To-do's

❍ **Silverbacks** - Hosting Trail Fri & Vernon Sat. Two weekend wins:
SA 3, Chilliwack 2 OT
SA 3, Spruce Grove 2 OT

❍ **Salmar Grand**
- *Ebenezer*
- *Drummer Boy*
- *Hunger Games*
- *I Play Rocky*
- *Cat in the Hat (1:30)*
- *Tony.* Film Society: Sat.

❍ **Fiddler on the Roof** Now to Nov. 29, Shuswap theatre. Sold out.

❍ **Sword & Stone,** Thur-Sun, Armstrong

❍ **Death of a Salesman,** playreading, 7pm, Wed, Shuswap Theatre.

❍ **Coffeehouses:** Enderby & Celista, Fri. Gleneden, Sat; Writers, 2-4, Fri, First Community

❍ **Storytime,** 9-10, Sat, Sweet Magnolia, 371 Hudson.

❍ **Turtle Valley,** Sat, Legion

❍ **Anthony D'Alssandro** plays Gershwin, 7pm, Thur, Nexus at First. Jazz club

❍ **Irish Mythen,** Sat, Song Sparrow Hall. Sold out

❍ **Adapter,** Fri, Setters

❍ **Thrash wrestling,** 7 pm, Fri, Recreation Centre

❍ **Open bonspiel,** Fri-Sun

❋❋❋

HOLIDAY MARKETS

❋ **Yuletide Village,** Fri - Sun, Alexander

❋ **Black Friday,** Piccadilly

❋ **Gift & Craft Sale**, Fri, Sat., St. Joseph's Church

❋ **Pottery Club Sale,** Sat, Sun, Piccadilly

❋ **Lakeside Manor Bazaar**, 10-2, Thur

❋ **Red Barn market,** Sat, Sun, Sicamous

❋ **Farmstrong,** Sat.

❋ **Chase,** 10-2, Sat.

❋ **Choose Refill event,** 10-4, Sat..

❋ **Christmas Market**, Fri, Splatsin Centre

❋ **Parade,** 5pm, Sat.

❋ **Holiday train,** Dec. 17

2°/ -4°
Chance of flurries

SALMON ARM Nov. 23 Beat

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PREMIERS' BILL

Earl Brown was a brash 14-year-old teen 55 years ago when he asked Premier WAC Bennett for his autograph, except all he had on him was a crisp one dollar bill.

Since then, Brown who now lives in Salmon Arm, has collected all 13 Premier signatures since the legendary Bennett. His mission now is to track down the newly sworn in Premier Lorne Doerkson. The bill still has a little real estate left for a 14th signature.

Brown was featured on CBC's *As it Happens* national current affairs show this past Friday. You can hear the entire segment by going to cbc.ca and searching 'As it Happens' (Nov. 20). ■





> Not without some push back from Canoe residents, Council approved converting five gravel laneways between 70th Ave. NE and Canoe Beach Dr. to one-way northbound only.



Around town



> Happy 101st birthday Mr. Jack Stead, celebrating with the Saturday gang at the Legion and his daughter, granddaughter and great-grandson.



> On right - Sam and Gail make the hospital rounds



> These neighbours on a cul de sac in Canoe are really into Christmas this year. Photo posted by Brian Browning includes one of the brightly festival homes. Might it possibly be observed from the Space Station?

1°/ -2°
Mix of sun and cloud

SALMON ARM Nov. 20 Beat

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The Beat goes on..

The daily *AM Beats* are turning into more than a little retirement project for myself. There's never a shortage of content, and it is fun for me to put together, however, I need to tap on the brake just a little. In the interest of more retirement-like behaviour on my part, I am limiting these blogs to five a week, no more ones on Saturday and Sunday. Now that was easy.

To-do's

❍ **Silverbacks**
Visit: Chilliwack, Friday
Host: Spruce Grove, Sat.
❍ **Salmar Grand**
• *Ebenezer*
• *Drummer Boy*
• *Hunger Games*
• *I Play Rocky*
• *Cat in the Hat (1:30)*
Film Society, 4 pm, Sat:
• *Mile End Kicks*
❍ **Fiddler on the Roof**
Now to Nov. 29, Shuswap theatre. Sold out.
❍ **Coffeehouses:**
Enderby & Celista, Fri.
Gleneden, Sat
❍ **Repair Cafe,** 10-3, Sat., 220 Shuswap
❍ **Mother Sun, Highbush Caribou, Open mic,** 7pm, Fri, NF Stage on Hudson
❍ **Canoe Sr. Hall Pancake b'fast,** 8:30 - 10:30, Sat.

