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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

January sure made up for the mild start to the winter. As the month closes off, we can bask in the warmth of the chinook that will tease you with spring - winter has a cruel sense of humour. Having been dis-owned by my dog for dragging her along on a few cold weather walks, she has since forgiven me, and willing to trust that the walk will be enjoyable once again.

Although my dog's memory seems to be short and can't remember the offence of the cold, us humans seem to find it hard to let go of the icy grasp of unforgiveness. Re-extending the hand of trust is a



Northern Flicker in Black Diamond
Photo submitted by Rae Jamieson

challenge as the fear of old hurts paralyze us. Holding onto past offence hinders us from experiencing the fullness of what life has to offer. The beauty of community is that we don't have to walk this path alone. Allowing others into our places of vulnerability can bring healing.

As you work and live within your community, hopefully you can take a lesson from your pooch, and forget the offence of yesterday, living fully in the present moment and wag your tail in anticipation of tomorrow, (with a nap in between of course). Enjoy this month and celebrate the relationships you have.

The High Country News seeks to connect members of the community with one another. I trust you will enjoy the articles and updates from the various organizations and businesses that faithfully contribute. If you appreciate an article, please let me know and I will pass on the message. If you know the author, let them know directly. Words of encouragement can inspire people to keep writing. We are 100% funded by the local businesses that advertise in the paper. Let them know your appreciation for maintaining their support. We are one of the last community papers in Canada that are truly independent.

*From my family to yours,
Lowell Harder*



COVER ARTIST PROFILE

Liz Kohut-Sandau is a native Calgarian currently residing in Rockyview County with her husband and many animals. A retired nurse, Liz spends much of her free time exploring the mountains with her husband and friends, all the while not losing site of her passion for horses.

Having participated in different genres of English riding since an early age, she recognizes the partnership one makes with their horse and also appreciates their free-spiritedness. Such passion is what led Liz to paint the 'spirit' horse. Her painting reflects the exuberance, beauty, and playful nature of the horse in its natural setting.

This is Liz's first painting at an 'action art' class in Calgary. Action art refers to letting go and being passionate with big strokes to create an expressive work of art. The painting is acrylic on canvas. Liz can be reached at spiritcrossing@gmail.com.

We are looking to feature local amateur and professional artists or photographers. Now that we have a colour publication our ability to feature your work is better than ever. Submit your work to info@highcountrynews.ca We are looking forward to seeing what you create.



HIGH COUNTRY LIFE

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MP UPDATE - FOOTHILLS

John Barlow

Saving Canada's Natural Health Products

For months, I have received thousands of letters and emails from constituents who are deeply concerned about the regulatory change at Health Canada pertaining to Natural Health Products and Supplements.

Last month, my Conservative colleague, Alberta MP Blaine Calkins, introduced a Private Member's Bill which would amend the Food and Drugs Act. This bill would reverse the changes made by the NDP-Liberal government in its omnibus budget bill, Bill C-47, earlier this year. It would return natural health products to the status quo, ensuring these products are not classified as therapeutic products, like synthetic drugs, and are therefore not subject to the same regulatory regime as other drugs.

Previously, natural health products were classified separately from pharmaceuticals due to the minimal risk they pose to their users. However, after the NDP-Liberal coalition passed Bill C-47, bureaucrats in Health Canada can now implement their own self-care scheme, which, according to the Natural Health Products Protection Association, will reduce choice, increase costs for consumers and drive businesses, investment, and product development out of Canada.

The existing regulations already keep Canadians safe. As such, Conservatives are urging all members in the House of Commons to listen to their constituents and the overwhelming amount of correspondence they receive and vote for this essential, common-sense Conservative Private Member's Bill.

After eight years, enough is enough. It is time to undo the damage done by Bill C-47, kick out the gatekeepers and save our supplements and vitamins.

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COUNCILLOR UPDATE ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

Don Kochan - Division 2

Hi everyone, the following Division 2 information is for your use:

Petro –Canada relocation proposal – An Area Structure plan (ASP) and Land Use Redesignation application for the property located at 33019 Township Road 250 (subject property) has been presented to administration. The subject property is located at the southwest corner of Range Road 33 and Township Road 250. The proposed land use application will seek a land use redesignation of the subject property to redesignate the lands from the current Special, Public District (S-PUB) to the proposed Commercial, Highway District (C-HWY) to permit the future development of an integrated energy centre. Planning advises that they are finalizing the review of all the submitted documents to be circulated with Circulation Agencies and Circulation Area as per Policy C-327. Administration has just received the Applicant's submission for the Master Site Development Plan (MSDP) application; Administration must include the MSDP submission together with the initial applications, which are the Redesignation and amendment to the Area Structure Plan. A Council date is still not yet determined at this time as the application is still within the initial stages. The standard process timeline for applications such like this is 6-10 months. If you would like to provide comments on the application, please send them to Bernice Leyeza at BLeyeza@rockyview.ca

Springbank Park For All Seasons (SPEAS)- A presentation was provided by SPFAS at the Recreation Governance Committee on December 6th. SPFAS proposes to build a Multi-Use Gymnasium Facility that would serve additional indoor recreation needs of the Springbank region. The proposed Multi-Use Gymnasium Facility, that includes Volleyball, Basketball, Pickleball Courts, a walking/running track, a possible Training Area for teams and a 2nd story on the front end where the change rooms are proposed to be located. The project also includes adding



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Artificial Turf to the current Football Field. The Gymnasium (Multi-Purpose) facility is proposed to be located just east of the existing SPFAS hockey arenas on Springbank road. This is in close proximity to other community recreation facilities, utility services, etc. The Artificial Turf Football (Sports) Field would be located just north of the Springbank Community High School, and it would serve as a multi-use sports field.

Since this proposal is close to meeting the requirements of the phase 2 portion of the Springbank Communities Facilities business case the following motion was approved by the committee.

That the Recreation Governance Committee direct Administration to continue working with Springbank Park For All Seasons to develop the concept presented at the December 6, 2023 Recreation Governance Committee meeting into a plan that is at the same level of detail as the Phase II of the South Springbank Community Facilities – Business Case Plan, including identifying needs for a community use gymnasium through a business case.

TransCanada Hwy. and RR33

Interchange – The Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors, Devin Dreeshen, has indicated how upgrading this interchange will allow the area to continue to develop and provide for a safer access to and from Highway 1. His ministry has requested an additional 19

million dollars be considered as part of the provincial capital planning process that is currently underway. The provincial capital budget approval is expected in the spring of 2024. With this additional funding the total project funding shall be in place. The engineering design for the interchange is expected to commence in the first half of 2024.

Stoney Trail Opening – On December 18/23 Premier Smith and Minister Dreeshen have opened Stoney Trail in its entirety. The opening provides the much-needed relief of not having to endure excessive detouring during Stoney Trails construction.

On another note, the Government of Alberta is transferring the portion of 101str. from Lower Springbank Road south to Hwy 8 to the County from the City of Calgary. The portion of 101street north of Lower Springbank Road would remain with the City of Calgary.

Utilities Review – On January 9th, Council passed a resolution to retain an independent consultant to undertake a complete utility financial modeling and technical assessment of the Water, Wastewater and Storm Drainage Systems operated by Rocky View County. The report is expected to be presented in the second quarter of 2024.

Wishing you the best in 2024!

Don Kochan - Deputy Reeve - Division 2
Councillor - kochandiv2@gmail.com



MLA UPDATE - BANFF/KANANSKIS

Sarah Elmeligi

February already! The first month of the year is always a little different than the rest. For my colleagues and me, January was time to take a breath and think about the year ahead. Spring legislature session starts this month, and we want to strategize and be prepared. Reinvigorated after the holiday break, we're ready for the next big push as we represent Albertans and their interests in Edmonton.

As you may recall, the last week of legislature was very intense as I joined my colleagues in the Official Opposition to push the UCP to prioritize the needs of everyday citizens. Unfortunately, we saw the government insist on passing legislation that we nick-named the Gravy Train bills. These removed the spending limits on gifts MLAs can receive and axed salary caps for boards and commissions. It's an unfortunate irony that this is what our government decided to do in their final hours before Christmas when they knew so many Albertans were struggling to put gifts under the tree.

A major focus for us this month has been housing, a crisis that is affecting renters, owners, and property owners alike. While the striking images we've seen of homeless encampments being cleared in the middle of a deep freeze are hard to get through, this is a problem that can truly hit any Albertan. My hardworking colleague, Janis Irwin, MLA for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, has put forward Bill 205, the Housing Security Act. The Bill proposes an immediate cap on rent increases of two per cent per year for two years.

While high rents are often associated with cities, I know that many in small towns and rural areas are struggling as well. On January 17, I joined Janis at an online consultation where we heard the concerns of Albertans of all backgrounds. We know that Bill 205 doesn't address every aspect of the housing crisis, but it's an important first step – first of many.

In the past few months, I've also learned a little more about how MLAs can work together across party lines to best serve the people of Alberta. We're all there to serve our constituents and it's been great to develop positive relationships with other MLAs whose constituents face similar issues to ours. Question Period is a bit of political theater, but there are opportunities to get work done more behind the scenes. My job is to represent the people of Banff-Kananaskis and I will work with anyone who will help me to do that!

This dry warm winter has already got all of us talking about summer. My colleagues and I have to already started with Ministers about wildfire preparedness and drought relief. With a Members Statement and a letter to the editor, I'm working to bring forward the needs of our communities and secure government support for firesmart programs and wildfire support. We know that we're heading for another significant drought, which will intensify wildfire risk. What we need to do now is get prepared. I have been working on actionable strategies with Heather Sweet, Opposition Critic for Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development, and will continue to prioritize this throughout spring.

Every email that you send, phone call to my office, or conversation we have at an event helps me understand my constituents and their needs more. Especially during this time of planning and strategizing, I want to hear from you! What should I talk about? Which issues should I raise when I and our

province's eighty-six other MLAs gather in Edmonton this spring? Write me a letter or an email, or come by the Banff-Kananaskis Constituency Office. Encourage your friends and family to do the same, no matter what the issue is.

Though I'll be up in Edmonton at the legislature Monday to Thursday when sitting resumes, I'll also be resuming MLA on Tour this month and hope to see you soon!

Sarah Elmeligi



MLA SARAH ELMELIGI BANFF-KANANASKIS

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Sunday, Feb 4 | 12:00 - 2:00
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Thursday, Feb 8 | 5:30
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Canmore Civic Centre

Sunday, Feb 11 | 10:00 - 12:00
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Sunday, Feb 11 | 2:00 - 4:00
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COUNCILLOR UPDATE ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

Kevin Hanson - Division 1

Quick Bits

The official opening of Abrio Place in Airdrie is January 31st, from 2-4pm. The public hearing matter for adding swimming pools as a permitted use to Direct Control District-13 (Elbow Valley) was refused by Council. It was a good education session for my colleagues to understand the complexity of Elbow Valley condo and management structures. Council approved Economic Development Initiatives grant policy C-350 which provides guidelines for funding our two active Chamber of Commerce - Bragg Creek and Langdon, with other Business Associations included on a Council-approved basis.

Bragg Creek Firesmart Committee

Four members at large have been appointed to the Bragg Creek Firesmart Committee: Liz Breakey, Mark Kamachi, John Morris, and Rod Saville. A fifth member at large remains to be filled, and the committee

is tasked to recruit and recommend someone to Council for approval. Emergency Services staff is quite keen on Firesmart this year, and changes may be in the works broadening scope to include other forested areas, or perhaps even all of Rocky View, as the incidence of serious grass fires has increased significantly.

Bragg Creek Area Structure Plan (ASP)

The Terms of Reference for the ASP has been delayed for about 6 weeks, for a very good reason. In late December, an opportunity arose to apply for a grant through the Province's Northern and Regional Economic Development (NRED) Program, which has implications for the budget and workplan of the Bragg Creek ASP project. This grant requires matching by RVC, but will allow the ASP to incorporate tourism, environmental assets & sustainability, and economic development as key areas of study and consideration. This is a first for any Rocky View ASP.

West Bragg Creek Secondary Access Feasibility Stumbles

A preliminary report was made to the Governance Committee September 12th, where I made a successful motion that Administration be directed to prepare

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a report for Council's consideration to complete the feasibility assessment for Option 7B, a Bracken Road bridge option, and a Spruce Avenue bridge option. There was good support for this from my colleagues.

This came back to Council on December 5th, where that support evaporated. My motion that Council approve a budget adjustment of \$95,000 from the Tax Stabilization Reserve fund to complete the feasibility assessment was defeated. I only had support from Clrs. Wright, and Samra. The Reeve indicated that she had personally received a large number of e-mails from residents that were not in favour, which swayed her, and the other general comments in opposition from my colleagues was that it was too much money, and not needed.

There was then a motion arising by Deputy Reeve Kochan that Administration work with the Reeve and/or Deputy Reeve to discuss the Bragg Creek emergency access route options with the Tsuut'ina Nation. It appears we are now right back at the same table we were at in 2016.

Calgary Ring Road and Hwy 8

At the official opening ceremony for the Calgary Ring Road, Byron Riemann (RVC Executive Director of Operations) and I were able to briefly chat with Kurt Gibb, the Province's director for the CWRR project. Kurt indicated that in Spring of 2024 he would be putting the completion of the Hwy 8 project out to tender. He also said that ongoing discussions with our Operations group would continue, ensuring the Province and RVC are coordinating well for this piece of cleanup work. I mentioned that residents along Highway 8 are a little grumpy, and that frequent updates from the project could help matters.

The feedback from the community on their ability to quickly and easily access all parts of Springbank from south of the Elbow River has been overwhelmingly positive, and Hwy 8 residents no longer feel cut off from the rest of Springbank, or the Schools. Whew!

