

Hike or Bike for Housing brings in the all stars

by Rita Moir

It's really an incredible group of people breaking in their runners, tuning

up their bikes, and gathering pledges for the September 30 – October 2 Hike or Bike for Housing, a fundraiser for the

seniors' housing project in Slocan.

There's veteran hiker 91-year-old Lydia Kania, 82-year-old track star



Hiking and biking to raise funds for seniors housing in the Slocan Valley this year will be Lydia Kania, Corky Evans and Madeleine Perriere, Slocan council liaison with the housing society.

Don Currie, 68-year-old farmer and former MLA Corky Evans, and former housing society president Don Munro. Coming from Oliver for the hike will be Susan Harder, recovering from recent heart surgery and in training on her new bicycle.

Why are they doing it? For Lydia Kania, it's about staying fit and pitching in. She raised almost \$8,000 when she hiked the entire 236-kilometre Silvery Slocan route in 1998 at age 73 to raise funds to build Passmore Lodge. "Eighteen years later, at 91, I am doing it again to help build housing in Slocan. There is a great need for low income housing for seniors!" Kania's gone door-to-door, had great visits with people, and raised more than \$5,000 a month before the hike begins. She's the society's top fundraiser.

"People see Lydia coming and they take out their chequebooks," said Slocan Valley Seniors' Housing Society president Rita Moir. "Of course they want to see housing for seniors in Slocan, but they support Lydia's incredible drive and will give her anything she asks for. One supporter called her bionic."

Don Currie of Slocan, a housing society board member alongside Kania, is a track star in the BC Seniors' Games. He's in the Master Class participating in track and field competitions as a member of the Trail Track and Field Club and Zone 6 BC Seniors Games Society. A long-time peace and justice activist, Currie believes "good affordable housing is a basic need of all: a decent safe place to live brings dignity and worth to one's life. The project helps fill a growing social need."

A fact that startles many people appears in the housing society's Need and Demand Study: of the 5,000 residents of the Slocan Valley, 48 percent are 50 or older, but there are only 20 units of dedicated seniors' housing in the Valley, 10 at Passmore and 10 at Brouse Lodge. Also, the median income for individuals in Area H is \$22,632, lower than the average in the rest of the RDCK, and much lower than the BC median of \$28,765.

"We have to plan not only for housing in Slocan, but even more down the road," says Moir. "These hikers and bikers, old or young, and all the people donating funds, really are investing in the long-term health of our community. We need a multi-aged community, and it's so great to see that kids from local schools and daycares are coming out to hike as well as these seniors."

Farmer and former MLA Corky Evans says on his fundraising page: "I am 68. We built a house here a long time ago to raise kids in. Then we built a cemetery so we would have a place to go when this part is done. The missing link is where to spend the time between the active years and the cemetery years. This is the conundrum of our times for my generation. Walk with us or pay us to walk for you. We will all, sooner or later, need a roof among friends."

Susan Harder, 77, is biking with her grandson. Earlier this year, she underwent open heart surgery to replace her aortic valve. "As daily exercise is a very important ingredient of the recovery process, I decided to

enter this fundraiser to prove to myself that I could do it. I will be accompanied on this bike hike by my very supportive grandson, Liam, aged 15. I think, as an aging senior, that this is a very worthy project and I myself can envision living in the lovely Village of Slocan when I can no longer manage my home in Passmore."

Don Munro was Area H director for several terms and served as board president during fundraising and construction of Passmore Lodge. "I'm coming back from Oliver for this because I'm anxious to see all the people I met during the great 20 years in Vallican and because I remember how successful the original hike was." Munro, 78, was recently inducted into the Wall of Fame for athletics at the University of Alberta, where he played basketball and football in the 1950s.

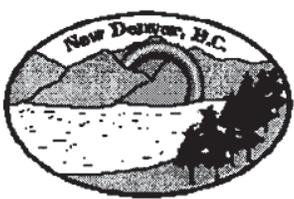
And last (but not least), special guest Betty Windsor is assembling her travelling wardrobe of British tweeds, brogues, white gloves, signature clasp purse and crown. Writes her royal personage: "It gives us such great pleasure to be part of such a jolly good effort. We are so looking forward to promenading and helping with this lovely project. After all, we do believe one's home is one's castle."

