

UPFRONT

Serving the Robson Valley since 1986

Reach The Valley Sentinel at: 250.566.4425 or 1.800.226.2129 • Email: editor@thevalleysentinel.com • Fax: 250.566.4528

BRIEFLY

Crime Stoppers Tip

Valemount RCMP are investigating a number of thefts from vehicles which occurred at the local snowmobiling areas over the weekend of Decemer 12, 2008. Valemount RCMP are asking anyone with information about these thefts to call the Valemount RCMP at 250-566-4466 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

Valemount RCMP are also asking people to take measures to minimize the risk of having their vehicle broken into. Measures that can be taken include using an alarm, immobilizer, steering wheel lock, and other anti-theft devices. Valemount RCMP are also strongly recommending that people take all their valuables out of their vehicles, especially wallets and cash.

Grooming Report

Allan and Clemina Creek - Groomed on Wed, Fri, Sat and Sun Evenings
Chappell Creek - Groomed on Thursday Evenings

The Robson Valley has had continued snowfall this week and it's expected to keep coming. Riders should look forward to exceptionally deep powder riding this weekend. Thanks to the new snowfall V.A.R.D.A. is now on their normal grooming schedule and will be working on the Chappell Creek trail this Thursday.

Know the risks before you enter the alpine

ROSETTA MITCHELL
Contributor

Now that winter is here, snowmobilers are back the hills with fresh powder and surroundings like nowhere else in the world. With the Sparwood tragedystill fresh in everyone's minds it makes one wonder what Valemount and VARDA are doing to encourage safety up in our alpine.

Each year VARDA ensures that riders are safe out in the backcountry. The Canadian Avalanche Safety Bulletin is posted in

the parking lots of the Snowmobiling trails, which informs snowmobilers of the danger scale of avalanches in our area. Staff from VARDA is also present in the parking lot to tell sledders the current conditions, as well as out on the mountains.

With the avalanche in Sparwood taking the lives of so many, snowmobilers are newly awakened to the realities of the mountains and the danger they could be faced with each day they ride. "Riders are definitely being more careful and cautious,"

said Curtis Pawliuk, GM of VARDA.

Some tips for practicing safe riding out in the mountains is to know the area and go sledding with experienced riders. Checking websites such as abcsnow.ca or the local VARDA website are efficient and informative. "An important tip to go by is 'Know before You Go,'" said Pawliuk. "Know the area, know the weather, monitor the snowfall, and check the websites."

Although there have been recent avalanches throughout the province, some

ending in death, it cannot be all to blame for lower numbers of riders in town this year. "With the lack of snow and the late start to the season, we cannot associate the recent avalanches with the lower amount of snowmobilers out in the alpine," said Pawliuk.

Avalanches are a real danger out in the alpine, but as with every sport, there is always risk, and snow falling at high speeds down a mountain is just one of them for the snowmobilers out in our area. If something like the catastrophe in

Sparwood ever happened in Valemount, being such a small town there is a huge chance that someone in the accident could be a close friend, or family member. But with organizations like VARDA taking action each year to help snowmobilers understand the dangers in our area and the current conditions, everyone can be a little bit safer when they ride. At the end of the day, it is the responsibility of the rider to ensure his or her safety, so please take care before you head out into the backcountry.

Charges to be laid in abandoned horse case

BIRGIT STUTZ
Contributor

The B.C. Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is expecting to forward charges to Crown Council by the end of this week in connection with two abandoned, starved horses that were discovered in the backcountry near McBride a month ago. The horses belong to Edmonton-based lawyer Frank MacKay. "The elements of an offence have been met and it is our full intention to present charges to the Crown," said Shawn Eccles, chief animal protection officer with the B.C. SPCA,

The SPCA is looking at both charges un-

der the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and criminal charges. "The advantage of doing it under the Cruelty to Animals Act is we just have to prove the offence, not that there was any wilful intent to abandon on the part of anybody," said Eccles.

The downside is, the Cruelty to Animals Act is a provincial statute, and therefore any penalties or prohibitions from owning animals would only take effect in British Columbia, whereas under the Criminal Code, penalties and prohibitions are Canada-wide. The problem with the Criminal Code though is to prove that the offence was done with

wilful intent. The two criminal code charges the SPCA is looking at are abandonment and causing or permitting an animal to suffer unnecessary pain or injury.

The SPCA will also forward recommendations to the Crown with regards to MacKay owning animals. It is, however, up to the SPCA to decide whether MacKay is going to get Sundance and Belle, the two pack horses he left behind near Mount Renshaw, back or not.

The SPCA had previously mailed a notice of disposition to MacKay, and Eccles said MacKay has indicated that he is disputing the disposition. But just

because MacKay challenges the SPCA's seizure, that doesn't mean he gets the horses back, said Eccles, adding that MacKay now has to prove to the SPCA why the animals should be returned to him and explain how the animals got into the condition they are in. "We have to be satisfied that the animals are properly cared for if given back," said Eccles.

MacKay is also liable to the SPCA for all costs incurred since the horses were rescued.

Eccles wants to assure the public that the SPCA is going to make the right decision based on the evidence that is presented to them. "We fully intend

to do the right thing, and that may not be the right thing as the owner is concerned," he said. "We have a responsibility to the animals we own and care for. Leaving them in the backcountry and hoping they would come out on their own is not acceptable. The individual doesn't seem to have respect for the law."

Being a high profile case, Eccles said he is "fairly optimistic that the right thing is going to be done in this thing."

"The act of abandonment is an abhorrent act. The individual should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Whistle Stop Gallery Society
January 15th, 2009 • 7:00PM

At the CN Train Station
1000 1st Avenue, McBride BC V0J 2E0



When You Need It Done Right

- Mechanical Work
- I.C.B.C. Glass
- Exhaust
- Welding
- Inspections Stations

Blackman Bros. Industries

6780 Blackman Rd • 250.566.4349 • Res. 250.566.4274



New Grants
Announced for Solar Hot Water!

SOLAR HOT WATER SYSTEMS
GARN SMOKELESS
OUTDOOR WOOD HEATERS -
The Perfect Answer to Dead Pine
PV, Wind, Micro Hydro

www.rockymountainsolar.ca
royhoward@telus.net

250-968-4490