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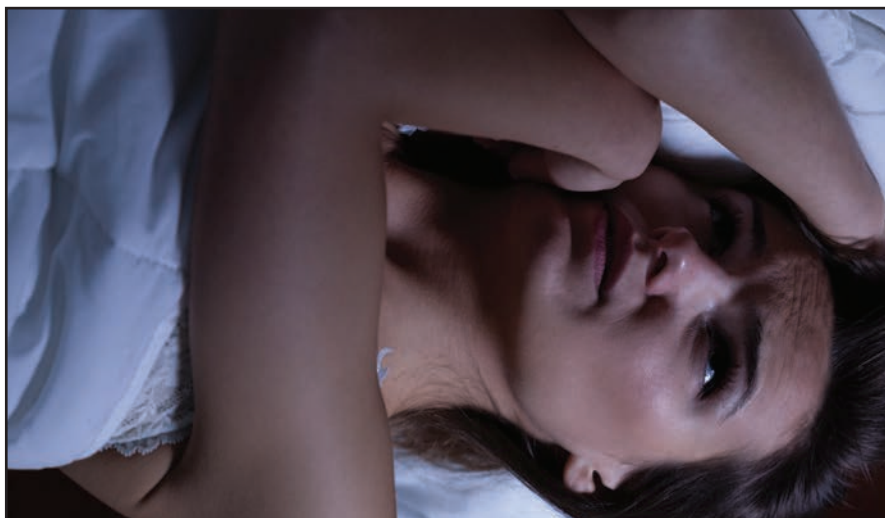
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These Rainy Days are not about the Weather

The last year, or so, has been a very rude awakening for many. Too many people today are so busy living a lifestyle, they forget that emergencies may need to be dealt with. It's all too easy to take one's cash flow for granted and get lulled into the belief that it will go on uninterrupted. Those who are best able to handle the financial rainy days that inevitably come along, are in the habit of living well below their means and paying themselves first.

The news these days seems to be filled with stories of mortgage payment stress, jumping bankruptcy rates and rising credit card delinquencies. What can be done to get through these challenging times?

Glenn is in sales. He is still working the same number of hours per week, but his income has dropped by about 35%. Fortunately, Glenn and his wife had financed very little of their lifestyle, so they simply made changes to their discretionary spending habits. For example, instead of going out for restaurant meals three or four times per week, they now only go out once or twice per month.

Jim and Karen, on the other hand, were carrying a large amount of debt on some of their lifestyle spending. When Jim's hours were cut at work, he lost the overtime income they had counted on. This put a serious strain on their monthly budget. They came to realize that it made more sense for Karen to stay home with their two children during the day to avoid day care costs. With Jim's shorter hours, he now looks after the kids while Karen works an evening shift. He also works a part-time job on weekends.

Wayne and Linda had been in the habit of living below their means and setting aside a certain portion of every pay cheque. When Wayne and his coworkers took a temporary pay cut, to keep the company going, they used their rainy-day savings to get through the income drop.

Brent and Darlene really enjoy their toys, and their lifestyle. Like many, they were carrying a credit card balance from month to month. The credit charges and payments became an even bigger burden when Brent was laid off for a few months. He cashed in \$40,000 worth of RRSPs to pay off some of the debt. Brent, age 35, realized too late that by doing this, he gave up almost \$244,000 of future RRSP value at age 60 (assumes 7.5% compound annual return) to pay off about \$26,000 of debt today.

Many others have over-extended themselves to the point that they have had no other choice but to lose vehicles, recreational toys, and over-sized houses to get their cash flow under control. As much as we'd like to believe otherwise, business cycles do happen, and unprepared people will get hurt financially.

Brent recalled a conversation he'd overheard while waiting in line for an expensive coffee a couple of years ago. The barista, who was serving a regular

customer in front of Brent, said that she hadn't seen him in a while. He replied that he and some friends had flown to Australia for a few days of golf.

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MAKE YOUR MARK By Mark Kamachi

The more the merrier?

I hope you managed to survive our recent cold snap. Otherwise, you wouldn't be reading this. Doh. And I'm sure during that time, sitting in front of the idiot box, you saw the recent A&W "Besties" ad. It features two young women, one who is giving her friend a driving lesson on how to navigate an A&W drive-through, served by that familiar A&W guy.

Well, I'm sure if you didn't leave your seat during commercial breaks, there's no way you would have missed it because of how many times the ad appeared each commercial break. I found it to be very entertaining and funny. And obviously memorable since I'm talking about it in this article. Never did I get tired of it when it came on, sometimes even during the same commercial break. In fact, I enjoyed it as I saw something different each time.

In the world of advertising-media speak, this is called "frequency". Frequency

refers to the number of times an ad is run, targeted at a specific target audience at specific time frames during a specific time period whether it be hours, days, weeks or months. In A&W's case, assuming I fell into their target audience persona as someone who eats fast food on a budget, it was during the evening news, dinner hour and/or hockey games that it appeared and reappeared. I'm sure it runs on other channels at other times depending on who they are targeting at a particular time of day.

The role of frequency, whether it be on tv, radio, online or even print such as billboards, is to build brand awareness. Whether you're selling a product or service, the idea is that the more your potential customer sees your brand, the more they will be able to recall or remember it. It's message reinforcement. But when using frequency, the message or creative idea must be emotionally engaging. The viewer must be drawn into the ad whether it be through laughter (A&W "Besties" ad), anger (election ads), sadness (pet adoption), joy (diamond engagement rings), etc. It's the emotional buttons that get pressed that build awareness and connection to your brand. Frequency in combination with creativity leads to memorability

and immediate or future engagement by the viewer.

However, this approach can also do the opposite. It's a fine balancing act between creativity and frequency that grows your brand. Creatively weak, lackluster, unemotional boring ads are not memorable. They make you go to the fridge for another slice of cold pizza. Ads that don't leave an impression are a waste of your precious marketing dollars and you may as well spend your ad dollars on purchasing lottery tickets if you're not investing in creative brand story telling.

If you're going to engage frequency in your ads, make sure the creativity lends itself to the viewer wanting to see it repeated but not to the point of ad nauseam. People will talk about and share in conversation, emotionally creative ads.

Check out the A&W television spot at www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwPy7ry-PPU for yourself. The key to the success of any ad whether on television, print or digital is in its creativity. If it's good, some will even take the time to write about it.

Until next time, keep it creative.

Cheers, mark.

Cheers, mark.

Cheers, mark.

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Now that winter has set in, the cold is here also. If you require heat, let us help you out with that! We have many sizes and styles of heaters that could keep your home or project at the temperature you require. We even have a ground thaw unit in the event you need to get to something where the ground is frozen. Give us a call!



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Counting on your same ad to work each time it runs? It is working isn't it? If not, maybe it's time to dial up the creative and make it memorable. After all, that's what ads are supposed to do. If you need help, feel free to dial us up first for a second look. You don't want to make us repeat ourselves.



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The foundation for your spring projects starts right now

Winter is a great time to start planning for next year

Did you know planning your spring/summer construction projects of any size can be completed while snow is still on the ground? Getting the legwork of quoting and planning completed now means we can be ready to move on your project before the first grass appears.

Want to get the most enjoyment from your outdoor space during our short summer so you can spend your time not having to do it while the warm weather slips by? Then don't wait until April or May to book. Harder for your work, our reply might hit you like a tonne of bricks.



that's how we work

403.949.3442 | info@exteriormaintenance.ca
exteriormaintenance.ca



BRAGG CREEK AND AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Hello Everyone!

Welcome to our new Board of Directors for your Bragg Creek and Area Chamber of Commerce!

President: Neil MacLaine,
Moose Mountain Horseback Adventures

Vice President: Taylor Clarkson,
Bragg Creek Bakery

Secretary: Sunil Mattu,
Lynx Education & Third Academy Schools

Treasurer: Jason Traviss,
Cowboy Trail Brewery

Past President: Sherri Olsen,
Realtor and Business Coach

Board of Directors:

Harmke de Bruin, Hooked on Bragg

Ian Greenhalgh,
Moose Mountain Mechanical

Brett Schönekeess, Bragg Creek Distillery

Trish Vansickle, Primerica Financial
Services LTD

Kevin Yun, Italian Farmhouse

Terri-Lynn Duque, Ignite- Energy

Yash Prajapati, Mountain Bistro Pizza

All businesses can be found on our
Directory page at visitbraggcreek.com.

Your Board is keen to understand what is important to you - what events, or suggestions for guest speakers at our meetings? Let us know at president@braggcreekchamber.com.

We look forward to listening to
your requests.

Our meetings as always are every
third Wednesday of the month, 7-9 PM,
at The Post House. We provide some
wine and snacks and look forward to
meeting you. Feb 21 meeting will be
guest speaker Cameron Spence from
Travel Alberta, and Aaron Lattimer from
Rocky View County will be on hand to
discuss their collaborative plans and
answer your questions.

Remember we are on Facebook - Visit
Bragg Creek, and Bragg Creek Chamber
of Commerce, along with Instagram if
you would like to follow us.

See you soon!

*Your Board,
Bragg Creek and Area Chamber of Commerce*



LOWER CROSSED SYNDROME

This term, and posture description, refers to muscle imbalances in the lower back and hip region. We commonly see tight lower back extensors matched with tight hip flexors and weak abdominal muscles matched with weak gluteal muscles. This criss-cross pattern of muscle imbalance in our body creates joint dysfunctions, poor movement patterns and often pain in the lower back, pelvis, hips or knees. Our bodies are very accommodating and take the path of least resistance. When one muscle group is tight, the opposing muscle groups are inhibited in function so that they “weaken” to accommodate the “tightness” on the other side of that joint. This is a process called “reciprocal inhibition”.



What causes this imbalance? Posture! We hear it all the time and there are some activities we just can't avoid. Driving to work and sitting at our computers are the most common, but we often carry these postural habits around with us elsewhere. Improper exercise technique, repetitive movements, standing postures, and physical inactivity. The development of these muscle imbalances occurs over

time. This sets us up for a cycle of habitual movement patterns and using other muscles to compensate. Eventually this results in pain somewhere in our body as certain structures ‘start complaining’ from overuse and strain.

We commonly see weak gluteal and abdominal muscles. When these muscle groups aren't engaging well, the hamstrings and lower back muscles are recruited to assist in activities such as walking, running and squatting. This leads to overuse and tightness of the hamstrings and lower back. One of our hip flexors, the iliopsoas muscle, originates on the front aspect of the lumbar spine and travels down to the front of the hip. Due to these attachment sites, this muscle is shortened when we sit and when tight, pulls on our lumbar spine in standing. Even though this muscle attaches on the front of our spine, the ache and tightness often manifest as lower back pain.

How can we correct this? Body awareness and posture correction are two important aspects you can focus on through your day. Identifying these imbalances, learning how to stretch properly and strengthening weak muscles are what will take a little work and practice! While there isn't one approach that works for everyone, there are a few tips that may help you identify some imbalances in your body.

1. Standing posture – take a look at yourself in a mirror from the front and from the side. Do you let your belly hang forward and have excessive curvature at your lower back? Do you have a flat buttock? Do you round at the shoulders and have too little curvature at your lower back? Try standing up against a wall with your feet a few inches from the wall. Stand tall, shoulders back, head against the wall. You should have some curvature

at your lower back and behind the neck. How does this position feel?

2. Lay on your back with your knees bent and feel the difference between an anterior pelvic tilt (arching your lower back) and a posterior pelvic tilt (flattening your back). Can you find a neutral zone? Can you keep your neck flat with a slight chin tuck position?
3. Glute squeezes. Can you squeeze your butt muscles? Can you squeeze the left and right independently and the same amount? Think of engaging your glutes while you are walking, running, and cross country skiing.
4. Lunge stretch. Place one foot on a secure chair or stair, stand tall through the torso, abdominals drawn in and slowly lunge forward, bending your front knee and keeping your standing leg straight. You should feel a stretch through the front of your standing leg. This can be progressed to a lunge position with one knee on the floor (wedding proposal position).

Other exercises such as squats, plank, bridging, and the child's pose stretch can also be beneficial for core strengthening. As these exercises have multi-joint involvement and require proper technique, it is best to seek professional advice, be properly assessed and receive an individual exercise program. Our therapists at Bragg Creek Physiotherapy are well versed in these common but troublesome muscle imbalances and we would love to see you before more sinister injuries crop up!

Come see us for a professional biomechanical assessment so we can find and treat any relevant muscle imbalances, pain or movement dysfunctions you may have.

Jennifer Gordon (BSc.PT, BA Kin, AFCI)
Physiotherapist - Bragg Creek Physiotherapy
www.braggcreekphysio.com

Let's work together to get you on the right path

Bragg Creek Physiotherapy envisions a healthy community that is inspired and empowered to lead fulfilling, active lives in the natural beauty that surrounds us.

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24 Balsam Avenue, Bragg Creek



BRAGG CREEK PERFORMING ARTS

Join ZENON+ for a sweet evening of R&B peppered with Jazz!

Bragg Creek, AB - Bragg Creek Performing Arts is pleased to launch its 2024 season with the first in our exciting series: Concert & Confections at the Chalet.

Come out for an evening of great music in the intimate Bragg Creek Snowbirds Chalet. This February, get ready for a mix of R&B and Jazz tunes while enjoying treats from the Bragg Creek Café & Bakery — all included in your ticket. It's the perfect Valentine's date night.

Headlining the event is ZENON+: a mighty duo fronted by ZENON and accompanied by BEV on percussion. They'll perform original Alt R&B music and select covers in a captivating live performance.

ZENON, recipient of the 2022 YYCMA Solo Artist of the Year Award, boasts soulful vocals and skilled guitar and keyboard play. From street performer in Calgary to a musician with a BMus degree, ZENON's shows - from Toronto to Vancouver Island - continue to impress.

"ZENON+ is a remarkable Calgary talent. This concert will be a blast," says Clint Docken, BCPA president.

Join us for an evening celebrating talent, passion, and creativity with ZENON+.

Event Details:

Date: Saturday, February 10, 2024

Time: 8:00 pm (Doors open at 7:30 pm)

Location: Bragg Creek Snowbirds Chalet, 19 Balsam Avenue, Bragg Creek, Alberta

About Bragg Creek Performing Arts

Music Series: We're committed to presenting live concerts that inspire. Our next showcase features Tim Isberg with his story-telling folk music on April 13, 2024.

