



R C M P

Appreciation Day

February 1 - 2023





would like to **THANK the RCMP** for being present on our worksites, and all the hard work that they do to make sure that everyone stays safe.



ALL SAFE SERVICES:

- ▶ Traffic Control Plans
- ▶ Certified Traffic Control Persons
- ▶ Traffic Control Supervisors
- ▶ OFA Level 3 Attendants
- ▶ Lane, Road and Freeway Closures
- ▶ Detour Routes
- ▶ All Special Events - Parades, Races, Gatherings....
- ▶ Work Zone Set Up
- ▶ 24 Hour Emergency Response
- ▶ We work with public agencies to provide accurate traffic control in a professional and timely manner

We strive to serve our customers and public in a professional and timely manner to the best of our ability.

LOOKING FOR WORK?



We are always looking to hire reliable, hardworking people to join us at a fair wage.

**Call 250-469-3469 or
email: coralie@allsafetraffic.com**

RCMP APPRECIATION DAY

The History of the Merritt RCMP



The Merritt RCMP has a long history in the Nicola Valley, spanning over 100 years and outliving a previous provincial police force. Photo/NVMA

Marius Auer
REPORTER@MERRITTHERALD.COM

In March of 1920, federal agents with the newly established Royal Canadian Mountain Police (RCMP) made their way to the Nicola Valley to establish a detachment in Merritt. Still operating today, the Merritt RCMP has a storied history in the community, which all started with a handful of constables, horses, and basic equipment.

As reported in the Merritt Herald in March of 1920, the RCMP began operations when the

Inspector and commanding officer of the newly created force arrived in the Nicola Valley to set up the detachment. The detachment would be made up of a small number of men, to be sent from Vancouver, and led by a Kamloops RCMP constable.

“Inspector G. F. Fletcher, of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, arrived in Merritt, Tuesday night, from Vancouver to install the promised RCMP detachment for the Nicola Valley at

this point,” reads a Herald article titled ‘RCMP Detachment Installed in City’ from March 1920.

“With Inspector Fletcher was Constable A.D. Hilliker, from Kamloops, who had been selected to take charge of the local detachment.”

The Merritt RCMP was initially headquartered in the Merritt Armory, now the Elks Lodge, which Fletcher secured as both office and living quarters for the local constables. As they were the mounted police, accommodations were needed

for the RCMP’s horses as well. Inspector Fletcher contracted local Merritt Transfer proprietor Fred B. Billett to stable the horses. Once the detachment had been established, Fletcher returned to Vancouver with the promise of more horses, equipment, and officers for Merritt.

The newly established Merritt RCMP force worked alongside the British Columbia Provincial Police (BCPP), which had already been well established and providing policing services for decades. The two organizations often worked together until the BCPP’s dissolution in August of 1950. While the BCPP was run by an experienced officer in Chief J. T. Willgoose, the Herald reported that the Merritt RCMP’s leadership included fresh blood.

“Constable Hilliker, in charge of the Merritt detachment, though a young man in point of years, has

had a wide and varied experience,” the article adds.

“He was for some years stationed in the Yukon, and made the 1,000 mile annual patrol, carrying the mails, from Dawson City to Fort Macpherson, on the Mackenzie River, about 200 miles from the Arctic Ocean.”

After returning from fighting overseas during World War I, Hilliker joined the Vancouver Squadron of the RCMP. Before coming to the Nicola Valley and creating the Merritt RCMP, Hilliker also worked as part of the Kamloops detachment. He then left Merritt in April of 1920, being replaced by a Constable Ray.

The RCMP’s history in the Nicola Valley is undeniable, with the organization being at the centre of over 100 years of community protection, policing services, controversy, and emergency services.

First point of contact



Merritt RCMP front counter staff welcome visitors to the detachment on Voght Street, assisting Merrittonians in accessing RCMP services such as criminal record checks, the reporting of crimes, and administrative information. Marius Auer/Herald

THANK YOU

for the years of services, and keeping
our community safe

CJIR

BOOKKEEPING & TAX SERVICES INC

EST. 1998

Ph: 250-378-9446 3499 Voght Street

Adelphi Hotel

THANK YOU

To the men and women in uniform
who make our surroundings as
crime-free as possible, they know their
duty and they do it with diligence.

2101 Quilchena Ave., Merritt, BC • 250-280-2024

Thank You

A lot of lives would have been sacrificed if it was not for the police. The job is not easy, thank you for your determination and support.

MERRITT'S only SPORTS BAR!

GAME ON

Sports Bar & Grill

Open 11 am
7 DAYS A WEEK

Facebook icon

250-315-1022

Next to Comfort Inn Hotel on top of hill
3701 DEWOLF WAY, Merritt, BC

RCMP APPRECIATION DAY

Learning the function of the Victim Services unit



Teddy bears adorn a desk in the Merritt Victim Services office, often given to younger clients accessing their services. Marius Auer/Herald

Marius Auer
REPORTER@MERRITTHERALD.COM

Note: We have excluded our source's last name at their request for privacy and security reasons.

