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Braggin' Rights Blonde: Built for the Trail Ahead

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And those moments matter more than ever.

Across Alberta, moderation is on the rise, but the tradition isn't going anywhere. People still want the ritual: the crack of a can, that first cold sip, time spent with friends. Braggin' Rights Blonde was built for exactly that.

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Because out here, the beer comes with you, from the trailhead on.

Braggin' Rights Blonde Trail Ale (0.5%) Built for the hikes, the rides, the climbs, and the views.



P.S. - This product was inspired by the beautiful trails we all enjoy thanks to the Volunteers of the Bragg Creek Trails Association. It is a collaboration in support of a wonderful group who build and maintain what very well may be the best trail network in Western Canada. Cheers to the Bragg Creek Trails Association and Cheers to the West!

**Written By: Chloe Traviss,
Head of Sales and Marketing,
Cowboy Trail Brewery**

Cowboy Trail Brewery products are proudly available at local establishments in Bragg Creek, including Bragg Creek Distillers, Creekers Liquor, Spirits West, and many restaurants. You can also find us at liquor stores across Alberta such as Co-op, Sobeys, Safeway Liquor, Wine and Beyond, and more.



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

With our late winter, I'm sure we're all excited to see green emerge from the various shades of grey and brown. Although one snowy April day this past month I did remind my wife that at least the highway signs were green. She didn't think it was funny.

I associate May with the beginning of the gardening season, Mother's Day, and the first hopeful long weekend that has the potential (yes, the odds aren't in our favour) to get outside and experience some great weather. The first two, Mother's Day and gardening seem to be inseparable. The May long weekend is more rooted in delusion than reality. As a family we would be outside in and around Mother's Day planting the annuals and prepping the garden beds etc. (Note I grew up in the interior of BC, not Alberta). Mom would be outside ensuring spacing was accurate; making suggestions, and we would all be doing the work. It's a happy memory, although I'm sure time is causing me to forget any complaining I may have had in being required to work. As it was difficult for my mom to navigate the

work physically, I always enjoyed seeing her delight in the end result. She used a combination of a creative eye mixed with the ability to command action through kindness. I'm sure she would have liked to do more of the hands-on work, but as kids I don't remember her ever complaining about her physical limitations. She leveraged other strengths to see the results she was looking to accomplish. As mom is no longer with us physically, it's good to have memories of her influence living on. Mom taught me more than a love of aesthetic beauty, she taught me to learn to appreciate what I have, not what I lack.

With lots of great events happening this month, I would encourage you to go to our Community Calendar to see what's happening in your area. We want to thank the many people who write and contribute the various community updates and articles on a regular basis. As we don't rely on any government funding, your financial support is and has been appreciated in order to provide the not-for-profit organizations an effective means of reaching their community.

*From my family to yours,
Lowell Harder*



COVER ARTIST PROFILE

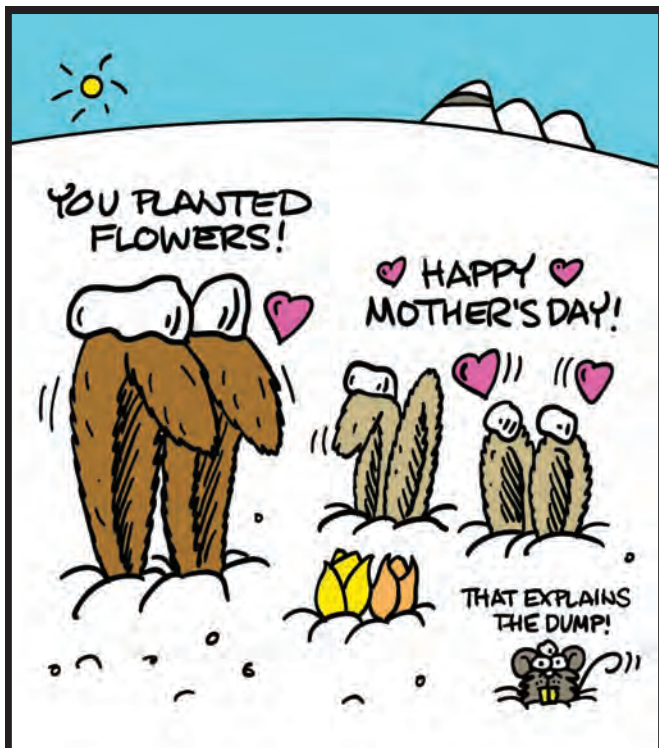
Hello, my name is Keziah Harder. I am a local visual artist, mainly using acrylic paint on canvas. I am currently finishing high school, and I have a passion for creating beautiful things despite our seemingly chaotic world. I have had the privilege of exploring many different creative outlets and I have fallen in love with symbolic art.

I paint to showcase deep emotion and most often my canvases reflect biblical themes of redemption and love. I also have been able to do a bit of commission work this past year.

Instagram: [@keziahharder.art](https://www.instagram.com/keziahharder.art)

Email: keziahharder07@gmail.com

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



HIGH COUNTRY LIFE

BY MARK ADMAKI.CA



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We are turning 40 this year!

Did you know the Springbank Heritage Club is not just a place to vote during election time? The Springbank Heritage Club is a not-for-profit organization created for the benefit and enjoyment of older adults age 50+ in Springbank and surrounding communities. Annual membership is only \$50. We are located at 244168 Range Road 33, and online at www.springbankheritageclub.com.

New members are always welcome! Ready to engage in old or new activities and meet some new friends? Each month members enjoy regularly scheduled activities as well as special events and outings – we even have our own bus to shuttle members to these off-site events!

- Mondays for Fitness Class and Pickleball
- Tuesdays for Games/ Pool, Singing, and monthly Potluck
- Wednesdays for Fitness Class, Crafts, and monthly Trivia Night (next on May 13th)
- Thursdays for Pickleball and Sewing
- Fridays for Fitness Class, monthly Book Club, and Pool/ Billiards
- Special events and outings, and more!

Upcoming Special Activities

- **Wednesday, May 6th from 7:00pm to 8:30pm – Pie and Presentation: Canadian Snowbird Association.** Join us for an informative and timely presentation by Bud Conroy, Director of the Canadian Snowbird Association (CSA). Learn about the CSA, and how

they advocate for Canadians who travel or spend extended time in the United States. Topics will include travel tips, cross-border issues, medical insurance, visas for Canadian retirees, tracking your days in the U.S., important IRS and U.S. immigration forms, and the benefits of CSA membership.

- **Friday, May 8th at 10:15am – Page Turners Book Club.** The book this month is titled *Strangers in the House*, A Prairie Story of Bigotry and Belonging, by Candace Savage.
- **Wednesday, May 13th at 7:00pm Trivia Night.** Join us for our next Trivia/ Name that Tune on Wednesday, May 15th. Please arrive at 6:45pm so we can organize tables and be ready to play at 7:00pm sharp.
- **Monday, June 1st at 5:00pm – Harmony's Creative Keys Ukulele Group** is a multi-age group of ukulele

students from Harmony, who will perform some popular "oldies" for us! It will be a great mini concert filled with songs that you recognize and can sing along to!

- **Tuesday, June 23rd from 7:00 to 8:30pm – Pie and Presentation: Estate Planning with Cherie Baruss.** Join us for what promises to be a very timely and informative evening! Cherie is a lawyer with 25 years of experience and a wealth of professional estate planning knowledge. She will review the basics of estate planning, including a review of unique documents and considerations, why having these documents is important, typical complications that can occur with estate planning and how to address them, and the cost to have these documents prepared.

Ready to join us?

You can sign up at the club or by emailing springbankhc@telus.net



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RVC Division 2 news items for your information:

Division 2 Open House – Thank you to everyone who joined Rocky View County staff and me for Division 2's Open House on March 26th. With approximately 75 residents in attendance, the evening was a wonderful example of what makes our community strong: people showing up, asking thoughtful questions, and sharing practical ideas rooted in day-to-day experience.

I truly appreciated the collaborative discussions on a wide range of topics affecting Springbank and the surrounding area. Transportation and road safety were clear priorities, with many comments focused on intersections and traffic operations, including RR 32/Twp 250 and RR 33/Springbank Road. We discussed access and congestion around key routes, as well as ideas to improve safety for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, such as extending pathways, widening shoulders, and exploring safer options at busy crossings. Residents also raised important infrastructure concerns, like ensuring culvert replacements are backfilled to prevent road dips over time.

There was also strong interest in community-building priorities, including outdoor recreation amenities and natural green spaces, as well as in conversation around housing options for seniors, from downsizing to independent living. I want to extend my gratitude for the positive feedback directed towards our staff; it means a lot to see such a respectful tone and shared commitment to finding solutions.

If you couldn't attend, I invite you to stay involved through conversation with me or through broader County engagements. Please visit engage.rockyview.ca to learn about upcoming public engagement opportunities and share your input on key County initiatives. Your perspective helps shape better decisions, and I am genuinely thankful for your continued involvement and support.

Alberta Heritage Fund – At the March Rural Municipalities of Alberta conference, I had a conversation with the Minister of Treasury Board and Finance Nate Horner regarding the Heritage Fund. The Minister provided the following information:

The Heritage Fund serves as the province's long-term savings account, designed to collect and invest a portion of Alberta's non-renewable resource revenues. As of December 31, 2025, the Heritage Fund reached a record fair value of \$31.9 billion and delivered a strong five-year annualized return of 8.8 per cent, net of fees.

These results, as detailed in the 2025-26 Third Quarter Report, place the Heritage Fund on track to reach \$35 billion by 2027. This growth is further accelerated by current legislation that allows for 100 per cent of the fund's net annual income to be reinvested, which effectively inflation-proofs the assets and maximizes compound growth.

To ensure professional stewardship, the Heritage Fund operates under a sophisticated asset-owner model led by the Heritage Fund Opportunities Corporation (HFOC). The HFOC board provides independent oversight and strategic direction, while a separate investment management function is responsible for portfolio construction and individual securities transactions.

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Gather up the family

There's no better way to show how much you love and appreciate "mom" than by treating her to a Mother's Day lunch or dinner. And speaking of love, nothing says "I love you mom" more than our potatoes, snuggled next to a succulent schnitzel or juicy rouladen. So book a table, inside or out, today.

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All Heritage Fund investment decisions are subject to a formal Statement of Investment Policy and Goals, which defines asset mix requirements, risk parameters, and return expectations. To ensure all investment risk is deliberate and measured, the Heritage Fund is managed at a total portfolio level with rigorous stress-testing, continuous monitoring, and strategic diversification.

The long-term strategy for the Heritage Fund is presented in government's ambitious, but achievable, roadmap to grow the fund to \$250 billion by 2050. By transforming resource wealth into lasting financial security, Alberta can secure a stable and sustainable revenue source that will eventually offset volatile earnings from non renewables. Once the Heritage Fund reaches its \$250 billion target, its investment income will be used to support public programs, build vital infrastructure, and maintain Alberta's position as one of the lowest tax environments in Canada. Achieving this scale ensures a permanent economic legacy that future generations of Albertans can both rely upon and benefit from.

Property tax assessments - Rocky View County (RVC) have sent out the property tax assessments. This is not your tax bill.

"Assessment and taxation are connected but different: assessment estimates your property's value as of July 1, 2025, and taxation applies the tax rate to that value to fund local services and provincial costs like education."

Tax rates will be set by Council in April and then your tax notices will be mailed out.

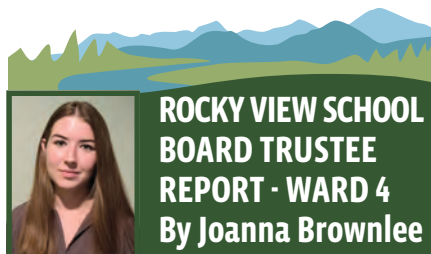
Assessors conduct site inspections every year. Inspections begin early in the year and take the entire year. These inspections may include measuring buildings, photographing exteriors and gathering details regarding interior components and the use of the property.

Assessors may also inspect your property if: there has been a recent building permit issued, or physical change or if your property has recently been purchased or sold. If you have any questions about your assessment, please contact Assessment Services.



Spring road bans - Seasonal Road bans are implemented to help protect County roads during periods when they are most vulnerable to damage, particularly during the spring thaw when moisture weakens the road structure. Limiting heavy vehicle loads during this time helps preserve road conditions, reduce maintenance costs, and improve safety for all motorists. Road bans have been in place since March 23.

Don Kochan - Division 2 Councillor
kochandiv2@gmail.com



RVS has received notification that the Government of Alberta has approved 10 new and four replacement modular classrooms and one washroom unit for the division, to help address the continued need for additional student learning spaces. RVS had requested 10 new modular classrooms, eight replacement modular classrooms and one washroom unit. The Board appreciates the government's ongoing infrastructure support through this approval.

RVS continues to expand career learning opportunities beyond existing high school programs, through experiential learning and strong partnerships with post-secondary institutions, industry and community. The 2025 launch of the Career Learning Practice Guide (CLPG) established a consistent, division-wide approach to integrating career learning from Grades 1-12, supported by targeted resources, staff engagement and strengthened partnerships.

Implementation has included widespread school participation, career exploration events and new dual credit opportunities, supported by grants and collaborations with organizations such as post-secondary institutions and industry partners. For 2025-26, most RVS

schools have embedded career learning goals, with dedicated career learning teachers supporting delivery. Looking ahead, RVS will continue to expand dual credit offerings, enhance career-focused programming and strengthen partnerships to ensure students develop the skills, knowledge and experiences needed for future career success.

Following the release of the provincial government's Budget 2026, RVS has received its detailed funding profile for the 2026/27 school year. RVS will receive total funding of \$315.9 million, an increase of \$14.1 million over the current year. This growth reflects rising student enrolment and rate increases across several grant areas.

Overall, the funding profile includes positive funding growth in key funding areas. Base instruction funding has increased by \$6.5 million to \$198.9 million, while specialized learning funding has grown by \$788,000 to \$22.8 million, supporting enhanced services for students. Transportation funding has risen by \$619,000 to \$20.1 million, and operations and maintenance funding now totals \$27.8 million following the consolidation of infrastructure grants, which is an increase of \$311,000. While system administration funding saw a slight adjustment, overall funding remains stable, and additional support will fully address projected teacher salary increases for 2026/27.

School boards across Alberta have flexibility in how funding is allocated to best meet local needs, and RVS administration is working closely with the Board's Budget Committee to develop a balanced and responsive budget. A proposed 2026/27 budget will be brought forward for Board consideration by the end of May 2026.

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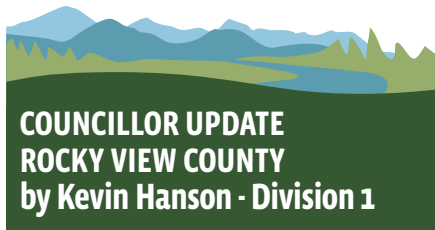
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COUNCILLOR UPDATE ROCKY VIEW COUNTY by Kevin Hanson - Division 1

Springbank Trails and Pathways Association

STAPA has been actively engaged with Rocky View County for the past year, meeting with Administration, myself, and Councillor Don Kochan. They've presented to our Public Participation Committee to inform Council about their mission. Recently, they informed Council about the opportunity to coordinate with Alberta Trail Net and the SR-1 project to work towards a Cochrane-to-Bragg Creek segment of the TransCanada Trail.

