

The Valley Voice

The Voices of the Columbia Valley

TheVoiceCV.ca

INSIDE THIS EDITION

RADIUM HOLIDAY TRAIN 2025

Some beautiful photos taken by a local photographer of some of the Radium holiday train.

THE GREAT SUMMER-LEMONADE-STREET-STAND LESSON

Where Choice, Voice, Price, Spice and Strawberry Ice Decide the Roll of the Lemonade Dice—a Simple Story About Basic Economics.

HOME ENERGY HACKS: STAYING WARM & LOWERING YOUR WINTER BILLS

As the winds pick up and snow piles along the eaves, winter in the Columbia Valley is a season of beauty—and, for many households, a season of higher energy bills.

WHAT'S AN IDIOM, ANYWAY? PT 6

The Weird, Wild World of Everyday Expression

#105 Issue

Columbia Valley, BC



PHOTO CREDIT: JUSTIN SPILLY

➤ SUBMIT CONTENT

This only works if we all do. Your content is what DRIVES this publication. We need it all because we need you.

NEXT EDITION February 4th, 2025

SUBMISSION DEADLINE February 3rd, 2025

EVENTS

Any and all businesses, organizations and entrepreneurs and members of the public are welcome to submit an ad of any size to promote local events. We WANT to promote your event, seriously, send it in.

LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Any and all are welcome and encouraged to submit their photos. Credit given when requested. Great way to get your art out to more eyes.

BUSINESS ADS

Any and all businesses, organizations and entrepreneurs are welcome to submit a business ad for free. *Ads must be refreshed periodically. Once an ad is out of date or stale, we will remove it.*

PERSONAL INTEREST

Got something to say? Expert in something? Know how to handle a season with skill? Send it in! We'll edit it only if requested. We'd LOVE to publish your brilliant works.

NEWS

Did you hear about it or see it? We could use your help! Snap a photo and send a blurb/article and we'll make sure it get included.

BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

We are always looking for content curators, liaisons, photographers, and promoters.

Want to get involved?

Email us at news@thevoicecv.ca

VISIT US ONLINE

thevoicecv.ca

VISIT US ON SOCIAL

[@Thevoicecv_official](https://www.instagram.com/Thevoicecv_official)

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HOW ARE WE DOING?

The Volunteers of the Columbia Valley Voices Online Magazine are dedicated to providing content that is generated and supported by our valley residents.

We welcome and encourage all communication - we want to know how we're doing!

Send us a note on Facebook or Instagram [@thevoicecv_official](https://www.facebook.com/thevoicecv_official)

OR

by email to news@thevoiceca.ca



EXHIBITION 2026 ~ ART GALLERY

Submissions are now open for our 2026 Gallery Season, and we warmly invite artists to apply! Please submit your applications by January 31, 2026.

ARTISTS CALL OUT



~ Art is for Everyone ~
Send us your application along with images of your artwork to
cvartscurator@gmail.com

PYNELOGS
ART GALLERY
INVERMERE BC

LETTER FROM THE VOLUNTEERS

Happy New Year! As the winter chill settles over the Columbia Valley, we find ourselves reflecting on the past twelve months and looking ahead with hope and excitement for what's to come. The turning of the calendar is always a moment to pause, appreciate, and set fresh intentions, and we can't think of a better time to thank all of you—our readers, contributors, and supporters—for being the heart of The Valley Voice.

This season, the snow reminds us of the warmth that a caring community brings. Each story submitted, each photograph shared, and every kind word of support has helped keep The Valley Voice vibrant and alive—especially as our core team of volunteers has grown smaller this past year. With a leaner team, every little bit truly does make a difference, and we're deeply grateful to everyone who's stepped up, pitched in, or cheered us on. Your involvement is what keeps this project going.

As we begin our fifth year, our goal is to reach

more readers than ever and to fill these pages with even more voices from across the Valley. We want to showcase local stories, art, ideas, and experiences in all their diversity and wonder. If you've ever considered submitting a piece, sharing a photo, or telling a friend about us, now is the perfect time—your contributions and recommendations help us grow and thrive.

Please consider sharing The Valley Voice with a friend, neighbor, or family member. We've been part of this amazing region for four years now, and with your help, our reach and impact can be even greater.

Thank you for being part of our journey. Here's to a new year filled with warmth, creativity, and community spirit. Together, we can make 2026 our brightest year yet!

—The Valley Voice Volunteers (VVV) 🍁

KEY CITY GYMNASTICS CLUB

SUPER HERO

TRAINING CAMP

REGISTER NOW AND UNLEASH YOUR INNER HERO!

JANUARY
16
9AM-4PM



DISCOVER YOUR INNER HERO

GAIN REAL-LIFE
SUPERPOWERS
SUCH AS AGILITY,
STRENGTH, AND
BALANCE

THROUGH OUR HIGH-
FLYING CIRCUITS,
FLIPS, AND TUMBLES!





IMAGE CREDIT: Justin Spilly



IMAGE CREDIT: Justin Spilly





IMAGE CREDIT: Justin Spilly

Radium Holiday Train 2025



IMAGE CREDIT: Justin Spilly



IMAGE CREDIT: Justin Spilly



IMAGE CREDIT: Justin Spilly



IMAGE CREDIT: Justin Spilly





IMAGE CREDIT: Justin Spilly





Rotary

Club of Radium Hot Springs



We are doing it again!!!!

**CASH
CREDIT
DEBIT**

**THE ROTARY CLUB OF RADIUM HOT
SPRINGS WILL BE HOSTING**



BINGO NIGHT



Radium Hot Springs Centre
4863 Stanley St,
Radium Hot Springs

January 15th

**5 BINGO GAMES ... CASH PRIZES
50/50 DRAW & DOOR PRIZES**

**A fun night!
Snacks, pop & water for sale.**

Must be 19 years or older.
Know your limit, play within it!
BC Gaming Licenses 166407 & 166210

Doors open 6:30 – Games start 7 pm

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 2026

BURNS NIGHT



CEILIDH



LIVE MUSIC AND CEILIDH DANCES

ALL DANCES WILL BE CALLED AND WALKED THROUGH

**LIVE MUSIC, DANCE, FUN FOR ALL AND
A WEE TASTE O' SCOTLAND (not a meal)**

**HAGGIS, NEEPS N TATTIES
WITH A DRAM OF UISGE BEATHA**

MUSIC BY INVERMERE'S OWN

THE O'SULLIVANS

DOORS OPEN AT 6PM

CEILIDH FROM 7PM TO 10PM

MEMBERS AND GUESTS WELCOME

ADMISSION \$35

TICKETS FOR SALE IN THE BRANCH IN JANUARY

250 342 9517

525 13 St, Invermere, BC, VoA 1Ko

Legion

Branch 071
Windermere District

100
1926 • 2026



The Great Summer-Lemonade-Street-Stand Lesson

Where Choice, Voice, Price, Spice and Strawberry Ice Decide the Roll of the Lemonade Dice—a Simple Story About Basic Economics.

Although it is the beginning of a semi-chilly winter right now in the Columbia Valley, let's switch the paradigm and talk about a sunny street in a cheerful neighbourhood in the middle of summer. Three kids—Leah, Jay, and Montgomery—opened lemonade stands at the start of summer. They didn't plan it together; it just happened the way kids do things. Leah loved making fancy lemonade with fresh-squeezed lemons and a little mint leaf on top. Jay preferred the easy route with powdered lemon mix and lots of ice. Theo decided to be bold and added fresh strawberries to his intricate recipe.

Each kid set a different price. Leah charged two dollars, Jay asked for one, and Montgomery boldly wrote "Three Dollars" on a bright red sign. It didn't take long for the neighbourhood to sort itself out. People who wanted something cheap and cold lined up at Jay's table. Folks who liked something a bit nicer—and didn't mind paying for it—visited Leah. And every now and then, someone who loved strawberries treated themselves to Montgomery's costly cup-o-lemonade.

No one told the kids how to run their stands. They just watched their customers, made minor changes, and figured things out naturally. Jay bought more mix when his line grew longer. Montgomery experimented with slightly lowering his price. Leah added more mint because people kept asking for it. The street buzzed with friendly competition and copious, colourful cups of lemonade.

Then one afternoon, the kids' parents decided the lemonade operation needed a little parental fine-tuning. They announced that lemonade should be affordable

for everyone and ordered all the kids to sell their drinks for exactly one dollar. Suddenly, the variety that made Lemonade-Street special began to disappear. Montgomery couldn't afford strawberries anymore, so it shut down. Leah switched to a cheaper mix because fresh lemons were too expensive at the new price. Jay didn't mind—he was already selling at a dollar—but now everyone's lemonade cost the same and tasted the same.

A week later, after the first plan fizzled, the parents tried a different idea. They gave each kid twenty dollars to "grow their business." The street exploded with upgrades—new stands, new tables, fancy umbrellas, shiny blenders, and all sorts of delicious recipes. It felt like a lemonade boom, but it didn't last long. Without enough real customers to support the new expenses and expansions, the upgrades became burdens. Some stands closed, while others shrank back to their original size.

Finally, after a short, very unsuccessful interruption, the parents finally stepped back and let the kids run things their own way again. Slowly, the street came back to life. Montgomery returned with his fresh strawberries. Leah brought back her mint leaves. Jay stuck with his trusty ol' mix. Once again, the neighbourhood buzzed to life, as everyone picked the lemonade they liked best.

In the end, Leah, Jay and Montgomery learned something no rulebook had taught them: when people are free to choose, experiment, and set their own prices, things tend to sort themselves out. The street didn't need perfect plans or equal cups—just room to be weird, different, and honest about what things were worth.

Once prices were allowed to rise and fall naturally, the right recipes survived, the wrong ones faded, and balance returned without force. It wasn't flawless or fair in every moment, but it was genuine—and in the real world, that freedom turned out to work better than control ever did.





District of Invermere
Celebrating 75 Years

Invermere
Snowflake
Festival

Invermere Snowflake

Kinsmen Beach Festival

January 16th, 2026 5:30pm-8:30pm

Ice Carving with Cold Creative
Downtown Snowflake Scavenger Hunt

Skating on the Lake

Live Music Featuring...ROCKINOMIX

Bonspiel on the Lake Curling Tournament

Invermere Legion Cook Shack
Serving hot food & drinks all weekend!

