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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

How's your January been going?

The typical Canadian person will often say, "fine", which if quoting from the movie, Italian Job, means freaked out, insecure, neurotic, and emotional.

The reality is that we don't like communicating our junk, so "fine" is a safe answer. However, what it really says is, "I don't want or trust you to be that close". At times it can be a fair answer, and I would agree that some information is "TMI". But to be a real and close community, we need to be willing to allow a bit more than a "fine" response.

We were recently brought into a situation where the impact of what happened was clearly visible on my countenance. Saying, "I'm fine" would be an insult to the intelligence of the person asking. Although information is sensitive, there were discrete ways in which my wife and

I could communicate without exposing unnecessary information and people. What was interesting is that through our honest response, immediate support was not only expressed, but we heard how others have navigated their own difficult situations.

In this month's edition I would like to make a particular mention of the newly founded "Bragg Creek Foundation". You can read about the formal celebration of their transformed community presence on page 11. This organization has helped the Bragg Creek Community navigate through some of the instances where "fine" was the veneer covering the impact of trauma. To be a true community, we need to be willing to allow honesty to be part of our response. We also need to create time to allow room for someone to give an honest answer. You will be amazed at who may come alongside to support you in your journey, helping you get back on your feet. Isn't that true love?

Happy Valentines

*From my family to yours,
Lowell Harder*



COVER ARTIST PROFILE

Ella Gallagher is a 16-year-old local artist who has called Springbank home since she could walk. She is currently a student at Springbank High School. Ella has always had a passion for art, beginning to draw, sketch, and paint as soon as she could hold a pen or a paintbrush! While she has explored watercolour, her true preference lies in oil painting. Ella finds inspiration in nature, particularly the Rocky Mountains, lush vegetation, and serene lakes. She also enjoys painting animals, such as the Highland cow featured on the cover, a piece she completed in 2022 at the age of 14. A self-taught artist, Ella is a free spirit who paints from the heart. You can contact her at gallagherhome@shaw.ca

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.

**ROCKY VIEW COUNTY
Election 2025**



THE NEXT MUNICIPAL ELECTION FOR ROCKY VIEW COUNTY IS MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2025.

ARE YOU CONSIDERING RUNNING FOR OFFICE?

The nomination period is now open and lasts until noon, **Monday, September 22, 2025.**

Visit www.rockyview.ca/elections to learn more about the Candidate Nomination Process and Election 2025.




HIGH COUNTRY LIFE

BY MARK ADMAKI, CA



MP UPDATE - FOOTHILLS John Barlow

What does Trudeau's "resignation" mean?

Nothing.

Scandal after scandal, billions of dollars wasted, and Liberal ideology the basis of bad government policy - that is the record Trudeau runs from, leaving destruction in his wake.

And yet, nothing has really changed following his announcement to eventually step down. He's still Prime Minister. Poor Liberal policies are still governing our country. And Canadians are still forced to suffer through the high cost of living crisis this government as forced them in to, with no signs of reprieve.

Every Liberal MP in power today and every potential Liberal leadership contender fighting for the top job helped break the country over the last 9 years. All Liberal politicians actively worked to pass into law the job-killing, inflationary carbon tax—a tax that Carbon Tax Carney endorsed in

his book. All supported a law quadrupling the tax over the next 5 years. All voted for or actively supported Trudeau's out-of-control spending, debt and immigration. All passed Trudeau's housing policies that doubled the cost of homes. All Liberal politicians helped pass catch-and-release bail and house arrest for the most rampant reoffenders, policies that increased violent crime 50%, gun crime 116% and hate crime by 250%.

Now, while leaderless Liberals focus on saving their jobs and fighting each other for power—the country spirals out of control—an out-of-control housing emergency, an out-of-control migrant crisis, an out-of-control \$62 billion deficit, not to mention tariff threats from the United States, oh, and another NDP-Liberal carbon tax hike kicks in this April 1st ... everything is out of control.

To add a broken cherry to the Liberal cheesecake, Trudeau prorogues Parliament so Liberals can just focus on piecing back their party and finding a new leader, and Trudeau can spend this time greasing the wheels for his next venture. Canadians are suffering. Our country is falling further into shambles. Yet Liberals only care

about repairing their party reputation over repairing the country they have broken.

We need an election now. Canadians can take back control of their lives and their country. Take back control of our border, take back control of immigration, take back control of spending, deficits and inflation. Take back control of our streets by locking up criminals, banning drugs, treating addiction and stopping gun smugglers.

Conservatives will cap spending, axe taxes, reward work, build homes, uphold family, stop crime, secure borders, rearm our forces, restore our freedom and put Canada First.

We have one mission: to bring home Canada's promise that every hardworking Canadian gets a powerful paycheque and pension that buys affordable food and homes on safe streets; where all are united for the country we know and love: Canada first, Canada last, Canada always.

John



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COUNCILLOR UPDATE ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

Don Kochan - Division 2

RVC Division 2 news items for your information:

Bingham Crossing – Following are comments provided by Rencor Developments on the status of Bingham Crossing:

“We’re thrilled to share exciting updates on Bingham Crossing as we prepare to restart construction this spring. Since summer, our team has been focused on finalizing approvals, and with construction scheduled to resume in April, we’re eager to bring this vibrant project to life.

In preparation for Costco’s highly anticipated opening in Fall 2026, significant off-site improvements to the road network will be completed. These include 2 new high-speed ramps, one eastbound and one on the westbound on Highway 1 at Range Road 33, the widening of Range Road 33 and Township Road 250, and the addition of traffic circles to enhance traffic flow in the area.

On-site work will involve completing all underground services, constructing the private spine road serving Bingham Crossing, and developing various site features. Over the past several months, we’ve tendered both on-site and off-site work and are now in the process of awarding contracts to ensure we’re ready for the upcoming construction season.

We’re also finalizing approvals with the Province and County for all transportation improvements and are on track to begin work this spring.

Leasing for the surrounding retail buildings has begun, with tenant possession targeted for late 2026 to early 2027. We’re excited to announce high-quality retailers and amenities in the coming months as leases are finalized. Bingham Crossing is designed to complement the surrounding communities by offering a wide variety of shopping, services, and amenities.

While this process has taken longer than anticipated, we’re delighted to be moving forward with such an exciting project. We look forward to sharing more updates as

construction progresses and can’t wait to welcome you to Bingham Crossing!”

Great twine round-up - Now through May 31, 2025, CleanFarms is encouraging Rocky View County residents to recycle used plastic baler twine. Drop-offs can be made at participating Alberta collection sites, including Rocky View County Transfer Sites. It’s a simple way to reduce waste, support sustainability, and keep our beautiful landscapes clean—and you might even win a cash prize! Rocky View County has announced a contest to help recycle plastic baler twine. The contest is open to all Alberta 4-H clubs, agricultural charities, and Alberta residents. For details on how to participate: www.rockyview.ca/news-events/news/article/3422/round-up-your-used-plastic-twine-for-a-chance-to-win/

AG Workshops - Each year, our Agriculture Services Team organizes a variety of workshops designed to provide

valuable information to our community. Whether you’re interested in gardening tips or learning how to maintain your septic system, there’s something for everyone. Below is a list of upcoming workshops, with even more to come as the season progresses! For more information: www.rockyview.ca/news-events/news/article/3450/ag-workshops-to-expand-your-knowledge

- Ladies Livestock Workshop
- Living in the Natural Environment
- Ranching Opportunities
- Environmental Farm Plan Workshop
- Vegetable Gardening for New to Intermediate Growers
- Orientation to Beekeeping

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



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SPRINGBANK HERITAGE CLUB

February 2025

The Heritage Club reopened on January 13th for a new year of fun activities. Regular programs that are available at the club are:

Heritage Club Singers – Join us every Tuesday from 10:00am – noon for fun, singing and socializing.

Pickleball – We host pickleball for 50+ seniors on Monday and Thursday afternoons starting at 12:30 pm and ending on or before 4:30 pm depending on attendance.



Exercise class – Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:00am – 10:00am.

Craft, Coffee & Chat – Wednesdays from 1:00 – 4:00. Bring your project, or learn something new from our talented members.

Games – Tuesdays 1:00 – 4:00. A fun afternoon of cards, bridge, pool and shuffleboard. There is something for everyone!

For information on any of these activities, please contact us at springbankhc@telus.net

Springbank Heritage Club is a not-for-profit organization created for the benefit and enjoyment of senior citizens 50+ years young in Springbank and surrounding communities. Come check us out! You can visit our website at www.springbankheritageclub.com for further details and to see all that we have to offer.

Springbank Heritage Club Contact:
Janice at Springbankhc@telus.net

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NEWSLETTER

Judi Hunter - Ward 5 Trustee

High schools have completed their term-one departmental exams and students have entered the second term. Plans are underway for June departmental exams and graduation ceremonies for graduating Grade 12 students.

Two Rocky View School projects were announced under the Alberta Governments accelerator program: Full construction funding for Airdrie High School ;Full construction funding for Chestermere K-9. The anticipated completion of these projects is Fall 2028.

Rocky View Schools is transitioning to the WheresTheBus App. This app provides information that checks the current location of the bus, when it arrives at your child's stop and school. WheresTheBus replaces the Bus Status App, which will no longer be available effective March 6.

The Board of Trustees approved a \$300 000.00 contribution to the Ed Eggerer Athletic Park in Airdrie which will provide opportunities for the three Airdrie high school students to access this field as part of a joint-use agreement with the City of Airdrie. The Board contributed \$230000 to the Cochrane Turf Field and \$500 000 to the new Horseshoe Crossing High School turf field in Langdon. Turf projects are costly and can only happen with the contributions of many partners. Where possible, the Board seek to support opportunities to improve the athletic opportunities for students. Football Alberta and the Alberta Schools Athletic Association require artificial turf for playoffs and regional championships.

The education landscape is seeing labor unrest. Educational support workers from many of Alberta's Northern Boards are currently on strike.

The Board will be addressing bussing fees as part of its budget process, which will begin in the next month. Parents can expect an increase in fees due to a rise in fuel prices and wages incurred by our transportation partners. This year, the

Board was able to defer those increases as the Board drew down transportation reserves.

The Airdrie Space accommodation changes will commence September 2025. The Board is in the final process of re-evaluating the numbers and considering any further adjustments.

Early learning testing mandated by the provincial government is under fire by Alberta teachers, who are concerned with the amount time used to conduct the testing.

- In 2024, Learning Disruption Funding was renamed Literacy and Support Funding, to support the development of crucial early literacy and numeracy skills in Alberta's youngest learners.
- All students in grades 1 to 3 are being screened twice a year, in September and January.
- Students requiring additional support will be screened a third time at the end of the school year to monitor their progress.
- New screening requirements will be introduced for students in grades 4 and 5 in September 2026.

For detailed information visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/system/files/educ-general-information-bulletin-literacy-and-numeracy-screening-assessments.pdf#search=literacy%20and%20numeracy%20testing>

The Board is in the third year of its 4-year strategic plan. The Board will be receiving administrative updates on the progress being made in each of the areas:

- Improving student learning
- Strengthening our workforce
- Bolstering our infrastructure
- Connecting with community

A recent study of myopia in young people found a 30% increase since the pandemic.





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COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE ALBERTA SPCA AND UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA TO ADDRESS FARMER AND ANIMAL WELL-BEING

Project aims to create assessment tools, provide resources, and deliver training to Alberta SPCA Peace Officers

The Alberta SPCA and the Agricultural Well-being in Alberta (AgWellAB) program – part of the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities (ACSRC) at the University of Alberta — are collaborating to develop training and resources for Alberta SPCA Peace Officers to support farmer and animal well-being.

Alberta SPCA Peace Officers respond to calls of animal distress across the province. In some cases, the Peace Officer identifies that the owner of these animals may also be in distress and/or experiencing a mental health challenge. However, there is no existing training and few resources for Peace Officers to access in these cases to support the farmer’s needs.

In response, this project between the Alberta SPCA and AgWellAB’s lead researcher, Rebecca Purc-Stephenson, aims to create assessment tools, provide resources, and deliver training that empowers Peace Officers to effectively engage with residents living on farms. This will help Peace Officers identify possible cases where mental well-being may be a concern and provide resources for mental health support when investigating animal welfare concerns.

“During their daily duties, our Peace Officers often encounter people in crisis,”

said Alberta SPCA Director of Education & Strategic Initiatives, Melissa Logan. “Through this partnership, we hope to strengthen rural communities by not only helping animals, but by ensuring farmers also get the care they need.”

“Equipping Peace Officers with the tools to recognize and respond to mental health crises can make a significant difference for both farmers and their animals,” added Purc-Stephenson.

This collaboration is guided by a One Health approach that states an individual’s health has an impact on animal welfare and the environment.

Financial support for this project was provided under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year, \$3.5-billion investment by Canada’s federal, provincial and territorial governments that supports Canada’s agri-food and agri-product sectors. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5 billion commitment that is cost-shared 60% federally and 40% provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

For more information please contact:

Dan Kobe
Director of Communications, Alberta SPCA
dkobe@albertaspca.org | 780-982-5055



CONNECT TO WILD ALBERTA WITH THE QUESTION “WHAT’S YOUR 60?”

Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) wants to know “What’s Your 60?”

In 2025, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of AWA, we are inviting Albertans of every age and background to answer this question in their own way, by creating a nature-based challenge around the number 60.

“Connecting people to Alberta’s natural places is so important because we won’t protect or stand up for the things we don’t love,” says Lindsey Wallis, Adventures for Wilderness coordinator at AWA. “This challenge offers an opportunity for folks to mindfully set a goal for 2025 that will connect them to Wild Alberta, whether it is in their city park or deep in the backcountry.”