Don and I submitted a motion for Council to direct Administration to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the Springbank Trails and Pathways Association outlining roles, expectations, and areas of cooperation. We hope to receive Council's approval on April 28th.

2026 Spring Budget Finalization Completed

The April 14 Council meeting focused on finalizing the 2026 budget and setting the 2026 tax rate increase. In earlier workshops, and again publicly at this

meeting, we heard that Rocky View is working toward a single, fulsome budget approval before the start of the fiscal year, which runs from January to December.

That would be a change from the current two-step process. At present, Council approves a "Base Budget" in December. A final round of adjustments follows in the spring, after Rocky View has confirmed the applicable tax assessments and before the budget must be submitted to the Province.

Historically, the two-step process was used because it gave Rocky View more confidence in estimating how much "live growth" would be in place for tax calculations. This is more complicated than it sounds. When the commercial and industrial assessment base is growing quickly, tax estimates depend on whether buildings are completed and occupied on schedule. Budgeting therefore depends on whether developers deliver product to market when expected, and whether those spaces are sold or leased when Rocky View expects them to be.

The same dynamic exists on the residential side, although usually with less uncertainty than in the commercial and industrial sectors.

In the past, Rocky View has taken a very conservative approach to estimating additions to the assessment base, or "live growth." Administration and Council have built the budget and calculated the tax rate using that same conservative assumption.

The reasoning was straightforward: it is better to finish the year with a surplus than a deficit.

However, during a period of sustained growth, that approach tends to generate larger surpluses over time. Those surpluses typically end up in one of two places. They can be added to the tax stabilization reserve for future uncertainty mitigation, or they can be used immediately to subsidize the following year's tax rate increase. The second option is naturally easier politically. As a result, Rocky View has held tax rate increases exceptionally low, or at zero, through the four years since the COVID-19 disruption gave way to a boom. Those low tax increase decisions happened even while high inflation was pushing up actual costs. There is a limit to how long those pressures can be deferred, because under-investment in lifecycle asset management eventually catches up in the form of higher future costs and fewer good options.

Moving to a one-pass budget approval process will require several things to be in place:

- Multi-year capital planning, with cash flow reporting across project delivery timelines
- Multi-year operating budgets that can maintain or adjust service levels as needed
- Better assessment growth estimates, along with a stronger understanding of economic risk
- A multi-year tax rate strategy aligned with capital and operating goals

With those pieces in place, each year's budget would no longer start from scratch. Instead, it would become an adjustment to an established trajectory. Rocky View is continuing to work toward that model in 2026.

Multi-Year Capital Budget Still a Work in Progress

Council is still workshoping with Administration to better understand the trade-offs involved in Rocky View's mid- and long-term capital needs. These include Fire, Recreation, existing asset management, and new infrastructure commitments. That work depends in part on the Fire and Recreation Master Plans, as well as other strategic reports expected later this year.

As I have noted before, Rocky View is at an inflection point. These are complex decisions, and Council will need to work through them as we move into budgeting for 2027 later this year. The hope is that next time we can do that through a single, once-through approval process rather than a second round of spring adjustments.

So long story short, the overall net tax increase required to support the approved 2026 operating and capital budget was decided by Council at 4.16%.

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May is here and hopefully we're moving into spring with crocuses blooming and snowstorms turning into rainstorms! I hope you're getting your gardening hands ready and dreaming of the bounty you'll grow this summer! April was an especially busy period, with many weeks spent debating legislation in the Alberta Legislature, followed by constituency weeks filled with tours, events, and meetings across Banff-Kananaskis. While it's busy, this is the time where I get to take your concerns from MLA on Tour and community events directly to the legislature and I love that!

Influx of Government Bills

At this stage in the legislative session - the last month before summer break - the government has introduced a large number of bills at once. This strategy, often referred to as "flooding the zone," limits meaningful debate and overwhelms the opposition's ability to fully respond to each piece of legislation. Below, I outline the aims

and potential consequences of several key bills. By the time you read this, there will be more. Keep following me on social media to see clips of how I'm representing you in the Legislature. If any of these proposed laws concern you, please do not hesitate to contact my office at banff.kananaskis@assembly.ab.ca.

Bill 23 – Justice Statutes Amendment Act

Bill 23 represents a troubling consolidation of power within the Minister of Justice's office by transferring authority away from Elections Alberta, an independent and non-partisan institution. It also alters the rules governing citizen-initiated petitions, creating uncertainty around one of the most important mechanisms of public engagement in our democracy.

The centralization of power in the Minister's office a continual theme of this government, and our team in opposition will continue to push against that.

Bill 25 – An Act to Remove Politics and Ideology from Classrooms

Bill 25 further centralizes authority by removing decision-making power from democratically elected school boards and trustees and placing it directly in the hands of the Minister of Education. Alberta's teachers work tirelessly under increasingly challenging conditions,

including overcrowded classrooms and limited resources. Rather than addressing these real issues, the government is targeting a problem that does not exist.

Of particular concern is the proposed ban on all flags in schools except the Alberta and Canadian flags. In Banff-Kananaskis, where Indigenous communities and Treaty history is vibrant, this provision risks erasing important cultural representation. A child's culture is not political, and teaching history as it occurred is not ideological.

Bill 26 – Immigration Oversight Act

Although Bill 26 claims to protect immigrants and hold bad actors accountable, it appears to duplicate federal immigration processes while expanding provincial control in an area that has already been subject to divisive rhetoric from this government. This bill also adds unnecessary red tape and increases administrative burden for businesses. I will continue to stand up for fair and respectful treatment of immigrants and temporary foreign workers essential to our tourism economy, as well as increased bureaucratic efficiency not more red tape.

Bill 28 – Municipal Affairs and Housing Statutes Amendment Act

Bill 28 removes authority from democratically elected municipal governments and

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independent library boards, placing additional power with the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It restricts municipalities' ability to raise revenue and introduces unnecessary provincial oversight into local governance, including in land use planning and zoning.

This bill also targets public libraries, despite existing policies already addressing age-appropriate content. Additional restrictions risk government censorship and impose needless bureaucracy. This bill is another gross example of government overreach into municipal decision making processes.

Bill 29 – Health Statutes Amendment Act

This Bill 29 advances the government's efforts to further privatize health care in Alberta by enabling a two-tier system. Under this model, those who can afford to pay will be able to access diagnostic services more quickly, while the public system is left understaffed and under-resourced.

Bill 29 does nothing to address the real crises facing our healthcare system, including staffing shortages and hospital capacity issues. Instead, it risks drawing workers away from the public system, weakening both. My colleagues and I will continue to fight for a strong, public health care system that serves all Albertans, regardless of income.

Electoral Boundaries and Democratic Integrity

Beyond these bills, one of the most serious

issues facing our province is the government's attempt to alter electoral boundaries in a partisan manner. Every eight years, an independent Electoral Boundaries Commission reviews ridings based on population shifts and public input.

Traditionally, the commission's majority report is adopted. However, the government has opened the door to other options, attempting to advance a minority report that redraws boundaries in ways that can only be described as gerrymandering. This practice undermines democratic fairness.

I urge you to speak up—talk to your friends and neighbors, write letters to the editor, contact the Premier's office, and share concerns publicly. Democracy depends on participation, and silence is not an option. This is not a partisan issue, it is an issue that directly impacts how your needs will be represented in our provincial democracy.

Staying Connected

This month, I will be hosting Facebook Live Q&A events and participating in MLA on Tour visits throughout the riding. I encourage you to connect however you are able. It is truly an honor to represent Banff-Kananaskis, and I remain committed to advocating for you in the Legislature.

I look forward to connecting soon.

Sarah Elmeligi



THE LITTLE SCHOOLHOUSE

The Little Schoolhouse is buzzing with excitement for another month of discovery, learning, and play!

This month, we'll explore the life cycle of butterflies, discover fascinating insects, and learn how plants grow. We'll even plant and care for some of our own! Through stories, hands-on experiments, and plenty of curiosity, our classes will dive into these topics together.

It's always wonderful to see the children sharing ideas, asking questions, and learning side by side. Their enthusiasm makes every day special, and we are so grateful to be part of their journey.

Registration for our programs is ongoing. To learn more or join us, please visit: www.thelittleschoolhouse.ca.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy month!

Ms. Shelley and The Little Schoolhouse Team



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Facebook Live (Online) - For Everyone
May 8th
12:30pm -1:30pm

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Get Serious About Saving and Investing

We are now well into 2026 and your New Year's Resolution about managing your money better may have already been forgotten. As the late Sir John Templeton famously stated, the best time to invest is when you have money! The challenge for most people – with many people just struggling to make ends meet – is just getting started.

You can begin with a basic monthly contribution to your RRSP or TFSA to get into the savings habit. The younger you are, the better, but it is never too late to start as long as you are still working. Just don't expect miracles if you don't start saving for retirement until your mid-50's for example.

People either have an automatic (default plan) or their own custom designed plan with a qualified financial advisor. The custom plan is based on your own efforts and focus on being economically self-sufficient with the advice and guidance of an advisor.

The automatic (or the do nothing and don't think about it) plan, means getting whatever government support payments available to all Canadians CPP, Old Age Security and if your income is low enough, the Guaranteed Income Supplement. That is about it except maybe getting support from your children or other family members.

There are two schools of thought in the media – and financial advice books – about the best way to manage one's money during your career. The first one says you should build your emergency savings first, save for a house down payment (both can be done with a TFSA for example) and eliminate all consumer debt before you start saving for retirement.

The challenge with this approach is that it doesn't work well in high priced real estate markets like Vancouver or Toronto. Almost all of your disposal income would be diverted for debt reduction. The result can be families hitting their early 50's with low mortgages, no retirement savings and hopefully enough savings to pay for their children's education. And they are running out of time to save money by age 65.

This approach also assumes that you only buy one house while the real estate statistics show that many people buy several homes during their work years and trade up to larger mortgages and never get out of debt. Never mind the ongoing temptation to take on consumer debt through car loans and other installment type debt.

With another approach, you can be doing all of the same things as the first approach but also add longer-term asset building goals to the mix. You can start saving for retirement by putting a modest amount into an RRSP on monthly basis to build the savings habit. The monthly amount for RRSPs and life insurance becomes part of your monthly family budget and is taken into account as part of the affordability calculation when buying a mortgage.

The result theoretically is that you buy a house around age 30, have a life and raise a family and have the house paid off by age 50 or so with RRSP savings of \$100,000

or more. Ideally the kids are ready to move out of the family nest and your obligation to contribute to their education is done. You now have momentum for the final savings push to your ideal lifestyle in your retirement years.

Because the best time to plan for retirement was yesterday. The second-best time is Today.

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

We will look at your sources of income, the physical assets you have, such as home, other real estate, etc. We will also review the various investments that you have that will be generating retirement income, now and into the future.

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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Brand soup anyone?

Somewhere right now, an excited would be entrepreneur is googling “cheap logo design” or “free website builder” and texting a cousin to “whip up some business cards.” That’s brand soup.

What’s brand soup you ask? It is easy to spot. The logo says one thing, the website says another, the social media feed looks like three different people are running it from three different decades, and the ad campaign feels imported from an entirely different industry. The tragedy is that beneath the visual chaos, the business idea itself might actually be strong.

As a long serving creative type, what I’ve seen is not a lack of passion but rather a lack of professional execution. The person with the idea, living with or seeing a problem firsthand, has devised a solution and is prepared to risk savings, time and sanity to bring it to life. But what they usually don’t have is a coherent brand to complement a great idea.

A brand, despite how it’s sold, is not a logo, a colour, a font, or a clever tagline a relative thought of in the shower. A brand is the central idea of a business, clearly defined and then expressed consistently at every point of contact. It’s very personal. And it doesn’t operate well when the “I know someones” tackle different parts in isolation. The common DIY process for a new venture is familiar. Hire someone cheap to create a logo. Have someone build a site with a template. Use a social media specialist who has never seen either. And then ask a graphic designer for stationery that “pops.” It’s like commissioning a different architect for each room in a house and praying for Feng Shui.

The less glamorous, but more reliable, reality is that the first creative partner a new business needs is not a graphic designer or a web developer at all. It is a creative brand strategist (from which many graphic designers evolve to become). Someone whose role is to define what the business really offers in human terms, who it is for and who it is not for, how it is positioned against competitors, and what core idea and voice should drive every touch-point of the brand.

Once that foundation is in place, questions about shades of blue and fonts finally

have context. The brand creator can then implement or oversee everything that follows. From the visual identity, tone of voice, website structure, social media approach, and the look and feel of advertising and collateral. The point is not that one person must do every task, but that one mind, or creatively aligned team, is responsible. One brand brain. One brand voice.

Entrepreneurs often protest that they “just need something simple.” Simplicity is not the enemy. Randomness is. Even the most stripped down brand still needs a clear point of view, a consistent tone and a visual system that repeats on purpose, not by accident. When a brand feels assembled from leftovers, that is how the marketplace will value it.

In the end, the choice is stark. A founder can invest once, up front, in a strategic process that creates a clear, strong, coherent brand from the top down. Or they can economize early, cobble together a patchwork of disconnected creative work, and then add “seasoning” repeatedly to find “flavour” in the resulting brand soup. One path builds something customers trust and remember. The other yields a creature its owner spends a long time apologizing for.

Cheers, mark.



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BRAGG CREEK & AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

As the snow finally gives way to warmer days and the community begins to bloom, it brings an opportunity to celebrate the people who matter most, especially the mothers, caregivers, and role models who shape our lives every day.

Mother's Day offers a perfect moment to slow down, be thoughtful, and show appreciation in meaningful ways. This year, consider celebrating close to home by supporting the incredible local businesses that make Bragg Creek such a vibrant and welcoming place. Whether it's a handcrafted gift, a delicious brunch, or a unique piece of art, our community offers options that let you give something truly special while also giving back.

Choosing local isn't just convenient; it strengthens the heart of our community. Every purchase helps sustain small businesses, supports local jobs, and keeps Bragg Creek thriving. It's a simple but powerful way to make a difference, especially during moments of celebration.

If you're not sure where to start, the business directory at visitbraggcreek.com is a valuable resource. It brings together a wide range of local shops, services, and experiences, making it easy to find exactly what you need. From charming boutiques and artisan goods to dining, wellness, and outdoor experiences, the directory is designed to connect you with the best our community has to offer.

Beyond special occasions, the directory is also there for everyday needs and unexpected moments. Life doesn't always give us time to plan, and when challenges arise—whether it's a plumbing issue, home repair, or the need for professional services—having a trusted local resource can make all the difference. The directory includes skilled tradespeople and service providers who are part of our community, ready to help when you need them most.

