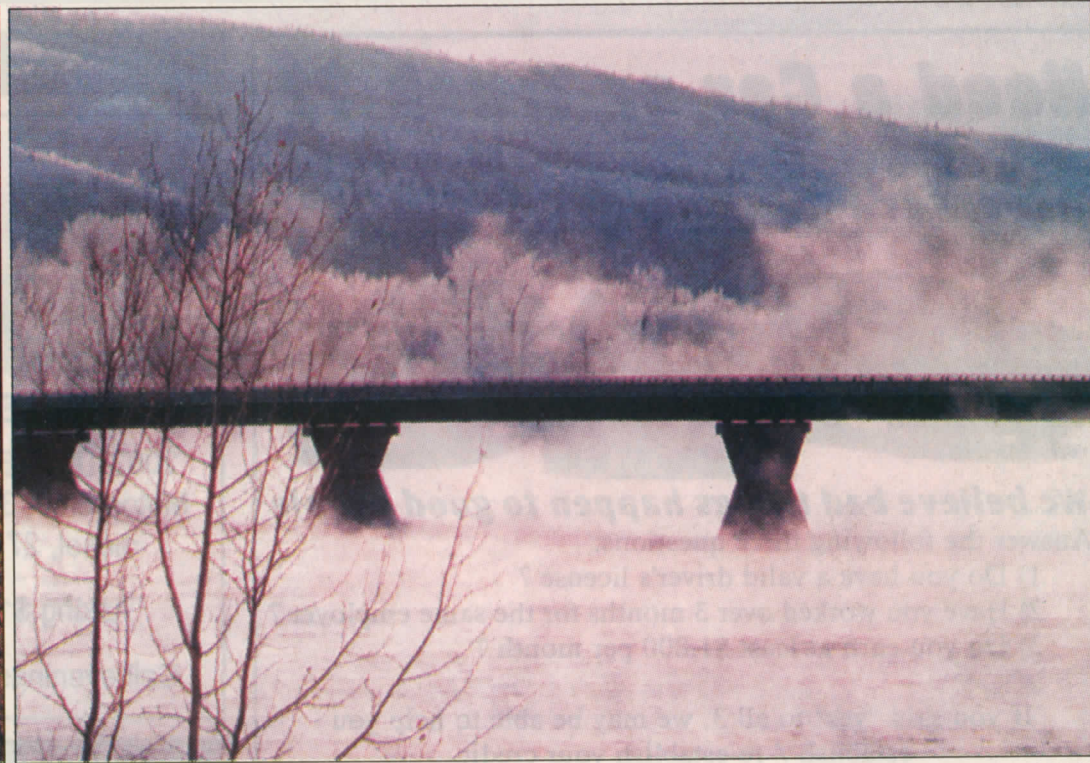


REGION



Photos courtesy of NEAT

Ruth Anne Darnall's photo of the Peace River (left) was the winning entry for the 9th annual Rivers Day Photo Contest, co-sponsored by the Northern Environmental Action Team and the Peace Valley Environment Association. Second place went to Julie Vander Linden's misty winter scene of the bridge at Clayhurst. "We look forward to next year's contest and hope that as usual there are entries from all over the Peace," said NEAT executive director Sally Emory. "Don't forget your camera on your next outing along the Peace River Valley."

ARTS

Help is available for young artists

Life is funny sometimes, isn't it? A month ago I was wondering to myself about being an emerging artist, and how it's hard to get your name out there when you're just starting your career. There's so much competition among emerging artists because there's so many of us; it's a wonder anyone actually gets anywhere in the art scene.

Well, shortly after that bout of doubtfulness, (and who doesn't have those every now and then?) I received an invite from none other than the Canada Council for the Arts to come down to Vancouver for what they were calling 'The Next Generation of Artistic Leaders Dialogues.' That'll teach me for being such a Negative Nancy.

The Canada Council for the Arts is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. They had themselves a big party in Ottawa, inviting fifty artists, one for every year the council has been around, to help them celebrate this momentous occasion by sharing stories about how they got their start and how the Council helped them get where they are today. Now that takes care of the professional artists, but what about the up-and-comers that will be taking the places of those who were at this shindig?

That is where the Dialogues came in. As a way to plan for the next fifty years, the Canada Council decided to have these emerging artists come together from all across B.C. to discuss problems that we face right now, and solutions for the future. Can you imagine: a group of twenty eight 20-somethings, all young artists and arts administrators, fighting their way through the art world, being given a chance to help shape the future of the arts in Canada? It boggles the mind!

So once everyone got past the ice breaker aspect of the meeting, we noticed that there were many similarities between us in terms of what we want and what we need from the Council as we continue down the path of the "emerging artist" and make our way into the world of the "professional

artist."

A need for more monetary support was one of the biggest concerns, but then who wouldn't like some extra money? Another issue that was brought up, by yours truly I might add, is that with a fine arts program, it's very hard to get your foot in the door since once we finish school we have no real experience in working in a gallery or studio, and nearly no guidance from our professors other than "your job is to get your work into galleries." Nice idea, but not overly helpful when it comes to certain amenities, like food and shelter.

Other programs like engineering send their students off to work all over the place as part of the co-op program. So I ask you, why can't there be an artist's co-op? Send us off to various cities around the country where we can gain that necessary experience that will help land a decent job when school is all said and done. Now, some schools do offer a practicum when it comes to fine arts, but that's more like the work experience you did in Grade 12. You spend a few hours a week essentially volunteering your time and skills but still have to go back and complete your studio requirements on top of that. A co-op would be infinitely better since you would devote a whole semester to working at a gallery, or a studio or whatever would be most beneficial to your career path. Not only would you gain the necessary work experience that everyone wants, but you'd get paid for it! What a concept! Perhaps those that intend to go to art school in a few years will have this opportunity.