❄❄❄

HOLIDAY MARKETS
❄ **Craft & Gift,** 4-8, Thur., M.V. Beattie
❄ **Rancho Vignola Harvest,** Fri & Sat, Rec. Centre
❄ **Spinners & Weavers,** 10-3, Sat, Fifth Ave. 50+
❄ **Craft & Trade Fair,** Eagle R. Sec., 10-3, Sat.
❄ **Christmas Market,** 9-2, Sat, Sorrento Hall
❄ **Decor,** 1381 13th Ave. NE, 11-4, Fri, Sat.
❄ **Christmas Market,** Fri, Enderby Drill Hall
❄ **Farmstrong Christmas Market,** 11-5, Sat
❄ **Yuletide Village, Nov. 27-29, Alexander**
❄ **Parade,** 5pm, Nov.28

Vancouver's 40 under 40

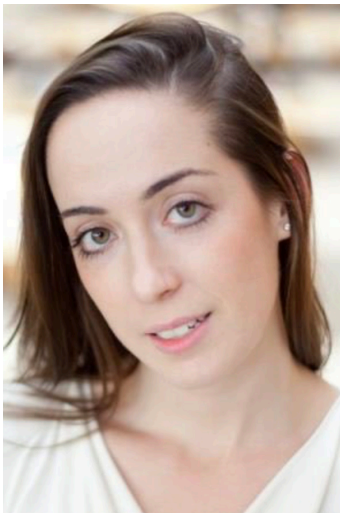
Aria Hahn is back in Salmon Arm now, but is definitely not forgotten by the Vancouver business community.

Business in Vancouver magazine (BIV) has recognized her in this year's '40 under 40' prestigious list.

She is co-founder of the innovative company, Pocketed, that has helped more than 17,000 businesses access over $200-million in government funding.

The company was recently acquired by Deloitte and rebranded as 'Pocketed, a Deloitte business.'

The 2005 SAS graduate earned a PhD in Genomics from UBC and grew up



in Salmon Arm with both parents longtime teachers in SD83.

Dr. Hahn also played for the Jewels and was one of the first late French immersion classes. She and her family returned last year.

A million for STARS

Armstrong Regional Co-op, which Salmon Arm is a part of, is participating in a $1 million multi-year investment to support the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service (STARS).

The five-year funding agreement directly bolsters STARS' critical care operations and emergency transport services throughout BC and the Prairies.

For residents across the North Okanagan and surrounding rural regions, this partnership ensures that advanced, life-saving medical care remains within reach when every second counts. ■

Grant for Watershed

SASCU has awarded a $40,000 Empowerment Grant to the Salmon River Watershed to help develop a plan to protect the Salmon River's water flows for both fish and agricultural users.

The association came together in response to the increasing pressure on the region's water supply.



COST OF TODAY'S EDUCATION

Education should open doors, not create a life-long debt. College students are trying to get an education with hopes of a stable job, owning a home, and creating a financially secure life. Yet the very education that is supposed to help, is creating a massive amount of debt that they will pay off for the rest of their lives.

With students being so busy with schoolwork and fully applying themselves they often do not have time to hold a steady job. But even if students took fewer classes so they could work, there is a lack of jobs in the Salmon Arm area.

Young Canadians are being told to work hard, get an education, and set their life up, but the financial aspect of the education system makes it so much harder than people think. The society we live in now is much different than it was 20to 40 years ago. Students must pay for tuition, books and supplies, a laptop or iPad, (much of the schoolwork must be done online) rent, food, phone bill, car insurance and even gas if you are not within walking distance.

Each month all that stuff adds up fast. For many students', the only way to afford their education and basic living is student loans. With student loans each semester piles on to the last and before you know it you owe the government $70,000 for an education and to survive during that time. Rent is averaging $1,000 a month for one person and that is including a studio apartment in the school dorms. $1,000 a month times the eight months you are in school. That is $8,000 just in rent for one year of school (and there are at least four years of post-secondary school so $32,000 in rent alone).

