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NSIDE THIS EDITION

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The provincial government has removed the mandate requiring masks to be worn at indoor public spaces. B.C. HAS A PROBLEM

Death from illicit drugs continues to skyrocket across the province. EXTENDING URGENT CARE

Cranbrook's Urgent and Primary Care Centre will be extending their hours. MLAS CALLING

Gas prices continue to soar with no relief in sight.

Your weekly community magazine

The Voice of the Columbia Valle



LETTER FROM THE VOLUNTEERS

The mask mandate has been lifted! Many of us are excited to see the faces of those we haven't seen since last year. Though, there are some who still wish to protect themselves from the virus by wearing masks at indoor public spaces.

This is acceptable!

Whether you choose to continue wearing your mask for your health, the health of your family, or simply personal choice, or should you choose not to, please just be kind.

It's easy for stigma to be created from our perceptions. It's easy to be hateful. Let's try instead to be kind and supportive - just as we did when the mandate was in effect.



Caution: Ice

Columbia Valley Rural Fire & Rescue Services reminds residents to use caution when operating on frozen bodies of water. The Windermere Fire and Panorama Fire teams will be updating their Ice Rescue training this weekend on Lake Windermere.

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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

OF

by email to news@thevoiceca.ca



Mask Mandate

The provincial government has removed the mandate requiring masks to be worn at indoor public spaces.

As a result of COVID-19 cases declining from both infection and hospitalization perspectives, the provincial government lifted the mask mandate on March 11th. This means face coverings will no longer be required at indoor public spaces, though some workplaces may still recommend or require masks to be worn in certain settings. Though, this is a decision to be made by the owner of the space.

The requirement of face coverings is still in effect for doctors' offices, patient contact areas, and federally-regulated workplaces. This includes airports and airplanes as they are federally-regulated. In a statement <u>reported by CTV</u>, Provincial Health Office Dr. Bonnie Henry shared how she will personally be handling the updated mask mandate.

"I'll continue to wear my mask if I'm on public transit and I would encourage others to do so too. We know it protects us, but it's also a sign of respect of protection for others."

It's being recommended by the province to continue wearing a mask in spaces where physical distancing can be challenging. Also for those who are older, immune compromised, don't have a booster or initial vaccinations, or have children who are not vaccinated are recommended to continue wearing your mask while at indoor public spaces.

While the mask mandate has been lifted, the restrictions surrounding vaccine cards and rapid testing will continue to be in place. The mandate requiring vaccination status to be presented in certain spaces is expected to be relieved on April 8th, 2022. On this date, the B.C. government will also be removing COVID-19 work safety plans to transition back to communicable disease plans.

I'll continue to wear my mask if I'm on public transit and I would encourage others to do so too. We know it protects us, but it's also a sign of respect of protection for others.

> Dr. Bonnie Henry Provincial Health Office

The Risk of Unmasking

Many of us are excited to see the smiling faces of locals we hadn't seen in what feels like forever. Though lifting the mask mandate doesn't signal that we are out of the thick of things with the COVID-19 pandemic. The virus is still present and can infect others around you. Lifting the mask mandate now puts responsibility on each of us to ensure we do our part to prevent the spread of COVID-19. When assessing your risk of being unmasked in public spaces, there are things to keep in mind such as your vaccination status and those around you. It's important to also be cognizant of how much COVID-19 is spreading throughout your community. This can factor into your plans depending on where you're going, whether it is expected to be a crowded setting or not.

Wearing a mask shows...



It Feels Like Forever

The COVID-19 pandemic feels like it's been a part of our lives for a very long time and it certainly has as we're now over the two-year mark. The mask mandate was introduced in British Columbia on August 25th, 2021 to slow the transmission of COVID-19 across communities in the province. The order required masks to be worn in indoor public spaces regardless of your vaccination status.

The settings included:

- malls, shopping centres, coffee shops and retail and grocery stores;
- liquor and drug stores;
- airports, city halls, libraries, community and recreation centres;
- restaurants, pubs and bars (unless seated);
- on public transportation, in a taxi or ride-sharing vehicle;
- areas of office buildings where services to the public are provided;
- common areas of sport and fitness centres when not engaged in physical activity;
- common areas of post-secondary institutions and non-profit organizations; and
- inside schools for all K-12 staff, visitors and students in grades 4-12.

The mask mandate had been reviewed many times since it's inception, though the number of COVID-19 cases across the province played the biggest factor in deciding whether to lift the mandate or not. With the number of hospitalizations and infections dwindling across the province, the B.C. government saw this as a good moment to lift the mask mandate.