AWA was founded around a kitchen table in 1965 by a group of backcountry enthusiasts. They were concerned about the detrimental effects on Alberta’s wild places from multiple landscapes uses, including oil and gas, mining, forestry, recreation, and agriculture. For the past 60 years AWA has been a voice for the wilderness, these places we know to be key to our physical, mental and spiritual health.

In celebration of the joy Wild Alberta brings us, AWA is spreading the love of these special wild places by asking Albertans to challenge themselves and find out “What’s Your 60?”

“The only limit is people’s imagination,” says Wallis. “We want people to find something that makes them excited about the natural world around them and challenge themselves to deepen that connection.” It can be almost anything nature-based! The challenge so far cover and exciting range of activities, from making 60 sketches of nature over the year, to meditating in nature 60 times, to going for a walk, bike, or paddle in nature 60 days in 2025, to writing 60 letters to government, all the way up to something extreme like spending 60 days hiking the Great Divide Trail.

AWA is working with our supporter Bowness Soapworks+Seto Pottery to create handmade medals for all those who reach their 60 goal. For folks who may not be able to commit to a challenge, they can support other participants with a donation. All funds will be directed to AWA and its work defending Wild Alberta.

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COUNCILLOR UPDATE ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

Kevin Hanson - Division 1

Quick Bits

I met with the residents of Elbow Valley West at their AGM, and had a good discussion about Highway 8, and some internal traffic concerns. There was a great turnout for an AGM, hats-off to those that made it - good AGM's result in strong communities with respected voice at the County. The first meeting of 2025 for the Bragg Creek FireSmart Committee will be February 19, 2025. It will be held electronically, so hopefully we can get a full turn out of committee members. The agenda will be posted online in the "Meetings and Hearings" area of the RVC website, closer to the meeting date. I am sure there will be a good discussion given the events in California of late.

CMRB

Interesting development at the December 11, 2024 Council Meeting. It was resolved on a 4-3 vote of Council that "Rocky View

County intends to withdraw from the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board, citing a need for greater planning autonomy and alignment with local priorities". I voted against the motion, as I felt it was premature as there was insufficient information at that time to make an informed decision, or fully consider its consequences. More information is coming from the Province early this spring as to what the legislative changes will in fact be, as the regional boards are baked into the MGA both at the corporation and board level, and in the area of the legislative hierarchy of planning documents.

To assist the Province sort through the complexity, the CMRB is producing a report by March 31, 2025, outlining options to the Province. This will include recommendations for potential ways to unwind the crown corporation, including legal ramifications of current contracts for planning work, staff contracts, as well as guidance on how planning is currently intertwined into MGA level statutes, etc. There will also be recommendations for potential ways forward with voluntary membership, and without direct oversight of the Province and its \$1M budget investment.

Under the MGA, being part of a regional board meant that member municipalities were not required to enter into Intermunicipal Development Plans and Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks with their neighbours that were in the board with them. Being outside of a regional entity means that we will have to enter into agreements with Cochrane, Airdrie, Chestermere, Foothills, and Calgary. RVC would not have to negotiate with Okotoks and High River.

Springbank Area Structure Plan

My colleague in Division 2 reported in the January HCN that I was promoting residential developments to be allowed to have parcels less than two acres. This on the surface is correct, but it is an overly simplistic statement without the context of the full discussion, as I indicated at the time that this was only for environmentally sensitive areas.

There are two policy areas that I took a stand on environmentally:

1. Is with regard to continuing to pump water into our Country Residential Estates, and slowly and constantly trickle that water into the water table through our choice of sewage treatment systems. The details of slow percolation vs. storm



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AFTER

water behaviour during snow melt or heavy rains on top of saturated surface layers, I will leave to experts.

2. Is with regard to our Country Estate build form. Especially when it comes to environmentally sensitive areas like the Bow and Elbow River edges, escarpments off of the west bluffs of the Paskapoo uplands, and the 5 creek drainages into the Elbow River on the south side of Highway 1.

Although it sounds assuring that something like 2-acres is enshrined in policy at the ASP level, the fact is the ASP is a Council statute. As is our higher-level Municipal Development Plan. Any Council at any time has the ability to make decisions to amend their plans. Amendments to the plans can be sought by applicants, and if Council is of the will, it can enact changes – on the fly – to suit. This involves public hearings, and may involve higher-level agreements and policies (i.e. IDP's or regional growth plans) that must be adhered to, but in my seven years on Council I have seen more than enough setting aside of policy to fit circumstance with often the deciding Councilors not even the local representation. The point of all this is that I would rather have seen a thoughtful addition of policy that was anticipatory of those situations, and laid out the ground rules for environmental interesting areas, and not just do it on the fly down the road, by future Councils that have not sat through a full ASP engagement experience.

Contact: KRHanson@RockyView.ca
or call 403.463.1166.



BRAGG CREEK FOUNDATION LAUNCH



Saturday, January 25, 2025
Robbie Burns Day

The community came together to celebrate the launch of the Bragg Creek Foundation with Scottish flair and a wee dram on Robbie Burns Day, January 25th. Hosted at the Post House, the event opened with a piping in the haggis ceremony and a theatrical performance of Burn's poem "Address to A Haggis" recited by Marty Gorman.

What was known as the Bragg Creek Ladies Auxiliary is now the Bragg Creek Foundation. The Ladies Auxiliary was formed in 1960 as a special committee structured under the Bragg Creek Community Association. It provided supports and services in the community for over 65 years.

The evolution started back just after the flood. A couple of community members walked down White Avenue in June 2013 and witnessed the devastation people were dealing with. They quickly mobilized, held a fundraiser, raised local donations and distributed funds to the people who urgently needed help.

Then came the pandemic, funded by a generous BC family the Auxiliary hosted a

COVID Relief Fund and provided funding to families in the community. Both efforts, the flood fund and this COVID fund, were based on and operated much like the Red Cross model. This fund now operates under the title of the Urgent Needs Fund and provides support to children, families and seniors in our local area who are experiencing hardship due to a life-changing event such as fire or poor health.


"We also evolved to reflect how we manage donations, such as bequests and gifts that are reinvested directly into the community. We believe that the Foundation will help us better serve the community's current needs. Society status also allows us to work more collaboratively with like-minded efforts in the community." said Michele McDonald, President of the Foundation.

The Foundation will continue to help locals with their Celebration of Life events, support the BC Veteran's Committee with the annual Remembrance Day Service and host the annual Clean Up the Creek event with BC Wild.

What's on the horizon, is supporting the Rocky View Foundation for the long-awaited senior's housing, dedication to support primary care in our community, a scholarship program, hosting a "Not a" Golf Tournament and they have sights on establishing charitable status.

The mood was jubilant on Robbie Burns Day and McDonald expressed that, "We appreciate all the community groups that came out to support us today, there were representatives from the Chamber, BCCA, Camp Horizon, Bragg Creek Trails, the Wild, Snowbirds, Redwood Fire, MLA Sara Elmeligi and more! Think of the even more great things we can do in Bragg Creek when we work collaboratively. I think this calls for a Scottish salute" and a dram was raised.

www.braggcreekfoundation.ca



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Above: "Address to A Haggis" recited by Marty Gorman.
Below: Attendees gathered at The Post House for the launch





MLA UPDATE - BANFF/KANANSKIS

Sarah Elmeligi

February Already! I feel like time is flying by as your MLA. In January, I took some much needed strategy time to think about the year ahead. As always, meeting with you through MLA on Tour or event has been an important of that. Understanding your concerns guides my focus and ensures I'm addressing the issues that matter to you most as we prepare for the spring legislative session later this month.

What are my priorities for 2025?

While I'm still refining the details, there are a few things that you've told me are important to you.

Protecting Our Natural Landscape

Conversations with residents have highlighted deep concerns about protecting our shared environment, especially regarding coal mining. Despite overwhelming opposition to new coal mines along the Eastern Slopes, the UCP continues to push projects like the Grassy Mountain coal mine forward. The new

coal policy and regulatory changes they announced right before Christmas holidays don't offer any real protections for our Eastern Slopes and headwaters, and they don't apply to "advanced" projects. The Grassy Mountain mine has already been rejected by a provincial/federal joint review panel. To many Albertans that means it's not an advanced project, but the UCP and Northback disagree. I was one of the many Albertans who attended a protest in Calgary to oppose this mine. The mine will impact water quality and quantity in Southern Alberta and impact habitat for people and animals alike. I'm also struggling with the way the decision has been made. The Government's handling of the Grassy Mountain mine proposal demonstrates the lack of independent decision making in the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER). This is on top of various other issues that have arisen with the AER's effectiveness in monitoring, reporting, and enforcing existing regulations. All this brings to question the effectiveness of our energy regulator. There are many aspects of this project and the AER that I can't wait to discuss in the legislature this spring! Thank you to everyone who has emailed, phoned, met with me, or attended a protest about Grassy Mountain. Your efforts are

important. I hear you and I carry voice with me to Edmonton.

To me, whether we're talking about coal, forestry, or recreation, it's really about land use planning. What do we want our landscape to be used for? What objectives will that meet? What kind of society do we create when we make these decisions? From the Ghost to Kananaskis and the protected areas on the Eastern Slopes, our land use planning decisions have serious implications for our livelihoods, social connections, ecosystem sustainability, water provision and so much more. I am continually considering the review of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan and the current water allocation consultations in this vein. If you are too, please reach out. I'd love to talk about these issues in more depth and learn what your priorities are.

Addressing Affordability

Rising costs remain a top concern for many residents and businesses in Banff Kananaskis. From housing shortages to inflation, utility bills, auto insurance, and wages, Albertans are asking why we face some of the highest costs and highest unemployment west of the Maritimes—despite having the lowest minimum wage. People need a government that takes

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**MLA SARAH ELMELIGI
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CONTEST CLOSES FEBRUARY 14th, 2025

Winners will receive a prize from one of our ridings local artist & have their design shared with our community on our new stickers
We can't wait to see what you create.

meaningful action to address your pocket book, while prioritizing a strong economy and environmental protection. Over the next few months, I want to hear from you. How is affordability hitting you? What are solutions you think your government should be implementing? Where are you feeling inflation the most? What sacrifices or changes have you had to make to accommodate our increased cost of living? Please email me your thoughts.

Get Involved – Volunteer call-out

Bragg Creek has an incredible network for trails that many of us enjoy regularly. I know you value these recreational opportunities, and I hear from many of you that you value the need for wildlife to have safe access to these areas too. Bragg Creek Trails has recently received funding from

the Calgary Foundation to do some trail monitoring examining how wildlife and people share these spaces. If you'd like to volunteer, email Eric at: elloyd525@gmail.com.

Colouring Contest

Our constituency logo needs your splash of creativity! Let your imagination run wild and bring our logo to life with your unique colouring skills! Participants must be 18 years old or younger, live in the Banff-Kananaskis riding, and submit their finished masterpiece by February 14th via email to: Banff.kananaskis@assembly.ab.ca.

Sarah Elmeligi



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New Year's Financial Resolutions

Happy New Year! Let's start with recommendations for a young couple with a family. Most resolutions are generally broken. Let's hope the resolutions below are not broken.

Jack and Diane have had financial savings issues in the past, and starting with 2025, they want to turn this around and improve their financial situation. They feel that making financial New Year resolutions and implementing them is a good start. To help identify their priorities, they made the following list:

Set Objectives – Goal setting is the foundation of achieving financial success. If they write down their goals, it will help Jack and Diane clarify them and establish their personal and financial priorities. With written goals it is harder to not to follow up, over time, with those goals.

Pay Themselves First – There is no better way of building wealth than paying themselves first. It simply means Jack and Diane take their savings off the top of their pay cheques rather than from what little, if any, is left over. By building their investments through regular monthly deposits, they also benefit from dollar cost averaging, by making regular investment purchases on a monthly basis.

Avoid Personal Debt – Since interest on personal debt, such as credit cards, car loans and a mortgage, is usually not deductible for income-tax purposes, paying it off is one of the best investments Jack and Diane can make. Too much personal debt is the most serious obstacle to achieving financial success.

Diversify Their Investments – Few people have the time or specialized knowledge to successfully manage their own investments. By choosing well-managed investment funds, (i.e. mutual funds), especially Global Mutual funds, Jack and Diane will have the benefit of professional management as well as better diversification. Mutual fund managers have access to current financial information much quicker than individual investors and therefore can make better financial decisions sooner.

Maximize their TFSA, Non-Registered and RRSP investments. These accounts are Jack and Diane's cornerstone of their retirement financial plan. But they haven't been making enough deposits to meet their goals. They can boost their plans, by setting up monthly automatic deposit arrangements and by depositing any refunds they receive into their investments.

Prepare an up-to-date Will – They want to decide how their estate will be settled. A professionally prepared Will makes sure that their estate gets settled quickly when they die and reduces the risk of the courts making distribution decisions for them. Jack and Diane also want to choose who gets custody of their children.

Reduce Their Taxes – There are not as many generous tax breaks as in the past. In addition to RRSP deposits, they may be able to further reduce their tax bill by shifting investments into the hands of lower-income family members. Also, the tax-sheltered growth within a permanent

life insurance policy should not be overlooked.

After carefully reviewing their list, Jack and Diane chose the strategies most important to them and adopted these as their New Year's Financial Resolutions. With the help of their financial advisor, they'll get their year off to a good start. They will monitor their progress towards achieving their goals by doing periodic reviews.

Would you like help with your personal financial resolutions?

Call me today, to set up an appointment to review your goals and objectives and to ensure that your current investment approach will allow you to fulfill your goals.