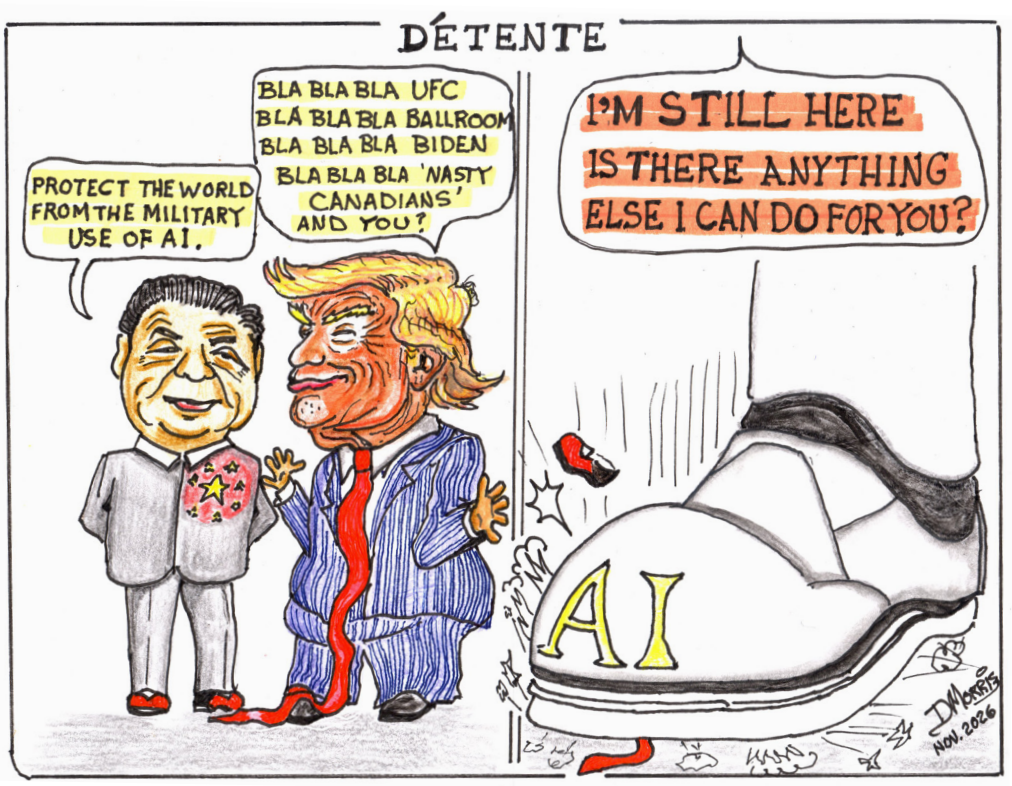
How are college students supposed to feel like they are getting anywhere in life when they have this massive sum of money, they owe the government that could take decades to pay off?

Young Canadians should not spend the beginning of their adulthood worrying about the debt they are building instead the government needs to recognize the financial pressure and burdens college students are enduring.

Paytan Gagne, Salmon Arm,
Okanagan College student

Here is the latest cartoon from Salmon Arm's Duncan Morris on the subject of AI. It is something that world leaders need to take an intense look at before it takes over every aspect of contempory life. Below is a sample of AI slop that could become the future of news releases.





To-do's

❍ **Silverbacks**
Win 1, lose 1 on Weekend
Visit: Chilliwack, Friday
Host: Spruce Grove, Sat.

❍ **Salmar Grand**
• *Cat in the Hat**
• *Godzilla minus zero**
* Ends Thursday
• *Ebenezer*
• *Drummer Boy*
Opens Friday:
• *Hunger Games*
• *I Play Rocky*
• *Cat in the Hat (1:30)*
Film Society, 4 pm, Sat:
• *Mile End Kicks*

❍ **Fiddler on the Roof** Now to Nov. 29, Shuswap theatre. Sold out.

❍ **Three acclaimed poets,** 7pm, Thur., Little Mt. fieldhouse. Details to follow.

❍ **Barra MacNeil,** Thur, Song Sparrow. Irish/East Coast. Sold out

❍ **Coffeehouses:** Enderby & Celista, Fri. Gleneden, Sat

❍ **Repair Cafe,** 10-3, Sat., 220 Shuswap

❍ **Mother Sun, Highbush Caribou, Open mic,** 7pm, Fri, NF Stage on Hudson

❍ **Canoe Sr. Hall Pancake b'fast,** 8:30 - 10:30, Sat.

HOLIDAY MARKETS

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❄ **Rancho Vignola Harvest,** Fri & Sat, Rec. Centre

❄ **Spinners & Weavers,** 10-3, Sat, Fifth Ave. 50+

❄ **Craft & Trade Fair,** Eagle R. Sec., 10-3, Sat.

❄ **Christmas Market,** 9-2, Sat, Sorrento Hall

❄ **Decor,** 1381 13th Ave. NE, 11-4, Fri, Sat.