East Kootenay COVID-19 Cases

For the first time this year, COVID-19 cases in the East Kootenay region have gone below 100 with only 94 infections confirmed between February 27th and March 5th. The numbers are also showing a steady decline since the end of January. 37 infections were reported in Cranbrook and remains a hotspot for the region 7 weeks in a row. Though the number is down from previous weeks. Within the Interior Health region there are 90 hospitalizations with 11 currently in intensive care.

Seed & Plant Swap Sunday March 13 11 to 1:30 pm



Bring your seeds from last year and any indoor plants you have to swap or sell. Make sure to label seeds with name and date. Plants should have a tag with name. Entry fee for sellers suggested: 20% of sales by donation.

At the Groundswell Greenhouse

A yearly get together, before spring comes, to dream about gardening and to share our knowledge and expertise. Sure to be a fun event!

SEEDS

Bring your family to see the produce growing in the greenhouse and enjoy a Sunday outing and buy some indoor plants and/or seeds for your garden.

> This year if after the sale, you have left over seeds, you can donate them to the new Invermere Library Seed Bank.



Let us know if you will be coming to sell or share seeds and plants so we can set aside enough space for all.

More info groundswellnetworksociety@gmail.com groundswellnetwork.ca

Want to improve your English?

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www.cbal.org









VALLEY PROMOTIONS







LEARN ABOUT BATS IN OUR COMMUNITIES MONDAY, MARCH 7TH @ 6:30 P/ 7:30 M Email Kootenaylibrariesprogramming@gmail.com to register for this free zoom event



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A Problem

Death from illicit drugs continues to skyrocket across the province.

January saw another month where hundreds of British Columbians lost their lives due to drug toxicity. 207 lives were lost in January which marks the fourth month in a row where drug toxicity deaths peaked over 200. 37 of these lives lost were within the Interior Health region and three were local to the East Kootenay area.

Between August 1st, 2017 and July 31st, 2021 the province experienced 6,007 deaths due to drug toxicity, making it the leading cause of unnatural death in British Columbia. The review panel of the BC Coroner Service wants a safer drug supply and an evidencebased system of care to help combat the ever-growing deaths related to drug toxicity. The recommendations being provided by the review panel are ensuring a safer drug supply for those who are at risk of dying from the toxic drug supply, develop an "Illicit Drug Toxicity Action Plan" which includes ongoing monitoring, and establishing an evidencebased continuum of care.

The Indigenous population in B.C. counted for 14% of overdose deaths between January

and June of last year. The northern areas of the province contain the highest proportion of Indigenous people and communities which can bring unique challenges and distance between communities and service centres. In 2020 alone, 254 First Nations people were lost due to toxic drugs in the province.

Calls are coming not only from provincial organizations and parties but from local organizations as well. ANKORS has issued a drug warning as they found traces of Flualprazolam in drug samples tested locally. The chemical is a type of benzos and is being found in more sample testing across the province. High doses of benzos mixed with opioids increases the risk of overdose in the user and Naloxone will not reverse a benzo overdose.



Free Personal Tax Filing at the Radium Library-Beginning February 22, 2022!

Free tax clinics are available for eligible individuals through the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) and the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

This free personal tax preparation service is available for individuals who do not exceed the BC Low-Income Value. Please go to our website to review full eligibility criteria, or call the library at 250-347-2434 to inquire!

If you qualify for this service, you can drop off your income tax documents in-person at the library. Please bring government issued ID with you. (It is required to submit your forms)

- Drop off available: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays. Bring your documents to our front desk anytime during open hours (11:00am-4:00pm)
- We will ask you to fill out a quick intake form before you submit your documents
- Tax returns will be completed by our volunteer tax assistant off-site, and we will notify you when it is ready for pickup
- Phone and in-person appointments with volunteer tax assistant available upon request

The Clinic will end on April 21, 2022.



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







DROP OFF YOUR GENTLY USED KITCHEN AND GARDEN TOOLS TO SUPPORT OUR FUNDRAISING SALE! Donations accepted from ga-sp. 7 days a week at

Winderberry, through March 22nd.



Thanks to Columbia Basin Trust Summer works program we are hiring two students for our summer season. Position starts May 15th and goes until August 27, 2022.

Students need to be 17 years of age or older, have been registered as a full-time student in the previous academic year and intend to return to school on a full-time basis in the next academic year.

For more information contact Angela Millor at serenityfarmev/Reutlook.com or 250-341-5216





CPR Lodge & Green Space \$25 per vendor Makers/Crafters/Artists Dried and Preserved Food Vendors Welcome (Honey, jams, etc). Please contact us at columbiavalleypride@gmail.com to apply by June 1st, 2022





Extending Urgent Care

Cranbrook's Urgent and Primary Care Centre will be extending their hours.