7pm: Fire Performance 8pm: Fireworks



Columbia
Basin

trust



INVERMERE
INN & SUITES
— INNHotels —



6th Annual Ice Fishing Derby
Sunday, February 15th/26



6:00 am- 4:00 pm

Prizes for 1st, 2nd, 3rd in

Mens, Ladies & Children

1st for Best overall

1st for combined weight

for couples

\$15 Adult

\$5 under 12

100 Km radius

of Wasa

Registration:

By Telephone: 780-668-5977

In Person: Wasa Gas Station parking Lot 6 am-9am

Or online: adamsarmy.ca

*Weigh in no later than 4 pm at the Wasa Lions
Grounds*

Charity BBQ at weigh in!

****must be present to win prizes****

NEW PRINT OR OLD?

HOW TO TELL

Sharpness and Definition:

Fresh tracks have crisp, well-defined edges. As time passes, wind, sun, or additional snowfall will soften and blur the outlines, making older tracks appear rounded or melted.

Snow Texture Inside the Track:

In a new track, the snow inside the print is often still loose, powdery, or even sparkly from being freshly disturbed. Older tracks may have compacted, icy, or even refrozen snow inside them.

Overlapping Weather Signs:

If new snow, frost, or drifting has partially filled in or covered the track, it's likely older. In contrast, a track that sits cleanly on top of the most recent snowfall is quite fresh.

Animal Signs Nearby:

Fresh tracks may be accompanied by other recent signs—such as moist scat, urine stains, or visible fur or feathers nearby. These clues, especially if unfrozen, suggest the animal passed by recently.

Environmental Context:

Consider recent weather conditions. If there's been a recent snowfall or thaw, any prints that look undisturbed and match those conditions are newer. Tracks exposed to sun or wind for a while will look more weathered or degraded.



WILDLIFE TRACKING 101

Reading Animal Signs in the Snow

There's a special kind of magic that settles on the Columbia Valley after a fresh snowfall. While the landscape may appear still and quiet, the snow tells a different story—a living tapestry of animal tracks and signs waiting to be discovered by curious eyes. Winter is the perfect season for wildlife

tracking, inviting us to become detectives and deepen our connection with the Valley's natural world.

Tracking begins with observation. After a snowfall, bundle up and head to a quiet trail, forest edge, or even your backyard. Look for patterns pressed into the



"Y" pattern as they bound across the snow. Canine tracks (coyote, fox, or domestic dog) show four toes and a heel pad, often in a straight line, while felines like bobcats have rounder prints with no claw marks.

But tracking is more than just footprints. Watch for wing marks where a bird landed, or a sweep in the snow where an otter slid down a bank. Scat, chewed twigs, and tufts of fur can tell you what animals have been eating and how they move through the landscape.

Bring a notebook or snap photos to compare with a field guide when you return home. Over time, you'll start to recognize not just who's out there, but how they're living, surviving, and sharing the Valley with us.

Whether you're a family on a winter walk or a solo explorer, tracking opens a window into the Valley's secret winter life. Every print is a reminder that, even in the quietest months, nature's stories continue—right beneath our feet.

powder: dainty footprints zigzagging under bird feeders, deep, rounded prints by the riverbank, or a straight line of tiny dots leading into the brush. Each track is a clue.

Start by noting the size, shape, and pattern of the prints. Deer tracks are among the most common—look for two elongated, heart-shaped impressions, each about the length of an adult's index finger. Rabbits leave pairs of large, side-by-side hind prints ahead of two smaller front prints, forming a





The East Kootenay Veterinary Group was formed with the mission to improve access to emergency veterinary services in our region. By providing dedicated after-hours and urgent care, we help ensure local pets receive the medical attention they need when they need it most.

Our goal is to support veterinary professionals by reducing burnout and improving work-life balance, allowing more veterinarians to remain in our community. This means better access to care for all pets now and in the future.

Together we are making emergency care more accessible for the Kootenays.

East Kootenay Veterinary Group Emergency Services

Our Locations

1) Invermere Veterinary Hospital

250-342-7007

4854 Athalmer Rd, Invermere, BC V0A 1K3

2) Columbia Valley Veterinary Clinic

250-349-0514

9039 Thunderhill Rd, Canal Flats, BC V0B 1B0

3) North Star Vet Clinic

778-481-5288

550 Mark St, Kimberley, BC V1A 2B8

4) Steeple's Veterinary Clinic

250-489-3451

3410 Victor Rd, Cranbrook, BC V1C 7B7

5) Tanglefoot Veterinary Services

250-489-1655

315 Industrial Road F, Cranbrook, BC V1C 6N4

6) Cranbrook Veterinary Hospital

250-426-8517

106 5 Ave S, Cranbrook, BC V1C 2G2

7) Creston Veterinary Hospital

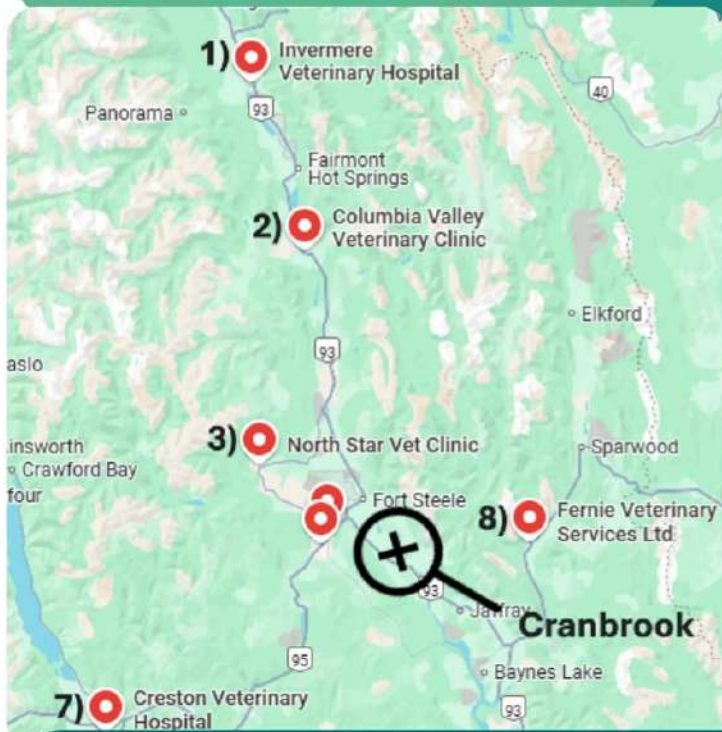
250-428-9494

1605 Dogwood St, Creston, BC V0B 1G0

8) Fernie Veterinary Services

250-423-2620

1161 7 Ave, Fernie, BC V0B 1M0

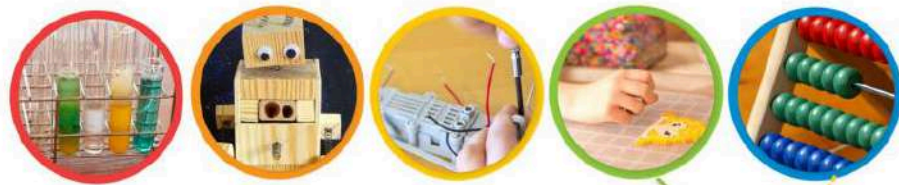
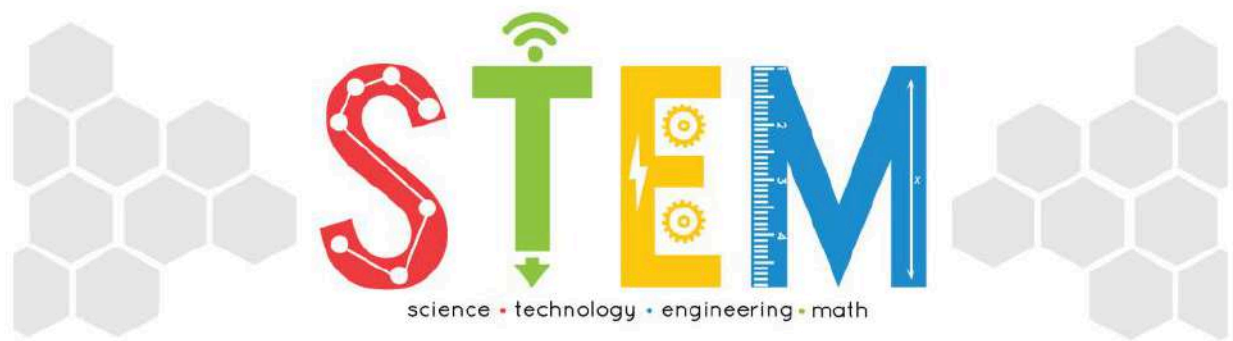


All emergent calls will be triaged by an experienced, registered veterinary technician who will help clients determine whether emergency service is required and, if so, direct them appropriately. Clients will be given clear direction on where emergency after hours service will be offered based on the day and nature of the emergency.



250-342-7007

All calls to our regular line after hours will automatically connect to triage.



STEM program at the library

Saturdays, January 17 - March 14

(*no program on Saturday, 7th February)

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Ages 7-14

Join us for an exciting 8-week STEM program with hands-on activities, creativity and problem-solving. Participants will explore fun topics in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics at the Radium Public Library.

Perfect for curious minds who love to learn, build and discover!

***Registration not required.**



Radium Hot Springs Public Library

4863 Stanley St | Radium Hot Springs, British Columbia V0A 1M0 | 250-347-2434 | <https://radium.bc.libraries.coop/>

THE SCIENCE OF SNOW

How Winter Shapes Our Local Landscape



As winter settles over the Columbia Valley a quiet transformation unfolds with every snowflake that drifts from the sky. Snow isn't just a hallmark of our season—it's a powerful force that shapes our rivers, forests, and mountains in ways both subtle and spectacular.

Snow begins its journey high above us, forming when cold air turns water vapor into delicate ice crystals. These crystals grow and cluster, eventually falling as the snowflakes we know and love. No two snowflakes are the same, and their final shape depends on temperature, humidity, and the path they travel down to earth.

