



SKAHA MATTERS

“Bringing Community Matters To You”

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January 2026

Your FREE Monthly Community News!



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What Will You Do In 2026?

By Myleen Mallach, Owner/Publisher of Skaha Matters

The arrival of a new year invites reflection - not just on what we want to achieve, but on how we want to live. Amid resolutions and ambitions, it is an ideal moment to pause and set boundaries that protect what matters most. Boundaries are not limits on joy; they are commitments to it. By deciding what deserves our time, energy, and attention, we begin to identify what is truly important, rather than what is merely urgent or loud.

In a digital age defined by constant notifications, infinite scrolling, and performative busyness, choosing to go analog can feel a bit radical. Yet stepping away from screens, even briefly, creates space for clarity. Writing goals by hand, reading a physical book, cooking without distraction, or simply sitting in silence allows us to reconnect with ourselves. Analog moments truly slow time. They remind us that life does not need to be optimized to be meaningful. Slowing down is not falling behind; it is actually arriving more fully. When we move at a gentler pace, we begin to notice the small, sustaining details of everyday life: morning light through a window, the warmth of a shared meal, the comfort of routine, the sound of laughter without a phone nearby. Pause and unplug and see what happens. These little things often carry the greatest weight, yet they are the first to be lost when life becomes rushed and overfilled.

As the new year unfolds, the challenge is not to do more, but to do less with intention. To say 'no where needed', to unplug without guilt, and to protect time for rest, connection, and presence. In choosing boundaries, valuing the analog, and appreciating the ordinary, we create a year not just of progress, but of true meaning. A huge thank you to all the advertisers and content contributors since the beginning of this community newsletter in August 2009. We simply wouldn't have this paper without your ongoing support.

A New Year, A New Municipality: What's Next For Okanagan Falls?

By Randy Ludwar

Happy New Year to everyone, and best wishes for a healthy and successful 2026. With 2025 now behind us, we are entering a year that may bring historic change to Okanagan Falls. Many residents are aware that this spring the Province may issue the Letters Patent for incorporation. If that happens, Okanagan Falls will officially become a municipality and, for the first time, residents will be preparing for the election of a mayor and council later this year.

In March 2025, local voters approved incorporation, making Okanagan Falls the first new municipality in British Columbia in 15 years. Incorporation means the community will have its own local government, responsible for decisions such as bylaws, budgeting, and community services, rather than being governed directly by the Regional District (Government of British Columbia, 2025).

At a meeting in mid-December, several people asked an important question, "What exactly are Letters Patent?" While explanations were offered, there was no clear, simple definition, so I took time to research the topic using information from the Government of British Columbia website. Letters Patent are legal documents issued by the Province that formally create a municipality. They set out the municipality's name, boundaries, governance structure, number of councillors, and the rules for the first election. In simple terms, Letters Patent act as both the birth certificate and operating framework for a new town. Without them, incorporation cannot be completed and elections cannot legally proceed (Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Municipal Affairs).

The Letters Patent for Okanagan Falls are expected to be finalized in spring 2026, assuming all remaining steps are completed. Once issued, the community will move toward its first municipal election, which is expected to align with British Columbia's general local government elections in October 2026 (Government of British Columbia, 2025).

Many residents have also asked how the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, often called DRIPA, affects this process. DRIPA requires the Province to work in cooperation with Indigenous peoples and ensure laws and decisions are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In this case, the Province has been working with the Osoyoos Indian Band as part of the incorporation process, including discussions around boundaries and governance considerations (Government of British Columbia, DRIPA).

One issue that has drawn strong public interest is the possibility of a **name change**. The official name of a municipality is set out in the Letters Patent, and discussions about naming have formed part of the broader incorporation dialogue. A change in name could affect residents in practical ways, including mailing addresses, legal documents, business branding, tourism recognition, and the long-standing identity many people associate with Okanagan Falls. Past examples in British Columbia show that naming decisions can be emotional and lasting, and they deserve clear communication and public input.

For residents who have concerns about a radical or unexpected name change, it is important to know that respectful written input matters. Those who wish to express their views can write directly to the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs. Correspondence can be sent to **Tara Faganello**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Local Government Division, at Tara.Faganello@gov.bc.ca, and to the Minister's Office attention the **Hon. Christine Boyle** at HMA.Minister@gov.bc.ca. Thoughtful, respectful letters help ensure community voices are part of the official record. Thank you and best wishes in 2026.

A Year Of Community, Advocacy, And Connection

By Donegal Wilson, MLA for Boundary-Similkameen

As the year comes to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect on the work we've done together across Boundary-Similkameen and to thank you for the trust you place in me as your MLA.

This past year has been shaped by strong community voices, real challenges, and meaningful progress. From Oliver and Okanagan Falls to Keremeos, Princeton, Grand Forks, Greenwood, and the many rural areas in between, I've had the privilege of meeting with residents, local leaders, businesses, volunteers, and first responders who care deeply about where they live and where our region is headed.

Advocating for local priorities has remained at the heart of my work. That has included standing up for communities navigating flooding and extreme weather, pushing for greater transparency and accountability in local governance, and continuing to support residents during ongoing discussions around incorporation, infrastructure, and service delivery. I've also spent time listening directly to families and seniors about healthcare access, affordability, and the importance of keeping services close to home.

This year also reinforced the strength of community connection across our region. I was honoured to take part in Remembrance Day ceremonies and to connect with veterans and volunteers who ensure these moments of reflection remain meaningful. Supporting local events, small businesses, and community organizations continues to be one of the most rewarding parts of this role, because these are the places where neighbours look out for one another.

In Victoria, I've worked to bring Boundary-Similkameen perspectives forward in the Legislature, raising issues that matter locally and ensuring rural voices are not lost in provincial decision-making. While not every challenge has an easy or immediate solution, I remain committed to following up, asking questions, and advocating on your behalf.

As we finish up the holiday season, I know this time of year can look different for everyone. Whether you're gathering with family, working through a busy season, or facing uncertainty, I hope you find moments of rest, warmth, and connection. Our communities are strongest when we take care of one another.

If you ever need assistance, have concerns, or simply want to share what's happening in your community, my office is here to help. You can reach us by phone at 250-498-5122, by email at Donegal.Wilson.MLA@leg.bc.ca, or by visiting www.donegalwilsonmla.ca. No issue is too small to raise.

I hope you and your loved ones had a very Merry Christmas and a safe, healthy, and hopeful holiday season.

Recovery For Everyone

By Van Hill

What? A Recovery Meeting ~ This is a secular meeting based on smartrecovery.org and AA agnostic. Smart has many tools that are based in CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) and techniques which can help individuals recognize some of the thinking/feeling traps that may have unreasonable levels of control over their behaviors. We also utilize the book "The Proactive 12 Steps" for recovery discussion.

When & Where? ~ Wednesday evenings at 7 pm at 216 Hastings Avenue, Penticton (Heritage Train Station). Doorbell at front. For more information, please contact Van Hill at 250.300.5222.



RCMP Community Report



By Jo Anne Ruppenthal,
Community Policing-Resortative Justice Coordinator

Connecting & Support

Last year, I spoke about coming out of the holidays and being mindful of our mental health. I would like to add more insight and suggestions to help navigate some of these low feelings. I am going to preface this by stating that if you need support, please reach out to the numbers listed at the end of this article.

A co-worker suggested to me that even random acts of kindness can be affectious to a mood. Here are some suggestions that you can do right now: 1) Say something nice about someone in your family or who you work with. For example, "thank you for loading the dishwasher" or "I really like your shoes". People like to feel noticed or appreciated. 2) Someone waiting in a lineup with you. For example, a smile or a friendly "hello" may be enough for someone to feel "connected" to the current moment. And lastly, 3) A simple gesture of holding the door open for someone. Yes, these are simple, and yes, these are most of the things that people SHOULD be doing, but when we are stuck in our head - we forget. All these suggestions are FREE too. They cost you nothing, but may be a big value to the other person ... or even yourself.

Please, if you need extra support, utilize the following numbers:

- Suicide Crisis Line ~ 1-800-784-2433
- Child & Youth Mental Health ~ 250-487-4422
- AA - Alcohol & Drug Referral ~ 1-800-663-1441

Please reach out to the South Okanagan Similkameen Community Policing Unit whenever you need, by calling either 250-770-5688 or 250-770-5684 or on our Facebook site.

**Up To Date
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eCalendar!**
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Quick Facts: Skaha Matters is published every month. All residents and businesses in Kaleden, Heritage Hills, Okanagan Falls, Skaha Estates, St. Andrews, and Twin Lakes receive an issue via Canada Post on the last business day of each month. Limited locations also carry copies. For full advertising details, please visit SkahaMatters.com.

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From The Director For RDOS Area "I"

Happy New Year to everyone! 2026 is going to be a busy year wrapping up the projects that I started at the beginning of my term in 2018. Watch for updates through the upcoming months. If you are interested in learning more about being an RDOS Director for Area "I", please reach out. I have heard from some residents who have expressed interest.

Subrina Monteith

Director of RDOS Area "I"



If you see maintenance needs for the KVR Trail, Pioneer Park, 1912 Hotel or pathway, please email parks@rdos.bc.ca. If you can provide photos or location information, that will assist staff greatly in locating the issue needing to be addressed.

The 1912 Hotel will have some activity, as it undergoes its annual safety inspection. The Twin Lakes public access points are being surveyed for legal boundary areas, so RDOS knows where FireSmart activities can occur.

Consider joining Kaleden Parks and Recreation Commission to have your voice at the table during discussions on projects in the community.

I wish you all the best in the year ahead. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to me.

Subrina Monteith, Director of RDOS Area "I"

Direct: 250.460.0723 | smonteith@rdos.bc.ca | www.rdos.bc.ca

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Kaleden FireSmart Tip

By Linda Dahl

First of all - Happy New Year! Make getting FireSmart your first new resolution of 2026.

1. Book an Assessment to get started: FireSmart.rdos.bc.ca
2. Think about clearing 1.5 meters around your house making it void of all burnable debris, shrubs and wood products.
3. Borrow tools and large waste bags from Kaleden FireSmart. Email FireSmart@kaledenfire.ca.
4. Consider a Neighbourhood Project to make everyone close by safer together.
5. Mark Saturday, May 2nd on your calendar for Kaleden's Annual Chipping Event.

Need Medical Equipment?

The HUB would like to remind local residents that medical equipment is available to borrow. There are crutches, walkers, hospital beds, raised toilet seats and other helpful items one might need. If you are looking for this type of equipment for the long or short term, please call the HUB at 250-460-3387.

Kaleden Community Association Update

By Glenda Livolsi

Happy New Year! The Kaleden Community Directors hope that everyone had a wonderful time at the Tree Lighting event in December ... Christmas was definitely in the air! Pioneer Park looked amazing with the lights on the gazebo and pathway lit up with candles, and the Community Choir was singing while the caroling continued on the Christmas Trolley!