A new healthcare facility recently opened in Cranbrook and thanks to the additional staff in the centre, their hours of operation will be extended. A new family physician, a nurse practitioner two registered nurses, and three medical office assistants were added to the team helping make the extension a reality. The new healthcare centre is located in the Baker Street Professional Centre and will be open from 9:00am-7:00pm and open from 10:00am on statutory holidays.

Since the facility opened in December, over 1,300 patients have already been seen. There are currently 19 healthcare professionals working in Cranbrook's Urgent and Primary Care Centre where patients can be connected with the practitioner who can best treat their illness or injury. In a statement that was reported by Health Minister Adrian Dix shared his comments on the benefits of extending the of centre hours operation.

"By extending the hours of operation, we're helping more people in Cranbrook quickly connect with a practitioner to best treat their condition. The additional seven healthcare providers are crucial to the urgent care team and providing quality services."

The centre accepts drop ins for a same-day appointment and you will be seen in order of the severity of the condition, instead of a first come, first served basis.



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Donation Drop Off Hours:

Sunday- 9am to12pm Wednesday- 9am to5pm Thursday- 9am to5pm



VALLEY PROMOTIONS



MLAs Calling for Action

Gas prices continue to soar with no relief in sight.

The province is seeing record-breaking gas prices and MLAs feel it's time for the provincial government to provide support.

On March 10th, gas prices were at record highs with Cranbrook seeing prices as high as 210.9 cents/litre and Radium seeing 188.9 cents/litre. The average price of gas across the province of British Columbia on that day was \$2.03/litre. As reported by <u>myeastkootenaynow.com</u>, Kootenay East MLA Tom Shypitka speaks out on the cost of gas in the province and how this is not a new issue.

"British Columbia has, for the last several years, had the highest gas prices in North America and now, with the war in Ukraine, it has knocked it totally out of the park," said Shypitka. "The people of B.C. have had enough of it. This government promised to make life more affordable for British Columbians and we've seen our real estate market is going off the charts, our groceries and everyday essentials are sky-high, and now we're seeing gas prices over the \$2 per litre mark. It's unacceptable."

Shyptika is not the only local MLA who is speaking out on the record-breaking gas prices. MLA for Columbia River-Revelstoke, Doug Clovechok, also speaks out and shares his comments on the impact the NDP's carbon tax has on the province and gas prices.

"Our carbon tax was revenue-neutral, which meant all revenue from the tax was actually returned in a couple of ways," explained Clovechok. "Fast forward to today, one of the first things they (the B.C. NDP) did immediately, was get rid of the tax neutrality. So, there are over a billion dollars of B.C. taxpayer's money that have gone into general revenue and haven't come back to them."

Clovechok continues to explain the complexities of the situation.

"I've talked to the BCUC (British Columbia Utilities Commission) several times, they said they were going to have some solutions. We're still chasing after them to find out what they're going to do," explained Clovechok. "The BC NDP brought in the Transparency Fuel Act in 2019, which was supposed to look at whether or not oil companies are gouging us. They did a report that said it actually was happening, but the BCUC doesn't have any authority to enforce it."

Both MLAs make it clear they feel the government should either reduce or remove the provincial carbon tax overall. At the same time, the NDP government is also expected to add one cent per litre to the existing carbon tax.



Tom Shypitka Kootenay East MLA



Doug Clovechok MLA Columbia River-Revelstoke



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VALLEY PROMOTIONS

BREAKING

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

The Columbia Valley Food Bank supports students in schools through funding for lunch and snack programs. A popular item was recently made available with the help of the BC Food Bank Hub in Kelowna! A partial skid of pizza pops and rice bowls were received and delivered by Morgan Odland and her partner Griffin!

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

NEWS

The Invermere Film Festival is gearing up for March 25th and are looking for 40+ volunteers to be a part. Volunteer positions are open to anyone 16 years of age or older, fun loving, willing to work fairly hard for 2-3 hours at a time, then watch a film. All volunteers will need to provide proof of vaccination.

Learn more here.





LOCK YOUR DOORS

RCMP are reminding Columbia Valley residents to lock their vehicle doors after three vehicles were entered with valuables stolen. A set of keys and tools were stolen from a dump truck on March 1st near Highway 93/95 in Windermere. Two additional vehicles had valuables stolen the next day near Radium. All vehicles were determined to have been unlocked as there were no signs of forced entry.

CRANBROOK STREET SWEEPING

Street sweeping will begin this week on Priority 1 routes in Cranbrook. Residents are asked to make efforts to avoid parking on priority streets. More information will be provided as they move to different areas around the city.









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VALLEY PROMOTIONS



Killer New Horror Game

The Quarry reveal is set for this week.

