Stereotypes of all kinds suck! Liberate your minds and learn. Expose and get rid of discrimination. Don't be afraid to be yourself.
# SCRATCH Table of Contents

**Editorials & Opinions**
- Why should you take action?  
- Your comments  
- Creston's skateboard park – It's not being used. Why?  

**Youth Activism: Making a Difference**
- Activism – It’s a daily choice  
- Can young people make a difference?  
- Profiles of young, local activists  
- Chatroom: Young & Elected – youth politicians in the Basin  
- Homeless in the Kootenays?  
- Do you shop with a Conscience?  
- When does activism become dangerous?  
- Get involved! Do something!  
- Making videos and a difference in Costa Rica  
- Youth in Communities – CBT funds cool projects  
- Youth Conference on Water – Dip into this!  
- Using the media to make a difference  
- Young couple starts newspaper in Robson Valley  

**Word on the Street**
- Can young people make a difference?  
- What’s another word for youth?  

**The Written Word**
- Zoo  
- The Sensation of Surprise  
- Untitled Work  
- Why?  
- Deep Forest  
- The multi-individual propaganda poem  
- Resemblance  
- Acts of Revision  
- Two Journals – Two Strangers  
- Forgiven  
- Future Forests  
- My Son & I  

**Get Moving**
- Snowboarding! It's a head trip.  

**Columbia Basin Trust Stuff**
- Update from the Youth Committee  
- Traveling from here to Mexico  
- Youth Links – Way more than a summer job  
- Youth in Communities – CBT funds cool projects  
- What do you know about the Columbia Basin Trust?  

**Other Stuff**
- Need a job? Fill the skills gap  
- Chain-mail - A twist in fashion  
- Meet a cool adult from Cranbrook  

---

**SCRATCH is your Magazine!**

Become a part of the SCRATCH team. Artist, writers, photographers wanted!
Contact Stacy Barter sbarter@cbt.org or 1-800-505-8998 if you want to work on the next issue of SCRATCH.
Why is it important to take action and get involved

Over one quarter of the world's population is under the age of 18. Shouldn't one quarter of the solution come from us? We are the leaders of tomorrow, and therefore we are responsible for our future. There is no doubt that our world is deteriorating, bit by bit. Now is the time to reverse the trends of globalization, destruction of the environment, and poverty. No action is too small or insignificant. Young people need to take action and get involved so that we can inherit a future that we can be proud of.

If anyone is going to take action, youth should be the people. Youth have a greater vested interest in the future than other age groups. This is our world. We are full of fresh ideas, we have a positive attitude and an outside perspective for what needs changing. Adults can have a negative perception of youth that can be proven wrong by taking action in what you believe in. A bit of respect between generations can go a long way.

There are many ways for youth to get involved. From lobbying to get a skate park built, to making your voice heard by your elected officials. It all helps. Should you have no clue as to where to get started, refer to other articles in this issue of SCRATCH. The profiles of youth in action might give you an idea for a project.

And remember, decisions are made by those who show up.

I think that it is about time that we, as youth, raise our voices and tell the world what we think. By getting involved in community activities, we are not only doing this, but much more as well. You get excellent opportunities to meet new people, and the skills of getting hands-on volunteer experience. If we think that something needs changing, we have to take the initiative and do something about it, no one is going to do it for us. Making a difference should be one of our top priorities. I am personally enrolled in an environmental awareness program at my school and as a class we try to make the community aware of problems in the area. We have done many things like teaching elementary students how to recognize the signs of a healthy stream, as well as the cleaning of Joseph Creek. If we take action by volunteering or protesting we can change the world for the better, and hopefully inspire others to do the same. Changing the world one small step at a time.

Rant and Rave

The more you put into something you will get out of LIFE! Get involved with change.

Don’t complain if you aren’t getting involved.
**Letters**

I've never really done anything for a magazine and I just wanted to let you know that it really made my day. I just wanted to say thanks for this opportunity.

Posted by **Cici**, 19, Revelstoke

This magazine SCRATCH offers great opportunities to young writers, artist photographers like myself to get their work published. Thank-you!

Posted by **Lindsey Swales**, 26, Meadow Creek

Finally something to read directed at young people that isn’t about what make-up, hairstyle or fashion items are hot this month. The best thing about this magazine is that it’s totally youth driven. I think the website is awesome too. Publicize a lot so kids know it’s out there!

Posted by **Karly**

SCRATCH is amazing. It creates a feeling of connectedness with other youth in the Columbia Basin. It makes me realize we are all under the same basin roof – one big community.

Posted by **Claire Amundsen**

---

**Opinion**

**Skate park not used in Creston, how come?**

**Ben Fromme**, 17, Creston

A couple of years back, the town of Creston, in collaboration with the Recreation Centre, began building a skateboard park for the youth to put to good use. This was deemed by almost everyone to be a very feasible operation, and one that would provide the youth with an alternative place to skateboard/rollerblade/bike. A few other benefits would be a decreased amount of skateboard traffic on pedestrian dominated sidewalks, it would provide local vandals with an alternative place to practice their “art”, and it would be giving the youth a means to get out and get some fresh air and exercise.

So after passing through all the “red tape”, construction of the skate park was underway. This is where things went wrong. During the planning phase of this whole operation, there was no input from the skateboarders themselves, and without the appropriate knowledge concerning the physics of riding a skateboard how can one be expected to create a compatible design? Thus the final product, though greatly appreciated, is far too advanced for the majority of the skateboarders who would like to frequent it. Some of the more industrious skaters began building wooden grind boxes, ramps, and steel rails to complement the overall appeal of the skate park. This did not last long however, due to insurance conflicts with the Recreation Centre, which is liable in the event of an accident involving any equipment not sanctioned in the original construction.

So the park sits, disappointingly unused by the majority of skateboarders, not because they are ungrateful, but due to a lack of forethought on the town’s behalf. I am not proposing a total rebuild of the park, which would just be a waste of a perfectly usable area. Instead, the removal of some of the over advanced aspects from the park, to be replaced by objects designed/created by skaters; this would ensure a greater increase in the overall usage of the park. The only expenditure I can foresee would be the actual removal of the advanced section, and even then, I am sure local skaters would be more than happy to participate in a fundraising campaign. In all, I feel that the “re-creation” of the park would be a valuable endeavour that would be greatly appreciated by the youth of Creston.

Lesson learned: -- Involve young people in projects that are for us. We can help make it happen and make sure it’s the right project.

---

For more information about skateboard parks underway or already built in the Columbia Basin, check out the resource section of www.scratchonline.ca

---

**We know you have opinions so let’s hear them. Post them on the message board or submit them to reader submissions at scratchonline.ca.**

---
The Youth Committee
Cassidy Sherrington, 15, Slocan

The Columbia Basin Trust Youth Committee is an advisory committee that gives input on youth involvement and youth issues to the Columbia Basin Trust. One of the cool things the Youth Committee did, was help create this magazine – SCRATCH – for youth living in the Basin.

This is the second issue of SCRATCH and it’s brought to you by the Columbia Basin Trust. Youth in the Basin are doing some really awesome stuff, and this issue is dedicated to just that - youth activism. Take a read. If you want to share your stories of activism post them on the message board at www.scratchonline.ca

We want to hear your stories!

The Columbia Basin Trust Youth Committee would like to thank everyone who attended the 2002 Youth Forum held at the Blue Lake Centre. It was awesome! Read what happened at the forum in the summary report at www.scratchonline.ca

Check out www.scratchonline.ca for information on funding available for youth driven projects. Don’t forget that youth can apply for any other Columbia Basin Trust funding in the areas of education and training, economic development, environment, arts, culture and heritage and social. If you’ve got an idea Columbia Basin Trust might have a program to help you make it happen!