As we move into May, we encourage everyone to explore what's available right here in Bragg Creek. Whether you're celebrating Mother's Day, preparing for the summer season, or simply taking care of day-to-day needs, let the local directory be your guide.

Supporting local doesn't have to be a grand gesture. It can be as simple as choosing a nearby shop, booking a local service, or recommending a business to a friend. These small actions add up and help ensure that our community continues to grow and thrive for years to come.

This May, celebrate the people you love and the place you live by choosing local.

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Join the Conversation
Our next Chamber meeting is on May 20th at 7:00 PM at The Post House. It's a great opportunity to connect with fellow business owners, share ideas, and gain insights to support the season ahead. These meetings are casual, collaborative, and always worthwhile.

Your Bragg Creek
& Area Chamber of
Commerce





The Point of Relief: Needling Techniques in Physiotherapy

Happy spring, readers! As we settle into the season, I hope you're finding time to enjoy the longer, brighter days. In this month's article, I'll be exploring needling techniques used in physiotherapy practice. As always, this is a broad overview and not intended as medical advice. My goal is to highlight some of the key nuances between the various "dry needling" approaches you may encounter.

One question that comes up frequently is: what's the difference between acupuncture and dry needling?

To answer that, we need to take a step back. "Dry needling" is actually a broad umbrella term used to distinguish non-injection needling from injection-based procedures (such as IVs or vaccinations). It refers to the use of thin, solid needles that do not inject or remove substances. Under this umbrella fall a variety of techniques, including acupuncture, intramuscular stimulation (IMS), functional dry needling, and trigger point dry needling (to name a few).

This is where confusion often arises. In physiotherapy, "dry needling" typically refers to techniques grounded in a Western medical approach, while acupuncture is rooted in Eastern medicine. Although they may appear similar (i.e., both involve

inserting fine needles into the body to help relieve pain and improve function) their underlying philosophies, techniques, and clinical applications differ.

Acupuncture is based on traditional Chinese medicine and centers around the concept of "Qi", a form of life energy believed to flow through pathways in the body called "meridians". Disruptions in this flow are thought to contribute to illness or dysfunction. Acupuncture aims to restore balance by targeting specific points along these meridians, and has historically been used to address a wide range of conditions, from pain to fertility to digestion and sleep concerns.

Some physiotherapists are trained in acupuncture; however, this does not make them acupuncturists. Acupuncturists are distinct regulated healthcare professionals. Physiotherapists who incorporate acupuncture into their practice typically apply it in the context of musculoskeletal care.

In contrast, dry needling techniques commonly used in physiotherapy are based on Western medical principles, with a focus on anatomy, physiology, and evidence informed practice. Rather than targeting energy pathways, these techniques focus on muscles and nerves. In the context of physiotherapy, you may hear terms such as IMS, functional dry needling, or trigger point dry needling. These reflect different training approaches and philosophies depending on the practitioner's post-graduate education.

In practice, dry needling in physiotherapy often involves identifying specific muscles

or nerve-related targets and inserting a needle into the affected area. Depending on the practitioner's training, treatment may focus on a single muscle or follow broader nerve patterns. Techniques can vary. Some practitioners use a "pistoning" method to elicit a muscle twitch response, while others may leave needles in place for a period of time, sometimes adding gentle stimulation such as twisting/ flicking or electrical current. In other cases, the needle may be inserted briefly and removed immediately after achieving the desired response.

As with any treatment, your physiotherapist will complete a thorough assessment, a discussion of potential risks and benefits, and obtain informed consent before proceeding. The decision to include needling as part of your care depends on your condition, goals, preferences, and your physiotherapist's training.

The physiotherapists at Bragg Creek Physiotherapy are certified to complete dry needling. Steve Resta has completed Gunn IMS training. Breanna Maughan is certified through On Point Needling. Jennifer Gordon has completed Gunn IMS training and holds additional certification in acupuncture through the Acupuncture Foundation of Canada Institute. While the approaches may differ, the focus remains the same: helping you move better, feel better, and get back to the activities you enjoy. As always, we are here to support and guide you through your options, in a way that feels comfortable.

Bre Maughan
Registered Physiotherapist (MScPT, BScKin)
Bragg Creek Physiotherapy
www.braggcreekphysio.com

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

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

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Writing an article in April for May publishing can be quite a task when a spring storm out the window brings your thoughts to hot chocolate and fireplaces, rather than iced tea and patios. As unpredictable as spring in Alberta can be, one thing that doesn't change is how quickly our community comes to life this time of year.

Our Spring Programs are well underway, with something for all ages and interests. Youth can get creative and active with options like Youth Master Chef, Youth D&D, and Youth Dance, while adults can enjoy Two Step Nights, Pickleball, Artsy Afternoons, Spanish Lessons, and Volleyball. Little ones can burn off energy in Kids Rumble & Roar and Kids Dance. Be sure to check the "Current Programs" tab on our website for full details and registration information.

Looking ahead:

May 30: Mark your calendars and join us for our Indoor Yard Sale. These events

are always a ton of fun—whether you're registering a table or simply stopping by to shop for hidden treasures. Runs from 11am to 3pm.

June 14 through September 20: Our Farmer's Market season returns running every Sunday (excluding July 19) from 10am to 3pm. With a full lineup of fresh growers, local makers, and handmade finds, it's the perfect way to spend a summer morning in the community.

June 20: Lend a hand at the Bragg Creek Foundation's annual "Clean Up the Creek" event. This is a great opportunity to give



Meals for Your Freezer Bragg Creek

In collaboration with the Bragg Creek Snowbirds, Cochrane Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) has expanded the Meals for Your Freezer program.

Orders due Tuesday by 12 p.m. and available to pick up the following Tuesday afternoon at Snowbirds Chalet.

For more information or to view the menu, visit www.cochrane.ca/foodprograms or call 403-851-2250.

Meals: \$6.50 each
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back and keep us looking our beautiful best—visit their website for full details.

Summer will be here before we know it, and registration is now open for Peak Ambition Summer Kids Camps, running weekly from June 29 to August 28 for children aged 5–13. With a focus on outdoor exploration, skill-building, and sport—plus weekly guest specialists—these camps offer an unforgettable summer experience. Visit the Summer Camp section of our website for weekly features and details.

Be sure to save the date for July 18 & 19, as Bragg Creek Days returns with an exciting lineup. This year, we are thrilled to welcome the Cowboy Trail Car Club for a Sunday Car Show!

SATURDAY will feature the Redwood Meadows Fire Department Pancake Breakfast, The Bragg Creek Chamber's 57th Annual Parade, Kidzone, Outdoor Market, Bragg Creek Wild's BearSmart Demos, The Trading Post Pony Rides, Beer Gardens & Live Music. So much fun for everyone!

SUNDAY brings Mabel Yeo's Memorial (Not A) Golf Tournament, hosted by the Bragg Creek Foundation, along with an exciting, ALL NEW Car Show, Beer Gardens and Live Music.

Want to work on the planning committee? Contact Ramonde via the Community Centre. Opportunities to volunteer on event days will be posted on our website closer to the event. Thank you!

Community Feature – Did you Know?

In partnership with the Bragg Creek Snowbirds, the Cochrane Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) has introduced "Meals for your Freezer" right here in Bragg Creek! For order and pick up information, ask over at the Snowbirds or visit Cochrane.ca. Thank you to the Snowbirds for helping bring this valuable service to our community.

Wishing all the wonderful mothers and caregivers in our community a very Happy Mother's Day. And as we look forward to the May long weekend, we hope you find time to relax, recharge, and maybe even enjoy a little bit of both patio weather and hot chocolate, because in Alberta, you just never know.

Your BCCA
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Throw your hat in. Apply today.



Bragg Creek Foundation Scholarship Program

Applications must be received by May 31 from students currently enrolled in Grade 12. Students must be registered for a course at university, trade school, polytechnic, or college for the upcoming academic year.

For further information please reach out to the
Chair of the Scholarship Committee
info@braggcreekfoundation.ca



The application form can be downloaded
from our website braggcreekfoundation.ca
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From 800 to 556 to 989 Hectares: Is Clear-Cutting the Only Answer?

Our Forests. Our Water. Our Future.

Either on Google Maps or on the trail, the scars of past and current clear-cut areas are visible along the eastern slopes of Alberta, including our area. Clearcutting remains the standard approach to resource extraction, pest mitigation (e.g., pine beetle), and now wildfire fuel reduction. West Fraser's initial 2025 proposal covered 880 hectares in West Bragg Creek and Moose Mountain, later reduced to 556 hectares to accommodate recreation. However, Alberta's new "Community Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program" could increase that total to 989 hectares.

RESOURCE EXTRACTION VS FOREST HEALTH

The eastern slope forests of the Alberta Rockies are a critical ecological and economic asset, serving as a primary water source for nearby residents and major urban centres. They support biodiversity, act as a major carbon sink, and provide essential ecosystem services like water filtration, flood mitigation, and wildlife habitat.

However, large-scale clear-cutting can fragment habitats, reduce water quality, and increase vulnerability to natural disturbances.

THE VALUE OF EASTERN SLOPE FORESTS

- Watershed Protection – Forests filter water and regulate flow, reducing flood and drought risks.
- Biodiversity – They support diverse wildlife and serve as migration corridors.
- Carbon Storage – Forests help mitigate climate change.
- Recreation & Tourism – They provide opportunities for hiking, fishing, camping, and skiing.
- Cultural Significance – Natural lands support Indigenous traditional practices and resources.

IMPACT OF CLEAR-CUTTING

Clear-cutting disrupts forest systems in several ways:

- Water Impacts – Loss of tree cover increases runoff and sediment in streams, harming fish habitat and worsening floods and droughts.
- Habitat Loss – Logging and roads fragment ecosystems, threatening species

dependent on mature forests such as owls, martens, and lynx.

- Carbon Release – Stored carbon in trees and soil is released, turning forests from carbon sinks into sources.
- Fire and Pest Risk – Dense young regrowth can be more vulnerable to wildfire and pests like spruce budworm.
- Soil Degradation – Heavy machinery can reduce soil fertility, limiting natural regeneration.

WHAT WE HEARD:

APRIL 1 OPEN HOUSE

Alberta's "Community Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program" justifies expanded clear-cutting as a response to decades of wildfire suppression and fuel buildup. Plans include encouraging less flammable deciduous regrowth (like aspen) within 2 km of communities, with a gradual return to conifers farther out.

However, when asked about alternative wildfire mitigation approaches, officials stated:

- Controlled burns are not being considered due to proximity to Bragg Creek.
- Selective cutting or thinning is also not under consideration.

One positive note: glyphosate will not be used, and deciduous regrowth will be encouraged near communities.

QUESTIONS REMAIN:

- Why does clear-cutting remain the primary approach to resource extraction and forest management on Crown land?
- What wildfire mitigation strategies, beyond clear-cutting, have been used historically in the West Bragg Creek and Moose Mountain areas?
- Why are proven alternatives such as controlled burns, selective cutting, and thinning not being considered? These methods are used in Canada and globally, often with better ecological outcomes.
- Watersheds are critical to both ecosystems and communities. With expanded clear-cutting likely to accelerate degradation, what measures, beyond minimum provincial standards, are being taken to protect our headwaters?
- Finally, what actions are being taken to reduce the risk of human-caused wildfires?

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

The deadline to share your feedback and concerns with West Fraser and the Alberta government is MAY 29th. Please email COS-Info@westfraser.com and consider c.c. our MLA, Sarah Elmeligi at Banff.Kananaskis@assembly.ab.ca



Our final production of the season, 9 to 5: The Musical, runs May 1 to 10, 2026. Tickets are available at swampdonkeytheatre.ca.

Pushed to the boiling point, three female coworkers concoct a plan to get even with the sexist, egotistical, lying, hypocritical bigot they call their boss. In a hilarious turn of events, Violet, Judy, and Doralee live

out their wildest fantasy – giving their boss the boot! While Hart remains "otherwise engaged," the women give their workplace a dream makeover, taking control of the company that had always kept them down. Hey, a girl can scheme, can't she? (synopsis from mtishows.com)

AUDITIONS FOR 2026/2027 SEASON:

Auditions for ALL our 2026/2027 season productions are scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, 2026 and Thursday, June 11, 2026. Auditions are for A Taste Of Things To Come, A Bragg Creek Christmas, and Dear Evan Hansen.

Audition sign ups begin May 1, 2026 at www.swampdonkeytheatre.ca.

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9 to 5: The Musical is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized materials are supplied by Music Theatre International, New York, NY 212-512-4624. mtishows.com

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Spring Cleaning Safety Tips

As the snow melts and the days grow longer, many of us feel the urge to open the windows, shake off winter, and dive into spring cleaning. While this annual ritual helps refresh our homes, it's also the perfect time to make sure your household is as safe as it is tidy.

One of the most important steps you can take this spring is to inspect and test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Vacuum around the units to remove dust, and check the manufacturer's date—most alarms need replacement every 10 years. While you're at it, review your home escape plan with everyone in the household. A quick conversation today can make all the difference in a real emergency.

Spring cleaning is also a great opportunity to reduce clutter, especially in storage areas like basements, garages, and utility rooms. Excess items—particularly cardboard boxes, old newspapers, and unused chemicals—can fuel a fire or block access to exits. Dispose of hazardous materials such as paint, solvents, and cleaning products according to local guidelines, and store remaining items in clearly labeled,

sealed containers. Keeping pathways clear ensures firefighters can reach critical areas quickly if they ever need to respond to your home.

As you tackle your kitchen, take a moment to inspect appliances for frayed cords, grease buildup, or signs of wear. Clean your oven and stovetop thoroughly, as grease accumulation is a leading cause of kitchen fires. If you use a clothes dryer, remove lint from the filter after every load and check the vent hose for buildup or damage. Lint is highly flammable, and a blocked vent can cause overheating. A few minutes of maintenance can prevent a dangerous situation.

Outdoor spring chores matter too. Clear dead leaves and debris from around your home, especially near decks, fences, and siding. Trim branches away from the house and remove dry vegetation that could ignite during warm, windy days. If you plan to burn yard waste, make sure you do so in an approved fire pit or get a burn permit, and never leave a fire unattended. A garden hose or bucket of water should be within reach at all times.

With warmer weather also comes the return of cyclists to our roads and pathways. To help keep everyone safe, take a moment to review bike safety basics with your family. Ensure every bike is in good working order by checking brakes, tires, and reflectors. Riders should always wear a properly fitted helmet and bright or reflective clothing to

increase visibility. Remind children to ride on the right-hand side of the road, follow traffic signals, and make eye contact with drivers at intersections. Motorists can help too by slowing down in residential areas, giving cyclists plenty of space, and staying alert for young riders who may be unpredictable.

Finally, take a moment to look after your emergency supplies. Restock first aid kits, replace expired items, and ensure fire extinguishers are fully charged and easily accessible. If you're unsure how to use an extinguisher, remember the PASS method: Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep.

The RMES team is proud to serve this community, and we're here to help you keep your home and family protected. Stay safe and enjoy the warmer weather!

Until next month, stay safe!