The Bragg Creek Performing Arts Society operates as a registered not-for-profit charity, managed entirely by volunteers. Join us in celebrating the magic of music and the arts! Contact Clint at cgd@docken.com



BRAGG CREEK PERFORMING ARTS
PRESENTS

S A T
10
F E B
2024

Join us for a
sweet evening
with ZENON+ :
Alt R&B
with sultry
tones of jazz,
powerhouse
vocals and
intentional
use of space,
creating
a musical
landscape
entirely their
own.

ZENON+

CONCERT & CONFECTIONS AT THE CHALET

CONCERT
8 PM

TICKETS*
\$35

BRAGG CREEK SNOWBIRDS CHALET
19 Balsam Ave, Bragg Creek AB

For tickets visit braggcreekperformingarts.com or call Ticketpro 1 888 655 9090.

* Youth under 18 years \$25.

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Alberta
Foundation
for the Arts

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NEWS FROM THE WILD

2023 was a busy year with several initiatives launched to tackle critical wildlife-human conflicts. The efforts continue into 2024. Here's a brief overview.

GARBAGE BYLAW PROPOSAL

In 2023, multiple bear sightings near neighborhood trash cans were reported—again. These incidents made headlines, prompting a plea to everyone to keep garbage and food attractants out of reach of our hungry neighbors. These incidents renewed our resolve and led to a proposal for a refuse bylaw, presented to Rockyview County in October. Interestingly, we are among the last mountain communities in the region without a bylaw regulating the management and disposal of our refuse. The initial reception was positive, and we eagerly anticipate the next steps toward approval and implementation.

WILDLIFE ACCESS TO THE RIVER OVER THE BERM

The Bragg Creek berm walking pathway is finally completed except for wildlife access. Representatives from Bragg Creek Wild (BCW) walked the berm with Rockyview staff to discuss safe passage. During the walk, wildlife and people with leashed dogs were observed negotiating treacherous boulders to access the river, raising safety concerns. BCW submitted a proposal for simple, natural-looking wildlife access points at critical areas along the berm. Redwood Meadows already enjoys similar access over their berm area, providing a potential solution. A timely resolution to access issues is crucial to prevent future wildlife injuries, like broken legs.

CO-EXISTING SAFELY IN COUGAR HABITAT

Over the past months, numerous cougar sightings occurred in Bragg Creek, Redwood Meadows, Kananaskis Country and communities along Highway 762. Some encounters resulted in pet attacks, including fatalities. While area cougar sightings are common and usually a non-issue, negative encounters emphasize the need to be "wild-smart" for the safety of households and neighbors. It can

be difficult to deter cougars that have developed a taste for pets. Avoiding this situation in the first place is a great start to responsible coexistence with our wild neighbors.

PREVENTING WILDLIFE-VEHICLE COLLISIONS

You may have noticed new BCW road signs along Highway 22 between the Paintball property and Banded Peak school. The messages on these boards, which caution motorists of fawning and rutting seasons, complement those installed by Rocky View County along the West Bragg Creek road. Despite efforts to promote safe driving, collisions involving deer, moose, elk, horses, cows and dogs (who are sometimes seen roaming on or near roadways) remain a concern; numerous collisions have been documented here and along Highways 66, 762 and 22X. Collisions are not only traumatic for drivers but often deadly for wildlife, resulting in significant repair costs which, according to the Alberta Motor Association (AMA) are second only to hail damage claims. Continued efforts to raise awareness about safe driving are essential.

WILDLIFE MAPPING – CITIZEN RESEARCH PROJECT

Since 2021, the community has contributed wildlife sightings to our database, revealing diverse wildlife, major

wildlife movement corridors and road-crossing hotspots. It's time to compile remaining data to refine our understanding of local fauna, wildlife movement and habitat use.

AWARENESS, EDUCATION, AND ADVOCACY

From safe driving to our coexistence with bears and cougars, understanding the vibrant natural environment and engaging with local governments and environmental groups, there's much to do. Visit our website, read our articles, newsletters, and follow us on social media. Stay tuned! BCW hopes to offer the Bragg Creek area our first upcoming community symposium.

JOIN-IN, BECOME A BRAGG CREEK WILD MEMBER – IT'S FREE

Interested in getting involved or supporting our projects? Sign up as a member—a simple act that contributes to creating a safe and sustainable environment for both wildlife and humans to enjoy.

For more information and to become a member, visit BRAGGCREEKWILD.CA

Bragg Creek Wild - www.braggcreekwild.ca
braggcreekwild@gmail.com - 403-200-9961
People and wildlife living in community



“Our Nature”
Student Art Works Exhibit

Enjoy 30+ student artworks displayed amongst the trees. Walk the trail between the Bragg Creek Community Center along Hwy 22 to the school to view them. Enjoy!

**A Banded Peak School
Bragg Creek Wild
2022 Initiative**



XC BRAGG CREEK SKI AND BIKE SOCIETY

XC Bragg Creek Ski and Bike Society has a lot to celebrate this month with many of our athletes qualifying for the upcoming Alberta Winter Games to be held in Grande Prairie, February 16-19, 2024, and one athlete who attended the 2024 Gangwon Winter Youth Olympic Games in South Korea, January 19- February 1.

The Alberta Winter Games brings together over 2000 of Alberta's top youth athletes to participate in 18 different winter sports. Athletes are selected based on their performance at Zone competitions including the Alberta Cups and Calforex Cups held in Canmore earlier in the season. Congratulations to the following athletes who have already secured their places and will represent XCBC at the Alberta Winter Games later this month:

Biathlon: Emma Jackson (U12), Reed McArthur (U12)

Nordic Skiing: Hugo Borycki (U12), Isla Borycki (U14), Evelyn Peperkorn (U14), Logan Rostoker (U14), Ian Thomson (U16), Cadence Trainor (U16).

XCBC proudly celebrates Nordic skier, Avery Balbinada, who represented his native country, the Philippines, in Nordic skiing at the 4th Winter Youth Olympic Games. The games took place in the province of Gangwon in the Republic of Korea, which hosted the Pyeong Chang, 2018 Olympic Winter Games. Athletes competing in Gangwon 2024 benefitted from many of the facilities used for PyeongChang 2018, providing the participating athletes with the opportunity to compete in some of the same sites as Olympians did a few years before. The vision of Gangwon 2024 is to celebrate peaceful coexistence and unity through

sport to create a better future together. At the time of article submission, Avery was en route to the games.

XC Bragg Creek Ski and Bike Society is also looking forward to hosting the Alberta Youth Championships for Nordic skiing at the West Bragg Creek trails, March 1-3, 2024.

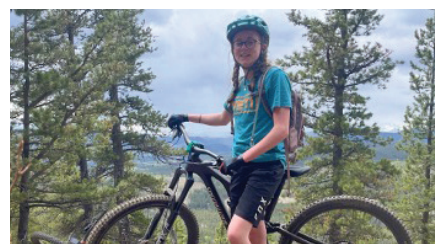
Junior Coach Program

Part of XCBC's mission is to develop citizenship and leadership skills in our young athletes. Our club's junior coach and mentorship program has been a longstanding aspect of this aim. Older club members who are often a part of one of the performance teams gain leadership and coaching experience by becoming junior coaches. Junior coaches work alongside adult coaches to learn skills and provide support to our younger and beginning athletes, giving back to the club.

Andrew Thompson is one of our outstanding junior Nordic coaches and an integral part of the XC ski race team. Andrew knows how to work hard and have fun and nowhere is this more on display than in his role as an XCBC Jackrabbits coach. He excels at creating an environment where younger skiers can challenge themselves and have fun while learning foundational techniques. He is always helpful to other coaches and athletes and looks out for his teammates and younger club members. As a racer, Andrew is dedicated to improving his technique and tactical knowledge of skiing. As a result, he has made major improvements in his performance during the past two seasons.

For more information about XCBC's programs and registration, please check out our website: www.xcbraggcreek.ca. See you on the trails!

Athlete Spotlight An aspect of XCBC that we are particularly proud of is that our young athletes are well-rounded, multisport competitors. This month, we would like to recognize two of our athletes who exemplify these XCBC values:



Emma Hunt

XCBC Sport(s): Mountain Biking
Favourite WBC Trail: Merlin's
Words from Coach Susanne:
Emma epitomizes hard work and consistency. She shines in our club with her amazing effort and continued improvement. Emma's highlights last season included racing at the Alberta Summer Games, where her lap times got faster throughout the games, regardless of the high temperatures. We are so proud of her dedication and can't wait to see her strength this spring!



Emma Jackson

XCBC Sport(s): Nordic ski, Biathlon, Mountain Biking
Favourite WBC Trail: Sundog (ski)
Words from Coach Allison:
Emma is a true club ambassador and multisport athlete. She qualified to represent XCBC at the 2023 Alberta Summer Games in Mountain Biking and will be representing XCBC at the Alberta Winter Games later this month in Biathlon. Emma always arrives at training with a smile. She works hard and constantly demonstrates excellent sportsmanship. She has a can-do attitude and embraces many of the challenging activities that XCBC offers.



Love is in the air

And we're not talking about the lovey-dovey stuff of cupids and arrows, but the sweet aroma of a golden-brown schnitzel cuddled up with spätzle and red cabbage. Come fall in love with the Bav Tav.

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BAV
MOUNTAIN DINING

THE
TAV
MOUNTAIN DRINKING

75 White Avenue, Bragg Creek | 403 949 3632 | bavtav.com

AT THE BAVARIAN INN



BRAGG CREEK TRAILS

If you've been on the trails in West Bragg Creek recently, you may have noticed vandalism on some of our trail signs and maps. Stickers containing a message that challenge the authority of Bragg Creek Trails and encourage trail users to disregard trail signage dominates this inaccurate messaging and has defaced many of our signs.

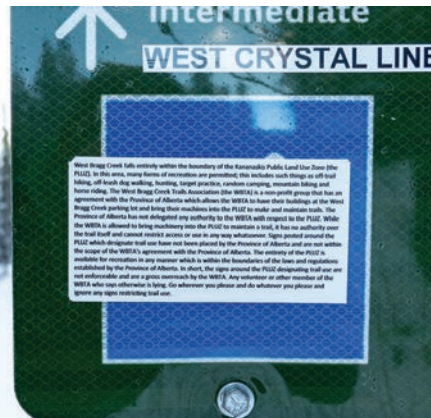
Since 2009, BCT has had a Cooperating Agreement with the Alberta Government to co-manage the WBC trail system. This agreement is still in effect today.

The following selected responsibilities have been taken directly from the current Cooperating Agreement and were assigned to BCT by the Alberta Government:

- To enhance the trail user experience by grooming cross-country ski trails, tread-setting winter bike trails, maintaining a public trails centre, providing on-site trail hosting, education, signage, maps, public communication;
- To protect the environment by building properly designed trails, maintaining trails and water crossings as necessary, decommissioning unauthorized trails and educating the public about proper trail use and etiquette;
- To promote respect and preservation of the ecosystem and respect for fellow trail users and public land users.

BCT and the Alberta Government have had a long history of collaboration. A 2007 agreement to have BCT volunteers assist with ski trail grooming in WBC morphed into the development of a much needed trail plan which has set goals for trail development, maintenance and management.

BCT has been preparing to launch into a newly minted, Alberta Forestry and Parks approved, West Bragg Creek Trail Plan.



This plan sets lofty goals for BCT to achieve over the next decade and focuses more on developing trail management strategies and less on new trail construction.

The need for this updated plan comes from WBC developing into a highly popular recreation area for non-motorized sports. The population of the city of Calgary area is now over 1.6 million people and we have seen a corresponding steady increase in visitors to the WBC trails. Recent traffic counts indicate close to 300,000 visitors come out to WBC annually to enjoy the trails.

Without a management strategy to reduce the impacts of all these users on the trails, the environment, and on the various user groups, the WBC area would quickly become degraded and rife with conflict. Even though this is a multi-use trail system, it is apparent that separation of certain trail users from others provides a better user experience, for all. This is especially true in the winter season when BCT grooms both ski and Fat bike trails. This is also the season when we experience the most user conflict and trail damage.

Respect and appreciation for the work that BCT puts into maintaining these trails is the cornerstone for trail etiquette. Stewarding the trails takes money and hundreds of volunteer hours. Activities that damage the trails challenges the sustainability of BCT's efforts to provide a safe and enjoyable trail experience, for all.

The approved Alberta government signage and maps are there to provide information and direction. Trail hosts, when present, are also a great resource to making your experience a great one.

For further trail etiquette and wayfinding information, BCT's website is a treasure trove. BCT also offers many opportunities to get involved as a volunteer. Please visit us at braggcreektrails.org.

Please take time to thank a trail volunteer next time you're out. WBC wouldn't be what it is without them.

See you on the trails
Conrad Schiebel (BCT President)




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Bus: 403.949.4947 3 River Drive S.
Fax: 403.949.2252 Bragg Creek, AB T0L 0K0



BCCA

You... Me... We... Connect the dots and you have built a community.

When people come together to work towards a common goal, they experience fulfillment and a sense of accomplishment. Acquaintances can become friends and experiences can become opportunities.

Your BCCA has been fortunate to obtain a CASINO engagement! This is one of the most time efficient ways for fundraising and does not come around often. We must fulfil the volunteer spots or lose out on future years when dates are awarded.

Can you be there for us? Give Kim a call to hear more and sign up! (General Manager - 403 949 4277).

- CASINO – March 9 & 10 - Volunteers Needed for all spots. Guaranteed fun positions; from Banker and Cashier, to Chip runner and Countroom. You can do this!
 - Grab a friend and spend sometime enjoying some laughs and catching up.
 - Enjoy a free meal, compliments of the Casino.

- Shifts run during the day, evening and late night.