Don’t forget that Youth Links is running again in 2003. So, if you’re between the ages of 17 and 19, check it out. Information about applying should be available in April.

If you would like to get involved in the Columbia Basin Trust Youth Committee, the committee is looking for members for 2004 and is always looking for network representatives in communities around the Basin.

For more information on any of Columbia Basin Trust’s youth initiatives or to get involved with the Youth Committee, contact Stacy Barter Youth Coordinator at 1-800-505-8998 or sbarter@cbt.org.

Youth Forum – Making a SCRATCH in your Community

At the 2002 Basin Youth Action Forum, about 75 young people came together to exchange ideas, celebrate youth culture, learn new skills, meet young people from around the Columbia Basin and share information and ideas on youth activities and opportunities in the region. The purpose of the forum was to encourage youth to take action in their communities.

During the weekend workshops, young people also identified priorities for action:
• Foster and develop youth leadership;
• Increase awareness and spread the word about youth opportunities and;
• Increase communication between Basin communities to share ideas and information.

These are just some of the things that the Youth Committee will be working on in the next year. Way more priorities were identified and covered from creating decent, well-paying jobs for youth, to environmental stewardship and at-risk youth. Check out the summary report from the forum at www.scratchonline.ca for more details.

www.scratchonline.ca is another cool project by the Youth Committee. Check it out. Post your events on the calendar. Put your opinions on the message board. Use the resources to find local and global sites.

Zoo
Lindsey Swales, 26, Meadow Creek

Confined in a cage
Gaping souls in pain displayed
A stolen future
Unknown to many of today’s youth, there are exciting opportunities for high school and college/university age students today in the Columbia Basin, and all across Canada. Ever heard of the skills gap? When the babies of the “baby boomers” age grew up, they got jobs, and over the years many have risen to various positions, in trades and technical fields, in management positions, supervising, etc.

Over the next four to ten years, many of them, who have been holding these positions for so long, are going to retire. According to a survey done by the Greater Trail Community Skills Centre, 40% of the present workforce will be retiring in this time. The generation between them and us is smaller, and many are too old to begin the necessary training now; consequently, there are numerous opportunities for us.

This means that as the baby boomers generation is retiring, we have the opportunity to take over their jobs, and there will be many job openings for those who are entering or already enrolled in college/university at this time. The problem is that we don’t have the skills required for many of these jobs.

When employers hire people, they don’t just look at the formal education of the candidate, they also look for what are called essential or employability skills. These include good teamwork, people, problem solving, and technical writing skills. Safety is also a big factor. Apprenticeship is one way to get the skills needed for the jobs that will be opening up. This kind of training means that rather than spending all of your time at school, you learn required skills on the job and get paid for it. Many of the job openings soon to come — estimated to be around 700,000 just in B.C. over the next few years — are for ‘skilled’ workers – millwrights, electricians, welders, mechanics, and machinists.

If you would like more information, refer to your local employment centre or contact Sue Bock at the Greater Trail Community Skills Centre in Trail, B.C. at 250-368-6360. For more information concerning the skills gap in B.C go to www.workfutures.bc.ca or in Canada go to www.jobfutures.ca.

Get a job and live here!
"If I’m a youth that makes everyone else an adult. But I feel like an adult too!" We need a better word than youth to describe people aged 15 to 29. Got any ideas! Post them on the message board at: scratchonline.ca

Katie Wilcott, 18, Nakusp
“Inspirational young adults”

Lisa Payne, 15, Elkford
“Next Generation”

Brett Pope, 29, Winlaw
“Pre-adult”

scratchonline.ca
Go there! Get published! Post your event on the calendar, submit your artwork photos, cartoons and writing. Click on the reader submissions.
Most people associate snowboarding as one of the “cooler” wintertime sports, upon which thousands of young and old people take to the slopes each year. Surrounded by media, pressure from peers and fashion, it can sometimes be difficult to see what snowboarding is really about.

What is it really about? I don’t think anyone has or doesn’t have a right answer. If someone were to ask me, I’d say it’s about my friends and I making an experience unique; forever to be in my memory, to call upon as one of the best ways I spend my time. I’d also say it’s about the smiles and hollers that come from those powder covered faces after another Kootenay winter day. It’s about coming face to face with anxiety and overcoming personal boundaries. I also might say it’s a great way to meet new friends who you otherwise wouldn’t have remembered except that riding an untracked, snow covered mountain together made everyone feel like gods of their own destiny if only for a moment. Where snowboarding means the world to one person, it might only mean being a weekend warrior to the other.

For all you snowboard enthusiasts exploring the sport this winter, either to make a name for yourself amongst the pros or really leaning into that toe side carve for the first time, always remember that you’re doing it for yourself for reasons physically and spiritually. Snowboarding, carried out in the right mindset, will benefit those wishing to express themselves in an art not based on looks and fame, rather true character and individual style.

**WEIRD FACTS**

- If the population of China walked past you in a single file, the line would never end due to the birth rate.
- Fewer **people are killed** in plane crashes than are killed by donkeys.
- The average **human** eats **eight spiders** in a lifetime at night.

**Alex Tegart**, 17, Golden
Plucking plastic a puckered tactic I please to upheave my peers and plot my position my ploy in suspision of displeasing, will pose so deceiving once those who start reeling, to me a trunk of silenced ears I squeak and snuggle my elastic peers, oh sweet harm take your last embrace I will erase the sins and silence the fears of the meek and trusting loving loners, oh blessed are those who weep who drag across their sleeve a lesson indeed needed to teach, to pluck a peach so young too ripe I harvest those unresting souls, it is mine my decision for those times to diminish, I plot my finish and bless the sinners, it is mine my vision that I might list and listen to the screams of those dearly damaged souls who insist, my acts of revision.

**Acts of Revision**  
*Karina Sims, 16, Montrose*

### Can young people make a difference?

**Aaron Banfield, 20, Nelson**

“Social movements have always had a strong youth component and in many cases were started by youth.”

**Kyle Holland, 17, Cranbrook**

“Of course. Young people have the drive, energy, openness, and a desire to be involved.”

**Josee Corrigan, 25, Winlaw**

“Yes. Obviously. We have the energy, ideas, and enthusiasm.”

*Artwork by Amos Tanguay, 19, Nelson*
A Daily Joy, Not an Annual Protest

Torrey Pass, 27, Nelson

What is activism? There are probably as many answers as there are activists. Chances are that if you care about the world and are even remotely optimistic, you are already an activist. The foundations for activism are self-respect and respect for others and the planet. Activism is not exclusive; it is not a secret club.

Young people represent a disproportionate number of activists among the overall population, especially in Europe and North America. Young and student populations have the best possible conditions for organizing as they are grouped together in large numbers in public learning institutions. Not only is intellectual curiosity encouraged, there also exists an inner directive among the majority of youth to define one's morality, to dare to dream of a just world, and contextualize our place within it.

Activism is the alternative to despair. Some believe that giving up is a rational and justifiable political stance. This view is held not only by the cynical politicians who wreak havoc upon the social fabric of this province and country, but by ordinary, intelligent people. These soggy-diapered philosophers explain articulately as all heck that the world is too far gone and there's little point in trying to change anything - mass extinction, apocalypse, bla bla bla. It takes courage to invest one's time toward positive change. It can be attractive to lie down and spite the possibility and responsibility of action. But it just ain't no fun.

There has never been a better time to get involved. A process of increasing solidarity is taking place between activist communities, partially as a result of the social justice movement. This loosely defined movement places an emphasis on how a range of strategies covering a broad base of issues is needed to make pro-active, positive changes. This solidarity is facilitated by new communication technology such as the Internet, a tool originally designed for the military.