DONATIONS ACCEPTED

Help rebuild RMES after a fire in December 2025 destroyed infrastructure and equipment.

For more information contact:

RebuildRMES@redwoodmeadows.ab.ca



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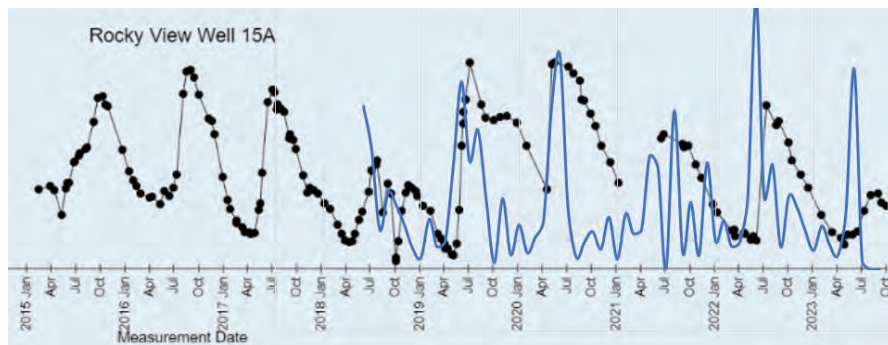
BRAGG CREEK ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION

The Importance of Groundwater

Groundwater has always been a mystery since - by definition - it's invisible. But that's no reason to ignore it, because groundwater is critical to all of us regardless of whether we get our drinking water from wells or municipal water systems. There's ten times more water stored as groundwater than is stored in rivers and lakes.

In wintertime the only source of water for surface flows (rivers and streams) is from groundwater inflow, which is why surface water levels in the Elbow River are generally lowest in winter. To add to the fragility of the water cycle, there's little or no recharge in the aquifers throughout the winter months. These underground water reserves depend on whatever water build-ups have taken place prior to winter, and summer/fall build-ups or replenishments can vary dramatically from year to year.

To better understand these variations and their impact on our water supply, Rocky View County (RVC), in conjunction the University of Calgary (UofC), initiated a county-wide well-water monitoring program in 2007 under the direction of well-known hydrologist, Dr. Masaki Hyashi (<https://gwfn.net/rockyview>). Several members of the Bragg Creek Environmental Coalition have participated in this program since its inception. It consists of lowering a specially designed measuring tape down



a well with an electrode probe at the end. When the probe touches the water level, a signal is transmitted and the depth to the water table is recorded. This procedure is conducted, ideally, every 2 weeks. On some wells continuous monitors have been installed, which record water depths every hour. Some probes also measure water temperature. The graph below shows the type of data that's been gathered over the years.

The black-dot curve is the depth to the water table in a well in West Bragg Creek. Superimposed on that, the blue curve is precipitation data from the Foothills No. 31 weather station. The correspondence between periods of maximum rainfall and the highest water table levels is not surprising. More surprising is that our maximum snow-melt in spring results in so little groundwater recharge. Water from melting snow contributes almost nothing to the aquifers and is dispersed only as surface runoff. Surface runoff is essential for filling rivers, ponds and dugouts but does little to fill or refill aquifers in spring.

Measuring groundwater levels year-round is essential to understand the sustainability of our potable groundwater resources. To this end, the groundwater committee of the Bow River Basin

Council initiated a program in 2024, expanding the UofC – RVC water-well monitoring program into the other municipal jurisdictions situated within the Bow River Basin – including the M.D. of Bighorn, Foothills County, Banff National Park, Wheatland County, and Newall County. Anyone interested in participating in this expanded program should contact the BRBC at <https://brbc.ab.ca/>. Additional information on groundwater in our area can be found on the Elbow River Watershed Partnership website (<https://www.erwp.org/>) and on the provincial Ground Observation Well Network (<https://www.alberta.ca/lookup/groundwater-observation-well-network.aspx>).

The main takeaway from this is that, regardless of whether we live in an urban area or in the country, we should always be hoping for rain in the spring and summer to refill our aquifers - but as we found out in 2013, not too much rain.

Please check out the work we do at braggcreekenvironmentalcoalition.ca, follow us on Instagram [@braggcreekenvcoalition](https://www.instagram.com/braggcreekenvcoalition) and email us at braggcreekenvcoalition@gmail.com

By Alan Breakey



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Tuesdays

1-4pm: Ladies Group & Snooker

Thursdays

1-4pm: Snooker

4-9pm: Open House/Pub Night

First Wednesday each month

1:00pm 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
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BRAGG CREEK & REDWOOD MEADOWS WELLNESS NETWORK

Continuing to build connection: How can we improve our health?

Over the past few years, many of us have felt a quiet shift. Fewer casual conversations. Fewer places to gather. Fewer opportunities to feel part of something larger than ourselves. In rural communities like Bragg Creek and Redwood Meadows, connection has always been a source of strength. When it begins to thin, it matters. As a registered nurse, a UCalgary professor, and a community member, I want to share why social connection is a public health issue and what we can do about it together.

What alarm bells are ringing?

Across Canada, we are seeing worrying signals in national health data. Statistics Canada's Functional Health report shows increasing loneliness, declining mental wellbeing, and growing stress. Functional health, or a person's ability to live well physically, mentally, and emotionally, has declined by 12% in Canada since 2015. The results show what many have noticed: our youth and young adults are particularly affected. This is not evidence of individual failure. It is an early warning system that tells us something in our social environment needs attention. Nursing has taught me to address these alarms to prevent a crisis.

Statistics Canada tracks this data for a reason. When large numbers of people report feeling isolated, unsupported, or overwhelmed, it predicts future challenges: mental health concerns, substance use, lower physical health, and diminished community resilience. Other countries that intentionally invest in social connection and community life are doing better. That tells us this is not inevitable. It is changeable.

Why does isolation matter here?

Community health is intergenerational. In rural communities, isolation can be harder to see and no less real. Young people and young adults often face fewer informal gathering spaces, limited transportation options, and pressure to leave their home communities to build their lives. Digital

connection cannot fully replace face-to-face belonging. When connection erodes, it affects mental health and whether young people see a future for themselves here. When youth feel disconnected, the whole community feels the impact.

How can caring for each other increase our resilience?

We are living in uncertain times. Many people are feeling pressure from forces beyond our borders, economic instability, and political polarization. In moments like this, our strength as Canadians and as rural communities comes from how well we look after one another. Communities with strong social ties are better able to withstand stress, adapt to change, and protect their members. Caring for each other is not a sign of weakness. It is how societies stay resilient, capable, and prepared for what comes next. When we invest in connection locally, we strengthen ourselves nationally.

How can we advocate for our health?

Health does not start in your local clinic. It starts with whether people can afford local housing, stay in their community as they age, earn a living wage, access a local recreation facility, and feel they belong. This is why engaging with municipal, provincial, and federal governments is part of public health. Decisions about land use, housing, transportation, recreation, and services shape health long before medical care is needed.

Advocacy is how communities hold decision-makers accountable to the conditions that allow people to thrive. Speaking up, showing up, and staying engaged are acts of care for ourselves and for each other. I encourage you to get involved in helpful ways; be a citizen who asks questions such as:

How do everyday decisions about land use, transport, libraries, schools, and community spaces shape health?

Can volunteering help our health?

Research consistently shows that volunteering supports mental health for those receiving help and for those offering it. Volunteering builds purpose, connection, and a sense of belonging. It strengthens the social fabric that keeps communities healthy. In our area, there are many meaningful ways to be involved. Helping Hands Cochrane and Area is one. Helping Hands volunteers support neighbours, youth, seniors, families, and community members in ways that are often invisible and essential. When people participate,

communities become more resilient. No one must do everything. Everyone can do something.

To register as a volunteer, please go to the Helping Hands website (helpinghandsscochrane.ca).

We can move forward together.

Improving community health does not require grand gestures. Nor is it something we can postpone or outsource. It starts with paying attention, increasing connections, and caring for one another guided by evidence and grounded in relationship. This moment calls for us to step in because we are capable. The Bragg Creek and Redwood Meadows Wellness Network supports these conversations, connections, and community health. However, the real strength has always lived within our community.

If you have been wondering whether you belong or how you can address the suffering you see, now is the time to step in. You are needed; you are welcome.

www.bcrmwllness.ca to get involved.

*Shannon Parker MN RN, co-chair
Co-chair, Bragg Creek and Redwood
Meadows Wellness Network*



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BCT Trail Centre Engagement Surveys - What We Heard

Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate in the recent permanent Trail Centre engagement surveys. We received input from 41 trails user groups representing over 35,000 members, and another 1,100 responses from individual members of the BCT community. In aggregate, these provide valuable insight into how the trails are used and what matters most to those who spend time there.

The surveys were designed to better understand trail use patterns, the types of amenities that may support the experience, and community perspectives on the potential development of a permanent Trail Centre. As expected, the feedback reflects a wide range of perspectives from a highly engaged trail community.

Responses show that cross-country skiing and hiking are among the most common activities at WBC, with many groups and participants identifying as regular users, volunteers, and donors of the trail network. Interest in a permanent Trail Centre is very strong among User Groups, and more mixed for individuals. A significant number of respondents indicating they are supportive, alongside others that with more cautious viewpoints. Many respondents noted that a permanent Trail Centre could enhance the overall experience, while not necessarily increasing visitation.

Through both survey responses and written comments, several consistent themes emerged. Many participants expressed support for improvements, particularly related to washroom facilities, running water, and accessibility. User Groups also expressed a strong desire for meeting space. At the same time, many emphasized the importance of maintaining the natural, simple character of West Bragg Creek and some shared concerns about additional development or potential impacts on the experience.

Our community shared a wide range of perspectives. While many see benefit in a permanent Trail Centre, others expressed concerns or questioned the need. This feedback is important and will help inform thoughtful, balanced decision-making as the project continues to be explored.

It is important to note that the surveys represents input from those who chose to participate and is intended to help inform



planning, rather than act as a vote for or against a specific outcome. The insights gathered provide meaningful context to support ongoing discussions about stewardship, sustainability, and the long-term future of the WBC trail network.

As we move forward, BCT remains committed to transparency and continued engagement. We will continue to share updates, reflect on what we have heard, and ensure that any future planning aligns with the values of the community and the responsible use of this shared landscape.

Thank you again for your time, your input, and for being part of the BCT community.

LINK to public survey results [HERE](#):

*Con Schiebel
BCT President*



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Standard Water System Maintenance Schedule:

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

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HIGH COUNTRY RURAL CRIME WATCH ASSOCIATION

The Dangers of QR Codes

At the HCRCWA AGM on March 9, cyber security expert P. Ariss took us through a number of instances where QR codes are being used to scam the public. There was one instance in February where someone had replaced the QR codes on approximately 75 Kelowna parking meters directing people to the fraudster's website. RCMP quickly identified and arrested three individuals.

The Government of Canada has a website titled "Canadian Centre for Cyber Security - Security considerations for QR codes" that deals directly with the fraudulent use of QR codes. The following information takes some of the highlights from that website to help you identify and understand the risks of using QR codes.

A Quick Response (QR) code is a small white square with two-dimensional black markings, similar in look to a barcode. QR codes contain information that can be read by your device through a camera lens.

Once scanned, decoded text of the QR code can trigger actions such as:

- Opening a website
- Downloading an app
- Joining a Wi-Fi network
- Verifying information
- Creating a contact
- Sending an email message
- Dialing a phone number

QR codes can contain personal information. They can execute an action that prompts you to enter personal information. Once this information has been entered, scanning the QR code will display the stored information on your device.

By scanning a QR code you could be susceptible to the following risks:

- Tracking your online activity by websites using cookies, meaning your data can be collected and used for marketing purposes.
- Exposing financial data, such as your credit card number, if you used it to purchase goods or services on the website.
- The actions the QR code performs can also pose risks, such as allowing threat actors to infect devices with malware, steal personal information, or conduct phishing scams.

How QR codes can attack you:

- Cloning: Threat actors clone an authentic QR code that redirects you to a malicious site or infects your device with malware to extract your personal data when you scan it.
- Leveraging: Malicious QR codes can direct users to legitimate-looking websites designed to steal credentials or credit card data.
- Quishing: Threat actors can use a QR code inside a phishing email, or to direct the user to a phishing website which prompts the user to disclose personal information.
- Scanning apps: Threat actors can use third party scanner apps to spread malware and gain access to some privacy settings on your mobile device, such as viewing your network connections or modifying the contents of your USB storage.

Here are some things to avoid if you are using QR codes:

- Authorizing your device to automatically execute the QR code action.

- Scanning a QR code posted in a public setting, such as in a public transit station or advertisements on the street.
- Scanning a QR code printed on a label that could be covering another QR code (i.e. a Kelowna parking meter).
- Scanning QR codes received in emails or text messages unless you know they are legitimate.
- Using QR scanner apps from unknown companies or institutions.
- Putting convenience before security. Type in a website URL to view content, such as an online restaurant menu, instead of scanning a QR code.

Some people, including myself, have eschewed the use of QR codes altogether believing the risks outweigh any convenience.

Dave Schroeder
HCRCWA Board Member

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Proclaiming Christ in the Heartland!



Hello wonderful community members,
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

Thursday May 7, Friday May 8 and Saturday May 9- Community Garage Sale

This event is one of our biggest fundraisers of the year and it takes many helpers in order to be successful. Volunteers on Thursday evening will be helping set up the tables in the hall. Volunteers on Friday will be helping community members unload donations from their cars and sorting them in the hall. Volunteers on Saturday will be helping with the sale and cleanup. Please email garage sale chairperson, Arlene, at aljelfs@googlemail.com if you are able to help.

Saturday May 30- Rink Board Removal

Thanks to a generous grant from the Daryl K Seaman Hockey Fund at the Calgary Foundation, our beloved community rink is getting new boards! This will be an exciting, and much needed, functional and safety upgrade for year round rink use. But before that can happen, the old boards need to come down and we are looking for volunteers to help with that. Some notes:

- Please bring a drill with batteries/chargers (proper bits provided)

- Volunteers must be at least 15 years of age
- Lunch will be provided for volunteers (12-1pm)
- Shift 1 (9am-12:30pm), Shift 2 (12:30pm-4pm)
- The old arena boards will be for sale on a first come, first served basis. Please contact priddishockey@gmail.com to express your interest

Ready to help with this exciting community project? Sign up here: www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0C4AABA72BA1FC1-63459662-rink

Saturday July 4 and Sunday July 5- Stampede Breakfast

Please save the date. Volunteer schedule and sign up to be released next month. We will need help with prep and setup on Saturday and with execution and clean up of the event on Sunday.

Thank you for considering giving back to your community through volunteering.

PROGRAMS:

Community Yoga

Community Yoga will be continuing for May and June. Classes take place from 7:30-8:30pm on Mondays and Thursdays at the Priddis Hall. Whether you are experienced with yoga or brand new, we invite you to come try the class. It is a wonderful mix of flow and restorative in a welcoming atmosphere. Email

lorichinnery@heartomwellness.com for more information or to register.