Once on the ground, snow has a profound impact on our landscape. In the forests, a thick blanket of snow acts as insulation, protecting plant roots and small animals from the harshest cold. In the wetlands and meadows, snow slows evaporation, storing precious moisture that will feed the valley's rivers and lakes come spring. Even in our towns, snow shapes daily life—whether we're shoveling driveways, building forts, or enjoying a day on the ski trails.

But snow's influence isn't always gentle. As layers of snow build up over the winter, they can become unstable, especially on our valley's steep slopes. When the weight and



structure of these layers shift—a process influenced by wind, sun, and temperature changes—an avalanche can occur. These dramatic slides of snow are a natural part of mountain life, helping to shape valleys and renew alpine ecosystems. However, they also pose a serious risk to backcountry travelers, making avalanche awareness and safety training a must for anyone exploring beyond marked trails.

Snow is more than a winter backdrop; it's a vital and ever-changing part of the Columbia Valley's story. By understanding how snow forms, moves, and shapes our world, we deepen our connection to this place we call home—one snowflake at a time.



COLUMBIA VALLEY
FOOD BANK

Buy a Food Basket For A Household



Two Person
Food Basket



Five Person
Food Basket



Eight Person
Food Basket

Households of all sizes
benefit from our food baskets.

Choose a donation
option here from
\$74.00 to \$335.00.

Tax receipts provided.



Households
of 1,3,5 and 7
people



Households
of 2,4,6 and 8
people

Help Relieve Hunger in the Columbia Valley

We provide one week of food
per household. When
more support is needed an
emergency food basket
is a solution.



Emergency Food
Baskets (\$39.00)



Emergency Food Basket

10TH ANNUAL POLAR PLUNGE

TAKE THE LEAP FOR ACCESSIBILITY

Join us for the 10th Annual RAD Polar Plunge – a community fundraiser making outdoor recreation more accessible.

Take the leap solo or with a team! Jump into the icy waters (or plunge virtually) and help raise funds while we stream the fun LIVE.

- COLD PLUNGE
- HOT TUB & SAUNA
- MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT
- SNACKS & DRINKS STATION
- ICE SKATING
- HOCKEY SLEDGES

12:00 PM – 4:00 PM MST

INVERMERE, BC

AT KINSMEN BEACH

FEBRUARY 14 & 15, 2026

\$20 per plunger

All ages and abilities welcome!

**To View, Register & Donate,
visit www.radsociety.ca**

Stop Asking What You Should Have Done

'Cause Your Past Doesn't Get the Final Say



We all know that voice that creeps in late at night, in the back of our mind, telling us we should have known better, done better, chosen differently. That's hindsight—it's always 20/20, and it has a cruel way of showing up with perfect vision, announcing, with great pride, that the answer was obvious all along. As the 8th-century BC Greek poet, Homer put it, "After the event, even a fool is wise." Life doesn't give us the script in advance. It hands us the pen and expects us to write the story in real time, with smudged ink, shaky hands, and imperfect information.

And the truth is, we did the best we could at the time—with what we had, and with what we knew. That's not an excuse; that's reality. Søren Kierkegaard, Danish philosopher and poet (1813-1855) once said, "Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards." We make decisions in the fog, then later judge ourselves when everything is clear. No wonder the mind can often be a harsh critic.

There's a shift that begins when we realize we don't have to let those creeping,

Learn the Lesson, Stop the Stressin', Release the Pain, and Reclaim Your Lane, for It's a New Day, so Find Your New Way



action. And action requires strength—your strength.

You are the most important person in your life. That isn't selfish; it's built into how life works. If you aren't strong, healthy, confident, and grounded, you can't pass any of those things on to your loved ones, your friends, or anyone who relies on you. Think about the airline safety demonstration: the oxygen mask goes on you first. Not because you matter more, but because without breath, you can't help anyone else breathe.

So be kind to yourself. Be gentle. You're still learning, still growing, still writing the story. You're not meant to have perfect vision looking forward—but you do have the power to walk forward anyway.

And maybe that's the real work: not wishing we had known more yesterday, but choosing to be someone wiser, stronger, and more compassionate today.

Hindsight may be 20/20—but your future is written by the person you are becoming right now. As the American philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) echoes: "With the past, I have nothing to do; nor with the future. I live now."

Go forth and create your day!

passive, destructive thoughts run the show. Negative thoughts are lazy—they arrive uninvited, repeat the same tired lines, and pretend they're delivering profound truth. They're not. They're bullies. And like any bully, they shrink the moment we stand up to them.

So stand up. Stick up for yourself. Be brave. Be strong. Be the defender of your own mind. Tell yourself, I did my best. I forgive you. I love you. Become your own mentor—your big brother, your coach, your wise counsellor, and remind yourself that real growth comes from experience. As Mark Twain famously said, "Good judgment is the result of experience and experience is the result of bad judgment." That's not failure. That's the process.

Life has a strange way of

working itself out, even when we can't see the path clearly while walking it. Douglas Adams, creator of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, captured that beautifully: "I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I needed to be." There's relief in knowing that the detours, the wrong turns, the embarrassing missteps all shaped us and delivered us to now.

Still, hindsight tempts us. It tells us to dissect the past endlessly, as if rewinding it will somehow produce a different outcome. The German philosopher Nietzsche (1844-1900) warns us against that illusion: "To predict the future we must create it, not analyze the past—though hindsight seduces us into thinking we could have done otherwise." The past is data. The future is

PRICE LIST

Want to advertise your business or services?

All designs come with 2 rounds of revisions. Any additional rounds will be estimated on a case-by-case basis. Please note that services do not include any printing or stock photography costs. Final files will be formatted to fit your desired needs.

VECTOR LOGO DESIGN	VECTOR SIGN DESIGN
Single Concept _____ \$62	Single Concept _____ \$44
2 Concepts _____ \$107	Price based on existing Logo, Logo Design sold separately.
3 Concepts _____ \$125	
LETTERHEAD DESIGN _____ \$26	LABEL DESIGN
Price based on existing Logo, Logo Design sold separately. First round includes 2 layouts.	Single Concept _____ \$35
FLYER DESIGN	2 Concepts _____ \$44
Single Layout Concept _____ \$35	Price based on existing Logo, Logo Design sold separately.
MENU DESIGN	BROCHURE DESIGN
Priced Per Page _____ \$26	Tri-Fold _____ \$44
KIDS COLOURING MENU	
8.5" X 11" _____ \$35	
11" X 17" _____ \$44	
MAGAZINE DESIGN	3D PRINTING AVAILABLE!!
Starting at _____ \$314	PRICES VARY BASED ON COMPLEXITY AND SIZE
Prices vary based on the amount of pages.	
BOOK COVER DESIGN	3D CUSTOM DESIGN
Single Sided _____ \$53	Starting at _____ \$62
Double Sided _____ \$71	Prices vary depending on complexity.
CUSTOM COLOURING PAGE	
Priced Per Page _____ \$17	
TAROT/ORACLE CARD CUSTOM ART	BRISCO HERMIT
40-Cards _____ \$1,106	250-549-0247
78-Cards _____ \$2,105	BRISCOHERMIT@GMAIL.COM
Additional Cards +\$35 per card	@ f @BRISCOHERMIT
Price includes one back card design.	



Sierra Says

HYPNOTIST ENTERTAINMENT

90 MINUTES OF FAMILY FRIENDLY FUN!

- WEDDINGS
- BACHELORETTE
- STAFF EVENT
- BARS
- ETC.

Sierra Franklin

EMAIL TO BOOK
MovingMountainsHypnotherapy@gmail.com




Lasting Memories & Big Laughs!

PET and people PORTRAITS









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LOCATED IN FAIRMONT HOT SPRINGS

SUPPORT OUR YOUTH CAMP FUNDRAISER



Made with love in
Cranbrook with local
ingredients



SCAN ME



Order from Jan 6 - 27, delivery on Jan 28

<https://mamasdumplings-fundraiser.square.site/>



We believe in celebrating the wild places of our region while empowering our community to enjoy them safely. This article explores avalanche risks, practical safety tips, and the many local resources available to help you make smart choices in the mountains this winter.

AVALANCHE AWARENESS

Staying Safe in the Backcountry

Winter is a call to adventure. The snow-covered peaks and pristine valleys beckon skiers, snowboarders, snowmobilers, and snowshoers to explore the beauty of the backcountry. But with that beauty comes a very real and powerful risk—avalanches. Each year, avalanches claim lives and cause serious injuries in British Columbia. The good news is that with education, preparation, and respect for nature's forces, backcountry enthusiasts can significantly reduce their risk.

Understanding Avalanche Terrain

Avalanches are sudden, fast-moving flows of snow, ice, and debris down a slope. They can be triggered naturally by weather and snowpack conditions or by people moving across unstable terrain. The majority of

avalanche incidents in BC occur on slopes between 30 and 45 degrees—steep enough for snow to slide but not always as dramatic as you might imagine.

Avalanches require three key ingredients:

1. A slab of cohesive snow
2. A weak layer beneath that slab
3. A slope steep enough for gravity to take over

Understanding how these elements interact is the foundation of avalanche awareness. Snowpack changes daily and hourly based on temperature, precipitation, wind, and sun exposure. One slope may be safe in the morning but hazardous by afternoon.

Common Avalanche Triggers

- New Snow: Heavy

snowfall in a short time adds stress to weak layers below.

- Warming: Rising temperatures, especially rapid warming or rain on snow, can destabilize the snowpack.
- Wind: Wind can transport snow and create dangerous slabs on leeward slopes.
- Human Activity: Skiers, snowboarders, or snowmobilers crossing a slope can trigger avalanches, even if the snow appears stable.

Avalanche Danger Ratings

Avalanche Canada issues danger ratings for backcountry areas each day, ranking avalanche risk as:

- Low
- Moderate
- Considerable
- High
- Extreme

Before heading out, always check the current forecast for your region at Avalanche Canada's website, and understand what the danger rating means for your planned activities.

