

Westside Weekly

Sunday, December 5, 2010

NEWS

Water watchdog reports on weeds

By Dorothy Brotherton
Westside Weekly

After decades of war, the Okanagan Lake battle with aquatic weeds is still not over.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board recently reported that it's working with counterparts in the United States on aquatic weed control. The OBWB signed a memorandum of understanding between a coalition of agencies in B.C. and northwestern U.S., which aims to promote exchange of data, information and best management practices for controlling invasive aquatic weeds. The battle here has been focused on milfoil control, using mainly a harvesting method.

The OBWB report, received last week by Peachland council, noted the water agency is considering its budget for 2011-2012. With approval expected in December, it will earmark \$3.7 million to fund the milfoil control program, sewage facilities grants, a water management program and a new UBC-Okanagan water resources chair.

Peachland is planning to look with interest at a report being prepared by the OBWB on Okanagan water supply and demand.

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NEWS

Peachland approves encroachment rules

Westside Weekly

Don't build your retaining wall or anything else onto the roadway allowance: That's the message being sent to residents by Peachland council.

A new highway encroachment bylaw and policy received approval recently, aimed at making people who use public land for private use get approval and pay a fee.

The problem has been that sometimes in the past, a property owner has encroached on a public right-of-way with a fence or other structure. That public land may contain a waterline or other infrastructure, and the encroachment was discovered when that infrastructure had to be dug up.

Now a resident will have to apply to the town for a permit if they wish to construct or place anything on a public right-of-way.

In many cases it will be allowed, if there is no infrastructure beneath or if it won't restrict public access over the area and won't affect safety.

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KIRSTIN LESOSKY/Westside Weekly

BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER

Back row from left, Janet Jansen as Grace Bradley and Pastor Derrick Hamre as Reverend Hopkins have their hands full when their church's Christmas pageant is taken over by the six unruly Herdman children, including Hannah Koch as the anything-but-an-angel Gladys, alongside Joel Hamre as the trouble-making wiseman Ollie. Emmanuel Church presents its dinner theatre production of Barbara Robinson's, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, nightly Dec. 9-12 starting at 6 p.m. at the church located at 2600 Hebert Rd., West Kelowna. Tickets cost \$20 for adults and \$15 for children/youth/seniors and include a turkey dinner and a dessert at intermission. Tickets are available at the Emmanuel Church office or at event sponsors Home Hardware (Westbank), British Invasion Sweets and Goods (Peachland) and Blenz Coffee (Westbank). Call 250-768-7638 for more info.

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Westside NEWS

Silent demonstration for children's rights

Jazmin Welder-Coulson
Mount Boucherie Secondary School

In the cold, the wind, and the snow, 12 youth stand in front of Orchard Park mall's entrance, outside The Bay, alerting bus riders of their presence with the eye-catching tape they wear over their mouths.

It's 10:30am on a Saturday morning, but these teenagers are not sleeping in.

Advocating for Free the Children's Vow of Silence campaign, each member of the group stands without speaking, holding a sign with a different statistic about global child laborers and slaves. "One in seven children worldwide are child laborers," and "There are 218 million children in slavery worldwide" are examples of their signs.

Each year, the Vow of Silence marks the anniversary of the U.N. Convention of the Rights of the Child. Twenty-one years later, it is clear that most of the rights of children agreed on are not being

respected.

"It's not fair," said 15-year-old Nicole Swett from Rutland Senior Secondary. "Kids need to be in school, not taken from their families and enslaved at as young as five years of age."

"I'm definitely not impressed," said Nicole Johnston, a 13-year-old from Dr. Knox Middle. "It's been 21 years, and a body as powerful as the U.N. definitely has the power to put these measures in place, and it's like nothing has been done at all to protect children."

During the Vow of Silence, kids partaking remain absolutely silent for 24 hours – no talking, no texting, no facebook, no communication whatsoever – to represent the millions of slaves worldwide who have their voices silenced, and who are not being heard. Most of this group participated in the vow last month in their schools, which included Mount Boucherie Secondary, Dr. Knox and Rutland Senior Secondary. Staying silent when you are so accustomed to

having your voice be heard is "immensely frustrating, but completely worth it when you consider the cause."

The group attracts a great amount of odd looks, stares, and questions. When a question is too complicated to be answered with a simple nod or head shake, one member of the group takes off the tape on their mouths to explain so that the others can continue with the silent demonstration.

"Two hundred eighteen million children in slavery," Carson Reveen, 15, also from Rutland Senior, says to an interested passerby. "That's only a ballpark number of children that are actually in slavery. This doesn't take into account children who simply have to work because their families can't afford them not to. Free the Children implements projects that help relieve that problem so kids can go to school, families can sustain themselves and child laborers and slaves become a non-issue."

This particular group are called



Students from Okanagan Schools, including Mount Boucherie Secondary School, recently participated in protests against child labour.

Contributed photo

the Kelowna-Okanagan Mobilizers. They are a chapter of the Me to We Mobilizers, a Canada-wide initiative of 24 mob cities. The Mobilizers are a group of dedicated social justice advocates, championing the causes of Free the Children and it's business partner Me to We, and tackling any human or environmental rights causes that they feel passionately about.

After roughly an hour of demonstrating outside Orchard Park, the group moves on foot towards downtown Kelowna, walking the entire

5.2 km to Queensway Station. They and their signs are met with much honking and encouragement. "It's nothing compared to what some children have to go through," they say of their representative march through the -6 degree snowy cold.

Any cash donations or pledges that the Vow of Silence participants take in are donated to Free the Children to help with Adopt a Village projects, which include building and funding schools, clean water projects, medical carts and alternative income projects.

Growing garden in Shannon Lake

By Barb Aguilar
Westside Weekly

Shannon Lake could have its own community garden as early as summer as West Kelowna council directed staff to work with the Central Okanagan Community Garden Society to explore the use of a portion of land at the north end of a park on Shannon Ridge Drive.

Barbara Bowmar, a board member from the society, appeared before council last week to ask for approval in principal to explore the use of the land as a community garden.

According to Bowmar, without any advertising, some 15 residents have already indicated an interest in a community garden in the Shannon Lake area. The Town Centre Garden has a waiting list and there would be Shannon Lake residents who would move from the Town Centre garden to one in Shannon Ridge.

Bowmar said that children, singles, families, older adults and citizens who do not have access to land to grow their own food use the gardens and added that gardening provides exercise, recreation, social networking and supplemental nutrition.

"We prefer to put gardens in multi-family areas," said Bowmar, "There is multi-family housing in the area and our gardeners are those without their own land on which to grow food."

The garden would be approximately 70,000 square feet and would have space for 30 10 by 20 plots.

Bowmar estimated that the garden would cost \$10,000 and hoped to have it running for the 2011 growing season.

The Central Okanagan Community Garden Society is a non-profit society that aims to provide barrier free access to gardening. The society has already built eight community gardens including the Town Centre Garden.

Water watchdog

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It targets local government staff, and is expected to show how the study results can be used as a planning tool.

Workshops called From Rain to Resource, held in October in Kelowna, drew more than 100 delegates, including local government officials and staff with industry experts. The OBWB workshops

looked at innovative ways to address the significant rains expected with climate change.

A full report will be available soon and workshop presentations will be posted at .

Local governments will also be paying attention to a topsoil guide, being developed by OBWB with a \$10,000 grant from the provincial Ministry of Community and Rural Development.

The guide will promote water quality improvement, water conservation and storm water management.

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