

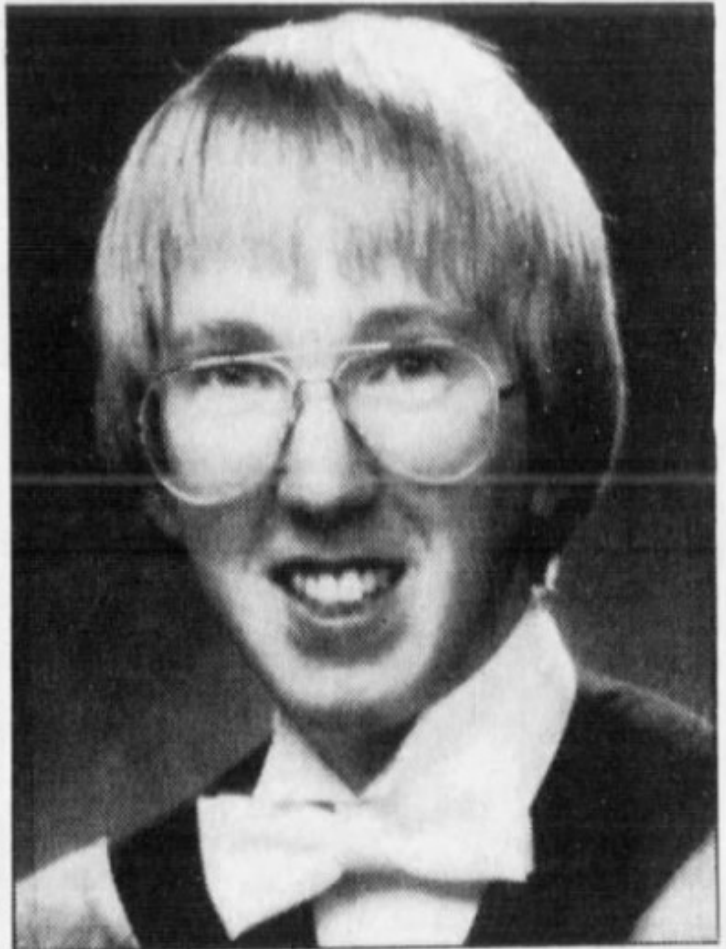
DONNA COULTER

Mentions in [The Daily Herald-Tribune](#), Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada

Graduates



Robert Michael Coulter, son of Mr. and Mrs. L. Coulter of Grande Prairie, recently graduated in Architectural Technology from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. He is employed with the City of Grande prairie.



Kenneth Archibald Coulter, son of Mr. and Mrs. L. Coulter of Grande Prairie, recently graduated from the University of Alberta Faculty of Business with a Bachelor of Commerce.

Service group helps needy eyes in Sri Lanka

By Herald-Tribune staff

The picture is getting clearer for the people of Sri Lanka.

And it's thanks in part to the efforts of Grande Prairie eye-glass wearers.

For the past three years the Lions and Lioness clubs of Grande Prairie have been sending lenses and frames to the war-ravished country.

"We've sent about 6,000 pairs of glasses," said Lioness Donna Coulter.

She and husband Lynne collect the glasses on behalf of the Grande Prairie clubs and store them in their garage until there's enough to ship over.

In Sri Lanka the glasses fall into the hands of Lion Dayantha Fernando.

"We'd seen pictures of the travelling eye clinics in Sri Lanka but it's always nice to get assurance from the people themselves."

Coulter said any pair of glasses can be used because it's the frames that are expensive and not the lenses.

While attending the 74th annual Lions Clubs International Convention in Brisbane, Australia, in June, the Coulters renewed their friendship with Fernando and wife Averil.

The couples first met in Denver, Colorado, at the 1988 convention where the eyeglass project was suggested to the Coulters.

"We'd seen pictures of the travelling eye clinics in Sri Lanka but it's always nice to get assurance from the people themselves."

— Lioness Donna Coulter

"He asked us if we'd collect glasses for the needy people of Sri Lanka and it took off from there."

The annual convention usually draws over 40,000 members from 170 countries.

The Coulters also took the opportunity to visit their exchange student Natasha Kelly of Wellington, New South Wales, Australia.

The Grande Prairie Lions Clubs will accept donations of used eyeglasses with or without lenses. Contact the Coulters (532-3027) or any Lion or Lioness member for more information.

No limits to his vision

*Lorne Webber's
visual impairment
doesn't stop him
from looking
forward to the
future.*

Staff photo by Tony Seskus
Lorne Webber, 14, may have limited vision, but he hasn't limited his goals. Webber walks down a Grande Prairie street Saturday with the aid of his cane.



TONY SESKUS
Herald-Tribune staff

Lorne Webber is an impressive kid.

He plays piano, gets good grades, skates like the wind and reads everything he can get his hands on. He's also determined to learn French and this week he'll try horseback riding for the first time.

Lorne Webber is also blind.

"I don't see myself as special. I see myself as just trying to do the best I can," says Webber, 14. "I don't see myself as brave. I'm just trying."

Webber wasn't born blind, but with long eyeballs. The ocular oddity made him very near-sighted and strained his retinas, the part of the eye that sends messages to the brain.

Despite the problem, Webber never thought he'd lose his sight. He was a sports fanatic and loved watching hockey. He devoured books and studied piano.

What happened in 1992 came without warning.

When Webber turned 10, the retina in his left eye detached. A series of operations failed to save it and the eye went blind.

In 1993, the right retina detached. This time surgery was more successful and, thanks to a series of treatments, Webber can still see some colors and images.