❄ **Christmas Market,** Fri, Enderby Drill Hall

❄ **Farmstrong Christmas Market,** 11-5, Sat

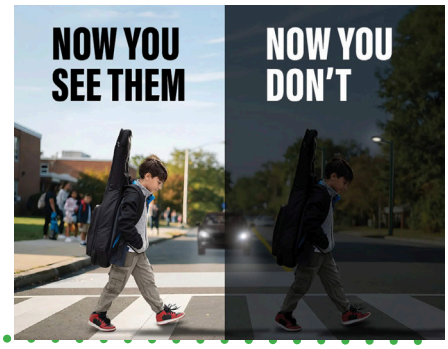
❄ **Yuletide Village, Nov. 27-29, Alexander**

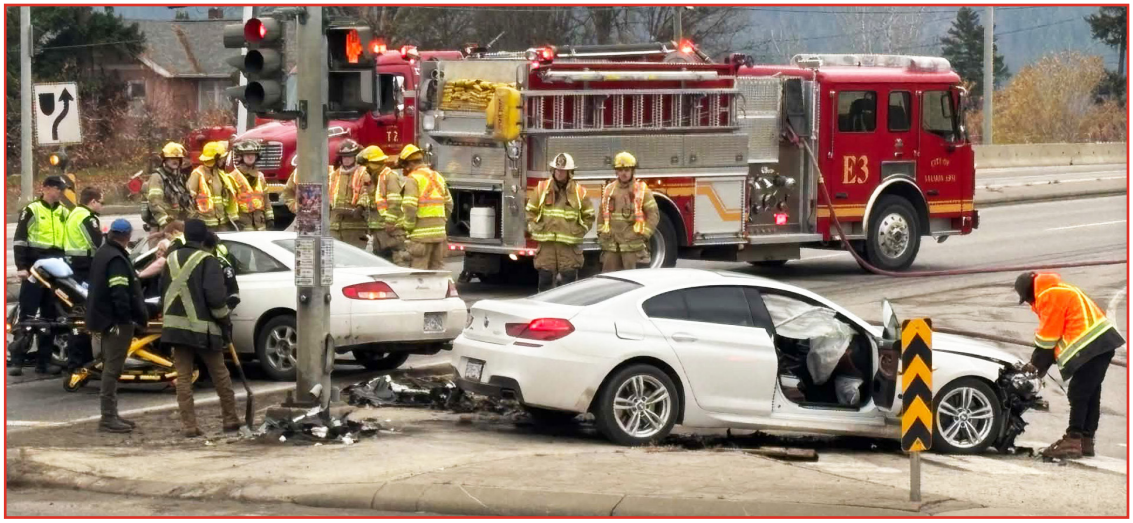
❄ **Parade,** 5pm, Nov.28

3°/ -3°
Clearing

SALMON ARM Nov. 19 Beat

Be a frequent 'Fri'er. Bookmark FriAM.ca





> The Highway 1 and Broadview (30th St. NE) intersection was the scene of yet another two vehicle crash about 11 Wednesday morning. Police, fire and ambulance attended with three transported to hospital, and one occupant and a dog appearing okay. Eastbound traffic was rerouted.

> After an hour staring out at the lake, it occurred to me that it was just a fence.



Wildwood Winter Open House

Join us Thursday, Nov 19 from 5:30-7:30 pm

Catch up, celebrate, have a nibble, get inspired!



Rancho Vignola

Prize Draws!

SALMON ARM
HARVEST SALE
NOVEMBER 20 & 21

Recipe Demos!

Tasty Samples!

NUTS AND DRIED FRUIT
Gourmet Gifts & Fine Confection

Easy to taste.
Impossible to Forget.

FREE ENTRY
Friday | 9am - 7pm
Saturday | 9am - 5pm
SASCU Recreation Centre

Join us on Social for Event Updates
@RanchoVignola
ranchovignola.com

The Friday AM Facebook page reached a record 279,700 views over the last 28 days (Oct. 21-Nov. 17) with 2,760 active followers.

SALMON ARM Nov. 18 Beat

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PAST WEEK, Nov. 8 to 14
By weather reporter Nick Parsons

4°/ -3° Mainly cloudy

DATE	HIGH	LOW	PREC.
Nov. 8	14	6	Trace
Nov. 9	6	0	1/16"
Nov. 10	9	4	1/4"
Nov. 11	14	6	
Nov. 12	13	6	
Nov. 13	7	3	
Nov. 14	10	3	Trace

The grandstand at Sorrento--Blind Bay community park will be closed until further notice. A temporary brace had been installed in June to make it safe during the summer season. However, the bracing was only intended as a short-term measure.

