

Another successful Valhalla Fine Arts season comes to an end

by Jan McMurray

It was another great season for the Valhalla Fine Arts programs in New Denver-Silverton this summer.

These arts programs bring top-notch instructors to the community, offering exceptional opportunities for participants – and the public performances are a treat for all who attend.

The theatre, dance, and Music Explorer programs took place in July. The Suzuki Valhalla Institute (SVI) program ran the first week of August, followed by the Valhalla Summer School of Music (VSSM) the second week of August.

About 60 children participated in the dance and theatre programs, 12 in the Music Explorers program, 100 in the Suzuki program, and almost 100 in the VSSM program.

The Suzuki camp filled to capacity much earlier than usual this year. “It’s become very popular,” commented Miranda Hughes of SVI.

The age of the participants in the Suzuki program ranges from 4 to 17.

Hughes reports that the chamber music program, oriented to more advanced teens, was 50% bigger this year than ever before.

The Suzuki Valhalla Institute (SVI) offers core classes in violin, viola, and cello. Core string faculty are all members of the Suzuki Association of the Americas and have taken training in Suzuki pedagogy specific to their instrument. “They have also demonstrated that they are highly creative and are curious and collegial, sharing ideas freely and always exploring new ideas,” added Hughes.

Erin Burkholder, raised in New Denver, joined the SVI faculty this year as a piano accompanist and chamber music coach. She completed her first two Suzuki teacher training courses while attaining her degree in violin performance at McGill University. She will be attending

New England Conservatory in Boston to attain her Masters degree

and will continue her Suzuki teacher training. Ultimately she would like to

combine teaching Suzuki violin with playing in a major orchestra.



The Valhalla Fine Arts Drama and Dance programs were held in July in New Denver-Silverton, with performances on July 15 and 22. About 60 children aged 6-15 participated, benefitting from professional instruction by actors Julie Lynn Mortensen and Mark Kunji Ikeda, and dancers Glynis Waring and Slava Doval. The Music Explorers program also ran in July with 12 participants aged 4-6, with instruction by professional singer and music educator Kelly Cobrough and New Denver resident Julia Greenlaw.



The Suzuki Valhalla Institute’s ‘Tutti Night,’ an informal event that epitomizes what the Suzuki community is all about. Everyone gathers at Silverton Hall, where an orchestra is formed out of faculty, alumni, string-playing parents, visiting observer-teachers and interested members of the local community. The shared common repertoire of Suzuki music gives students a common language that allows for this sort of inclusive instant concert to take place.

Seniors’ Housing Society promotes Hike or Bike at AGM

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The upcoming Hike or Bike for Housing and updates on the Slokan housing project will highlight the Slokan Valley Seniors’ Housing Society’s AGM September 13 at Passmore Lodge.

“We’ve moved so far on the Slokan project. We’re shovel ready if funds come through, and now the community is preparing to hike or bike to help raise money for the new housing,” said society president Rita Moir. “We are proud to run Passmore Lodge and its success punctuates the need for more seniors’ housing. There are only 20 units in the Slokan Valley, where half the population is over 50 years old.”

Along with many housing societies in BC, the Slokan Valley group has applied for new funds that have opened up through BC Housing, the first available for projects of this type in many years.

“We’ve done our homework, we’ve put in a very solid application, we have the support of all our local, provincial and federal representatives,” said Moir. “We’re hopeful, but the competition and need is fierce for this first round of funds. We’re in this for the long

term and it may take time.”

The Village of Slokan has helped the society move forward with all necessary steps toward rezoning land for the 12 units to be built behind the Slokan Library and Wellness Centre, an ideal spot in the middle of the village.

“It’s support from the local people that keeps us going,” said Moir. “We are running Passmore Lodge, doing all the work to move forward with Slokan, and organizing the Hike or Bike for Housing on the Slokan Valley Rail Trail from September 30 to October 2.

“We have fantastic hikers and bikers like Lydia Kania, Don Currie, Corky Evans, and we expect a special appearance by Betty Windsor herself in her finest walking tweeds and crown. We have a great website at www.svhousing.ca where people can sign up to hike or bike or to make pledges. Or people can call me at (250) 226-7759 and we’ll get pledge sheets to them.

“Now we’d love people to come to the AGM, for the social with food and photos at 6 pm, and then for the meeting at 7 pm. The public’s involvement is crucial to our success.”

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