Indoor Pickleball

Thank you to everyone who came out and enjoyed this program over the winter. Our indoor pickleball court is now closed and we are excited to be able to start playing on our beautiful outdoor courts soon. A friendly reminder that users of the outdoor pickleball courts must have a PCA membership and the courts are available on a first come, first served basis. The nets must be taken up and put away by players after each use. Please keep glass, pets, skateboards, bikes and scooters off the courts.

Youth Ball Hockey

We are looking to gauge interest in a youth drop in ball hockey program this summer. This would be a grassroots, sticks in the middle, once a week opportunity for community members. We are also looking for some local teenagers who would be interested in helping to manage the program. Please send expressions of interest to jillianaguitar@gmail.com

Martial Arts

The new community martial arts program will be continuing in May. There are classes for all ages offered either once or twice a week (Mondays and Wednesdays) at the Priddis Community Hall. Please email yus84635@gmail.com for more information or to register.

*The Priddis Community Association
Board of Directors*



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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. Our next meeting is May 12, 2026 at 7 pm. Our flower fundraiser opens soon for purchases online.

Check the Millarville Horticultural website for details. Locally grown plants and baskets are offered with a percentage being donated to the club. Flower fundraiser pick up will be Tuesday May 12 between 3 and 6 pm at the Millarville racetrack grandstand. Last year the baskets and plants were spectacular!

Thursday June 4, 2026, 7pm will be our famous plant sale at the Millarville Racetrack quonset. Members dig up and donate locally grown plant material. Hardy perennials, annuals, shrubs, trees all available for purchase. Come early as the sale is over in half an hour.

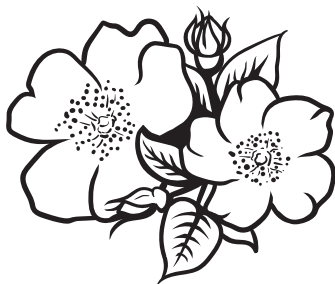
There will be door prizes drawn at 6:50 pm.

New members always welcome at our upcoming meetings:

May 12, 2026 | June 4, 2026 Our plant sale at the Millarville Racetrack 7 pm sharp !

If you are interested in attending any of our presentations, please contact Louise Patterson Bruns (our new President) at louispattersonbruns@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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Annual Plant Sale

Thursday June 4th, 2026

In the Quonset at the Millarville Racetrack 7:00 pm to 7:45 pm

Very reasonable prices: all plant material is from our local Horticultural members.

Perennials,
annuals,
vegetables,
house plants, trees,
fruit shrubs,
surprises galore...



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Plant Donations: Please drop off on Thursday, June 4th from 3-6pm. Thank you in advance!

Contact Glenda Bruder at 403-620-5509 for more info

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MILLARVILLE COMMUNITY LIBRARY

We'll be showcasing artists Sarah Moran and Peter Sartorello starting April 15th. Please come in and see their works!

The annual Wine and Cheese for book club members in the Millarville area takes place on May 7 at 7:00PM at the Millarville Community Library. Our guest of honor will be Erin from Spisherbocker books in Diamond Valley. Book clubs will be notified as usual. If you are a book club that hasn't been notified please email Karen at amclibrary@marigold.ab.ca

Mother's Day Teacup Craft will be Wed May 6 at 6:30PM. Paul R will supply flowers and floral foam. Cost is \$30.00. Min of 10 needed. Drop in or call 403-931-3919 to registrar if you're 12 years old and up.

This review is not for a single book, but a series, *Things Our Fathers Saw* by Matthew Rozell. This series is a must for any WWII enthusiast; all the stories are from interviews with those who lived them during the war. Rozell, a Social Studies teacher and enthusiast, had his students assist with the interviews to collect information from the veterans. The concept alone makes the series worth reading.

The stories are not explicit or graphic, but true to heart what the individual was experiencing at that point during the war, not knowing if they were ever coming home. They cover all theaters of WWII: from the day of enlistment, through training, then war, and then home. Sadly, with the end of each chapter is a statement of the date the interviewee passed away. This pulls you deeper into understanding the need for a series like this, the Vets from the greatest generation will all soon be gone. Who will tell their stories? There is a quote in the book, "Dying for freedom isn't the worst that could happen. Being forgotten is." We cannot ever let them be forgotten.

Review by: Nicholas Yurko
Staff Sergeant, US Army - Retired



SQUARE BUTTE COMMUNITY

Here's what's happening at Square Butte Hall:

May 6 – June 24th Fusionary Mind Body Spirit. Join for 8 weeks of Hatha Yoga led by Tanya Evans. Wednesday's from 6:30-7:30pm Members \$80 for 8 weeks or \$12.50 drop in. Non-Members \$100 for 8 weeks or \$15 drop in Sign up at fusionarybodyworks@gmail.com

May 9th – Good Old-Fashioned Square Dance Doors open at 7pm. Spin, Swing & Stomp... come learn to Square Dance! No experience needed... No partner required! Dress up retro and join us for some good old-fashioned fun! Age 10 – 100. Cash Bar. \$25 for Members. \$30 for Non-Members. \$5 for 14 & under. Tickets available on the website or at the Millarville General Store

May 21-22 - Casino Fundraiser
WE NEED MORE HELP!

This fundraiser keeps our hall running for the next 3 years. To say it's important is a huge understatement and we still have volunteer positions that need to be filled. Our Association receives between \$40-60K for this 2-day event. Previous casino experience is not required, a food allowance is provided, and the best part is you get to hang out with a great group of people! Visit our website to see the remaining positions that need to be filled.

The casino fundraising event takes place at Ace Casino Calgary on Blackfoot Trail. Daytime & Evening shifts available. The volunteer schedule is posted on our website. Got questions? Please reach out!

June 14 - FireSmart

Thanks to Councillor Laura Kendall, we received a grant to host another FireSmart event. Stay tuned for details!

www.squarebuttehall.com
info@squarebuttehall.com
Facebook @squarebuttehall



RED DEER LAKE UNITED CHURCH

Join us at 10:30am every Sunday – **onsite or online** (YouTube - [@RedDeerLakeUnitedChurch](https://www.youtube.com/@RedDeerLakeUnitedChurch)) as we explore faith, hope, and connection together.

We're an inclusive and affirming community of faith made up of people of all ages, backgrounds, and perspectives. Located just minutes from most South Calgary communities, and only 20 minutes from the Northwest via Stoney Trail - we're closer than you think!

Special Events

- May 2, 7:30 pm – OTE Concert Series presents – Steve Pineo's Tribute to Elvis
- May 6, 10:00 am – Coffee with the Minister
- May 7, 7:00 pm - Sound & Soul – Pentecost "Spirit" Music
- May 20, 10:00 am – Coffee with the Minister
- May 23, 9:00 am - Men's Breakfast

*Please note that on May 24 there will be no Sunday Service held at Red Deer Lake, instead, join us for our Pentecost service at McDougall United Church.

ON THE EDGE CONCERT SERIES

Experience an unforgettable season of live music at Red Deer Lake United Church! Enjoy a lineup of talented performers spanning a variety of genres, and share in an evening of music, community, and connection. Learn more and see upcoming concerts at reddeerlakeuc.com/concerts

SUMMER STAGE SUMMER CAMP

We're excited to announce the return of our two week, youth musical theatre summer camp, featuring this years' production of James and the Giant Peach Jr. This fun, imaginative, and creative camp experience, runs July 13-17 and July 20-24 at the McDougall site. It's a camp like no other and new this year, we're adding puppetry and mask making workshops! Cost for the two week camp is \$350. To register or for more information visit us at www.mcdunited.com/theatre

WEDDINGS & EVENTS CENTRE

Meadow Green Wedding and Events Centre, is a stunning 45,000 sq. ft. event space at Red Deer Lake United Church—perfect for weddings, workshops, performances, art shows, and more. Visit us at www.meadowgreenevents.ca or contact the office (403) 256-3181 to book your tour today!

Stay connected and explore all upcoming events and sign up for our weekly newsletter at www.reddeerlakeuc.com

*Red Deer Lake United Church is in a shared Ministry with McDougall and Ogden United Churches.



Greetings! Sharing my News Update...

Foothills County Road Bans: Road bans are restrictions placed on roads which limit vehicle weights to protect the structural integrity of the County's road system during certain seasonal conditions when roads are subject to damage from vehicles with heavy loads. Road bans are most often seasonal, but some roads could be restricted ongoing due to specific circumstances or conditions. As of March 12, 2026, spring weight restrictions for road use are in place. Road ban signs are installed along County roads – see example photo with this article. You will see an indication of a percentage, which tells you the weight restriction that applies to the specific road. The percentage of weight restriction varies by each road, which is determined by the state of the road.

Road Use Agreements and Enforcement:

While most trucking companies know about road bans, some may not. Please advise service providers attending your property. Further, the County requires road use agreements for multiple loads and extra use of the roads during construction and during commercial hauls. Please be sure that the proper agreements are in place to compensate for any damages. Keeping the roads in good repair is of great importance to our residents, and is considerate of taxpayers' contributions. Concerned neighbours can advise the County departments about destructive road use situations. Road bans and excessive road use situations are enforced by multiple policing agencies. If you have any questions about agreements,

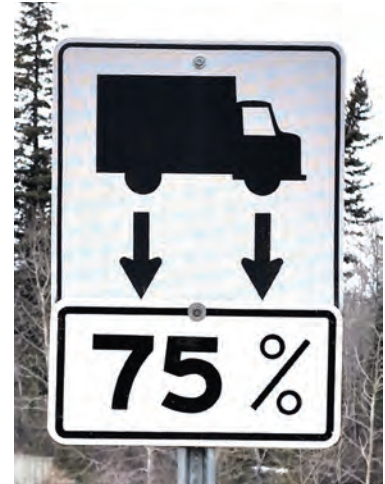
road bans, commercial vehicle overweight reporting, please contact our Public Works Department www.foothillscountyab.ca/contact/public-works-department. Phone: 403.603.2390. All road ban details, including dates, percentages, maps, and Roadata permits contact info, can be found on the Foothills website: www.foothillscountyab.ca/alerts/2026-road-bans

A Message from Foothills Enforcement:

Traffic fines across Alberta increased on March 13, 2026. For offences such as speeding, the penalties increased by 30%, including: 30 km/h over the speed limit - up to \$324; 40 km/h over - up to \$560; 50 km/h over - up to \$744 plus a mandatory court appearance where fines will be determined by the courts. Construction Zone speeding penalties increased to \$540 from previously \$499. Distracted driving: \$325 fine. No Licence: \$351 fine. No active Registration: \$527 fine. High-risk driving offences, such as careless driving, excessive speed, stunting and racing increased by 50%.

Speed Limits: 80 km/hr is the speed limit on roadways in rural areas, unless otherwise posted by the rural municipality (Foothills County, in our case). Foothills County Hamlet speed limits are posted at lower amounts. 100 km/hr is the speed limit on provincial highways, unless otherwise posted by Alberta Transportation.

Want more Police Presence? According to Foothills County resident input, requests for more police presence is a top priority. At a number of recent events in Foothills County with police service providers and County reps, residents have expressed concerns. Policing agencies explain that residents' calls for service get them out to your location. We are all reminded that we must contact them to get a response. While we have raised awareness at meetings, additional resident calls will get onto a record so that resources can be planned and the locations of concern can



be attended. You can report concerns by phone or by email. As always, call 9-1-1 for emergencies as they are happening. After-the-fact, can share by calling in concerns through the 24/7 RCMP complaints line: 403.933.4262. Foothills Enforcement complaint line: 403.603.6300.

Foothills Enforcement email: enforcement@foothillscountyAB.ca

Electronic Speed Signs Reminder:

Foothills Enforcement Services arranges for the Foothills County electronic-message speed signs to rotate through our communities, especially in areas where we receive the most complaints. In summer, of course, we're all outdoors hoping to enjoy our surroundings and there's lots of competition for use of our roads. Just a friendly reminder, to us all, to follow the speed limit and drive safely. Let us know of areas that could benefit by displaying our electronic speed sign.

For Other News & Updates:

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

Email: suzanne.oel@foothillscountyab.ca
Please visit High Country News online for my previous articles: highcountrynews.ca/?s=suzanne+oel

With Best Regards, Suzanne

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HELLO DIAMOND VALLEY

Hello, Diamond Valley! Well, it sure took a long time for Spring to come. Mother Nature teased us with warm sunshine followed by snow and wind. I watched the robins picking at the berries in my hedge while fluffing their feathers against the wind. Let's hope the old saying goes and May showers will bring us Spring flowers. I'm starting my indoor seedlings this week, which is always a pleasant chore.

DeWinton Community Association is hosting a Spill the Tea Fashion Show on May 9 from 2-5. Enjoy an afternoon of tea, desserts, raffle prizes from local shops, and a fashion show from Ginger Laurier and Classic Rodeo Boutique. Gather your friends and family and come dressed in your Spring finery along with your favourite hat. This event is in support of Rowan House and tickets are available at dwca@platinum.ca or 403-938-2525.

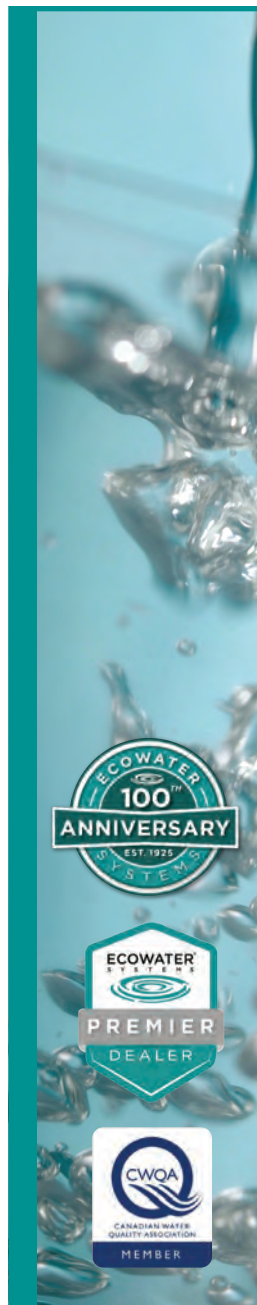
Millarville Race Track is having their annual Spring Market on May 10 from 9-2. They are expecting over 180 vendors including makers, growers, farmers, bakers, and artists. Admission is by a suggested \$3 donation which helps the Racetrack with operating costs. The regular Saturday Market opens June 21, and this will be their 43rd season. Check out their website for full details.

The annual Purina Walk for Guide Dogs will be held in our province, in Bowness Park in Calgary on May 30, and Pincher Creek on May 23. Dog Guides transform the impossible into the possible and your support will help more people to be able to experience the increased safety, mobility, and independence a Dog Guide provides. There are 5 types of Dog Guides, Vision, Hearing, Special Skills, Seizure Response, an Autism Assistance. To register, donate, and for full details please visit purinawalkfordogguides.com.