Also, visit my business website (myfinancialsolutions.ca) for additional financial information on insurance, retirement/estate planning, investments and whole host of other financial topics.

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MAKE YOUR MARK By Mark Kamachi

Advertising-design is not art!

Not to divulge actual details, but I want to convey a story that happens often in the advertising-design (A-D) profession.

I was having dinner recently with a relative, who I shall call Bob. Between bites of steak, Bob mentioned his “friend”, we’ll call Doug, who was in the midst of starting a business. Bob wanted my two cents on Doug’s endeavour as I was a branding guy. At this point, Doug had already spent \$millions to secure a building, not to mention the \$\$\$\$ he spent on R&D, market analysis, product design, interviewing potential partners and investors, etc.

But something was troubling Bob. Between mouthfuls, he showed me a logo that Doug had a “professional designer” create. I choked back my steak in an effort to hold back my laughter. What he produced must surely have been a joke? Was Doug testing my creative expertise?

After overcoming my need to vomit, I offered up some constructive criticism. This was another case of someone not understanding the importance of branding. As a logo (one part of a brand marketing strategy), Doug’s attempt failed on many levels: too many colours, not scalable, too many fonts, and most importantly, didn’t illicit any emotion (other my gag reflex). It was supposed to, as my creative partner Kate said, look like a horse but in the end resembled a camel. Regardless, it had to have been “designed” by a committee or by Doug’s cousin’s cousin.

When launching a business, entrepreneurs spend too much time prioritizing aspects such as product development, R&D, operations, and customer acquisition. All good. However, the brand and its tentacles, despite being crucial to the creative marketing strategy, is not considered vital. It is viewed as something aesthetic.

In my opinion, this occurs because: First, entrepreneurs may assume they can create a logo inexpensively. Watch a 15-minute YouTube tutorial and voila. Instant logo. This perception reduces the importance of how professional content creators work holistically. Professionals consider how logos work on marketing materials such

flyers, signage, digital and print advertising, social media, apparel, etc. If Doug’s logo were to be produced on a hoodie, it would resemble a squashed tarantula.

Second, the rise of DIY tools, education online, etc, has made it easier for anyone to create their own content. Tools like Canva, Squarespace, Wix, and the like, allow entrepreneurs to design materials without needing formal design skills. But with little regard for long-term branding. Near sightedness can be costly. Professionals, as mentioned, work holistically. They plan for a brand’s growth. A brand, often starting with a logo, isn’t seen as integral to the bottom line.

The reality is that A-D plays a key role in shaping a business’ identity, attracting customers, and driving growth from day one. A-D helps businesses convey their brand story clearly and stand out in a competitive market. As companies grow, they begin to realize how the power of well-crafted design elements create lasting impressions that attract customers and boost their bottom line.

In short, A-D is a professional investment that businesses cannot afford to overlook, even if it’s not initially seen as critical.

Chew on that. Cheers, mark.

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BRAGG CREEK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Bragg Creek's Winter in the Woods festival is back for its 4th year on February 1st, 2025! This fun-filled day celebrates everything winter plus raises funds for our cherished outdoor rink (ODR).

Winter in the Woods is all about community, winter magic, and fun activities that bring us together to celebrate the season. With on-ice and off-ice activities like hockey games, human curling, outdoor beer garden, and crackling fires, this event has become a beloved Bragg Creek tradition. Our ODR is 100% volunteer-made! Volunteers put in hundreds of hours every season, keeping the rink alive even through chinook challenges. Proceeds from past festivals helped us resurface the rink's asphalt, creating a smoother ice and a year-round

space for basketball and ball hockey. This year we are aiming to raise \$15,000 to turn our list of rink projects into reality. Come celebrate winter, support your community, and help us take the ODR to the next level!

- VOLUNTEERS, it's not too late. We need YOU to help make Winter in the Woods AMAZING! Even if you have never volunteered before, this is a great event to start. We've got roles for everyone, including youth volunteer opportunities. Whether you're directing parking, running the kids zone, or keeping the fire pits roaring, we have the perfect volunteer role for you! Join us for one shift or stay all day – whatever you can offer makes a HUGE difference! Jump to our website for the "SignUp" link or scan a QR code on posters everywhere to pick a shift.
- HUGE thanks to our title sponsors and everyone who comes together in warmth and cheer for this event. Title Sponsors: The Bragg Creek & Area Chamber of Commerce and Cowboy Trail Brewery.

You may be aware of the winter programming that happens at the Centre, like Rumble & Roar (playtime for parents & tots on Thursdays), or Adult Pickleball on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but, if not, maybe a membership at the BCCA would help you plug in. Your membership will provide you a monthly email giving you all the inside info. Don't miss out! Purchase online anytime via the website or stop by the Centre in person. For a nominal \$25/year (or less depending upon the package you buy) you too will be in the know.

Did you know? Our community centre is a versatile venue able to host events large and small. We have space and time for all sorts of groups needing to get together for social, work or sporting events. Weddings can be professionally hosted as can private rink rentals. Keep us in mind this year if you have need or hear of someone who does.

February may be short, but it's also sweet. Happy Family Day!

Keep in touch and keep warm.
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KEEPING BALANCE IN YOUR LIFE

As people age, maintaining balance becomes increasingly challenging. For seniors, loss of balance is a significant concern, as it can increase the risk of falls, which can lead to serious injuries such as fractures, head trauma, and a loss of independence. Understanding the risk factors that contribute to balance issues and falls is crucial for seniors, their caregivers, and healthcare providers to prevent accidents and improve quality of life.

Balance is a complex skill that involves coordination between the brain, muscles, inner ear, and vision. As we age, several changes can affect each of these components, making it more difficult to maintain balance. Some common factors that contribute to the loss of balance in seniors include:

- 1. Muscle Weakness and Joint Stiffness:** As people age, muscle mass tends to decrease, and joints may become stiffer due to conditions like arthritis. This can result in decreased strength and flexibility, making it harder to stabilize the body and react to shifts in posture or the environment.
- 2. Sensory Changes:** The aging process often brings about changes in vision and the vestibular system, which controls balance through signals from the inner ear. Reduced vision, cataracts, or macular degeneration can affect depth perception, while vestibular disorders

can make it difficult to maintain balance, particularly when moving from sitting to standing or while walking.

- 3. Neurological Changes:** Conditions such as Parkinson's disease, stroke, and dementia can impact the nervous system, impairing coordination, reaction times, and cognitive processing. This makes it harder to quickly adjust and react to changes in body position.
- 4. Medications:** Many seniors take medications that can cause dizziness, drowsiness, or a drop in blood pressure, all of which increase the risk of falls. Medications like sedatives, blood pressure drugs, and antidepressants can all contribute to balance problems.

While loss of balance is a key factor in falls, several other risk factors may make someone more susceptible to accidents. These may include environmental hazards such as poor lighting, area rugs and cluttered living spaces. Poor footwear that is too loose, slippery or ill fitting can increase the risk of tripping. Lack of physical activity – those who may be inactive or don't engage in balance training exercises are at a greater risk of falling. Activities such as Tai Chi, yoga and walking can increase strength, flexibility and coordination. Cognitive and vision impairments may make it harder to navigate stairs, judge distances and uneven surfaces.

Falls can have serious, long-lasting consequences. In addition to the immediate physical injuries, such as broken bones or head trauma, falls can lead to a loss of independence, decreased mobility, and a diminished quality of life. Falls can also increase the likelihood of hospitalization. Moreover, the fear of falling can lead to a cycle of reduced

activity, which in turn weakens muscles and further increases the risk of falling. This creates a dangerous downward spiral, as decreased activity leads to more falls, and more falls lead to even greater fear and inactivity.

While the risk of falling can never be completely eliminated, there are several strategies that can help reduce the likelihood of falls. Home modifications such as removing clutter, handrails, non-slip rugs, and improving lighting in your home can make a big difference to your safety. Regular vision and hearing check ups are important to address any underlying problems. Medication review to identify any drugs that may be causing dizziness or drowsiness. Footcare and proper footwear can be addressed to prevent any problems like bunions or nail issues that may affect walking. Assistive devices such as walking poles or canes can provide extra stability. Lastly, regular exercises such as weight bearing activities, strength and balance movements will improve your coordination, confidence and mobility.

A loss of balance and the increased risk of falls are common challenges for seniors, but with the right strategies, these risks can be minimized. By understanding the factors that contribute to balance problems and taking steps to prevent falls, people can maintain their independence and reduce their chances of injury. Regular exercise, home modifications, and proper healthcare are all essential in ensuring you enjoy a safe and active lifestyle at every stage of life.

Jennifer Gordon
(BSc.PT, GunnIMS, AFCI)
Physiotherapist - Bragg Creek Physiotherapy
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BRAGG CREEK TRAILS

For the Love of Trails!

This February, we're sending heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers and supporters who make Bragg Creek Trails thrive. Together, we've created a space where everyone can connect with nature, find adventure, and enjoy the outdoors. But with this love comes a question: is it possible to love our trails too much?

From Bragg Creek Trails' perspective, the answer is yes. While we're thrilled so many people visit and enjoy this special place, high usage does take a toll. As co-managers of the trail system with Alberta Forestry and Parks, we witness firsthand the impacts on the land and wildlife. While we work hard to mitigate these effects, you, as trail users, play an essential role in reducing these impacts and preserving the trails we all cherish.

Here are some ways you can help protect the trails, environment, and wildlife that call this area home:

Be a Responsible Trail User

• Dogs: West Bragg Creek is one of the few maintained trail systems in Kananaskis where dogs can run free in the Public



Land Use Zone. Please keep your pets from chasing wildlife or cattle and pick up after them. Properly dispose of waste—poop bags left on trails are a significant issue. Be especially mindful around watercourses to protect our drinking water sources.

- Stick to the Trails: Shortcuts and trail braiding cause erosion, increase maintenance costs, and disturb wildlife that use quieter areas as refuge. Help us protect their space by staying on designated paths.
- Follow Signage and Trail Conditions: Wet trails are especially vulnerable. If your activity is leaving ruts or damaging the trail, consider changing your route or activity for the day.
- Respect Trail Etiquette: Our multi-use trail system welcomes a variety of activities. In winter, users are separated

to support grooming programs, but in all seasons, adhering to trail signage helps reduce conflicts and ensures everyone has a great experience.

- No Campfires or Smoking: Trailside campfires are strongly discouraged due to Bragg Creek's high fire risk. Smoking and burning toilet paper also pose significant hazards.
- Bury Your Waste: If nature calls, bury your waste and toilet paper deep enough so wildlife and dogs won't uncover it.
- Pack It In, Pack It Out: Leave no trace. Litter has no place on our trails.
- Limit Nighttime Use: Nighttime activities can disrupt wildlife behaviour. Please consider this when planning your trail adventures.
- Dirty bike?: Streams make tempting bike wash stations. Take your bikes home to clean them properly. Introducing silt and lubricants into the water contaminates the aquatic ecosystem and impacts our water quality.

By working together, we can reduce our collective impact and ensure these trails remain a source of joy for generations to come. Thank you for your care, respect, and love for Bragg Creek Trails.

Happy trail adventures!

Conrad Schiebel (BCT President)



WHAT ABOUT MY VALENTINE?

"It's not fair. You get to go out and celebrate on Valentine's and I have to stay with granny. No fair. You get schnitzel and I get mush. You don't love me as much as you love the Bav Tav. No fair."

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Helping Wildlife Through Winter: Tips on Trail Use

When you think of it, it is impressive how wild animals can survive our harsh winters. Herbivores feed on low-nutrient grass and twigs buried deep beneath snow; seeds and insects are in short supply to birds; and carnivores are challenged to find prey that are either hibernating or have migrated. Winter is stressful, requiring animals to constantly be on the move to forage, hunt or find shelter. For these reasons, wildlife need large expanses to make it to springtime. That challenge becomes even greater in areas heavily used by humans.

Peter Thompson (biologist and postdoctoral researcher at the University of Alberta), along with his team, have recently published a study documenting evidence of grizzlies staying 300 metres away from trails and wolves staying 600 metres away. Thompson's study, titled "Integrating Human Trail Use in Montane Landscapes Reveals Larger Zones of Human Influence for Wary Carnivores" was conducted in the Banff, Yoho and Kootenay national parks and neighbouring provincial areas, including the Bow Valley and Canmore area. This extensive, multi-year study showed that wildlife avoid being near busy trails, resulting in their displacement in the environment they inhabit and thereby reducing their capacity to sustain their livelihoods.

So, what happens when wildlife notices a human presence?

Once human presence is detected, wildlife keeps its distance, potentially leaving areas of habitat rich in food and shelter (valleys, waterways, mixed woodlands) for other places potentially less plentiful, leaving them less able to thrive and with increased competition for the resources they need. Weakened in this way, some wild animals become easier prey to predators and more susceptible to diseases.

In an article published by British Columbia's SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) in November 2024, the Society explains that: "While a single disturbance may not seem significant, the impact and stress of interactions with multiple outdoor enthusiasts over the course of the season can be significant. Chronic stress can impair immune responses, making wildlife susceptible to parasites and diseases. Animals may lose weight and die of malnutrition or be less able to escape predators. The consequences are often subtle and delayed."

To support our wild neighbours, the use of outdoor best practices can mitigate our impact while allowing us to enjoy our natural areas:

- Use trails during the daytime only to give wildlife the space and opportunity to move in and feed at night.
- Stay on official trails or in areas of high visibility where no wildlife is present. Official trails are those recognized by our local governments and official trail organizations. Watch for their trail signs and visit their websites.