Kaleden Community Association is pleased to highlight the following projects and events over this past year that the directors have completed or supported for our community:

- Funded accessible picnic table in Pioneer Park.
- Funded construction/installation of book/toy lending library and lost and found box at Pioneer Park.
- Installed power outlet at gazebo in Pioneer Park.
- Provided White Pine tree for Pioneer Park that can be lit up for Christmas.
- Installed power outlet near White Pine tree.
- Bench on KVR between Kaleden and Okanagan Falls.
- Flood lights inside the Kaleden Hotel.
- Resurfaced gym floor at the Community Hall.
- Replaced fluorescent lights with LEDs at the Community Hall.
- Installed wireless connection for sound projection at the Community Hall.
- Rebuilt counter in accessible washroom at Community Hall.
- Hosted Community Pumpkin Carving event.
- Hosted Community Light Up event.
- Financially supported FireSmart clean-up of hillside above the bottle depot.
- Purchased toys for children at Kaleden Library.
- Supported the Kaleden Community Church septic rebuild.
- Funded 5 small grants for community events: Twin Lakes Social Club BBQ and Chipping Event; Skating Party; Memory Cafe; Library Pollinator Garden; and Kaleden Library Summer Reading Program.
- Funded a bursary through the Kaleden Bursary Fund.

These projects and events were funded by the proceeds from the bottle depot, donations, grants, and the lease of the Kaleden Community Hall.



All new website for all things Kaleden!

www.KaledenCommunity.com

Courtesy of the Kaleden Community Association

Kaleden Irrigation District News

By Bruce Shepherd, KID Trustee

Goodbye, 2025 ~ And so long to our fourth dry year in a row! This persistent water deficit requires a lengthy and balanced stretch of snow and rain to recharge our Okanagan watershed. And unfortunately, the recent atmospheric rivers likely aggravated the situation, with too much warm rain coming too quickly and reducing an already low snowpack. Climate change in action!

Haven't Yet Paid Your 2025 Water Taxes? ~ If not, sorry to advise that an additional 10% penalty was added to your bill on December 31. Notices to this effect were mailed out earlier to all delinquent ratepayers. Please remember that taxes and tolls are billed separately (Tax Bills go out in the fall, and Toll Bills in the spring). They are KID's primary sources of income, so please pay both promptly to avoid penalties and ensure your taps continue to flow! A good resolution for 2026 ...

And Hello, 2026! ~ Like many other local water utilities, KID is required to upgrade its system. In preparation for this, we have compiled information for over a decade, and planning for the upgrade will escalate in 2026. We have requested that our engineering consultant prepare a Class A cost estimate. In turn, that estimate will be used to inform the ratepayers as to their individual costs and payment options via a survey, followed by a referendum to approve the project and borrow the additional funds needed for construction. Recent media coverage as to the costs faced by other local utilities has been nothing short of gobsmacking, but KID believes that our project will cost much less than these others, for a number of reasons. This column will be addressing those reasons over the coming months. Rest assured that KID intends to continue to provide quality water at a reasonable cost, as all of us Trustees live here too!

What's a Class A Estimate? ~ So glad you asked! Construction cost estimates are normally done in four phases, starting with D and ending with A (think of your high school report card). Beginning with Class D, project options are ranked and a design concept selected, with cost accuracy rated at $\pm 20\%$ (this has been done for KID). Classes C and B incorporate more detailed design and costing, with cost accuracy improving to $\pm 15\%$ and $\pm 10\%$ respectively (KID has not formally done these). The Class A Estimate provides bid-ready designs and specifications, and a cost accuracy of $\pm 5-10\%$.

Best Wishes for 2026 from KID'S Board of Trustees!



L-R: Henry Sielmann, Bruce Shepherd, Nayda Paruk, Steve Arstad, and Mike Gane.



Kaleden
Irrigation District

Office Hours: 9-1 Mon & Thur | Appt Wed
119 Ponderosa Ave | 250.497.5407
kaledenirrigation@gmail.com
www.kaledenirrigation.org



KALEDENHUB
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If you live in the Kaleden area and have needs, please call the HUB. Our frozen meals (mostly soup) are available immediately. We can also provide grocery shopping - Please allow a few days advance notice.

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"Asian Night" menu in addition to the regular menu and specials. More details on Facebook.

1030 Main Street, Okanagan Falls

Kaleden Volunteer Fire Department



By Jean Dube

Home Safety Checks

Let's start the new year off right. Doing some home safety checks may help in preventing a fire emergency.

Prevent burns and fires in your home:

- Avoid using electrical cords that are broken or frayed. Keep cords safe and out of reach from young children.
- Do not overload your outlets. If your outlet is warm or hot to the touch, or discolored, discontinue using and replace immediately.
- When using candles, never leave them unattended. Always extinguish when leaving the home or going to bed. Try battery operated LED candles instead, they are flameless and some even provide a realistic flicker. They are economical in price and much safer.
- Watch your food while cooking. Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove to help prevent burns.
- Create a safe zone for children. Keep children 1 metre from stove or heat sources.

More Home Safety Tips:

- Have working smoke alarms on every floor of the home, inside and outside bedrooms and the basement. They are your first line of defense.
- Have multiple fire extinguishers - in the central part of your home, near the front door or a door you use most frequently. Ensure all family members are aware of their locations. Use the PASS method to deploy extinguishers. **Pull - Aim - Squeeze - Sweep.**
- Don't attempt to fight a fire if it's spreading quickly or if the room is filling with smoke. In these cases, evacuate immediately and call 911.
- Keep hallways and exits clear and clutter free for ease of evacuation.
- Develop and practice a home ESCAPE PLAN with your family at least twice a year.
- Designate a meeting place outside and stay out until it is deemed safe to re-enter by the fire department.

I encourage you to talk to your family about fire safety and make sure to include all ages and any persons with mobility issues.



Matt Taylor
Director for
RDOS Area "D"



From The Director For RDOS Area "D"

Christmas 2025 ~ Always hard to write about something before it's actually happened. The run-up to Christmas was great! The lights and decorations around town were beautiful! I hope the Christmas season was great for everyone - and that Kyle and the rest of the Belich Crew enjoyed a well deserved, extra day off! Wish they'd had another!

Thanks goes to all the volunteers who staged various events for the rest of us to enjoy with neighbours, friends and family, including at Seniors, the Museum and the Legion, and the family movie and the RDOS Community Christmas Event at the Community Recreation Centre. The high point for me is Helping Hand's Christmas Hamper event. The 'Christmas Light Up' at the mall with carollers and hot chocolate was well attended, with quite a few more than last year. And yes, the trees fell over in a fierce windstorm a few days later. Despite all that, it was a great event and I hope organizers of this and all other events come back and do it again next year!



Interesting Fact ~ Okanagan Falls Community Recreation Centre officially opened May 4 1974 - apparently the accompanying dance went until after 1 am. Building costs of \$130,000 were provided by the RDOS on behalf of the community (\$65,000) with the balance from then School District 14. The Okanagan Falls Recreation Centre - gym, multi-purpose room, kitchen and office - is regularly used for events like the Christmas event, movies, community sports and school activities.

RDOS Budget ~ The budget has its first reading on January 7. Area "D" budgets will be presented at an information session on Tuesday, January 13 from 5-6:30 pm at the Community Recreation Centre. The budget won't be adopted until March, after consultation and third and final reading on March 5th.

These are well presented and informative sessions, providing an understanding as to how RDOS prepares budgets for all the different services in all the Areas - keeping them all completely separate! And, they offer participants a better understanding of the challenges of keeping budgets and taxes sustainable, i.e. paying our share today, so that there aren't unrealistic costs in the future. This session is focused on the budgets that relate to Area "D" and staff and myself will be present to answer questions and hear concerns. Other sessions will focus on budgets for other Areas, and there's an online session on Thursday, January 15th from 6:30-7:30 pm for the Region as a whole.

Budgets for 3 new services will be presented this year - Vintage

Views Sewer, Lakeshore Water and Skaha Estates Water. Staff responsible for these services recently converted to RDOS, will also be present at the Area "D" budget session.

Area "D" has, or is a part of, 43 different services - each having an operating budget and in most cases a capital budget as well as reserve accounts. Some of these are shared with other Areas, but about half are specific to Area "D". Some services have larger budgets that clearly benefit the vast majority, e.g. Parks & Recreation, Water, Sewer and Fire. Other services with smaller budgets may provide direct benefits to a smaller group, but their existence may be an attribute for the community as a whole.

Interesting Fact ~ Area "D" is well served by BC Transit, with the #20/21 running 5x daily on weekdays on the east side of the lake between Penticton, Heritage Hills, Skaha Estates and Okanagan Falls. There's also the #40/41 running 2x daily on weekdays between Osoyoos and Penticton, with stops in Okanagan Falls and Kaleden enroute to Penticton.

Cemetery Update ~ While the first burial is thought to have occurred in 1897, land provided by an R. Hody was registered as a Cemetery in approximately 1910. Over more than a century, there have been roughly 400 burials.

Responsibility for operating the cemetery service - management, groundskeeping, recordkeeping - has transferred several times over that period of a century or more. As RDOS prepares to transfer this service to the new municipality, they are also addressing some issues identified since taking responsibility for the cemetery service in 2023. These include some inaccurate or missing records, some unmarked graves that may reflect practices of earlier eras, inconsistent plot mapping, misaligned rows, and natural site obstacles such as tree roots and bedrock. Some improvements already initiated include digitizing records. Other improvements planned for the coming year, include use of ground penetrating radar to ensure future plots are appropriately located and consideration of sites for equipment and a scattering garden. The objective is to transfer the service in the best condition possible, while collaborating with families to identify the best possible options given the historic and physical limitations.

Grant Applications ~ RDOS has applied for 2 large grants totalling approximately \$14,000,000 from the Strategic Priorities Fund administered by Union of BC Municipalities. The grants relate to a water filtration treatment system for the Lakeshore and Skaha Estates Water Systems - and possibly neighbouring water systems - and infrastructure for the Vintage Views Wastewater System. It is significant that RDOS has submitted these 2 applications, as there are many other infrastructure needs and only 3 applications were permitted in this grant category. Responses are expected in 2026.

Looking Back at 2025 ~ It has been a busy year, with 4 public referendums in Area "D" - Incorporation, Vintage Views Wastewater, Lakeshore Water and Skaha Estates Water. These are the only referendums to date in this 4-year term in RDOS, although 1 is planned in another RDOS Area in 2026. As a reference point, the RDOS held 2 referendums in the previous term.