The Hike or Bike for Housing gets underway Friday, September 30th at the Crescent Valley Rail Trailhead, and runs for three days, with daily celebrations at community halls en route: Passmore Hall the first day, Appledale Hall the second day, with the grand finale at the Legion in Slocan at 1 pm Sunday, October 2nd.

For details, brochures, pledge packages or to volunteer call Rita Moir at 250-226-7759 or donate or register online at www.svhousing.ca. All ages are welcome to participate, but for the safety of all involved, please leave your pooches at home. Please look for our information table at the Fall Fair at Winlaw Hall Sept. 11, and come to our AGM at Passmore Lodge at 6 pm on September 13.



Don Currie, 82, a Seniors Games track and field star, will lend his energy to raising funds for Slocan Valley seniors housing.



British Columbia Conservation Foundation

Given the high black bear activity in the community, the Village of New Denver and WildSafeBC are urging residents to secure their attractants and give the bears that are travelling through the village lots of space. Bears are attracted to a property or community by a food source. Generally, if that food source is secured or removed, the bear will move on and not become habituated. If a bear has become habituated to humans or food conditioned then the risk of human-wildlife conflict can increase. Please learn these ways you can keep your neighbourhood safe and share the following with your neighbours:

Garbage

- Store garbage in a secure building until collection day or consider purchasing a bear-resistant household container.
- If you cannot store garbage securely, freeze smelly items and add to the bin only on the morning of collection.

Fruit

- Pick fruit daily as it ripens. Do not allow windfall to accumulate on the ground.
- Consider using electric fencing to protect your fruit trees.
- If you no longer want to manage your tree, consider replacement with a native, non-fruit-bearing variety.

Compost

- The key to a healthy compost is ensuring equal amounts of brown and green materials.
- Layer your greens, such as kitchen scraps and fresh grass clippings with no more than 10 cm of browns, such as dried leaves, grasses, shredded newspaper and cardboard.
- Do not add fish, meat, fat, oils, un-rinsed eggshells or any cooked food.
- Add oxygen by turning regularly.
- Avoid overloading the compost in fruit season – freeze material and add gradually.

Pets and Pet Food

- Feed pets indoors.
- If pets are fed outside, ensure all food is cleaned up.
- Store pet food in a secure location or in a bear-resistant bin.
- Keep dogs on leash when walking them.

Birdfeeders

- Use bird feeders only in the winter when bears are hibernating and natural bird food is limited.
- If you feed birds in bear season, consider the following steps to minimize your contribution to human-bear conflicts:
- Take bird feeders in at night
- Keep the ground underneath the feeders clean and free of bird seed
- Fill your feeders regularly with just a small amount of feed – this will decrease the reward a bear would receive if it does get to your feeder

Bear safety tips:

If you see a bear and it doesn't see you: slowly back away from the bear. If you have a dog with you make sure it is on a leash and remains quiet. Never turn and run.

If you see a bear and it sees you: Stop. Do not scream or run. If you have a dog make sure it is leashed and not barking. Take a step backwards. Do not stare directly at the bear – the bear may see this as an act of aggression. If the bear does not approach, slowly back out of the area and give the bear plenty of space. If the bear follows you – stop and speak in a low calm voice. When the bear stops – continue to back away. Report all encounters to 1-877-952-7277.

The vast majority of bear encounters end with the bear leaving. In the rare case when the bear does approach or even more rarely when it attacks it is important that you know how to react. Watch the "Staying Safe in Bear Country" video to get the full story on how best to survive a human-bear encounter.

Think about what the long-term outcomes could be from your present interactions with wildlife. Do not gather around bears or stop for photos; if you observe this happening please encourage people to move out of the area. For more information on attractant management and bear safety go to www.wildsafebc.com or call your WildSafeBC Community Coordinator at 250-354-8120 or email newdenver@wildsafebc.com.