It is important for young artists to be aware that there is help out there for those who really need and want it. I know it seems like a lot of hassle to sit down and try to write a proposal when you're not entirely sure about what the people who will be reading it really want to hear, but it's so worth it when you finally get that grant and the support that will allow you to continue doing what you love. They actually want to help us, they really do!

Aleisha Hendry



STATE OF THE ARTS



There is a new face at the Fort St. John Arts Council: the new executive director, Chandra Wong. An artist herself, Chandra will bring a fresh new perspective to the arts council and its activities.

Pipeline to the Arts

ART EXHIBITIONS

- Fort St. John Quilters "Pieces of the Heart" opens May 4, 7 p.m., Peace Gallery North.

FILM

- Monday Night at the Movies, After The Wedding, May 7, 7 p.m., Aurora Cinema.

THEATRE

- Stage North Theatre Society presents The Monument, May 3, 4 and 5, 7 p.m., North Peace Cultural Centre.

DANCE

- The Move Dance Centre presents "Spring Dance Recitals," May 24 and 25, 6:30 p.m., North Peace Cultural Centre.

MUSIC

- Unto Him, "A Place Called Hope," May 6, 7 p.m., North Peace Cultural Centre.

FESTIVALS

- Theatre B.C. Peace River Zone Festival, May 9-12, North Peace Cultural Centre.

Artists set off for wilderness camp

JULY 2007

Week-long trek includes strong First Nations presence this year

HARDY FRIEDRICH
ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

Artists partaking in the Muskwa-Kechika Artist Camp set off into the wilderness on Friday morning, and this year the journey is marked by a strong First Nations element.

The camp, now in its second year, takes 12 artists from across Canada for one week and sets them in the heart of the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area north of Fort St. John, where they travel by horse, cook over an open fire and let their creative minds loose.

Organizer and poet Donna Kane said that given the rich art and cultural importance of the Muskwa-Kechika to First Nations, it was a natural combination.

"Last year we were unable to get any First Nations artists in time, so this year we are really excited about it," she said as vehicles were packed before the group set off to Muncho Lake, where they'll fly in by float-plane.

The five First Nations participants include Adrienne Greyeyes, a local student who will attend Emily Carr this fall, and Brian Jungen, an internationally-acclaimed artist who has Dunne-za roots in the region and now resides in Vancouver.

"Brian is from our community and he's always had that spirit of environmental issues and recycling ideas...I think it'll be very interesting to see what he creates because his art is on an international level," said Gary Oker, who is also on the journey.

Jungen, who went to camp a day

early, is perhaps best known for the "Prototypes of New Understanding" series, in which he reworks objects into art form – such as aboriginal masks assembled from Nike Air Jordan shoes.

While representing nature through art is a central part of the experience, Oker also wants to develop the idea of environmental awareness in his work.

"How do we, as artists, create environmental awareness using art instead of preaching to people about it? I have this idea about the science of indigenous knowledge...and that's what I'm formulating right now," he said.

Saskatoon poet Laura Edna Lacey said she's not sure what she'll be holding after a week in the wilderness, but she's looking forward to connecting with other artists and sharing the experience.

"I'm not sure how busy and active we'll be and how much time we'll have to sit around and write. I may come out with a pile of rough notes, or I may come out with a pile of ideas," she said.

Other participants in the camp include Ann Jones, Sarah-Lynn Johnson, Sheila Peters and Rosaleen Ward. Youth artists also include Kristen Auger and Angharad Ward.

Photographer Wayne Sawchuk is co-organizing the camp and was in a week early to get packhorses ready and set up the camp, which is on the shores of Mayfield Lake.

The work produced from the camp will go into an art show that will travel the region next spring.





Hannah Scissons/AHN

Fort St. John Visitor Information Centre staff member Kimberley Moskalyk poses for a photo taken by Willy Sterenberg, an Alberta resident who was in town Sunday. Taking a photo of Info Centre staff is worth 10 points in the scavenger hunt, but there's an extra five bonus points if they can be convinced to make a funny face. The scavenger hunt runs until Aug. 17.

Photo Scavenger Hunt on for fourth year

FORT ST. JOHN — Get out an ugly bridesmaid dress, go shopping downtown, have a picnic and head to the lookout.

These activities are worth half of the points needed to participate in the fourth annual Fort St. John Photo Scavenger Hunt this summer — if they're captured in photographs of course.

Add in a hike in the Fish Creek Community Forest and a game of beach volleyball — and the hunt for 50 points will be reached, but there's no need to stop there.

"The Photo Scavenger Hunt gets people out into the community and the area doing some fun photos of the staples, like the viewpoint, plus other fun photos, too," said visitor services coordinator Deanna Hill.

The hunt started Saturday and runs until 7 p.m. on Aug. 17, when all entries have to be received at the Visitor Centre.

About 60 groups usually sign up for the scavenger hunt each summer, said Hill. Everyone who gets the minimum of 50 points is entered in draws for prizes, plus there's prizes for the top three point-getters.

The task considered most difficult is worth 50 points all on its own: getting a photo of a queen bee in her hive.

It's all designed to give people a fun chance to see what's in the North Peace.

"We want to get people to come in and see what we have at the Visitor Centre and enjoy what we have in the local area," said Hill.