While Merritt RCMP are often kept busy focusing on the offender when responding to crimes and other emergency services, a specialized team of case workers within the detachment are committed to providing support and important services to victims and their families. Merritt RCMP Victim Services has operated in the valley for decades, run by Nicola Valley Women In Action

in partnership with the RCMP. Shelby, a case worker with Merritt Victim Services, has been passionate about her career path since the young age of 5, when her family home in the Vancouver area was broken into. Victim

Services representatives responding to the crime gave Shelby a teddy bear to comfort her during the upsetting experience, a gesture she has never forgotten. She now hands the bears out to clients herself, along with a plethora of other services. "We do crisis intervention, emotional support, offer information, practical assistance, referrals, and court support," explained Shelby. "If there's a difficult scene where somebody is fairly distraught, the [RCMP] members will call us out so that we're there with the family,

See 'Support' Page 14

THANK YOU

Every person leaves to go to work and usually returns by the evening, but as an RCMP member in the line of duty, returning safe and composed everyday can be uncertain. They deserve all our thankful wishes for the risks they take to keep our community safe.

WEBSITE:
nvit.ca

TOLL FREE:
1.877.682.3300

f t i y l n d

7'6"
7'0"
6'6"
6'0"
5'6"
5'0"
4'6"
4'0"
3'6"
3'0"
2'6"
2'0"

New Patients/Heros
Always Welcome!

Risking one's life to save others is a job done only by heroes. Those heroes are none other than police officers. Thank you for risking your lives to keep us safe. ♥

2088 Quilchena Avenue
Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8am-4:30pm
Call Today to Book Your Appointment. Ph: 250-378-5877

RCMP APPRECIATION DAY

Support for victims Merritt Block Watch

From **Page 13**

or the person that needs the support. That way the members can do their investigation, or whatever they need to do, and we can just be with them."

Two case workers make up the Merritt Victim Services office, which is located at the RCMP detachment on Voght Street. While they aren't employees of the RCMP, case workers do have a level of security clearance that allows them to provide clients with updates on police files, and ensures client confidentiality. While

RCMP members often refer clients to Victim Services while on scene at an incident, victims of crime can also self refer.

Although they aren't counselors, Victim Services case workers also provide emotional support, along with referrals to mental health services if needed. Merritt Victim Services works with a number of local organizations, including the Nicola Valley Shelter and Support Services Society, Restorative Justice, and counselling services. They also guide

victims of crime through the court system, which Shelby said can be a stressful and sometimes traumatic experience.

"One thing that's hard is that court is so scary," said Shelby.

"When you get subpoenaed, and you have to go in there and you have to talk in front of people and be on that hot seat, that's terrifying. My goal starting in this role is to try to at least have people as prepared as they can be to just walk in there and own the room."

Case workers often deal with sensitive topics such

as domestic violence cases where charges legally must be pursued, death, and other traumatic events that the RCMP may respond to. Merritt Victim Services offers a number of resources to support the victims of crime throughout their experience with the justice system, and often go above and beyond to meet the needs of clients.

To access Merritt Victim Services, call the office at 250-378-5699 between 8:30am and 4:30pm, from Monday to Friday.

Izaiah Reyes
NEWSROOM@MERRITTHERALD.COM

Since 2007, Merritt has adopted the Block Watch Program, an initiative that promotes the community's involvement in crime prevention. Locals are invited to sign up as Block Watch members for their respective neighbourhoods. They are given the opportunity to report any suspicious activities in their area as well as the opportunity to build a network in their block.

There are 12 current Block Watch groups in the city. One of which covers McGoran Place, headed by Block Watch Co-Captain Ellen Nast. The Herald spoke with Nast to learn about her experience working in a Block Watch group for about 14 years.

"The idea for it is to make sure that neighbours know each other and look out for each other," said Nast. "We have everybody on our street signed up as a Block Watch member. We also have a couple of houses that are around the corner from us signed up as well."

Shortly after Nast moving in to McGoran Place, she was approached by the previous captain of the area's Block Watch group. Meeting new members of the neighbourhood was one of the duties

of the captain.

"I don't think everybody on the street was signed up for it back then," she recalled. "The person who was in charge of it was moving. I was asked if I have any interest in picking up the program and continue running it."

Nast at the time was an active community member, taking part in many local groups, while working at Merritt Secondary School.

"I was happy to take on a leadership role, being supported by my co-leader Al Clarke," she said. "This was a nice way for me to get to know my neighbours."

- Co-leading the neighbourhood Block Watch, Nast gave a short list of her duties:
- Communicating with neighbours any new developments/information about the neighbourhood
- Welcoming new people moving to the area
- Updating the network of contacts
- Organizing an annual social event for the neighbourhood

Nast noted that she updates her network of contacts every year, updating any changes of contact information, house-

Story continues on Page 15

Happy Anniversary to the RCMP!