Looking Ahead at 2026 ~ Will be busy as well! We are told that details of the Letters Patent for Okanagan Falls should be known in the spring, and that an election for a mayor and council should take place in October 2026. This coincides with elections for a Director of the remaining portion of Area "D" and all other municipal elections across the province.

Wishing A Happy New Year To All!

Director Information ~ Office hours on the first Tuesday each month are 3-4:30 pm at the RDOS Okanagan Falls Office.

Matt Taylor, Director for RDOS Area "D"
Direct: 778-931-6080 | mtaylor@rdos.bc.ca | www.rdos.bc.ca



Thank You!

By Nancy Wigley, Recreation Coordinator

RDOS Recreation would like to extend our gratitude to the following 'elves' with their assistance on Sunday, December 14 with our Okanagan Falls Community Christmas event held at the Okanagan Falls Recreation Centre. A huge thank you goes to: Randy Ludwar; Glenda Gretzan; Lindsay Hainstock; Mike Livingstone; Jim Cooper; RDOS Area "D" Director Matt Taylor; Oliver Ambassadors - Allison and Dania; Okanagan Falls Elementary Students - Aster, Morgan and Tomas; the Okanagan Falls Volunteer Fire Department, and of course "Santa".

Thank you to all the community members of all ages that came out and enjoyed an afternoon in celebration of Christmas. "Evan the Juggler" entertained us all, along with a photo booth, face painting, games, crafts and treats. Thank you for attending and helping make this community event a special seasonal celebration.



Okanagan Falls Business & Community Association Update

By Marshall MacKinnon

Our "Light Up The Falls" event at the Okanagan Falls Shopping Plaza was a festive gathering held on Sunday, December 14. Santa arrived with some of his elves in the Okanagan Falls Fire Truck around 3:30 pm, further fueling the anticipation of the Light Up soon to follow. Community Christmas Spirit was shared as locals joined in singing Christmas Carols, while also enjoying hot chocolate and baked goods provided by Rise & Shine Coffee House. Six large trees lit up the night sky at 4:30 pm to help celebrate the coming holidays! A special thank you to everyone who joined in the fun and came out to "Light Up The Falls"!



Okanagan Falls Volunteer Fire Department

By Colin Pickell



Happy New Year! Welcome to January 2026! This is the month to set goals and New Year's resolutions, make a fresh start, and celebrate spaghetti! That's right, spaghetti! January 4th is National Spaghetti Day in Canada and (hopefully) around the world. What does spaghetti have to do with the fire department, you ask? Well, unattended cooking is one of the leading causes of house fires, and in more cases than it probably deserves, spaghetti was involved.

Here are a few examples ... in 2018, three American exchange students in Italy started a kitchen fire by placing dry pasta in a pot without water and turning on the stove (and I just assumed "do you know how to properly cook pasta" was a question on the entry visa into Italy). Back in 2012, two men in London caught their flat on fire when they attempted to heat a tin of spaghetti by wedging it into a toaster. English understatement was on full display when the local fire chief said, "it's never a good idea to try and heat a tin in your toaster." And in Florida, two men tried to burn a house down after a burglary by leaving spaghetti sauce on the stove with a washcloth nearby to ignite and destroy evidence. Thankfully, they weren't successful despite there also being a toaster in the house - they mustn't read British news.

All that to say: a new year is a good time to remind ourselves of some basic fire-related safety tips, and having someone in the kitchen when something is cooking is important. Because as much as we'd like to come to your house for dinner (spaghetti?), we'd prefer it be with a proper invitation, not a 911 call.

We would like to thank our tree sponsors for their support: Unit Electrical Engineering; Easy Lock Self Storage; Millar Tree Care; Nielsen Roofing & Sheet Metal; Noble Ridge Winery; The Falls Barber & Shave Shop; Rise & Shine Coffee House; and The Lego Men of OK Falls. Thanks again for your community support!

Remember to follow the Okanagan Falls Business & Community Association's new Facebook page! Keep up to date with seasonal events, promotions, what's happening with local businesses, and everything else Okanagan Falls. You can find us by searching for "Okanagan Falls Business Community Association" on Facebook. If you have any questions, suggestions or would like to volunteer, please send us an email to okanaganfallscommunity@gmail.com.

Will AI Replace REALTORS®?

By Sergej Sinicin of neuHouzz Real Estate Group



I love tech. I use it every day. And I'm first to agree that the tools we use at neuHouzz Real Estate make us more organized, more efficient, and faster at accessing information. This past year, we started implementing AI into our workflow, and now that we're experiencing its continuously increasing capabilities firsthand, I wondered: Will AI replace REALTORS®?



It's important to note - I wrote about this in 2024 - nowhere in the law does it say you MUST use a REALTOR® to buy or sell homes in the South Okanagan. So, from that perspective we can already be replaced. However, it's also important to note that buying or selling a home isn't just about bedrooms and bathrooms. It's about the human connection. About tuning into the buyer and finding them the best suitable home, about emotional guidance during the sale, about fighting on the client's behalf during negotiations.

Let's break it down and uncover what a REALTOR's® future might look like.

Where AI Helps - To A Certain Degree ~ Let's start with the obvious: I think AI is an incredible tool. It supports me with daily tasks like scheduling, email handling, and transcription. It generates a large part of our marketing content, and helps me stay more closely in touch with my clients. Plus, it helps us to evaluate all the internal processes we have in place to make the office run smoother. Overall - it makes my day easier and more productive.

However, AI has blind spots. As much as it's designed to simulate thoughts and solve problems, it doesn't experience things the way humans do. It needs coaching, detailed input, and doesn't "grasp" the intricacies of human interaction. Plus, it can only draw conclusions based on information from public online resources, historical databases, or what we feed it. And, that is where AI falls short and human insight becomes indispensable.

Based on your input, AI is able to:

- Point you to the most ideally located lakeview homes, but not warn you about the surprisingly fierce winds kicking up from the shoreline.
- Determine a neighbourhood's best proximity to schools, but not know that the area turns into a parking zoo twice a day during school drop-off and pick-up.
- Interpret where the best value-for-money properties are, but not be aware of the ongoing public discussion to yes or no build a 50 unit wet facility closeby.

The latter isn't in a database, but it matters. Those details matter. They shape daily life far more than square footage. And, you can only know about these things if you're part of the community, chatting with people, and following the local news.

Where REALTORS® Are Irreplaceable ~ Let's shift the conversation. Though AI can surface FACTS - it can't replace FEEL. Current AI systems lack the self-awareness, subjective experience, and understanding of existence that are fundamental to consciousness. It can simulate human intelligence and behaviour, but it remains a tool without feelings or emotions. This is where a REALTOR® steps in.

- **Trust & Guidance:** REALTORS® build trust and provide guidance through the emotionally charged process of buying or selling a home. They can lean on "intuition" or "experience" to help you refine your approach to important decisions. And

algorithm can't, no matter how sharp, tell you what it FEELS like to live somewhere.

- **Emotional Intelligence & Empathy:** Buying or selling a home is personal. It's about guiding clients to a home where they won't be strangers, but part of a community. About offering smart alternatives when a deal seems dead, and "seeing it through".
- **Heart:** AI doesn't have a "heart" in the human sense. Its responses are based on algorithms and data, not feelings or internal states. If a client becomes disheartened or disillusioned during the real estate process (it happens all the time folks!), it can't offer a shoulder to lean on or determine what is "the right thing to do".

Then there's the negotiation side. Real estate deals can be intense, emotional, and nuanced. They require intuition and adaptability. Things like removing unreasonable requests from an offer, guiding a nervous buyer, coordinating contractors, or handling surprises like mold in the attic require experience and human judgment. AI can't do that. People can.

The Real Estate Future: A Hybrid One ~ I think the future of real estate isn't REALTORS® versus AI. It's REALTORS® and AI. A hybrid concept where technology increases our human capabilities and insights. I sincerely believe that real estate agents who fail to adapt and use AI tools, will eventually find themselves at a disadvantage. REALTORS® using AI will move faster, offer better service, and have more time for what matters most: provide insights no database will ever contain.

That said, as REALTORS® we will need to work on what AI can't replace: our human skills. We need to double down on learning to earn trust, provide personalized guidance and emotional support, and "be there" when our clients need us. Because while AI understands data, we need to understand people.

From all of us at neuHouzz Real Estate, we wish you a Happy New Year and all the best for 2026. Thank you for your continued interest and support, and if you're ready to make a move, visit us at 645 Main Street in Penticton, or reach out to 778-764-1373. Cheers!

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New Lease, New Sign ... New Paint Coming!

By Tony Acland

BC Livestock has extended the lease of the Okanagan Falls Stockyards and it's getting a bit of a face lift. A new sign is now up (bottom photo below), replacing the well weathered worn sign (top photo below), which will be relocated to inside the building.

Nobody remembers when the sign was originally installed, but the historic Okanagan Falls Stockyards were built in the early 1940s, with most local historical references pointing to around 1940-1941. They quickly became one of the major cattle shipping points in the Southern Interior and operated actively into the 1970s before closing as transportation and marketing practices changed. It has been run continuously since then.

The building will be getting a fresh coat of paint this spring, and we are looking forward to having many more successful sales there. The public is always welcome on sale day, so come check it out.



Let's Finish It ... 10 Years In Business!

By Jay Mallach, Custom Finish Carpenter

"Let's Finish It" has worked on many projects over this past 10 years from Osoyoos to Summerland and around Apex Mountain. Projects have ranged from kitchen and bathroom renovations to flooring, baseboard and casing to replacing drywall and mudding to building outdoor decks and pergolas to hanging doors and installing windows to custom made furniture. Some clients like to work alongside me, some clients prefer tasks for themselves to complete, while other clients simply want to watch and learn. I enjoy the process of transforming a space into the client's vision.

Below are two different feature wall projects. The first incorporated custom woodworking and an electric fireplace, along with custom placed electrical outlets for a large screen TV to be mounted. Below is another custom wood finished feature wall in a bedroom.



Have you been wishing for a refresh in your kitchen, bathroom or bedroom? Do you have a home renovation project started and can't seem to get it finished? Do you lack time, knowledge, or simply need a little assistance with the next step? Or, are you fed up and just want the project done? Not to worry, "Let's Finish It" can assist to whatever level of assistance you need. Contact Jay at 250-490-6343 or jaymallach@gmail.com for your free quote today.

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Natural Rhythms

By Trish Hoy, RPN, Homeopathic Practitioner

Did you know that we have a physiological connection to the seasons, including what goes on during the transition of seasons that is also known as 'in-between' the seasons? How do the natural rhythms effect our connection with Mother Nature? How can we help ourselves during the dark season of winter?