"It's like looking through a kaleidoscope, but without the sharp edges. Everything is blurry," the Wembley resident explains.

Webber has had 19 surgeries on his eyes.

"That sounds like a lot, but you get used to it," he says with a slight smile.

While Webber has tried to take everything in stride, things haven't been easy. He says it was hard to give up playing sports. He likes his friends, but regrets not being able to do everything they do.

"I try to be as much as a friend as I can be, but I just can't do everything they can," he says. "I miss the things I used to do."

But what Webber can do is still impressive. Not happy sitting at home, the Grade 9 student at Helen E. Taylor school in Wembley simply won't back down from a challenge.

"You never fail until you fail to try," he says.

For instance, Webber downhill skis. Initially, guides helped by skiing alongside him, but now he goes it alone.

"I just have someone follow me to yell, 'Tree!'," he jokes. "It feels just wonderful."

He continues to play piano, studies braille and excels at school. He loves science and is good at math. He gets As in both.

"I've got a lot of support from my family, my friends and my tutor. I've also spoken to a couple of other teenagers like me and that helps a lot. It's nice to know you're not alone."

Webber has gained the respect of many people in recent months.

"He is one of the most inspiring people I've ever met," Donna Coulter says. Coulter is a member of the Grande Prairie Lions Club.

The Lions, whose charity work focuses on people with blindness, gave Webber's school \$999 to purchase equipment to help him. In return, Webber had to make presentations to both the Lions and his class.

"He was wonderful. This young boy will do fine," Coulter adds.

Grande Prairians soaking up the heat

Water consumption up as heat wave continues

SCOTT SEYMOUR
Herald-Tribune staff

Swan City residents have discovered the perfect way to beat the heat this summer — soak it.

According to Lynne Coulter, operations supervisor at the city's water treatment plant, Grande Prairians established what is likely a record for water consumption in a single day last week.

Last Thursday, almost 19 million litres of water were pumped into the city from the treatment plant, a good four to five million litres above the average for a warm summer day.

"That was likely the highest consumption day that I can remember, ever," said Coulter, who's worked at the plant for 18 years. "I expect there were more people watering their lawns and I also expect there was the odd sprinkler turned on with kids running through it. Wouldn't you do that if you were a little kid?"

Besides hot weather, Coulter figures consumption has increased with the city's population boom.

In the seven days leading up to last Thursday's watershed day, an average of 16.25 million litres was swished into Grande Prairie each day.

So where does all this water come from? The city gets its water from a pump-

Last Thursday, almost 19 million litres of water were pumped into the city from the treatment plant, a good four to five million litres above the average for a warm summer day.

house on the Wapiti River.

From there, it's piped into the treatment plant on the city's south side and then on to the thousands of taps, garden hoses and water fountains.

So far, the river hasn't had any trouble keeping up, even though it's been fairly dry this summer, at least compared to other years. According to the Agriculture Canada research station in Brainerd, a little more than 24 millimetres of precipitation fell on the Grande Prairie area last month.

That's 40 millimetres under the region's 80-year average and almost 90 millimetres shy of what fell on the area in July of 1997.

Going by past history, August could be even drier. About 58 millimetres fell on the Grande Prairie area last August, about three millimetres over the long-term average.



Staff photo by Scott Seymour

Erin Austin, 13, and her 11-year-old sister Deanne washed their mom and dad's car Wednesday at their south side home. With temperatures over 30 Celsius yesterday, it didn't take long for the car — and the car washers — to dry out.

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City's water consumption close to capacity

LAURA TESTER
Herald-Tribune staff

Grande Prairie residents are lapping it up by the buckets.

We just can't get enough of water as the area experiences a stretch of scorching temperatures. And with Thursday's high of 31.1 C nearly topping the record high of 31.7 C, the garden hoses and sprinklers were out in full force.

Lynne Coulter, City of Grande Prairie treatment operations supervisor, says the city is reaching its water capacity.

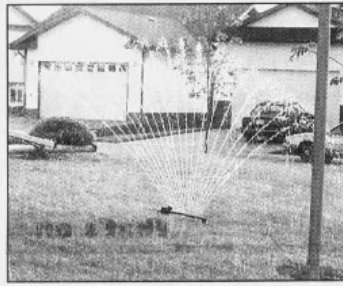
"We're very close to being at the maximum ability to our current ability to deliver," he said Thursday.

"The weak link is the pipeline from the river which delivers about 22 million litres of water per day to the plant here. The limiting factor is the amount of water we can push through that pipeline in a day."

On Wednesday, the consumption level reached 21.9 million litres.

But there's no need to worry just yet. Coulter says they have other water storage facilities in case the water demand skyrockets.

"We can hold our own if there are no technical or mechanical problems," Coulter said. "But if there are,



Staff photo by Randy Vanderveen

Water from a sprinkler provides refreshment to a thirsty lawn in Crystal Heights. This homeowner took advantage of the cooler temperatures in the morning to provide his lawn with much-needed water. Area residents shouldn't be watering in the heat of the day as the sun's rays coming through the water droplets can actually damage grass in addition to evaporation occurring rapidly.

then we get behind."

Any major fires in the area could put the squeeze on

water availability as well. Last year, for instance, forest fires in the region gave the Grande Prairie water plant some problems.

"They kept knocking the power out," he said.

"The big thing would be a major mechanical failure or a forest fire but we'll cross that bridge when we come to it."

Any possibility of water rationing would be city council's decision, Coulter said.