- Obey all signs and area closures.
- Never approach, chase or harm any wildlife.
- Avoid damaging vegetation.
- Pack out what you pack in, and never leave trash or equipment behind.
- Keep dogs on a leash and away from wildlife.
- When on a motorized vehicle in an open area, try to keep a distance of 500 metres from large mammals. For non-motorized activities, stay 100 metres away.

For trail organizations and government services responsible for building and maintaining trails, this study suggests that it is essential to locate trails away from rich habitat and ensure that sufficient, untouched space between trails is maintained to allow wildlife free and adequate passage through the developed area.

To find out more about BCW, visit www.braggcreekwild.ca

References:
Integrating human trail use in montane landscapes reveals larger zones of human influence for wary carnivores, Peter R. Thompson, John Paczkowski, Jesse Whittington, Colleen Cassady St. Clair, British Ecological Society, Journal of Applied Ecology, January 2025 <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.14837>



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BRAGG CREEK AND AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BUSINESS BITS

As we welcome a vibrant start to the new year, we want to connect with our community on 2025 initiatives, events, and resources...

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

TalentED YYC

We recognize that hiring comes with its own set of challenges for local businesses. Representatives from TalentED YYC spoke at our January Chamber meeting about their program for anyone looking to hire students from Calgary's seven post secondary institutions. Coop, Apprenticeship, paid internship, unpaid practicum, and other placements are available. TalentED YYC will help you through their easy application process and ensure your job postings reach your intended audience!

Join A Chamber Subcommittee

Do you have ideas? Creative solutions? A business initiative you'd like to explore? If so, we want you! Our Chamber Subcommittees are looking for volunteers with diverse perspectives and a collaborative approach to support the local economy. Contact the Chamber to learn more.

Greater Bragg Creek Area Structure Plan (ASP)

Two of our members represented Economic Development, and Public Amenities & Recreation, on the ASP Visioning Committee – a first step in the future development plan. A culmination of many months of work, the draft Vision was

finalized through a working session January 7. RVC Planning will present the final ASP Vision to RVC Council in March 2025, and will make it publicly available.

EVENTS

Winter In The Woods

Thank you to everyone who volunteered, donated time or resources, and supported the 3rd annual Winter In The Woods to raise funds to operate and maintain our local rink. Chamber Board Member TL Duque co-lead this initiative with the Bragg Creek Community Association. If you want to learn more about how to run an event like this, please reach out and learn from the best! Special thanks to title sponsors Cowboy Trail Brewery and Bragg Creek & Area Chamber of Commerce.

MEETINGS & MEMBERSHIP

Mark your calendars for the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Learn, laugh, and connect, with guest speakers, members, and fellow business owners in your community.

Membership Benefits

The Chamber has developed a social media and communication plan to ensure local businesses get noticed. Contact Imke.media@braggcreekchamber.com to spotlight yours!

Membership gives you a full package of perks: Social Media Showcase, Mix n Mingles, Marketing, Benefits Plan, Calendar, Job Board, and Directory Listing. Visit us any time at:

*W: visitbraggcreek.com/bragg-creek-chamber
E: Office@braggcreekchamber.com
On behalf of your Bragg Creek & Area Chamber team.*



REDWOOD MEADOWS EMERGENCY SERVICES

2024 saw RMES attend 458 calls - the highest number of calls in our history: 215 medical calls, 108 fire-related calls, 106 rescues and 29 hazmat/other calls. Top medical call types were: Traumatic injuries, Falls and Breathing problems. Top fire call types were Alarms, Structure fires and Wildfires.

Fun fact: Our busiest time of day for calls in 2024 was 3pm and the busiest day of the week for calls was Sunday.

RMES members invested 20,562 hours in the community in 2024, training fifty times together in addition to attending calls, doing administrative work, attending courses and community events. It would take ten full-time paid fire fighters to do the work that our mighty group of professional volunteers did!

Over the past 46-years, RMES has had almost 260 members "answer the call" to serve our community. Last year we welcomed eight probationary members and said 'see you soon' to several 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 2025!

Until next month, stay safe!



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825-734-1043: Main Office/Booking Appointments

587-872-7143: Estimate/Invoice Correspondence

403-800-1164: Customer Follow Up/Quality Assurance Number



BRAGG CREEK SNOWBIRDS FELLOWSHIP

Happenings at the Chalet

Tuesdays

1-4pm: Ladies Group & Snooker

Thursdays

1-4pm: Snooker

4-9pm: Open House/Pub Night

First Wednesday each month

1:15pm Book Club - bring a book to share with the group

Third Thursday each month

7pm: Open Mic Night
come play or listen!

Fridays

1:15pm: Exercise Class - 45 minutes
bring your own dumbbells or borrow
newcomers welcome, drop-in \$10/class

2025 MEMBERSHIPS

New members always welcome.
50+ to join - annual fee only \$15
Questions? 403-949-3313

Email inquiries:
braggcreeksnowbirdsfellowship@gmail.com

Snowbirds Chalet is pleased to sponsor

Foot Care in the Creek

19 Balsam Avenue, Bragg Creek

CLINICIANS

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Certified Podologist International

Sheree Gorsline
Advanced Pedicurist



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* Clients must provide their own
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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.



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XC BRAGG CREEK SKI AND BIKE SOCIETY

XC Bragg Creek Ski and Bike Society has a lot to celebrate for our Nordic skiers. The Bunnies and Jack Rabbits are skiing each Friday and have grown in leaps and bounds in their skills. The Club Racers and Nordic Ninjas have been competing at several races across Alberta and BC, and are representing our club with outstanding sportsmanship and performance.

Most recently, XC Bragg Creek athletes took part in a historic Alberta Cup in Calgary. For the first time in 20 years athletes toed the line to race within the City of Calgary at the Confederation Golf Course. Facing a technical course of short steep climbs and sharp corners, XCBC athletes put their skills to the test. We are incredibly proud, not only of the results from the weekend, but of the focus and effort each athlete put into their race. A special shout out goes to both Evelyn Peperkorn and Reid Bopp who finished the weekend with silver medals in the 4km U14 Skate Distance race and the 500m U12 Classic Sprint race respectively. As well, we commend Owen Kary, who skied the 6km U16 Skate Distance race, on his race performance. During the race, he pushed to maintain speed and momentum over the course's most difficult climb – bone breaker hill – often pushing further than most other athletes on course!

With a busy month ahead, XCBC athletes prepare to race next in Grand Prairie followed by the Western Canadian Championships in Kimberly BC. The Bunnies and Jack Rabbits will have a fun

“Fruit Loops” race at the West Bragg Creek Trails. Stay tuned for race results in the next issue.

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, February 28 - March 2, 2025. We are currently recruiting volunteers and cookies for the event. If you are able to support this unique, fun, youth-focused event, please visit our website for details on how to register to volunteer or donate. <https://www.xcbraggcreek.ca/alberta-youth-championships/>

Spring Mountain Biking and Junior Coach Recruitment

XCBC is currently recruiting volunteer mountain bike coaches for our spring Recreational Mountain Bike program. If you have a passion for mountain biking and want to share your love of the sport with young people, consider joining our team.

An important 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.

If you are interested in joining XCBC's mountain biking program, please reach out to our club administrator at programdirector@xcbraggcreek.ca

For more information about XCBC's programs and registration, please check out our website: www.xcbraggcreek.ca.

See you on the trails!



Athlete Spotlight

Poppy Trainor
Sport: Nordic Club Racer
Favourite West Bragg Creek Trail:

Words from Coach Josh:

As one of our U18 athletes, Poppy takes-on training with a consistent professional attitude; exemplifying the importance of consistency. It is rare to find a practice that Poppy isn't a part of – be it rain or shine, summer or winter - Poppy is always seeking out self improvement and development. In addition, Poppy is a junior coach for our Jack Rabbits Nordic program. Her gentle nature and Nordic skill make her a valuable asset for our younger skiers.

Her role modelling for our younger athletes, commitment to training, desire to give her best each and every day, and mature approach to her training showcase XC Bragg Creek's values and make Poppy an exemplary XCBC athlete.

Great work Poppy, see you on the trails!

BRAGG CREEK
community church

All Welcome!

Sunday Service 10:00 - 11:30am
(Sunday School runs Sept - July & nursery space is available for parent use)
For youth, business lunches, and other program info please visit our website and sign up for our email list, which sends out the most up-to-date info
You can also still join us virtually on Facebook Live or YouTube
Pastor Dave Zimmerman • braggcreekcommunitychurch@gmail.com
www.braggcreekchurch.ca

Bragg Creek Area Businesses:

Please Join Us **TODAY!**

For a FREE LUNCH
The Hub • 7 Balsam Ave
Bragg Creek Shopping Mall
TODAY 11:30am - 1:30pm
All Bragg Creek area business owners/operators welcome!

Hub



SWAMP DONKEY MUSICAL THEATRE

Swamp Donkey Musical Theatre Society is a not for profit society based in Bragg Creek. Our mission is to provide musical theatre education and performance opportunities to foster skill development and build community.

Since our inception in 2018, our society has succeeded in:

- building our own black box theatre that hosts all our musical theatre productions as well as fitness classes, recitals for local schools and music teachers, and other musical performances;
- producing 24 full scale musicals, including 12 youth musicals, and a number of musical theatre workshops and events; and
- participating in numerous community events including Bragg Creek Days, the Cochrane Labour Day Parade, Winter in the Woods, The Spirit of Christmas, the Airdrie Rotary Festival of Performing Arts, and Banded Peak School theatre workshops.

Over the course of 7 seasons, 439 cast members have graced our stage, singing 440 songs, with the help of 237 production team members backstage! All these individuals are volunteers and come from Bragg Creek, Redwood Meadows, Priddis, Diamond Valley, Cochrane, Calgary, and as far away as Canmore, Airdrie, Olds, and Chestermere!

Musical theatre is not a cheap endeavour. Did you know the average musical theatre licence costs approximately \$5,000?!

On Saturday, March 8, 2025, we are holding Broadway in Bragg, a fundraising event that will feature live musical theatre performances, a silent auction, and food from the Bav Tav, a local Bragg Creek restaurant. This event will help us to continue creating amazing musical theatre performance and educational opportunities in Bragg Creek.

Tickets for the event are available on our website at www.swampdonkeytheatre.ca.

SWAMP DONKEY
MUSICAL THEATRE PRESENTS:

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IN BRAGG

A MUSICAL THEATRE

FUNDRAISER

7PM SATURDAY MARCH 8

LIVE MUSICAL THEATRE

PERFORMANCES

SILENT AUCTION

FOOD FROM BAV+TAV

TICKETS \$75

LIMITED SEATING

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

SWAMPDONKEYTHEATRE.CA

We are seeking donations for the silent auction. Please contact us at swampdonkeytheatre@gmail.com if you are interested in making a donation.

To learn more about the Swamp Donkey Musical Theatre Society and our impact, or to read more about our upcoming productions, please visit www.swampdonkeytheatre.ca.

Trisha Gizen
Founder & President
Swamp Donkey Musical Theatre Society





THE LITTLE SCHOOLHOUSE

Happy February! All our classes are celebrating love, friendship, and family this month. We will explore how our differences make us unique and important.

All our classes are feeling very excited to be attending our first field trip this year to Telus SPARK! It will be a fantastic day to explore and learn together.

This month we are also exploring the importance of community with some very special visitors and community tours. All our class are looking forward to a special visit from our local Tosguna Police from the Tsuut'ina Nation, where will present how they serve and help our community.

The kindergarten class has the exciting opportunity to tour and learn from local businesses in our community of Bragg Creek. They will also have the opportunity to learn more about being better stewards of the land we live, learn and play on from Métis Educator Chantal Chagnon. It will be an amazing month full of lots of learning

and fun! We feel so grateful for our amazing and supportive community.

Registration for our 2025-26 School Year has begun! We endeavour to provide an enriching child centred and supportive preschool and kindergarten environment. A special open house is being planned on Friday, February 7th at The Little Schoolhouse. For more information regarding our Open House please see our website. We hope you can join us on this date to learn more about the programs and services we offer. If you are unable to attend our Open House, please see our website for more information regarding our school- we would love to have you join us for the 2025-26 school year!

www.thelittleschoolhouse.ca

Ms. Shelley and The Little Schoolhouse team



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- JAN 11 Episode 1: I have Called you by Name
Episode 2: Shabbat
- JAN 18 Episode 3: Jesus Loves the Little Children
Episode 4: The Rock on Which it is Built
- JAN 25 Episode 5: The Wedding
Episode 6: Indescribable Passion
- FEB 1 Episode 7: Invitations
Episode 8: I AM HE





WELL OWNERS



ARE YOU NEGLECTING YOUR WATER SYSTEM?

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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Your Greatest Threat?

The threat can come to you through the front door, through your computer, via the mail, and through your phone. I don't really like writing about fraud because I know it's probably not something you want to read, but it is very prevalent, growing and more likely to happen to you than ever. Fraud, including scams, has been identified as the top crime committed in Canada. It happened to my family years ago. Fortunately, the sum wasn't large.

There is a lot of very valuable information on the two websites referenced below concerning frauds, scams and how to protect yourself. It is not "fun" reading but taking a half hour or so to review and get educated is a lot more "fun" than having to read the section on "Reporting fraud" or "What to do if you're victim".

The Government of Canada anti-fraud web site states that as of October 31, 2024, there were 28,634 victims of fraud. The value of fraud transactions was \$503 million up to that point. In 2023, full year numbers were 42,226 victims and \$577 million. If I perform a simple extrapolation of the 2024 numbers for a full year, it comes to 35,512 victims and \$670 million. Using this extrapolation method, the number of victims annually has gone down, but the total dollar value of fraud has gone up. It should be noted that frauds often go unreported as victims don't want to come forward for fear of looking stupid or gullible.