Essential Safety Gear

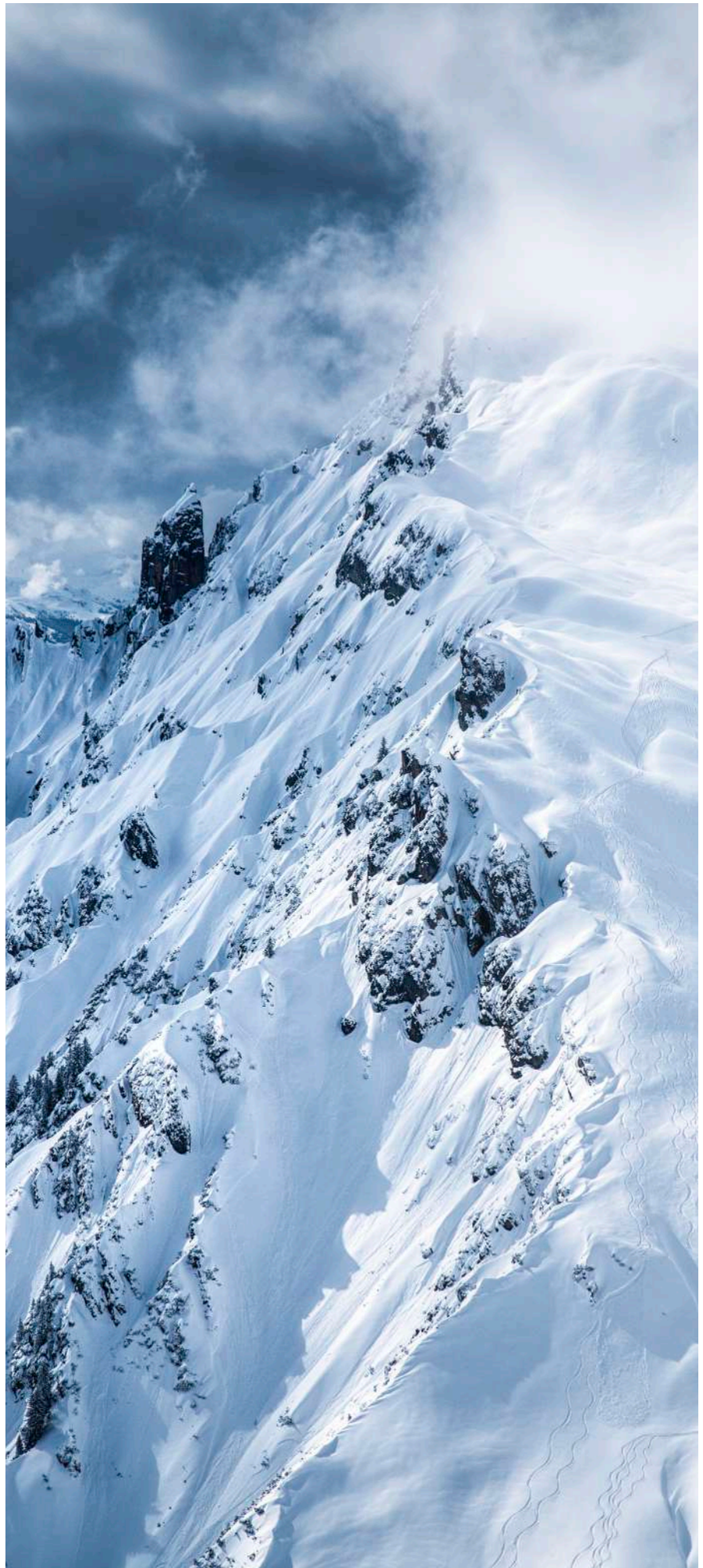
Everyone venturing into avalanche terrain should carry, and know how to use, three critical pieces of safety equipment:

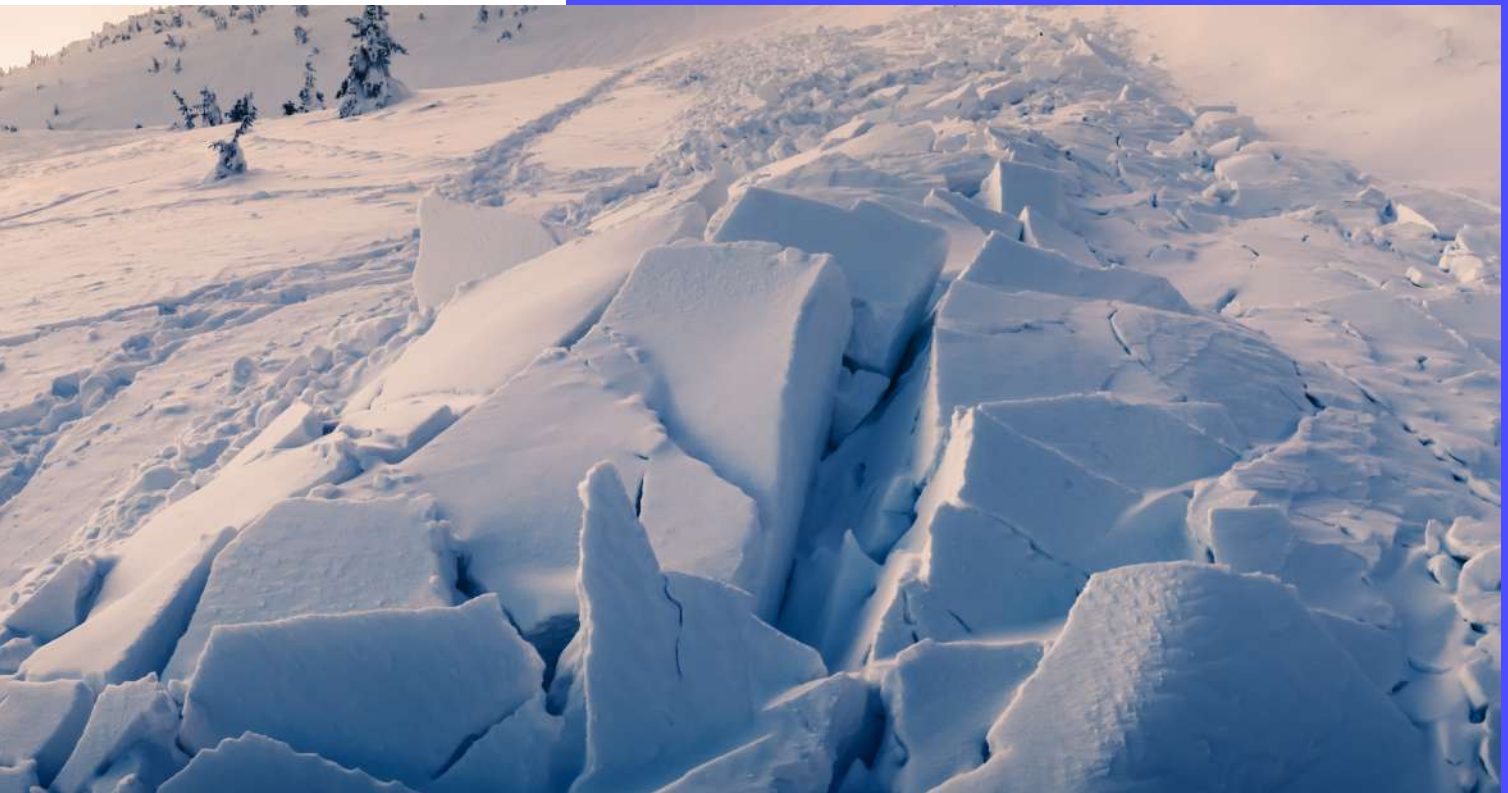
1. **Transceiver (Beacon):** Worn on your body and turned on, a transceiver emits a signal that can help rescuers locate you under the snow—or help you find a buried companion.
2. **Probe:** A collapsible pole used to pinpoint the exact location and depth of a buried person.
3. **Shovel:** Lightweight but sturdy, for quickly digging out avalanche victims.

Practice using your gear before you need it—speed and confidence save lives in an emergency.

Safety Tips for Backcountry Travel

1. **Get Trained:** Take an Avalanche Skills Training (AST 1 or 2) course. These hands-on programs, offered locally by certified guides and organizations, teach you to recognize hazards, read snow conditions, and respond in an emergency.
2. **Travel with a Group:** Never travel alone in avalanche terrain. Group members should be equally prepared and equipped. Establish clear communication and stick together, keeping visual





- contact.
3. Plan and Communicate: Know your route, check the forecast, and share your plan with someone not in your group. Carry a map, GPS, or phone with offline navigation
4. Recognize Avalanche Terrain: Learn to identify slopes prone to avalanches—open, steep slopes, gullies, and anywhere with recent evidence of sliding snow. Avoid terrain traps where even a small slide could bury you deeply
5. Travel Smart:
 1. Spread out when crossing or ascending slopes to minimize risk.
 2. Stop only in safe zones—on ridges, in

- dense forest, or far from runout zones.
3. Watch for warning signs: cracking snow, “whumphing” sounds, recent avalanches.
6. Practice Rescue Skills: Regularly practice beacon searches and rescue drills with your group. Seconds count in an avalanche burial.
7. Heed Nature’s Warnings:
8. If conditions feel wrong, or the danger rating is high, change your plans. The mountains will be there another day.

What To Do If Caught in an Avalanche

- Yell and Try to Escape: If the snow fractures beneath you, try to

move to the side or grab onto a tree.

- Get Rid of Gear: If possible, ditch skis, poles, or a snowboard to reduce drag.
- Swim and Create an Air Pocket: As the snow slows, try to “swim” to the surface and protect your airway with your hands.
- Remain Calm: If buried, expand your chest and remain calm to conserve oxygen.

For rescuers, follow the three steps: signal search with your transceiver, pinpoint with your probe, and dig quickly with your shovel.

Local Resources for Avalanche Awareness

- **Avalanche Canada:** The national authority for avalanche safety, with up-to-date forecasts, incident reports, and educational resources.
- **Columbia Valley Search and Rescue:** Offers information, community talks, and emergency response for lost or injured backcountry users.
- **Local Guiding Companies:** Several operators in the Valley, Kimberley, and Cranbrook offer AST courses, guided trips, and mentorship for all levels.
- **Community Groups:** Backcountry skiers, snowshoe clubs, and snowmobile associations often host awareness nights, beacon practice sessions, and group outings.