Thank you to the Merritt RCMP detachment and members for their dedicated service to Merritt and surrounding community!



DAN 

ALBAS MP

CENTRAL OKANAGAN—
SIMILKAMEEN—NICOLA

Toll Free: 1-800-665-8711
www.danalbas.com



@DanAlbas



DanAlbas4COSN

RCMP APPRECIATION DAY



McGoran Place Block Watch Co-Captains Ellen Nast and Al Clarke.
Photo/Al Clarke

From **Page 14**

hold head count, and other pertinent information that proves useful to the Block Watch.

“We don’t have a lot of concerns on our street,” Nast stated. “We haven’t had a lot of major incidents. I credit a big part of it to our people’s willingness to look out for each other.”

Through email, Nast can quickly inform the rest of the Block Watch about any suspicious activity, she can also contact the RCMP directly if the situation requires it.

“When someone had their shed broken into, they let me know, so I could make everyone else in the neighbourhood aware,” she recalled. “It’s good

that everyone knew that because now everyone is more alert.”

“We see the Block Watch being an important way that community members can be active in keeping our community safe,” said Cnst. Blake Chursinoff.

“When neighbours are connected, they can work together to help watch and share information amongst themselves and with police. We encourage anyone interested in setting up a Block Watch to reach out to the Community Policing Office and we can help them get started. It doesn’t take a large time commitment and can make a real difference if

your neighbourhood becomes a target.”

Viewing it as an essential tool in crime prevention, the Merritt Community Policing Office (CPO) is planning to hold a training session in February for Block Watch Captains and Co-Captains.

For more information, please follow Merritt CPO’s official Facebook page.

MERRITT BREAD BASKET SOUP BOWL SOCIETY



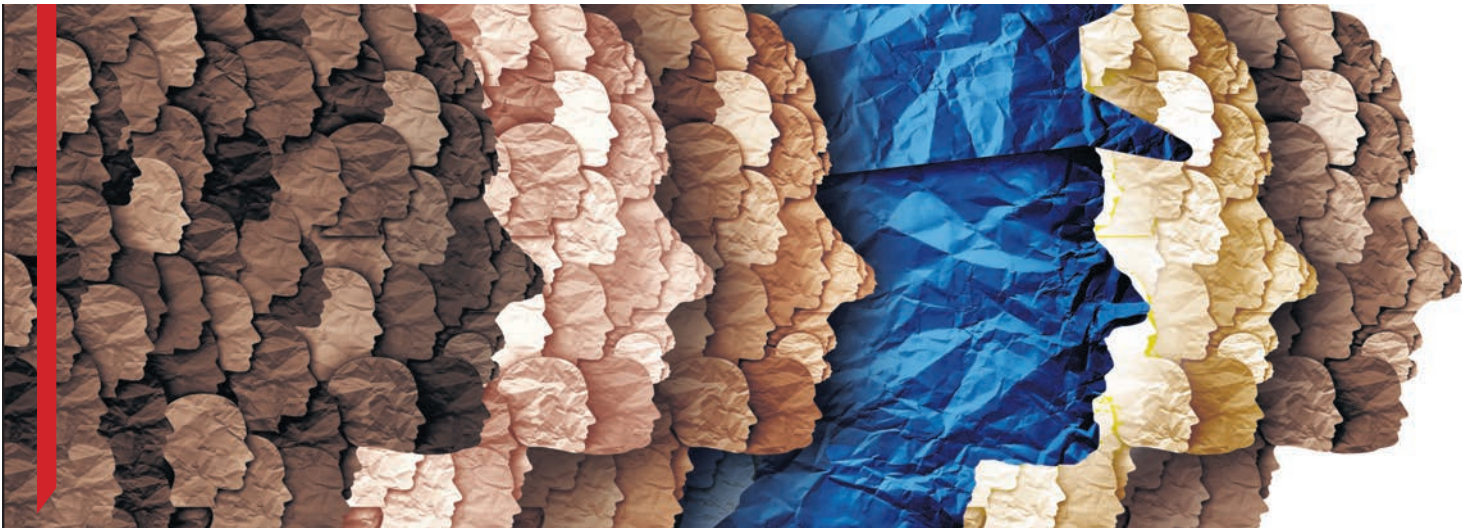
Police service comes with hours of insomnia and sacrificing the comfort to reach out to the people in the community, thank you to the people of this fraternity who cross all roads and blockages to provide security for the citizens

THANK YOU



Open to everyone,
Tuesdays from
11:30 am to 1:00 pm

For information contact Michael at
micsmail73@gmail.com or 250-315-7454



The real eye-opener is the moment when people understand the value of police and understand that they are the ones who deserve respect and honor due

At the Legion, we are guided by three pillars: **Remember, Join & Give**

Our Mission The Royal Canadian Legion/BC Yukon Command is a non-profit organization consisting of 149 Branches, 80 Ladies' Auxiliaries and nearly 55,000 members. We are one of the foremost and most respected community service organizations in Canada, serving veterans, ex-service personnel, seniors, youth and many aspects of community life.