The Anti-fraud website is a valuable resource. It lists what scams, or types of scams, are out there. You can click on each type for further details. For example, if you click on "Bank Investigator", you will get any special recent alerts, as well as specific short writeups on related scams and how they work. Related scams listed under Bank Investigator include Details about Dial *72 (forwards any calls to your phone to another number), Residence visits, Catch a bank employee, Unauthorized charges or compromised account, Sharing e-transfer URL, and Sharing multi-factor authentication (MFA) codes.

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I counted 87 or so different categories of scams. Everything from "Romance" scams to "Initial Coin (read cryptocurrency) Offering". (According to a cybercrime expert, Romance scams are the top dollar value scam in Canada.)

The site also includes quite a few tips on how to protect yourself, such as:

- Do not assume that phone numbers appearing on your call display are accurate. (I heard someone got a call from their own number.)
- Fraudsters will often provide the first 4 to 6 numbers of your debit or credit card (and try to get you to divulge the remaining numbers). Remember that these numbers are used to identify the card issuer and are known as the Bank Identifier Number (BIN). Most debit and credit card numbers issued by specific financial institutions begin with the same 4 to 6 numbers. (You'll notice on receipts that only the last 4 digits are x'd out, so every time you throw out a receipt the previous 12 digits are available to anyone who finds the receipt).
- Financial institutions or online merchants will never request transferring funds to an external account for security reasons.
- Enabling Auto-Deposits for e-transfers provides an additional layer of security.

The Government of Canada fraud website (which is different from the anti-fraud website) offers these clues for identifying scams:

It may be a scam if someone:

- Demands immediate payment
- Uses threatening language
- Sends you a link and asks you to click on it
- Asks for personal or financial information
- Requests payment by cryptocurrency or gift cards

If you are in doubt, take a minute to ask yourself why you are being contacted. It's okay to ask questions and say no.

Fraud is one area where you need to be your own policeman and your own detective. Unfortunately, that is the world we now live in. To protect yourself you will need a little bit of training (see above for resources), unceasing vigilance, and common sense.

It's almost tax time so get ready for the tax scams. If you want to check if CRA is really trying to contact you, you can call them at 1-800-959- 8281 (Individuals) or 1-800-959-5525 (Businesses).

Dave Schroeder - HCRCWA Board Member



PRIDDIS COMMUNITY

Hello from Priddis! Below you will find updates and information on upcoming programs and events in our community.

Priddis Rink:

We wanted to start by sending a big thank you to our volunteers for the dozens of hours they are putting into upkeeping our community rink each week. The Rink Schedule can be found on our website under the “Community” tab. Please remember that PCA memberships are required in order to use the rink and that helmets are mandatory. Using the rink is at your own risk.

Yoga:

The next session of Yoga will take place from February 6- March 3, 2025, 2025. Classes take place on Mondays and Thursdays from 7:30-8:30pm at the Priddis Hall. The cost for this 8 class session is \$160. Please email the instructor directly to register loricwbffpro@gmail.com

Community Playgroup:

We have a volunteer willing to run a parented playgroup in our preschool room if there is enough interest. The program would take place on Wednesdays from 10am-noon to begin with. This is perfect for stay at home parents with young children looking to meet other families, home schoolers or those working from home. Starlink internet is available for you to get some work done while the kids play. This program will be offered free for PCA Members and as a \$5 drop in for non members. Please email priddisalberta@gmail.com with any questions.

Indoor Pickleball:

Back by popular demand... the PCA is pleased to be offering indoor pickleball for our members again this year. The courts will be open from 1-4pm on most Sundays and 3-7pm on most Thursdays. Users must have a PCA membership and complete a waiver. Reserve your spot here:

www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0C4AABA72BA1FC1-53957656-indoor

Library: Did you know that Priddis has its very own library? Drop by the old school house on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3-5pm or Saturdays from 10-noon. The volunteers would love to show you the massive collection of books available to borrow.

WinterFest: Join your friends and neighbours at the Priddis Rink on Sunday

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Our Canadian Water Quality Association certified technicians can ascertain what is best for your water. We have technicians on staff that are certified by the Canadian Water Quality Association as: Certified Water Technician, Certified Installer, Reverse Osmosis, Filtration and trained by other authorities in disinfection.

If you have hardness, Iron, Bacteria, Manganese, H2S, rotten egg smells, high Total Dissolved Solids or any other water related issue, we can help! We provide basic water testing and can also help to get the correct tests done at a laboratory to ensure proper equipment installation.

If you have other equipment in your home but can't get the service you need; we can help, as we service most makes and models. We also provide in-home cisterns with repressurization to help with low production wells.

Water is the most precious resource on Earth, you should have certified technicians using the highest quality products to ensure the treatment is done right.

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February 9 from 3-5pm. This fun event is free for PCA members. Go for a skate, listen to music around the fire and enjoy hot chocolate and marshmallows. Drinks and a BBQ will be available for purchase. It is sure to be a fun afternoon with fellow community members. * Weather & Ice Conditions permitting. Donations gratefully accepted *

Third Annual Priddis Shiny

Tournament: This all day event on Sunday February 23 will feature 8 teams, plenty of hockey, fires, s'mores, a concession and bar. Team spaces are SOLD OUT but we invite all community members to come and enjoy this exciting event in Priddis. *Weather and Ice Conditions permitting.

Casino: The PCA has been granted their next fundraising casino on April 29 and 30 at the ACE Blackfoot Casino. These casinos are the largest source of income for the PCA and help us to keep our community amenities running. The casino requires a lot of volunteers and we would appreciate it if you would consider signing up for a shift. Please reach out to our volunteer coordinators at heinen3cw@gmail.com for more information.

Be sure to follow us on Social Media as this is the best way to keep up to date with everything that is going on in our community.

~Priddis Community Association Board



SQUARE BUTTE COMMUNITY

The Square Butte Community Association is sponsoring the Millarville Sports Association's Comedy Date Night starring Alberta's own international comedy veteran Andrew Grose with opening act Dave Nystrom. Mark your calendars for February 14th, and come on out to Square Butte Hall for a fun-filled evening of entertainment. Tickets are \$25 and all proceeds support the Millarville Sports Association. Doors open at 6:30pm, show starts at 7:30. Cash bar. Purchase tickets online at www.squarebuttehall.com/comedy-info

Comedy Date Night - Feb 14th

February 14, 2025

Square Butte Hall

Doors open @ 6:30 pm

Tickets \$25 (18+)

Cash Bar

www.squarebuttehall.com/buytickets

Square Butte Community Association



MILLARVILLE HORTICULTURAL CLUB

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month, September to May at 7 pm.

The meetings are held at the Millarville Anglican Church House on Hwy 549 East.

Tuesday February 11, 2025 is the next meeting .

The speaker for the February meeting will be Dallas Otto from Earth Smart solutions.

He is a local business man. He will be speaking on his products which range from soil ammendments, cleaners , septic, pet and personal health products. We look forward to hearing about them.

Tuesday March 11, 2025 meeting will feature Patty Webb. She will be speaking on the History of flower arranging.

There is no one better to give this talk. She is a wealth of knowledge!

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. 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 .

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MILLARVILLE COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Did You Know?

We now have a photo scanner and you can convert your old photographs, slides and negatives into a digital format. The scanner and instructions are available to use during regular library hours. You will need to bring a USB drive along with your pictures, so if organizing a container of old photos is a New Years resolution a few hours at the library will help.

Remember the front entrance to the library has a huge selection of used books. These books are ideal for travel. The pennies you pay will allow you to leave it behind for another reader to enjoy. New titles are added every week.

Would You?

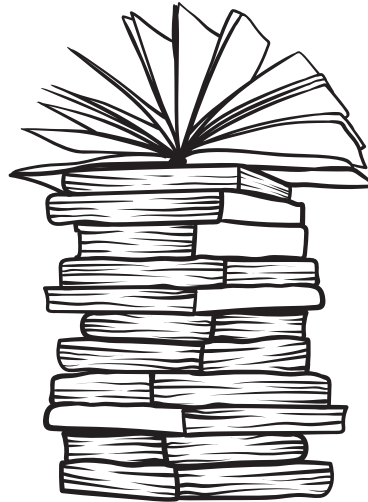
If you would like to volunteer, we are looking for people who would like to help shape the direction of the library to serve as board members! The board meets every other month, and needs fresh new ideas and people who want to help make an impact in the community.

Bouquets

Thank you to all the new volunteers! The time you give is greatly appreciated!

Need a Read?

The Stay at Home Chef Family Favorites Cookbook by Rachel Farnsworth - "We use this book all the time to get out of the dinner rut! Each recipe is very clear and the ingredients are most likely things that you have or are easily available. Very kid friendly recipes. And each recipe has a QR code that links up with a video so you can watch it being prepared before you attempt it yourself" - Natasha Grusendorf



LONGVIEW LIBRARY

The New Year brings two program changes. The Writers Group will be on the 1st. Thursday of the month at 1 p.m. New members are most welcome. They read, discuss and critique one another's work.

Bingo will continue and will be held on the first Wednesday of the month from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Memberships are still \$10.00 for singles and \$20.00 for families.

New to the library is Melania Trump's memoir. Her story is one of resilience and independence, showcasing her strength and her commitment to her true self.

February is Black History Month. It is a good time to read some of the excellent Black authors in our country and abroad. A good one is The Other Black Girl by Zakiya Dalila Harris. The book explores the dynamic between black and white people in the business world. It was made into a very popular TV. series in 2023.

Freedom to Read Week is from February 23 to March. This is an annual event that encourages Canadians to reaffirm their commitment to intellectual freedom.

Sylvia Binkley - sliv@telus.net

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WILD ROSE
 Community Care Centre

Memory Cafe
 Compassion | Connection | Resources

An opportunity for people with memory loss and their caregivers to meet for mutual support

Griffiths Center
 122 Government Road, Black Diamond
 1:00 - 2:30 pm
 Every Fourth Friday of the month

Contact Jennifer 403 969 6040

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SHEEP RIVER LIBRARY

As high school students begin another semester, this is the time to register for Study Skills for High School Students (Saturday, March 1, 1:00), a workshop geared for students in grades 9-12. It will cover study environment tips, time management, note-taking, what a teacher usually means when they tell you to "read this part of the textbook," review strategies for before and after a test, and test-taking skills. This workshop will be followed with Setting and Meeting Class and Career Goals at 3:00. This workshop is for high school students with their parent(s). It will cover setting short- and long-term goals, how to break down goals into smaller milestones to help reach targets, and how parents can help their teenage children achieve success in their classes and careers. Parents and students work together to start identifying their new skills before the end of the class. While the activities are related to setting goals, the class will also cover sources of information about potential careers. Students in grades



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9-10 are required to bring at least one parent or guardian. Students in grades 11-12 are strongly encouraged to bring at least one parent or guardian. While the workshop activities can be completed as an individual, they are much easier with a second person. Both workshops will be led by Cheryl Bain, an award-winning teacher and tutor with a passion for helping students achieve their goals. Her education includes a bachelor's degree in chemistry, a master's degree in library science, and an in-progress continuing education certificate in teaching. Cheryl has been a student, employee, or educator at five different Canadian universities.

In March, we begin our Hollywood Got It Wrong series. Have you ever watched a movie and thought that can't be right? We have recruited several experts who will use their professional experience and knowledge to let us know:

- what the film makers got wrong
- what they got almost right
- what (if anything) they got right

Some speakers will also add some food for thought about the topics the movie has directly or indirectly covered. If you need to re-watch the movie, we will be showing it just before the talk. There will be a brief break between the movie and the talk. Bring your own popcorn and willingness to learn! The series begins with Andy Lees, a retired Anglican minister, taking on The Da Vinci Code (March 8). On March 15, Detective Dave Sweet takes on Bon

Cop, Bad Cop. On March 22, physicist Jason Donev will discuss Oppenheimer. March 29, sees Amber Porter, a classical mythology professor, look at Hercules. The series wraps up in April with geologist, Brandon Karchewski vs. San Andreas (April 12) and nursing professor, Kerri Alderson vs. One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (April 26). All talks begin at 3:00. The start times for the movies, which are posted on the website, vary according to the length of the movie. Biographies of each speaker can also be found at www.sheepriverlibrary/programs/events. Please sign up at the library if you wish to attend any or all of these sessions.

Also starting in March is our series, Your Memory: What you Should Know. Jennifer Mallamo of Brain Health Catalyst will be presenting the following topics: Memory: What is it and how does it work? (March 4); Understanding memory loss and progression to dementia (March 11); Modifiable risk factors for dementia I: inflammation and managing blood sugar (March 18); Modifiable risk factors for dementia II: nutrition and digestion detoxification (March 25); Modifiable risk factors for dementia III: Detoxification and Intentional Supplementation (April 1); and Supporting those with Memory Challenges: communication and engagement strategies (April 8). All talks start at 1:00. Please register at the library.

The library will be closed Monday, February 17 for the Family Day holiday.



RED DEER LAKE UNITED CHURCH

Join us at Red Deer Lake United Church where we come together and explore God together onsite and online (YouTube - [@RedDeerLakeUnitedChurch](https://www.youtube.com/@RedDeerLakeUnitedChurch)) every Sunday morning at 10:30 am. We are an affirming, safe space for all. Don't let our name fool you, we are closer than you think, located only 5 minutes west of Spruce Meadows!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! RED DEER LAKE UNITED CHURCH UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Affirming Lunch and Learn (Soup Lunch provided) – February 16, following the service
- Men's Breakfast –February 22, 9 am

RENTALS

Red Deer Lake United Church is a 45,000 square foot facility that provides a variety of affordable spaces for rent on a one-time or recurring basis. For more information about booking an event, availability, and pricing, please contact the office at office@reddeerlakeuc.com or (403) 256-3181.

