

## VALLEY BRIEF

## Invasive mussels spotted at border

A boat that may have been infested zebra or quagga mussels was stopped at the Canadian border crossing in Osoyoos on March 12.

The pleasure craft was being transported from Texas to the Central Okanagan to be moored on Okanagan Lake.

According to information provided by the Okanagan Basin Water Board, the Canadian Border Services Agency has no legislative authority to refuse entry, however, the commercial transporter was co-operative.

Conservation officers brought a decontamination unit to decontaminate the vessel the following day.

The water board has been urging the federal government to pass legislation, which is pending, that will allow border guards to stop and inspect watercraft and prohibit entry of contaminated vessels.

It has also been urging the province to implement an inspection program that will help prevent the spread of these mussels and other invasive species. In December 2012, the province introduced legislation that makes it illegal to transport live or dead invasive mussels in B.C.

## You can be a parks volunteer

The regional parks system is launching a Volunteers in Parks program and is looking for people who want to become trail patrollers.

An information meeting will take place at 7 p.m., April 2, at the Environmental Education Centre for the Okanagan, in Mission Creek Regional Park.

"Our VIP trail patrollers will be additional eyes and ears in our regional parks," said community relations liaison Risti Lesperance. "While their main function will be to record and report any problems for our regional parks staff to follow up on, they'll also act as park ambassadors, providing information to visitors about the natural and cultural features of the park and if needed politely remind visitors about park regulations."

After the information meeting, applications will be accepted from people 19 and older and willing to commit to visit a park at least once a week.

More information is available at regionaldistrict.com/parksVIP.

## CUPW hosting public meeting in Vernon

Canada Post's planned cuts to home delivery will be the topic of a public meeting, planned for Saturday in Vernon.

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers will host the meeting at 10:30 a.m. at the Schubert Centre, 3505 30th Ave. The union opposes plans to make everyone pick up their mail at community mailboxes.

## Elementary pupils head to university

Elementary school students will learn today why neuromuscular physiology is cool.

Grade 4-6 students will attend the UBC Okanagan campus this morning to take part in hands-on projects that will show how the brain and nerves enable bodies to move in complex ways.

Neuromuscular physiology examines the connection between a person's muscles and brain.

Students will participate in experiments such as grip-squeezing objects to explore the science behind how

## Gray knows when he's put his foot in his mouth

By RON SEYMOUR  
The Daily Courier

Walter Gray knows full well he can put his foot in his mouth with the best of them.

"Sometimes I come up with the stupidest things, and right away I'm embarrassed I've said them," Gray said during an interview on Tuesday when he revealed he wasn't going to run for re-election.

His penchant for plain-speaking is either an endearing or unbecoming quality, depending on your point of view. With his language, as with the man himself, there is unlikely to be a middle ground in perceptions.

Here, in no particular order, is a list of some noteworthy Grayisms uttered over the years.

In the dying days of the heated 2011 civic election, Gray faced then-incumbent Sharon Shepherd in a debate at the Rotary Centre. Gray drew laughs, and later some censure, for describing Rutland as "Hooterville, that's what everyone calls it."

The perceived slight didn't seem to bother Rutlanders; Gray easily beat Shepherd at the two Rutland polling stations on election night.

December 17, 1987: Then an alderman, Gray voted with a majority of council to go ahead with plans for the 1988 Regatta, despite fears the summer festival might be hit with a riot for the third consecutive year: "How could we be proud of waving a white flag and walking away with our tails between our legs?"

In mid-June 1987, Gray led the Yes campaign in a local referendum on whether Kelowna should build a new \$18-million arena. The plan was rejected by 57 per cent of voters, but Gray was undaunted: "None of us who believe in progress will give up."

## Mayors pay tribute to Gray

Jim Stuart was mayor of Kelowna for 10 years, beginning in 1986. After Stuart retired from politics, Walter Gray defeated Henry Markgraf and won the mayoralty in the 1996 civic election.

"I'm sorry to hear Walter's decided to go," said Stuart, 79. "I appreciated his efforts in running a good council, particularly this last one. Maybe this change to a four-year term (from three, for all civic politicians beginning this November), had something to do with his decision."