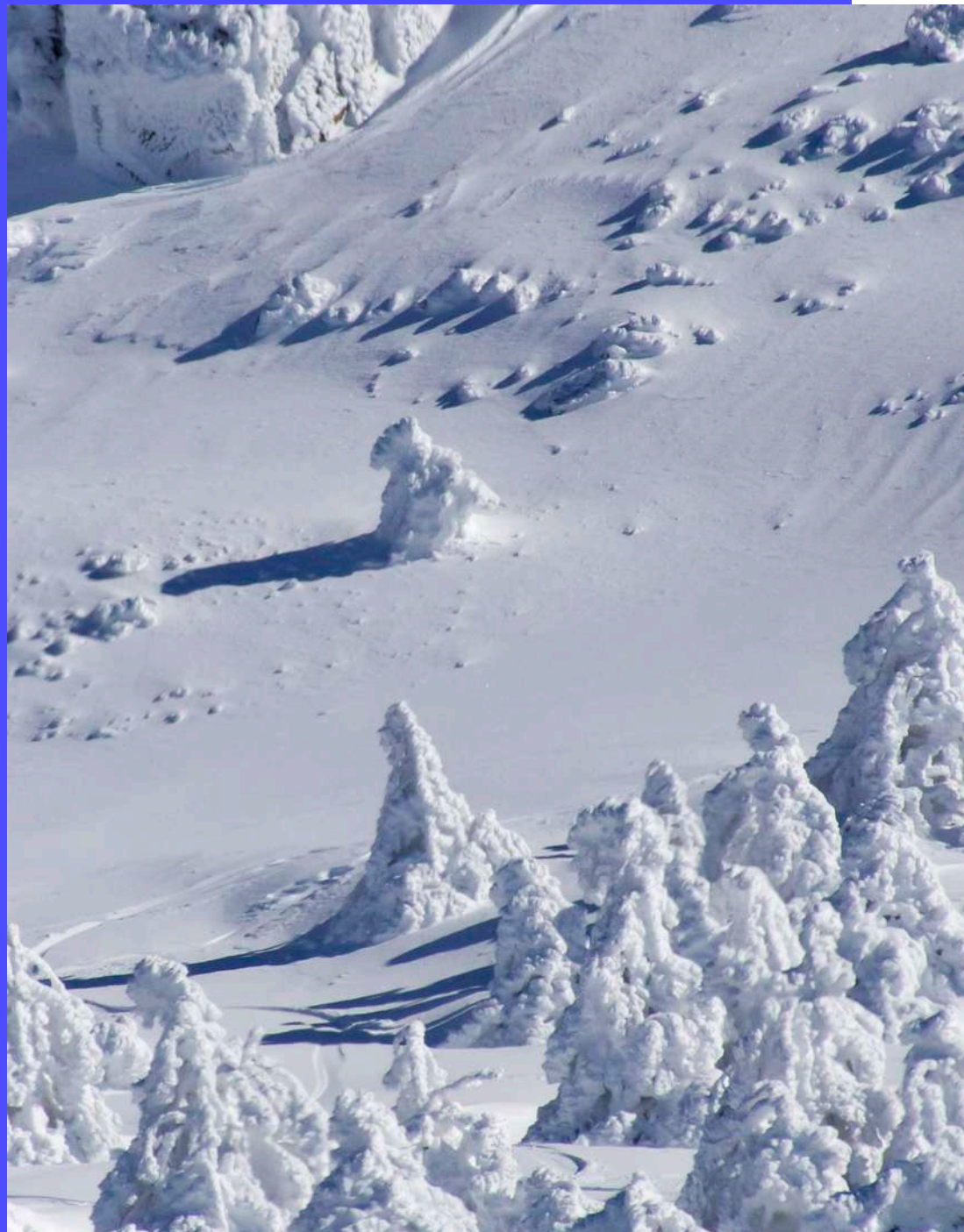
Take a course, practice rescue drills, and share your knowledge with friends and newcomers. The mountains offer beauty and adventure—but only if we return home to share the stories.

Stay safe, stay prepared, and let's keep exploring—together.

A Culture of Safety and Respect

Avalanche safety is a responsibility shared by all who love the wild winter spaces of the Valley. By educating yourself, equipping properly, and fostering a culture of respect for nature's power, you help build a safer community for everyone.

This winter, The Valley Voice invites you to make avalanche awareness part of your outdoor routine.





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WHAT'S AN IDIOM, ANYWAYS? PT. 6

The Weird, Wild World of Everyday Expression

An idiom is a phrase or expression that has a meaning different from the literal definitions of the individual words. In other words, if you take it literally, it won't make much sense—like "when pigs fly" or "like a fish out of water."

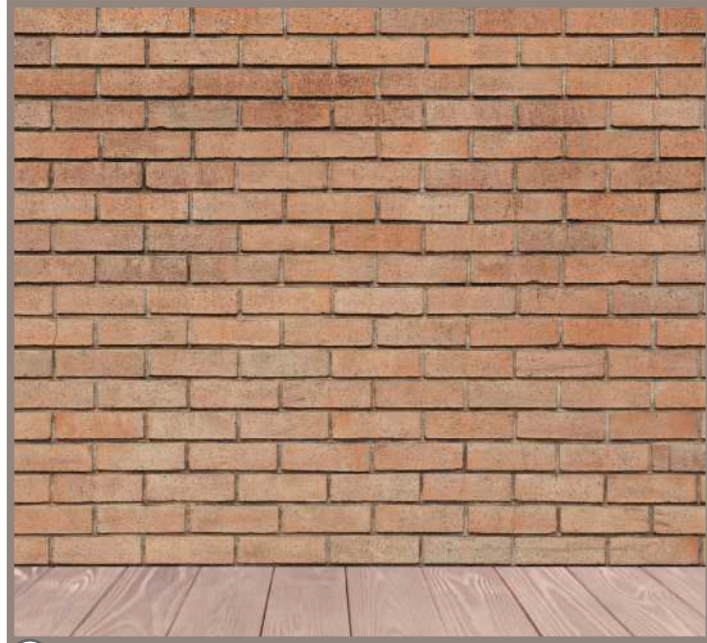


WHEN PIGS FLY

Used to describe something, an event so impossible or unlikely, that's never going to happen. "Yeah... that's not happening."

The phrase goes way back to the 1600s, and it's been used in various forms since then (even by Lewis Carroll and Mark Twain). The idea is always something absurdly impossible. By the 19th century, the modern phrasing became common in English-speaking countries and stuck because... well, the mental picture is hilarious.

I knew bacon had ambitions.



LIKE TALKING TO A BRICK WALL

Trying to communicate with someone who refuses to listen or respond—basically, all talk, no feedback.

This idiom popped up in English in the 1800s. I nails the perfect visual of frustration: you pour out your thoughts, but the wall (person) just sits there, unbothered and unresponsive. It's a universal human experience—especially if you've ever tried reasoning with a teenager, a cat, or customer service.

At least the wall doesn't interrupt.

Idioms are frequently used in everyday language to convey ideas more vividly or creatively. They often originate from old stories, cultural traditions, or historical events, and many have been passed down for centuries. Let's take a look at a few of them and hope it's not like "talking to a brick wall."



LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER

Something very common or easily available.

From the early 1800s in America, where merchants would advertise bulk goods like apples or eggs as "a dime a dozen" to show how cheap and plentiful they were.

Good ideas are a dime a dozen. Great ones come after coffee.



LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE

Let sleeping dogs lie

Don't stir up old trouble—if something's peaceful (or forgotten), leave it that way.

This idiom first appeared in Middle English literature around the 1300s. It came from the literal wisdom that if a dog's sleeping peacefully, you'd better not poke it—or you'll regret it. Over time, it became about avoiding unnecessary drama.

Disturb the peace, pay the price.

WHAT'S AN IDIOM, ANYWAYS? PT. 6

CONTINUED

Idioms are the seasoning salt of speech—sprinkle a few, and even plain talk gets tasty.



SNAKE IN THE GRASS

Someone sneaky or secretly untrustworthy—pretending to be friendly but ready to strike.

Goes all the way back to the Roman poet Virgil (around 40 BC!), who wrote "latet anguis in herba," "a snake hides in the grass." It caught on in English by the 1500s and has been slithering through our vocabulary ever since.

Smiles like a friend, hisses like a plot twist.



RUNNING AROUND LIKE A CHICKEN WITH ITS HEAD CUT OFF

Acting frantically and without purpose—busy, but not productive.

A gruesome but literal image from farm life in the 19th century. Chickens can move reflexively for a bit after decapitation, hence the vivid description of panicked, aimless movement. Thankfully, it's just a metaphor now (mostly).

Motion detected, purpose unknown.



TOE THE LINE

It means conforming to rules, following expectations, or obeying authority—even if you don't necessarily want to. Think of someone standing with their toes exactly on a marked line, ready to follow instructions.

This one has a literal origin: British military and school traditions had soldiers or students line up with toes touching a line drawn on the ground. First recorded in the 1700s, it became a metaphor for strict obedience.

...because nothing says 'personal growth' like doing exactly what you're told.



NOT MY CIRCUS, NOT MY MONKEYS

This is not my problem, not my responsibility, and I'm not getting involved. This chaos is yours, not mine.

The phrase is a Polish proverb: "Nie mój cyrk, nie moje małpy." It spread into English through translators, travellers, and the internet, especially around the early 2000s. We've all seen a few metaphorical circuses.

I'm just here for the popcorn.

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NEW YEAR, NEW FLAVOURS

Here are four winter-inspired shots and cocktails perfect for January gatherings in the Valley:



✓ Winter Spice Hot Toddy

1.5 oz whiskey
1 tbsp honey
0.5 oz fresh lemon juice
1 cup hot water

Instructions: Add whiskey, honey, and lemon juice to a mug. Pour in hot water and stir until honey dissolves. Garnish with a cinnamon stick and a lemon slice for a cozy, warming drink.



✓ Maple Walnut Old Fashioned

2 oz bourbon
0.5 oz pure maple syrup
2 dashes walnut bitters (or regular bitters)

Instructions: In a rocks glass, combine bourbon, maple syrup, and bitters with ice. Stir well to chill and mix. Garnish with an orange peel twist.



✓ Alpine Espresso Shot

1 oz coffee liqueur (e.g., Kahlúa)
0.5 oz vanilla vodka
0.5 oz chilled espresso

Instructions: In a shaker with ice, combine coffee liqueur, vodka, and espresso. Shake well and strain into a shot glass. Enjoy as a pick-me-up after a day in the snow.