Visit us at www.reddeerlakeuc.com to stay up to date on all our events!

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HELLO DIAMOND VALLEY

Hello, Diamond Valley. So, did Balzac Billy see his shadow this year? At the time of writing, he was still underground, but it's been a fairly mild winter so far. The Farmer's Almanac predicts Southern Alberta to be sunny and about 3 degrees average cooler than usual, with intervals of snow. So, all in all we don't have too long to wait for spring, as it's officially on March 20.

It's still been nice enough to take the dog for a walk most days. Some days I'm not feeling it, but then my little dog goes to his basket and pulls out his leash so what choice do I have but to go. Winter Walk Day in Canada is on February 5, it's always the first Wednesday in February. This day encourages us to get out for a 15-minute walk, around the block or nearby park, or wherever you may choose. Many organizations put together events, for more information, go to shape.ca/winter-walk-day, and get out and enjoy the sunshine and fresh air.

It's also Family Day in Alberta on February 17, the third Monday of February every year, and the Province offers a free fishing license for all from Feb. 15-17. Time to fire up the auger and go ice fishing, which is quite the experience. According to the Angler's Atlas, the 5 best spots in Alberta for ice fishing are: Chain Lakes, Ghost Reservoir (near Cochrane), Lake Newell (near Brooks), Eagle Lake (near Strathmore), and Crawling Valley (near Bassano).

Have you checked out our nice bookstore here in Black Diamond? Spisherbocker Books, located across from the Town Hall, is a lovely little bookstore with something for everyone. They also have a Book Club, and offer workshops on writing. This February features Writing Children's Books on February 15, and Writing Memoirs on February 22. For more info or to register pop by or visit spisherbocker.com.

And one of my favorite places, the Sheep River Library, offers a multitude of classes and groups as well. They have programs in Mind and Body, Arts and Crafts, Music, First Aid Courses, Brain Health, Movies, Career Development, Technology, Pre-School, Teen Events, and of course a Book Club. Visit the Library and pick up the Winter/Spring program or visit the website.

Also at the SRL is a program called STEAM. This stands for Science, Technology, English, Arts, and Math and is an affordable 10 week extracurricular program for youth. This program is brought to you through Diamond Valley Youth Foundation, in collaboration with the Library, TC Energy, and Tim Horton's. It is an after-school club, check out dvyouthfoundation.ca for full details.

Our local Pound Rescue can help with the cost of spaying or neutering your pets if you are on a fixed income. They are a registered charity who helps lost or abandoned animals to either be reunited with their owners or find a new home, with a no kill standard. People who adopt from them (or any animal rescue) help two animals; the one they adopt and thus creating space for them to take in another abandoned animal. They are for sure looking for foster homes for these animals, as there is no actual brick and mortar shelter, and can always

use donations in the form of money, dog houses, blankets, and helping to spread education about strays, fixing your pet, and much much more. Go to PoundRescue.ca for more information and as Bob Barker always said, please have your pet spayed or neutered so as not to add to the pet population. Why create more dogs and cats when there are thousands of pets just waiting for their forever home.

I also came across an organization called ElderDog. This is a charity which helps seniors keep their pets in their home, with volunteers helping to walk your dog if you are unable to, or get pet food, etc. If you must move somewhere like a senior's home and they don't allow your beloved pet, they will try to find a new home for them. ElderDog has a chapter in Calgary, and would love it if someone would start a chapter here in the Foothills. For more information, visit ElderDog.ca.

There are lots of Animal Rescue Organizations in our area, including our very own High Country SPCA, Heaven Can Wait in High River, Pound Rescue, AARCS, BARCS, and of course most larger cities have their own SPCA. As an animal lover, I appreciate all the hard work and dedication of the many volunteers it takes to run these programs.

If you're looking to get out and about after a lazy winter, the Black Diamond Hotel is hosting an Eagles Tribute Show on February 8. Tickets will go fast for this show, to get yours, pop by the Hotel or Okotoks Sobey's, or for E-transfers the number is 403-612-7046.

Happy Valentine's Day February 14!

Elaine Wansleben

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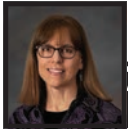
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COUNCILLOR UPDATE Foothills County

Suzanne Oel - Division 4

Greetings! Sharing my News Update...

2025 Events – Please mark these dates in your calendar! As mentioned in my January article, I am working with County departments and community groups to set-up and host some informative events in 2025, which I hope you may find interesting and attend. Please mark these three dates, below, in your calendar as planning continues.

High Country Rural Crime Watch Association (HCRCWA) AGM: Mark your calendar for Thursday, March 13, 2025, 7pm, at the Priddis Community Hall. The HCRCWA will hold a short AGM followed by a presentation + Q&A session with our local Diamond Valley RCMP Detachment representatives, including the Staff Sergeant. Topics of interest to our area will be discussed: more police visibility, road safety, rural patrols, speeding enforcement, cyclist and “share the road” issues. Bring your questions along and join in the conversation.

Wildlife Co-existence Workshop: Mark your calendar for Tuesday, April 8, 2025, 7 pm, at the Priddis Community Hall. Foothills County and Alberta Environment departments are collaborating to provide presenters and are teaming up with local community associations and HCRCWA to host this Wildlife Coexistence Workshop. We are planning to include these topics: introduction to our Agricultural Services Department, wildlife species awareness, conflict-reduction strategies, managing the

local Elk situation, recognizing invasive species, and Q&A with presenters.

Chainsaw and Tree Safety Workshop: Mark your calendar for Tuesday, May 6, 2025, 7 pm, at the Priddis Community Hall. Foothills County will be connecting us with an accredited instructor so we can learn some safety tips on dealing with our west country treed properties. Again, this event will be a collaboration of guest presenters, County departments and community groups. Whether its seasonal clean-up, clearing a treed area, pushing back the tree growth to FireSmart around buildings, or responding to the dead-fall of a windstorm, tree management is required every year. We hope to include these topics: safe chainsaw use, understanding tree dynamics, how to approach a clean-up, and Q&A with presenters. The focus of our meeting will be education presentations and discussions with residents, along with an introduction to our Agricultural Services Department. Tools will not be used by residents. More in my next article.

Rural Foothills Policing Committee update: In an effort to keep communications open and encourage the best possible policing services for Foothills residents, the County continues to hold Policing Committee meetings with board members, administration and our local police service agencies. We are grateful for the attendance of representatives from our three RCMP detachments (Diamond Valley, Okotoks, High River) and the Alberta Sheriffs District 5 Manager and team members. Each policing agency provides updates, plans, and a review of their crime and traffic statistics.

Foothills Enforcement Services adds the County’s perspective, including department activities, such as types of bylaw responses, planning, and project presentations. During our January

meeting, the County’s Traffic Safety Plan was presented and coming up soon we’ll be reviewing the Policing study. Next up in the meetings, we hear from our three local rural crime watch representatives, encourage discussion on all relevant topics from municipal to provincial to federal. At our November meeting, the Provincial Rural Crime Watch executive members were on hand to provide an update on their services and partnerships with the local Rural Crime Watches. Through a collaborative approach, this committee will dive into issues, service level evaluations and strategies, and then bring recommendations to Council for consideration of actions toward our goal of providing the best policing service level to residents.

2025 Budget Book: Foothills County Council approved the 2025 Budget in December. A Budget Book was created to provide residents an outline of both Capital and Operating budgets by department. It also includes an overview of 2025 plus the 2025-2028 Capital plan for Foothills County. This PDF book is available for download or viewing on the County’s website: www.foothillscountyab.ca/government/taxes/budget

Foothills County Job Opportunities: In case you are interested to know about local employment options happening at the County, you can find the latest postings on the County’s website. To view the jobs currently available, please visit: www.foothillscountyab.ca/careers

For Other News & Updates:
Facebook: www.facebook.com/CouncillorSuzanneOel/
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Visit High Country News online for my previous articles.

With Best Regards, Suzanne

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COUNCILLOR UPDATE Foothills County

Barb Castell - Division 3

With the exception of a few very snowy days, the winter has been tolerable.

Again, a huge thank you to Foothills County Public Works for keeping the roads clear as fast as possible over the Christmas holidays, nights, and weekends. Division 3 has winding, steep terrain in places which makes it harder to plough than roads out in the East country. I have had many calls saying how happy residents are and to pass along their thanks to those who plough all night long on some treacherous roads.

Foothills County - Budget Book

Foothills County Council approved the 2025 Budget at its December 14, 2024 meeting. The Budget Book outlines both Capital and Operating budgets by department and provides an overview of 2025 as well as the 2025-2028 Capital plan for Foothills County.

The 2025 Foothills County Budget Book is now available here: www.foothillscountyab.ca/government/taxes/budget

Foothills County - New Residents Information

Are you new to the community? In the past few weeks, I have met many new residents to Foothills County. The link below provides useful information from "Where can I take my garbage?" and "Do I need a burning permit?" and "What are the rules about dogs running at large?" It also has tips on winter road clearing.

www.foothillscountyab.ca/community/new-residents-information

Orphan Well Association – Well Decommissioning Work

The Orphan Well Association works with industry, government and public stakeholders to manage the safety and environmental risks of oil and gas sites that do not have a legally or financially responsible party. These properties are known as "orphans".

On January 8 they made a presentation to Foothills County Council regarding an upcoming project in Division 3.

If you see bright lights and trucks moving in and out of the north side of Diamond Valley on Dunham Lane at all hours of the day and night, it is the Orphan Well

Association at work decommissioning the area west of Diamond Valley (Turner Valley side). The well was drilled in 1930 and now abandoned with no viable partners.

This will mainly impact the immediate area, but you might notice more traffic coming and going from the area so drive with caution.

For more information: www.orphanwell.ca

Town of Diamond Valley Library Board (Sheep River Library)

The Town of Diamond Valley and Foothills County representatives for the Intermunicipal Collaborative Framework (ICF) met back in November 2024 to discuss Shared Services and Recreation. It was determined it would be beneficial to appoint a Board member from Foothills County council to the Town of Diamond Valley Library Board (Sheep River Library). Some residents of Foothills County use this library, so Foothills County has a cost sharing agreement.

I was appointed to the Board and attended the first meeting on January 9, 2025. Board Secretary Nadine Russell gave an extremely interesting presentation to the Board on Archives and the rules and ramifications of managing Archives.

For more information about the resources and events at the Sheep River Library: sheepriverlibrary.ca

Millarville Sports Association

Thank you to Director Mike Robley for the invite to the Grand Opening of the Millarville Hockey Rink Upgrades on January 10. Luckily, it was a beautiful evening, and everyone got to enjoy the very impressive viewing deck and new players' boxes. Plus, the added bonus of the U18 hockey game.

Mike acknowledged the Calgary Foundation through the Daryl K.

Seaman Canadian Hockey Fund represented by Bob and Patricia Seaman and Foothills County for their financial contribution to the upgrades. Many hard-working community members volunteered their time from the beginning of the project in 2023 right up to the special celebration where community members were still volunteering. He also acknowledged the companies and trades people who actually constructed this upgrade.

Congratulations to everyone involved.

For more information go to their website: www.millarvillesports.ca

The Priddis & Millarville Fair

Planning has already started for the 2025 Priddis & Millarville Fair. The first meeting of the new year was on January 9.

If you would like to be involved in this amazing event you can go to the website for more information:

www.millarvilleracetrack.com/priddis-millarville-fair

Or send an email to: fair@millarvilleracetrack.com

Millarville Stockland 4H Public Speaking

I always look forward to judging the Junior 4H Public Speaking, which will be held on Sunday, February 2. 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

Happy Valentine's Day!

Barb Castell

Phone: 403-931-3690

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DUANE HARDER

Developing the Power of Influence

Johnny Gaudreau's death brought an outpouring of love and respect from thousands of people. What triggered such a response. Was it his skill as a hockey player or could it be the quality of his character. Personally, I think it was the quality of his character that highlighted the skill of his performance.

Think about it — who has had the greatest influence in your life? The person with the power of position or the person with the power of influence? For me it was a man with the power of influence who did the most to shape my life.

Here are some thoughts to consider in developing the power of influence.

1. Look for the gold in the rock. On one of my many trips into Whitehorse, I talked with an older person who was very knowledgeable about the Klondike gold rush. He told me that a mine was successful if they could extract 2 ounces of gold from a ton of rock. The miners weren't concerned about the rock, they were looking for the gold. Every person has strengths and weaknesses. If you focus on the weakness, you will likely miss the gold. The value of the gold puts the weakness into perspective.
2. Let your word be your bond. If you made a commitment, KEEP IT! A broken commitment weakens the bridge of trust. Failure to keep our word in the small areas of life drains our trust account for the larger areas. A man had an opportunity to buy a beautiful 2-acre property with a lovely home. They could sell their house in the city and move onto the acreage and be debt free. His wife didn't want to make the move. What was at the heart of her resistance? "If you can't keep your commitment to care for a 'postage stamp property' why should



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I think you will care for 2-acres?" Build a track record of fulfilled commitments.

3. Admit your wrongs! Don't sanitize, minimize, or attempt to justify a wrong. If your words were harsh and demoralizing, admit it and ask for forgiveness. If you are late for a meeting acknowledge that it was wrong to expect others to accommodate their time to your schedule. If your failed to keep a commitment acknowledge that you allowed your priorities to eclipse your responsibility to keep your word. Remember, people will respect our sincere apology and despise our fabricated excuses. My dad would say, "Son, your enemies won't believe your excuses and your friends don't need them."
4. Agree on limits, rules, expectations and consequences of any contractual agreement. A contractor agreed to do work for a casual friend. The work was verbally outlined and a price established. The contractor came back to the friend and said there was more work than he anticipated and needed more money. A casual friendship was ruptured. This could have been avoided if the expectations of the homeowner

had been listed in detail and put within a time framework. The contractor needed to give a detailed cost analysis for each phase of the work, the limits of his responsibility, and his expectation should there be cost overruns. An agreed upon contract helps guard the integrity of relationships.

