

Yasmin John-Thorpe still encouraging kids to read

By JAMES MILLER
Penticton Herald

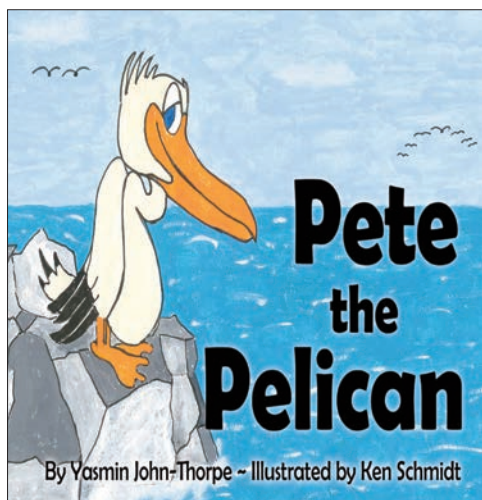
Yasmin John-Thorpe's latest project is among her most meaningful.

John-Thorpe, along with a dyslexia consultant and marketing specialist — both from the United States — launched Reading Is Fun Books, aimed at benefitting parents and teachers seeking books for early readers and students challenged by dyslexia.

"It's all about educating kids to be proficient in reading," said John-Thorpe, a local resident known for her volunteer efforts with Raise A Reader and Penticton Writers and Publishers.

It all began at a fall fair where John-Thorpe was selling her children's books. By chance she met educator Cheryl Anthony, a champion for the dyslexia community of nearly 20 years. Anthony bought several books and loved that they took place in a desert setting. She was eager to share these original stories with her students.

This led to John-Thorpe recording podcasts and eventually, she wanted to try rewriting one of her own books using a different style — stressing the past tense, using words with short vowels.



Special to The Herald

LEFT: The original "Pete the Pelican" book. RIGHT: Yasmin John-Thorpe (far right) of Penticton is pictured with her partners Nikole Haumont (left) and Cheryl Anthony.

She rewrote one of her favourite stories, "Pete the Pelican." Surprisingly, none of the story's plot or narrative were lost in the translation.

"I had to cut it down, but the general gist of the story is Pete is there with the other pelicans," she said, explaining the process. "They see the men — I can use the word



'men' — pulling in the nets — I can use the word 'nets.' The fish are in there, but 'fish' is a word that they'd (students) have to learn because of the i-s-h."

Soon after, web and graphic designer Nikole Haumont joined the team. She's also in charge of printing the books.

Much of this was done during the height

of the COVID pandemic, which created a series of additional challenges, including the closure of the Canada/U.S. border. The three women would meet regularly online.

John-Thorpe believes because of COVID, more youngsters have fallen through the cracks when it comes to reading.

"It seems that parents don't read to their kids anymore, they put them in front of a computer or TV screen. A lot of kids don't want to read. I'm now (age) 71 and want to help kids so much, to help them on the paths to being more proficient readers."

One of her happiest memories was taking her grandson, then five, to Penticton's famed Book Shop for the first time and his reaction was loving the smell of books.

With the site having just been launched, there are four Unit A books and four Unit B books.

The site will be updated regularly. "It's hard, but it's making my brain work," John-Thorpe concludes. I've never worked with two other women and it's been a wonderful partnership. I do the writing, Cheryl the decoding and editing and Nikole does all the marketing. We all have our field of expertise."

On the net: RIFbooks.com

NEWSBRIEFING

Overdose prevention event today at Gyro Park

Penticton was on track for its deadliest year yet for drug overdoses the last time data was released by the BC Coroners Service, adding extra urgency to the International Overdose Prevention Day event set for today in Gyro Park.

A variety of social agencies along with the City of Penticton are hosting the event from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Plans include a prayer and smudging, memorial table, drug checking demonstrations, harm reduction information, counselling and naloxone training.

Another event is planned for Oliver at 6060 Station St. from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. It will feature a free pancake breakfast, live music, children's activities, naloxone training and more. A mobile overdose prevention site operated by a Penticton non-profit will also be on site and set up for tours.