- Remembering** allows us to reflect and honour long-term veterans and their families, and to be here to support a new generation of veterans.
- Joining** is all about membership and volunteering—the Legion is where belonging matters, and where you can make a real difference with your time and talent.
- Giving** means saying “Thank You” and “I care about my community”—with your cheque book, credit card—even your cell phone! Your financial contributions make a world of difference.

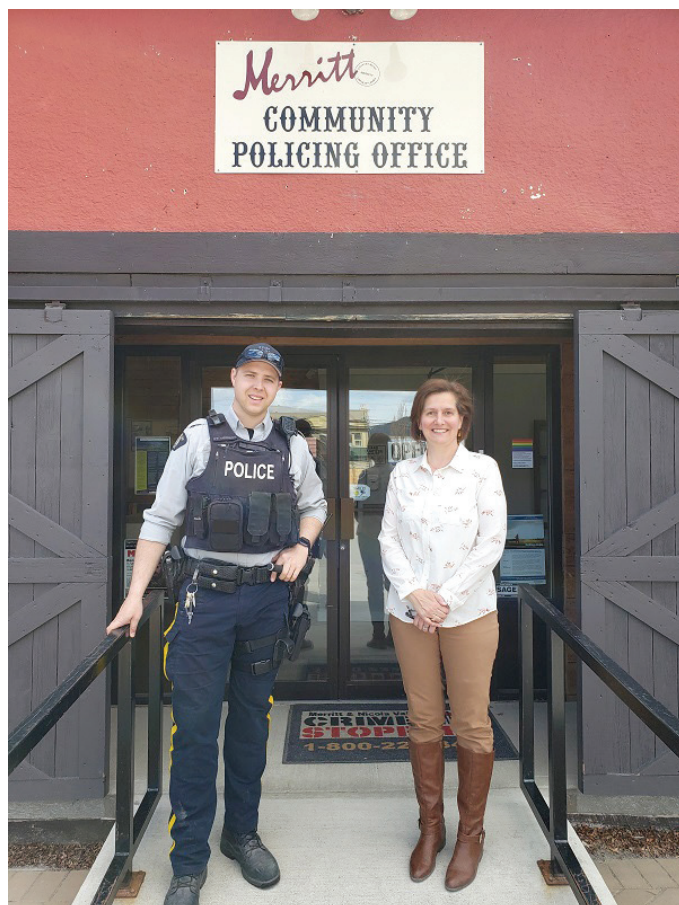
Join Now! Contact for Details.

Branch #96, 1940 Quilchena Ave, Merritt
Phone: 250-378-5631



RCMP APPRECIATION DAY

Highlighting the Merritt Community Policing Office



Cnst. Blake Chursinoff and Coordinator Marlene Jones standing in front of the Community Policing Office. Marius Auer/Herald

Izaiah Reyes
NEWSROOM@MERRITHTHERALD.COM

A key indicator of a successful police force is a well established relationship with the community. It benefits the RCMP's objective to protect and serve residents when they are engaging them through different activities and initiatives.

The Community Policing Office (CPO), located on Granite Avenue, is the specialized branch that does just that. A branch comprised of Policing Officer Cst. Blake Chursinoff and Coordinator Marlene Jones, the CPO has its hand

on many initiatives aimed at building relationships with the community.

The *Herald* had the opportunity to sit down with Chursinoff and discuss the many community engagement opportunities the Merritt CPO is both doing and planning to do.

"I think community engagement is going fairly well," said Chursinoff. "The people who have gotten involved with our initiatives have given really great quality feedback, not just those pat on the back types."

Chursinoff is fairly new to

Merritt, transferring to the detachment back in July of 2020. His role as Community Policing Officer wouldn't come till May of last year. Since then, the CPO has started a couple of new initiatives such as 'Coffee with a Cop'.

Inspired by a similar program by the Abbotsford RCMP, Coffee with a cop is a once a month activity done on Wednesdays where residents are able to chat with Chursinoff and any other officers on duty who attend the event.

The location for the initiative started in the com-

munity garden behind the Merritt CPO. Now Coffee with a cop is done in McDonalds on River Ranch Road. Over the course of the few months it has been running, attendance grew from eight to 50 people. Chursinoff said that on average, 30 people attend.

"It's gotten to a point where there are so many people that I need more police officers to attend so you can actually have coffee with a cop."

Another engagement opportunity that was introduced last year was the 'Youth Reading Program'.

"I try to be in

schools whenever I can," Chursinoff said about the reading program. "I am open to any ideas. If there are staff members or administrators who are in need of anything or would just like police presence there, I am available."

Merritt CPO collaborated with SD58 elementary schools to create the reading program where Chursinoff comes and reads to the elementary students.

"We hope that the kids would see the police as regular people."