In the spirit of community, the BCCA has a newly formed Volunteer Management Committee that is excited to work with staff and community partners to develop and implement new programs to enhance your volunteer experience. We want to build a strong and vibrant volunteer effort that provides fun and valuable opportunities for families, groups, youth, newcomers, and long-term residents. If you have ideas or want to share your thoughts, please contact us at president@braggcreekca.com.

What's Coming:

We are looking forward to another Rural Mom's Night! Come out and meet other Mom's and learn about sushi making! Feb 7th from 5:00 – 7:00pm.

To register: call Cochrane & Area Family Resource Network 403-851-2265 or visit cochrane.ca/634/program-Activity-Guide

Movie Nights are BACK!

Little Mermaid (2023) – Feb 16 - Doors: 6 pm– SHOW TIME 6:30pm
Thank you to our Sponsor:
Dirty Laundry Vineyard.

Programming notes:

- Pickleball is in full swing. Check out dates and times and come join the fun.
- MultiSport Youth program started on Jan 12th. Last day to join up is Feb 9.
- Adult Touch Rugby is an ongoing program running Fridays until Feb 23 (excepting Feb 16).
- Sign up for above programs at braggcreekca.com or call 403-949-4277 to register.

The BCCA and the Rink Committee are thrilled to have brought you Bragg Creek's Winter in the Woods on January 27th. At print time of this article, we are poised to host a fabulous event full of energetic volunteers and will report to you how much fun was had by all in the March article. Thank you to each and every one of our volunteers. You are the BEST! Watch for fun event pics and Chuck-a-Puck results on social media!

Nothing is more rewarding than lending a hand and being part of something grand. Are you up to reconnecting with neighbours and building new relationships? Raise your hand and let's get started!

Your Bragg Creek Community Association

Bragg Creek Centre

FRIDAY MOVIE NIGHT
LITTLE MERMAID
(2023) PG-13

February 16, 2024
ENTRY 6:00 PM / MOVIE @ 6:30 PM
*** CASH CONCESSION ***

SPECIAL THANKS TO
OUR SPONSOR:

Dirty Laundry
VINEYARD

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SEASONINGS

"WE ALSO CARRY THE FOLLOWING ITEMS"

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BBQ SAUCES, WILD
GAME SEASONINGS,
HOT SAUCES, BBQ
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WE CARRY GRILLS, SMOKERS AND DEEP FRYERS

#266, 200 SOUTHRIDGE DRIVE, OKOTOKS, ALBERTA T1S 0B2
PHONE: (403) 938-2271



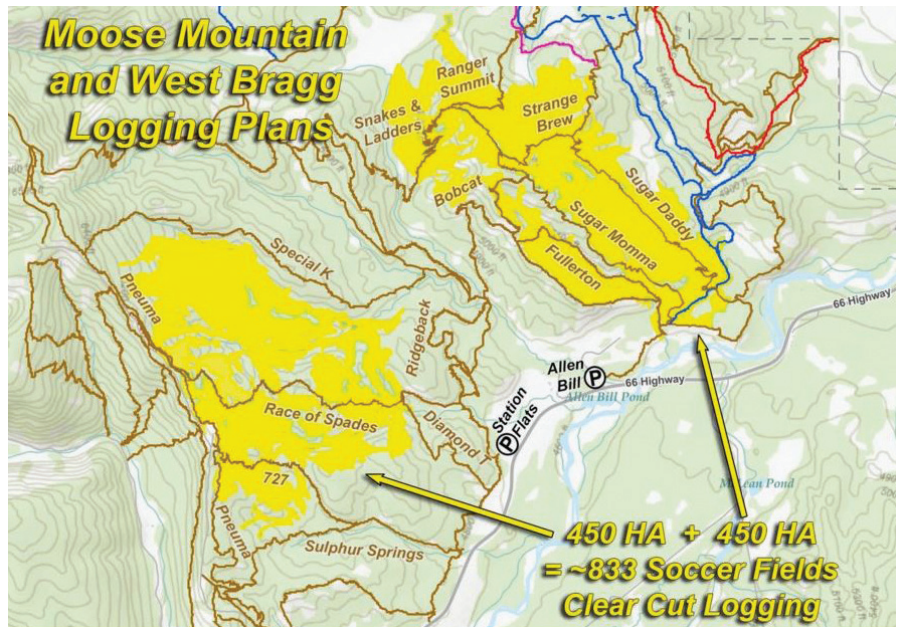
BCEC

Local Logging Plans and their implications – the view from BCEC

As many of our readers will already know, there's going to be logging taking place in the West Bragg Creek area in 2024 – 2026 by West Fraser Timber, the new owners of Spray Lakes Sawmills. The areas to be targeted for logging are around Fullerton Loop and Ranger Creek, as well as Moose Mountain and areas close to the Jumpingpound Creek headwaters.

Landscape ecologists and environmental organisations have pointed out that this logging will cause disruption not only to our local wildlife and trail users alike, but it will also have far-reaching effects on the resilience of the landscape itself in the face of drought, fire, climate change and flood. The forests of Kananaskis not only provide habitat for local wildlife and wildlife passing through, but also important soil, water and carbon fixing that helps our area in the face of these environmental challenges. We are concerned that this logging will degrade our ecosystems by changing the diversity, age and composition of vegetation, insects, and wildlife, as CPAWS outlines in their research. As the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) reports, the science shows clearcut logging does not mimic the wildfire disturbances our forests have adapted to over millions of years. CPAWS has a very accessible set of materials that go into how this occurs*.

As the climate grows warmer and we deal with a lengthening fire season as well as drought concerns, it's important for us all to be aware how the competing interests active in Kananaskis are affecting our landscape's resilience. These are public lands servicing the public good. The Bragg



Map from growkananaskis.com

Creek Environmental Coalition is not opposed to forest harvesting (forestry) but we are concerned about the health of our forests (forest ecology) and watershed. We are also concerned about wildfire and the increased risk of wildfire that conifer planting following a clearcut brings with it.

Our MLA, Sarah Elmeligi, is among those who have already made the point that the multi-use designation of Kananaskis itself is problematic. This is because it has led, particularly in latter years, to people and organisations wanting to do “everything all at once” in this relatively small area of land.

Within the areas of concern in the upcoming logging campaign, there is a particularly sensitive location that acts as a reservoir for regeneration of ecosystems across the area. This relatively pristine area represents an important habitat for a number of increasingly threatened fauna, as well as being a genetic reservoir for flora and plant life in general. This location

would be critically threatened by proposed logging along its northwestern periphery.

Bragg Creek Environmental Coalition will work to limit the 2024-2026 clearcut logging campaigns in both the greater Bragg Creek and the East Kananaskis areas. Our intention is to identify and mitigate this degradation and additional stress on our ecosystems. We're joining forces with other environmental and academic groups to gather information that will specify harmful outcomes, and communicate these to the people of Calgary and Alberta. We must mobilize protection for our beautiful and vital Foothills landscapes for generations to come.

Stayed tuned: Look out for our forestry, logging and wildfire FAQs next month!

Check us out at

braggcreekenvironmentalcoalition.ca

Contact us at [info@](mailto:info@braggcreekenvironmentalcoalition.ca)

braggcreekenvironmentalcoalition.ca

*cpaws-southernalberta.org/conservation/sustainable-forestry/forest-stewards/

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Susan O'Shea
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WELL OWNERS

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Standard Water System Maintenance Schedule:

Equipment/ System	Maintenance Required	Recommended Frequency	Risks/Results if Neglected
Reverse Osmosis Membrane/Filters	Membrane, carbon & sediment filters replacement	Annually	Excess waste water, low volume or pressure, bacteria/bio-film build-up and bad taste
Water Softeners	Ion Resin Replacement & Control Valve service	Every 5 years	Hard water, scaling on fixtures, white film on glassware, dry skin/hair, mineral bed channelling, reduced efficiency & control valve jamming
Iron/Sulphur Filters	Mineral Bed Replacement & Control Valve service	Every 3 – 5 years	Sulphur smell, red-brown staining in toilets, sinks, showers/tubs & appliances, metallic taste, stained laundry, plugged/channelled mineral bed, build-up & bio-film, mineral bed solidification & control valve jamming
Ultra-Violet Sterilization System	UV Lamp & Sleeve Replacement	Annually	Contamination of distribution system with micro-organisms, bacteria, e-coli, coliforms, etc.
Well Shock Chlorination	Correct dosage of chlorine injection into well & flush	Annually <i>(as per Alberta Environment)</i>	Reduced well yield, bio-fouling, incrustation, bacteria build-up, sulphur smell & black slime on surfaces
Raw Well Water Testing (Provincial Lab)	Obtain water sample & submit to lab	Twice per year <i>(as per Alberta Environment)</i>	Contamination of distribution system with micro-organisms, bacteria, e-coli, cryptosporidium, giardia, coliforms, etc

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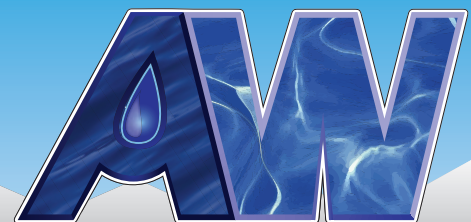
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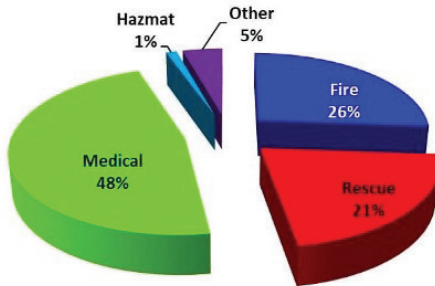
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REDWOOD MEADOWS EMERGENCY SERVICES



2023 saw RMES attend 436 calls - the highest number of calls in our 45-year history. Our call response types in 2023 were: Medical calls (48%), Fire calls (26%), Rescue calls (21%) and Hazmat/Other calls (6%). We saw a notable increase in fire responses this year from previous years. This can be attributed to great relationships with our partners in

Rocky View which saw us getting asked to assist other departments on their fire calls.

Fun fact: Our busiest time of day for calls in 2023 was 4pm and the busiest day of the week for calls was Saturday.

RMES members invested 15,333 hours in the community in 2023, training 50+ times together in addition to attending calls, doing administrative work, attending courses and community events. It would take 7.5 full-time paid fire fighters to do the work that our mighty group of professional volunteers did!

Over the past 45-years, RMES has had over 250 members "answer the call" to serve our community. Last year we welcomed 8 probationary members and said 'see you soon' to 9 retiring members - they will forever be part of the RMES family. Thank you to our members (past, present and future) and their families for your service!

We take the trust our community places in us very seriously and look forward to serving Redwood Meadows and the greater Bragg Creek area in 2024!

Until next month, stay safe!



THE LITTLE SCHOOLHOUSE

Happy February! All our classes are celebrating love, friendship, and family this month. It has been fun to explore how our differences make us unique and important. All the classes have really enjoyed creating special love notes to share with friends and family.

This month we are also exploring the importance of community. Our kindergarten class has the exciting opportunity to tour and learn from local businesses in our community of Bragg Creek. This month we are also honoured to learn more about being better stewards of the land we live, play on from a Blackfoot Elder. We feel so grateful for our amazing and supportive community.

Registration for our 2024-25 School Year has begun! We have an enriching child centred and supportive preschool and kindergarten environment. Please see our website for more information- we would love to have you join us! www.thelittleschoolhouse.ca

Ms. Shelley and The Little Schoolhouse team

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Debit & Credit Card Safety

When we think of rural crime, we usually think of events like break ins and thefts, but increasingly rural residents have been victims of financial crimes that can happen to either urban or rural citizens.

The following tips for using credit and debit cards have been garnered from banks, credit unions, the CRA, and internet searches including YouTube videos. A PIN is your Personal Identification Number. First, I'll offer some general tips on the use of credit and debit cards that I came across in my research.

It is recommended to use a credit card over a debit card. With a debit card transaction, the money immediately comes out of your account and is almost always irretrievable. With a credit card you may be able to recover some or all of a fraudulent transaction.

There are three ways to pay with a card: insert, tap, and swipe. Insert and tap are more secure than swipe. The swipe method utilizes the magnetic strip on your card which more easily exposes your information to any card reader. It is easier to "skim" the information from the card than the other two methods.

Insert and tap use an EMV chip imbedded in the card and were rolled out around 2015 by Europay, Mastercard and Visa – hence EMV. It was meant to cut down on credit card fraud and it has indeed done so. The EMV chip has more complex encryption than a magnetic swipe strip.

It takes longer to utilize the insertion method because you have to input your PIN number, but it's safer than the tap method. I asked a CIBC employee if I could put a limit on a tap transaction amount, and the answer was no. Individual merchants are the ones who set tap transaction limits.

It is wise to have a good look at the ATM or card transaction unit before using it. Thieves have been known to place a fake cover over both the insertion point and the keypad. It looks authentic, but they'll leave it on for a while and then come back and retrieve it with both people's card numbers and their PINs. A special caution: if the transaction unit won't give your card back, contact your bank immediately and cancel the card.

Prime spots for fake covers are gas stations with pay at the pump. The gas station owner will likely never know his pumps are being used for collecting this information. Most ATMs at a bank are fairly safe partly because of the many cameras in and around the bank, but independent ATMs could be suspect. Basically, any unattended or independent unit where cards are used. I've seen a video of a fake ATM unit set up on a street.

You should protect your cards with a RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) wallet or sleeve. These prevent transmission of your card information through the air. I watched a video of a security expert showing a reporter how, with a portable skimmer, he could walk by and obtain their card information onto his skimmer. He then went to a coffee counter and brought back a coffee paid for by the reporter. I personally use a couple of sleeves which are just big enough to hold a couple of cards. You can obtain them at various outlets. I obtained mine from Marks Work Warehouse and AMA.

There are various ways to protect your PIN. A PIN number can be from 4 to 12



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digits. The more digits used the harder the PIN is to ascertain by a thief. Do not use obvious choices like your phone number, birth date, address, etc. If a thief finds such information from other identification in your purse or wallet, they will be the first PIN combinations he will attempt.