Coulter, who's worked at the plant for the last 15 years, recalled back to 1982 when a flood gushed through the water plant formerly located near the

Wapiti River.

"We had several days of water rationing and some other extreme measures," he said.

During another year, people were asked to restrict watering lawns on certain days of the week. Coulter advises people now to water their lawns and gardens late at night instead of during the midday.

That suggestion will be a good one to abide by over the next few days.

Weather forecasters are predicting it will stay sunny and hot with temperatures reaching 28 C on Saturday, 25 C on Sunday, and 23 C on Monday.

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Killer flu stalked GP

Lions restore historic Bear Creek cemetery

They were fearsome times in the little village of Grande Prairie and the farmsteads of the surrounding countryside, the likes of which have not been seen since.

Nor in the winter of 1918-19 had it ever occurred to the few hundred residents of the community hugging the banks of Bear Creek that a fannoy killer was now on their doorstep.

A pandemic influenza outbreak, that had already claimed thousands of lives around the world, reached the Grande Prairie area late in 1918. It was generally referred to as the Spanish flu.

It was deadly.

And Grande Prairie was barely able to cope with it.

The number of cases overwhelmed the little hospital, forcing the takeover of what was then called the Immigration Hall to serve as an isolation facility.

Dr. L.J. O'Brien, just returned from the First World War, was pressed into service as health officer to do as best he could with the stalking death. It was a desperate battle.

J.B. Oliver, the village's undertaker, was still overseas. The village council urged Ottawa to free him from his duties and send him home immediately. That didn't happen that quickly and pioneer hotelman and entrepreneur Frank Donald offered to fill the vacancy during the crisis.

It was difficult work digging the graves for the flu's victims – and there were at least 88 of them in the thinly-populated region at the time. The village cemetery's soil was hard-packed and frozen solid.

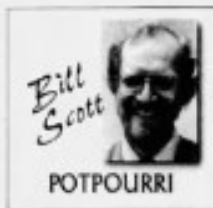
Donald made a decision: Create a new cemetery south of the community, alongside what is now Resources Road, where the soil was sandier and easier to handle.

That led to what is now known as the Bear Creek cemetery (it's just north of where the existing road crosses the creek).

It's not known for certain how many flu victims were buried at the site and of those that were, some were later reinterred at the Grande Prairie cemetery.

By 1975, more than half a century after the predatory flu struck and after years of neglect, the little cemetery was restored by the County of Grande Prairie with the aid of a provincial grant.

Sadly, over the years, vandals began destroying that restoration work. It was made easier for them because by then Resources Road had been built south to what was then the Procter & Gamble



Bear Creek cemetery



Dr. Bob Hook



Telephone operators in High River were ordered, but ineffective, face masks

Photos courtesy Grande Prairie Lions and (right) Glenbow Archives, Calgary



Cellulose pulp mill.

However, in 1990, Dr. Bob Hook, a long-serving member of the Grande Prairie Lions club asked his fellow members if they would take on the job as a repair and restore project.

"Our club agreed and with the help of the county, the city, P&GC, the Grande Prairie and District Oldtimers Association, the Royal Canadian Legion and the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation, the cemetery was restored, a new sign erected and a remembrance cairn placed," Donna Coulter, public relations chairwoman for the club, says.

Last year, Coulter says, a commemorative plaque with the names of 16 known flu victims buried at Bear Creek was added to the cairn.

They include Nellie Watson, who died Nov. 14, 1918; Edmund Salmon, who died Nov. 5; Janet Lough, who died Nov. 8; and Lois Lough, only 18 months old, who died Nov. 7.

"Each year, the Lions clean the cemetery, make sure the remaining crosses are in place, and take the time to remember and appreciate just how precious life is," Coulter said.

Yours truly suggests that anyone interested in the history of this little cemetery, or in the work of the Lions, or in the flu epidemic itself, contact Donna Coulter or the Grande Prairie museum.

And we thank her for drawing the project to our attention.

Historical notes: The Spanish flu killed 21 million people worldwide, including 50,000 Canadians, in less than 24 months. The First World War claimed 17 million victims, including more than 66,000 Canadians.

Agenda for the City of Grande Prairie Council Meeting to be held Monday, January 22, 2001 at 7:00 p.m., in Council Chambers, 10108 - 50 Avenue, Grande Prairie

A. Public Hearing
7:00 p.m. Bylaw C-027-00-11, to amend the Land Use Bylaw, to change land use design of Lots 2 to 36, to include, Block 28, Plan 1801 A6, from Commercial Highway and Commercial use to UO-2, to Residential Mixed Dwelling (R 30)
Application to amend the land use bylaw withdrawn
7:00 p.m. Bylaw C-027-00-14, to amend the Land Use Bylaw, to change land use design of a parcel of land in the Central Business District, Lots 1 and 2, Block A, Plan 1801-4579, from O-1 (Retail - Central Business District) to UO-2 (R 30)

The people at highest risk were aged 20 to 40 – and among them were many war veterans who had survived the horrors of the muddy, disease-ridden trenches of the Western Front.

The flu actually made its first appearance in Canton, China. By October 1918 it was killing 1,000 Canadians a day, attacking the respiratory system, causing pneumonia, and drowning victims in their own body fluids. Today, about 1,000 Canadians succumb to the flu each year.

In Alberta, the provincial health board ordered everyone to wear a cheesecloth face mask when outside the house (they didn't work) and told citizens to "keep away from public meetings, theatres and other places where crowds are assembled."

The Stanley Cup playoffs were cancelled in 1919.

