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Butterflies bring smiles to grieving relatives

400 Monarch butterflies released at Central Okanagan Hospice Association's annual Butterfly Effect event

Special To The Daily Courier

Love is like a butterfly — it goes where it pleases and it pleases wherever it goes. No one knows who penned that saying, but its essence was abundant as families set free 400 monarchs at a North Glenmore farm Sunday. The release may be a fundraiser for the local hospice association, but its uplifting impact brought countless smiles to grieving relatives.

"Watching it come out of the box and just spreading its wings and just flying up to the heavens gives you some heaven and some peace," said Marion Henselwood, who lost her entire family.

"I had no idea it would hit me in the way it did. It brings tears to my heart every time, no matter how many years have passed."

The Butterfly Effect has become an annual staple at Falcon Ridge Farms on Rifle Road. People pay \$30 for a monarch or \$75 for three to honour loved ones by releasing the butterflies at the same time in the rolling hills of Kelowna.

What the caterpillar sees at the end is what the butterfly sees as the beginning, says Susan Steen, executive director of the Central Okanagan Hospice Association.

"We wanted to give the community something they could embrace. It wasn't \$200 for a ticket at a dinner."

One family brought their mother's ashes for the butterfly release. The beauty of no



Photo contributed by Abbey Heller

Isabella Graziotto coaxed a monarch butterfly to perch on her hand at a Glenmore farm on Sunday. Hundreds of people grieving lost relatives released the monarchs as a healing exercise.

surroundings eases the pain of loss, but grieving with others also helps, said Henselwood, COHA's president.

"People who don't even know each other are crying together in the memory of those who died. There is a social aspect to know you're not alone... Maybe you're releasing one or five but we're all doing it for the same reason."

The butterflies are imported in the pupa stage from California and brought to adult-hood in Langley.

They're fed watermelon slices and Gatorade before owner Kim Sutton and husband Jeremy transport them to Kelowna for the release.

Nica Graziotto brought her two daughters and two nieces to Sunday's event. They released four butterflies to commemorate their four great grandparents.

"What an amazing way to honour loved ones," she said.

"The girls were totally blown away by it. They were like 'wow... It was great — something we'll always remember.'"

One of the four kids got close up and personal with a monarch soon after the release. Isabella Graziotto was able to coax the butterfly onto her finger in a flower garden.

"I brought my finger really close to its legs and it kind of climbed on," the 14-year-old said.

"It was really cool. Being able to look really close at it instead of seeing it far away is a lot different. I was really determined."

Proceeds go toward to the hospice association, which operates Hospice House on Ethel Street.

Hospice staff and volunteers provide care to terminally ill patients and counselling to families at no expense.

Rain doesn't quench fire threat

By The Canadian Press

VANCOUVER — A change in weather could offer British Columbians a break from an otherwise ferocious start to this year's wildfire season, but a provincial official says a few days of rain isn't necessarily enough to hit the reset button on weeks of soaring temperatures and parched conditions.

"It does appear that we've got a bit of temporary reprieve from the current situation... but we are still very early in the summer and the weather is fickle and changing daily," said Kevin Skrepnek, a B.C. Wildfire Service spokesman. "We need to ensure that people aren't getting complacent as a result of this rain."

This shift in weather is expected to continue, said Skrepnek, with cooler temperatures and scattered rain forecast across the province over the coming week.

A campfire ban remains in place provincewide as more than 230 fires rage across B.C., almost 50 of which began on Saturday.

So far in 2015, 1,065 fires have consumed nearly 2,800 square kilometres across the province — a substantial jump from this time last year, when 492 fires had burned a mere 200 square kilometres.

B.C. has spent more than \$100 million so far this year fighting wildfires, having burned through its annual budget of \$85 million by the end of last month.

About 2,400 personnel are busy fighting the flames — whether on the fire line or in support positions — more than 1,000 of which are contract workers.

B.C. has called in about 100 personnel from outside the province, including from Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes.

On Monday, 52 Australian firefighters are scheduled to arrive into B.C. to help with fire relief efforts, while another contingent of Down Under personnel will soon show up to assist in other Western Canadian provinces.

The provincial government has also signed a one-month contract to use the Martin Mars water bomber based in Port Alberni.

"The Mars is an iconic aircraft," said Skrepnek about the aged air tanker, which can unload 27,000 litre payload in a single fly-by. "It has a somewhat limited mission profile (but) in the right situation it is an incredibly effective tool."

Skrepnek had promising news about the ongoing battle against the province's top-priority fire.

Crews managed to contain just under a third of the Puntal Lake fire, an aggressive blaze raging in B.C.'s central Cariboo Region, about 150 kilometres west of Williams Lake. The fire more than doubled in size on Saturday, from 30 to 70 square kilometres, thanks to strong winds and an abundance of dry brush and timber.

So far several properties have been destroyed by the flames, including a hunting and fishing lodge. An order to evacuate remains in place in the region, affecting 50 properties, while more than 180 remain on evacuation alert.

B.C. has lifted all of the air-quality advisories in southeastern B.C., although smoke advisories remain in place in the province's northwest and Central Interior, Provincial Health Officer Perry Kendall said on Sunday.

"Depending on local conditions people should be alert for diminishing air quality — they'll see and smell the smoke," said the province's top doctor.

There remain 22 fires of note in B.C., six states of local emergency and 143 evacuation orders and alerts.

INDEX	
Canada	A6
Classified	B4-5
Comics	B6
Horoscope	A2
Letters	A9
Opinion	A8
Sports	B6-10
Weather	A2
World	A10

Wise words
 Take calculated risks. That is quite different from being rash.

— George S. Patton

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Roving inspections still not the right answer: water board

Adding three more roving inspection stations to hunt down invasive mussels is a good start, but still not good enough, says the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

In a news release, the water board applauded a plan by the B.C. government and Columbia Basin Trust to increase the number of roving inspection stations in the province from three to six.

"This is generally very good news. Inspection and decontamination in the Kootenays helps protect the Okanagan," said OBWB executive director Anna Warwick Sears. "That being said, the OBWB would prefer the province ensure the most defensive, conservative approach possible, with a minimum of five permanent inspection stations at major highway crossings on the B.C.-Alberta border."

The Canadian Border Services Agency will inspect boats coming across the Canada-U.S.

border for possible zebra and quagga mussels infestation. It's the Alberta border the water board is worried about.

In its news release, the OBWB says it has less funding than the Columbia Basin Trust to apply to the mussel issue and the board is wary of the downloaded responsibility to fund its own inspection and decontamination stations.

Water board directors passed a motion acknowledging federal government efforts to stop aquatic invasive species. The motion also recommended water utilities and owners of in-lake infrastructure evaluate what measures are needed should the mussels arrive.

Julia Lew with the Southern Nevada Water System will speak about her agency's efforts to combat mussels at the water board's annual general meeting, Sept. 4.

— Staff

Two killed in head-on collision

VERNON — Two women have died after a head-on collision over the weekend.

Police in Vernon say a vehicle veered into the oncoming lane on Highway 97 early Sunday.

Both women, aged 22 and 36, were declared dead at the scene after driving into an oncoming vehicle.

A 32-year-old woman and a 26-year-old man from Armstrong, who were traveling in the other vehicle were taken to hospital.

The pair was seriously injured but both are expected to recover.

No names have been released.

— The Canadian Press

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