With its wide scope, the social justice movement has helped to give rise to the most visible arena for activism in the beginning of the 21st Century: the mega protest - Seattle, Quebec, Genoa. The importance of these protests is that they serve as barometers for unrest. They are easy to spot. They underline the reality that people are collectively opposing international bodies such as the World Trade Organization and the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas. Anarchists, teacher's unions, women's groups, and steel workers can all agree that alternatives to "business as usual" are needed. While these sensational meetings garner media attention, they are symbolic. Activism is a daily joy, not an annual protest. In fact, the nitty gritty, homegrown revolution is happening right here in the Columbia Basin. There are a number of organizations and groups focusing on a variety of issues.

Dare to care! Choose something that is near to your heart. Remember, the people who make decisions about education, resource extraction, food production, military intervention and social services all have names and telephone numbers. Let them know how you feel. People die every day for want of the freedoms that we in Canada cede willingly. Use your voice. Talk to people! One way of breaking down the illusion that we are alone in our desires and discontents is to engage others in discussion. Exchanging ideas is the best way to develop your own views and plan your appropriate (re)action, to create a well-rounded and informed opinion. While discussion alone won't save the world, it is one of the pillars of change, helping to bridge different points of view, build solidarity and demonstrate the connectedness between struggles worldwide. Edward Abbey once said that sentiment without action is the death of the human soul. So let's quit dyin' and get busy!
Local youth share stories of how they are making a difference in their communities at the Youth Forum in October 2002.

“YEOW” (Youth Empowerment of Woman) is what you might say about a project based out of Nelson. Jennifer Compton is hoping to inspire women to be active in their community by taking them into the community and teaching them how to confidently apply their skills. The program targets female high school students from the ages of 15 - 19 years of age. Through dance, art, music and other means of creative expression women are able to share issues and concerns. When Jennifer approached people about concerns they may have, the answers ranged from employment skills, to a safe open place where they can express themselves with other women. Some advice from Jennifer for youth wanting to get involved, “Get others involved. Involve others in the community who may be working on similar initiatives; they may be able to offer advice or resources, but more importantly help you promote your project. The more support you can gain, the better off your project will be!”

If you are a young woman in the West Kootenay’s region, Jennifer would love to hear your thoughts. You can contact her by phoning (250) 354-1088 or email sc@netidea.com.

There seemed to be no programs for youth and children in Rossland, so Pam Shirley found a way to keep them busy. By combining her knowledge and love for the outdoors and her experience with children (working at a preschool and a day-care) Pam created eco-watch/adventure programs for children and youth in Rossland. The activities promote self-discovery and show children and youth what a good time they can have in their own big backyards. Participants are shown bike mechanic skills and drills, as well as an appreciation of our fragile ecosystems. In the past, Pam faced problems when working on her own. She now tries to connect with summer students or those who can assist her in a certain program, such as drama and dance instructors, students, trail builders, environmentalists, etc. She finds that her programs run much more smoothly when she can combine her skills with those who complement the program. With lots of public relations and a few alterations, Pam approached the recreational director of Rossland and her dream became a reality. Some words from Pam for youth wanting to get involved, “Research other community programs out there. In my case I networked with others involved with summer camps, Outward Bound programs, etc. and then I asked children, youth, and parents if they would be interested in various summer programs that I could offer to them. I submitted a program proposal, which was time consuming but necessary for the recreation developer to assess and receive as a potential program plan.” Pam also suggests giving out evaluations for the program.

Got more stories? We know lots of you are doing cool things and really making the Columbia Basin an even better place to live. Let’s hear about them. Let SCRATCH know what young people are doing in your community and we’ll feature them in an upcoming issue or on scratchonline.ca. Send your stories to www.scratchonline.ca (click on reader submissions) or mail them to Stacy Barter, Youth Coordinator for the Columbia Basin Trust. (see inside front cover for address).

You Can Make a Difference

Youth Empowerment of Woman
Young and Elected

Thoughts from a young Mayor and an even younger City Councillor

Aaron Banfield, 20, Nelson

Michelle Mungall took part in her first political action at age 11 and has been an activist ever since. Michelle, 24, was elected to Nelson City Council on Nov. 16, 2002.

Mark Shmigelsky is a political veteran whose opinions have appeared in media all over the country. First elected to Invermere City Council nine years ago, Mark, 30, has just been acclaimed and is mayor for a second term.

Here are their comments about being young and elected.

Why is it important to have youth represented?

Mark: Because it adds a new and different perspective to the issues of the day...there is a different kind of wisdom in youth.

Michelle: We will inherit the consequences of the decisions that are currently being made so why don’t we get involved in that?

Every age, every culture, every gender, every sexuality, every ability are all members of a community and that diversity is a key component of real democracy.

“Right now youth have been marginalized”

What issues are especially important to youth?

Michelle: From my experience, sustainable living wages, and flexible jobs. Something we can build a career out of. A lot of people come here from post-secondary schools, degree in hand, and what’s there? Not much when all we have is big box stores offering minimum wage part-time jobs. Also, we need to make sure our post-secondary institutions are solid, that they offer the programs people are asking for. Other issues are involvement and getting active in the community. Right now youth have been marginalized so much that unless you’re an employee of the youth centre it’s quite difficult to get an inroad into the decision-making process.

Mark: When I was first elected in 1993 at the age of 23 it seemed that the majority of youth concerns were around lack of a place to hang out or no skate park etc. Now it seems to be that the concerns are much more global or issues related to anything from economics, will I have a job, to the environment, will we have a planet. They [the issues] definitely have evolved.

continued on page 14
What challenges face a young person involved in politics?

Mark: The biggest challenge is getting by the ‘you are so young’ comment, but at the same time, many people like to see youth there and you end up getting the ‘it’s good to see some young people on Council’. I guess it all balances out but once you are there the toughest part for me, at least, was to make sure I listened before I spoke...I am still working on that one!

Michelle: A lot of people think I don’t know what I’m talking about. It hasn’t been so bad here (in Nelson); another reason I love this community so much. Just by virtue of being 24 rather than 55 I don’t have the hands-on knowledge, the direct experience with the community that other councilors or people in the community have. [Some people] have been involved for 60 years, I haven’t been alive for 60 years. Young people don’t have money, they don’t have access to funding...they’re often working a lot.

Where does doing this fit in with your long term plans?

Mark: I did run for MP back in 1997 and was trounced. I knew that I wasn’t going to win but I did it because I believed in what I was doing and I still do. So, I don’t really have any plans for anything else, even though many people still think I will run federally again but being Mayor of Invermere is an honour and I am very grateful to be able to contribute to my community. As long as I can do that, I will be happy.

Michelle: I don’t have any long term plans, believe it or not. Everyone finds it hard to believe that I don’t have this ambitious career of politics planned. I really don’t. I’m a young person. I think it’s important for young people to have a voice. I’m always going to be involved in politics one way or another. It’s my passion, it’s who I am. Whether it’s electoral politics or not I have no idea. I know that I want to make a difference in the world.

What advantages do you think youth have in the field of politics?

Mark: Energy, energy, energy! I also believe that the opportunity to be aware of so much more of what is happening ‘out there’, is incredible.

Michelle: I think I garner a little more patience from people because they recognize I have that learning curve. Perhaps it’s easier to impress people than if you are 55. We might not have access to a lot of financial resources but we’ve got a lot of access to our friends. Get your friends involved who have energy, who have time; they have creativity which is endless and so much more valuable than money, I think. It was that energy that got the word out. So I’m forever indebted to the volunteers.