To-do's

❍ **Silverbacks**
Win 1, lose 1 on Weekend
Visit: Chilliwack, Friday
Host: Spruce Grove, Sat.

❍ **Salmar Grand**
- *Cat in the Hat*
- *Godzilla minus zero*
- *Ebenezer*
- *Drummer Boy*

Film Society, 4 pm, Sat:
- *Mile End Kicks*

AGM, 4pm, Wed, Salmar

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Enderby & Celista, Fri.
Gleneden, Sat

❍ **Repair Cafe,** 10-3, Sat., 220 Shuswap

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❄ **Christmas Market,** 9-2, Sat, Sorrento Hall

❄ **Decor,** 1381 13th Ave. NE, 11-4, Fri, Sat.

❄ **Christmas Market**, Fri, Enderby Drill Hall

❄ **Farmstrong Christmas Market**, 11-5, Sat



Monday's *AM Beat* wrote about the disappointment from being too slow buying tickets. Well here's your big test: Tickets go on sale at Roots & Blues on Friday for **Sam Roberts Band & Uncle Strut**, performing Feb. 4 at Song Sparrow.

Tickets also go on sale Dec. 1 for the Celebrate Trails event, June 5 featuring **Uncle Strut** and **The Shades**. By the way, Sam Roberts will be playing from the Holiday Train as it rolls through the Shuswap on December 17.

Passages









Left to right:

❖ Mary Williams, 98. Teacher, restaurant manager, married to Lawrence nearly 78 years!

❖ Byron Thiessen, 74. Loved the open road. Watch for bike and hot rod gathering.

❖ Ferne Kilpatrick, 82. Completed final needle point creation just before her passing

❖ Victor Stanley, 86. Earned his 8th degree blackbelt in Karate

❖ Charles Armstrong, 83. Rail car superviser. Built special coal cars. *1 pm, Sat. United church*

❖ Barry Games, 83, extraordinary artist with intense world views. Remember his metal birdhouses in his yard off Lakeshore Dr?

❖ Christina Marier. The words on her facebook profile says it all: "Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times if only one remembers to turn on the light" And from her daughter, Brittany: "She was kind, thoughtful, hilarious, loving, and quite simply the bravest and strongest person you could ever meet. She was always the life of the party, bringing laughter, light and love wherever she went." Christina passed away in Victoria after a long battle with cancer. (*Editor's note: I remember Christina and her smiling face when she worked at restaurants in Salmon Arm, and when we both had daughters on the same soccer team. I didn't really know her except for pleasant conversations, yet I distinctly remember on Sunday the thought popping in my head - 'whatever happened to Christina', and it turned out the day of her passing. It makes one wonder what exactly the soul is up to after it passes from the body.*)

..And a few more Passages:

❖ Paige Tracey-Welwood 59, leaves a legacy of kindness. *3:30, Sat., Shuswap Lake Estates*

❖ Helen Pearson, 77. Former assistant school supervisor with uncanny ability to turn everyday encounters into funny anecdotes.

❖ Irene 'Mickey' Oesch, 94. Full of fascinating stories from growing up in the Yukon.

Rest in Peace to all who have left us

6°/ -2°
increasing
cloudiness

SALMON ARM Nov. 17 Beat

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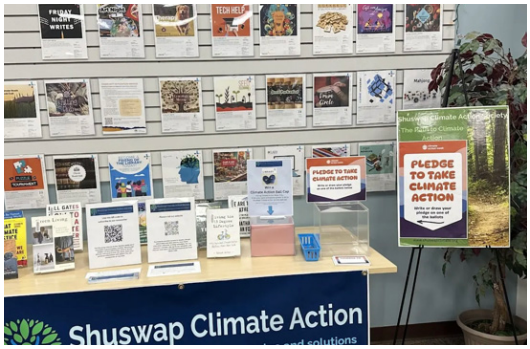

Climate Action Week runs until Thursday at the library.

To-do's

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HOLIDAY MARKETS

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❄ **Decor,** 1381 13th Ave. NE, 11-4, Fri, Sat.

