up with that?" She is called Kitty.

Out back is a vegetable garden of sorts. The black ants are the size of my little finger. I sit in the crook of the eucalyptus tree out back chewing on fat cucumbers straight from the earth. The contrast of heat and the cool soothing flesh of the fruit is incredible. I am a koala.

Some things never change.

*With gratitude and love, Kat Dancer
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