When you input your PIN, you should completely cover the hand that is entering the PIN number. Thieves have become fairly good at using your finger movements to decipher your PIN. This could be at an ATM or in a store. Yeah, you'll look like a paranoid nerd, but you'll retain your cash, and card information. I always felt self-conscious doing this, but after researching this topic, I've decided to forego my dignity during PIN inputs.

One final thing: Don't write your PIN number on your card! People do.

Dave Schroeder
HCRCWA Board Member



PRIDDIS COMMUNITY

Happy New Year Priddis!

We would like to begin this month's community update with some thank yous. Over the last month a crew of dedicated volunteers, led by Steve and Doug, spent dozens of hours finishing the interior of our new garage and change room and building a beautiful deck with benches for people to put their skates on. We are so thankful for all of the time they spent on this amazing project. Secondly, we would like to thank the hard working ice crew who spent many long, cold and late nights at the rink over the holidays making sure that the ice was ready for the community to enjoy. Lastly, we would like to send our heartfelt thanks to some outgoing members of the PCA Board. Our treasurer, Leah Tenove, and Vice President, Jessie Boyle, have dedicated many hours to our community over the last few years. We are grateful for their commitment and wish them well.

At January's board meeting, we welcomed three new executives to the team. We can look forward to Melodie Lalonde's leadership as President, Patrica Feuchter supporting as Vice President, and Susan Penner looking after the financial side of things as Treasurer. Welcome to the team!

Skating Rink:

The rink is open and it was great to see how many people came out to enjoy it over the holidays. Please keep in mind that you must be a PCA Member to use the rink. It is also mandatory that all users wear helmets while on the rink. Please be respectful of other users, use the bins provided for garbage and recycling and leave the ice when asked to do so by the ice maintenance crew.

Now that the hockey season has started back up, the following rink schedule is in place:

Monday

Community skating 8am-10pm

Tuesday

Community Skating 8am-5pm
Panther's Practices 5pm-7:30pm
Ladies Shinny 7:30-9pm
Community Skating 9pm-10pm

Wednesday

Community Skating 8am-4:30pm
Panther's Practices 4:30-9:00pm
Community Skating 9-10pm



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Thursday

Community Skating 8am-5pm
Panther's Practices 5pm-8:45pm
Men's Shinny 8:45-10pm

Friday

Community Skating 8am-10pm
Reserved for Panther's Games from 6-10pm on January 12, Feb 2 and Feb 23

Saturday

Reserved for Panther's Games 8am-3pm
Community Skating 3-10pm

Sunday

Community Skating 8am-10pm

We are pleased to currently be offering the following programs:

Parented Playgroup- Postponed due to weather! Stay tuned for more dates soon.

Yoga- Monday and Thursdays from 7:30-8:30pm. January 11-February 15 (no class Feb. 12). All levels welcome. Email priddisalberta@gmail.com to register

Pickleball- The hall is open for pickleball on Thursdays from 3-7pm and Sundays from 1-4pm. You can reserve a space here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0C4AABA72BA1FC1-44869971-pcaindoor#/>

Art Class- Session 2 is on Wednesdays from 4:45-5:45pm and runs from January 10 - February 14. This class is suitable for kids in kindergarten- grade 6. Register directly with Young Rembrandts: <https://campscui.active.com/orgs/youngrembrandtscalgarysouthernalberta#/selectSessions/3403132/filter/session=61397132>

Save the date for these upcoming community events. More details will be released soon:

Community Wildfire & FireSmart Meeting- January 23 from 7-9pm

WinterFest- Sunday February 4 from 3-6pm

4 on 4 Co-Ed Adult Hockey Tournament- Sunday February 25 from 8am-5pm

The best way to keep up to date on everything happening in the community is to follow us on social media. We are on Facebook and Instagram as Priddis Community Association. Our website (www.priddisalberta.com) also has lots of information about amenities, programs and events.

Lifetime Member

Each year, the PCA has the ability to recognize a dedicated community member with a lifetime membership. This year, we are pleased to announce that Suzanne Oel was nominated to receive this recognition. In addition to advocating for the Priddis Community in her professional role, Suzanne has shown dedication to the PCA by regularly attending board meetings as a community member. She has provided much needed continuity for the board as it transitions through the years. If you wish to read about Suzanne's positive impact from the perspective of the Priddis Community Association, a letter has been posted to our social media pages.

The Priddis Community Association



MILLARVILLE HORTICULTURAL CLUB

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month, September to May, at 7:00 p.m. The meetings are held at the Millarville Anglican church house.

Thank you to Louise to giving a talk on growing onions from seeds. We all will be going and putting this knowledge to work.

Our next event will be Tuesday February 13, 2024.

We will be having a speaker on bluebirds, Jim Critchley from the mountain bluebird society. Houses, habitat and what we can do to help the blue birds in our area. We also be looking at seed catalogues so bring your favorite. Garden planning will be discussed.

We will be having a bluebird box building workshop. March 2 10 am to noon . Registration required to plan for supplies.

March 12 Arden Nering from Wild about flowers will be speaking on wild flowerseeds and plugs. Members bring your own seeds to share .

If you are interested in attending any of our presentations, please contact Louise Patterson Bruns (our new president) at louisepattersonbruns@gmail.com or at millarvillehorticulturalclub@gmail.com. The presentation is free for members and \$15.00 for non-members. Whether you are a novice or expert in landscaping or gardening, join our club; \$15/year for singles or \$20/year for a family. Check us out on Facebook as well

Millarville Horticultural Club
millarvillehorticulturalclub@gmail.com
millarvillehortclub.com



MILLARVILLE-STOCKLAND 4-H CLUB



As we come closer to the midway point of the 4-H year, we are fully into the routine of the Millarville Mutts and Mustangs (MMM) 4-H Club. Members attend monthly meetings with the whole club and separate into approximately bi-monthly project trainings. MMM is a multi-club that meets at the Millarville Racetrack and Agricultural Society and currently has 47 members in one or more of the four projects. Our projects include horse, canine, archery, and sewing.

In the horse project, the members participate in monthly horsemanship rides under the instruction of Danielle Bartlett, where they learn and perfect their general riding skills and control of their mount. Their second monthly ride consists of either a fun ride or a clinic. Their December clinic was on polocrosse (a blend of lacrosse and polo) which was led by Kathy McAteer and other members from the Okotoks Polocrosse Club.

Canine members meet to work with their dog in obedience and agility training,

under the instruction of a prior 4H member, Cassidy Barnert.

In archery we usually meet twice a month to practice our shooting at distances of 5, 10, 15, and 18 meters. Jan 3rd, we had the opportunity to travel into Archery World in Calgary and receive some additional training from Bill, one of their instructors.

Unlike the other projects, sewing meets at the Priddis Hall where they learn new patterns and complete individual and group sewing projects.

Club members have other requirements as well, such as public speaking or presentations, fundraising, and community service activities. You may have run into some of our club members when they were volunteering for the Salvation Army Kettle Campaign or delivering hamper packages during the Christmas holiday season. We also have many additional opportunities to get together for fun and learning with our club or other clubs in the district.

Our members are now preparing for public speaking in February. We will continue to train in our projects until we can show them off in the year finally at 4-H On-Parade.



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MILLARVILLE COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Did you know?

Our library is made possible with the dedication of 26 volunteers and one part-time librarian. For \$5 you can become a member and for \$10 so can your family. This gives access to 170 libraries and over 3 million books in our province! Any book in the Marigold or TRAC system can be ordered online for pick up at your local Millarville branch just beside Millarville school.

Classes-

Valentine cupcake class for kids 6 and over with an adult, will create 6 Valentine inspired cupcakes to take home. Please bring an apron and a container, all other supplies are provided. Cost \$30 Friday, February 9th. 6:00-8:30 pm at the Millarville Library

Micro greens and sprouting class. Learn how to sprout and grow your own micro greens at home. Cost \$10 Friday March 1st. 7:00-9:00 pm at the Millarville Library

TBA upcoming classes in photography and gardening.

Would you?

Come and share your skill, talent or passion? We are looking for interested people to offer classes at the library. You could provide a wonderful learning opportunity in our community. Contact Natasha at 403-931-3919.

Family week schedule change-

February 19-23 The library will be open Tuesday, Feb. 12, 9 am - noon and Wednesday, Feb. 13, 10 am - 7 pm. There will be no Friday story time this week.

Bouquets-

We are sending a huge thank you to both the Lions Club of Diamond Valley and Splisherbocker Books for their generous donations. Their support allows us to offer more new material and great events!

Need a read?

"Greenwood" by Michael Christie. "It is a very gripping Canadian novel offering subtle reminders of the fragile nature of our environment." Loretta Stabler, Millarville.



LONGVIEW LIBRARY

With your Tracpac account, you will soon be able to download audio books and movies. Those coming up in the near future are the movies Barbie and Oppenheimer and the audio books, The Women, by Kristen Hannah, Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Grams and John Grisham's The Exchange.

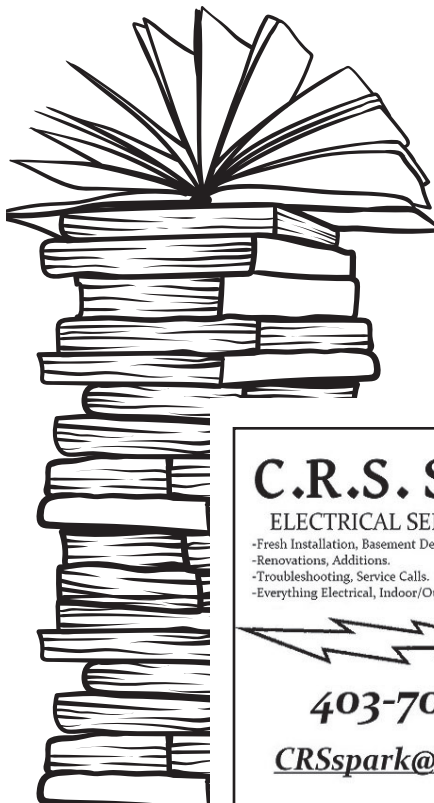
The library thanks the village for their generous allotment of FCSS funds toward our programming. We very much appreciate it.

The children had fun over the Christmas holidays doing crafts that our librarian, Lynda, provided for them. Slime was the most popular.

New to the library are The Last Restaurant In Paris by Lily Graham (fiction), The Russo-Ukrainian War by Serhil Plokhly (non-fiction) 1957, and Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel / Palestine (non-fiction.)

Highway Clean-Up is slated for May 4th. Marie Hummel is heading this up and she needs volunteers. If you can help, please get in touch with her.

Sylvia Binkley - sliv@telus.net



RED DEER LAKE UNITED CHURCH

Join us at Red Deer Lake United Church where we come together in community and explore God together Sunday mornings at 10:30 am. We are an affirming, safe space for all. We are located on the south side of the new ring road in SW Calgary. Check us out online at <https://reddeerlakeuc.com/>

FAITH & COFFEE: Bring your coffee and join us at Red Deer Lake United Church, on the first Wednesday of the month at 10 am, as we explore the stories of our faith and hear the wisdom, they offer us today.

SOUP LUNCH: February 18: Join us following the Sunday Worship Service for a soup lunch.

MEN'S BREAKFAST: February 24 at 9 am: Join us for breakfast and fellowship. We meet for approximately 2 hours to enjoy a meal and a chance to come together.

CONCERT SERIES: Love live music? We have an event for you! On The Edge Concert Series invites you to The Wardens on March 22 at 7:30 pm. For more information or tickets, visit On the Edge Concert Series at <https://reddeerlakeuc.com/concerts>

WE'RE HIRING! We are currently in need of a part time Custodian. If you or someone you know is interested in applying, please visit us at <https://reddeerlakeuc.com/employment> to learn more about this employment opportunity.

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SQUARE BUTTE COMMUNITY

Greetings from the Square Butte Community Association!

For those who are new to the area, welcome, we're glad you've chosen to make the western foothills your home. We invite you to get connected and be an active part of our community. The Square Butte Hall, located on Highway 762, is our base of operations and where you will be sure to make some memories and have lots of fun. From dances, to community potlucks, to music jams, we are keen to build an active and vibrant community. We keep our website updated, so you can find all the information for events online at www.squarebuttehall.com Here is what's happening in February:

33 Union Community Dance

Saturday, February 10th
7pm @ SquareButteHall

33 Union is an acoustic duo, Michael Martel and Shaun Cardinal from Okotoks, that play a variety of music from country, classic rock to oldies. Get your tickets online before it's sold out!

Music Jam

Tuesday, February 13th 7-9pm

Passionate about music? Bring an instrument, your voice or just come out for a casual evening of jamming together.

Please be advised, this is a "members only" event. An annual membership can be purchased online for just \$10.

Meet your MLA

Saturday, February 24th 1-3pm

Stop by and meet the new Banff-Kananaskis MLA Sarah Elmeligi.

When you come to any of our events you'll have a chance to meet the amazing group of volunteers that keep the wheels of this association turning. At the AGM in November, some new faces joined the board. It's always a little sad when life directs people down different paths, but it presents opportunities for new members to step forward with fresh ideas. We are excited to introduce our new team: President - Shanna Dunne, Past-President - Clayton Foster, Vice-President - Sandi Lightfoot, Treasurer - Becky Wiens, Secretary - Wanda Vockereth, Directors - Malcolm Carvell, Lisa Lloyd, Laura Ball, Alice Lewis-Nicholls, Howard Richardson, and Loreen Mazur. We meet every third Thursday at 7:30pm. Members are welcome to attend and listen to what's going on in our amazing community. We'd love to have help planning more events. Bring your ideas and enthusiasm!

Connect with us:

Direct: info@squarebuttehall.com

Web: www.squarebuttehall.com

Social: www.facebook.com/squarebuttehall

See you next month!