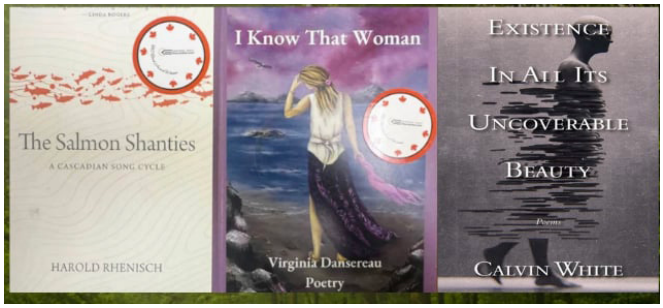
❄ **Christmas Market,** Fri, Enderby Drill Hall

❄ **Farmstrong Christmas Market,** 11-5, Sat

❄ **Yuletide Village,** Nov. 27-29, Alexander St.

❄ **Rotary Holiday Parade,** 5pm, Nov. 28

There are poets and there are poets who write books



Attention peope who like stimulating words and ideas. Three award winning poets are going to bare their deepest thoughts at a special night of poetry Thursday at the Little Mountain Fieldhouse. And admission is free!

Virginia Dansereau of Vernon will read from *I Know that Woman*, an exceptionally intimate book about sexuality, life's intricate journeys, and hope. Her book was named the best BC book of poetry in 2025 by the Sunshine Coast Writers and Editors Society. Her previous book of short stories, Undertow also won acclaim.

Salmon Arm's own **Calvin White** will read from several of his poetry books as well as speak about his year with Medecins Sans Frontieres as a mental health specialist. His most recent book, *Existence in all its Uncoverable Beauty* won the BC Book Prize for poetry in 2026.

And backstopping the evening will be acclaimed writer, **Harold Rhenisch**, author of 35 books ranging from poetry to fiction and non-fiction. He is a past winner of CBC literary prizes and other leading literary journals. His book, *The Salmon Shanties*, co-won the 2025 BC Book of poetry prize for 2025 with Virginia Dansereau. ■

Wildwood Winter Open House
Join us Thursday, Nov 19 from 5:30-7:30 pm
Catch up, celebrate, have a nibble, get inspired!



11-2nd St. SE • 778.489.5600

Rancho Vignola
Prize Draws!
SALMON ARM
HARVEST SALE
Recipe Demos!
Tasty Samples!
NOVEMBER 20 & 21
NUTS AND DRIED FRUIT
Gourmet Gifts & Fine Confection
Easy to taste.
Impossible to Forget.
FREE ENTRY
Friday | 9am - 7pm
Saturday | 9am - 5pm
SASCU Recreation Centre
Join us on Social for Event Updates
@RanchoVignola
ranchovignola.com

TURNING BACK THE CLOCKS

I remember my father and grandfather in the UK talk about Daylight Savings going back as far as the World War 1 era, for the benefit of agriculture, especially early morning milking.

During World War 2, "double-time" change was entrenched in helping the war effort as better work was done when it was light earlier. And artificial street lights from electricity was very restricted on farms and businesses due to the risk of aerial combat. Morning light was a necessity.

Other than agriculture, I would expect other industries favoured daylight savings back then. There was benefit for all as it is better for anyone to start their day in some natural light rather than pitch black, sometimes with only candles.

It is not for another couple of months to get past the shortest day, December 21st. The dark mornings from not moving our clocks back in the Fall will really take its toll then. It is not until mid-January that we'll notice days slowly grow longer.

Year-round Daylight Savings time came about in the UK in 1968, after much parliamentary debate just has happened recently in BC and much of the rest of Canada.

Then just three years later in 1971, it was deemed hazardous and unsafe for school children to start their days in darkness, so the old system of clock change was re-introduced. This has remained to this day, 55 years on.

There were other valid reasons to trn the clock back in the Fall. It's human nature to feel more like working when it is light out, and ready to go home as the sun goes down.

My old home in England is very similar to Salmon Arm, both near the 54th parallel. Moving the clocks forward and back has never bothered me. That is life and part of my nearly 80 years on this planet.

After this winter is done there could well be more debate on Time Change. However, our cities do have an abundance of artificial light that could it more likely to sway opinion to stay on course.

I have always advocated to "keep what works". Time changes worked well for me, except the period from 1968 to 1971 in England, and 2026 here now.

Farmers gave a big hurrah when the UK decided to go back to the old way of time change.

I can live with whatever, but do favour turning back the clocks in winter for a lighter morning start.

Nick Parsons, Salmon Arm

SCREEN-FREE UNINTERRUPTED REAL PLAY

When was the last time you walked by Fletcher Park and saw kids and parents playing together? How about playing screen-free? It's been too long, hasn't it?

As a student at Okanagan College, preparing to be an elementary school teacher, I have been struck by the lack of screen-free play that goes on today. Kids are spending more time on screens and phones, and almost no time playing, getting dirty, and running around.