"That's a long commitment to make, particularly at a certain age," Stuart said.



The Daily Courier

Mayor Walter Gray sparked a national controversy when he refused to sign a Gay Pride proclamation in 1997, but he made amends and got a kiss for his efforts from Wilbur Turner (aka Oddree Mayormaynot) at a Gay Pride event in 2012.

On May 9, 1986, Prince Charles and Princess Diana visited Kelowna en route to Expo 86 in Vancouver. During his welcoming remarks to the big crowd in City Park, "Walter Gray referred to Prince Charles as Prince Philip, and referred to Diana, Princess of Wales, as Lady Princess Diana, two diplomatic gaffes," The Daily Courier reported.

On Sept. 7, 1982, Walter Gray, then president of the Kelowna chamber of commerce, railed against what he said were too-high salaries at City Hall, with clerical workers making 47 per cent more than comparable employees in the private sector: "It's just the tip of the iceberg," he fumed.

In 1997, Gray refused to sign a proclamation for Gay Pride Day, saying he believed many Kelowna residents would be offended. In 2012, he kissed and made up with the local gay community — quite literally.

As the featured speaker at the Pride Festival's opening ceremony, Gray exchanged a smooch with festival organizer Wilbur Turner, who was appearing in his drag queen alter-ego Mayor Oddree Mayormaynot.

The awesomely flamboyant mayor then jokingly asked the real mayor if he would consider changing his sexual orientation. Gray drew a big laugh from the crowd when he responded by saying: "Now remember, for the last half hour, I've been looking at you're derriere, and I've changed my mind."

Shepherd was a city councillor in 2005 when she challenged Gray, who had been mayor since 1996. She defeated him, earning 53 per cent of the vote, to his 44.5 per cent.

Shepherd won the mayoralty again in 2008. But Gray staged a political comeback in 2011, narrowly defeating Shepherd, 47.1 per cent to 45.7 per cent.

"For 18 years, the mayor of Kelowna has either been Walter Gray or Sharon Shepherd," Gray said Tuesday, when he announced he would not seek a fifth term. "Maybe it's time for someone different as mayor."

## Who wants to be mayor?

Many on council still must decide whether they're running again in November

By RON SEYMOUR  
The Daily Courier

Will they or won't they?

With Mayor Walter Gray's announcement this week that he will not seek re-election, attention has focused on the eight councillors regarding their intentions heading toward the civic vote.

Here's what they had to say on the subject:

Gerry Zimmerman, first elected in 2011 with 18,857 votes, the most among any councillors: "I don't know yet, but I was really leaning against running again before Walter made his announcement. I'm turning 65 in April and I'm starting to think that maybe it's time to go off and do something different."

Gail Given, first elected in 2011, placing second among councillors with 13,111 votes. Given is now considering a run for mayor: "I continue to give serious consideration to this very important role. I am currently gathering community feedback and working on assembling a team."

"For me, it's too early to be absolutely definitive. I believe we, as a council, need to be focused on the work we have to complete. There is much to be done."

If Given decides against a mayoral bid, she will run for re-election as a councillor.

Colin Basran, first elected in 2011 with 13,073 votes, third highest among councillors. He is considering a run for mayor. "It's certainly something I would be interested in," he said, but he has no plans to make an immediate announcement on his mayoral intentions. If he doesn't run for mayor, he will run for council again.

Robert Hobson was first elected to council in 1988. He won re-election for a ninth straight term in 2011, placing fourth among councillors with 12,413 votes. "I am leaning toward retirement," he says.

Andre Blamie, first elected in 1993, and re-elected for his seventh straight term in 2011 with 12,081 votes, fifth among councillors. "I still haven't made up my mind yet," on whether to run again in November, he says.

Luke Stack, first elected in 2005, and re-elected in 2011 with 10,279 votes, or sixth most among councillors: "Yes, it is my intention to seek a third term on council this fall."

Maxine DeHart, first elected in 2011 with 10,106 votes, seventh among councillors: "I have had a very positive experience on council and have really enjoyed it. Now that the new term is four years, I feel I must give running quite a bit more thought."