• Source: Legion Magazine article by Pat Sullivan, January/February 2001 issue.

Feeling the pressure

Ever-increasing charitable demands on service clubs make for 'difficult decisions'

BILL LAYE
Harvard-Tribune staff

Tightening government social program budgets are bringing more groups and individuals-in-need to the doors of Grande Prairie's service clubs.

"I don't remember as ever having more than one or two (special requests) a year, but now it has increased quite rapidly in, say, the last 10 years," said Connie Martens, the incoming elected ruler of the Grande Prairie Elk Club.

Meanwhile, the government's move into the lottery and casino business has helped slice the proceeds from similar fund-raisers — once a mainstay of their donor base, he said.

"That's cut into everybody," agreed Grande Prairie Royal Canadian Legion branch president Phil Briant.

The recent cancellation of the provincial literary awards is sure to add to the requests for things were considered the handicaps — such as wheelchairs and limb braces, adds a representative of the Grande Prairie Lions Club.

"We see more requests for things we've never seen before, like aids-to-living and things like that," said Donna Conner, the club's public relations chairwoman.

They all say they do what they can, but there's only so much cash at the end of the day — especially with the high number of lottery fund-raisers in Grande Prairie already.

"So you have to work extremely hard to make your money – it doesn't come easy," Coulter told.

Each group has its signature charities—the Elks and Legion, for example, have children's causes as a priority and the Lions are heavily focused on serving the visually impaired. In addition to the construction of the local club's Lion Learning Center. But everyone who asks for help does get a fair hearing, they said.

"We've always done as much as we can," said Bristol, who's been with the league more than 30 years.

And saying so is "very difficult," adds **Coulter**, who's been with the Lions since 1999 and served as the club's district governor from 1993 to 1996.

"Any request that comes to our club is always discussed and we have to sometimes make very difficult decisions," she said.

Martinez, a 37-year E.R. nurse.

"When that budget runs dry then we have to say 'I'm sorry we can't do it - this was a request,'" he said.

But, an aging membership base and lower new faces is presenting an even greater challenge to the local community.

Coaliter says the Grande maitre Lions - one of three local Lions chapters - currently has about 20 members, compared to a peak of around 40 in the early 1980s.

"It's getting tougher and tougher to get the numbers that we would really like to have - everybody's time is precious and people are working longer and longer," she said.

People also have rising standard-of-living expectations, said Martens.

"Everyone has to have their lives now," he said.

"There's so much more to do than we had when I first joined."

He said local Elks numbers are down to about 80, compared to almost 200 when he joined in the 1950s.

Though the local Legion's numbers aren't down as dramatically, recruitment has been tough," says Brink.

(He said there are currently between 700 and 800 Legion members, composed of a

post-Second World War
peak of around 900.

But changes in the organization may help to bring those numbers back up.

Behind recalled when he joined, more than 30 years ago, there were no voting rights at a chance to hold office for non-veteran members like himself.

That likely turned away potential members was,

"I think we lost just about a generation," he said.

That's long since changed and he said there may be further amendments to the Legion's bylaws regarding newer members, soon.

Hill Green, president of Retiree Club of Grande Prairie, says it is a challenge for younger people who are building careers, families, and homes to get involved.

Rotaract is a branch of Rotary Clubs International, open to people between the ages of 18 and 30.

The local club rises to

He, for example, holds

does a full-time job, serves

city council and conducts minor events in addition to

—We try to be really flexi-

ble with that, (12) we have one meeting at lunch and we have one meeting in the evening and they're on different days of the week," he

said. "We want people to be there and to get what they

Lions Learning Centre cashing in on grants

DEB GUERETTE
Herald-Tribune staff

With construction well under way, new grants are bringing the Lion's Learning Centre closer and closer to completion.

Set to house the Pregnant Teen program, the Bridge Network, the Council for Lifelong Learning and the local Lions Club itself, two grants just received from provincial programs are boosting the project towards its \$3.2 million fund-raising goal, project secretary Donna Coulter said.

The Learning Centre last week received \$125,000 from a provincial Community Facility Enhancement program.

That funding will be used for construction costs, while a \$20,000 grant from the Wild Rose Foundation announced Wednesday will help furnish the building, Coulter said.

"It's going very well. The building is up, the roof is on. We're very proud of this project. It's going to be completed," Coulter said.

If all goes as scheduled, the 1,800-square-metre (19,375-square-foot) centre should be finished in November, she said.

Three years in the making, the four partners involved have raised about two-thirds of the \$3.2 million needed and are continuing to seek grants, approach businesses, organizations and individuals for donations, she said.

"We encourage the community to support the project, it's going to be available for them if they need it," Coulter said.

The three education program partners have all outgrown the rented space they presently operate out of, she said.

The Grande Prairie Public School District, the city and county of Grande Prairie and MD of Greenview have all been strong supporters of the new centre, Coulter said.

Alberta Infrastructure provided \$1.4 million as the centre will house recognized education programs, she said.

"There was a lot of planning, a lot



Brendan Dow (foreground) gets some roofing material ready to hoist over rafters at the Lions Learning Centre. With construction well under way project organizers are looking forward to the building's completion by November.

Staff photo by Deb Guerette

of work behind this and it is coming to fruition now," she said.

The Lions Learning Centre is just west of the Dave Barr Arena.

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Learning Centre doors swing open today

DEB GUERETTE
Herald-Tribune staff

A number of city educational programs welcoming students back to school opened their doors in a new home today.

After a speedy nine-month construction project, the Grande Prairie Lions Club's new Learning Centre is complete, project secretary Donna Coulter said.