The busy gathering time of the autumn harvest is the beginning of closure. It's called 'the in-between time' of autumn and winter when the transitions in nature occur, like the beginning of weather and light changes, and you may feel a slowing down in your body or a need to hurry up to get outside chores completed. We start to 'nest' inside our homes by cooking and baking comfort foods. A longing to rest begins to gently set in. We may find a need to sleep longer during the morning or even for an earlier bedtime. This is known as transitioning for the core of winter. Like the animals, plants and other forms of nature, transitioning in-between the core seasons is essential for getting ready for the next stage of life's rhythm. The gradual slowing of energy, motivation, drive call to us and the other forms of nature is our opportunity to do some inner work with our Mind-Body-Spirit.

Now we are in the darkest time of the year, when Mother Nature closes down all forms of nature for rest, healing and rejuvenation. It is a time when life roots-into-the-earth. Homeopathy, including flower and tree essences are formulated from the essences of the energy from plants. There is a chemical synchronicity that works with the life-giving natural chemicals with the ability to transform unwanted emotions; therefore, the transformation of thoughts along with behaviours follow. The feelings of depression, anxiety, fear and pain that darkness can sometimes trigger is your body's way of saying, "No!" Using the darkness of winter to discover new pathways for change can transform yourself by doing what the trees and flowers show us during their rest time, then we can change our unhealthy rhythms into wellness. Individualized treatment with homeopathy can harmonize wellness safely and effectively by addressing the mind-heart-gut connection through treating a variety of issues, including sleep, appetite, mood, energy and cognition.



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Kaleden Quilters & Crafters Invitation

By Vivian King

We are offering **Free Quilting Classes for Beginners** with the Kaleden Quilters and Crafters. All material is provided (you can choose your colours from our supply), plus rulers, cutters and patterns. If you have your own sewing machine, you can bring it. We do have a few sewing machines to use.

The **Winter Session runs every Wednesday from January 7 through February 25** from 1-4 pm in the Kaleden Community Hall. The cost is \$20/person or drop-in for \$4/day. Coffee and tea are always available. Ladies of all skill levels are invited to join us for an afternoon with other quilters and crafters. We would love you to join us! Let us know if you are interested, or for more information, please call 250-497-1164 or email viv20king@gmail.com.

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Ask Cheryl

By Cheryl L. Snyder, RTC, MRT, CBT

Happy New Year Everyone. Welcome to "Ask Cheryl" 2026.

Anonymous To: Ask Cheryl

Dear Cheryl,

I'm feeling quite challenged in the world lately with all the dark news and despair. How do I keep my head about me when all I want to do is scream?

Ask Cheryl To: Anonymous

Dear Friend,

You're not weak for feeling this way - you're awake. When the world feels loud with cruelty, fear, and grief, the urge to scream is a very human response. And, we all want to do it. Thank you for showing such courage to ask about it. It means your heart is still working.

Here's the part we often forget. You were never meant to carry the whole world inside your chest. The news is designed (I believe) to flood us, to keep our nervous systems on high alert. (I'll be working on adrenal gland relief when I see you.) So, the first act of sanity is knowing when to step back. Staying informed is not the same as staying immersed.

To keep your head when everything feels like it's falling apart, start small and close to home. Ask yourself, "What is actually in my hands today?" Maybe it's kindness to one person, tending your body with rest or movement, or creating something that reminds you beauty still exists (P.S. I buy myself flowers every week from Blooms on Maple in spring, summer and fall, in winter I support local florists - it's a way I love myself). These are not distractions - they are acts of resistance.

When you feel the scream rising, give it somewhere safe to go. Write it down. Walk it off. Cry. Breathe deeply and slowly until your shoulders drop from your earlobes. Your nervous system needs proof that you are not in immediate danger, even if the headlines suggest otherwise.

And finally, remember this despair spreads, but so does steadiness. By choosing to remain grounded, compassionate, and present, you become a quiet counterweight to the darkness. You don't have to fix the world (Cheryl's daily mantra). You only have to BE human in it. Be gentle with yourself. That, too, is how we survive then thrive.

Great question anonymous. Thank you for reaching out for a much brighter 2026!

Okanagan Quilters

By Barb Shanks

Okanagan Quilters meets every Thursday from 9:30 am - 2:00 pm from September to June in the Okanagan Falls United Church Hall (rear entrance). All quilters and crafters of all abilities are welcome to join. Coffee and tea are supplied. Yearly dues are \$50 or drop-in is \$5. For more information, contact Barb Shanks at 250-488-8174 or email barb.shanks@gmail.com. We would love you to join us!

Reversing Type 2 Diabetes: Is It Possible?

By Dr. Tamara Browne, ND Naturopathic Physician,
Licensed and Registered by The BC Ministry of Health



A multi-year study comparing a lifestyle-based approach to manage Type 2 Diabetes (T2D) with standard of care treatments for the disease, has shown that this common, debilitating, and rapidly growing problem is, in fact, reversible. Although this flies in the face of conventional wisdom, it is not new to holistic doctors who have witnessed this phenomenon for decades. Fortunately, a study is proving what many have suspected all along; since Type 2 Diabetes is largely caused by environmental and lifestyle factors, it can be reversed by changing our environment and improving particular lifestyle factors.

A group of researchers and doctors at Virta Health placed a study group of T2D patients on a program which induced nutritional ketosis. This is a diet that limits carbohydrate rich foods. They also supplemented patients with certain vitamins, minerals, and essential fatty acids. After one year, the treatment group on average had dropped their levels of Hemoglobin A1C by 1.3% (this is a measure of average 3-month blood glucose), their weight by an average of 8.2% or around 30 pounds, 60% of the people had their diabetes reversed to normal, and 94% had lowered or discontinued their dependence on insulin. Other benefits of this diet are a lowering of one's risk for heart disease, a lowering of high blood pressure, and a lowering of inflammation (56% reduction in heart attack, stroke, or death). Anyone with T2D can sign on with the Virta Health team to obtain more information and follow their protocol with proper monitoring (www.virtahealth.com).

With conventional dietary guidelines historically emphasizing a low-fat approach to health, diets for the past 50 years or so have been higher in carbohydrates, particularly from grains and sugars. This trend along with the production of factory food that is highly processed as well as the increase in fast and convenience foods, has brought about alarming levels of chronic disease rates, many stemming from blood sugar abnormalities. According to Diabetes Canada, the prevalence of T2D in 2024 was 3.9 million or 9.7%



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of our population, but was estimated to grow to 5 million or 12% of the population by the end of 2025, and continue to grow in the future. The health care costs annually are estimated at \$18.25 billion. Not only can we not afford to put ourselves at risk with this largely preventable disease, but our healthcare system is severely stressed by these numbers.

Consider this: It is estimated that one in ten deaths in Canadian adults is attributed to diabetes; Adult Type 2-Diabetics are 3 times more likely to be hospitalized with cardiovascular disease, 12 times more likely to develop end-stage kidney disease, and 20 times more likely to suffer a lower limb amputation compared to the general population. Couple this with the alarming stat that 57% of Diabetics cannot adhere to prescription treatment due to high out-of-pocket cost, and it becomes clear that prevention and evidence-based dietary and lifestyle approaches are direly needed in this area.

Under the care of a Naturopathic Physician and adhering to lifestyle guidelines that are sensible and easy to follow, Diabetics can lower their dependence on expensive therapies, free up spending for healthy whole food and exercise, and expect to live longer, healthier lives.

This article is for informational purposes only and should not be considered medical advice. Always seek the support of a licensed and regulated health care practitioner to ensure effective, safe, individualized protocols are employed.

CatMatch



Meet Richard

AlleyCATS tries to find a match for every cat in our care. Even the ones with issues. We are currently looking for a home for Richard, a beautiful tabby and white neutered male of 8 years of age. Richard has some gastrointestinal issues and is on medicine that he will probably have to take for the rest of his life. He is very friendly, playful and a talker! If you would like to learn more about Richard, please email alleycatsalliance@gmail.com and leave your phone number, so we can contact you.



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Welcome Joi Kittredge!

By Nancy Wigley, Recreation Coordinator

We are thrilled to welcome Joi Kittredge to the RDOS Recreation Team! Joi's heart has always been called to serve, and she fulfills this passion by sharing the transformative gift of yoga with others.

Joi is a **Yoga Alliance Certified RYT-500 instructor** with over **25 years of dedicated practice** in asana, breathwork, mantra, and meditation. Her personal journey of self-discovery and wholeness has deeply shaped her life and teaching style.

Joi offers a variety of yoga styles, creating an inclusive space for **all bodies and abilities**. Her classes are somatic, grounding, and often centered on heart connection. Students learn to build a strong foundation - finding stability first - before exploring fluidity and flow. She has experience working with **all ages**, from children to seniors, and those recovering from injury. In addition to her 500-hour certification, Joi is also **pre/postnatal certified** and **Pain Care Aware**, bringing a compassionate and informed approach to every session. Joi's approach is grounding, compassionate, and adaptable, which is perfect for anyone seeking wellness and balance.



To register for Joi's All-Level Flow Yoga, or to learn more about other amazing winter recreation programs, please visit our website at rec.rdos.bc.ca.

Creative Wellness Solutions

By Dee-anne Stone, Seniors Wellness Practitioner



Massage therapy is often associated with relaxation and physical relief, but its benefits extend far beyond mere muscle tension. One of the most fascinating areas of research in recent years has been the impact of massage on brain health. Engaging in regular massage therapy can enhance cognitive function, reduce stress, and even promote a sense of well-being that can influence our daily lives.

One of the first things massage does is calm the nervous system. When life is hectic, the brain keeps the body in "fight or flight" mode, flooding it with stress hormones like cortisol. Massage sends a clear signal to the brain that it's safe to stand down. Cortisol levels drop, while brain chemicals linked to happiness and emotional balance - serotonin and dopamine - rise. That's why people often leave a massage feeling lighter, calmer, and in a better mood.

Massage also activates the vagus nerve, a major communication line between the brain and the body. When this nerve is stimulated, the brain becomes better at regulating emotions, heart rate, and breathing. Over time, this can help reduce anxiety and improve resilience to stress. Think of it as strength training for your calm response.

Better blood flow is another brain boost. Massage improves circulation throughout the body, including to the head. More oxygen and nutrients reaching the brain can support mental clarity and focus, which may explain why many people report feeling mentally refreshed or even more creative after a session.

Then there's the power of touch. Healthy, therapeutic touch sends reassuring signals to the brain that promote feelings of safety and connection. In a world full of screens and constant stimulation, this simple sensory input helps the brain slow down and reset.

Incorporating regular massage into your wellness routine pays dividends in brain health, emotional stability, and cognitive enhancement. Over time, the brain learns to shift into relaxation more easily, making stress less overwhelming and calm more familiar. So why not set aside some time for self-care? Your brain - and your overall well-being - will thank you for it!