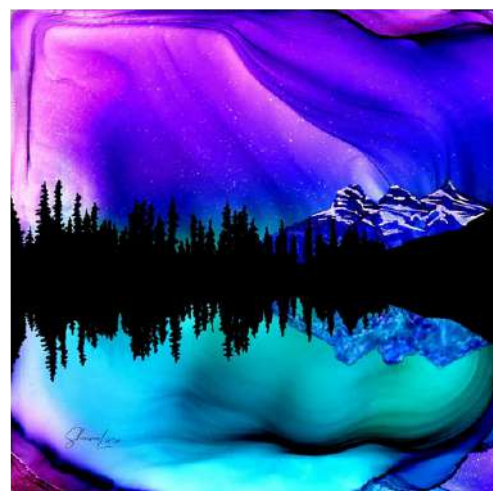
✓ Frosted Berry Mule

2 oz gin or vodka
1 oz cranberry juice
0.5 oz lime juice
Ginger beer

Instructions: Fill a glass with ice and add gin or vodka, cranberry juice, and lime juice. Top with ginger beer and gently stir. Garnish with berries for a fresh, seasonal touch.

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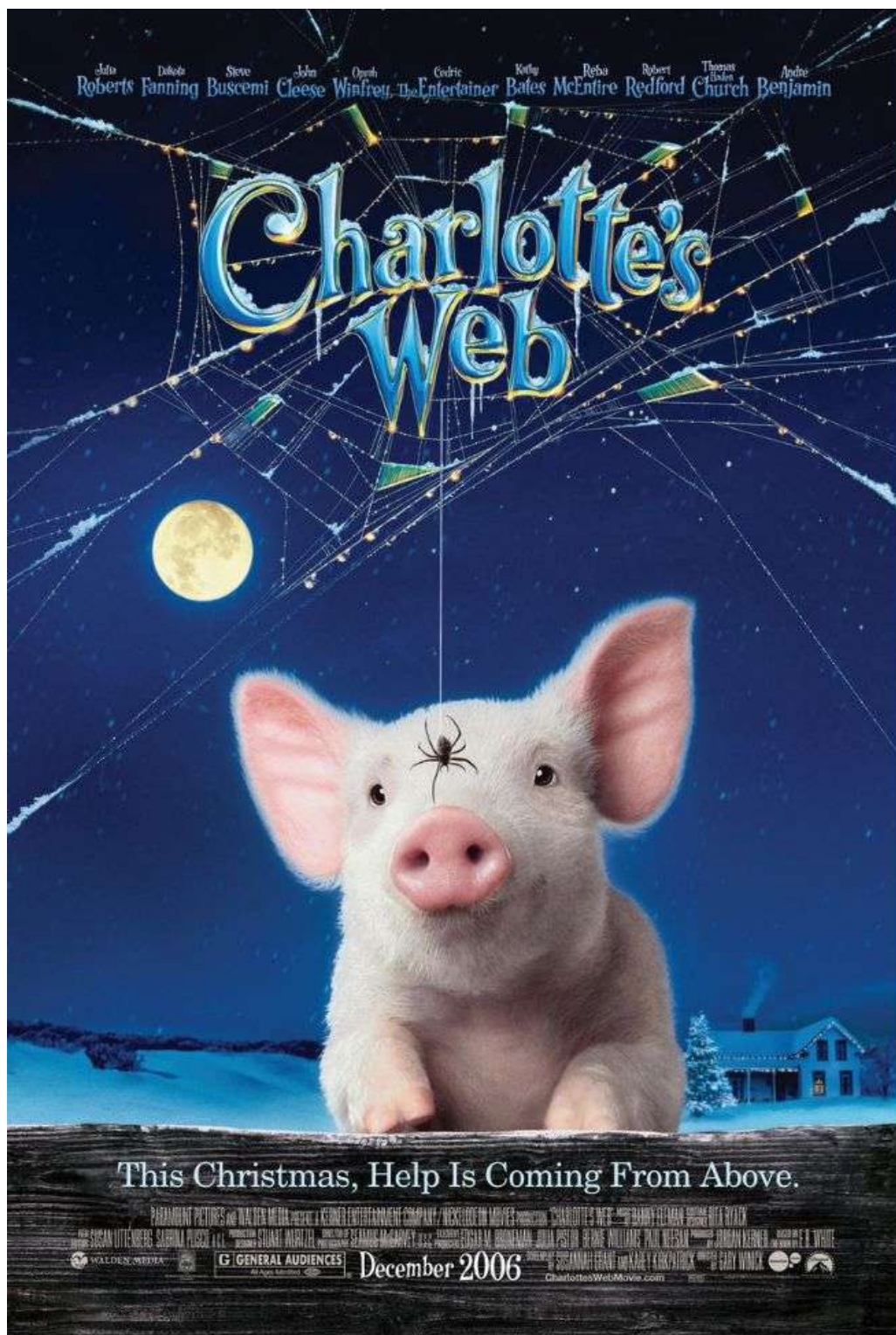
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HOME ENERGY HACKS

Staying Warm & Lowering Your Winter Bills

As the winds pick up and snow piles along the eaves, winter in the Columbia Valley is a season of beauty—and, for many households, a season of higher energy bills. Staying cozy shouldn't mean breaking the bank or sacrificing sustainability. With a few practical energy hacks and a little know-how, you

can keep your home warm, comfortable, and efficient all winter long.

At The Valley Voice, we know that every dollar and every bit of warmth counts. Whether you live in an older character home or a modern build, here are tried-and-true strategies to help

you save energy, reduce costs, and make your home a true winter sanctuary.



SEAL THE LEAKS: WEATHER PROOFING YOUR HOME

The first line of defense against winter's chill is making sure the warm air you pay for isn't slipping away. Even small drafts can add up to significant heat loss.

Check Windows and Doors:

Walk around your home and feel for drafts around windows and exterior doors. Weatherstripping and draft stoppers are inexpensive solutions that make a big difference. Self-adhesive foam tape or rubber seals can be installed in minutes. For door bottoms, a door sweep or a rolled towel can block cold air.

Caulking Gaps:

Use caulk to seal cracks around window frames, baseboards, and where pipes or cables enter the house. This not only keeps the cold out but helps prevent moisture issues.

Insulate Outlets and Switches:

Exterior wall outlets and switches can leak air. Install foam gaskets behind the plates to cut down on drafts.



UPGRADE INSULATION WHERE YOU CAN

Attic and Basement:

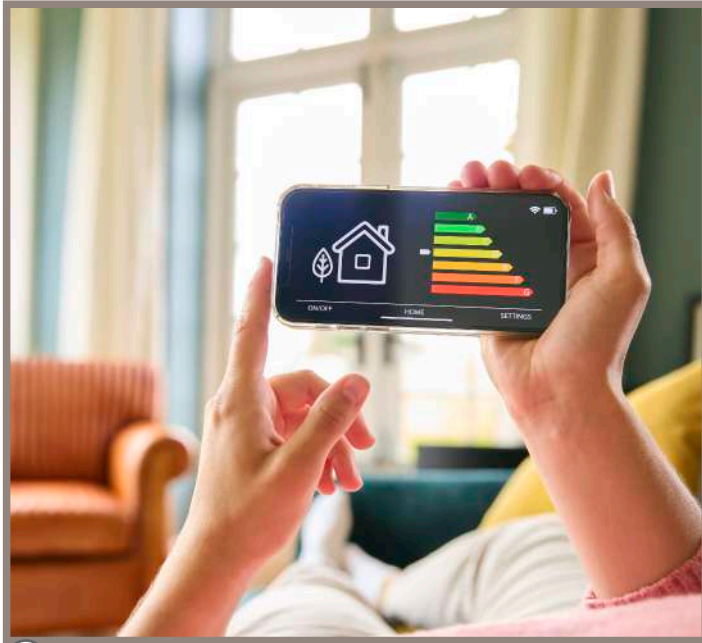
Heat rises, so an under-insulated attic means money drifting up and away. Consider adding more insulation if you notice uneven temperatures or high bills. Similarly, unfinished basements and crawl spaces are common sources of heat loss—insulating these areas can bring big savings.

Windows:

If new windows aren't in the budget, use thermal curtains or layer heavy drapes to keep warmth in at night. On sunny days, open them wide to let natural light heat your rooms.

DIY Window Insulation Kits:

Plastic film insulation kits can be installed on the inside of windows to create an extra barrier. They're affordable and can noticeably cut drafts.



SMART THERMOSTAT USE

Lower at Night:

Set your thermostat lower at night or when you're away. Dropping the temperature by just a couple of degrees for 8 hours can reduce your heating bill by up to 10% per year.

Programmable Thermostats:

If you don't have one, consider investing in a programmable or smart thermostat. These devices automatically adjust the temperature based on your schedule, preventing wasted energy.

Zone Heating:

If possible, heat the rooms you use most and keep others cooler. Close doors to unused rooms and consider space heaters for short-term warmth, but always use them safely.



FURNISH FOR WARMTH

Rugs and Carpets:

Bare floors can make a room feel colder. Area rugs add insulation and comfort, helping keep heat where you want it.

Furniture Placement:

Keep sofas, beds, and other large furniture away from baseboard heaters, radiators, or vents. Allowing airflow ensures your heating system works efficiently.

Reflect Heat:

If you use radiators, place heat-reflecting panels or even aluminum foil behind them to bounce warmth back into the room rather than letting it escape through exterior walls.



✓ MAINTAIN AND SERVICE YOUR HEATING SYSTEM

Regular Maintenance:

Have your furnace, boiler, or wood stove serviced annually by a professional. Clean filters and vents regularly to ensure your system is working efficiently.

Bleed Radiators:

If you have hot water radiators, bleed them at the start of the season to remove air and improve performance.

Check Ductwork:

Leaky ducts can lose up to 30% of heated air. Inspect for gaps or holes and seal with duct mastic (not regular duct tape).



✓ TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PASSIVE SOLAR HEAT

Daylight Savings:

On sunny winter days, open south-facing blinds and curtains to let sunlight naturally warm your home. Close them at dusk to retain the heat.

Houseplants:

Strategically placed houseplants can help humidify and insulate rooms, as well as boost your mood during long winter days.



USE APPLIANCES WISELY

Laundry:

Wash clothes in cold water and dry them on racks near heat sources to add moisture to the air. Avoid running the dryer and dishwasher during peak energy hours.