What advice would you have for any youth reading who want to enter politics?

Mark: If you are thinking about it...do it! Get involved in school politics, federal or provincial youth parties or community action groups. You don’t want to end up wishing you would have done something 10 years down the road. Also don’t forget to listen. Listen to everyone that is willing to give you their opinion and you will end up learning something everyday. Besides it’s about time that we got back to debating the issues rather than arguing the issues.

Michelle: One person said to me if you’re thinking of running, don’t. It’s hard work. It is not glamorous. Yeah, you get to have your picture in the paper and people stop and say “Hi” to you on the street...to me that’s not glamorous because people also stop you on the street and say there are too many leaves on their sidewalk. Do your research. You owe it to the community to know what they’ve been doing over the years. If you feel you can do it, do it. Rock the boat a little bit. Don’t be afraid to rock the boat. Being a young person in politics is boat-rocking as it is; don’t be afraid once you’re there to say that’s the only way you’ve rocked the boat—keep rocking it. Be prepared for hard work and your life as an open book. It’s like a 24-hour interview, naked. [Fellow councilor] Gord McAdams said it’s in your underwear; I think it’s naked. If you have something to say, you should run; it’s open. However, if you’re committed to winning it’s a lot of work and it’s not easy whatsoever. Definitely talk to a lot of people first. I talked to a lot of people and went in with both eyes wide open and boy I learned a whole lot — my eyes weren’t as open as I thought they were.
Talkative people became mumbling shadows and faded into the quiet darkness of other rooms. Just her and I remained, dissolving into the lush bed, sliding under covers of velvet and down. Ghost stories and the unexplained. Chattering teeth and knocking knees brought us together for sixth sense reasons known only to the hairs on our necks and spines in our backs. The creaks and groans of a potentially haunted house intrigued us both, but instilled a fear uncontrollable.

The high began losing altitude, and our minds started to crash, ready for sleep. In mumbled half whispers we discussed the benefits of sleeping next to someone and of sharing a bed without the sexual tension so often associated with doing so. With wine on our breath and the other on our mind, our bodies lay next to each other, lit up by the cracking electric sky. The sheer linen curtain lightly danced about the picture window in the midnight breeze, and the rhythmic sound of pouring rain drummed me closer to deep slumber.

I snapped back into consciousness to her voice. A few words of pseudo nervous chit chat began, and she ended up laughing at something I said and silence followed. There was a tension in the air. Like being perched on the edge of a small cliff, staring downward wondering if you could handle the fall. I felt more than reluctant to make a move. I had just spent five to ten discussing the benefits of sleeping with someone while emphasizing an x-nay on the ex-say. I felt entirely content with the warm bed and the warm soul next to me, but also wary about slipping into a state of contradiction. Tiredness slowly tortured me towards a numbing sleep. The lightening struck again, projecting awkward black shadows with its solid white light. I could see the defined silhouette of her wonderful face, staring at the ceiling. Her nose, lips, chin, and breasts slowly rising and falling with every deep breath. Her hair, curly locks of chestnut, smelling of Herbal Essences. The silence was not unlike the darkness, solid, thick, and seemingly impenetrable.

"Cuddle?" She asked. Silence broken, and instantly repaired by my lacking of speech, as I shuffled over quietly and placed my arm over her. The space between us was a barely visible seam. An unknown time passed, and a ridiculous amount of shifting and trying to get comfortable ensued. I came to the conclusion that comfort had nothing to do with sleeping at that point, that there was something else needing to be fulfilled. Perhaps something more emotional, or mental, even animal. More time passed, and fingers began stroking along skin, hands meeting and holding. Our fingers met in the air, and danced about each others like they had never experienced another hand. My nose touched to her cheek, and then my lips. I could feel my warm breath bouncing off her neck, then dissipating into the humid summer air.

Over time cuddling became a sensuous endeavour, progressing from a snuggling situation to an intimate moment. More time passed of holding each other tightly, and eventually we kissed. With sudden intensity energy flowed like whiskey running hot down your soul. Slow, romantic, casual, but steady. We kissed again, and again, and again. For periods of time unknown to my mind we kissed like it was art in the random flashing light of an angry sky, and under the rumbling boom of thunderous cloud. Slowly, we slowed. Eventually, we moved backward in time to just laying together, and soon, sleeping. In the morning, we were friends again as we had always been. The slow and beautiful adventure from the night hardly vexed our minds. It was almost as if it had been a sweet dream, a euphoric surreal experience between two people. The rest of the day passed casually, as life always had before. Upon my departure, I caught a wink, and threw a smile. It was nice, spending the night with her. It was a good moment in time. It was a great moment, in my mind.
Naomi English, 16, Gray Creek

Mama’s got cancer
Soon she’s gonna die
A reality that’s as simple as the changing of the sky
Why?
Because the government made a deadly poison legal to buy
Why did she try?
Because when it came out it was glamorous
What a lie!
Now when I see kids
Suckin’ on their cancer sticks
I wonder how they manage to still be tricked
When the knowledge is there
And the information so clear
How could anyone not care?
Sometimes I sit there and stare
As a new kid sucks away that rare
And beautiful lively glow
That never seems to show again
As clearly as they go
Soon I know they’re licked
They don’t give a shit as long as they get their next fix.

Addiction,
Sometimes I think it’s just a fiction
To make people listen
So they can get that attention they’ve been missin’.
Body’s become immune to those killin’ fumes?
That’s bull shit!
It’s just become dependent and equipped
So it’s impossible to quit
Can’t live without that shit
Go ahead become a slave
A paying addict to get that kick
But soon you’re gonna slip
Shallow breathing
Much too quick.

Tara Engdahl, 15, Slocan Park

Why do we laugh, but want to cry?
Why do we like to be honest, but yet lie?
Why do we get married, then long to be free?
What tells us to stay, and begs us to flee?
The purest of thoughts are shut out of sight,
The evil is rain, with lightning so bright
We’re torn from the wrong and beckoned with right
Til we’re shut in a corner, sweating with fright.
Why do we want to grow up, then miss being young?
Why are we kind, then use a sharp tongue?
Why does life seem ended yet we struggle to live?
What tells us to take, and begs us to give?
The purest of thoughts are shut out of sight,
The evil is rain, with lightning so bright
We’re torn from the wrong and beckoned with right
Til we’re shut in a corner, sweating with fright.
Why do we pray, then stop our belief?
Why do we anticipate, then yell for relief?
Why do we love, but know that it ends?
What tells us to make foe, then begs for a friend?

Chelsea DeYaeger, 18, Nelson

Without hesitation
I grab the knife.
My arm numbs
as I drag
the metallic blade
across
my skin
Relief releases
Anxiety drains
The pressure had built
I needed to break the tension.
Crimson glory
the greatest sign that
1
have won
Leland Bjerg, 20, Slocan

In a holy Golgotha topped with verdigris steeples
Where the age of the moss makes people feel fetal
A green sheen is glinting from clean tree needles
And reflecting like planets in the eyes of keen beetles

Here pellucid puddles of ragged lawns
Are mowed by droves of vagrant fawns
While ferns form flotillas from fragrant fronds
Floating like faeries over stagnant ponds

A wind in the limbs lifts vivarian hymns
Stumpbacks singing through riparian grins
Swimming for the Sun with solarium fins
Beneath a steep sky like an aquarium lid

Use these primal urges spurred by deer rut zeal
To find a feral forest facing clear-cut fields
Or chill in cold cities with your earmuffs sealed
And pray to plastic plants that your tear ducts heal

Julie Mercer, 17, Rossland

A grey mass
of blank stares
moving in unison
jointless limbs
left, right, left.
Few lead
many follow
look, think, be
like me
pre-determined destiny
of striving
of chance.
This is what you want.
This is what you work for.
This is you.
This is all of you.
This army,
This machine.
your position is
to have a position
any position
do what you're good at
whatever reaps results
reaps profits
for you
for everyone
for the army
for the machine.
put on your uniform
your blank stare
move with the mass
be grey
be normal
put on your blind eye.
ignorance is bliss, after all.