Similar events are being staged around the province, and will conclude at 6:30 p.m. with a candlelight vigil that will be live-streamed on Facebook and hosted by Moms Stop the Harm. Guest speakers include B.C.'s chief coroner, Lisa Lapointe.

The first International Overdose Prevention Day was staged in Australia in 2001.

At least 10 people died of suspected drug overdoses in Penticton through the first five months of 2021, according to the most recent data published by the B.C. Coroners Service. That compared to 19 in Kelowna and 13 in Vernon, and left Penticton on track to top its record-high annual death toll of 21 set in 2019.

Health rules put the bite on Ribfest

Perhaps the tastiest event on Penticton's community calendar has now been cancelled due to new public health restrictions.

Organizers announced Sunday that Penticton Rotary Ribfest has been scuttled for a second consecutive year by limits on public gatherings.

"Keeping attendees, volunteers, our ribbers, sponsors and our volunteers safe is of utmost importance," said Ribfest co-chair Barb Hoolaeff in a press release Sunday.

"We are, of course, disappointed to cancel one of our biggest yearly fundraising events but we know that the right decision has been made."

Between 2015 and 2019, the event featuring professional ribbers from across Canada raised \$220,000 for Penticton Rotary, which has used the proceeds for community projects. The event has also been a target of animal rights activists.

Many Hats also added to list of cancellations

Many Hats Theatre Co.'s first production since the start of the pandemic, "Hilda's Yard," originally scheduled to open Sept. 9, has been postponed until further notice.

"In compliance with provincial health orders, Interior Health guidelines and an abundance of caution, it will not be possible to open Hilda's Yard as scheduled. We hope to reschedule it as soon as possible," the show's co-producer Eric Hanston wrote on social media.

Chamber still considering position on vax cards

It's going to take a little while longer for the Penticton and Wine Country Chamber of Commerce to come up with an official position on vaccine cards.

The business group's board met to discuss the matter Aug. 26 but couldn't agree on a way forward.

"The directors at the chamber had various

stances on the new mandate. As such we did not reach a consensus on a chamber position," president Jonathan McGraw said in an email Monday.

"We are going to poll our members on whether they support it or not."

Response to the vaccine cards has been polarized since the initiative was announced last week by the B.C. government.

Some chambers in the Peace region have rejected the idea all together as an unfair burden on businesses, while others, including Kelowna, have expressed cautious support while calling on the province to help businesses with implantation.

Beginning Sept. 13, people will need to show proof they've had at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine before attending restaurants, stores, ticketed events and other public places in B.C. As of Oct. 24, people will have to show they've been fully vaccinated with two doses if they wish to go into those same public places.

City issues call for new community mobilizer

Calling all community mobilizers: There's a temporary job for you in Penticton.

With a \$435,000 grant in hand that's meant to improve the community's response to homelessness, the City of Penticton has now posted a job advertisement for someone to help spend that money.

"Reporting to the social development specialist, the community mobilizer works in alignment with the City of Penticton's Official Community Plan, council priorities, and city, department, and industry priorities, policies and practices to act as a community change maker and mobilizer," states the ad, which was posted Friday.

"They provide corporate and community support in roles ranging from advocate, capacity builder, coordinator, convener, and educator to agencies, associations, community groups, organizations, networks, and residents. The purpose of the role is to take ideas and mobilize them with community partners, with a can-do, get it done-type attitude."

The posting is for a maximum of one year with salary to be determined based upon experience and credentials, which must include a related university degree.

The city is also hiring a temporary bylaw officer, who would focus on connecting homeless people with services, using proceeds from the same grant, which came from the provincial-federal Strengthening Communities' Services Program.

Lots of chances coming to get COVID vaccine

Drop-in vaccination clinics are planned across the South Okanagan in the weeks ahead for those who still need a jab.

No appointments are required for anyone over the age of 12 requiring a first shot of a COVID-19 vaccine or those who are at least 28 days past their first dose.