5. Separate a person's value from their performance. Remember to put your mind in gear before you open your mouth. I have been confronted with some of the most obscene, abhorrent human behavior. The wrong choices these people have made does not define their value. Because someone calls you a stupid idiot or treats you as trash does not mean that is what you are. Don't let the words of insecure people define your value. Your Creator is offended when you are ridiculed, mocked, looked down on, and despised. Remember, your words have power to crush or create.

Next month we will give you five more steps in developing the power of influence. Keep growing and we will see you at the top.

Duane Harder



Check us out online: highcountrynews.ca



**REAL ESTATE - FOOTHILLS AREA
- LOOKING BACK ON 2024 &
LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025
by Wayne Chaulk BComm., Realtor**

Looking back over 2024

2024 was a vibrant year for real estate in Calgary and surrounding areas. People are moving here for various reasons including our affordable market relative to other Canadian cities, particularly Toronto & Vancouver, our entrepreneurial climate, attractive lifestyle, the natural beauty, safety, work & business opportunities. Calgary is usually in the top 5 cities in the world to live in from surveys. It is estimated on average there were 250 – 300 people a day moving to Calgary and surrounding areas throughout 2024!

During 2024 there were 122 sales in the \$800 - \$1.4M range in the Foothills. July 2024 was the peak selling month for rural properties. Properties with lot sizes under 5 acres with updated features achieved the fastest sales time. There were 34 sales over the last 3 weeks throughout the Foothills including 5 acreages and the rest equally split among homes in Okotoks & High River. Average days on market (DOM) across all was about 49 days. That is quite good given it was the Holiday season and early January.

A look back at total activity in 2024 throughout the Foothills showed 1,446 sales including acreages and homes in rural towns versus 1,396 sales in 2023, an increase in 2024 of 3.4%. For raw land there were 105 sales in 2023 and 117 in 2023.

According to the CREB forecast report rural towns in the Foothills had strong gains in 2024.

OKOTOKS - Improved new listings in 2024 supported sales growth and modest inventory gains. However, inventory levels remained at half the historical average, reflecting the market's exceptionally tight conditions with months of supply averaging just 1.3 months throughout the year. Limited inventory continued to drive price increases across all property types. The residential benchmark price averaged \$615,708, an eight per cent increase over 2023. Okotoks has experienced seller market conditions since the end of 2020, driving four consecutive years of price growth for a total gain of 49 per cent!

HIGH RIVER - Sales in High River grew in 2024, driven by increased activity in the row and semi-detached segments. Sales were 20 per cent above the long-term average, but new listings failed to keep pace, ensuring the market remained firmly in the seller's favour with a sales-to-new-listings ratio of 89 per cent and months of supply averaging just 1.2 months, inventory eased. High River's relative affordability compared to surrounding areas and Calgary likely contributed to strong demand. Prices rose across all property types, with detached benchmark prices averaging \$558,225, a nine per cent annual increase.

Looking ahead to 2025

Currently there have been 26 new properties listed in the Foothills over the last 30 days. There are a total of 124 listings with average 85 DOM (days on market) including acreages and town homes in Okotoks, High River & Diamond Valley.

Expensive acreages over \$3- 4 M seem to be struggling to move out. Several very expensive acreages in this range and above seem to have stalled with DOM over 250 days with some showing recent large price reductions. There were 7 sales in the \$1.1m to \$2.3M range in the last 30 days which is positive given this time of year. Sales were and are currently brisk in Okotoks with Cimarron showing as one of the more popular areas to buy! There is good activity in the Diamond Valley area as well.

Looking ahead, likely 2025 will be a similar year to 2024 with a seller's market atmosphere, more moderate rising prices, competing offers for some listings, particularly in the \$500 to 700K range for rural towns and in the \$1M- \$1.3M range for acreages, moderating interest rates and growth both in the city and outlining towns and country areas.

Some key highlights from the CREB 2025 forecast.

The 2025 Calgary and surrounding region housing market, including Foothills

acreages, is expected to maintain strong performance, driven by easing lending rates, steady demand, and increasing supply from record-high new construction in 2024. However, market conditions are set to rebalance with moderating price growth compared to previous years.

Sales Stability: Total residential sales are forecasted to remain strong. Demand for acreages in the Foothills region will remain steady, fueled by lowering interest rates, country lifestyle preferences, space needs for families desiring more privacy, and affordability compared to expensive urban centers.

Price Trends: Calgary price growth will moderate to approximately 3% as inventory expands.

Foothills acreages are expected to retain value with moderate price appreciation supported by limited supply. Product under \$600K will be in short supply.

Migration: The number of people moving to Calgary is predicted to slow in 2025 from the 2024 pace.

Inventory and Supply: Increased listings and new construction are easing pressure on inventory, particularly in suburban Calgary and rural areas including Okotoks, High River & Diamond Valley.

Economic Drivers: Continued population growth and interprovincial migration will sustain demand, though at a slower pace. Risks such as U.S. tariffs and federal policies could impact economic conditions, potentially influencing acreage & rural sales.

For the full 2025 CREB economic forecast scan the QR code below.





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GET RIPPED by Jari Love

When it comes to achieving weight loss and fitness success, having the support of your partner or spouse can be a game-changer. What's better than tackling challenges, celebrating wins, and staying motivated with the person you love most? Daniel Kosich, author of *Get Real: A Personal Guide to Real-Life Weight Management*, highlights that a supportive partner can significantly improve your chances of sticking to your health goals. Let's explore why this partnership matters and how it can set you up for long-term success.

The Power of Teamwork

Ever heard the phrase, "Teamwork makes the dream work"? That's exactly what happens when your partner is on board with your fitness journey. Having someone to meal prep with, plan workouts alongside, or even just cheer you on makes the process more enjoyable and less isolating. When you both work toward common goals, you create a sense of accountability that's hard to match.

Shared goals foster stronger relationships and greater commitment. So, not only are you losing weight or building muscle—you're also building a deeper bond with your partner.

Emotional Support When You Need It Most

We all know that sticking to a weight loss plan or new fitness regimen isn't always a walk in the park. There will be tough days—maybe you've hit a plateau, or maybe that double chocolate cake at your friend's party is calling your name. This is where your partner's support can make a world of difference.

Having someone to remind you why you started, celebrate your small wins, or even share in your struggles creates a sense of safety and motivation. Emotional support boosts self-esteem, which is crucial for pushing through challenges. Knowing your partner believes in you can be the nudge you need to stay on track.

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Healthy Habits Are Contagious

When one person in a relationship starts making healthier choices, it often inspires the other to do the same. It's a ripple effect. You start working out together, swapping late-night ice cream binges for a cup of tea, and suddenly, you've both built a healthier lifestyle.

Research shows that couples who adopt fitness routines together are more likely to stick to them. And why not? It's fun to see who can do more push-ups, race to the end of the hiking trail, or experiment with a new low-carb recipe.

Tips for Getting Your Partner Involved

If your partner isn't already on board, don't worry—it's not about nagging them into action. Instead, try these strategies:

1. **Lead by Example:** Show how much better you feel since starting your journey.
2. **Invite Them to Join You:** Frame it as quality time together, not a chore.

3. **Set Shared Goals:** Sign up for a fun run or agree to cook healthy dinners together.

4. **Celebrate Together:** Reward your milestones as a team—a new workout outfit, a weekend getaway, or just a relaxing evening with a movie and smoothies.

When your partner supports your weight loss and fitness goals, it's more than just encouragement—it's a partnership that can lead to a healthier, happier life for both of you.

So, grab your partner, lace up your sneakers, and tackle your goals together. After all, love and fitness are the perfect match!

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.





MORTGAGE MATTERS by Candace Perko

Bridging the Gap Financing

Bridge financing may be an option for that classic real estate conundrum: my new purchase closes before my home is sold and I don't have the down payment. Or, I do not want to move twice! What to do, what to do ...

Bridge Financing assists the customer(s) with the sale and purchase of their residence. Bridge Financing may be necessary when the closing date for the

purchase is before the closing date for the sale of the current residence.

The equity from the current residence is therefore not available on the closing date for the new mortgage. A Bridge Loan provides the customer(s) with short-term assistance to meet this shortfall. Once the sale on their current residence closes, the loan is paid off with proceeds from the sale.

How it works

- A bridge loan “bridges” the gap between the sale of one home and the purchase of another.
- The equity from the current home can be used as a down payment on the new home when the current home is firmly sold.
- Or, private lenders may consider a bridge loan even when the current home is not firmly sold, if equity allows and other criteria is met.
- The bridge loan is paid off when the current home sells.

Benefits

- Bridge loans may be useful in competitive real estate markets.

- They may provide flexibility to buy a new home without worrying about the closing dates of the current home.
- They may provide time to move and/or make upgrades to the new home.
- They offer short-term solution for time-sensitive investment opportunities and/or when you may need quick cash.

Drawbacks

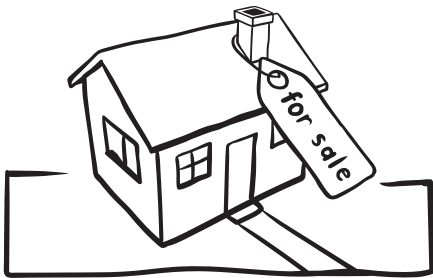
- Bridge loans may be more expensive than other types of financing.

Term

- Bridge loan terms are usually from 1-day to 1-month. The maximum is 90-days with most lenders (up to 12 months with a specific private lender).

Costs

- Bridge loan interest is calculated daily or monthly, generally at a variable rate of Prime + TBD%.
- Some lenders charge administrative and/or commitment fees, added to the net bridge loan.



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Funding

- A Bridge Loan Financing Agreement is to be signed by customer(s) with the solicitor handling the sale and/or purchase transactions.
- Solicitor must conduct a title search to confirm the encumbrances on title are as disclosed by the customer(s).
- Bridge loan proceeds are advanced 'in trust' to the solicitor, subject to the terms and conditions of the Bridge Loan Financing Agreement and may not be advanced until the new mortgage is advanced.

Applying for a bridge loan

- Your favourite mortgage broker can assist with a bridge loan application. Ask for all options for a current property firmly sold or not.

*Candace Perko,
Mortgage Broker*



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PROTECT YOUR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, GET IT REGISTERED by Bill Stemp

You have a unique idea or name, what next? Consider that there are different types of IPs that define new innovation or discovery or a new improvement to an existing idea. In Canada, you can obtain patent protection from Canadian Intellectual Property office. There are certain things you need to understand before pursuing a patent or a trademark.

Three types of patents:

- Utility patents
- Design patents
- Plant patents

A utility patent is one that involves the discovery of a new process, article of manufacture, machine, or an improvement of an original idea. Design patents are mostly concerned with ornamental designs that can be used to manufacture something. If you apply for a plant patent, then you

have to have discovered or invented a distinct variety of plant.

Utility Patent Process

The most common patent is the utility patent. When you verify that your idea does not appear in other patents you can decide which filing strategy you would want to use. In this stage, you have to determine whether you want an international patent, regional patent or both. If you want to patent in your region alone then you will need to electronically file for a provisional or non-provisional patent.

The patent process provides you with information about your patent period, requirements, charges, features, regulations and the examination. You can choose to file the patent on your own, with a patent agent or with a patent attorney. The patent agency recommends a lawyer who is in the position to assist you tackle the complexities involved.

Your application will then be examined by the patent office in the counties where you file. If it is successful, you will have to pay for the issue and publication fee to get a patent grant. The last part of this application process is the payment of

maintenance fees. In case your patent application does not is not allowed, you will require a lawyer to help you file for an appeal. With a good lawyer, you can overcome the judgment of the examiner and still get the patent grant.

Why Get a Patent or Trademark?

Patenting or trademarking unique ideas, thoughts or innovations will safeguard them from being stolen and used by someone else- losing out on profits. There are imitators who steal ideas and make profits out of them. That is why It is not appropriate to share a unique idea with anybody until you have fully protected it; otherwise keep it a secret.

With a patent:

- You get recognition and upgrade your CV
- You prevent people from stealing or copying your invention
- You are liberty sell, lease or transfer the rights at a profit
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- You create an asset that protects other assets




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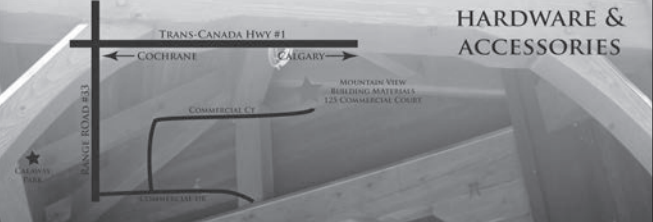
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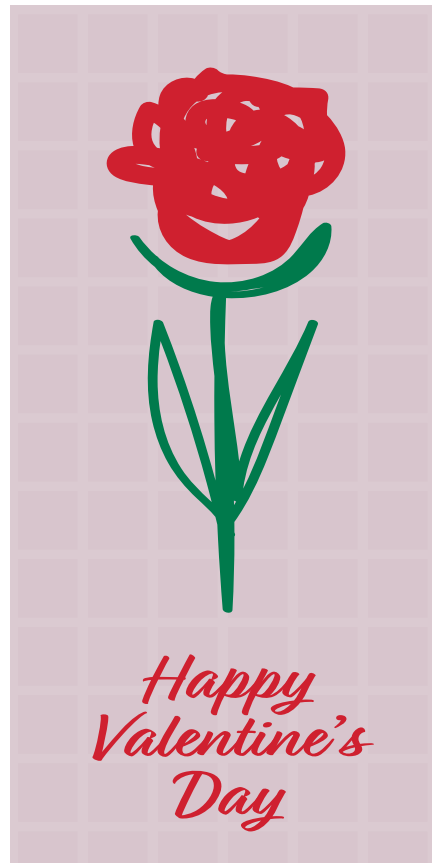
Why A Patent Lawyer?