Kitchen:

When baking winter treats, leave the oven door open after cooking (if safe) to let residual heat warm the kitchen.

Lighting:

Switch to LED bulbs, which use less energy and give off less heat, reducing overall consumption.



HUMIDITY HELPS

Add Moisture:

Dry air feels colder and can irritate your skin and respiratory system. Use a humidifier or simply place bowls of water near heat sources. Houseplants and drying laundry indoors also help. Aim for indoor humidity between 30-50% for comfort and efficiency.

A WARMER, SMARTER, WINTER FOR ALL

Energy efficiency isn't just about lower bills—it's about comfort, sustainability, and caring for our homes and our community. Each small step adds up to a warmer winter and a lighter footprint. As the



✓ COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND REBATES

Home Energy Audits:

Check with local governments or energy providers for home energy audit programs. These assessments can pinpoint exactly where your home is losing heat and recommend cost-effective fixes.

Rebates and Grants:

BC Hydro, FortisBC, and other organizations often offer rebates for upgrading insulation, windows, thermostats, or heating systems. Take advantage of these programs to offset renovation costs.

Neighbourly Help:

Ask friends, neighbours, or community groups for recommendations on local contractors, shared bulk purchases of weatherproofing supplies, or even a helping hand with DIY projects.

Valley's temperatures drop, let's share our tips, lend a hand to neighbours, and embrace the cozy joys of the season.

If you have a clever home en-

ergy hack or a story about wintering well in the Valley, The Valley Voice would love to hear from you. Here's to a warm, energy-wise winter for all!



✓ SIMPLE COZY COMFORTS

Layer Up:

Sometimes the easiest solution is the simplest—add another sweater, use warm throws, or pile on cozy blankets.

Hot Water Bottles & Heating Pads:

Target warmth where you need it, especially for chilly feet and hands.

Hot Drinks:

A mug of tea, cocoa, or coffee can warm you from the inside and lift your spirits.



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Movies



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DUST BUNNY (2025)

Movie Review



IMAGE CREDIT: [Variety.com](https://www.variety.com)

Dust Bunny is an offbeat horror-comedy that dares to blend childhood fears with adult anxieties, resulting in a quirky and sometimes unsettling cinematic experience. Directed by Bryan Fuller, the film stars Mads Mikkelsen and a talented young cast, setting the stage for a story that's as peculiar as its title suggests.

Story & Themes:

The film follows a young girl, Alice, convinced that a monstrous "dust bunny"

is the source of her troubles—and perhaps something darker lurking beneath her bed. Desperate for help, she enlists the aid of a reclusive neighbor (Mikkelsen), and together they embark on a nightmarish journey that blurs the lines between imagination and reality. Dust Bunny uses its horror elements to explore themes of grief, isolation, and the power of belief, though the narrative sometimes stumbles under the weight of its own

ambitions.

Performances:

Mads Mikkelsen delivers a reliably compelling performance, grounding the film's more surreal moments with quiet intensity. The child actors, especially the young lead, are convincing, bringing genuine emotion to a story that frequently teeters between whimsy and dread.

Direction & Visuals:

Fuller's direction is atmospheric, using shadowy

lighting and creative set design to evoke the feeling of a haunted bedtime story. The film's visual effects are imaginative, though occasionally the tone shifts feel abrupt—one moment eerie, the next oddly comical.

IMAGE CREDIT: Fandango.com



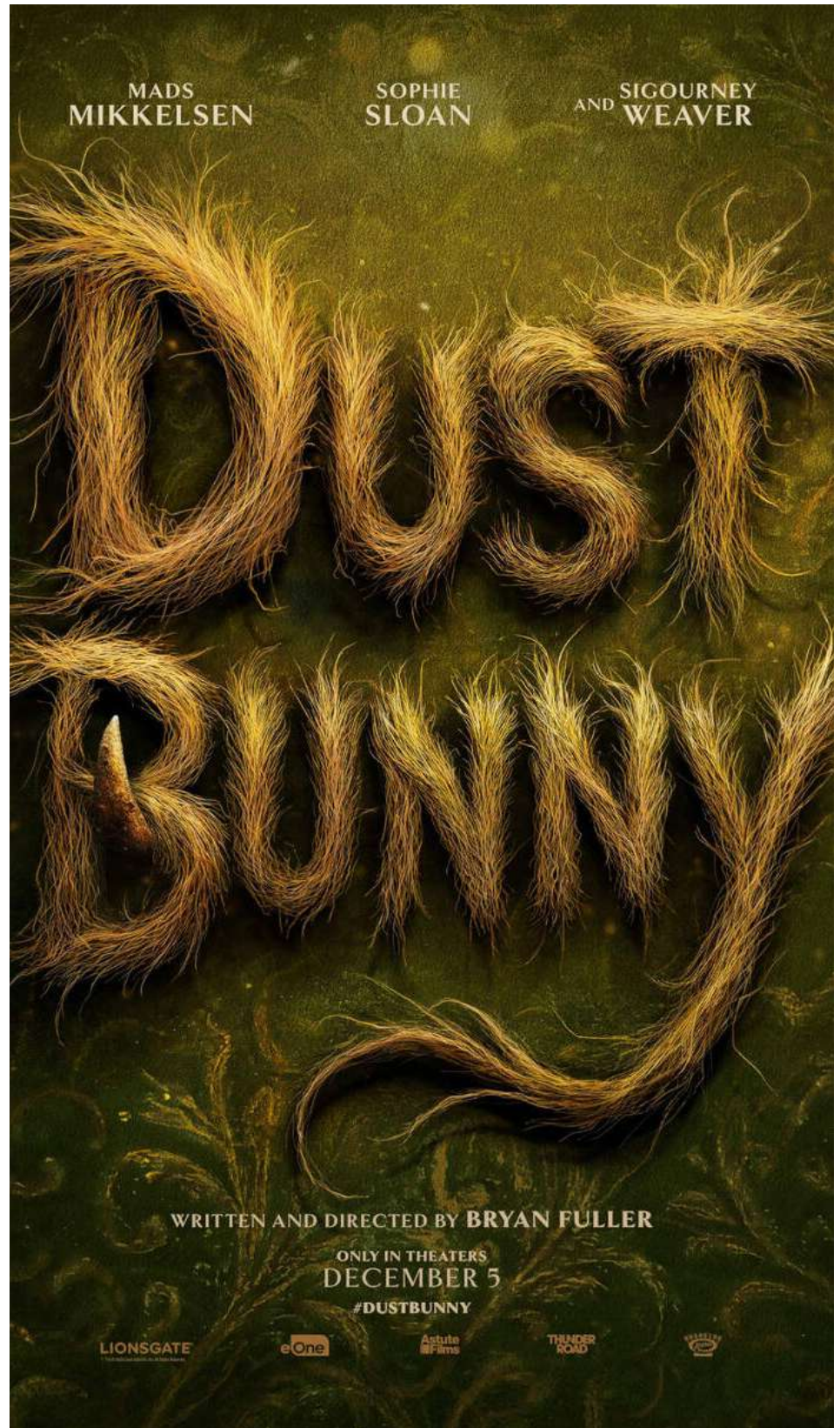
Overall Impression:

Dust Bunny won't be for everyone. Its blend of horror and comedy is uneven at times, and some viewers may find the pacing slow or the ending ambiguous. Yet, for those willing to embrace its odd-ball charm, there's a unique, thought-provoking film beneath the dust.

Final Verdict:

An inventive but uneven ride, Dust Bunny stands out for its performances and visual inventiveness, even if it never quite settles on what it wants to be.

★ Rating: 3 out of 5



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UNBEATABLE

Game Review

(PS5, Xbox Series X|S, PC)



IMAGE CREDIT: [Steam](#)