Creative Wellness Solutions provides a convenient massage with innumerable benefits on a comfortable massage chair. You do not need to climb onto a table or remove clothing and no oils are used. You can choose from a head and face, upper body, or legs and feet massage, or any combination.

We are a mobile service, so are able to come to you in your home (\$50 for a 30 minute appointment). Group sessions and gift certificates are also available. Please call Dee-anne at **250-497-5974** to arrange an appointment or to discuss The Grease Cream; which is an amazing, all-natural, cannabis infused pain management alternative that actually works. Be sure to check out our website at www.CreativeWellnessSolutions.com for more information about our services, The Grease Cream and where you can read any past articles you may have missed.



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Beginner & Experienced Dance Lessons

By Brian Udal, DVIDA Master Instructor

Survive & Thrive call to dance. Through my experience of 21 years of teaching, students just want to have fun and be comfortable on the dance floor with as few lessons as possible. They want to be on the dance floor arm in arm and enjoying the experience of connection while moving to the music. Mission accomplished. Keep reading.

I guarantee that after 7 lessons you and your partner will be dancing to the MUSIC of Rumba, Cha Cha, Foxtrot and Slow Waltz. You will learn approximately 8 solid patterns that are "One Size Fits All" that are applicable to those dance styles. You will learn some basic swing as well. You will learn the necessary lead and follow skills, listening skills, foot work, connection and so much more.

Experienced dancers can join the next level for more fun patterns to add to your arsenal of cool moves. We will study more Latin, Swing and Ballroom.

Classes:

Tuesdays ~ February 3 - March 17 for Next Level (Bronze 2)

Thursdays ~ February 5 - March 19 for Beginner (Bronze 1)

Fee is \$175 per couple. 1 hour classes start at 7 pm. Christmas Gift Certificates are now available. Lessons are in Summerland. Call today and secure your place on the dance floor.

Call Brian Udal, DVIDA Master Instructor, at 604.220.6256 (cell) or email brians.dance.class@gmail.com. www.briansdanceclass.ca



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Sexy Laundry

By Cheryl Gill, Many Hats Theatre Company Publicist

Many Hats Theatre Company is proud to present "Sexy Laundry" by Michele Riml. Many Hats originally performed this show way back in 2008 and it was so popular we're bringing it back with a whole new cast. Directed by Jane Pilkey and starring Many Hats favourites Jill Fey and Jason Lane this show is sure to sell out!

Henry and Alice have had a good life. They've been married 25 years, raised three kids, have a house in a great neighbourhood, and have good friends, but lately their sizzle has begun to fizzle! Armed with "Sex for Dummies" and booked into a swanky hotel, Alice is determined to get them past the physical plateau of love handles, receding hairlines and their mundane life.

This hilarious romp will have you laughing out of your seats, as Alice works hard to unleash her inner vixen and Henry works just as hard at maintaining his comfortable life. This quaint story about finding lost passion is sure to tug at the heartstrings of the most indifferent partner.

PLEASE NOTE: This show contains adult themes and language and is not suitable for all audiences.

Sexy Laundry runs February 6 - March 1 at the Many Hats Theatre stage in the Cannery Trade Centre. On Friday and Saturday evenings, the show will start at 7:30 pm (doors open at 7:00) and on Sundays, there will be a matinee starting a 2:00 pm (doors open at 1:30). Tickets are \$35 for adults, \$33 for seniors/students. They are available at www.manyhats theatre.com or 250-462-6428.

Kaleden Branch: 101 Linden Avenue - 250-497-8066

New Hours: Tuesday 1-5 pm / Thursday 1-8 pm / Friday 12-4 pm



Congratulations to Althea, winner of a \$35 Lego Gift card from our system wide Create your Own Monster Contest!



Congratulations to Charlie, winner of the Gingerbread House from our Gingerbread Colouring Contest!

Happy New Year! According to the Chinese Zodiac, 2026 will gallop in under the sign of the *FIRE HORSE*, with attributes of innovation and transformation, and here at the Kaleden Branch that is certainly the case. The first major change will be to our Branch open hours on **Fridays, opening 1 hour earlier at 12:00 and closing 1 hour earlier at 4:00.**

In the spirit of transformation, I will be retiring on January 30th from the Okanagan Regional Library, my dream job for almost 25 years. Although my time here at the Kaleden branch has been short, it has been my privilege and delight to serve this special community of passionate library patrons. The best news is ...

NEW STAFF: It is with great pleasure that I can announce that the amazing person who will be taking over as Community Librarian will be **Rachel Dowden**, who many patrons will already recognize from her time here in Kaleden as Assistant Community Librarian before moving to her current posting at the Osoyoos Branch. Rachel brings with her a passion for education, community service and innovative programming. I know her youthful commitment and enthusiasm will bring new and welcome energy to the branch that will benefit library patrons of all ages.

Submitted by Judy Komar, Kaleden Community Librarian

OK Falls Branch: 101 - 850 Railway Lane - 250-497-5886

Tuesday 10 am - 6 pm / Wednesday 10 am - 4 pm

Friday 10 am - 5 pm / Saturday 10 am - 2 pm

A fresh year means fresh programs at the Okanagan Falls Library! We're thrilled to bring back the programs you, while developing exciting new ones for our community. The fun is just beginning - stay tuned for what's next!

More exciting news from your library! Say 'hello' to our shiny new printer, ready to tackle your everyday tasks. Whether you need black-and-white prints, photocopies, or scanning to email, we've got you covered. Come visit us to learn more!

Teck Talk - One on One: Tuesdays from 3-5 pm. Tech Troubles? We can help! Got a burning tech question? Whether you are a curious beginner or a seasoned techie, this is the space to ask anything and learn everything from new cell phones to old PCs. This is a **FREE** program sponsored by Desert Sun Counselling. Please contact the Okanagan Falls Library at 250-497-5886 to make an appointment.

Book Club: Wednesday, January 21 from 1-2 pm. Indulge in your love of books and conversation. The Okanagan Falls Book Club is the perfect place to dive into new stories, meet wonderful people, and share in thoughtful discussion. We gather on the 3rd Wednesday of every month and would love for you to join us. For all the details on how to get started, simply contact the Okanagan Falls Library.

Family Story Time: Saturday, January 17 from 9:30 am - 10 am. Family Story Time at the Library - Where stories come alive! We'll dive into enchanting stories, sing along to interactive tunes, and bring tales to life with fun felt boards. Afterwards, stay and play and connect with other local families.

Lego Club: Come to create, make and play. Dive into the hands of creativity where imaginations rule. And the more you explore, the more rewards you earn.

Check out our **Events Calendar** at orl.bc.ca/okanagan-falls for a sneak peak on upcoming and current events.

Submitted by Artessa Wiker, Okanagan Falls Community Librarian



A roaring great time was had at our Prehistoric Christmas Party on December 6.

X-rays

By Tom Landecker

Everyone knows x-rays. The doctor uses them to see inside us, and the dentist does too. Our suitcases go through the x-ray at the airport. But x-ray astronomy?

Yes, parts of our Universe generate x-rays, just as other parts emit light, or radio waves. Light, and radio waves, and x-rays are simply different forms of electromagnetic radiation; they all carry energy through empty space. We can build telescopes for them all.

Light comes mostly from stars, so light-gathering telescopes tell us about stars. Radio telescopes let us probe the space between the stars. Gaseous matter between the stars can be cold, only a few degrees above absolute zero; radio telescopes can detect that matter. Gas around young stars is heated to a temperature of ten thousand degrees; those regions glow with visible light - we can see them with an optical telescope. X-rays show us parts of the Universe that are even hotter than that, one million degrees.

X-rays, and light, and radio waves, travel through empty space in the form of waves. When we talk about waves, we are usually thinking of waves on water. With waves on water, it's easy to understand the wavelength, the distance from one crest to the next. Light waves, and radio waves, and x-rays, all have their characteristic wavelength, and can all travel through completely empty space. Water waves, obviously, can't exist where there is no water.

Radio waves are long. When you listen to AM radio, the sounds and music come to you on waves that are about 300 metres from crest to crest. The wavelength in the FM band is shorter, about 3 metres. Light waves are much shorter - two thousand up and down cycles fit in one millimetre. X-rays are one thousand times shorter still, with 200,000 crests in each millimetre.

We can build telescopes for all of these kinds of radiation, and they show us very different aspects of the Universe. Using these telescopes, we have come to know the parts of the Universe that are invisible, in the sense that they emit little or no light. Light and radio waves pass through our atmosphere, mostly unaltered, so we can build optical telescopes and radio telescopes here on the solid surface. The Earth's atmosphere blocks x-rays rays, so we have to put telescopes for those wavebands into space.

Our own Sun has an outer gaseous layer, the corona, far above the visible disk. The Sun's surface is hot, 6,000 degrees, but the corona is even hotter. X-ray telescopes can see the Sun's million-degree corona. If a star explodes, a lot of its material is suddenly heated to a million degrees; it becomes 'visible' to x-ray telescopes, but 'invisible' to all our other tools. When whole galaxies, each with billions of stars, merge, a lot of very hot gas is produced, and can be seen by X-ray telescopes. Since 1970, X-ray telescopes have opened up a new and surprising view of the Universe.

Interesting websites:

- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X-ray_astronomy
- chandra.harvard.edu/field_guide.html
- chime-experiment.ca

The Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory is operated by the National Research Council Canada and is located at 717 White Lake Road in Kaleden. For more information, please call 250-497-2300.



Trail Of The Okanagans

By Mary Trainer

Clothing To Help You Ride The Winter Blues Away



Meet long-time South Okanagan cyclist Andre Blais (photo by Louise Blais). He bought his first road bike about 25 years ago, and quips: "Everything I did from then on was linked to bikes. Since retiring, I've been lucky enough to be able to spend my energy (and paycheque) at my local bike shop, where I work. I like helping people make the right decisions about the bikes they choose and the best gear needed in order to ride stress free!" Let's start from the bottom up ... feet.

Nothing ends a ride faster than a pair of frozen feet! When the

thermometer starts to drop and a bike ride was penned in, consider pulling on a good pair of wool socks. One of my favourite brands of socks that I use for those cold weather rides is Smartwool.

Also, when the weather shifts to more northerly temperatures, I put away my summertime cycling shoes and use my winter ones. They are a half size larger to accommodate the extra space taken from my woolly socks. The shoes I wear in the colder wet season are the Shimano MW5 boot.

As we work our way up, a good pair of cycling pants that are windproof on the front will help keep the front of your thighs from getting too cold. I like wearing Pearl Izumi AMFib cycling bibs as they keep me warm and they are still breathable when you're working hard climbing our hilly terrain!

Looking at your upper body, layering is your best bet on keeping warm and dry. Here I like to use a good wool base layer (Smartwool gets my vote here and followed up by a good cycling jersey).