There is still some finishing work left to do on the 1,800-square-metre (19,375-square-foot) facility west of the Dave Barr Arena, but "as of Monday, everyone is open for business," Coulter said.

"We have some things to do yet, but they are just small things and the landscaping has to wait until spring," she said.

The Learning Centre provides a new home for the Lions themselves, as well as the Grande Prairie Council for Life Long Learning, the Bridge Network, the Society for Pregnant and Parenting Teens, the Reading Network, the Northwest Regional Learning Consortium and a language development program for preschoolers.

"It's been pretty busy over there, everyone is trying to get ready for next week," Coulter said Friday.

While organizations have taken up all of the centre's program space, the facility does have meeting rooms and a kitchen and lounge area that is available for community groups to rent for events, she said.

The construction project got off to a rather slow start in April due to bad weather and the centre was supposed to be opened in December.

But, organizers are pleased at how well the building did come together, Coulter said.

"It was not a very nice spring, but, besides that, everything went really pretty well," she said.

The centre hosted its first paid function Friday.

The City of Grande Prairie rental was for a retirement banquet for her husband Lynne, who is the city's water treatment operations supervisor and also the Lions project chairman for the Learning Centre.

The \$3.5 million centre has been a project the Lions Club has been working on for the past four years, Coulter said.

A grand opening is set for Feb. 6.

The Bridge Network and Pregnant Teen outreach programs have been housed in a smaller rented space in the city ever since their former location, the old Montrose school, was torn down in 1999.

Lion's Learning Centre

where learning is fun...

Just like the Peace Country sky that beams through the skylit roof of its lobby, the new Lion's Learning Centre seems filled with endless opportunity.

Home to the Bridge Network, the Reading Network, Society for Support to Pregnant and Parenting Teens, Grande Prairie Council For Lifelong Learning, Northwest Regional Learning Consortium and Grande Prairie Public School District's Pre-School Language Development program, as well as the Grande Prairie Lions Club, the centre is the result of a unique partnership between private and public organizations.

Three years in the making, the Lion's Learning Centre is testament to what can come of a lot of hard work and co-operation.

The project began as a discussion between the Grande Prairie Lions Club and the Grande Prairie School District #2357 to look into a larger facility that could not only accommodate the local service club, but also provide space for other learning programs.

"When we were approached for this it really seemed like a good fit. It is a good fit," smiled Donna Coulter, secretary for the Lions Learning Centre Project.

At the time, the Grande Prairie Lions Club, which has been serving the city since 1957, owned the Lion's Hillcrest Centre. Their meetings were held in the basement and the Cool Aid Society was their upstairs tenant. As the club's programs grew it became obvious a larger home was needed.

Involved with the Bridge Network for a number of years, both in assisting in the program's graduation and with a member sitting on the advisory committee, the Lions were a natural group for GPPSD to partner with in a new program being offered by Alberta Infrastructure.

"The anagram for Lions is Liberty, Intelligence, Our Nation's Safety," notes

Coulter. "If you don't have learning you don't have those things. The project really incorporated the values that are important to our members."

It was in March of 2001 that an agreement on the current Prairie Road site

communities where no such facilities exist or are accessible," explained Coulter.

Through the program Alberta Infrastructure provided \$1.4 million of the total cost of the \$3.5 million project.



A volunteer for the Pregnant Teen Society, Kim Hartman, rocks young Valkyrie Foster in the society's new home at the Lion's Learning Centre.

just west of Dave Barr arena was reached and the idea of a private-public partnership really got rolling. "The Private-Public Partnership is a program in which non-profit organizations and the private sector or the public sector, can work together to provide facilities for learning in

Workun Garrick Architects and Associates were selected as the architectural consultant and by November of 2001 Bird Management had won the bid as construction manager for the centre.

Construction on the 1,800 square metre facility began in the spring of

2002 and by this past Christmas the partners started to move into the beautiful new building.

"The wonderful thing about this whole project is that everyone got along so well throughout," said Coulter. "I think it was because everyone was focused on same thing. We wanted this to be a place for the kids and the adult learners as well - we want them to feel that it is their place."

The partners in the project have done a lot of fund-raising over the past couple of years and will continue to do so. "We have no doubt that it will be paid off in five years," stated Coulter.

For the next five years, Lions Learning Centre is owned by the Grande Prairie Lions and during that time Grande Prairie Public School District #2357 will be responsible for the operating costs of the facility, while the Lions will be responsible for the mortgage. At the end of five years, the Lions will turn over full ownership of the Centre to the Grande Prairie Public School District and the facility will continue to be named Lions Learning Centre.

As all the partners are now settled into the new building Coulter said it's amazing to step back and see what has been accomplished. "At our first board meeting in early January as our Lions members sat around the table in our new boardroom, we looked around and said, 'Hey, we did this!' because there were times when we thought this would never happen," she chuckled. "Our members, our partners in the project and our community have been just marvelous and it really is a legacy."

For Coulter the wondrous thing about the Lions Learning Centre is the amount of opportunity for learning that it provides for those pre-school age right up to seniors.

"The Bridge Network has over 500 students from junior to senior high. This is a safe and wonderful place for those kids to learn," she said.

For the Pregnant and Parenting Teen Society, the new building offers a bright future as well. With a playroom area, crib room, fenced in playground, resource centre & kitchen facilities, the program offers young mothers and fathers the skills they will need to nurture and raise their little ones.