I don't know but I've been told,
Conformity has gotten old.

Deep Forest

Leland Bjerg, 20, Slocan

Willow branches drooping, resting on the grass
Strawberry patch which the birds picked bare
Car in the drive, doesn't move forward
Vegetables in the garden, growing through the weeds
I am my yard.

Lindsey Swales, 26, Meadow Creek

Resemblance

Lindsey Swales, 26, Meadow Creek
It is commonly assumed that if you can’t see a problem, then it doesn’t exist - or does it? Shelley Joubert is the Regional Coordinator for Shelter Net BC, a society with a mandate to advocate for suitable shelter for all people in the province. She recently stated in a regional newspaper article, “Homelessness is hidden in our area. We don’t see people sleeping on the streets because the homeless are doing what we call couch surfing, moving from home to home, dependent on their friends just to find shelter for another night.”

Picture yourself in the following situation: You’re a recent high school graduate, who just moved to another town in the Columbia Basin, working for a year to save some money for college. You miss a day of work and get fired, and then without any money you get evicted from your apartment nowhere else to go. You’re not eligible for Employment Insurance, and social assistance might not come through. Although there are places to occasionally use a phone or get a meal, your basic needs are not being met. What do you do?

It may seem as though there is nothing you can do to work towards solving the problem of homelessness in the Kootenays. However, one Nelson-based organization, sponsored by the Government of Canada’s National Homelessness Initiative, is trying to change that.

Roofs 4 Youth is an exciting project initiated by the Nelson District Community Resources Society. By working together with a research team, including four youth research assistants, Roofs 4 Youth hopes to increase awareness about youth housing issues and homelessness. They also work with local service providers, maintain a website, and provide a drop-in space for youth with housing issues. Roofs 4 Youth is only available in the Nelson area at this time.

So next time, when you’re out in the night, and it’s bitterly cold, just stop and take a moment to think. What would you do if you had to spend all night outside, without a home? Homeless in the Kootenays - the reality.

Contact Roofs 4 Youth at, 608 Lake Street, Nelson, BC, or at (250) 352-3659. Send Roofs 4 Youth an email at roofs4youth@netidea.com or visit the website at www.roofs4youth.ca.
Shop with a Conscience

Sheena Witter, 16, Rossland

It is time that big corporations are held responsible for their business practices. It is up to us as consumers to hold these companies accountable. We must demand fair wages and working conditions for the people who make the clothing and products we so often take for granted.

There are many opportunities available to help stop the injustices of sweatshops. The biggest tool you have is education and making people aware of what they spend their money on. Here are a few things you can do:

1. **Educate** the people around you. The more people who know about sweatshops, the less often big corporations will be able to get away with treating their workers like slaves.

2. **Talk** to the retailers where you shop and ask them if they can tell you where the clothing is made and the companies’ policies.

3. **Write** letters or circulate petitions and send them to companies that use sweatshop labour.

4. Sweatshops make a great topic for school assignments; why not inform teachers too?

6. Make your school sweatshop-free. Push to have your school adopt and enforce a policy that ensures the products used at your school are NOT made in places that employ sweatshop practices.

Activism - Get Involved

Sheena Witter, 16, Rossland

New programs are started in support or defense of different causes every single day. Teenagers have an incredible ability to take a stand for their ideals and make a very real difference. After finding a cause that you feel strongly about, it takes effort, time and determination. A single individual is capable of promoting major changes and bringing awareness to others. There are lots of different things you can do to be active for your cause. Here are some suggestions, both large and small, to help you get started on your way.

- Do some research to discover established organizations that share your views. See if it is possible to open up a local branch or chapter in your school or community.
- Read or listen to the media to see how the issues you are concerned with are handled. If you don’t like it, write a response that expresses your views.
- Pay attention to politics. Even if you are not old enough to vote, you can still lobby for change, or support those who are taking a stand.
- Write articles and submit them to school papers, community papers and organizations that support your cause.
- Lobby or campaign for money or resources for an organization that you would like to be involved with.
- Create public awareness of your cause.
- Ask if you can speak to your school to bring awareness to the student body.
- Talk to people who disagree with your views. This helps you understand a different perspective. Remember to come with research so you can counter their points.
- Take a leadership role in an organization that furthers your cause.
- Take an active role in something you believe strongly in isn’t always easy. It can be time-consuming and even discouraging at times. The question you must ask yourself is, “Is it worth spending your/my time on?” Well, activism enables you to share your ideas and make friends, and can teach you a little about life and how the world outside high school works. It also shows you that with a little determination, one really can make a big difference.

When Activism Becomes Dangerous

Sheena Witter, 16, Rossland

There is no better way to promote ideas and instigate change than becoming active for a cause. There is a line, however, that more and more activists are choosing to cross, plunging them from simple activism into crime. Activists who choose this route call it “direct action” and the concept is simple — cause financial harm to those who profit from the exploitation or suffering of animals.

Practitioners of direct action use whatever means necessary to harm a business, including petty mischief such as vandalism and gluing shut the locks of stores, or more serious crimes such as arson and the physical release of animals, which is called animal liberation.

There are several major targets for direct action; these include stores that sell or distribute fur, fast food restaurants, animal farms, and factories that process and package meat products. Depending on your beliefs, eating meat and using animal products such as fur is wrong, but so is taking direct action in the name of a cause. Laws are set in place to protect society. Perhaps our laws do not do enough to protect the rights of animals; that is where you can do something. Getting involved in non-violent forms of activism is one of the best things you can do, both for yourself and for society.
Top 10 Reasons Youth Need to Take Action and Get Involved in their Community

Diana Dearden, 18, Fort Steele

1. So we can meet new people and get out of our regular routine.
2. So we can obtain new skills and experiences which we can use for a job search or throughout the rest of our life.
3. To get some more volunteers out into our community.
4. Because we need to take action and take responsibility for our future.
5. So we can interact and work with other generational groups in our community.
6. To change the popular stereotype of youth into a more positive perception.
7. Because we have the ability to add new ideas and energy out into our communities, and then we won’t keep getting the same…old…stuff…
8. So we can build the kind of society based on the values we want to have.
9. Because we can make a difference – really!
10. And finally…
11. To get rid of the ‘Mom, I’m bored’ syndrome!

Cecilia de Groot, 19, Revelstoke

As a hobby I make chain-mail, the medieval armor that knights and warriors would wear in battle. It not only is used as protective-wear today, but also as an eccentric fashion, found as skirts, dresses, belts and much more. You can often find chain-mail on the costumes in films, and some people display it on their walls. Making chain-mail is a hobby of mine, and I am hoping to turn it into a business.

A Twist in Fashion – Literally
During the summer of 2002, Mr. Osiowy (Rod) took a group of students on a trip with a mission to Costa Rica for a media project. They traveled around the small country, filming footage for a number of different videos. The group called it a Youth Social Justice Media Project, and was doing just that, social justice. The videos were all for awareness projects of environmental and social causes. Some of the videos included information on the water situation, a biological reserve, and a local youth centre. These videos were then mixed back in Canada, and distributed to different areas for education purposes, and small community commercials. Mr. Osiowy was pleased to see each student feel as though they had made a positive difference during the trip, and hopes to go back again in the near future.