My last layer over this is a good colourful wind shell. Something breathable and bright in colour to make sure that you are still visible to motorists.

For gloves in temps above freezing, I use the Pearl Izumi gloves and when the temperature drops to below zero, I also have the Pearl Izumi Claw gloves, which are very warm.

To round up, I use a good toque with a windstopper front.



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School Trustee Report For SD67

By Karen Botsford, School Trustee

Leadership Students Participation ~ I want to highlight the incredible work being done by students. In all three secondary schools, students are contributing to building community at school and in the wider community. Some of the highlights include the 10,000 Tonight 2025 held earlier this fall. The goal was 10,000 items and the final count for this year was just over 20,000 food items. In December, the annual Toys for Tots was a huge success with 2200 toys and \$11,500 donated. Mobilizing volunteers (70) and serving breakfast (donated by Tim Hortons), while school bands played was organized by the leadership students.

An Indigenous Student Leadership gathering was held on December 3. Students from all three secondary schools spent a half-day of community building, leadership development, and cultural learning.

Student Voice ~ I am including two articles written by Superintendent Manuel on student voice.

“A Racial Equity Student Forum was held on November 26 and included a number of courageous students who shared their experience with educators and the South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services partners to share stories how issues of racism continue to impact their lives, both in community and in our schools. They emphasized the desire for consistent, immediate adult intervention when racist language or behaviour occurs. Students also advocated for ongoing early education on anti-racism and expressed enthusiasm for taking on leadership roles to support anti-racism learning opportunities in elementary schools. District Principal Dustin Hyde moderated the conversation, prioritizing student voice and identifying work the district has done to support early education, including supporting anti-racism learning resources. Principal Hyde continues to support this work in developing our SD67 Anti-Racism Framework with guidance from the Ministry of Education and Child Care’s Anti-Racism Action Plan.”

“At the District Student Leadership - Student Voice Meeting, students from Princess Margaret Secondary, Penticton Secondary and Summerland Secondary met on December 2 at the district office with the Superintendent and school administrators to engage in a district student voice session. Students provided great feedback on their current learning experiences, strengths that they identified in their schools, and suggestions for ways the district could continue to improve the learning environments for them.”

More information is available in the Superintendent’s Report on the district website under Superintendent’s Reports - News - School District No. 67 (Okanagan Skaha). Feedback from students will be shared with the board at a Trustee In-Service in January. The board values student voice and the incredible impact our students are having in building community.

December was a busy month in schools. I hope that families had a restorative break.

I am sending my very best wishes to all for a happy, healthy 2026! May the coming year be filled with new opportunities for learning and growth!

For more information, please contact Karen Botsford, School Trustee for SD67, by sending an email to kbotsford@sd67.bc.ca.



New To Kaleden?
We would like to welcome you & provide you with a package of community information. Please call 250-460-3387.

Highlights From Kaleden Elementary School

By Principal Jessa Arcuri

Kaleden Elementary wishes everyone a Happy New Year! It has been a wonderfully busy end to the year for all our students. From learning how to snowboard, to exploring lacrosse, to learning nsylxcæn, and celebrating our growth in reading, our first term was filled with excitement and accomplishment.

December was especially joyful, with holiday cheer filling the school. As part of one of Pete the Penguin’s special kindness tasks for the kindergarten class, the whole school joined together to spread kindness throughout our community. Staff and students also shared festive cheer outdoors, caroling as cars drove by to enjoy the music. Students embraced the holiday spirit in the classroom as well, creating their own gingerbread houses piled high with icing and candies - a sweet and memorable tradition that brought plenty of smiles. Kaleden Elementary was proud to welcome all our families and community members to our Christmas Sing-a-Long, where students showcased classic Christmas songs. The evening ended with two very special visitors - Santa and his mischievous elf. Families went home with delicious baked goods and beautifully assembled raffle baskets. A heartfelt thank you goes out to all the families who donated and helped make this PAC fundraiser such a success. We are incredibly grateful for the PAC’s support, as this event would not have been possible without their hard work. From decorating, to wrapping baskets, to organizing countless details, your efforts are truly appreciated.



Kaleden Elementary PAC Update

By Tenna Fisher, PAC Chair

Happy New Year! We hope everyone had a joyful holiday season filled with warmth and celebration. On behalf of the PAC, we want to extend a heartfelt **thank you** to our amazing community for making this past holiday season so special. Your generosity and support for our fundraisers truly made a difference, and we couldn’t have done it without you!

As we step into the New Year, we’re excited to start planning for our **spring fundraisers**. Stay tuned for more details in the coming weeks. We have some fun and engaging events in the works that we can’t wait to share with you.

Thank you again for your continued support. Together, we make our school community stronger!

Highlights From Okanagan Falls Elementary School

By Principal Katie Poole

December was a month filled with pride and gratitude at OKFE, as our school community came together in the true spirit of the season. We were fortunate to participate in a meaningful Giving Week, where we were able to support local families with food, gifts, and pajamas for the holidays. The outpouring of generosity and participation from our students, families, and staff was truly heartwarming, and we extend a heartfelt thank you to Miss Sam for organizing and coordinating the initiative, as well as to Ms. de Ruiter for her invaluable support. Most importantly, we are deeply grateful to our OKFE community for making this effort a resounding success. Thanks to you, we made 32 children's Christmas a little brighter.

Our annual Christmas Concert was another highlight of the season. A special thank you goes to Mrs. Eddison, Mrs. Brockholm, and all the staff who worked tirelessly to bring the performance to life. Additionally, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to The Falls Market for their generous donation of a new microphone system. Thanks to their support, and the headsets they provided last year, our performances are sounding more professional than ever! Thank you as well to the Okanagan Senior's Centre and Belich's AG Foods for allowing us to practice our songs by caroling for you. We appreciate the community welcoming us!

We also want to extend our thanks to the Lions Club, Belich's AG Foods, our Parent Advisory Council (PAC), Miss Nancy from the RDOS, as well as Rocky Bedard and Susan Midgley for making our Pancake Breakfast with Santa a truly memorable event. Their contributions helped create a festive atmosphere for everyone in attendance.

Looking ahead to January, we are excited to welcome Penticton Minor Lacrosse Association to our school, in partnership with the RDOS, to introduce the sport of lacrosse to our students. We are also looking forward to our upcoming ice skating trips to the Oliver Arena, and we can't wait to share these exciting experiences with our community next month!



Okanagan Falls PAC Update

By Kari Hill, PAC Chair

We're kicking off the New Year with a big thank you to Mrs. Poole for donating Decembers PAC Snacks! Our meetings are always better with a little treat on the table - we appreciate you!

Meat Draw at the Legion ~ Join us on Friday, January 16th at the Legion for our next PAC Meat Draw. Come out for some fun, community time, and a chance to head home with dinner!

Pancake Breakfast Thanks ~ A huge thank you to the Lions Club for cooking and supporting the Pancake Breakfast at the school. We're so grateful for the continued support of our students and school community!

50/50 Update ~ Our recent 50/50 draw wrapped up with a total jackpot of \$3,300. Congratulations to Martin Z., our lucky winner! Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets and supported the PAC.

Looking Ahead ~ We're excited to share that we'll be hosting another Movie Night with RDOS in February. Stay tuned for more details!

Spring Planning ~ Looking ahead to spring, we're planning a Mother's Day Market, and another Burger BBQ Fundraiser at Belich's AG Foods (dates to be determined).

Thank you, as always, to our amazing community for your ongoing support. Here's to a great start to 2026!



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School Trustee Report For SD53

By Sholeh Pickell, School Trustee

As I reflect on December, I am impressed with the wonderful sense of celebration and connection across School District 53. Schools performed winter concerts; families gathered in gymnasiums and theatres; and students shared the joy of the season through music, performance, and community.

With the coming new year, the Okanagan Similkameen school district is pleased to share an exciting initiative, spearheaded by the district's early learning team. The team is taking meaningful steps to support families, especially in our rural communities. Their new partnership with OSNS Child and Youth Development Centre is launching a pilot project that brings services directly to families using the new Early Learning Outreach Van. This work has the potential to remove significant barriers for parents and caregivers, and it reflects our district's commitment to meeting families where they are.

In the classroom, teachers in Grades 3 and 5 spent time with numeracy consultant Katie McCormack, digging into practical strategies aligned with our district screeners. Their enthusiasm for strengthening Math instruction is inspiring, and Katie will be returning in the spring to continue the learning.

Wishing you all the best in 2026. Happy New Year!

For more information, please contact Sholeh Pickell, School Trustee for SD53, by emailing to spickell@sd53.bc.ca.

Kaleden Museum & Archives

By Mike Gane

This current series of articles covers the history of Kaleden's Pioneer Park. Below is Part 4 of this series.

The planning and financial negotiations proceeded. In 1986, a more permanent committee of Kal-Rec was set up to be responsible for park development. The members were: Dan Nicholson - Chairman, Ted Gane - Vice Chairman, Alan Tucker - Secretary, Barbara Gane - Treasurer, Jeanne Lamb, Helen King, Reg Murfitt, Sue Austin, Ian Cox, Joy Whitley, and Cay Swales, with Ron King - Chairman of Kal-Rec and Noreen Williams - Vice Chairman - also attending. It was arranged that the actual handling of money, property deeds and transactions was through RDOS, with Vanessa Sutton providing invaluable support. The debenture provided a basic sum of \$210,000 and the sale of eight town lots owned by the Packinghouse directly across Ponderosa Avenue would eventually reduce our costs by about \$80,000. Local fundraising events gave further help, so that the temporary 10% mortgage for \$160,000, which we had required was soon paid off. To cover development costs, we applied to the BC government for a \$102,000 Lottery Fund grant, and due to poor penmanship by some government staffer, we were approved for \$107,000. Of course, they eventually discovered their mistake and wanted the \$5,000 back, but Vanessa said, "Sorry, it's all spent".



The half built washrooms in July 1987.

torn up and hauled away to make way for tennis courts and grass. Arnold Reum, Marvin Hayter, George Brent, and Ed Courtney gave generously and made quick work of a heavy task.

One construction job that was labour intensive was the building of the change rooms. John Roberts, a local architect, donated his time in providing plans. Elmer Marchant, aged 68, was in charge of construction, guiding his crew of "young fellows": Ron King - 72, Norman Ashe and George Robertson - each 71 and Jim Robertson - a mere stripling at 69. Elmer used to boast that the crew had 350 years of experience.

Another major project took place that summer. After hours of research and planning, construction of the tennis courts was completed in late 1987, with many hours of volunteer labour involved.



In 1988, the projects began again, and many others gave hours of time, rolling out sod for the lawns, planting trees, weeding, preparing flower beds, building fences, or shoveling sand on the beach. Two people who deserve mention by name for participation during the first years would include Barbra Paterson, who did the detailed layout of all the garden areas, and Jeanne Lamb, who was our RDOS liaison.