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GP Transit rates going up

\$2 cost for a single-ride ticket still considered a pretty good deal by city

KEVIN CRUSH
Herald-Tribune staff

Be prepared to pay more to take the bus unless you have a pass.

Grande Prairie Transit is increasing its fares to \$2 for all single-ride tickets. Its ticket bundle packages will also be on the rise, but the price of monthly passes will stay the same.

Fares currently are \$1.50 for adults, \$1.25 for students, and \$0.75 for seniors and children.

If city council approves the changes, it will be the first time since 1995 that the bus system has driven up its rates.

"We haven't had a fare increase for 10 years now since 1995 and we're just kind of catching up with other transit systems that are charging \$2 cash," said transit co-ordinator Karen Bustin.

The cost shouldn't worry people too much, she said.

"Let's say your car doesn't start on a cold winter morning. Two dollars, that's not bad. It's less than a cab."

Different rates for seniors, students and children for single-ride tickets will also be a thing of the past, lumping all riders at the same \$2 per ride rate. Discounts will still apply if the person is purchasing ticket bundles or passes.

Ald. Helen Rice doesn't believe the rates will be too onerous on people, but she can see seniors being upset that special rates for them will disappear.

"I think seniors are very, very aware and they're very concerned about rising prices, and I think it's



A Grande Prairie Transit bus waits near the Towne Centre Mall as it picks up passengers. Patrons of the service will be paying a flat \$2 fee for one time transit rides, although monthly pass rates will remain the same. Staff photo by Randy Vanderveen

something we'll have to re-think."

Kids age 12 or under will be able to ride free if they're accompanied by a paying adult, up to a maximum of four kids.

That should keep costs down for young families, said Mayor Wayne Ayling.

"That's a significant impact on people who have young families who need to get around our community and keep their transportation costs very low."

Hiking rates for tickets but not for passes is supposed to encourage more people to use the passes rather than tickets.

"What we're seeing is that we're really rewarding people for taking the

bus on a daily basis. Taking the bus keeps your transportation costs very low," said Ayling.

Changing to passes will save people money, said Rice.

"It will become even more important for people if they are regular users of transit to get themselves passes because that's where the savings will really occur."

Bustin wasn't sure how many rides on buses are taken by people holding monthly passes but estimated that more than half of all riders currently use the passes.

It's not expected that ridership levels will change much with the fare increases, especially as many people pay \$2 right now anyway.

"For people who just use the bus occasionally we have a lot of people who just put in a toonie anyways because that's what they have so that's what they put in," said Bustin.

Increasing the rates is OK for such a good transit system, said bus rider Donna Coulter.

"The buses run nice, regularly, they're clean and comfortable. With my route it takes me half a block from my house," said Coulter, whose only complaint was the bus service doesn't go far enough north.

"I don't have a problem with the increase.

Our city is growing, the bus service has increased, it now goes out to places where it didn't."

Junior high student Kim Witham disagreed, saying the buses today already cost too much for her and her friends.

"It just takes so much money to take it every day," said Witham.

"I find they've gone up a little bit. I don't take it as much because it just costs a lot. Even all my friends have been complaining."

City council still has to approve the new transit rates but they're generally considered to be a done deal as the changes were previously approved in the budget.

Fire up those cameras, film festival open to all

DIANA RINNE/ENCORE!

Filmmakers of all types are being invited to grab their camcorders and get creative for the Grande Prairie Lions Club's first annual film festival. "I have no idea what we'll get. We're just trying to get a buzz going and get people out and shake off those winter blues," says Dave Watson of the Lions Club.

Watson has been thinking about the project for some time and brought it to the club as a possible fundraising idea.

"It was always on my back burner. Then I got into the Lions Club and it was my bingo cop-out," he laughs, adding "It was to get a fundraiser going but also to get something going that we could start for the community — try to

generate something that could get the public involved."

The Lions are hoping that is exactly what will happen and have come up with seven categories to give people a variety



Penny Vey and Dave Watson of the Grande Prairie Lions Club.

of options when shooting their films. They include drama, comedy, music, commercial/advertising/promotion, social commentary/documentary, animation and Alberta History. The films must be in DVD or VHS format with a maximum run time of 10 minutes for each entry.

"So many people get camcorders and bring it out at the odd birthday party, the odd Christmas thing, and then it sits there. I thought if we could approach the public and say 'It's your turn to dust off the camcorder and become an Oliver Stone or a Scorsese' and get that creativity going," says Watson.

The deadline for entries to the festival is March 11, 2005 with a cost of \$10 per video. Once all the films have come in, the Lions will go through them and whittle them down for a panel of celebrity judges to watch. The judges will then choose the top entry for each category.

Those winning entries will be shown at the It's Your Turn Film Festival, on Saturday, April 9 at the Lions Learning Centre. "The audience will choose the overall winner," says Donna Coulter of the Lions Club. She adds they hope to make the evening a special and entertaining night for everyone.

The seven category winners and the grand prize will all receive trophies, as well as some other prizes. "We're working really hard at getting some good prizes," he says. "Stuff to make it really worthwhile."

Watson is really hoping Grande Prairie will latch on to this project and have some fun with it.

"That's the fun thing about this — the creativity is unlimited. That's what I'm hoping it will do is spark that in people," he smiles, adding, "We're really hoping that the school system will take advantage of this."

Both Watson and Coulter note the festival is open to everyone. "Hopefully it will give an opportunity for up and coming people who are interested in film a venue to show their stuff," says Watson. "I'm hoping we get people from right across the spectrum."