Do you consider yourself to be a cool adult? [He laughs at this] No! I'm boring! I don't do much, I don't go out. I'm always working on lines for a production being performed that night, while others are mixing their latest video. The man to start these projects is Mr. Rod Osiowy, the drama teacher of Mount Baker. Sitting in the office of his black classroom (for theatre effects), this teacher oversees the creation of amazing videos and drama productions. This article is all about Rod, and why he was chosen as the Columbia Basin’s Cool Adult of 2002.

Do you know a cool person over 29 who does positive stuff with youth? Then tell SCRATCH @ sbarter@cbt.org or 1-800-505-8998. We’ll make them famous!

THE BASICS
Name: Rod Osiowy
A.K.A.: Rod-O
Career: Drama Teacher
Location: Mount Baker Senior Secondary, Cranbrook, BC

His Cool Adult: Former art teacher

A.P. Osiowy, 16, Cranbrook

THE BASICS
Name: Rod Osiowy
A.K.A.: Rod-O
Career: Drama Teacher
Location: Mount Baker Senior Secondary, Cranbrook, BC

His Cool Adult: Former art teacher

What have been some of your greatest moments as a drama teacher? [Ponders this for a while] Every year seeing students do something they thought they couldn’t do. Those are the times I like best. And going to Costa Rica.

So what exactly was the reason you went to Costa Rica? We took a group of students for something we called a Youth Social Justice Media Project. It was to make short films for environmental and social causes.

That sounds cool. So because of that, I’m sure that each student took back a life changing experience, but what was the best thing the students in a whole brought back from Costa Rica?

They all felt as though they had made a positive difference.

So would you go back?
Yes. I hope to go back soon.

Just getting back to your drama experiences, did any of your productions totally flop?
[Laughs] Of course! You have to have a failure to see your successes.

What were your successes?
Oh man, lots. Grease, Peter Pan, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, the Wizard of Oz, Private Lives with Jeremy Raymond, that was beautiful. And the most recent one - Till Death Do Us Part.

Well, even though you don't see yourself as a cool adult, who was your cool adult when you were younger?
My art teacher. He treated us as humans, not as subjects to be filled with information. He actually talked to us, not at us. That was cool.

After having him, did you always want to be a drama teacher? Or what did you want to be? A firetruck.

A firetruck?
Yes! [Smiles] No, I had no idea. I took my sciences in university, and was heading to be a doctor, but I just didn't have the heart for it.

Well, when you decided to come here and teach, what was the coolest part for you?
The support from the students, community and school administration for programs to allow students to express and develop skills.

Ok, last question. Even though you don't see yourself as a cool adult, could you give me at least one reason why others might?
[Thinks about this for a while] One thing? Well, I suspend my judgments. I allow people to prove themselves.
In summer 2002 a group of students from Mt. Baker Secondary School in Cranbrook spent three weeks in Costa Rica making videos that focussed on the environment, youth and social justice. The trip was sponsored by Canada World Youth, ACI Costa Rica and UNESCO. The students all paid to go on the trip.
Postcard from the Columbia Basin

Well I’m proud to report that I’m doing sweet justice to the term farmer’s tan. Our group of nine volunteers has been divided into three groups with a representative from each country involved (Canada, USA, Mexico). Each group spends three days a week at their respective project and then all nine reconvene for two days a week to work on other local environmental and community projects.

Our group also devotes every Friday to an Education Activity Day. Each sub-group is responsible to plan and facilitate one of these days where the objective is to share information relevant to the group’s project and the community.

We explored the bio-diverse region that makes up the east portion of the Canadian part of the Columbia River Basin. We also made connections with some incredible leaders in environmental preservation and natural resource management. This trip was also a time for new experiences. Some of the people in our group had never slept in a tent before or gone a day without the luxury of a hot shower. Needless to say this was both an exciting and challenging week for all.

Postcard from the Columbia Basin

In June 2002, three Columbia Basin youth took part in a six-month youth exchange. The North American Community Service (NACS) program took them from the Columbia Basin to Texas and then on to Mexico. Working with youth from the United States and Mexico, the group took part in community projects while traveling and learning about the local culture, environment, politics, and social challenges.

Hillary Schell, 20, of Argenta, Anna Wilkinson, 19, of South Slocan, and Zachary Allison, 22, of Nelson are back home in the Columbia Basin. These email excerpts from Zachary’s trip tell the story.

For more information about Columbia Basin Trust youth programs, contact Stacy Barter at 1-800-505-8998 or sbarter@cbt.org.

Local Youth Travel North America

In June 2002, three Columbia Basin youth took part in a six-month youth exchange. The North American Community Service (NACS) program took them from the Columbia Basin to Texas and then on to Mexico. Working with youth from the United States and Mexico, the group took part in community projects while traveling and learning about the local culture, environment, politics, and social challenges.

Hillary Schell, 20, of Argenta, Anna Wilkinson, 19, of South Slocan, and Zachary Allison, 22, of Nelson are back home in the Columbia Basin. These email excerpts from Zachary’s trip tell the story.

For more information about Columbia Basin Trust youth programs, contact Stacy Barter at 1-800-505-8998 or sbarter@cbt.org.

Postcard from Mexico

The past three weeks our group has been busy tackling the finishing touches of house construction, as well as touring a pristine mangrove ecosystem, hiking with howler monkeys, celebrating the Day of the Dead (Halloween traditional Mexican style) in Naolinco.

Postcard from Texas

Welcome to Texas. And yes the saying “They do everything BIG in Texas” is bang on the money. We are working on the historical restoration and preservation of a 300 plus year old mission, a pretty unique experience. Wow, we’ve got a lot on our plate.

Having said that I must also say how excited we are to be in a new community and to be involved with such an incredible...
Columbia Basin Trust’s (CBT) Youth Links program is an educational, work experience program for people ages 17-19 residing in the Columbia Basin. Participants spend seven weeks in the summer travelling the Columbia Basin in groups of 10, living, working, and making decisions together as a team. Work projects during the summer portion of the program often include working on trail building, community gardens, and community festivals. In addition to work projects, participants receive valuable training in life skills, issues of the Columbia Basin, and how to have a good time in a van with nine other people. Participants receive a weekly stipend of $100 for the summer portion of the program and a $500 completion bonus.

After supporting each other to succeed throughout the summer, Youth Links participants have the opportunity to receive a grant of up to $500 to do a project in their own community between September and December. Throughout the summer, participants brainstorm ideas and by the end of seven weeks, each participant has completed a project plan. Here are some of the 2002 Fall Up (also known as follow up) projects.

Megan Shannon of Cranbrook created a mural for the Cranbrook Family Centre with the theme of “love and literacy.” Todd Wesley Wesselke gathered support from his home community of Fernie to create an informative plaque and place it on top of Three Sisters, a local mountain, in the spirit of the International Year of the Mountains. The plaque includes information about surrounding mountains, the elevation and coordinates of the mountain.

Shauna Shkuratoff of the Slocan Valley is creating a list of volunteer opportunities for youth in the Valley and promoting volunteering to local youth.

For more information, or to receive an application package, e-mail youthlinks@earthmatters.ca or call 1-250-354-7261. Nelson-based Earth Matters administer the Youth Links program for Columbia Basin Trust.

Mike Kootnikoff’s project, Bikes for Kids, is one that has the potential to carry on beyond Youth Links. Mike got people to donate bikes. He then fixed up the bikes and kids will receive these bicycles as Christmas presents through the Family Centre in Nelson.