Play is crucial to a child's mental, physical, and social development. Play allows a child to learn how to create worlds in their mind and stories to act out. Play lets a child jump and run around. Play develops fine motor skills, as well as critical and creative thinking. But play is becoming extinct.

Can you blame the kids? Being online makes it easier to walk away, and there's no need for kids to have hard conversations. So do we blame the parents? No, because putting on the TV stops all the arguments, or an hour of peace.

There's no one group to blame, and the problem of disappearing play is imminent, with so many facets. What if the only time a child expresses themself is when they're on a phone, or the only way kids feel comfortable with others is by watching movies? There are, of course, cases such as these, where screen- free play is nearly impossible.

Happily, many parents already have time limits for screens, but it is crucial for kids to get outdoors as well. We should take advantage of this beautiful natural playground we have in Salmon Arm. In addition, family or face-to-face time helps kids improve their social skills and relationships.

I remember the excitement and joy I felt as a child when my parents told me I could play with the neighbours. We would run to the woods and play all day. We would only stop when our stomachs started to rumble or when the sun went down. I hope that kids can experience the screen-free, uninterrupted, simple play that we have been able to.

Salmon Arm needs to remember what play really is. We need to encourage kids to get outside and get muddy, to find a friend and make worlds in their minds, and to turn off the cell phones and enjoy REAL play.

Tomi Wilson, Salmon Arm

9°/ 1°
Mix sun & cloud

SALMON ARM Nov. 16 Beat

Be a frequent 'Fri'er. Bookmark FriAM.ca



Sam Robinson photo

Dancing with Shuswap Stars

> Saturday night's 10th year gala event raised many thousands for work of Shuswap Hospice.
Judges choice:
Couples - Brad & Kelly Demille
Group - Meridian Integrative
People's Choice: Group: BVD Law
Couples: Tim & Dawn Alstad

To-do's

❍ **Silverbacks**
Surrey 4, SA 2, Friday
SA 5, West Kel. 2, Sunday
Visit: Chilliwack, Friday
Host: Spruce Grove, Sat.

❍ **Salmar Grand**
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❄ ❄ ❄

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❄ **Christmas Market,** Fri, Enderby Drill Hall
❄ **Farmstrong Christmas Market,** 11-5, Sat
❄ **Yultide,** Nov.27-29



> The Barra MacNeils East Coast Christmas sold out show visits Song Sparrow Hall Thursday night.

'SO-SOL' lesson

The acronym is **SO-SOL,** and it basically means "so, so sorry, dear folks, but the show is, **Sold Out** - you're **S**t Out of Luck."**

Shuswap residents are starting to learn fast that if there's a big show coming up, **do not,** I repeat, do not wait until the last week, or in so many SO-SOL cases, the actual day, to book your tickets.

To avoid disappointment, as many slow-pokey folks discovered with the truly delightful and, as professional as one could get, *Fiddler on the Roof* show was sold out long ago.

Everyone involved in this production did an absolute stand-out job.

What a tribute to the 50th season of Shuswap Theatre. The favourite musical was staged in the first season, and some of those involved were still around to see it again.

This Thursday, there's another standout sold out show happening - the "Barra MacNeils East Coast Christmas tour' at Song Sparrow Hall. I say, lucky for those who scored tickets, not so lucky to those who did not! ■

Halucinating man calls cops on self

A Salmon Arm man called police for himself because he had taken too many mushrooms and was "freaking out."

Police located the 32-year-old man and spoke with him at length. The man told police he was having urges to do things like kill or hurt people, but had not done anything.

He requested police arrest him and politely turned around and put his hands behind his back. Police arrested the man and transported him to cells to sober up over night.



There has been an outpouring of love and support since the shocking news of the taking of Kitty Schindler's (Hayward) life in Chilliwack Nov. 6. A Celebration of her life is planned for Nov. 29 from 1 to 4 pm at Song Sparrow Hall.



Downtown rendering by Otto Pfannschmidt / rough proposal by Lorne Reimer

QUADRANT PARK CROSSING

Canada's truck traffic between Calgary and Vancouver has no choice other than to run straight through the centre of Salmon Arm. And it is only going to get heavier and heavier in years to come.

I strongly believe that our nation's main highway builders owe Salmon Arm something to help alleviate the dangers and inconvenience of expecting pedestrians to contend with these trucks in order to cross from one side of our downtown to the other.

The Quadrant Park proposal provides downtown with a level pedestrian and local road crossing that is both safe and pleasant.