For more information, or entry forms for the Grande Prairie Lions first annual It's Your Turn Film Festival, contact Dave Watson at 538-4442 or by email at dwatson@gppsd.ab.ca, or call Donna Coulter at 532-3027.



Photographer John Davidson opened a new exhibit at the Beaverlodge & Area Culture Centre, last week. In keeping with the 100th anniversary of Alberta, the show features a number of photos of buildings and elevators that no longer exist. Davidson's photos also include a range of landscapes as well as floral studies. The photographer says his hobby has taught him how to see things in a different manner and notes he enjoys keeping his photos as simple and as natural as possible. The exhibit will be on display until the end of February.

Photo: Diana Rinne



Donna Coulter (centre), public relations chairwoman of the Grande Prairie Lions, accepts a \$25,000 donation from the Trumpeter Lions in support of the Lions Learning Centre.



Donna Coulter, (left) and **Lynne Coulter** (right) of the Grande Prairie Lions present \$1,000 to **Karen Pascut** and **Sarah Pruckl** of the Grande Prairie Volunteer Services Bureau for the National Volunteer Week luncheon to be held later this month.

Local Lions recognized internationally

PETE LUCAROTTI

Herald-Tribune staff

The Grande Prairie Lions Club is earning international recognition for the programs it offers to the local community.

"It's a project that took us a while to get off the ground that's cost us \$3.5 million to build, but it's one we're pretty proud of," said Grande Prairie Lions Club president Donna Coulter.

The project, which has been providing services to the area since February 2003, involves a number of different programs offered by the club. The Bridge Network is an outreach school operated by the Grande Prairie Public School District that allows students who have experienced difficulty with the more traditional public school system to earn a quality education. The service is also provided to students in a position to fast track and finish their schooling early.

Other services provided include the Society for Support to Pregnant & Parenting Teens and the Grande Prairie Council for Life Long Learning.

Coulter and her husband, Lynne, who serves as club treasurer and chairman of the Lions Learning Centre project, will leave June 20 for Bangkok, Thailand, where the winner will be announced at the Lions Clubs International Convention, June 26.

"Our project will be recognized at one of the plenary sessions. There should be about 18,000 Lions there," she said.

Even with the services they provide, the Grande Prairie Lions will be facing some stiff competition. An Italian Lions Club providing food, wells and health care to a Lions Club in Burkina Faso, with which it's partnered, and a Lions district in Cape Town, South Africa, that feeds 60,000 people in need in an impoverished area devastated by HIV/AIDS were also nominated for the award.

Regardless of whether the Grande Prairie Lions chapter actually wins, Coulter is more than happy just to be nominated. To be singled out amongst Lions Clubs International's approximately 45,000 clubs that span 202 countries is a rare feat.

"You don't even know how many nominations there were, but to be selected one of three, even that is quite wonderful for us," she said.

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City awards long-time volunteers for efforts

DARRELL WINWOOD
Herald-Tribune staff

One helped bring the past back into focus while two others have aided the vision of thousands of people, but all three are responsible for helping making Grande Prairie a better community.

Lynne and Donna Coulter and Jerry Petryshyn are honoured by being the latest inductees to receive the city's George Repka Award.

Named for a former mayor, the award was created in 1987 to honour the tireless work of volunteers who have significantly contributed to improving the quality of life in Grande Prairie.

Only a few are honoured each year and Mayor Dwight Logan said "wonderful people do wonderful things and these people are three examples."

Like most great volunteers, the three are all humble saying they don't do it to win awards but like recipients before them, have a history of volunteerism going back decades.

"Grande Prairie, the city and community, is truly an outstanding community ... it's only fair we work to have it continue that way," is how Petryshyn described it.

He arrived in Grande Prairie as a history instructor at the regional college in 1978. His plan was to stay a few years and then move on.

Instead, Petryshyn would become involved in and spend many years as a board member for the Grande Prairie Museum, volunteering numerous hours on city committees and delving deep into the region's history and his employer's history.

He wrote a detailed history of the college, published in the 1990s, and recently served as president of Alberta's Centennial History Society that created a two-volume series detailing Alberta's history in 2005. He's also served as vice-chairman of the Alberta Press Council, a body which reviews complaints against print media, and served on the city's library board.

"I remember being on the museum board when we were struggling and as poor as church mice," laughed Petryshyn. "I always thought the city deserved a state-of-the-art museum."

Today, much of Petryshyn's work revolves around one of the city's biggest institutions, the college. As dean of health, wellness and career studies, he has dedicated himself to the continual improvement of the college.

"We keep renewing ourselves, the



GPCC's Jerry Petryshyn (left) with some of the books he's helped write on local and Alberta history. Mayor Dwight Logan (right) presents the Repka Award to Lynne and Donna Coulter, honoured for their work with the Lions Club.



DARRELL WINWOOD Herald-Tribune staff/ submitted

community keeps renewing it. This is an institution with a social conscience," he said, admitting there are times today when he misses being in the classroom full time.

"That's where you make the more direct connection with students," he said.

When asked why he started volunteering and then continues to do so, Petryshyn said it's a simple answer.

"It creates networks that potentially help you, it keeps you involved in the community and it sure beats coming home and plopping down on the sofa to watch TV. It's the people factor ... the bottom line is the people."

LION'S ROAR

For the husband and wife Coulter team, Lynne and Donna have become synonymous with the city's five Lions Clubs.

Both have been involved in the service organization for more than 40

years, starting in Ponoka where they farmed before moving to Grande Prairie in 1980 for work.