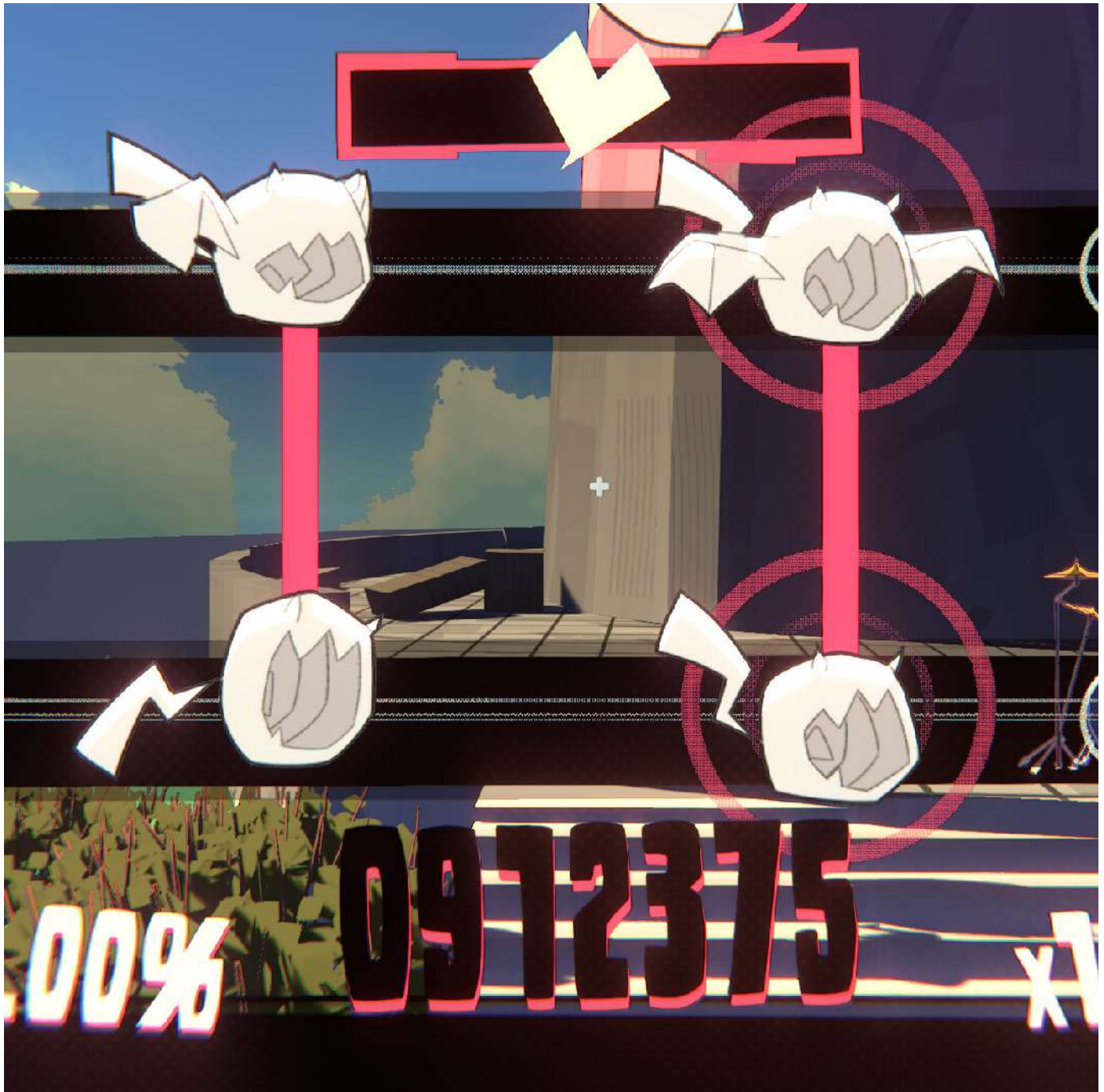
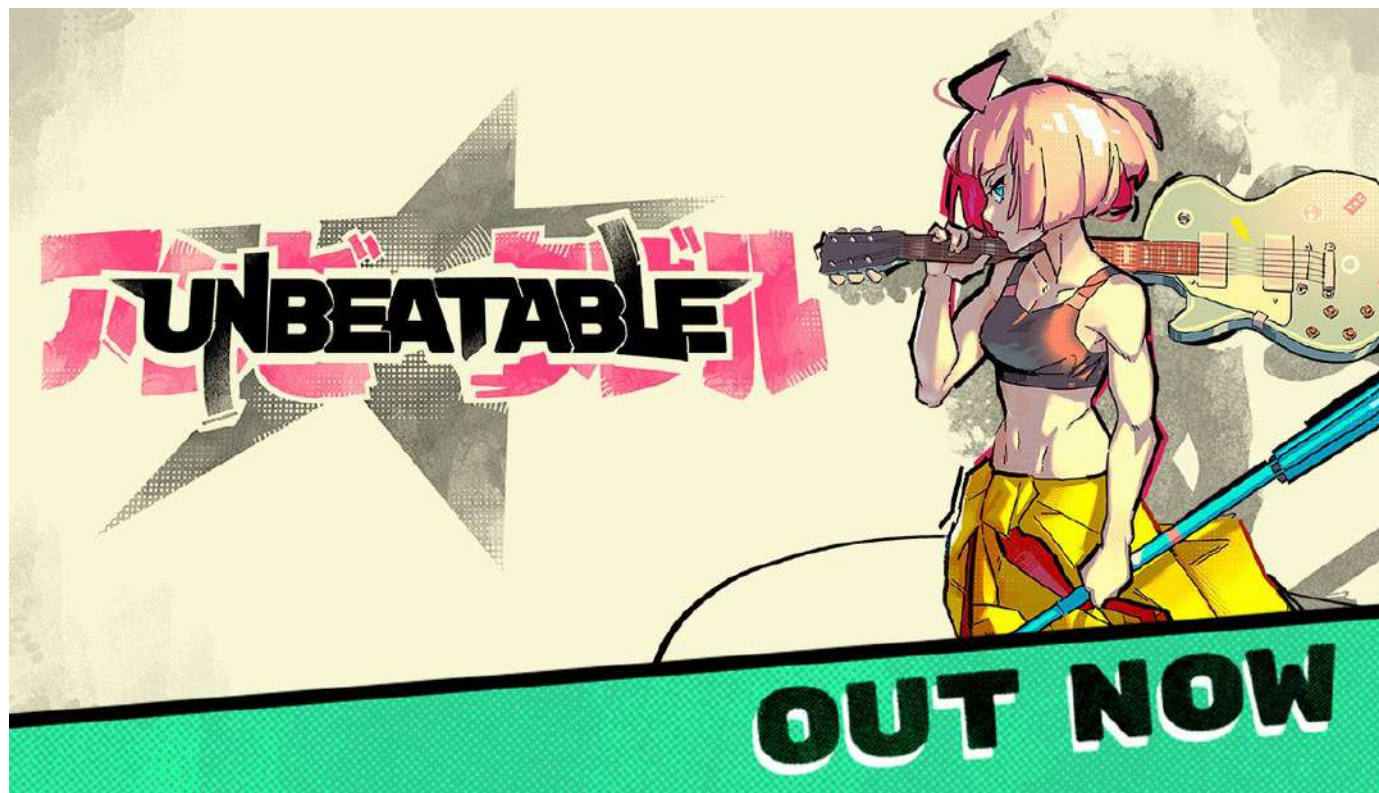


IMAGE CREDIT: [X.Com](#)

Unbeatable is a rhythm-adventure game that pulses with style, heart, and a soundtrack you'll be humming long after the credits roll. Set in a vibrant, neon-lit world where music is outlawed, you play as Beat, a rebellious musician fighting for creative freedom. The game blends narrative-driven exploration with fast-paced, two-button rhythm action, delivering an experience as energetic as it is emotionally resonant.

Gameplay & Mechanics: Unbeatable's rhythm sections are simple to learn but challenging to master. The two-button setup makes it approachable for newcomers, while higher difficulties offer a tough test for genre veterans. The game seamlessly weaves its music challenges into a story of resistance and self-dis-

covery, giving every note and beat real narrative weight.

Visuals & Audio:

What sets Unbeatable apart is its hand-drawn, anime-inspired art direction. The world crackles with personality—think pastel cityscapes, bustling arcades, and expressive character animations. But the real star is the soundtrack: an eclectic mix of rock, synth, and pop that drives both the gameplay and the story. Each track is catchy, memorable, and expertly matched to the action on screen.

Story & Atmosphere:

Unbeatable's plot explores themes of expression, friendship, and the power of music in the face of oppression. Dialogue is witty and heartfelt, with a cast of characters who feel authentically

messy and relatable. The narrative pacing can sometimes stutter, with occasional tonal whiplash, but overall, the story hits the right notes.

Overall Impression:

Unbeatable is a love letter to rhythm games and rebellious youth. While its mechanics aren't groundbreaking, the combination of style, music, and heartfelt storytelling make it special. Occasional difficulty spikes and pacing issues keep it from true perfection, but for music game fans, it's an experience that's hard to beat.

Final Verdict:

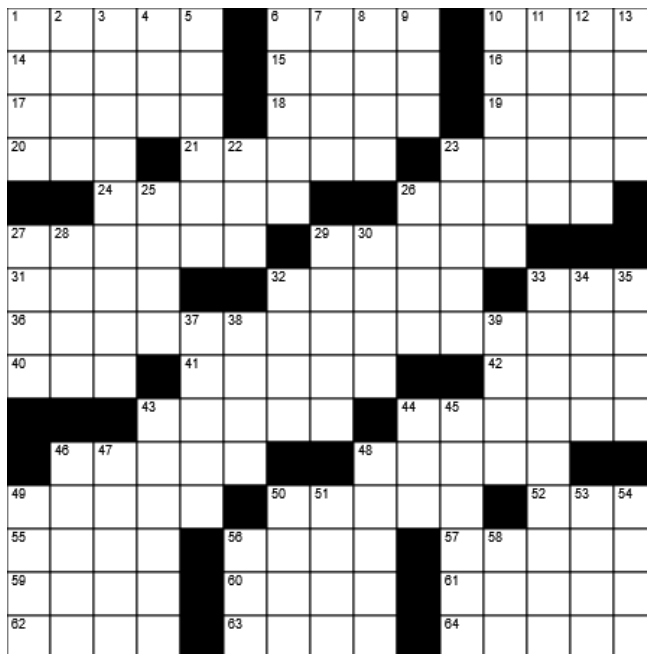
A visually striking, emotionally charged rhythm adventure—Unbeatable earns a solid four out of five stars.

★ Rating: 4 out of 5

A LITTLE FUN

Across

1- Purple Heart, e.g.; 6- Some VCRs; 10- Verdi heroine; 14- Amphitheater; 15- Sharpen; 16- Fulda tributary; 17- Zsa Zsa or Eva; 18- A Chaplin; 19- Linguist Chomsky; 20- Terre Haute sch.; 21- Russian liquor; 23- Singer Furtado; 24- Jewelled crown worn by women; 26- Browned sliced bread; 27- Less fatty; 29- Iranian money; 31- ____ way (not at all); 32- Kama ____; 33- Also; 36- In spite of; 40- Mao ____ - tung; 41- Like a smokestack; 42- Latin love; 43- Narrow street; 44- Stick; 46- How some losses are shown; 48- Not for kids; 49- Chambers; 50- Spy in Canaan; 52- Wonderment; 55- Needle case; 56- River under the Ponte Vecchio; 57- Toil; 59- "Great" dog; 60- Horse hair; 61- Inuit dwelling; 62- Flat sound; 63- Iowa city; 64- Food and water;



Down

1- Biblical trio; 2- Notable times; 3- Society girl; 4- Year abroad; 5- Immature insects; 6- Harper sitcom; 7- Prepare food; 8- ____ Karenina; 9- Neptune's realm; 10- Trojan War hero; 11- Graven images; 12- Distributed cards; 13- Military force; 22- Bobby of hockey; 23- Atari founder Bushnell; 25- ____ pronounce you...; 26- Skater Lipinski; 27- Bits of thread; 28- Slaughter of baseball; 29- Out of practice; 30- ____-bitty; 32- Sneaker or loafer; 33- Schedule; 34- ____ about (approximately); 35- Meanie; 37- Man and Wight; 38- Tattled; 39- Willy Wonka creator Roald; 43- Military organizations; 44- Orange drink; 45- Capital of the Republic of Ireland; 46- Smidgens; 47- People and places, e.g.; 48- Healing plants; 49- Some wines; 50- Study at the last minute; 51- Singer Murray; 53- Timber; 54- Cupid, to the Greeks; 56- Physicians' org.; 58- Tree-ring indication;

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