Lindsey Kindrat, SBCA – Director, Property Management and Archivist



SHEEP RIVER LIBRARY

Freedom to Read Week

February 18-24 is Freedom to Read Week. This is an annual event that encourages Canadians to think about and reaffirm their commitment to intellectual freedom. In 2024, Freedom to Read Week will celebrate its 40th anniversary, representing 40 years of dedication to freedom of expression, a fundamental right of all Canadians. Freedom to Read Week, which annually raises awareness about censorship and access to books and magazines, has become a nationwide campaign uniting readers, writers, publishers, schools, libraries, bookstores, universities, colleges, and other organizations across Canada.

The Canadian government guarantees freedom of speech and of the press within "reasonable limits" in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is quite rare for Canada to ban books domestically, outside of wartime. The Criminal Code does prohibit certain kinds of speech, such as hate propaganda and "undue exploitation of sex". Canadian customs officials are empowered to block the import of any material considered to be hateful, obscene, seditious, or treasonous. The goal of these restrictions is largely to protect from the social harm that encouraging hateful and obscene behaviors can create.

Many novels which are now considered classics and are prized for their literary content have fallen into the banned book category over the years. At one time or

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another Animal Farm, Catcher in the Rye, To Kill a Mockingbird, Of Mice and Men and Brave New World have all found themselves on banned book lists in North America. Ironically, Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 has been subjected to censorship and banning, even though the story is about the dangers and consequences of censorship. All these books are in our Classic Fiction collection, and if you have never read them, perhaps this Freedom to Read Week might be the time to do so.

In Canada, most challenges revolve around objections to depictions of violence, sexually explicit content, anti-religious sentiment or issues of racism. In the United States, most challenges target African American or LGBTQ authors.

Today, library associations and library boards still deal with books in their collections being challenged. Usually, this is done formally, with a written request, but more often than not, these items simply disappear from the collection, having been removed by someone offended by their content. This is not usually very effective, as items can be replaced, but at a cost to the taxpayer.

During Freedom to Read Week, the Sheep River Library will have a display of previously banned books with a blurb describing why and where it was banned, and for how long. We are hoping the display will generate some thought and discussion about the topic of censorship and banning books and how important it is to develop critical thinking skills so that individuals can evaluate materials for themselves. It is helpful to remember that books are a portal to different life experiences and reading encourages empathy and social-emotional development.

The library will be open Saturday, February 17 but closed Monday, February 19 for Family Day.



HELLO DIAMOND VALLEY

Hello, Diamond Valley. Well we sure had a cold snap unlike any I remember for a long time. It started on January 10 and finally broke the 15th, with temperatures of -40 with the wind. When the emergency alert came on about the electricity grid being dangerously close to having to do rotating power outages, I was pleased to hear the next day that many people unplugged everything and lit candles. That was a good team effort for Albertans because for sure nobody wanted the power to go out. Lots of cars were stranded on the highways I noticed, let's hope we are done with the extreme cold. We will have to see what Balzac Billy, our Albertan groundhog, does when he pops his head up on February 2.

There are quite a few other days to celebrate in February, such as Valentine's Day, Yukon Heritage Day, Chinese New Year, Alberta Family Day, and Shrove Tuesday. Shrove Tuesday was the last day to use up eggs and fats before the start of the Lent fast, and pancakes were the perfect way to use up these items. The word Shrove means to give absolution for sins by way of Confession and doing penance. St. George's Church in Turner Valley invites residents to their Pancake Supper on Feb. 13 from 4:30-7. The Supper is by donation and for more details, call 403-933-3620 or email meotaparish@gmail.com.

There's lots to do at our Sheep River Library if the weather is too cold to be outside. Special days in February include How to Sell on Facebook Feb. 15, Using AI Tools in Work and Life on Feb. 29, How to Avoid Financial Scams on Feb. 20, plus ongoing programs include exercise, belly dancing, games, computer, crafts, children and youth programs, and much more. For a full schedule list, go to sheepriverlibrary.ca.

Down the street in Turner Valley is our Turner Valley Legion. They have Paul Rumboldt playing there on February 3.

This ex-minister and his brothers are back in their old stomping grounds and it will be an awesome show. Drop by to see if by chance there are any tickets left, and while you're there, pick up February's calendar of events

and buy a raffle ticket on the beautiful handmade canoe hanging up in the hall.

Up the street from the Legion is the Valley Neighbours Club, and they offer lots to do in the winter months as well. Floor curling is a popular event there and they always welcome spares if you don't want to join a regular team. The VNC also offers social dance, line dance, exercise, crafts, cards, and so much more. Go to their website or pop in and see what this long-standing club has for you.

Our Foothills are alive with music this month. Elvis will be in the building on Feb. 3, playing at the Black Diamond Hotel. This is Vic De Sousa's Elvis, and he also channels Buddy Holly, Fats Domino, Little Richards, and more! Drop by the Hotel to see if there are any tickets left and keep an eye on Rockabilly Entertainment's website for upcoming shows at the Hotel and in the Foothills. I heard tell there may be a CCR Tribute Band coming in March.

Beneath the Arch Concert Series presents Steve Pineo on February 24 from 7-10. His music is from when orchestral music met the jazz age and he plays it in a 5-piece ensemble. This show features "original tunes and 20s and 30s classics all played with fun and virtuosity." I've been to many Arch Concerts and have always enjoyed them immensely. For tickets and info, go to beneaththearch.com. The shows are held at the Flare and Derrick Community Hall in Turner Valley.

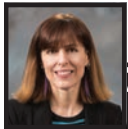
High River's Gift of Music Society is pleased to present musical storyteller Samantha Whelan Kotkas and pianist Mark Limacher. This is a great show for the whole family as they create an interactive experience that will delight children of all ages. Their Rocky Mountain Fairy Tales interweave story with melody and it sounds like a really nice show. For tickets and info, go to the Gift of Music website, and the show is scheduled for Feb. 10.

Our very own Oilfields High School has a cool program going on, called the Vertical Farm Initiative Market. You can drop by the School on Thursdays from 2-3:30 and purchase fresh herbs and microgreens from the Vertical Grows. This is a student led program and I can't think of a better way to get fresh herbs and greens in the middle of winter while supporting the students. The School is located at 511 3 Street in Black Diamond.

Any news or events for March, please drop me a line before February 15 at elaine.w@telus.net. Enjoy your February and stay warm and active!

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COUNCILLOR UPDATE Foothills County

Suzanne Oel - Division 4

Greetings! Sharing my News Update...

Water and the Necessities of Life: We face a variety of situations in this beautiful place we call home in the Foothills of Alberta. Water is one of our most precious resources, next to air, then food. Not forgetting the other reality check we just recently had at the -40C temps, where heat reached the top of the list. These essentials of survival are the subjects of some important studies and planning. As we anticipate the coming spring, we wonder which way it will go? Will we be out of the drought, or continue? In response to these relevant unknowns, we are preparing, holding conversations and taking action at the provincial and local municipal levels of government. Join us in this quest to respond to Mother Nature's drama, by learning about these topics and participating in preparations.

Provincial Flood Mapping Engagement:

The Province is currently undertaking a public engagement to gather feedback on new draft flood hazard maps. If you are a landowner along one of the affected waterways, providing your opinion and feedback is important to ensure accuracy of these flood hazard maps. You are encouraged to thoroughly review the area(s) that directly impact your land and provide feedback to the Province through their engagement pages. You do not need to be an engineer or flood expert to view or provide feedback. All feedback will be carefully considered with revisions made to the draft flood hazard maps to address technical errors, as appropriate. These maps will provide a valuable resource that will aid Foothills County in planning decisions that may affect future development on your land and that of your neighbours. Within Foothills County, draft flood hazard mapping includes: Priddis Creek (+ Fish Creek), Elbow River, Sheep River (includes Three Point Creek), Highwood River, Bow River, and more. Review and respond by February 12, 2024: <https://www.alberta.ca/flood-study-engagements>

Drought Awareness:

The Province is sitting at 4/5 of their drought management response, taking action before 5/5, which would be the implementing of emergency measures.

You may recall that Foothills County declared an agricultural disaster in 2023, so we are all keenly watching the precipitation levels, our wells and water supplies. The County is participating in collaborative discussions and strategizing access to local water supplies should assistance to residents be needed.

Find drought management info, here: <https://brbc.ab.ca/drought>

Find more history and resources here: <https://www.alberta.ca/drought>

Spruce Budworm & Mountain Pine

Beetle 2023 Aerial Maps: Reports about a reduction in Spruce Budworm infestation were welcomed over the past year. Great news was shared in December about a steep 98% decline in the Mountain Pine Beetle throughout Alberta, since the peak expansion in 2019. However, upon review of the recent 2023 provincial aerial survey information, a bit of a re-emergence of Spruce Budworm is showing up along the eastern edge of the Kananaskis forestry area. This may affect landowners along the Highway 762 area.

Find the aerial maps here: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/aerial-overview-survey-spruce-budworm-map>

Find County information on Spruce Budworm here: <https://www.foothillscountyab.ca/services/agriculture/spruce-budworm>

Alberta experienced drought in many parts of the province due to a below average snowpack in winter 2022-23, which meant less runoff, and below average precipitation in most areas during the spring and summer. This is contributing to water shortage especially in southern Alberta.

Be Prepared for Wildfire: Consider planning for yourself, your family, animals and property. Wildfire risk could be affected by a number of elements present in our area, including damage from forest insect pests, tree age, variety of trees, lack of recent fires, proximity to provincial forestry areas, potential dry conditions, and more site-specific situations. Learn more here: <https://firesmartalberta.ca/>

West Foothills Water Project awaits


Grant Funding: In 2023, Foothills County reviewed previous engineering studies and areas, near the West Foothills Water Treatment Plant, where interest in piped-water service has been identified. Cost estimates for a public system extension, large-scale project, remain the same as previously calculated for the area directly north of the West Foothills Water Treatment Plant, assuming there are two hook-ups per property, and all landowners on an agreed-upon route are included in a local improvement project. Due to the resident response regarding the price tag of approximately \$62,500 per potential water service connection, the County recognizes that there is a preference for the option of obtaining a grant to reduce the cost. The County continues to search for grants. Once the County sees that there is a possibility of applying for a grant, when one becomes available, a mailout will be sent out to residents to determine interest and potential route(s). As of the end of 2023, the County has checked into grants and found that no grants were available for this purpose. In 2024, the grant search will continue.

For Other News & Updates:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CouncillorSuzanneOel/>

Email: Suzanne.Oel@FoothillsCountyAB.ca

With Best Regards, Suzanne



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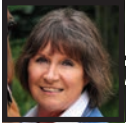
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COUNCILLOR UPDATE Foothills County

Barb Castell - Division 3

As I write this newsletter, Foothills County is in the deep freeze. It has been -37C or colder for the past few nights.

Foothills County - Public Works

A huge thank you goes to our Public Works crew for their fast and efficient clearing of our County Roads in the last cold spell. Special care was given to sharp corners and sand was applied in many places.

Public Works has been looking for ways to save money and utilize older equipment longer as delays in the supply chain seem to still exist and the cost of equipment is always increasing. In 2023, the County utilised the Finning Canada's Governmental rebuild programme for two of its other motor graders, which saved the County roughly \$670,000 and cut delivery time by more than six months.

Just recently Council approved the rebuild of one of the graders with a major engine issue. It needed to be dealt with and was an ideal candidate for a rebuild. Public Works had a full machine assessment completed. The rebuild is not to exceed \$575,000 which is 62.2% of a full machine replacement. It would provide 5 years of warranty or 6000 hours of warranty exclusive to the Finning Canada's Governmental rebuild programme.

Foothills County - Transfer Stations

I have been asked why there are cement blocks near the garbage disposal containers at the transfer stations. Short answer: Safety. Users have fallen between the containers and the area around the containers.

Millarville Horticultural Club

I think all of us who attended the meeting and talks on January 9 will agree it was one of the very best. There were so many new members sharing their gardening successes and failures from last year's hot summer. Those who wanted some onion seeds got to plant them right there and take them home to sit in a sunny south window until Spring planting.

Thank you to our new president, Louise Patterson-Bruns, for supplying the seeds and making the evening so much fun.

Lyn Dean gave us a great overview of what is to come this year with the Hort Club.

If you want to join, just contact the Horticultural Club by email:
millarvillehorticulturalclub@gmail.com

Millarville Racing and Agricultural Society (MRAS)

If you are new to the area, check out the February 2024 Calendar on the MRAS website. If you are interested in attending some of the equine presentations and activities, this is your chance.
www.millarvilleracetrack.com/calendar

Millarville Stockland 4H

Public Speaking

I always look forward to judging the Junior 4H Public Speaking, which will be held on Sunday, February 4. The Juniors are my favourite group and provide great entertainment for all. If you are new to the area and want your child to join this wonderful organisation. Contact them at:
millarvillestockland@gmail.com

Dark Sky Working Initiatives Stakeholders Working Group

Good news! We now have a website:

www.darkskycountry.ca

We also have a Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/DarkSkyCountry

Thank you to Councillor Suzanne Oel for all her work on the website.

The Dark Sky Initiative aids the efforts of Foothills County in becoming more aware

of the night-time environment and how it can be adversely affected by human activities. The initiative will minimize the impacts of lighting yards and streets, as well as commercial and industrial developments.

Right now, the group consists of area stakeholders, representatives from various groups, and residents of Foothills County. New members are always welcome to join.

Ask your children why you think we chose an Owl for the Dark Sky Mascot? Winter is a perfect time to look at the night sky in Foothills County. Go out and have a look tonight.

Northwest Foothills Recreation Board (NWFRB)

New benches and bear proof garbage disposal containers were installed at the Seaman Sports Park. These are for dog pick up and picnic garbage only. Watch for new updates in the Spring. Updates from NWFRB can be found on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/NWFoothillsRec
Or look on the Foothills County website:
www.foothillscountyab.ca/community/recreation-boards/north-west-foothills-recreation-board

Leighton Art Centre

Due to financial and infrastructure constraints, Leighton Art Centre has extended their annual winter break and will remain closed to in-person visits from now through to April 5. The centre will reopen on April 6 with new exhibitions in the gallery and museum!