The clinic locations are:
Tuesday, Aug. 31, Gyro Park, 55 Main St., Penticton, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Tuesday, Aug. 31, Oliver Eats, 6060 Station St., Oliver, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Monday, Sept 1 and Tuesday, Sept. 2: Okanagan Falls Recreation Centre, 1141 Cedar St., 3-7 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 10, Canadian Tire, 960 Railway St., Penticton, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 24, Canadian Tire, 960 Railway St., Penticton, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

As of Aug. 24, 74% of Penticton residents over the age of 12 had been fully vaccinated, according to the B.C. Centre for Disease Control. Summerland stood at 75% and Oliver-Osoyoos at 73%.

The provincial average is 75%. Just 51% of Penticton Indian Band members had been fully vaccinated as of Aug. 27, according the First Nation.



JAMES MILLER/Penticton Herald

Carbon monoxide scare

More than a dozen emergency personnel descended Monday afternoon on the home at 1208 Government St. in Penticton following a report of a possible carbon monoxide leak that had rendered a woman unconscious but apparently did not impact her child. A firefighter was later overheard on radio telling a dispatcher there was not actually a carbon monoxide leak, but no one on scene would clarify the nature of the call. Police were seen interviewing neighbours and continue to investigate. The house is listed for sale.

ALARM BOX

The fire dispatch for the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen received the following calls:

Sunday
10:11 a.m. Van Horne Street, Penticton. Alarm.
2:14 p.m. Warren Avenue, Penticton. Wildfire.
2:56 p.m. Noyes Road, Naramata. Wildfire.
3:09 p.m. Old Hedley Road, Princeton. Smoke.
5:04 p.m. Ash Street, Okanagan Falls.

Flood assessment.
6:01 p.m. Bench Drive, Penticton. Alarm.
10:32 p.m. Lakeshore Drive, Penticton. Burning complaint.
11:36 p.m. Maple Street, Penticton. Minor fire.

Monday
3:38 a.m. Duncan Avenue, Penticton. Medical first response.
4:09 a.m. Sovereign Road, Okanagan Falls. Medical first response.
6:08 a.m. Main Street, Penticton. Medical first response.



CITY PAGE

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A Public Hearing will be held at **6:00 p.m., Tuesday, September 7, 2021** at the Penticton Trade & Convention Centre (273 Power St.) to consider the following:

Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw 2021-25:

813 Westminister Ave W (Lot 1 District Lot 2 Group 7 Similkameen Division Yale (Formerly Yale-Lytton) District Plan 13891); **825 Westminister Ave W** (Lot 2 District Lot 2 Group 7 Similkameen Division Yale (Formerly Yale-Lytton) District Plan 13891); **877 Westminister Ave W** (Lot 1 District Lot 2 Group 7 Similkameen Division Yale (Formerly Yale-Lytton) District Plan 15658)

The applicants are proposing a mixed-use (commercial and residential) development on the properties (813, 825 and 877 Westminister Ave W), with the opportunity for a strata owner tourist accommodation rental component. As the first step in facilitating the proposed development, the applicants have applied to amend Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw 2019-08 as follows:

"Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 2021-25": A bylaw that amends Map 1: Future Land Use of Official Community Plan Bylaw 2019-08, by changing the future land use designation from Tourist Commercial to Urban Residential.

Public Comments:

Any person whose interest may be affected by the proposed bylaw amendment may participate at the Public Hearing: 1) via Zoom or telephone. Please go to www.penticton.ca for details; 2) via written comments by mail or email submitted no later than **9:30 am, Tuesday, September 7, 2021** to Attention: Corporate Officer, City of Penticton, 171 Main Street, Penticton, BC V2A 5A9; Email: publichearings@penticton.ca; or 3) In person. No letter, report or representation from the public will be received by Council after the conclusion of the Public Hearing. Please note that all submissions must include a name and address and will form part of the public record.

Further Information:

The above mentioned bylaw and supporting information can be viewed on the City's website at: www.penticton.ca/publicnotice.

All Council meetings will be live streamed via the City's website: www.penticton.ca.

penticton.ca

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