The Foothills Lions Club is selling tickets for their annual Duck Derby, which the draw will be held on June 6, Parade Day, at the Diamond Valley Festival and Market. You could win \$500 for each of 1st and 2nd ducks, or \$1000 for the last duck to swim to the finish. Tickets are \$10 and can be found at the Bob Lochhead Memorial Campground, or at events around town. Check Facebook at FoothillsLionsEvents.ca for details.

The annual Provincial Highway Cleanup is scheduled for May 2, weather permitting. Thousands of volunteers from various clubs and organizations will be cleaning up garbage along highways to raise funds for their groups. Please watch for them and slow down. The Cleanup runs from 7-5.

May to September is Lightning Season. You can find out how to protect yourself and your



home from lightning strikes and other natural emergencies by visiting getprepared.gc.ca. The Sheep River Library is offering some workshops for emergency preparedness and personal safety this month. May 4 at 7pm is Wildfires and Fire Smart. May 6 at 7pm is Flooding and Floodplain Awareness, followed by Communications and Evacuations on May 9 at 1pm. Please check the Library's website for full details.

The Dewdney Players along with the Alberta Foundation for the Arts present Steel Magnolias, a play by Robert Harling. The play runs from May 8-23 at the Old Church Theatre in Okotoks. It sounds like a fun evening or matinee, something different to do in our Foothills. For tickets and information, go to DewdneyPlayers.com.

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Last month I wrote about the Turner Valley Sustainable Living Centre, it's actually called the Diamond Valley Sustainable Living Centre. They offer free monthly drop-in maker nights from 7-9. They host Mending Mondays, bring your sewing project, Tech Tuesdays, try out their equipment such as their 3D printer, and Tinker Thursdays, in which you can work on your woodshop or DIY project. Drop by on almost any Tuesday for a tour and to find out what the Centre has to offer, at 218 Kennedy Drive SE in Turner Valley. or go to DVSLC.ca.

If you have any news or event for the month of June, please drop me a line at elaine.w@telus.net before May 15.

Happy Mother's Day May10,

Elaine Wansleben



SHEEP RIVER LIBRARY

Emergency Preparedness and Personal Safety talks return in May. We have six sessions planned with spots still open. The first three are facilitated by the Town of Diamond Valley Emergency Management, starting with Wildfires and FireSmart (Monday, May 4, 7:00 pm). This session will look at how wildfires behave and outline what practical FireSmart steps you can take to protect your home and property. A new addition to the line-up this year is Flooding and Floodplain Awareness (Wednesday, May 6, 7:00 pm). This talk will look at the flood risk profile and the factors that influence seasonal water levels in our region. Find out how to recognize changing conditions outdoors and what steps to take if water levels rise unexpectedly. Another new session is Communications and Evacuations (Saturday, May 9, 1:00 pm). Come and learn how an evacuation unfolds and how emergency information is communicated to help reduce stress and confusion when it matters most. Other sessions in the series include: We can do it! Adult Children with Aging Parents (Saturday, May 23, 2:00

pm). Learn about eldercare planning from Lorrie Morales. This session is Intended for either the aging parent or their adult children, or both together. If you have ever wondered what conversations you should be having with the other generation before eldercare is urgently needed, then this workshop can help! Registration is strongly recommended as this class requires a minimum number of registrations to run.

The series finishes up with two events on Saturday, May 30. Standing Strong Together: How Insurance Helps Our Community Weather Life's Storms (Saturday, May 30 10:30 am). Facilitated by insurance experts from Western Financial who will share how insurance can be a safety net when nature throws us a curveball and how to keep our small rural communities resilient.

Our local RCMP detachment will present Online Safety and Fraud (May 30, 1-2:30 pm). Learn about the current online environment and possible dangers and how to avoid them.

Once you have become safe and secure in the month of May, you may want to venture out and explore. Our bikes are out of storage, have been tuned up by our bike mechanic and are ready to hit the road again. Bikes can be checked out on your

library card, you just have to complete a waiver that will cover you for the 2026 season. Waivers are available online or at the desk. Helmets and locks are provided if needed.

Mark June 6 on your calendar for our annual used book sale. As part of the festivities on Discovery Day we will be set up in front of the library. All sales are by donation. The sale runs from 11:00-4:00. Please bring your own bag to cart away your purchases. Doris is busy over the next month sorting all the donated items into categories so they will be easy to locate on sale day. If you wish to donate to the sale we accept books in good condition only! No encyclopedias, manuals, cookbooks, Reader's Digest condensed books or damaged items. Bring your used books or DVDs to the front desk before May 20.

The library will be closed Monday, May 18 for Victoria Day.



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COUNCILLOR UPDATE FOOTHILLS COUNTY By Laura Kendall - Division 3

Square Butte Community Hall

When was the last time you had the chance to square dance? Well the time is near at Square Butte Hall on Saturday, May 9th, 2026. Dust off your dancing shoes!

Our Casino fundraising dates are May 21 and 22nd. We are still looking for volunteers for these very important dates to fill up our positions at the casino. Please visit our website to save your spot.

Come meet Ember the Fox at our upcoming FireSmart Event! We have waited a whole year for him to show up and can't wait to meet him! We will have local firefighters, trucks and speakers on hand for a fun morning of fire smarting ideas, topics and educational materials. Sunday June 14th, 2026 at 10:00 AM. Lunch provided. www.squarebuttehall.com

Leighton Art Center

The Leighton Art Center is hosting their 39th Clothesline Art Market from June 6th at 10 AM to June 7th till 4 PM.

Sunset Hours are also starting at The Center starting April 24th: 10 AM till 9 PM. Come enjoy these extended hours in the beautiful heartland of Foothills County.

Jane's Walk / Nature, Art & Community Connection is May 3rd from 2:15 till 3:30 PM.

Nest Box Monitoring will be held May 23rd from 1 to 3 PM.

leightoncentre.org

Black Diamond Hotel

A Tribute to the Beatles: The Mop Top Tour is coming to the Black Diamond Hotel on Saturday, May 2nd, 2026. Tickets are \$35.00 and are available at the hotel, Sobey's in Okotoks and etransfer.

The Northwest Recreation Board is currently fundraising for a Multi Sports Field and Park Amenities at the Seaman Sports Park close to the Millarville Race Track. There are brochures at the

Millarville school, store, library, gas station and Miss Marples. You can also contact NWREC@FoothillsCountyAB.ca to donate.

We had a sandwich board sign at the Millarville Skijoring event at the Millarville Race Track and it went missing sometime after that event. If anyone knows of its whereabouts please contact Foothills County.

Laura Kendall - Division 3 Foothills County
laura.kendall@foothillscountyab.ca

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130th Anniversary

May 6th 1896 to May 6th 2026

On May 6th, 1896, the first rector of Christ Church, the Reverend R. Murray Webb-Pepelow, conducted the first service at the newly erected Anglican Church in Millarville, NWT. (It would be another 9 years before the province of Alberta was established.) He had come from England 2 years previously in search of an outdoor life, and he found it in the beautiful foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

The Reverend had recognized the need for an Anglican Church in the Millarville area, so he took on the responsibility of constructing the unique church that still stands today. It was built of spruce logs placed in an upright position. There was concern that the structure would not withstand the strong winds, so the contractor, Mr. Charles Shack, agreed not to receive payment until the building had been standing for 3 months. 130 years later it still stands, and its bell, a gift from

the Hudson's Bay Company, after it was unearthed during the construction of their building in downtown Calgary, still rings each Sunday morning to summon worshippers to service.

In 1926, the parishioners were alarmed to see that the unpeeled logs were being destroyed by wood-boring insects. The remedy: peel the logs and preserve them with applications of solignum. Today, the work of the insects is still visible in the form of exquisite tracings covering the logs surface.

The pulpits and the communion table are made of small spruce logs. Hand woven kneeling mats in front of the altar rail came from England, a gift of the family of Charles Douglas one of the members who assisted in the building of the church. The Bishop's chair in the chancel was a gift in memory of old time Millarville residents, Joseph and Elizabeth Deanne-Freeman, from their sons and daughters. The stain glass east window behind the altar is a copy of Holman Hunt's "In the Light of the World". It was donated in memory of William de Vere Hunt, a trooper in the Lord Strathcona's Horse, who lost his life in Pretoria on November 14, 1900.

On Saturday, September 26, 1920, a portion of the churchyard was consecrated as a burial ground by the Right Reverend Cyprion Pinkham. At this time a war memorial was unveiled by Brig. G.H. Bell, C.M.G., D.S.O. Engraved on a plaque were the names of those from the Millarville district who lost their lives in World War One. In the summer of 1998, the column was replaced with a large natural stone from the area to which the original plaque was attached.

On Sunday, May 10th, a service of commemoration and celebration will be held at Christ Church, led by our current rector, the Venerable Alan Getty. The service will reach back to the past and echo the voices of the original parishioners both in song and prayer by using the 1662 Book of Common Prayer which is still the official prayer book of the Church of England and would have been the book used on that wonderful day in 1896 when the first members of Christ Church, Millarville worshipped in their unique church.

Everyone is most welcome to join us at the little log church on the hill at 10:30 on Sunday, May 10th to celebrate the 130th anniversary of Christ Church. A reception will follow at the Church House.





DUANE HARDER

What Is a Democracy?

Several years ago I was doing a leadership seminar in Ottawa. During one of the sessions I made a comment that democracy was the superior form of government. After the session a gentleman from the Philippines approached me and asked if I would be willing to consider an alternate view on democracy. I said I was listening and he proceeded to expound the virtues of a benevolent dictatorship. His primary argument was that democracy presupposes that the group of people or nation has a common set of values that are agreed upon by all.

I am not interested in writing an article on the pros and cons of democracy. I am concerned about how we practice democracy. In Canada we have four main political parties that represent diverse ideological positions. I choose to support the party that most closely aligns to my set of life values. In a similar way, I support the candidate that aligns with that party's "platform." If the candidate of my choice

gets elected, I expect them to walk out what their mouth has professed.

What happens after the election if they change their position and align with a different party? That is where our democratic process breaks down. We allow the personal preferences of the elected representative to be imposed upon those who elected them.

A political party does not define a politician, but it does impact a candidate's decision making and is often a deciding factor for voters. Turning against the platform that got them elected shouldn't be up to the politician's discretion. Instead, politicians should have to win a special election to keep their seat after changing party affiliation. Doing so would better represent voters' interests and keep them involved in the political process.

Party switching must be done with voters in mind, not on personal whims or to gain more power. Without viable means to reassess a politician's new political affiliation, voters are left out of the conversation. With trust so scarce in contemporary politics, anything that can reassure confidence should be implemented. Inconsiderate politicians need to prioritize their constituents — and

if they won't, the rules must change to hold them accountable.

Allowing politicians to switch party affiliation based on their own personal preference is a slap in the face of democracy. We the people, cast our vote to put them in place based upon the values that were espoused during the election campaign. If those values change, we, by democratic vote, should have a voice in determining that candidate's re-election. Without that vote, the candidate is saying that he has the right to impose his values upon the constituents. **THAT IS NOT DEMOCRACY!**

Allowing candidates to shift without a constituent vote, demoralizes voters and increases skepticism toward our electoral system. Voter skepticism is reflected in low voter turnout.

We define democracy as "government by the people for the people." It would be cumbersome and impractical for every Canadian citizen to vote on every issue brought up in the house of commons. Hence, our democracy is expressed by electing representatives who will carry our voice into the House of Commons. If the candidate changes their "voice," they no longer represent those who put them in place.



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The recall process in our system is cumbersome and inefficient. There needs to be legislation that prohibits “crossing the floor.” Any political representative who changes their political stripes mid-term needs to have the courage and the character to step down and let the people determine their future.

We need politicians who have courage, integrity and character. Courage will enable them to stand on the ground of truth without being shaped by popular opinion. Integrity asks the question, “Is it right?” not, “Does it work?” Character is a moral compass that is consistent regardless of my environment.

It is my hope that our leaders will manifest a clear sense of morality in their governance that is shaped by transcendent values, integrity that is consistent in any context, and courage that can live with the consequences of truth.

Duane Harder



Over fifty skiers gathered for a two-day event at Nakiska in February for the Alberta 55 Plus Provincial Alpine Skiing championship.

Local competitors in recreational Men's 75+, Harold Jones from Foothills won Gold, Airdrie's Angelo Dalcin Silver and Clint Docken from Bragg Creek came in fourth. In Men's 70+ Reg MacDonald from Cochrane won Bronze; in Women's 65+ Susan Chomistek from Airdrie came in fourth and in Women's 55+ Cochrane's Lynda Cooke captured the Silver medal. In the 70+ Masters category, from Cochrane, Bill Sule won Gold and Pat McCarron Silver, Gerhard Gruenwald from Rockyview got Bronze, and Airdrie's Joe Chomistek came in fifth. In Master's 65+ Richard Kasper – Canmore captured the Gold medal.

From March 26-29 we welcomed curlers from Grande Prairie to Lethbridge to the Okotoks Curling Club for the Provincial

Championships. Our Zone 2 did very well and local results are as follows:

55+ Women - Silver –Springbank - Michelle Ewanchuk, Janet Biagioni, Laurie Coopersmith, Marg Matthews. Bronze –Springbank- Bev Buckley, Marla Forth, Adele Williamson, Cheryl Fricker. 6th Place – Diamond Valley – Cindy Kuhl, Lynn Heriot, Lia Mason, Lisa Busse.

55+ Men - Gold – High River – Dean Schielke, Kevin Muir, Tim Paziuk, Shannen Saint-Cyr. Silver – Okotoks – Dave Anderson, Bruce Dalsto, Randy Coates, Doug Short. Bronze – Cochrane – Wayne MacDonald, Ken Weisner, Dan Ferguson, Rob Zampa. 4th Place – Cochrane – Phil Smith, Rod Rutherford, Dave Hands, Brad Blackman.

55+ Mixed -Silver – Diamond Valley – Russell Siebert, Tammy Conacher, Rod Renaud, Kathy Mahlow.

65+ Women -Silver –Cochrane – Alicia Brooks, Heather Craig, Lynda Ward, Kathi Dawson.

65+ Mixed - Gold – Canmore – Richard Davis, Norma Columbus, Vic Lemecha, Deanna Thompson. Bronze – Diamond Valley – George Hilderman, Theresa Crocker, Jim Nicolson, Barb Larson.

70+ Men - Gold – Cochrane – Doug Campbell, Bill Icton, Bob Bleaney, Dennis Fundytus.

There is a 5-Pin Bowling qualifier in Cochrane on April 27th with provincials to follow in Medicine Hat May 21-22. This year we are planning to have Fun Games around the zone in Cycling, Floor Shuffleboard, Golf, and combining a few activities at special events with other groups such as senior centres and other community venues. For further information on Alberta 55plus go to alberta55plus.ca.



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CHAINSAW SAFETY

The sounds of spring not only include those of raindrops on the roof and song birds in the air, but those of lawnmowers, blowers and chainsaws.

Homeowners have a love affair with their power equipment and spring ushers in a multitude of opportunities to put them to work. Unfortunately, safe operation of this equipment is often overlooked or misunderstood.