I love horror, I am all about it. Horror games are one of my favourite genres. Games like Resident Evil, Death Park, Silent Hill, Dead by Daylight, etc. Whenever there's even a hint of a new horror game being dropped, I am all over it. Supermassive Games has announced a new horror game that is being billed as an "all-new horror experience" from Until Dawn and The Dark Pictures studio. 2K will be publishing the game later this summer.



A reveal trailier is set to be published on March 17th at 10:00am MDT that will give us more details on the game. A teaser trailer was released by Supermassive Games that shows a crime scene that looks like a vehicle accident. Voiceovers give the feel that something isn't right and they need to make it to the quarry. A slow pan builds up to an ominous person whos face we don't get to see. My assumption is this will be the killer of the story.

My hope is this won't be another team-up "survivor vs. killer" type game. There's already so many of those out there, doing it right, and the new Evil Dead game is about to drop in May too. There needs to be a good story-driven horror game that allows you to be immersed in the environment. I'm looking forward to the trailer dropping on March 17th, hopefully it contains gameplay or game details.

Supermassive Games also registered five new logos for unnanounced games in the Dark Pictures series. Sparking rumours there may be new game coming in the franchise. The titles included were The Dark Pictures: Directive 8020, The Dark Pictures: The Craven Man, The Dark Pictures: Intercession, The Dark Pictures: Winterfold, and The Dark Pictures Presents O Death.



<u>@The_incrediblejosh</u> on Instagram

MARCH 21-25 2022

Are you ready for an amazing week of learning? Then join us!

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BladeRunners



A LITTLE FUN

Across

1- Rejection power; 5- Ski lift; 9- Chadic language; 13- Sidestep, circumvent; 15- The munchies, e.g.; 16- Folk singer Burl; 17-Tennis's Monica; 18- Classic autos; 19- Frat party purchases; 20- Half a fly; 21- Stadium section; 23- Develop; 25- Able was ...; 26-Wise guy; 27- Ten plus five; 30- "Aladdin" monkey; 31- Religion of the Muslims; 32- A type of interpolation, transform, or map; 37-False god; 38- Piece of music written for a solo instrument; 40- Member of a great Peruvian people: 41- Brief summary: 43-Gangster Lansky; 44- Fashion designer's monogram; 45- Elaborate fabric; 47- Stellar; 50- As to: 51- Feathered fisher: 52- Golfer Aoki: 53- Gobble up: 56- Desperate; 57- " She Lovely?"; 59- Have a feeling; 61- It's a thought; 62- Go sky-high; 63- Born before, senior churchman; 64- Nair rival; 65-Bandleader Puente; 66- This ____ outragel;



Down

1- Sleeveless garment; 2- Nights before; 3-Story; 4- Shelley's "____ to the West Wind"; 5-Large soup dish; 6- ____ Fox; 7- Back in time;

8- To be similar to; 9- Member of a motorcycle gang; 10- Not concealed; 11- Having long gams; 12- Being, to Brutus; 14- Prize; 22- Dander; 24- Island in central Hawaii; 25- Author Calvino; 26- Stated; 27- Little lies; 28-_____, old chapl; 29- Custardy dessert; 32- Student's conveyance; 33- Family tree member; 34- "Orinoco Flow" singer; 35- Scored 100 on; 36- Hard to find; 38- Editorial writer; 39- Work the soil; 42- Combustible heap; 43- Sullenly ill-humored; 45- European-style restaurant; 46- Retrovirus component; 47- Line in a play directed to the audience; 48- Carousal; 49- Rare delight; 51- Thor's father; 52- _____ the finish; 53- Terminates; 54- On the ocean; 55- Small gull; 58- _____-disant (self-styled); 60- Lilly of pharmaceuticals;

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GET INVOLVED

There are MANY ways you can get involved with this awesome online publication! We hope to hear from you.

BUSINESS ADS

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

FOR A FULL-PAGE PLACEMENT

Donate a product or service for giveaway through the Valley Voice. Help us give back to the readers and we will help place you. Though, we will likely reserve this to one per issue. Businesses can choose to host more than one giveaway through Valley Voices to obtain additional feature pages.



FOR A FULL-PAGE FOOD WRITE UP TO GET ON THE COVER

We will ask you to provide the meal set you want tasted, at no charge, to our public food writer. (One of the front facing volunteer positions through the Valley Voice where anonymity is not always possible.) You will be notified when to expect the critic and they will introduce themselves. Once the meal has been completed, you can expect a fullpage review, complete with photography of your food, to appear in a future issue. This one is really easy... take the best photo. If the best photo has been submitted by a business, it's the business who will be credited on the front page.

BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

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

Want to get involved?

Email us at <u>news@thevoicecv.ca</u>

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