Indeed, the process of obtaining a Patent or trademark is long (about 24-36 months) and costly, sometimes with no guarantee. The amount of paperwork and legwork involved attracts high fees, especially when you are patenting or trademarking from scratch. You need to know your Intellectual Property rights; however, the laws related to IP protection change all the time. These changes make it a complicated process, so hiring a lawyer to do the job ensures everything is airtight and valuable. This is where Stemp and Company can step in and take over all the work for you.

When you deal with a lawyer from our firm, you are guaranteed a legal option for a confidentiality agreement. Before you hire Stemp and Company to help you defend

your intellectual property, first come up with definite goals and strategies- this makes work easier. Therefore, if your idea can make the world a better place, then consult a patent lawyer from our team for the very best professional advice.

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“MY” ROCKING CHAIR by Andrea Kidd

I call it “my” rocking chair, but where did it come from?

Twenty five years ago, Zak yanked the steering wheel of his truck and pulled off onto the shoulder. Cameron peered out the passenger window. He turned to Zak with a puzzled grin. They got out to examine the damage.

For several kilometers they had been following an overladen 4 X 4 truck, furniture precariously strapped down with ratchet straps. A rocker was flipped upside down on couches and a table. My son and his roommate had been watching it rock to and fro, and side to side. The bindings loosened until the chair wiggled free, tumbled, ricocheted off the tailgate, skidded on the gravel and bounced into the ditch.

Zak strode through the tall grass in the ditch. Cameron followed. “What’ya gonna do with it?”

“Fix it up and sell it.”

One leg and rocker had splintered on impact and lay in water. The seat was scratched where it had slid over the corner of the tailgate. Zak attempted to lift the chair. The armrest came off in his hand.

“It’s toast!” said Cameron.

Determination and hope gleamed in Zak’s eyes. “No, just broken.”

Meanwhile, far away, I was sheltering a broken woman in Cameron’s unoccupied bedroom. Francine came to my home for Bible Study when she could. We were studying J.I. Packer’s book, Knowing God. Our study time coincided with her children’s piano lessons. Nigel thought he knew where she was. She could take the children to music lessons. That was okay. But Francine sneaked out to find out what God is like, and be with some friends. She always left at 7.55 p.m. to pick up the children. Now Francine was facing a court case. She had thrown a pop can at her husband and he was suing her for abuse. She was sheltering in my house, a recluse, broken.

Zak loaded some of the broken rocker onto his truck. Cameron shook his head, shrugged and picked up the rest.

My husband accompanied Francine to court. She was put on probation. The lawyers, judge and probation officer knew the situation. They did what they could legally to give her courage and minimize her humiliation.

Zak’s glue and screws restored integrity to the rocker. He secured polyester fibrefill and brocade fabric to the scarred seat with upholstery tacks.

Francine applied to work as a Personal Support Worker for a newly-established care home. Brian, a confused, blind resident, began to feel safe and comfortable in his new surroundings with Francine’s support.

A few years later, the rocker held Cameron’s wife as she nursed their newborn baby, but soon the family moved to Brazil. So, the rocker was placed in the master bedroom of Zak’s newly-purchased house and it held his wife as she nursed one new-born baby and then another.

When the time came for us to move, Zak helped relocate our furniture into our new home. Wandering through our newly-acquired house, I walked into our unusually large bathroom. A rocking chair, with open arms, welcomed me to relax by the window overlooking the mountains.

On the other side of the country, Francine had squirreled away a down payment on a charming little, run-down cottage. How she scrubbed, painted and decorated her new home! Her children, however, would not visit. They were enjoying the free living and drinking their father encouraged.

My “new” rocking chair holds me as I chat with my sister, attend online meetings, or rock the latest grandchild. But, I have yanked on the armrest too many times. It wobbles, and now floats free from the seat. I am fond of it, though, and use it even if it is broken. I wonder whether the Diamond Valley Repair Café can fix it.

One night, Francine heard a knock at her door. She peeked through the window. Her daughter, disheveled, distraught, disturbed and desperate stood hunched on the doorstep. Francine embraced Janine, poured coffee and listened.

Maybe it is time to take my rocker apart and let it go to the dump. But I know Ben, and Ben knows and loves wood. I will ask him. He says, “Yes,” takes it and returns it the following week. “My” rocking chair is restored!

If you enjoy my High Country News submissions, please see my substack for more: andreakidd.substack.com

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OUT OF THE RUT Chapter 174

The sky is pure, clear blue... cloudless, endless, translucent, full of imaginings. Moments later the sun has reached a certain angle and the quality of the light deepened, more profound in its illumination of the folding hills. The rumples ridges coated in deep green and elusive silvered-olive interspace deepest dark shadows and ancient mysteries. In some of the golden, ochre cliffs, black caves look like accidental naive paintings. This is a landscape of mystery and history. A landscape that hearkens back to the Alberta Foothills through mercurial weather changes, temperature slides and winds that arise and evaporate on the breath. It is a land of outrageous colours, intense desertification and sudden lush bursts of life. There are similarities and strangeness in every view.

The architecture is something else. Little to nothing links to the western reaches of Canada, yet there are echos connecting everything. Here the influence of the Moors of the 8th to 15th centuries gives a wealth of exotica and richness absent in the rest of the country and majority of Europe. Monuments of ingenuity, hydro-science, astrological learning, agriculture, art, music, creativity, practicality and more, still remain despite later attempts to obliterate them. Thank the many deities and fortunes that the Alhambra still stands today, that we can see the ingenious beauty of such constructions, their tremendous knowledge of water conservation and dispersion still extant.

In Almeria, we spent a couple of days of loooong walks through city streets from the highest point of the Alcazaba down to the furthestmost edge of the Cable Ingles (a feat of English engineering from the beginning of the 20th century). The Alcazaba – like the Alhambra – showcases stunning water systems. When one considers the time in which it was built...walking into the Aljibe (cistern) at the top of the hill is a breathless experience. I stand surrounded by deep stone walls and arching ceilings. There is a stone pillar about four feet high in one rounded end of one room... a depth marker. The spot on which I stand would have been immersed in water a few hundred years ago.



A system of ceramic pipes would bring the majority of the water from large catchment reservoirs on the roofs of the buildings and on the surrounding hilltops. The rain, when it falls, was and still can be, torrential. Massive amounts of water can be caught in a short space of time and piped into the cool underground caverns to be siphoned off for use throughout the drier times.

Much of the Alcazaba has now been restored. The last time my parents visited about twenty years ago, they tell me it was predominantly ruins emerging from preliminary excavations. Now the city walls are rebuilt, the great defensive wall stands again, a tower looms over all and from its parapets I can see an expanse of excavation works still being explored and rediscovered. Beyond the walls the city undergoes a subtle translation to modernity while an incongruous giant ferry rests at harbour. The original layout of valley agriculture and gardens to the north and east is recreated with small enclosures housing goats appearing as minuscule caricatures from my viewing distance.

After, we made our descent to a Moorish tea room... eventually discovering the

minuscule kitchen did not receive our order from the tall, thin waiter. A lady bustled out apologizing profusely, thrusting a plate of pastelitos árabes before us which we promptly devoured. I saw the stove in the tiny kitchen, watched the double-bellied silver teapot atop spewing forth boiling tea from its spout. The tea, on arrival, was delicious. A deeply satisfying té negro pakistani sweetened and brewed with milk, poured from a great height into gold-traced glasses, frothing, emitting deliciously appetizing odours. A lovely way to round off the afternoon.

And the sky. Again. Sunset is a swiftly-morphing cacophony of colour. I rush from one aspect to another to watch the colour of the sky in each direction. The moon, stunningly bright each night, and ghosting the daylight blue, it's startling luminosity is magic.

May your own sunrises and sunsets continue to awe and amaze.

Kat Dancer
bodymudra@gmail.com 1 415 525 2630 (c)



HOWLING LOVE SONGS by Laura Griffin

If you listen closely outside on an evening in February you may have the pleasure of hearing a song of love in the air. The howls can carry quite the distance, but it's the interspersed yips and short howls that tell you romance might be afoot. Coyotes, depending on their wide range across North America, will either live in pairs or in packs with last year's offspring. I have heard arguments that animals feel no love, but by the definition of love being a strong feeling of attachment and devotion then I do not see how the monogamous coyote pair do not fit the bill. They take walks together, can collude to catch unwary prey, and will frolic and play to strengthen their bond. They have even been documented to mourn the loss of their partners.

I have the good fortune to have a neighbouring coyote den, which means that a cacophony of calls is in store for me every January and February as the monogamous pair renew their sparks. If all goes well the pair will welcome pups between late March and May into their den, a burrow in the hillside carefully constructed to ensure proper drainage from moisture. I try to spend as little time near this den as possible, particularly at this time as I do not want the coyotes to find me intrusive. For one, they might not return the following year if I am not a good neighbour, and secondly they are territorial and will defend their dens against intruders. It will fall to the male to defend the den and bring food for the female in the first few weeks of nursing, which certainly seems like devotion to me. As the pups are weaned both parents (and/or siblings from the previous year) provide



the pups with prey and teach them to hunt for themselves.

The Latin name *Canis latrans* translates to barking dog. With eleven different vocalizations heard throughout the year it certainly lives up to its name. It is always intriguing for me when an emergency vehicle drives by with its sirens wailing and the local packs start howling back and forth. Occasionally, I join in when I hear the coyotes; I have no idea what I'm saying, which might be evident in the sometimes back and forth responses I get and sometimes the silent stare. Those who study coyotes say that their stares are not aggressive as with some other creatures, but usually out of curiosity.

A howling and yipping biped is certainly a curious sight. There are a few tips to better understand your own neighbourhood coyotes; howls are done to show location and identification of individuals, yips are thought to convey friendly messages and the enjoyment of the present company. Yelps and whines express pain and displeasure. Barks are warnings telling one to back off.

If you are feeling lonely this February I encourage you to listen to the messages of the song dog carried on the wind. Who knows, you might even find yourself calling back. Just remember to be respectful and always give them their space.



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Hey KIDS, do you have a great idea for a puzzle, brain teaser, colouring page or word search?

Have your parent or guardian submit your completed project (have an adult look it over first!) to submission@highcountrynews.ca and you may see your project in print! We will include your first name and age if you include that information



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WORD SEARCH

Valentine's Wordsearch

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- Love
- Roses
- Hugs
- Cupid
- Puppies
- Valentines
- Letters
- Confetti
- Kisses
- Kitten
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- Bouquet
- Gifts
- Scarlet
- Fourteen
- Chocolate
- Sweetie
- Family

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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, and Future Directions. Cognitive and behavioral practice, vol. 22, no.2, p172-191.

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ATTENTION HORSE OWNERS: If you have any old hay, bottom bales, moldy water damaged bales, etc. that are no longer suitable for horses, please give me a call. I may be able to pick it up and use it for cow feed. Call 403-651-5852

WANTED FIREARMS AND LAWN EQUIPMENT Paying cash for unwanted firearms. Free pickup of unwanted garden, lawn, acreage equipment, generators, chainsaws, golf carts, etc. Millarville, Priddis, Okotoks and between. Call or text 306-641-4447

COUNTRY LANE QUILTERS GUILD meets the first Saturday of the month at 9:30AM at Christ Church, Hwy 549 Millarville Ab. Business meeting followed by projects. We make quilts for the local charities in the Foothills Division. Contact clqgmillarville@gmail.com or stop by to see what we are up to.

LOST FRIDGE VENT COVER for Triple E trailer. Contact: Pat Phone: 403-271-7686 Lost on Highway 22 near Millarville, aluminum fridge vent cover for Triple E trailer. White in color. Approximately 10" high x 20" long

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old shotguns wanted by retired engineer and collector, any gauge, prefer Hammer, single or double barrel, not for resale, please phone 403-201-7181, valid firearms license holder.

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Contact: Simone Phone: 403-771-9475 I'm looking to rent an apartment or small house in Diamond Valley. I'm a female and a senior. I have references, don't smoke and have no pets. Thanks in advance.

1 BEDROOM APARTMENT OR HOME TO RENT Independent 79 year young male, non-smoker, on fixed income, looking to move to Bragg Creek area to be closer to family requires 1 bedroom accommodation, suite, apartment or house. Single parking space required for vehicle. Unfurnished or furnished. Mid to late September occupancy. Contact Keith @ 403-949-3678 landline or sibedad@gmail.com

WANTED TO RENT Bachelor or 1 bedroom suite. Available October 1st. Contact Dave: 403.819.5303

LOOKING TO GET A BAND/ORCHESTRA GOING IN BRAGG CREEK.
If any retired band/ music teachers are out there looking to start up the above, please contact me. Julie at 403-949-3637, or jcdocken@gmail.com

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MISC ITEMS Wheeled microwave cart \$30; Cuisinart 1/2 cup popcorn machine \$15; McLane gas 5 bladed reel mower \$375; grandfather clock \$375; Singer sewing machine model 3314, in original box, never used \$125 Contact Warren 403 949 3452 or email cwmcnabb@telusplanet.net

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