Art and Nature Summer Camps are now registering for children aged 6-14. These camps offer children a hands-on connection to art, nature, and Alberta's heritage. Each week during July and August, summer campers are inspired to create in a wide variety of art forms while exploring Leighton Art Centre's natural setting through nature hikes and outdoor games and activities.

More information: www.leightoncentre.org/parents/summer-camp

Important Dates

Family Day: Monday, February 19

Alberta Teachers' Association Convention and Non-instructions days: Tuesday, February 20 to Friday, February 23.

I started my plants in January, and I am really looking forward to Spring.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Barb Castell

Phone: 403-931-3690

E-Mail: barb.castell@foothillscountyab.ca

Website: www.barbcastell.com

FaceBook: facebook.com/barbcastell.ca



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DUANE HARDER

How's Your Love Life?

Here we are in February, and central to the month is Valentine's Day. Some would say, "Love is in the air." That raises an interesting question. How do we define love? We love that someone special and at the same time, love hockey. And then there's that favorite dessert that we "really love." And the list goes on as we try to describe the things that are special in our life. Hopefully your love for the special dessert, hobby, or pet, is not the same as the love you have for your partner, family, or close friends!

Today I want you to join me for a journey on the "Love Boat." The first stop is at the city of Philadelphia. Did you know that Philadelphia means, "The City of Brotherly Love." (Phileo) This is a city where we meet each other's emotional and mental needs. As we meet the needs of each other, there is a bond that holds us together. This is a love between friends that is based on commonality. You meet my emotional/mental/physical needs and I meet yours.

If there is a balance in the meeting of needs, there is a bond of love. However, when one person stops meeting the needs of the other, the love scale goes out of balance and the relationship begins to deteriorate. The problem arises when I see your needs being the same as mine and I try to meet your needs in the same way that I would like to have mine met. Let me illustrate this with a real-life story. A husband bought his wife a movie camera for Christmas because he wanted their family history preserved on film. He was mystified when his wife's response in receiving the gift was less than his joy in giving the gift. He was giving a gift that he wanted to receive, not one that would bring her joy. The City of Brotherly Love thrives when we focus on the needs of others. It is destroyed when we lock in on entitlement.


The next stop for the love boat is a city called Agape – The name of this city takes love to a new level. It is a name that describes unconquerable benevolence and invincible good will. The people in this city have a deliberate conviction of the mind that shapes an inalterable policy of life. The founder of this city intends that its residents experience a love that transcends all human expressions of love. The founder extends His love, not because people deserve it, but because they need it.

He wants to share His love with us so that we can extend that love to one another. His love will enable us to give to others at our expense. We will give love without consideration of what comes back. Even if people are disrespectful and antagonistic toward us, we keep on giving love. The founder wants His love to empower us to leave a place in better condition when we leave than when we came. His love enables us to see past the harsh negative comments to the insecurity of the soul. His love says, "You may have fallen but your success is measured in the number of times you rise and keep pressing toward the goal."

The people of Agape see the powerful potential in words that affirm the value of a person – not because of what they do, possess, or the position they hold, but value that is imparted to them by the one who created them. They see past the annoyance of the nosey person to the value of their alertness. They can see the strong determination that lies behind the belligerent teen. And the person who seems to lack conviction oozes the balm of mercy.

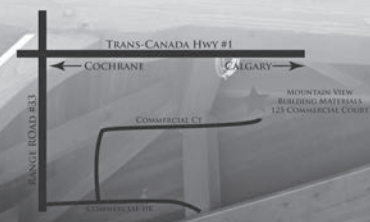
The founder of Agape has love without limit, grace that has no measure, and power that has no boundary known to man. Personally, this is the city where I want to live. Join me and I'll see you at the top.

Duane Harder



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ADHD AND NATURAL REMEDIES

DO THEY WORK?

I get asked a lot on how to augment ADHD treatment. There's no way to predict in advance if a person will be helped by any one particular approach, even medication. It is critical to monitor the person's symptoms closely in order to know what works well or not (including setbacks and side effects). Most of all, be open to a variety of changes in nutrition, exercise, sleep habits and lifestyle.

I KEEP MY SYMPTOMS IN CHECK BY....

Implementing a multi-modal treatment plan is the key to managing your ADHD.

Different strokes for different folks. Some prefer behavioral therapy or coaching, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and/or parent training. Others simply watch what they eat or when they exercise, and how it makes them feel. A friend in the same boat can be invaluable to help keep you on track. Many reduce their exposure to EMF, try acupuncture or alternatives like CBD oil. For the latter, keep in mind that there are limited studies available showing different results.

SUPPLEMENTS AND VITAMINS TO BOOST YOUR ADHD BRAIN

Omega 3 fatty acids, zinc, iron, protein, low sugar foods and a host of homeopathic remedies, etc. A diet that is rich with a broad spectrum of micro nutrition can be a powerful tool for managing ADHD symptoms. According to Richard Wurtman, protein triggers neurotransmitters

responsible for inducing alertness, while carbohydrates trigger drowsiness. It also prevents surges in blood sugar that may increase hyperactivity. It's not called 'comfort food' for nothing. Plant-based and high fiber foods such as fruit, vegetables, whole grains and legumes help stabilize energy levels. If you take medication, a low-fat breakfast (or home-made smoothie) will maximize its effectiveness. Fats can cause the body to absorb the medication more slowly, thus delaying efficacy.

RESTORATIVE SLEEP

It is thought that people with ADHD might spend less time in the REM cycle of sleep. This is the long, deep sleep that leaves you feeling rested. Practicing good sleep hygiene, starting with a consistent bedtime routine could prevent ADHD symptoms from getting worse the next day.

EXERCISE

Short-term aerobics, including yoga has positive effects by decreasing your cortisol levels ('stress' hormone), increasing endorphins ('feel good' hormone), dopamine, serotonin and norepinephrine. Climbing stairs or walking 30-minutes four times a week will also do the trick. Green time outside will help you recover from attention fatigue. Consider simply 20 minutes in the backyard or any green open space, gardening, walking the dog, biking to school or to work.

MINDFULNESS

This is an attention-awareness technique that reduces stress, develops positive emotions and strengthens self-regulation skills. The idea is to become more aware of everyday activities and to stay in the moment as much as possible. For example, check in with your biodata like breathing. Just focus on the sound of it while walking instead of whether it's 'normal'.

HOMEOPATHY

Yes, it has its critics but many believe this 200 year old practice helps relieve symptoms of hyperactivity, inattention and anxiety. Consult a homeopath and ask for clinical studies to support the efficacy of recommended treatments.

Sources:

Wurtman, Richard. *Nutrients that modify brain function. Scientific American*, vol. 246, no.4, 1982, p50-59.

Mitchell, J. T., Zylowska, L., & Kollins, S. H. (2015). *Mindfulness Meditation Training for Adult ADHD: Current Empirical Support, Treatment Overview*,

Please note that due to a server issue my email has had to change to rocheherbst1@gmail.com I appreciate your patience on this matter.

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ASK CARA - AN EVERYDAY ADVICE COLUMN

Cara Chalmers

Dear Cara,

I am an older gentleman who has lived in a rural community for most of my life. I have always considered myself to be a loving family man, a hard worker and a good neighbor to those who live in my area. I believe that my neighbor's living on acreages that either border or are near my own, would say that I am always available to help lend a hand or a tool or even a tractor when asked and often without having to be asked. Over the years this has looked a lot like me ploughing the driveways and entrances to and from the highway during and after a heavy snowfall, helping to dig new fence posts when they need replacing to keep livestock and pets safe, pumping off the water runoffs after a storm, fixing garden tractors and mowers and generally just being the go-to guy for a number of families on my road. I have always been happy to support my community in this way.

My problem is that as I get older in age I am just not physically able to keep helping and providing in the way that many of my neighbors may have become accustomed to. Although I am retired now and beginning to show my age, it seems to me that the 'asks' from neighbors are increasing rather than going in the opposite direction. I've made some mention to folks about getting tired easily and having achy joints, but this has not slowed down any requests to lend a hand.

How can I tell my neighbors (many of whom I consider friends) that I am not able to help them out like I have been? I don't want to cause issues or let others down and it is still important to me to contribute to my community, just in a less onerous way.

Sincerely, Go-to Guy

Dear Go-to,

Living in a rural area can present many unique challenges but also many opportunities for connection and community building. I commend you for being such a giving and steadfast neighbor.

The best way for you to communicate to your immediate community about what you can and can no longer contribute to is



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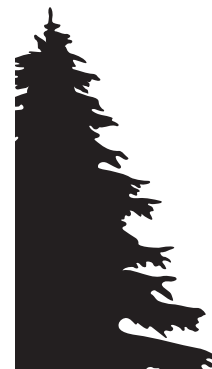


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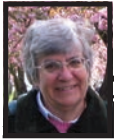
to be honest and upfront. Giving 'hints' typically does not help us communicate with others in the way that we hope it might.

Consider writing a letter describing some of the limitations that you are facing as you age and how these changes have impacted your ability to help out. Drop off a copy of this letter to the households who may be impacted. Or, perhaps the road you live on has a group chat or some online forum it uses to communicate. You could post a message on something such as this. Be honest about where you are at

and reinforce that it is still important to you to feel connected despite how your contributions may change. The point here is to tackle this dilemma directly and honestly, rather than waiting for your neighbors to (hopefully) catch on and let you off the hook.

I wouldn't be surprised if a message or letter from you is met with compassion and support from these families that you have been lending a hand to all of these years.

Cara Chalmers, is a local writer, therapist and registered social worker living in Springbank, Alberta. Need some advice? Questions for Cara can be emailed to: cara@askcara.ca



NASTY LANDINGS by Andrea Kidd

One day, in the 1990s, I joined a group of people gathered around staff members at Science North in Sudbury, Ontario. The workers, clad in royal blue lab coats, introduced me to flying squirrels. On that day, I spent most of my admission fee watching these amazing little furry creatures. One of the staff would stand high in the balcony, take a flying squirrel gently from his pocket and hold him in the palm of his hand. The squirrel would notice another worker below, where we were standing, and leap effortlessly, float and glide gracefully to land neatly on the outstretched arm of a another staff person. There he would settle in and nibble on a piece of tasty banana.

As Laurie Griffin mentioned in her interesting article in the January edition of the High Country News, you rarely see this kind of squirrel because they are nocturnal, shy and stay mostly up in the trees. Their large skin flaps, so handy for gliding, are an encumbrance on the ground, making them easy prey. So, like many people, I have never seen one in the wild.

I am so pleased Science North introduced me to flying squirrels. I find them delightful, intriguing and, as Laurie writes, they encourage us to aspire to greater things.

But, that last line in her article had me laughing out loud! "If you can't fly, just learn to fall with grace."

Oh, Laurie! You set me thinking about times when I have fallen – and it was not "graceful"! I find myself blushing in shame because my landings were absolutely "disgraceful"!

I remember stomping out of the room incensed, wounded, determined never to speak to that person again. Another time I slammed the front door so hard the glass shattered (at least it was my own front door!). One time, though, I nailed it. I scrubbed the kitchen floor and released the pent up energy before I said or did anything else (and the floor was gleaming!).

I don't plan to fall. It always takes me by surprise and then it is too late to be graceful. So, now I am working at getting up gracefully.

Sometimes an apology is a good idea. But, as I often say to a certain teenage girl in my life, "Stop saying I'm sorry!" These words can slip out so easily and can be more a sign of insecurity and "people-pleasing" than authenticity.

So, when I am getting up from another fall, holding onto something for support and legs splayed apart for balance, I need to think. I need to figure out if I'm sorry, and, if so, what exactly am I sorry about? I am a person, too, loved by God just as much as the other, and so I need to respect both parties and apologize truthfully.

Sifting through the reason for the fall is a good idea for me because I want to do better in my relationships. After all, I believe this is why we are here on this planet – to be in relationship with God and the people around us.

If I can understand the emotion I am feeling, name it and determine the truth of why I am feeling this way, then I may be able to deal with my emotions in a more rational and mature manner. As the older teens say, "I need to get on with adulthood". I wonder why it takes me so long to grow up.

I do not believe that flying squirrels aspire to have wings. I believe they are created to glide. I believe also that I am created to be an adult with a good mind, capable of working problems out with God's wisdom and guidance.

And, once in a while, I find myself gliding with poise through the air, landing gracefully and delighting again in the life I have been given.



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MORTGAGE MATTERS by Candace Perko

2023 Mortgage Market Year In Review

As we wrap up a year full of economic twists and turns—and interest rate ups and downs—lets look back at some of the top mortgage-related stories from 2023.

Two rate holds by the Bank of Canada early in the year turned out to be a head-fake and prematurely led to market expectations that the rate-hike cycle was over. That in turn caused a short-lived run-up in home prices in the spring and renewed upward inflationary pressure before the central bank delivered two more quarter-point rate hikes over the summer.

But markets and economists seem confident that 2023 was the Year of the Rate Peak, and that 2024 should herald in some welcome rate relief for borrowers with rate cuts expected by mid-year.

All of this was taking place against a backdrop of falling inflation. The year began with Canada's headline Consumer Price Index inflation growing at a pace of 5.90%. As of November, that pace has slowed to 3.10%.

The average non-seasonally adjusted house price also reached a high of \$729,044 in May before sliding back down to \$646,134 as of November. That's still up 5.5% from January, but down more than 20% from the all-time high reached in February 2022.

Here's an overview of some of the year's top mortgage stories, rate movements and mortgage-related stock performance.