For the older students at the high school, there

Story continues on Page 17

Thank you,
 for your continued
 dedication, support
 and commitment
 in keeping our
 community safe!



From all of us at

DENTISTRY @ MERRITT

"WHERE RELAXATION MEETS CARE"

www.dentistryatmerritt.ca



2731 Forksdale Avenue

Call: **250-378-4888**

RCMP APPRECIATION DAY

From **Page 16**

is the School Liason Officer program. Every Tuesday, Chursinoff visits Merritt Secondary School (MSS) and makes himself available to students, teachers, and staff. “They’ve given me an office there so staff or students with concerns can approach me for questions or concerns,” he said. “I’ve tried to make it a safe environment for kids to approach me and ask questions. A lot of the time it is about ‘what if’ scenarios such as drinking and driving. The students are really receptive and surprisingly more engaged than I have imagined.” Though the program is being scrutinized at the provincial level, Merritt CPO will not be following recommendations to suspend the initiative. “My relationship with the school has been fantastic since

I started my duty there,” Chursinoff described. “It’s always one of the main highlights of my week. The staff, students, and administrators are all very receptive to my presence there.” This great relationship with the high school has opened the door to another initiative by the CPO. Coming this March, the RCMP will be hosting a Jr. Police Academy for the high school students. Chursinoff is very excited about this

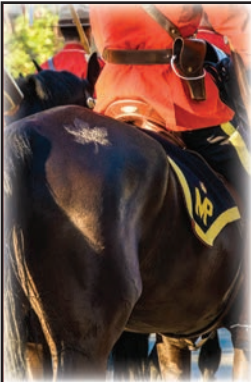
newly introduced initiative, but remains tight lipped about what the CPO has in store. “When I was working up north, we did a small version of this,” he explained. “I want to give it a shot here and see how it goes.” Applications for the program closed after the beginning of January. Chursinoff shares that there were nine students who applied and will now go through interviews and physical tests before the week long program in March. “The idea is to basically provide them with opportunities and give them as much exposure as I can to law enforcement and first responder opportunities,” Chursinoff explained. “I’ve got RCMP partners, CBSA partners, and police training partners who will be alongside me, so I’m very excited to see what it turns into.”

Apart from the new and exciting programs introduced, Merritt CPO also continues a number of programs that have already been running for years. The Youth Collaboration Table, Go By Bike, Block Watch, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, and Community Forums are all programs which the CPO is involved in. “We are all for any opportunity we find or are presented to us to be a part of the community,” said Chursinoff. “With things opening up, I think it’s good to get involved with things like the farmers market, and other community events. We’re always looking for ways to be a part of the community and try to engage the public and educate them on what we do and what our purpose is.”

For more information about the Merritt Community Policing Office programs and initiatives, please call 250-378-3955, or visit www.merritt.ca/community-policing.



Blake Chursinoff, Merritt’s community policing officer, interacts with students throughout SD58 on a daily basis. Marius Auer/Herald



Every day you make a commitment to serve & protect
THANK YOU!

MR MIKE'S
Steakhouse Casual

3969 Crawford Ave. 250-315-2364



Thank You
for your
Dedicated Service to
the City of Merritt
and Surrounding Areas.

Message brought to you by

YRB yellowhead road & bridge

www.yrb.ca @YRBNicola

There is no limit of time for police service as they stand on their feet 24*7 to provide guidance and help to people who might get trapped in this world of crime, thank you to all those who do their duty



NICOLA VALLEY COMMUNITY JUSTICE SERVICES SOCIETY

2025 Granite Ave., Merritt, BC V1K 1B8
TEL: 250-378-5010 www.nvcjss.com FX: 250-378-5014

THANK YOU!
For your *Commitment and Service*
on the front lines to keep our
communities safe.
WE APPRECIATE ALL YOU DO.

WorkBC Centre
FREE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- Resumes & Cover Letters
- Computer Workstations
- Assistance with Job Search
- Career Planning
- Skills Training
- Work Clothing & Gear
- Assistive Technology & Devices

WE CAN HELP!

WorkBC Centre-Merritt
tel: 250-378-5151
email: info-merritt@workbc.ca
2099 Quilchena Avenue, Merritt, BC

This program is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

All of us at Hub Electric appreciate all that you do for our community!