Chainsaws are one of the most dangerous tools that a homeowner can operate. When contemplating the use of a chainsaw, users should consider not only the operation of the saw as a potential danger but the consequences of what they are cutting.

If one considers that one tree worker dies every 2.45 working days in North America, it should be evident that cutting trees can be hazardous to one's health. As the process of felling trees is far too complex for an article of this type, we will concentrate on some basic chainsaw safety.

The first and most important aspect of safe chainsaw operation is to be wearing proper Personal Protective Apparel or PPA. The minimum standard includes: Helmet, Hearing protection, Safety glasses, Chaps/ chainsaw pants, Steel/Composite toed full leather boots, and gloves.

The chain on a chainsaw can move at a speed of over 9000 feet per minute. In an instant, a chain can impart considerable damage to human flesh. Further, studies show that injuries to the leg and knee during chainsaw operations account for a third of injuries. In order to mitigate this type of injury, chainsaw pants have been

designed with a special fibre that when contacted can stop a chain from moving in under one second. This has considerable value when you consider the fact that of the 35,000 admissions to hospital for chainsaw injuries in the U.S. in any given year, the average number of stitches administered is 110.

There are a number of reactive forces that occur as the cutters on a chain chisel and cross cut wood fibres. The most significant of these reactive forces is kickback. Kickback can have lethal or life changing consequences and should be well understood before operating a saw. It occurs when the upper tip of a chainsaw bar contacts any type of material including wood.

When the cutters of a chain rotate around the bar tip, the guides that control the depth of cut momentarily lose their functionality, and can result in a violent upwards rotational force towards the operator. For this reason, the upper front tip of a bar should never be the first part of the saw introduced into material to be cut. If it should happen inadvertently, there is no way to respond to it quickly enough and a helmet and/or chain brake are often the only saving graces.

Over the years, engineers have incorporated at least four safety features into modern chainsaws. They include: 1) an inertial chain brake 2) a throttle interlock 3) a chain catcher pin and 4) a wrist protector

The inertial chain brake is a feature whereby the chain brake will engage should a rapid kick back event occur. The chain brake should be engaged at all times when the operator is not cutting. This is especially significant when an operator is moving or starting a saw. If taking more than one step while the saw is idling, I will

always engage the chain brake. In the event of a fall or trip it would be impossible to have the chain move even if the throttle was accidentally activated because the brake is on.

The throttle interlock is intended to prevent operation of the saw without the operator's hand in the proper position.

The chain catcher pin is a safety feature that is meant to catch or slow a chain dislodged from the bar.

The wrist protector is a widened area of plastic below the handle of a saw that in conjunction with the chain catcher pin prevents a thrown chain from rotating up into the operators hand.

Lastly, a comment on the starting of a saw. All too often I see operator's performing a drop start, which is neither a safe or acceptable chainsaw starting method.

The two safe and standard starting methods are the ground and leg-lock start. My preference is the leg-lock start which provides three points of contact with the saw and a stable body position. The chain brake should be on, the left hand on the top bar, the chainsaw rear handle cradled between the legs, and the starter cord pulled straight and in such a way that it doesn't rub against any of the housing. These techniques can be viewed at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=THV_xfFe0i8

This short article is meant to be an introduction to chainsaw safety and is not a substitute for formal training. Chainsaw operators should be very familiar with their chainsaw's operating manual and understand not only the limitations of their equipment but their own abilities as well.

Jeff Hughes is a Certified Chainsaw Trainer and Owner of TreeWorx Tree Care Inc.

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Return of the Fresh

Spring has a way of resetting your palate without asking. The food becomes greener, brighter, more delicate, and the wines you were drinking a few weeks ago start to feel out of place. The winter blues begin to lift, and with it comes that familiar pull to be out again, on a patio, a glass in hand, with friends, somewhere between a plan and no plan at all. My favourite part is getting to pair wines with the new spring produce and when you get it right, the wine does not compete, it sharpens everything on the table

The OG for spring veg, asparagus. The one vegetable people love to avoid when it comes to wine. It carries a slightly bitter, almost herbal edge that can throw things off. Instead of fighting it, lean into it! Sauvignon Blanc is the easy answer, but not all styles feel the same. Look for something with freshness and lift, like a Sancerre or a cooler climate expression from New Zealand. If that is already your go to, mix it up with Grüner Veltliner instead. It has a subtle peppery note that meets asparagus right where it is and feels just a touch more interesting.

Peas, fresh herbs, and anything green and delicate follow a similar rhythm. Think dishes with mint, basil, or a squeeze of lemon. This is where you want wines that feel alive. German or Alsatian Dry Riesling bring acidity without overwhelming the plate. If you usually reach for Pinot Grigio in these moments, this is your upgrade. It gives you the same freshness, but with more personality.

When you move into softer textures like burrata and goat cheese, you can take a slight step up in weight. A lightly oaked Chardonnay works here but keep it restrained. You want something that supports the creaminess without turning the whole pairing heavy. If you like rich, buttery styles, try pulling back slightly toward Chablis or a cooler climate Chardonnay. You still get that texture, just with more balance.

Saint Spring Cleaning	
If you usually pick this...	Next time, try this...
Pinot Grigio	Dry Riesling
Sauvignon Blanc	Grüner Veltliner
Provence Rosé	Tavel Rosé
Oaky Chardonnay	Chablis
Southern Rhone Red	Frappato
California Pinot Noir	Beaujolais
Prosecco	Franciacorta

*Muratori Franciacorta Brut
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My ultimate favourite in spring produce? Strawberries. A dry rosé is the easiest answer, but choose one with structure, not just something pale and forgettable. If you tend to grab whatever rosé is closest, try something like Tavel Rosé from Rhone instead. It has more depth, a little more grip, and holds up to the fruit. Or, if you want something that feels a bit more playful, sparkling wine with strawberries is always the best idea.

For dishes that bring a bit more richness, like salmon, spring lamb, or anything grilled as the weather turns, you can introduce lighter reds. This is where chillable styles come into play.

Gamay from Beaujolais or a Frappato from Sicily offer just enough structure while staying fresh.

If you are someone who leans toward bigger reds, this is the moment to shift. You



still get that satisfying weight, just without overpowering everything else on the table.

Spring is not about perfect pairings. It is about paying attention. The wines that work best right now are the ones that feel awake. They carry acidity, a sense of place, and just enough character to keep things interesting without taking over the table.

Pour something that makes the food taste better, but also makes the moment last a little longer.

Cheers!

Stephanie Gilker is the founder of Saint Wine Society, curating polished wine tasting experiences and Champagne service across Alberta. She holds WSET Level 3, French Wine Scholar, and Master of Champagne certificates, bringing expertise, creativity, and elegance to every glass.

Photo Credit: Stephanie Gilker



Stephanie Gilker

saint wine society

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Why Stretching After Exercising Matters More Than You Think

If you've ever been tempted to sneak out right after the last round of burpees, this one's for you. As much as we love the intensity, sweat, and calorie burn of a great workout, what you do after your workout plays a huge role in how your body recovers, performs, and progresses. Stretching isn't just a "nice to have", it's a critical part of the process. Let's break down why it matters.

1. It Helps Your Muscles Recover Faster

During a workout, your muscles are contracting over and over again. This leaves them tight, shortened, and fatigued. Stretching helps to:

- Restore normal muscle length
- Improve blood flow (bringing oxygen and nutrients where they're needed most)
- Reduce next-day soreness

When you skip stretching, those tight muscles stay locked in that shortened state. Over time, this slows recovery and leads to lingering fatigue—something that can impact your next workout more than you think.

2. It Helps Prevent Injury

Tight muscles don't just feel uncomfortable; they can actually pull your body out of alignment. A few common examples:

- Tight hips can contribute to knee pain
- Tight chest muscles can lead to shoulder issues
- Tight hamstrings can increase strain on your lower back

In a workout where we're moving in multiple planes and using a variety of exercises, balanced muscle length is key. Stretching helps keep your body aligned and moving the way it's designed to.

3. It Improves Flexibility & Performance

Here's something many people overlook: tight muscles limit performance. When your muscles are constantly tight:

- Your range of motion decreases
- Movement quality suffers
- Strength output drops

For example, if your hips are tight, your squats become shallow. And when that happens, your glutes aren't firing the way they should, which means you're not getting the full benefit of the exercise.

Better flexibility = better movement = better results.

4. It Helps Your Body Shift Into Recovery Mode

Exercise fires up your system. Your adrenaline is high, your heart rate is elevated, and your body

is in "go mode" (your sympathetic nervous system).

Stretching helps bring things back down by activating your parasympathetic nervous system, your "recovery mode." This shift is huge for:

- Hormone balance
- Stress reduction
- Better sleep

And for many women, especially those navigating menopause, this recovery piece is absolutely essential.

What Happens If You Skip Stretching?

Short-term:

- Increased tightness and stiffness
- More soreness the next day
- Reduced mobility in your next workout

Long-term:

- Chronically tight muscles
- Compensation patterns (your body starts using the wrong muscles)
- Higher risk of injury
- Plateaus in your results

That last one? That's the big one most people miss.

The workout builds your body... but the stretch is what protects it and keeps you progressing. If you skip the stretch, you're basically locking tight muscles into your body, and that's when injuries start creeping in.

In my world, stretching isn't an afterthought—it's a strategy. It's a performance tool. It's a longevity tool. And honestly, it's what separates good programs from great ones. A lot of programs rush you out the door. But when you take the time to recover your body properly, you're setting yourself up for better results, fewer setbacks, and long-term success.

Keep It Simple: Your Post-Workout Stretch Plan

You don't need a full yoga session, just a few focused minutes goes a long way. Aim for:

- 4–6 minutes minimum
- Focus on: hips, hamstrings, chest, shoulders, and back
- Hold each stretch for 15–30 seconds

At the end of the day, stretching is one of the simplest things you can do to take care of your body, and one of the most powerful. So next time you finish a workout, don't rush off. Give your body those few extra minutes. It will thank you tomorrow, and in every workout after that.

Not sure where to start with stretching? I've got you covered. I've created a free, easy-to-follow stretching guide you can use after your workouts—just email me at getrippedjari@gmail.com and I'll send it your way.

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.

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Fuel economy tips

The KAT Automotive Team wanted to reach out to our community members with some tips on how you can get better fuel economy from your vehicle. With the Significant jump in Gas and Diesel prices at the pump there are many steps and actions that can be taken to help ensure your vehicle is using the least amount of fuel required to meet your needs. Here is a list of some things you can actually control to help keep your vehicle fuel costs as low as possible;

- Tire pressure, a tire running 10psi low can decrease the fuel economy by 4% all 4 tires low could be 16%. It is true an overinflated tire can improve fuel consumption however an overinflated tire will wear faster and thus offset any fuel savings in the shortened life of the tire
- Wheel alignment- improper wheel alignments can cause higher fuel consumption due to higher rolling resistance of the tires this also decreases the life of the tires
- Tuneup and Emission Service, vehicles may decrease fuel economy with dirty or worn components by up to 20% with no outward indication to the operator
- Brakes, improperly working brakes can drag and put a higher rolling resistance on the vehicle requiring a higher fuel usage, this also decreases the life of the brakes
- Weight in vehicle, extra weight installed in vehicles for traction in the winter adds to the decrease in fuel economy as the vehicle requires to work harder to get too and maintain speeds
- Engine Idle time, engines in the warmer weather do not require the idle time to meet operational temperature. Idling only warms the engine, don't forget when in a colder climate that transmissions & differentials need to have their fluids warmed up, to do this you start by driving at slower speeds initially which allows even warming of these components
- Air Conditioning, the draw of the air conditioning compressor on your engine is a better option in the summer than rolling windows down which results in poor aerodynamics of a vehicle at highway speeds resulting in less fuel used by your vehicle, however with city driving or slow slow speeds this will be less of a factor
- driving habits and driving speed are some of the biggest factors to fuel economy that can be controlled, slow acceleration and longer stopping distances can help increase your fuel economy. Did you know driving at a highway speed of 90km/h is the most fuel efficient, driving 110km/h from 90km/h typically increases fuel consumption by 10-15% and travelling at 120km/h increases fuel consumption by 20-30% from travelling at 90km/h

Ensuring all these factors are in order can save you some of the extra expense at the pump. If you are unsure of the condition of your vehicle its always best to have it inspected at a certified automotive repair facility. Between your driving habits and the vehicle operating conditions you can help decrease the impact of the high fuel prices that can't be controlled.

Be safe on the road while having the best impact you can have on these rising fuel prices.



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MORTGAGE MATTERS by Candace Perko

Purchase Plus Improvements (with Cash-Back, too)

Helping you update your new home by adding the renovation costs to a mortgage using a Purchase Plus Improvement Program. Buy a home with good bones and simply update it to your personal style!

How does it work?

- ✓ Clients can borrow the funds to update their home immediately after closing.
 - Uninsurable - \$40,000 or 20% of 'initial' value, whichever less.
 - Insured/Insurable: CMHC: Maximum 10% of the 'As-Improved Value & Sagen/Canada Guaranty: Total improvements as approved by the insurer. No progress draws.
- ✓ Qualify on the 'as improved' value of the home. (i.e. \$650,000 purchase price with \$60,000 of improvements, LTV and downpayment calculated at \$710,000).
- ✓ Appraisal required stating the 'as is' value of the property at time of purchase and 'as improved' value once improvements complete.
- ✓ Detailed list of improvements, along with all quotes are required up front for the work to be completed.

- ✓ Inspection report by a lender approved appraiser stating the work has been completed to allow funds to be released from the Solicitor.
- ✓ Lender advances the entire committed amount to the Solicitor on closing.
- ✓ Funds to begin the work come from the borrower(s) own resources and are reimbursed to the client once the work has been completed.
- ✓ Consider a *cash-back mortgage (details below) for up to 3% of the mortgage advanced at closing.

How long do you have to complete the work?

- ✓ Uninsurable – 180 days
- ✓ Insured/Insurable – 270 days.

What kinds of improvements can qualify?

- ✓ Cosmetic updates including; kitchen, bathroom, flooring, painting, lighting, windows, doors.
- ✓ Landscaping, patio/decks, driveway.
- ✓ Roofing, insulation.
- ✓ Detached garage.
- ✓ If improvements are structural, a copy of the building permit is required.
- ✓ Always consider the state of the property and improvements required, the improvements should increase property value.

What if you don't have upfront funds to do the work?

- ✓ Consider a *cash-back mortgage (details below) for Insured/Insurable purchases.

- ✓ Qualifying clients can receive between 1-3% cash back to pay for home improvements, clear debt or use for closing costs.

*Combine the Cash-back and Purchase Plus Improvement programs:

- ✓ The cash back is calculated on the total approved mortgage balance and is advanced on the initial closing.
- ✓ These funds can be used as a deposit for the contractor, or to increase the total budget for the improvements.
- ✓ Cash-back can not be used for initial down payment.