Top mortgage stories of 2023

- Mortgage credit growth plunged in 2023, falling by more than 25% compared to 2022.
- Mortgage interest payments have continued to rise over the course of the year and are now nearly 90% higher compared to before the Bank of Canada's rate hikes began.
- There was a great deal of focus on the upcoming impact of higher interest rates on the estimated \$600 billion worth of mortgages coming up for renewal in the next two years. The Bank of Canada said that alone was one of the key reasons it decided to leave interest rates on hold this fall.
- Many variable-rate mortgage borrowers saw their amortizations soar thanks to rising interest rates, something the Bank of Canada said it was monitoring closely. But since the middle of the year,

that trend has started to reverse with big banks like TD saying they've seen a drop in amortization lengths as borrowers increased payments or switched to fixed-rate mortgages.

- Despite remaining near record lows for much of the year, early-stage delinquencies have now started to rise and are expected to keep trending upward.
- Bond yields and in turn fixed mortgage rates see-sawed several times over the year, rising heading into the fall, before plunging in the final months of the year.

Rate Movements

- The foundation for variable interest rates is the Bank of Canada's overnight rate and prime rate, which both finished the year 75 basis points higher compared to where they started the year. That was on top of the 400 bps worth of rate hikes delivered in 2022.
- Meanwhile, the most important benchmark for fixed-rate pricing—the 5-year government bond yield—ended the year down by 25 basis points to 3.17%. That was before it reached a peak of 4.42% in early October.

Source: Canadian Mortgage Trends

Candace Perko, Mortgage Broker



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GET RIPPED by Jari Love

Why People Fail at New Year's Resolutions

As the calendar flips to a new year, many of us embark on setting New Year's resolutions. These annual declarations of intent carry a sense of hope and optimism, symbolizing the opportunity for positive change and personal growth. However, despite our best intentions, the majority of New Year's resolutions fail. Research shows that a mere 8% of individuals manage to stick with their resolutions. However, 43% quit at the end of January and 23% quit in 7 days. The journey toward self-improvement often hits roadblocks, and understanding the reasons behind these failures is key to overcoming them. Here are the 4 main reasons we can fail at New Year's resolutions.

Challenge 1: Fear of Failure

Many individuals worry about not being able to follow through with their resolutions. This fear of failing to meet their goals can be emotionally challenging and may lead to feelings of disappointment, self-doubt, and frustration.

Solution: Adopt a growth mindset, recognizing that setbacks are stepping stones to success. Set achievable, specific goals, break them into smaller steps, and celebrate each milestone to bolster confidence. View setbacks as opportunities to learn and grow rather than as failures. Embrace a growth mindset that sees challenges as part of the journey to success.

Challenge 2: Fear of Regaining Weight

Weight loss can lead to improvements in body image and self-esteem. The fear of regaining weight is linked to the concern that it might lead to a loss of the positive self-image and confidence gained during their weight loss journey.

Solution: Shift the focus from quick fixes to sustainable habits. Embrace mindful eating and regular exercise, understanding that a positive self-image should encompass more than just physical appearance. Seek support from friends, family, or a support group to help you stay on track and maintain a positive body image.

Challenge 3: Fear of Judgment

Regaining weight can be seen as a personal failure, leading to feelings of disappointment, guilt, or shame. There's also a concern about how others will perceive them if they regain the weight.

Solution: Seek a supportive community or share your goals with trusted friends and

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family who offer encouragement without judgment. Remember that your journey is personal, and others' opinions should not define your self-worth. Focus on health, not appearance, and that your goal is to be healthier.

Challenge 4: Health Concerns

Some people embark on weight loss journeys to improve their health. If they regain the weight, there might be a fear of the return of health problems associated with obesity, which can be emotionally distressing.

Solution: Consult healthcare professionals to design a personalized health plan. Prioritize overall well-being and understand that maintaining a healthy lifestyle is a lifelong commitment. By staying closely connected with a healthcare professional, individuals can receive tailored advice and support to ensure their long-term health and well-being.

In the pursuit of New Year's resolutions, the path to personal growth can be filled with challenges. The fear of failure, regaining

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weight, judgment, and health concerns often deter individuals from their goals. However, with the right mindset and practical strategies, these challenges can be overcome. Embrace the New Year as an opportunity for transformation, knowing that setbacks are part of the journey. Surround yourself with support and prioritize well-being. With these tools, you can defy the statistics and make your resolutions a lasting reality.

Jari Love is a certified trainer and creator of the successful scientifically tested Get RIPPED!® series. You can learn more about Jari Love at www.jarilove.com. You can follow her on Facebook at @JariLoveFitness and at @rippedjari on Instagram.



OUT OF THE RUT Chapter 162

The month of love of martyred Valentine. This piggy-backs on an ancient seasonal celebration, morphed from the fertility-focused Roman Lupercalia, reproduction being significantly more important then. Romans were not the most delicate folk by historical accounts, modern families may be appalled by the goings-on of the ancients in their festivities.

Flying home as the wildest cold snap of several decades made it's exit, I'm relieved it's only minus 20! Goodbyes painfully pull me back to my Hawaiian friends. I miss the circles of colourful folk playing music and sharing stories, poetry, laughter, insight... without a biting wind playing across our backs.

A Mad Hatters Tea Party: Extraordinary Chai from fruits and herbs growing abundantly, sweetened with oat milk and local honey. Delicious in whatever vessels we could gather. All sported hats of varying eccentricity from Fantuzzi's 'wall of hats'. Each contributed to creating a 'chain story' where one person begins, then hands off with a cliff-hanger to the next person, progressing around the group to involve all. Even crowd-shy Angel contributed a humorous ending to our non-sensical

tale. The tea-table then laden with potluck offerings; including hot food we cobbled together from anything suitably edible. It amazes me how we create deliciousness out of what appears so little... when the land is spitting out food, it's easy.

Everyone's avocado trees are going off right now. Angel has two trees dropping about a dozen avocado bombs daily. One smaller variety, still double the size of those seen here, another producing rigid-skinned giants as large as a football. Opened, they reveal great buttery bowlfuls of flesh. Almost daily, I'd create a large bowl of guacamole pungent with garlic and cilantro to share, and take boxes of avo's to our friends.

Yellowing papaya and bananas, pendulous spikey Jackfruit, alien Cacao pods, Longan, Breadfruit, Eggfruit, Lilikoi, Coconuts galore. If you're a fruit-eater it truly is paradise. If you're reducing sugar intake it can be incredible torture. Perspective is everything.

My last afternoon was spent lounging at our friend's Banyan Tree Sanctuary. Meditation in the hot tub and sauna between swimming many lengths of the cool blue pool. As the sun descended, the last Hawaiian sunset of this trip spread with glorious colour and drama, invoking tall tropical silhouettes against the horizon. A fond farewell indeed.

The flight was an endurance effort. Hard seat, packed flight due to weather-induced cancellations. I spent much of it head

wedged against the seat in front and fingers in my ears. Entertaining

in a less than fabulous way, but here I am, gathered by my good friend into a toasty car, driving towards the stunning Rockies standing bold and clear against the lucid blue sky.

I cleaned, unpacked, reorganised, drove to collect groceries and was graced by a herd of elk, group of deer and a lone coyote on a serious hunting expedition. All three in the same few acres mere moments from home. How fortunate to be able to return to this natural beauty and harmony of life and death.

We have been celebrating death, life, the passing of many, the memories and moments enriched by those with whom we have shared this land. As we age, the number of friends graduating to the next phase steadily increases. I spent NYE sleeping in the study of a dear friend who left us just over a year ago. On rising, I walked with my harp to his nearby grave and played to the wind, sky, ocean and to his beautiful soul.

My harp has been a boon. I've been lucky to jam with excellent musicians, making me feel like I can do this, something that others might also enjoy, sharing the magical sounds of harp on the beach, at firesides and circles, as background to the beginning or end of a party. Before, I kept it pretty much to myself and those mad enough to be close when practicing. It's a good thing to share music. LIVE music, and to feel the appreciation of others.

I wish you a genuinely beautiful February of life, laughter, sharing and much love.

Be peaceful, Kat Dancer
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FROZEN FROGSICLES FROLIC IN FUTURE by Laura Griffin

Hoppy Leap year! What better way to celebrate than by taking a closer look at one neighbour known for its outstanding ability to leap thirty times its own body length, the wood frog. In the springtime wood frogs can be recognized by their mating calls from their wetland homes. They make a sound similar to that of rubbing your finger along a balloon; some describe the sound as quack-like. If you follow that sound you might be lucky enough to spot these four-legged amphibians with their tan bodies and dark bandit masks around their eyes. If you do find yourself in this situation, staring down at a handsome spring wood frog, know that you are gazing at one of nature's hardest survivors of winter.

The wood frog is the only amphibian that can be found north of the Arctic Circle, giving us cause to contemplate where are they hiding in the cold of February? Underneath Fall's leaf litter little frogs tucked themselves in as part of their

incredible transformation to survive the wicked weather of winter as frozen "frogsicles."

Freezing is fatal for most organisms because it causes ice crystals to form in the cells. This process can rupture the cell walls, the result being cellular death. To ensure its survival, the wood frog has an incredible adaptation. In the fall it eats as much as it can, building up glycogen in its liver. Then, just before the chilly weather hits, it buries itself in the leaf litter, curls up tight to minimize its surface area and prevent dehydration, and waits as its body temperature drops. It may have the urge to urinate, but the frog will hold in its urine as this becomes a life-saving liquid. When frost or snow touches the frog's skin the miracle begins. The liver releases massive amounts of glucose (sugars converted from the glycogen) into the bloodstream. This mixes with the urine, creating what is essentially antifreeze. This antifreeze prevents the cells from losing too much liquid, thereby preventing cellular death. With most of its body frozen the lungs stop breathing, the heart stops beating, and brain activity ceases. Any doctor would declare the frog clinically dead, but it has not croaked.

With the warming weather of Spring, the frogsicles melt. The frog thaws in a day or



Photo Credit: Jackie Sills

two and off it hops. This extreme survival strategy allows the wood frog to get a jump on life. It does not have to wait for the ice to thaw off the ponds like other frog species, it can start finding a mate early and can catch the groggy insects just emerging. This February 29th I encourage you to emulate a wood frog and hop on the chance to make the most of your extra day.

If you would like to watch this freezing process unfold I suggest watching "Frogsicles: Frozen But Still Alive", on the Smithsonian Channel on YouTube. Please note this process CANNOT be replicated by throwing a wood frog in a freezer. That would be fatal and is no way to treat our wild neighbours.



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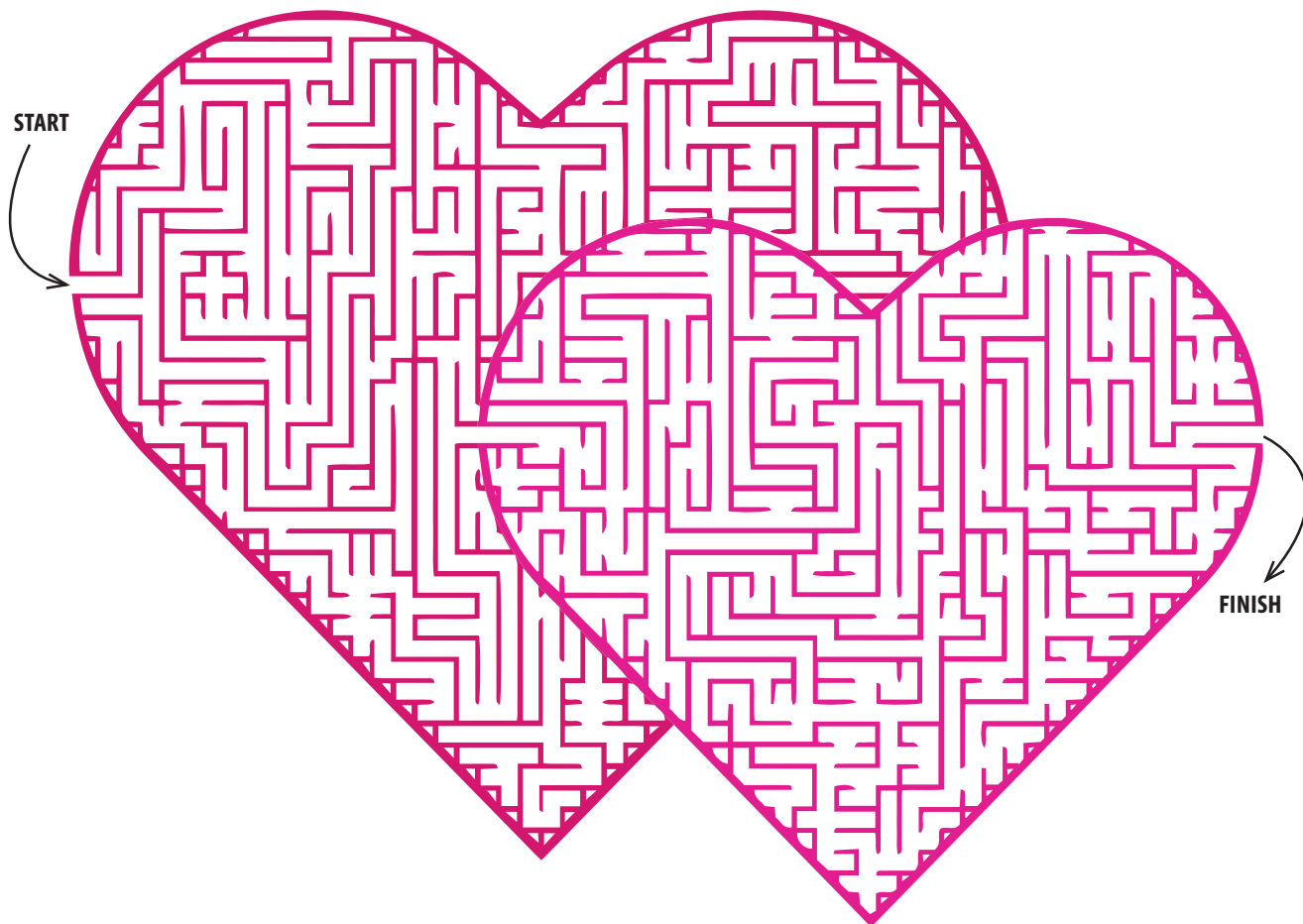


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