**RESIDENTIAL
COMMERCIAL
INDUSTRIAL**

HUB ELECTRIC LTD. imhub@telus.net

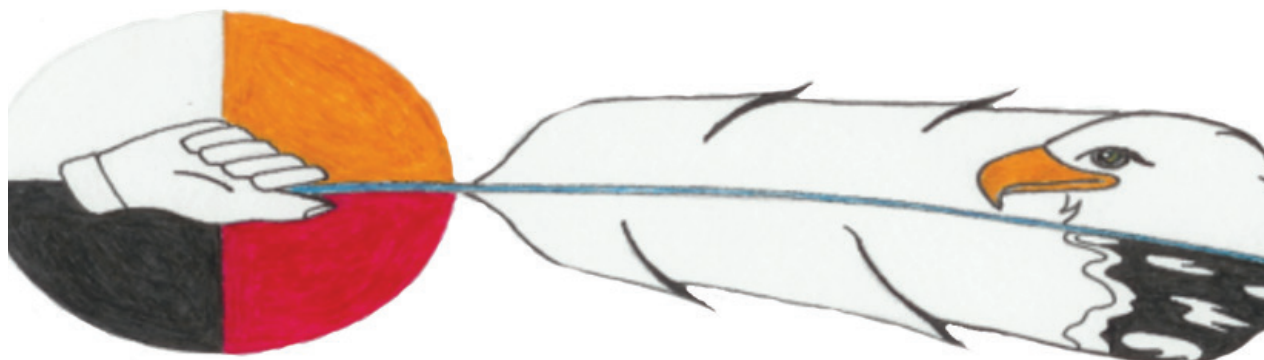
2001 Gillis Crescent, Merritt BC 250-378-4646

Merritt BOWLING
THANK YOU for keeping
our community safe.

250-378-5252
2076 Coutlee Avenue., Merritt BC

NICOLA VALLEY NEWS

Restorative Justice in the Nicola Valley



The Nicola Valley Community Justice Services Society has been providing justice and advocacy services to those in the Nicola Valley since 2003. Photo/NVCJSS

Marius Auer
REPORTER@MERRITHTHERALD.COM

Looking to take a more healing based approach to the justice system, the Nicola Valley Community Justice Services Society (NVCJSS) provides the resources and support required to move through some of life's more difficult moments. Being the victim of a crime is never an easy thing, and the NVCJSS looks to ease the hurt and bring accountability to the forefront.

Restorative justice, opposed to the traditional criminal justice system, is victim centered, and highlights collaboration and healing, and advocates say it puts power into the hands of the person affected by the crime. The Herald sat down with representatives of the NVCJSS and the Merritt RCMP's Victim Services Unit to discuss the merits of restorative justice and its relevance in the

Nicola Valley.

"The Restorative Justice Program provides individuals and families in the Nicola Valley with the opportunity to develop and participate in restorative justice processes when dealing with criminal matters," said Christopher Stokes, restorative justice coordinator with NVCJSS.

"That involves working with the victim, offender, and community members in resolving crime in a more proactive and moral way. It offers rehabilitation and healing over more punitive measures, like what a court might do."

Both offenders and victims of crime in the Nicola Valley can be referred to both the NVCJSS and Victims Services at the local detachment by RCMP officers involved, Crown Council, and community referral. The two organizations often work hand in hand, offering support and resources throughout

the entire justice process.

The two often collaborate on healing circles, where victims and perpetrators meet with support staff to discuss the impacts of the crime and circumstances around it. The NVCJSS also offers low risk probation supervision for Indigenous offenders, who their services are mainly targeted towards. Indigenous cultural knowledge and practices inform restorative justice processes.

"We work with the victims of crime. In partnership with the Restorative Justice Society, we have been asked to come in for healing circles to be the victim's voice, when sometimes it's not possible for the victim to be there," said a representative of the Merritt RCMP's Victim Services Unit.

"At Victim's Services, we provide information, support, and refer-

Story continues on Page 19



THANK YOU
to all the police officers out there who are giving their all to protect our community.

Work 'n' Play
Clothing Company

facebook

DOWNTOWN MERRITT:
#120 1700 Garcia St. Railyard Mall **250-378-5217**

THANK YOU & STAY SAFE
You deserve our applause, our thanks and our respect.



Nicola Valley
Food Bank

(250) 378-2282
foodbank@telus.net



Thank You!

BREATHE BIKES





SALES SERVICE RENTALS

Bicycles: Mountain, Electric, BMX, Cruisers
• Stunt Scooters • Paddleboards

250-936-9702 
1960 QUILCHENA AVE BESIDE THE LEGION

The group at Ska-Lu-La would like to say

THANK YOU

To all the people who work in the police department, I walk a little slower and feel a lot safer when I walk on the streets even in the middle of the night.

Ska-Lu-La Workshop
1775 COLDWATER AVE, MERRITT, BC V1K 1B8

Nicola Valley & District Metis Society



We are **DEEPLY GRATEFUL** to all RCMP members for all the sacrifices that you and your family are making.



If you would like more information on our society please call 250-378-5015 or 250-378-0076
email: truck126@hotmail.com • Facebook: Nicola Valley Metis

We appreciate our working relationship with the RCMP.

THANK YOU
for having our backs.

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Mario's
Towing Ltd.

www.mariostowing.com
2676 Nicola Avenue 1-888-292-1581
250-378-9241

RCMP APPRECIATION DAY

From **Page 18**

ral services to victims of crime. The information pieces can be anything regarding the criminal justice system. We can also provide information on domestic violence, and anything to do with the crimes themselves."