One of my favourite prime lenders also offers:

- ✓ We use an inspection report upon completion to show the work has been finalized and don't chase the client for receipts for ease of process. For improvements of \$15,000 or less, receipts/invoices and photos of the completed work may be acceptable.
- ✓ Appraisal rebate program for Insured and Insurable mortgages over \$200,000 to help facilitate the additional costs incurred (max. rebate is \$400.00 for a \$400,000+ mortgage).

Next Steps

When it's harder to qualify, you may be looking at a less expensive option that requires a bit of work. Speak with an experienced mortgage professional that can help you evaluate whether a Purchase Plus Improvement Mortgage, combined with a cash-back program or not, is the best option for your new purchase.

Candace Perko, Mortgage Broker

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HOW TO APPLY FOR PATENTS Part II

PATENT SEARCHES

Before proceeding with the patent application for any new invention, first you need to have a search conducted in the Patent Office to determine if your idea is in fact new or unique.

By conducting a patent search you will determine:

1. Is my product, in fact, new, novel or unique?
2. Has my product been previously patented?
3. Is my idea merely an improvement on an existing patented invention?
4. What possible changes or enhancements could I make to my product to make it more patentable?
5. Should I proceed with a patent application for my invention?
6. Alternatively, should I approach the owner of the patent to negotiate a

license agreement or possibly negotiate a purchase of the patent?

This type of initial patentability search is usually completed in approximately two weeks and involves a very exhaustive and thorough search in the relevant section of the US Patent Office which deals with the same type of invention that you have created.

When your initial patentability search has been completed, you will likely find that your idea is somewhat similar to other ideas which have been previously patented. This should not discourage you, since most patents which are approved and granted involve improvements on existing ideas and not inventions which are the first of their kind. The results of the patent search can enable you to see what has come before you and what types of ideas have been approved previously. This will enable you to make changes to your invention which will enhance the novelty or uniqueness of your invention and make it more likely to be granted patent protection.

You may also wish to approach the owner of a patent which is quite similar to yours and inquire about the possibility of a licensing agreement or buying the patent from that owner.

Acquiring a license from the owner involves discussions with the owner to enable you to lawfully use the idea which will usually require you to pay some form of compensation to the owner for using the patent (usually called a royalty). Royalties can be calculated based on a certain monetary value per unit sold or a percentage of the wholesale price of the unit.

Purchasing a patent involves purchasing the rights owned by the patent owner for the remaining term of the patent. A patent which has only two or three years left until it expires would have much less value than a patent which might have eighteen or nineteen years left until it expires. Purchasing a patent also involves stepping into the shoes of the patent owner (by purchasing the patent, you would take over the manufacturing or licensing agreements with other companies or individuals), in this case, you would be entitled to receive any royalties which were previously payable to the owner of the patent.

In the next issue we'll get into if you can conduct your own patent searches.

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ANDREA KIDD

A Pea-Souper

Dad said it was a 'pea-souper'.

I had gone to a friend's house after school and was now walking up the hill to my home, a scarf tied over my mouth. The fog was thick, a dirty yellow in the lamplight. I felt as if I were in a dream. My familiar surroundings were unfamiliar. I could hear the hushed swish as cars passed by, but see only its fuzzy outline.

Surely I was at Dr. Scott's house by now! I squinted into the murk. Was I lost? Impossible! My friend lived on my street, just several houses down the hill. But, this place I knew so well was transformed, surreal, and unrecognizable. With my fingertips, I brushed the hedges and traced the tops of walls that bordered the front gardens of each home. I wanted to be sure I was still on the sidewalk.

I told myself to keep believing I would see Dr. Scott's surgery and then, after a few houses more, I would find my bungalow with the two bay windows. I imagined my footsteps scrunching on the cinder path at

the side of the house, turning the handle on the back door and entering the cozy warmth of the kitchen. The lights would be lit, my mother would give me a hug and my father would be sitting in the armchair reading a book.

That was during the 1950's in the suburbs of London, England.

Now I live in the Foothills of the Rockies. This morning, the sun has just risen above the roof tops. Light streams over the village and tips the Rocky Mountains in pink-gold. Jagged peaks stand in sharp relief against an azure sky. I take deep breaths of clean, pure air. It is good to be in Alberta, Canada.

However, my mind is in a fog, like the pea-soupers of my childhood. I see the mountains clearly defined on the far horizon, but the inside of me is a fog of self-doubt and anguish. Something has come into my life and I no longer know which way to go. I have lost my direction. I need a hedge to brush or a wall to trace with my fingertips.

Long ago Peter and some of his friends felt the same way. They felt as if they were in a dream. Their familiar surroundings were unfamiliar. They doubted the things they had been so sure about when Jesus was with them. But he had been brutally killed. Now they had lost their direction in life.

Peter and his friends reached for something familiar and went fishing on Lake Galilee. They yearned to grasp at something secure. They fished all night and caught nothing. They were lost in a fog of despondency.

Peering into the mist of dawn, Peter noticed someone standing on the shore, calling to them. "It is the Lord!" he shouted, then jumped into the shallow water and joined Him. Peter's friends followed in their boat with a great catch of fish. They had breakfast together.

As the sun rose that morning, Peter's clouded mind cleared. His purpose in life was restored.

Today, as I walk in the clear, clean Alberta air, my footsteps scrunch on the gravel path, I run my hand along the chain-link fence and realize that Jesus is alive and with me now, listening to my confused thoughts.

I realize I am not alone in my mind-fog. I am walking through it and Jesus is walking through it with me.

Lord, you are "my shepherd"...you "restore my soul... Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...you are with me"...you "comfort me".

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Chapter 189

Recently I went on a bus trip with the Tercera Edad (Third Age aka Seniors) of Mojacar. It was entertaining to say the least. Here are some reflections from the back of the bus: Salt flats - Salina de San Frederico. Pink flamingos, white salt mountains, green lakes on the way to Medina Sidonia. Sun setting over the flats on our return, creating oceans of deep gold and brilliant bronze. Silhouetted birds perched atop a single leg.

On the road, amid rolling hills and an unusual expanse of greenery following the abnormally wet past few months, round-topped pine trees. Horses in squares, standing statues, immobilized by confinement. Ethereal windmills, without a Don Quixote in sight. The picante specks of bull-spiced fields rolling further away beyond densely-packed trees and dark green shrubs.

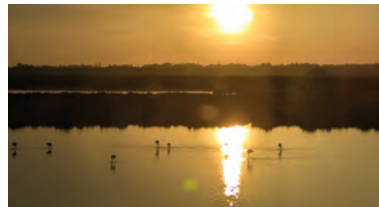
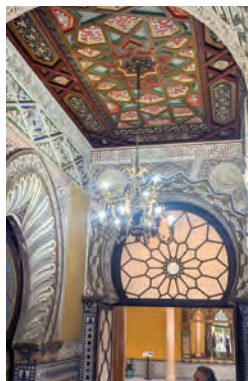
In the foreground, gravel trails snake paths of sunlight between dappled undergrowth.

Following the road we wind between cleaving serrated hills strewn with vines of famous Xerez grapes while distant hills gleam white with pueblo encrustations. On closer ground, the tones are ochre and cream, clay here and there, blue sky beyond.

Another vista reveals tilled fields of dusty chocolate brown, aside creamy pale bases for vineyards, sprinkled with occasional trees, other wider grounds sport black slanted panels absorbing sun, storing its energy. A land cracked open by ancient streams, gasping dry now after months of rain.

Approaching a motorway, red-rimmed circular signs forbid tractors, bicycles, mounted adventures, horse-drawn carriages. Adjacent roads used to lead somewhere, now truncated by abrupt concrete guards, made obsolete by new highways. Meanwhile smooth-skinned multi-hued eucalyptus drip leaves and bark, securely shackled by gravity yet soaring skyward.

Further, closer to a pueblo, a giant dusty green spike-leaved pita spreads pointedly by a gateway, leaves cleave air or fold exhausted to earth. An ochre and white cortijo in the foreground, a glinting-tipped far spire, everywhere spring leaves fecund and throng, dense blossoms, azahar of orange and attar of roses. We are high in the hills now, overlooking the plains, the green fields, rows of windmills.



Medina Sidonia; cobbled hill streets, narrow avenues, graceful plazas, strong coffee, gentle people, Esparto cestas (baskets). History. Religion. Bulls. Bakery.

Sanlucar; Terracotta colours, ochre and white, sidewalk cafes, pan-tiled chimneys, spiral staircase with iron fences, wrought iron gates, gardens of bougainvillas, wisteria. Guadalquivir river, at sunset horse races along the sands. A Podenko (dog) lies beneath a gateway chain guarding the entrance to a granja pequeña (small farm).

Journey home: Snow-covered mountain range. Olive tree graveyard, stumps wrenched from clay-yellow earth, dessicated entrails listless over the broken earth. Distressed land.

Falling sun, thickening light, silvered undersides of small leaves, red-roofed

terraces, occasional creamy-white cortijos, wide lanes of olive trees then golden acres of scrub, ruined skeletal buildings, acres of new olive orchards, small saplings bases protected with white wraps resemble rows of war graves. White mountains creeping closer, sun sliding lower, wheels eating miles, we sway through hours of circling tires, occasional stops for coffee and peeing, smokes for those thus addicted. Long hours later, the stops release bodies and bags casually and with great cheers of adios, hasta luego! along our way.

Final stop a couple of hours in advance of midnight. It's been a long and winding road home.

Blessed to be here. Soon to be there.

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LAURA GRIFFIN

Mighty Muskox- Smelly Bovidae of the North

Above the arctic circle the midnight sun has risen, warming the inhospitable cold from the - 40's to the - 20's. With increased visibility comes an ability to explore farther afield and appreciate the unique challenges the wild neighbours here face. All of these creatures combat the cold and the unique challenges that come from living atop the beautifully textured permafrost (permanently frozen ground). There is one land mammal who has mastered the harsh terrain arguably more than any other, weighing up to 315 kg and looking very much like a walking carpet with impressive horns, is the mighty muskox. And yes, it is named for its smell.

When the blizzards blow, these bovidae beauties don't back down and seek shelter as the other arctic inhabitants do. Their shaggy coats make them impervious to the cold. The undercoat, called qiviut, is extremely long, fine, and feels very fluffy and soft. It is the most expensive wool you can buy with the title of "cashmere of the north". On top of this is the long course

outer guard hairs which almost trail on the ground, sometimes called a skirt. This ice age look gives the muskox the ability to withstand temperatures below - 45 degrees celsius. They spend the winters in harems and will gather together in extreme cold for warmth, slowing their breathing, heart rate and their digestion instead of migrating. In the summer they will naturally shed their shaggy coats along the ground.

The next impressive thing about the muskox is their ability to find enough food to survive in the far north. Pawing with hooves at the active layer of soil that lies atop the permafrost, which may only be 20 cm thick they find arctic vegetation and lichen. They have been observed using their horns to smash the layers of ice that form over the ground during the freeze thaw cycle to find their next meal. I had the opportunity to examine the skull of a muskox as we dug it out from the snowdrifts of the tundra and I would not want to ever be on the receiving end of those horns that can be up to 10 cm thick.

The predators of the arctic, such as wolves, know this all too well. They will sometimes prey on muskox, usually going for the calves. However, if they are not quick the adults will form a circle around the young with their horns facing outwards or a solid line and then wait for the pack to leave. If the predators attempt to get too close they will defend themselves. They can have bursts of speed up to 40 km/

hour and have been known to disembowel those fool enough to not give them their space. Wolves are wise to this behaviour and move on once the defensive posturing begins. Unfortunately for the muskox, after surviving thousands of years in this environment the introduction of the Europeans and their rifles wiped out their numbers to the brink of extinction when they took up this defensive posture.

Since 1927 the Muskox have been put under protection in Canada. I eagerly await a day when I can encounter more than the bones and the wool left behind of the harem of nine that hang around Alert.



Photo by Laura Griffin

Photo by Molly Farquhar



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HYDROGEN AND BRAIN HEALTH

I got involved with Hydrogen at the beginning of this year. I was reading and studying when I came across an article from Dr. Ohta (2012) on PubMed. I thought wow, this is really interesting! It talks about the molecular mechanisms of hydrogen and how hydrogen gas exerts changes on a cellular level. Hydrogen has the potential to help people. Not many people know or are aware of hydrogen gas being beneficial or therapeutic. Only that it is explosive. Then I came across the Molecular Hydrogen Institute website which talks about the benefits of hydrogen, filled with scientific studies, articles advancing education, research and its applications.

WHAT IS MOLECULAR HYDROGEN?

Firstly, we all drink water. Hydrogen water takes things up a notch. It changes the structure of H₂O (2 Hydrogen & 1 Oxygen molecule) with an added Hydrogen molecule (HH₂) to it. So, the water is infused with hydroxy gas for therapeutic effects. It comes in travel size bottle generators and larger equipment that deliver HHO gas that you can inhale through a cannula.

Hydrogen is the smallest molecule in the universe that allows it to penetrate cell membranes, mitochondria, nucleus and even through the blood-brain barrier where many drugs can't go to. With over 2000 peer-reviewed clinical publications on the therapeutic effects of hydrogen gas

shown to be therapeutic in every organ of the human body. It's very powerful.

DOES IT HELP THE BRAIN?

You bet. It supports brain functioning by protecting the neurons from oxidative stress and inflammation. This leads to mental clarity and improved focus. In my experience, I feel less brain fog and grogginess in the morning. Drinking hydrogen water regularly helps you stay sharp, improves your memory, mood (anxiodepressive symptoms) and boosts your overall cognitive functioning. More publications are coming out about hydrogen being preventative and therapeutic for neurodegenerative conditions i.e. Parkinson's, Alzheimer's dementia, etc. It also helps to protect the neural tissue when no oxygen is available typically during and after a stroke. These are not just animal studies which are impressive within themselves, but actual human clinical studies. To me, that's amazing.

IS IT SAFE?

The safety of hydrogen is well established when you think that hydrogen gas was used to prevent decompression sickness in deep-sea diving incidents since the 1940's. That procedure literally has a million times higher hydrogen concentrations than what is used for therapeutic purposes. Remember, hydrogen is produced by our gut bacteria. That means we're always exposed to hydrogen gas. We just don't realize it. It's not some alien foreign substance. It's very natural to our bodies and simply drinking it has these beneficial effects. Did you know that Hydrogen therapy is officially used as a medicine in Japan for treating over 140 conditions and that there are hydrogen rich wellness spas?

CAN FOOD PRODUCE HYDROGEN?

Well, listen to your mother. She says eat your fruit and veggies. They contain fibers that are non-digestible carbohydrates.

When they're metabolized by our intestinal bacteria, then that bacteria produce hydrogen gas. However, studies show that drinking hydrogen water is more effective than getting it from food, and inhaling Brown's gas or hydroxy gas has even more superior therapeutic properties.

Sources:

<https://molecularhydrogeninstitute.org;>

<https://h2mhisummit.org>

Ohta S. Molecular hydrogen is a novel antioxidant to efficiently reduce oxidative stress with potential for the improvement of mitochondrial diseases. *Biochim Biophys Acta*. 2012 May;1820(5):S86-94. doi: 10.1016/j.bbagen.2011.05.006.

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