It also addresses an odd situation in Salmon Arm's street system. Okanagan Avenue and Shuswap Street is the functional centre point of our city from which the four quadrants - NE/NW/SE/SW radiate from. This proposal connects Shuswap and Okanagan at an actual intersection rather than annoy the owners of Barley Station by cutting through its parking lot.

It should be the highway that goes under rather than require pedestrians to climb a bridge stucture or walk through a tunnel.

One advantage is how the highway at the west side of the proposed highway tunnel by Shuswap Lodge is already on the tunnel elevation, so it could stay at that level until the other side of the tunnel. Construction could be done in two phases, Wings restaurant would need to be removed for the detour route and future off ramp, and a portion of the field across from Centenoka could be utlilized for construction staging area.

It would also enhance the area around the heritage quarter with the old courthouse, art gallery and original municipal hall now being restored.

This is simply one proposal to consider for the future, however, everytime I see a mother and child, or a senior on a walker, attempt to cross the highway with a row of towering semis waiting impatiently for the green, or worse, barrelling through an amber, I think to myself, why not?

And if Highway planners need more convincing. Remind them of the safe wildlife crossings that they provide in the National Parks. The folks in the middle of Salmon Arm could use one of them too!

OUR COMMUNITY IS GROWING

For a community that loves winter sports, there's something that continues to fall behind in the city; access to ice surfaces.

Multiple young athletes in Salmon Arm and neighboring cities step onto the ice for various associations held at Rogers Rink, with many age and competitive-level divisions.

But with so many athletes, it has been increasingly hard to keep up with the ice space we have, meaning many athletes and their families travel to other arenas to find the space we don't have.

The lack of ice space and the compromises made for it have caused frustration, disappointment, and developmental issues for our athletes. The City has stated that we cannot afford to build a recreational facility yet, but that should not stop from creating and developing a plan for what this future infrastructure will be.

Many athletes have had to travel not just for games, but practices too in order to find full ice.

From my years as a minor hockey player, full-ice practices were a luxury. If you weren't playing for a competitive team or traveled for full ice, you had to split the ice with another team for practices.

Split-ice practices aren't just crowded; they restrict athletes and teams from practicing skills they need for games and competition against harder and better-prepared competitors. I know firsthand what it felt like when my team couldn't practice the skills we needed come game time for lack of ice space.

Similar circumstances will happen to many other teams and athletes forced into split ice practices, which is why they need a plan for a new arena to help them get the space they need to compete to their fullest.

The suggestion of a new recreational facility has been proposed, then denied multiple times, with the main excuse: budget. It has been 14 years since the city's "master plan" to renovate and upgrade our recreational facilities. Since then, everything remains hypothetical. Instead of development, we have had neglect and demolition, which started with the SASCU Memorial Arena in 2024.

Mayor Alan Harrison says "the time isn't right" and "the taxpayers cannot afford to build a new indoor recreational facility". Money is a key weighing factor in why nothing has changed. But why does that have to be the reason we can't start planning now? The lack of funds shouldn't stop us from creating long-term plans and blueprints for expansion and renovations.

We do not know what condition our facilities will be in once the budget comes; that's why we should start now.

A discussion of what can benefit the community and the associations held in Rogers Rink is the idea of an expansion. An expansion can temporarily relieve the ice spacing issue until the budget for a new recreational facility is possible.

For example, the dirt space in front of Rogers Rink used for parking would be a great space that would have little impact on parking issues.

This space is big enough for one or two miniature arenas, perfect for public skating and younger athletes. The inspiration comes after visiting the Okanagan Training Rink in Vernon. The rink has many testimonials on its website about how it has helped with learning to skate, fine-tuning your skills, and helping young athletes start up their sport of choice. Expanding with an arena like the one in Vernon brings these advantages to us. Adding this arena means that more time slots open up on the larger arenas, which benefits our competitive and older athletes by giving them more home ice, improving the amount of split ice and travel for practices, and potentially giving them more home games.

Our athletes are important to our city, which is why they need a plan for what will help them in their future athletic careers. The need for more ice is essential for less travel and for the space they need to properly develop their skills.

The city's lack of response and initiative on the issue needs to be addressed, and using cost as an excuse cannot stand. Expanding the local arena is not nearly as expensive, and neither is building a blueprint for a future facility. Yet, the cost of a new recreational facility should be seen as an investment rather than another expense.

It shouldn't be whether our city can afford a new facility or not, but whether we can continue to afford to go without one. **Avery Blair, Salmon Arm**