The NVCJSS also has its Advocacy Centre component, which provides access to resources such as legal aid, offers family mediation and legal services, and

provides support for those going through the Indigenous Court process. The Nicola Valley Indigenous Court is a sentencing court where local Elders sit together with a Judge to provide a holistic and restorative perspective, as well as build a healing plan. The RCMP's Victim Services unit is often involved in these plans.

The NVCJSS and Victim Services both provide support to an array of individuals and families, using their connections and resources to guide those impacted

by crime. Stokes added that seeing clients' needs met and watching true healing and accountability in action is a rewarding part of his job, while the Victim Services representative added that facilitating connections and support for those impacted by crime brings satisfaction.

For more information on the Nicola Valley Community Justice Services Society, visit www.nvcjss.com. The Merritt RCMP's Victim Services unit can be reached at 250-378-5699.

Discussing the 'Controlled Drugs and Substances Act'

Marius Auer
REPORTER@
MERRITTHERALD.COM

The decriminalization of some illicit substances under B.C.'s first in the nation exemption from Health Canada's **Controlled Drugs and Substances Act** will take effect on January 31, 2023 for a three year period, a move the provincial government hopes will both address and reduce the stigma surrounding addiction and mental health issues.

The exemption will apply to British Columbians 18 years of age and older, allowing them to possess up to a cumulative 2.5 grams of cocaine, opioids, methamphetamine and MDMA within the province without criminal charge.

The Merritt RCMP currently respond to calls of public drug use on an almost daily basis, but users rarely see charges for possession alone, Acting Detachment Commander Sgt. Josh Roda tells the Herald.

"With these complaints, we try to move users along and encourage them to seek help," said Roda.

"We do not and have not charged users with possession unless there are aggravating factors, such as committing other offences, like drug dealing, break and enter, or assault, to name a few."

Roda noted that the Merritt RCMP hands out naloxone kits to drug users

who pass through their cell block, and encourages them to seek help by offering relevant material on supports available through Interior Health Authority. Roda agreed with the province's statement that addiction and substance use are healthcare issues, and said the issue should be tackled by healthcare authorities. He explained that the RCMP will continue to target drug dealers and crimes associated with them beyond the effective date of the exemption.

By decriminalizing the possession of these drugs, they remain illegal to sell and obtain, but the province said the change allows the healthcare system to support those struggling with addiction, rather than the justice system. The possession of these substances will be allowed in most public areas, with some restrictions around schools, airports, and childcare facilities. Roda added that the Merritt RCMP will no longer respond to calls of public drug use in most circumstances.

"The jury is still out on how this will affect policing," explained Roda.

"There are restrictions on where people can use, but ultimately they will be allowed to use in most public areas. If people are using in a legal area, we will not respond to calls about drug use."

Roda added that while he agrees addiction and substance use are healthcare issues, he noted that

drug dealing is not, and those victimizing vulnerable populations by profiting

from addictions through the selling of drugs should be held accountable.



Acting Detachment Commander Sgt. Josh Roda is shown in front of the RCMP's Merritt Detachment on Voght Street. Marius Auer/Herald

THANKS to the police officers who put their own lives at risk to put the safety of others first and Thank you for your hard work and dedication to some of the most vulnerable.

Brought to you by
Nooaitch Indian Band

THANK YOU
to the RCMP for striving to make
our community a safer place,
YOUR HARD WORK IS APPRECIATED!

CASCADE
FAMILY DENTAL

#110-1700 Garcia St.
(Located downtown in the Railway Mall)
250-378-4000
www.cascadedental.ca

THANK YOU
RCMP FOR ALL THAT YOU DO

MERRITT

2740 Pooley Ave, Merritt | 250-378-2030
csnmerritt.com

THANK YOU!
We appreciate all you do
and your dedication
to the job.

BW Best Western PLUS. **250-378-0700**
www.bestwestern.com

Your tireless efforts
are not going unnoticed.
THANK YOU

Helping to keep our RCMP
safe on roads.

FRANK'S MECHANICAL SERVICES
Quality Auto Service & Repairs for your Car or Light Truck

Owner Frank Douthwright
2026 Mamette Ave. **250-378-1322**

RCMP APPRECIATION DAY

Getting to know the RCMP Chaplain



RCMP Chaplain Jim Caruso. Izaiah Reyes/Herald

Izaiah Reyes
NEWSROOM@MERRITTHERALD.COM

Working in a very demanding field, the Merritt RCMP makes it a point to take care of its members’ well being. Whether it be debriefs, consultations with the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team, or approaching the in house chaplain. RCMP members are ensured access to people for guidance, clarity, or even just someone to talk to.

Jim Caruso is the chaplain for the Merritt RCMP detachment. He is both nationally and internationally certified as a RCMP chaplain. A retired pastor for 15 years, his journey to becoming a man of the cloth began in Victoria

when he was working as a paramedic. “Basically I did an ambulance call where a woman tried to take her life,” he recalled. “I saw that she was in rough shape when I came in. After treating her, I felt God say ‘hey, somebody needs to get into her heart and give her some spiritual first aid.’”