Tune in next month for Part 5 of the Kaleden Pioneer Park series. *If you wish to donate items to the Kaleden Museum, please contact Mike Gane at 250-497-5674.*



The Demolition of the Packinghouse began in March of 1986.

Now the grant came with the condition that local contributions must account for a sum twice the amount of the grant. The debenture, volunteer labour, donated material, and machine time all counted as part of the local contribution, and attesting to the fact that one man's pain is another man's gain, we benefited from the fact that 1987 was a very slow year for construction and road building. While thousands of hours of volunteer labour were duly recorded, it was the donated hours of trucks and heavy equipment that made this requirement so easy to meet, as an acre of cement floor was



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The buffing got the scratches out, but I still think Dad might notice the dent.

Kaleden Seniors Committee Update

By Karla Avendaño, KSC Coordinator

Last month, the Kaleden Seniors Committee enjoyed a wonderful gathering at Frog City Café for a wreath making event. Neighbours and friends came together to create beautiful Christmas arrangements, share food, and enjoy a special time connecting with one another. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the evening so memorable.



Our January event will be Bingo, taking place on January 16, 2026, at noon at the Kaleden Community Hall. Lunch will be provided by donation, and everyone is welcome to join in for an afternoon of fun and community.

Also, please save the date for Friday, February 20 for our Lunch & Learn series, "Sustainability and Climate Change". Share ideas, experiences and perspectives in this World Café style workshop.

A big thank you to the Kaleden School Kindergarten Class and Mrs. Noble-Hearle for the beautiful flower pots they painted for our seniors' Christmas poinsettias, and for their commitment to this special project.



The Kaleden Seniors Committee wishes everyone a Happy New Year and looks forward to spending more time together in the months ahead.

Elks Lodge Oliver #267

By Dee-anne Stone, Secretary

We are a volunteer organization of men and women serving our community. All welcome!

January 16 ~ Thrash Wrestling. \$25 Tickets available at Respect Record and Skate.

February 1 ~ Elks District 4 Provincial Qualifier dart tournament 10:00 am. Register by 9:30 am. Must be an Elks member in good standing.

Open ~ Tuesday to Sunday from 1:00 pm to closing.

Meat Draw ~ Every Sunday at 3:00 pm. Meat provided by Belich's AG Foods. January 11 hosted by SOSS Grad, and January 25 hosted by OES PAC.

Breakfast ~ 2nd and 4th Sundays from 8:30-11:00 am. Bacon, eggs, sausage, home fries, pancakes, toast, coffee and juice all for only \$10.

Darts ~ Drop-in darts toeline Sundays at 2:00 pm and Wednesdays at 5:30 pm. Come early to sign up.

Mahjong ~ Wednesdays at 1:00 pm.

General Meeting ~ Tuesday, January 13 at 7:00 pm. Second Tuesday of every month.

Hall Rental ~ We have a large hall with a kitchen available for rent. Email for inquiries.

Contact ~ Phone: **250-498-3808**

Email: oliverelkslodge267@gmail.com

Address: 477 Bank Avenue, Oliver

Facebook: Oliver Elks Lodge #267

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Okanagan Falls Lions Update

By Bob Wilson, Past President

Out with the old, in with the new, as we categorize the years as they pass by. So, onward into 2026 and all she has in store for us, hopefully some stabilization of the current situation. But regardless, in good faith, we wish everyone a Happy & Prosperous New Year!

It was quite a busy summer and fall last year for our club as we continued our activities and created some new ones, by the way of more community involvement and additions to our programs.

With the coming year and new members joining the club, we hope to explore new opportunities and continue our projects.

The continuance of the School Breakfast program 3 times a week, our annual Easter Egg Hunt, Canada Day BBQ & Music in the Park goodies sale at our Lions location in Centennial Park, and who knows, perhaps something new. Used eyewear collections will be ongoing as we head for our goal of 100K pair started by Lion Colin van Blerk a number of years back. Lion Colin is no longer with us, but his dedication to this needy program carries on. Thanks to the donors and the space made available by businesses in the area.

Once again a big THANKS to all who participated and volunteered during this last year. We couldn't do it without you.

So, once more into the fray as the saying goes, "with both feet".

See you in the New Year! And as always, stay safe and healthy.

Blood, it's in you to give! The next Blood Donor Clinics will be held January 13 & 14 at the Penticton Senior Drop In Centre from 1:30-5:30 pm. The Canadian Blood Services needs both donors and volunteers, visit www.blood.ca or call 1-888-236-6283.

The Okanagan Falls Lions Club meets the second Monday each month at 7 pm starting in January upstairs in the Okanagan Falls Legion. Come and join us and see what we are all about. If you have any questions, please call 778-439-2275. Visit www.e-clubhouse.org/sites/okfalls/ or www.facebook.com/okanaganfallslionsclub.



South Skaha Housing Society Update

By Michael Livingstone, SSHS Chair

Season's Greetings from South Skaha Housing Society ~ On behalf of the Board of the South Skaha Housing Society (SSHS), we extend our very best wishes of the season to everyone in our community. We sincerely thank residents and supporters for their continued patience as we move forward with Phase 2 of our housing project.

We are pleased to share that visible progress is being made. Watching the structure take shape is encouraging, and the Board is delighted to see the building begin to resemble the project we have all been working so hard toward. This progress reinforces our ongoing commitment to providing safe, affordable housing for our community.

We would also like to express our heartfelt appreciation to the many individuals, organizations, and local businesses who have supported SSHS throughout this journey. We have had the privilege of working with and meeting many outstanding people along the way, and their support has been invaluable.

Finally, I would personally like to thank the SSHS Board of Directors for their dedication and hard work, and to wish us all continued success in the year ahead. On behalf of the Board, we also wish everyone a joyful holiday season and a very Happy New Year. Thank you for being part of this important effort to make our community a better place.

Okanagan Falls Helping Hand Update

By Patty Neuner

What a year! Wishing a very Happy New Year to everyone in our Okanagan Falls community!

With your help, we were able to gift 64 families with a helping hand. With sincere appreciation, we want to thank our community, volunteers and the many personal and corporate donors for their generous support of our 2025 Hamper Project. We couldn't do this without your help. Your contributions allowed us to bring joy to many individuals and families, this holiday season. Each donation, whether small or large, is a reminder that when we come together, we can achieve extraordinary things. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected community where everyone has the chance to thrive. Your kindness inspires us every day, and we are honoured to have your support. Thank you all so very much!

Sincere thanks to Belich's AG Foods for sponsoring the community event "Fill the Van for the Helping Hand", where we collected monetary and food donations to help finish filling our shelves. Santa even came to help and it was a lot of fun to come together.



If you are interested in being apart of the fun, we meet at 4:30 pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month at the Okanagan Falls Community Church, or call us at 778-559-2412 and leave a message.

Thank you from our many volunteers, and together, we want to wish you all the best for 2026!



Emergency Food Hampers can be made available from Okanagan Falls Helping Hand throughout the year with proper qualifications.

To apply, please call 778-559-2412 and leave a message.

Your call will be returned.

Okanagan Falls Seniors Activity Society

By Donna Taylor

Happy New Year Everyone!

We are located at 1128 Willow Street in Okanagan Falls. The local bus stop is right across the street from our front doors.

We would like to thank the following businesses for their generous donations: Wild Goose Winery; Farm Gate Winery; Mayhem Winery; KJ Coffee Bar; Doug Homestead; 3 Winds Hair Design; Curio Collective; The Falls Barber & Shave Shop; On The Spot Chair Massage; Pharmasave; OK Falls Hotel; Tickleberry's; Angel Place Restaurant; Centex Gas Station; Esso Gas Station; Kettle Valley Pizza; Falls Market; Bullies Pizza; Willow Creek Estates; and Rise & Shine Coffee House.

Check out our website at www.okfallsseniorscenter.ca. Follow us on Facebook at "Okanagan Falls Seniors Center".

Activities in January 2026:

- Canasta** ~ Mondays at 10 am
- Crafts & Coffee** ~ Mondays at 1 pm
- Tuesday Bingo** ~ Tuesdays - January 6, 13 & 20 at 1 pm
- Evening Pool** ~ Tuesdays at 6 pm
- Mexican Train Dominos** ~ Wednesdays at 1 pm
- Bridge** ~ Thursdays at 1 pm
- Cribbage** ~ Thursdays at 7 pm
- Line Dancing** ~ Fridays at 1 pm
- Pancake Breakfast** ~ Saturday, January 3 from 8-10 am
- General Meeting** ~ Monday, January 5 at 1 pm
- Country Music Jamboree** ~ Sundays January 11 & 25 at 1 pm
- Drop-in Bingo** ~ Saturday, January 17 from 1-4 pm
- Pot Luck Dinner** ~ Saturday, January 24 at 5 pm
- Scrabble** ~ On hold for now - looking for players
- Carpet Bowling** ~ On hold
- Theatre Group** ~ On hold for now - looking for players
- Lending Library & Puzzles** ~ For members when hall is in use
- Booking Agent** ~ Please call Heather at 250-497-1171.



Are you over 50? Just \$25/yr to join!
Enjoy activities. Meet new people. Get out and have FUN!
Become a member of the OK Falls Seniors Society!
For more information, call 250.497.8199 or 250-462-5233.

OK Falls Heritage & Museum Society

By Connie White, Curator/Board Secretary

Happy New Year! Here we are in January with a fresh start! Thank you to all who attended our Photos with Santa event. It was a huge success and will become an annual event for the society. We will soon be announcing the date for our Annual General Meeting, so if you aren't a member yet, what are you waiting for? We really got a lot accomplished last year and our new board worked well together. Some of our accomplishments include a lighting upgrade for the museum, a new museum sign, activity sheets for the kids, an added day open for the thrift shop, a new accounting system, new computers - this is just to name a few! None of this would be possible without our volunteers, from our thrift shop volunteers to our board members. What a group of fantastic people! If you haven't visited the thrift shop, come on by. Our volunteers are the friendliest in town and are always happy to see you! This year we hope to introduce some new sponsorship opportunities, so stay tuned for that. As always, we appreciate the support, not just from our own community, but surrounding areas as well.

RISE AND SHINE!

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Legion The Royal Canadian Legion Branch #227

Branch 227
Okanagan Falls

By Bev Van Uden

As we said goodbye to 2025, we have to say goodbye to 3 Veterans - Tim Syrette, Don Anderson and Michael Hykaway.

Legions In The Community ~ As a cornerstone of the community across the country, we provide the central service and support to Veterans, youth and those in need.

2026 marks 100 years since Legions were established! The first Legion was opened in St. James, MB, which is part of Winnipeg now. Plans are in the works for events. Stay tuned ...

