

UPFRONT

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BRIEFLY

Cariboots and blades skating

Skaters from both ends of the Valley took part in the 25th annual Cariboots and Blades Figure Skating Competition last weekend. Both Clubs came home with a lot of medals, and a ton of smiles. Here are the results:

Canoe Valley Figure Skating Club

Keisha Byford - 4,3
Jessica Shalla - 1,1,2
Kaylie Byford - 5
Jesse Lewis - 4
Melanie Brown - 7,2
Morgan Tinsley - 3,2,3
Melissa Brown - 11,3
Hannah Knelson - 5,5,7
Jessie Lewis and Lysie Shalla - 2
Kaitlen Jensen - 2,4
Cypris Arntson - 3,5
Sydnie Pelletier - 1,5
Adam Newman - 5,7
Hailey Knelson - 4
Team maneuvers
Hailey, Sydnie, Cypris, Adam - 4
Keisha, Melissa, Morgan, Hannah, - 6
Lysie, Jessica, Jesse, Kaylie - 2

McBride Figure Skating Club

Paislee Hickerty - 5,1,4
Genna Jacques - 8,2,1
Adaleena Merauri
Shea Krenzler - 7,7
Billie Littlechild - 2,4
Sheraya Prince - 6,6
Emily Crichton - 5,4
Cassidy Brawn - 6
Team Maneuvers
Emilly Chritchton,
Sheraya Prince, Cassidy Brawn - 5
Billie Littlechild, Adaleena Merauri, Shea Krenzler - 5

SPCA recommends charges in abandoned horses case

BIRGIT STUTZ
Contributor

The B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is recommending a number of charges of animal cruelty be laid against the owner of two horses that were rescued from the mountains near McBride shortly before Christmas.

The Dec. 23 rescue of the two abandoned pack horses, a three-year-old mare named Belle and a 14-year-old gelding named Sundance, made international news after volunteers spent over a week shovelling a one-kilometre trench through six feet of snow to save the emaciated horses. The horses were abandoned near Mount Renshaw by Edmonton-based lawyer Frank MacKay last September.

"We are recommending charges of animal cruelty against the owner of the horses under both the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act and the Criminal Code of Canada," said Shawn Eccles, chief animal protection officer for the B.C. SPCA.

The SPCA also forwarded recommendations to the Crown with regards to MacKay owning animals. The report was submitted to Crown counsel in Prince George Jan. 22.

The PCA Act, which applies only in B.C., and the Canada Criminal Code, both carry a maximum fine of \$5,000, up to six months in jail and a possible prohibition on owning or having custody or control of an

animal for a period of time specified by the judge.

While the B.C. SPCA is responsible for submitting charges, it will be up to Crown counsel to determine whether the charges are approved.

Charges forwarded under the PCA Act are a strict liability offence, Eccles explained, so the SPCA only had to prove that the animals were in distress and who the owner is. Under the Criminal Code, the SPCA had to prove that the owner willfully failed

"This could have some serious consequences both on him as an individual and as a professional," ~ Shawn Eccles

to provide adequate care for these animals, causing unnecessary pain and suffering and willfully abandoned the animals in distress.

Depending on the seriousness of the offence, the Crown may elect the charge of abandonment under the Criminal Code to be either a summary conviction charge or an indictable charge, Eccles said. The latter is a far more serious offence and could lead to a jail term. "If charged and convicted criminally, this could have some serious consequences both on him as an individual

and as a professional," said Eccles.

Eccles said that while it is common practice for some outfitters to leave animals in the wilderness over the winter to fend for themselves, this is something the SPCA is vehemently opposed to.

Eccles said that the B.C. SPCA has also determined that the horses will not be returned to MacKay, who was informed of that on Jan. 19. MacKay had until a certain date to respond to the legal filing, but Eccles confirmed that the SPCA hasn't been served with any legal papers, so the horses now legally belong to the SPCA and can be adopted out. "The animals are receiving excellent on-going care in their foster home and a number of people have offered to provide a permanent home for them," he said.

Eccles commended the people of the Robson Valley for rescuing the two horses. "It was only possible because of the people involved and their passion," he said. "It was a daunting task."

Kent Kokoska, senior animal protection officer with the B.C. SPCA, said he visited the horses last week and was happy to see that they have improved by about one body score, from two to three. Five is considered ideal on a scale from one to nine. "They are thriving well in the SPCA foster facility under the veterinarian's directions," he said. "Their weight gain has been pleasingly progressive. They have received dental care which has improved their ability to put on weight."

Partygoer injured

JOSHUA ESTABROOKS
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A late night of drinking and partying January 22, 2009 resulted in a very close call, and some serious injuries, for an out of town sledder and a young lady who is staying in town.

RCMP Corporal Ed Burstrom said that a group of sledders were drinking at the Valemount bar, and decided to go back to their room at the Best Western with some local girls. "They started playing around with their snowmobiles in the parking lot in the wee hours of the morning and a near fatality almost occurred."

Burstrom said that the group were ripping their sleds around the parking lot, when one of the machines struck a gate that closes off the access to the back parking lot. "It hit the heavy yellow gate at a high rate of speed. The female got most of the injuries, but the male got a fair amount of facial injuries too. Alcohol was a huge factor, and maybe a few other things too."

The owner of the sled and the male that was involved in the crash were traveling together, said Burstrom. "No one was wearing helmets, and nobody is admitting to driving the sled. We will be pursuing criminal charges. According to our information at this point the woman was not a willing participant."

Burstrom said that had the sled hit a foot and a half from where it actually struck the female would have most likely been killed. "She had a broken arm and broken cheek bones."

The male involved will likely face charges of criminal negligence causing bodily harm, said Burstrom.

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Valemount Entertainment Society Notice of Annual General Meeting

7:00 pm | February 18, 2009

Public meeting room at:

99 Gorse Street, Valemount, BC

Members of the public are welcome

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