He went into the ministry after this encounter, working as a volunteer ambulance attendant and volunteer firefighter on the side.

Caruso believes that learning is a life long task, and while working on his master’s degree in the arts, he took a course done by a former RCMP member who

introduced him to the idea of becoming a RCMP chaplain.

“I was connected to the E Division Chaplain. We got along well I started my chaplaincy journey from there.” Caruso noted. “We moved around a lot and for every community I’ve pastored in, I became the RCMP chaplain as well.”

After retiring from his pastoral ministry in Richmond two years ago, Caruso moved to Merritt. He was approached by the Cross Roads Community Church to become the interim minister until this past November while also serving the local detachment.

“I am privileged to serve the detachment, offering spiritual care with the full time and auxiliary members of the RCMP and their families.”

Being the RCMP chaplain, Caruso is involved with training, hospital visitation, spiritual guidance, regular drop-ins at the detachment, and ride-alongs with the members. Caruso is also a CISM team member, and would occasionally be

asked to officiate weddings and funerals and attend farewell gatherings for members leaving the detachment.

“Being a chaplain is similar to a pastor in some ways and different in others,” he said. “You don’t prepare to have people assemble and focus on one faith. It could be Bhuddist, Hindu, Muslim, Catholic, or any religion.”

According to Caruso, the frequency of members requiring a chaplain’s service varies greatly, as there are weeks where there could be five and other weeks where there could be none.

“Nothing is scheduled and nothing

is on call,” he described. “I just make myself available, I just hang out at the detachment, I do ride-alongs with the officers, hoping that I am in the right place at the right time for those who need me.”

Caruso said that the most rewarding part of being a chaplain is being allowed into the RCMP community and getting the chance to be of service to them.

“The service affects each person differently,” he said, “I just go in and listen, give them someone to talk to in an environment that’s safe. It’s just a really privileged position for me to be able to hear them out. I don’t push my

faith to them or extract theirs.”

Conversely, the most challenging part about chaplaincy according to him are the times when he feels helpless to serve the members.

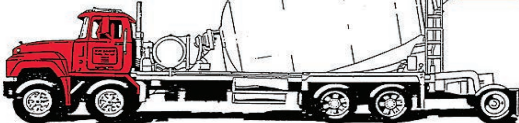
“Sometimes being in the midst of situations that go down, and being at a loss for words is really challenging,” he said. “Those are difficult times because I’m not a member so I can’t do anything in that aspect. All I can do is be there for them.”

With leaving the interim pastor position at Cross Roads and getting security clearance, Caruso now looks to do more work with the Merritt RCMP.



Words are not enough to thank you for your strength, courage and dedication. Being on the frontline isn’t easy, but it is very much appreciated.

NORGAARD



READY - MIX LTD.

Serving the Nicola Valley since 1960.

250-378-5121

1301 Nicola Ave., Merritt

GOOD FOOD, GOOD SERVICE, GRAND TIMES!

THANK YOU!

We APPRECIATE you keeping our Community SAFE.

FULL PUB MENU • COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF BEER & WINE
CALL US FOR ALL YOUR CATERING NEEDS

Like Us On facebook

250-378-4618
2099 Garcia Street

Sun-Wed: 11AM to 11PM
Thurs-Sat: 11AM to Midnight

THANK YOU!

for all the hard work you put in, keeping our beautiful community safe!

2770 Pooley Ave.,
250-378-9201

Thank You

for all your hard work and providing safety to the people of our city.

2025 Coutlee Avenue Ph: 250-378-2332



Sending thanks and warm thoughts to all police officers who are working through these challenging times.

Carrie Ware & Company Inc.

Chartered Professional Accountant Firm

CARRIE WARE,
BSc, CPA, CA

1964 Quilchena Avenue,
Tel: (250) 378-2215
Fax: (250) 378-6061
reception@carrieware.ca

THANK YOU

25% OFF
FOR ALL
RCMP MEMBERS

FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE
FOR YOUR DEDICATION
FOR YOUR BRAVERY
FOR YOUR SACRIFICE

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 9 AM - 9 PM for your shopping pleasure

★ PIPES
★ VAPORIZERS
★ GLASSWARE
★ TRAYS
★ HUMIDORS

THE
Lemonade
STAND

**“NOT YOUR
AVERAGE
SMOKE SHOP”**

MUST BE
19+

Kamloops - 259 Tranquille Rd. - 250-554-1501
Merritt - 2013 Quilchena Ave. - 250-378-9686

Salmon Arm - 420 Trans Canada Hwy - 250-833-1414

Westwood Mixer & Smoke - Port Coquitlam - Unit 101 - 2748 Loughheed Hwy - 604-944-2838

www.lemonadestand420.ca