Kelli Mai Doebert learned how to make a mean apple pie, do advertising, and protect bears at the same time! Kelli Mai volunteered for the fruit tree mapping project in Kimberley and organized volunteers for apple picking. She then organized mass pie baking and sales as a fundraiser for East Kootenay Environmental Society.

Thanks to PJ Stevenson, there is now a new soccer field in Cranbrook, which he built!

Aaron Vorley has been letting other youth in Golden learn about his experience with Youth Links through a newspaper column.

Cora Jenkin of Warfield is putting together a cd of Youth Links information for the Columbia Basin Trust website.

Jen Redfearn is creating a Youth Links information video.

Kevan Gilbert, from Fruitvale is doing an innovative culture jamming “environmental” poster project.

The Fall Up portion of Youth Links is an incredible opportunity to have the experience of planning a project and going through with it, with the support of other people. Congratulations to all of the 2002 participants who are making awesome contributions to their communities. To find out more about these projects, check out the Columbia Basin Trust website in April.
The Rocky Mountain Youth Council is organizing a youth water forum in Cranbrook, March 28-29, 2003. H2Open is for youth ages 15-29 from across British Columbia. The H2Open conference will look at water issues in BC - drinking water, watersheds, the Columbia River and water as a salable commodity. The Columbia Basin Trust is contributing $5,000 to the conference. For more information about attending the H2Open visit http://www.cotr.bc.ca/water For more details email Kyle Holland at h2open@shaw.ca

Thirsty for a water conference?
The Rocky Mountain Youth Council is organizing a youth water forum in Cranbrook, March 28-29, 2003. H2Open is for youth ages 15-29 from across British Columbia. The H2Open conference will look at water issues in BC - drinking water, watersheds, the Columbia River and water as a salable commodity. The Columbia Basin Trust is contributing $5,000 to the conference. For more information about attending the H2Open visit http://www.cotr.bc.ca/water For more details email Kyle Holland at h2open@shaw.ca

What's been funded so far?
The 10 projects that have received funding so far (totaling close to $55,000) are from across the Columbia Basin and address a range of topics.

In Rossland, the Yellow Ribbon Project is focused on suicide awareness and prevention. In Elkford secondary school, students are facilitating art exploration sessions. In Crawford Bay, a youth survey is underway to identify local recreational needs. In Invermere, the First Impressions Program offers interview and employment preparation skills to youth. And in Nelson, Creating Safe Spaces is supporting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth.

These are just some of the cool youth projects funded by CBT.

DID YOU KNOW? The Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) has funding specifically allotted for a youth program! It’s called the Basin Youth in Communities Program, and CBT gives up to $10,000 to an approved project. All proposals must address community issues related to youth, support the development of youth leadership, and encourage youth participation in program development, implementation and evaluation. Basically, young people [aged 13-29] have to be involved in both running the show and reaping the goods. If you cover both those bases and your idea is somewhat inspired, you could be well on your way to being one of the people or groups to make it through the selection process. In 2002, over 10 projects received grants and even more project ideas have been accepted. Those ideas are being developed further. The range of issues tackled by those ventures included suicide awareness, youth art workshops, a skate park project, and a bunch more. Funding is allotted by community, so don’t worry if you’re out in a rural setting. Your chances are still just as good as your ‘urban’ neighbour, as long as you get your application in on time.

One thing about this program that I find especially ingenious is that you don’t have to be a professional grant writer to get your foot in the door. If your idea is solid, a staff member will help to polish it up and work out the mechanics of how to make it happen, such as establishing a timeline, drawing up a budget, dealing with space, materials, advertising, etc. (It’s like throwing in a free grant-writing course!) You can strike out on your own or do it with your chums. ‘Adults’ (which according to the CBT are people over 29) can get projects off the ground too, as long as the mighty youth are holding the reigns. Just try to shoot for something realistic and practical. That doesn’t mean it can’t be a little out there, but you have to imagine yourself physically doing the thing. You can also apply for funding for an existing project or program you’re involved with that would benefit from having some funding thrown at it.

To get your mitts on an application form, go to the Columbia Basin Trust website at www.cbt.org or www.scratchonline.ca. Non-emailers and Internet distrusters can call Merrilla Thorp, a CBT Assistant Community Liaison, by phone at 1-800-505-8998. If you need more info, Stacy Barter, CBT Youth Coordinator, is the woman to call. Her number is 250-365-6633. Her email is sbarter@cbt.org.

The deadline to apply is April 1, 2003.

Need money for a project? Try the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) youth programs or any other funding programs offered by CBT. Info - 1-800-505-8998.
Anne McEwan, 17, Nelson
11:19 am Friday March 8, 2002
Mood: Romantic
Music: Dave Matthews Band- Crash

The last part of this week has just flown by. I keep renting feel good romantic movies and making fancy meals for myself. Last night I made cannelloni and watched French Kiss. I love Meg Ryan. Although she always acts the same, I want to fall in love and be her character. In the spirit of my romanticism I'm going to that poetry reading at the cafe. If that guy who came in the other day is really interested in poetry maybe he'll be there. Or maybe he just bought that poetry book for some stupid college assignment. I should start a Sex in the City style diary of my quest for love. Maybe I'll actually DO my hair and I'll wear my new skirt and sweater, and my confidence boots. This could be fun. Wish me luck.

-Sarah

Forgiven

April Cuffy, 24, Castlegar
Peel away the layers of sin
Feel the sunlight warm your skin
Allow your past to melt away
Awaken clean – embrace the new day
Throw away that tarnished, tainted mask
Turn towards the sun and let yourself bask
There is no use for the guilt you bear
Cast it off, let it not harbour there
Permit yourself to be forgiven
Discover the world you are meant to live in.

Sarah

204 am Sunday March 10, 2002
Mood: Happy
Music: River City High- Us vs. Them

I just came home from a poetry reading & I think I've found my new love. The girl at the bookstore told me about the reading, rather sheepishly I might add. And since she's going to be my 'intriguing stranger' I figured I'd at least check it out. There I go stalking again. I have no clue why I'm even doing the project in the first place. So I've decided that I should read more poetry y'know as an aspiring songwriter and all. The thing is I love to read and listen to poetry but I hate poetry analysis. So basically school has kept me away from poetry.

Anyhow tonight was good. There were a lot more people there than I had expected, which was a good thing since I went alone. She did too. I need to make up a name for her or something if I'm to address the letter. Maybe Kelty. She wore those boots again and this time her hair was all flipped out. I wonder what kind of music she likes. Who knows, maybe she's just a meek poser like the rest anyway. I better get on with writing the letter though, it's due next Tuesday: End of term. My mom is trying to get me a math tutor. She just doesn't understand that I don't care about my math mark and that's why the mark is low not because I can't do it. She's going to have a hard time finding someone geeker than me. At least on this one Dad doesn't care. I think he's just given up on me completely. I suppose I'll need to get a job soon if I want to move out next year. Damn me I bet I won't be able to keep a job. I've developed this complex where I don't take shit from anyone. I better go to sleep so I can wake up again. How futile.

-Gabe
On the side of the cardboard box
of tree seedlings it states:
OUR FUTURE FORESTS
in big bold letters
optimistically

While the reality of the surrounding clear-cut
hits me with full force
The branch of a felled log
jabs and bruises my shin
Sharp vibrations of pain shoot through my wrist
as my shovel hits rock, again
My heart aches at the sight of this vast wasteland of
huge stumps and dead charred logs

I look to the green
of the valley below for strength
But the replanted trees there
stand in rows
the same age
the same size
the same species
The conformity is like soldiers marching
As I stare in horror
at the valley below,
at the future forest,
The image blurs
to form pixels of green
as unnatural as the picture
on a computer screen
I blink to focus my vision
but the image won't leave me

Stubbornly
I grab a little tree,
bend over,
and feel its roots slide through
my fingers into the
moist soil of the
Earth.