At that time, Lions Clubs didn't allow women members so Lynne joined the Grande Prairie Lions and Donna helped create the city's first Lioness Club for women, which eventually became the Trumpeter Lions Club.

When all Lions Club began allowing women a few years later, she transferred to join Lynne.

But their volunteerism doesn't stop there. They serve on countless other non-profit boards in the city, worked hundreds of bingos and bake sales and were heavily involved in the building of the Lions Learning Centre, along with other Lions in Grande Prairie.

They have travelled the world and made countless friends through the Lions internationally.

It was in 1988, however, when they made a trip that would come to define

much of their volunteerism.

Lions Clubs internationally work on charity projects that deal with eye-sight and vision restoration. A trip to Sri Lanka introduced the couple to a Lions project that needed donated eyeglasses to give to the poor.

The couple thought they might be able to round up a few hundred pairs back in Grande Prairie and returned home with a promise to send what they could. Since then, with the help of the other Lions Clubs, they've collected, wrapped and shipped more than 70,000 pairs in 22 years.

"I asked him in 1988 (Sri Lankan organizer) how many do you need, he said 100,000 so we're getting close," said Lynne with a chuckle.

"Every time you wrap up a pair you think someone in Sri Lanka will be able to see better because you took the time to wrap these up," said Donna. "I used to come home and find a bag of glasses hanging on the door knob."

For the husband and wife team, volunteering is their way of life and as they near retirement there's no slowing down as they talk about helping to charter a new Lions Club based in a Grande Prairie seniors' home.

"When you see some of the people who have won it (Repka Award) ... it's a pretty elite group of people," said Donna, humbled by the award.

They hope their example and those of their friends in the volunteer community can inspire others to get involved in some way in Grande Prairie.

"Expand your circle of friends, because that's what will happen," said Donna. "What you do for others lives forever."

"It's an opportunity to help people who really need the help," said Lynne. More information and list of past winners of the George Repka Award can be found at www.cityofgp.com.

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Sunday walk to raise funds for service dogs

LAURA BOOTH
Herald-Tribune staff

The Grande Prairie Lions Club is hosting its fourth annual Purina Walk for Dog Guides Sunday, to raise money to provide canine assistance to those with disabilities around the country.

"If you've ever been with someone who has a disability, whether it be a hearing loss, or a sight loss, or a mobility loss - and when you see them after they have received a dog and the changes that happen within their lives...their lives become so much better," said Grande Prairie Lion Donna Coulter.

Money raised goes to breeding and training dogs at the foundation's program headquarters near Guelph, Ontario. Dogs are trained to assist six different service categories including guiding the visually impaired, persons with physical disabilities, persons with autism, diabetes, seizures, and hearing impairments.

More than 200 Lions Clubs around the country will organize and participate in the walk to raise pledges to support the program that places a dog free of cost.

"The thing we really want people to understand about this, the foundation and what they provide, is there is no cost at all to someone who qualifies and is accepted into the program and we do have two dogs here in Grande Prairie," she said.

Getting one pup ready for service costs the foundation approximately \$25,000.

Last year, 151 dogs were placed with a person in need and \$1 million was raised across the country during the dog walks.

Every cent raised goes back into the program.

Registration for the walk begins Sunday, May 25, at 11:45 a.m. and the 3km walk starts at the Lions Learning Centre on 9625 Prairie Road, at 1 p.m.

"And the pledge forms will be there if you want to pick

them up. There is no minimum pledge, just come and pledge what you want to," said Coulter.

Anyone is welcome to join - owning a dog is not a

requirement.

"It's a fun social thing. We have light refreshments afterwards for everybody who walked and children are more than welcome," she

said.

"We had kids in strollers, we even had a cat last year, in the walk - well she carried the cat most of the way," Coulter laughed.

The event will run, rain or shine. For more information call 780-402-2479.

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Riverstone rezone draws detractors

TOM BATEMAN
Herald-Tribune staff

City council approved the rezoning of a chunk of undeveloped land off of 92 Street, due north of Countryside North on Tuesday evening.

The land, owned by Riverstone Grande Prairie Inc, is now classified as small lot residential, with the exception of the southwest corner which is slated as medium-density residential. The medium-density classification allows for four-plexes, townhouses and four-story apartment buildings to be developed.

The changes are in line

with the South East Area Structure Plan and the Riverstone Outline Plan.

The amendment was not without objection. Countryside North residents Martina Hoddinott and Jerrod Savage presented several issues they had with the plan to council. They are concerned that the small, tightly packed lots will not induce the quality of development they see fit.

"All over Grande Prairie, the things that were going up for multi-family are cheap, cheap, cheap and that is ridiculous because somebody's got to live there and call it a home and you know they're getting crap," said

Savage.

Hoddinott echoed sentiments expressed by Coun. Kevin Maclean, one of three councillors who voted against the amendment.

She said that 33-foot wide lots, without back-alley access, which an outline indicates are planned for the area, will compound problems relating to vehicles being parked on the street.

"It's off-street parking and that makes for problems with street clearing and then they put up 24-hour notices and then nothing happens and people don't get streets cleared."

"None of this (develop-

ment) is walking distance to any amenities within the city right now, not one bit. Basically everyone in there is going to need a vehicle and everyone in here is going to drive wherever they need to go," added Savage.

"Our homes are in a higher end neighbourhood and it has a very nice family atmosphere, it has a large park in the middle, there's a double cul-de-sac, everyone has a garage and a driveway. It's a very nice neighbourhood. We just hope that by approving this zoning, they continue to make that next development reflect ours," said Hoddinott.

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