2025 Donations by Branch #227 ~ Our branch donated \$26,000 to numerous charities within the community and across BC. Thanks to all the support of the members and community by coming out to our Meat Draws. We are a small community with a big heart!

OPEN Monday-Saturday from 2 pm to closing. Open Sundays at 11 am for pool. Check out the game. Everyone welcome!

Shuffleboard ~ Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2 pm. Check it out!

Meat Draws - Fridays at 5 pm & Saturdays at 3 pm ~ Thanks to Belich's AG Foods! All profits are donated to charities.

Drop-in Darts ~ Saturdays at 2 pm. Registration at 1:30 pm.

Music Bingo ~ Saturday, January 17. Food will be available.

Pancake Breakfast ~ Sunday, January 18 from 8-10 am. Adults \$10, Kids \$5 and under 3 years is free!

General Meeting ~ Tuesday, January 20 at 7 pm. Always the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

Membership ~ Time to renew your membership. 2026 dues are \$55/person. Members cards or stickers are at the Branch. Please ask the bartender.

Volunteers ~ Would you like to volunteer? Drop by the Legion and let us know. Its a great way to give back to your community and the Legion, plus meet new friends.

Bottle Returns ~ Drop off cans and bottles by the garage door at the Legion. Thank you.

For Updates ~ Call the branch at 250-497-8338, check the board outside, or check our Facebook page at "Royal Cdn Legion - Branch 227 Okanagan Falls BC" or our Instagram at "Veterans227".

We are a Little Legion with a Big Heart!

Say Thank You!

By Ken Hale and Sandy Butcher

The seeds of a community: What it takes to grow! Each other we are the seeds. Smaller towns like Okanagan Falls are always at risk of being overlooked ... even by those of us lucky enough to live here. We don't have the big box stores or the infrastructure other than what we develop for ourselves. We're our own managers of our social structures that provide for our safety, comforts and small town culture. The most valuable things a small town can share with each other ... our resources! Each other, and how we interact as a real community ... we need to have pride and take care of each other, work together, and believe in our common goals.

We are about to be recognized as a municipality, but we were already a tight little town. We are blessed with a first class fire department - 24/7 the firefighters are ready, trained and they hurry to our needs, highway, lake, houses, community involvement ... they are 'our' fire department. They know us by name. They all live here. They never say no to offering a helping hand for town support or social activities ... SAY THANK YOU!

Our small town pharmacy ... they work here and give us our flu shots and medications ... they know us by name. SAY THANK YOU!

Our convenience stores ... beer, wine, lotto tickets ... they know us by name. SAY THANK YOU!

Our gas stations who offer us the best prices they can afford to and be able to stay open and serve us. SAY THANK YOU!

Our hotel that re-opened to serve our community with a new public house, so we have a place to go. SAY THANK YOU!

Our Legion who never says 'no' to a community effort or refusing to step up and give. SAY THANK YOU!

Belich's AG Foods, our biggest gift in the last 5 years, is at the centre of our community needs, using our donated points towards a school lunch program, plus their benevolence to feed the little ones, a "seniors meals on wheels" program, fundraising, BBQ's, deals on groceries when they can. "Yes, we can" is what they do. Kyle's heart is bigger than he is. If you're stuck, Belich's will help. The staff are our people. SAY THANK YOU!

The Hall family and staff ... also our people, The Apple Bin, fresh produce, corn maze, and all the things the Hall family contributes to all of us and our community. SAY THANK YOU!

We are an older town with lots of seniors, but we are gaining younger families all the time. We set the example for a successful small town for our new community members.

All the fabulous seniors who give freely of their time to volunteer for Helping Hands, Seniors Centre, Lions, Legion, Museum, Thrift Store, and all the behind the scenes tasks that make Okanagan Falls such a cool place to live. SAY THANK YOU!

Gerry and Ryan at our Landfill care enough to keep it free of the garbage that would pollute our rich soils. SAY THANK YOU!

To every neighbour who keeps an eye out for those who would violate or steal from us. SAY THANK YOU!

And, who puts all our community news and information together for us every month? Our politics, local news and events, the pulse of our town and people. Things we need to know and talk about. "Skaha Matters" what a fitting name. Hats off! SAY THANK YOU!

If I didn't mention you ... I meant you too! SAY THANK YOU!

This is our town, small as it is, we own it's history and it's future. Be proud of ourselves and what everyone does. SAY THANK YOU!

Sun, sand, lake, beaches, parks, school, churches, wineries, its all ours to cherish and care for. Be very, very proud all my neighbours. We say 'Thank You' all. It is a privilege to live here with all of you.

LOCAL CHURCH DIRECTORY

Kaleden Community Church

Sunday Worship at 10 am ~ in-person and online

Visit kaledenchurch.ca for updates and the link to our live worship.
443 Lakehill Rd. | kaledenchurch@gmail.com | 250-497-5995

Okanagan Falls Community Church

Sunday Worship Service & Children's Teen Church at 11 am
With Pastor Jon Manlove - regular services from Jan 4th onwards.

Ladies Bible Study ~ Tuesdays at 10 am

Worship services recorded at OKFCC.net. Everyone is welcome!
1356 McLean Creek Rd, Okanagan Falls | 250-497-5131

Okanagan Falls United Church

Sunday Service at 9 am ~ Speakers: January 4 - No Service; January 11 - Rev. Liz Bowyer; January 18 - Rev. Paul James; and January 25 - Rev. Liz Bowyer. Coffee fellowship following the services. More information available at okfallsunited.ca.

1108 Willow St, Okanagan Falls | 250-497-1171 or 250-460-2560

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Service

Sunday Mass at 11 am ~ All services held in St. Barbara's Church.
1039 Willow St | Father Gabriel Chinnaperiannan | 250-494-3110

St. Barbara's Anglican Church

Sunday Service at 9:30 am ~ Join Rev. Rick Paulin on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. Morning Prayer on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Everyone is welcome! Email for more information.

1039 Willow St, Okanagan Falls | st.barbaraanglican@gmail.com

What To Explore In Puerto Vallarta

By Vi Creasey

Diane and myself are presently in Puerto Vallarta. The weather is perfect, with night time lows of 18°C to day time highs of 30°C.

Puerto Vallarta is a resort town on Mexico's Pacific coast, in Jalisco state. It is known for its beaches, water sports and nightlife scene. Its cobblestone centre is home to the ornate Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe church, boutique shops and a range of restaurants and bars. El Malecón is a beachside promenade with contemporary sculptures, as well as bars, lounges and nightclubs.

We are participating in the Guadalupe Pilgrimages, which take place every evening for the first 12 days of December. This annual event features processions, folk dancing, mariachi music and street food in honour of the Virgin of Guadalupe. The beginning of December is a magical time to spend in Puerto Vallarta.

We have also participated in the release of baby turtles. What an exciting, meaningful and educational experience. Only one out of 1,000 baby turtles will survive to adulthood. We first had to make sure there were no birds flying above us. They will swoop down and have baby turtle for dinner. So, we helped them survive their first obstacle in life.

For more information on Puerto Vallarta, or any other world wide destination, and to book your vacation, please call Reliable Travel.

ReliableTravel.ca
250-488-9313

Vi Creasey
vicreasey@shaw.ca

Diane Chatfield
dchatfield@tpi.ca



Flowers Or Fish Heads?



Send yours to skahamatters@telus.net

Your full name and location area is required on any submission.

(Please Note: Some discretion on content inclusion may be involved.)

Flowers to the Okanagan Falls Seniors Center people for an outstanding Christmas Dinner and evening on December 13th.

~ From Eleanor W. of Okanagan Falls

Fish Heads to the person(s) who continues to throw beer cans out your vehicle window in the south end of Kaleden: 1. Stop drinking and driving; 2. Stop littering. Hopefully, you can do better in 2026!

~ From Mike G. of Kaleden

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South Okanagan Similkameen Community Connections Volunteer Centre Update

By Laura Turnbull, Board Chairperson

The new year is upon us and that brings thoughts of new activities and programs to support in one's leisure time. Perhaps you have been thinking of volunteering in 2026, but are not sure where to look. The South Okanagan Similkameen Community Connections Volunteer Centre has the tools and resources to help. Below is a short list of ideas and suggestions to begin the process.

I encourage you to begin by reflecting on areas of interest. What brings you joy or satisfaction that you might be able to share with others? What hobbies or former jobs (or facets of jobs) brought you delight and might be of interest to others?

Next, think about what age group do you most enjoy working with. Do you find pleasure when you are around young people? Is it the assurance and energy of adolescents that gives you a boost? Possibly you like to be engaged with family groups of various configurations. Adults in assorted age categories are yet another source of delight for some of us. What about you?

Now comes the fun challenge. Combine your list of interests and the age group you most enjoy being with and see what that describes. As an example, you might be gifted in knitting and enjoy being with adolescents. You could contact The Foundry and see if they could utilize your time and talents with one of their teen programs. Or, you might be very organized and love being with middle-aged adults. One of the many organizations such as The Access Centre, The Volunteer Centre, Red Cross, etc. could use your gift of a few hours each week.

You may have a talent and an age preference that is difficult to match. Don't despair! The South Okanagan Similkameen Community Connections Volunteer Centre is ready to help. A phone call to Subrina Monteith, our Executive Director, at 1-888-576-5661 and she will gladly suggest many options. Check out our website at www.volunteercentre.info or email at info@volunteercentre.info.

Make your 2026 New Year's Resolution one of volunteering! Wishing you all the very best in this New Year.

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Lesley@crediblecremation.ca

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If Basic Cremation Is Your Choice

By Lesley H. Luff, Okanagan Falls & Osoyoos

By the time this publication reaches our readers, 2025 will have slipped into history. What a challenging year it turned out to be. Everything from the US tariffs to forest fires, rock slides, the atmospheric river, which caused devastating flooding in the Fraser Valley, and the recent high winds, which caused major power outages in many parts of the province.

Let us look forward with hope for a more normal and fulfilling 2026. For those who believe in making New Year's resolutions - resolve to make your pre-arrangements now, so that your family members do not have to make those difficult decisions at a very emotional time.

Lesley@crediblecremation.ca - Pre-Need

Robin@crediblecremation.ca - At-Need

We wish all our neighbours a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Credible Cremation Services

110-1960 Barnes Street, Penticton V2A 4C3

(By appointment please)

250-493-3912

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Okanagan Falls



Intro to Lacrosse

LACROSSE

Penticton Minor Lacrosse Association
(PMLA)

The Penticton Minor Lacrosse Association and RDOS are offering Intro to Lacrosse in Okanagan Falls. This program introduces the fast-paced sport to beginners ages 5 and up, focusing on fundamental skills such as passing, catching, and shooting in a fun and supportive setting.



Follow the QR code for
more information

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