**WEIRD FACTS**

If you yelled for eight years, seven months and six days you
would have produced enough energy to heat a cup of coffee.

‘I am’ is the shortest complete sentence in the English language.

The word “typewriter” is the longest word that can
be made using only one row of the keyboard.

**Alex Tegart, 17, Golden**
Try using the Media

Marty Uri, 26, Cranbrook

In today’s fast-paced information age the media can be one of your best and most efficient ways to inform the public about your event or spread the word about a cause or an issue you think is important.

First things first you need to identify your target group. Who and what are you looking for in your audience? Young or old, boys or girls, that sort of thing. There are many avenues for you to use and now you need to pick which is going to work best for your event. Press releases, written articles, interviews, and press conferences all get the message out. But which one is going to hit the biggest chunk of your target audience? Is there any point in advertising a skateboard demo in the Wall Street Journal?

No money for advertising? No worries. There are many ways to advertise inexpensively. Word of mouth, posters, mailbox fliers, and on-line community calendars are just a few of the many ways. Post your event on the scratchonline.ca calendar or make your point on the message board.

It is also important to consider the time line of promoting your event. Too early and people will forget, and too late and not enough people will hear the message. For example, if you were to have a press conference the same day as the Premier were to announce major layoffs throughout the province you would get no or little media attention.

There is already so much advertising media out there now you don’t want to waste any resource. So make sure you:

• find your target audience (who do you want to reach);
• and narrow down where and when to advertise your event (where are they likely to look for information);
• be consistent, persistent, and be original (be creative so your message stands out from the rest).
Hi, My name is Andru McCracken, I'm 28 years old and my wife and I have just started a newspaper that serves the Robson Valley. The crazy thing is that before this summer we didn't have an inkling that we'd ever try anything like it.

My wife and I moved to Valemount about one year ago to work at the local community paper. My wife had received a journalism diploma, but I was new to reporting altogether and jumped into the role of photojournalist. It was a tough transition at first, but I soon knew that I had found my niche. The great thing was my wife had too.

Community reporting is one of the finest things you can do. It's demanding, always interesting and reactive like depleted uranium. I call it reactive because there is very little you can write in a small community without getting a reaction. I can't see journalism in a larger centre being as demanding or as rewarding because each time a small town journalist walks into the grocery store they'll see a raft of people that they've written about the week before.

We grew to love our new jobs and the pace of life very quickly. The crazy thing was that our jobs wouldn't last. Imagine finding the job that you know you want to do for the rest of your life and have it vanish! It was terrible. We hadn't a clue what to do. We had moved to a beautiful little village nestled between the Cariboo, Rocky, and Monashee mountain ranges and lost our jobs at the only newspaper in town.

It was on our way to a Co-op meeting in Dunster, a tiny farming community in the middle of the Robson Valley, when a friend suggested something that got us positively stirring. She asked us why we didn't start a cooperative newspaper. Well, the idea captured our hearts and minds, and we began dreaming, even scheming about a cooperatively run newspaper – we began to listen to what the community was calling for. Thinking about the newspaper as a cooperative gave us a chance to completely re-evaluate the role of a newspaper in a community.

Our newspaper isn't a cooperative, but it does incorporate some of the ideas that came up in discussion with our friends in Dunster. Who knows where this paper will lead us, it could well be into a media cooperative.

We have just sent out our third issue to the press and our circulation is burgeoning. The community is opening up to us, helping us to find our place.

I probably don't need to tell you this, because it will be obvious if it ever happens to you - but if you find something you like to do, just do it, the rest just seems to follow.
Under the Columbia River Treaty, three dams were built; Duncan, Keenleyside, and Mica.

The amount of water stored behind the three dams is equal to 19 kilometres cubed. The Columbia River is 2000 kilometres long.

Christopher Swain, from Portland, Oregon is currently swimming the entire length of the Columbia River.

The Columbia River Treaty Committee first met in 1992 and in 1995 the Columbia Basin Trust Act was created.

In 1995, Columbia Basin Trust was endowed with a $295 million financial commitment from the Province of B.C.

Columbia Basin Trust has invested $45 million in non-power investments and $250 million in power projects.

The power generated at the Arrow Lakes Generating Station near Castlegar produces enough energy to supply all the homes and businesses in either the East Kootenay or West Kootenays.

The Canadian side of the Columbia Basin produces half of all the hydroelectric power generated in B.C.

Columbia Basin Trust gives 20 Youth Community Service Awards valued at up to $8000, $2,000 for up to four years that you attend university, college or a training program.

Columbia Basin Trust is committed to providing $12.9 million in funding to Basin communities through the Community Initiatives program over a 10 year period.

Columbia Basin Trust held Youth Action Forums in 2001 and 2002 to encourage youth to get involved in their communities.

Burgess Shale located near the village of Field in the Basin is the world’s most significant fossil discovery.

Highway 3A between Creston and Kootenay Bay is on Destination Highways list of top highways to travel.

Kootenay Pass between Salmo and Castlegar is the highest mountain pass in Canada.

Check out the Columbia Basin Trust website for more info about CBT at www.cbt.org

Get Published. It’s Easy

If you would like to publish your art, writing, cartoons, opinions and photos, you can do it at www.scratchonline.ca/submissions.asp. Click on the submit button and follow the simple instructions and you will be on your way. If you have any problems or questions you can email the moderator of the site at moderator@scratchonline.ca for help.
We are very good friends, my son and I. I suppose that makes sense, since we practically grew up together. I was 18 years old when I found myself pregnant and very scared.

The changes in my life were instantaneous. I moved in with my son’s father and added on the new role of ‘wife’ to the already scary one of mother-to-be. I felt like a kid playing house, but this was all too real.

For years, I had watched friends go out and have fun in the local bars after turning 19. I spent my 19th birthday pregnant, sipping ginger ale. Not quite what I had envisioned.

My son’s dad and I tried to make things work but it was not to be. We split up when my son was a year and a half. So, here I was young, single and a parent. Not quite where I had pictured myself at 20 - living in a small apartment with borrowed, ripped furniture, living on Welfare, barely able to afford food. I am intelligent, I came from a good family, how did this happen?

I have pulled myself up from that place and I am now self-sufficient and not struggling nearly as much. It has been a very difficult road. When other people my age were out dating and going on trips I was at home potty training. When my friends made plans for their futures, I made lunches for school. I have been one of the lucky ones though, my son’s father remains an integral part of his life.

In two parent families, you can always leave your spouse at home with the child when you run to the store or to meet a friend. Being a single parent does not allow this luxury, everything you do, you do with your child. When my son finally became old enough to spend some time on his own, it was an amazing liberating experience for me - imagine going to the store - ALONE!

I love my son more than anything. I don’t regret having him be a part of my life. I do believe though, that the choice I made to have him when I did was a choice that inflicted hardships on both of us. I have the guilt of that which I will carry forever.

Becoming a parent at any age is a decision not to be taken lightly. There is no greater responsibility than the one a parent has to a child. One rarely plans to be a single parent - I certainly didn’t. I didn’t consider the possibility that things may not work between his father and I. I had no way to take care of my son and I immediately. His father and I did things in the wrong order. We didn’t take the time to be in a healthy, committed relationship first and now all three of us have paid a price. I hope my experiences as a young single mom make someone who is considering the same path I took, sit back and really think about it. A great kid like my son deserves to have had a parent who was grown up already when he was born. However, if I had to grow up, I am glad I grew up with him - because, we’re very good friends, my son and I.