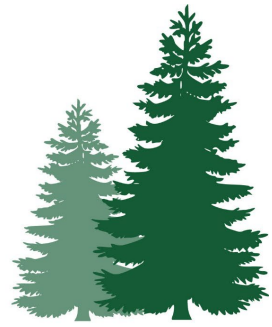




HALL ROAD HERALD

Fall 2026



Editor's Den

By Don Plant

The days are getting shorter but the kiddies will be banging the door to go play in Johnson Road Park in a month or so.

City workers are preparing to build the new playground at Johnson Road Park and hope to finish by early November. Children will have the latest equipment, including a three-bay swing set, climbing structure, a larger footprint made of pea gravel and a seating bench.

Tom Woloshyn, the landscape designer in charge of the project, says the play apparatus should be delivered by the third week in October. Assembling it all will take at least two weeks, so it's conceivable the kids will be swinging and climbing by Nov. 11.

Remembrance Day, of course, honours members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP who've served, suffered, and died in the line of duty. Because the afternoon is usually considered free time, your neighbourhood association thought it would be a good day to celebrate the new playground.

So ... mark your calendar for a fun time at Johnson Park starting (tentatively) at 2 p.m., Nov. 11. If the playground is not finished, we'll postpone to a later date in November. We'll arrange for lawn games, cookies, hot chocolate, coffee and lots of swing time. Once we confirm the date, watch out for an update. You can play with the kids, get to know some neighbours and celebrate a welcome addition to our neighbourhood.

Other news:

- Your neighbourhood association has just learned the City approved a grant that will help us host community events and pay for things that tell Hall Roaders what's going on. Our plan is to set up a reader board or bulletin board along the south end of Hall Road so we can advertise yard sales, work parties, FireSmart tips, house concerts and other social gatherings. The City doesn't like these boards on its property, so we're hoping a resident living near KLO Road will let us set up the reader board on the edge of their lot.
- You may have heard city council turned down an application to build a 47-lot subdivision at the north end of O'Reilly Road in August. The developer proposed a smaller subdivision earlier this year but applied for a bigger one after he partnered with his neighbour's property. City staff objected to the plan because the Hall Road area is outside the city's Permanent Growth Boundary, which defines where housing density should go. And our area hasn't undergone a neighbourhood development plan -- a community-led blueprint that guides the future use, design and growth of land in the area. After an hour of discussion, all eight councillors and the mayor voted down the proposal.

The Hall Road Herald is looking for ideas and writers to contribute to the next issue in January. Our neighbourhood is full of stories and unique perspectives, so write us via herald@hallroad.ca to make your pitch. We'd love to hear from you.

Fire Smart: Smoke Sensors, Roof Sprinklers and Removing Forest Fuels

By Brad Rix and Don Plant



Our neighbourhood association has been busy lobbying for ground fuel removal in the Sutherland Hills area of Mission Creek park – one of the largest interface parks in Kelowna.

City officials know we're concerned about wildfire tearing through the park's forest and spreading to the care home and houses along Hall Road, Woodland, Maquinna and Dunsmuir roads. The regional district, which manages the park, has told us it won't implement prescribed burns or other fuel mitigation until late 2028 at the earliest. And funding must be available.

Controlled burns have been approved for Knox Mountain, Quail Ridge and the June Springs area this fall. RDCO officials understand we want them too but say their assessments suggest our wildfire risk is lower.

We want to do what we can as residents to remove flammable ground fuel before 2028. We've also researched new technology that can detect fire smoke before we smell it.

SenseNet is an early detection platform that uses a network of ground sensors, smart cameras, weather data and satellite images to spot early ignition. Small, wireless sensors are strapped directly onto trees in high-risk forest zones. They "sniff" the air for carbon monoxide, methane and other gases released when a fire is smouldering. They can automatically alert first responders in less than a minute.

The City of Vernon and Predator Ridge have partnered with SenseNet. We're encouraging the City of Kelowna and regional district to do the same.

Meanwhile, there's more Hall Roaders can do. At least three households installed the WASP roof-sprinkler systems this summer. They retailed for \$180 at Costco, and the WASP outlet on Pier Mac Way matched the price. I demoed a sprinkler at my house for my neighbours. They work well and are easy to install. They may now be unavailable at Costco until next year.

We plan to organize a resident work party to clean up ground fuel next year. We're not allowed to remove deadfall from the park but the City says we can clean up dry vegetation and invasive plants on the boulevard along Hall Road. One question is how to define where the boulevard begins and the park ends.

Stay tuned.

Music in the Neighbourhood: Singing from the Front Yard

By Don Plant



Soon after they moved into their house on Packers Court in 2025, Lee and Norm Strauss were putting down patio stones to replace a weedy front yard when the idea landed – they could set up a stage and chairs here and host a small concert for their neighbours.

As musicians who spent decades touring Canada and Europe, the couple have attended and performed at countless house concerts. They suddenly realized they had a little amphitheatre outside their front door where they could deliver the magic of live music in the heart of the Hall Road area.

“We realized there’s actually a little space where we could bring people together,” Lee said. “We thought, well. Let’s try it and see.

“A lot of artists are looking for listening-room experiences to perform their art, to share their heart and share their songs. And there are not a lot of those around in Kelowna.”

The Strausses have organized three house concerts on their sunken yard since then, and they plan an indoor event in December. Norm knows a lot of local artists, so he has no problem filling the bill with musicians who love telling stories. They don’t do it for the money, although spectators are encouraged to make a donation.



The result is an intimate gathering of strangers who share a musical, lyrical ride and get to know one another. Norm calls the concerts community builders.

“It's touching. It's inspiring,” he said. “It can almost be like a spiritual experience if you have the right artist and the right connection to the audience. It really is a time of, to use a spiritual term, edification.”

The 60-something couple bring a lifetime of know-how to their gigs. Norm spent years as a solo guitarist

touring mostly in Germany, where it's easier to travel than in Canada because major cities are short distances apart. Lee, who plays bass, has written 80 books, many of them “cozy historical mysteries” that have sold so well on Amazon the proceeds paid for their house. With her being a novelist and Norm a singer-songwriter, they've become long-time storytellers.

They were poised to host their latest gathering in the Strauss Cafe patio-concert series on Sept. 26 but an illness in the band scrubbed it. They'll host their next gig, the Mr. and Mrs. Strauss Christmas concert, inside their house at 3330 Packers Court where there's plenty of room. It's on Dec. 5, and you're invited.

To hear them perform, visit YouTube under “[Mr. and Mrs. Strauss](#)” and “[Norm Strauss](#).” To learn about Lee's books, go to leestraussbooks.com.

Owls be Hootin'

By Bruce Hedmann



Picture Credit: All Things Wild 2020

Hoo hoo's calling at night?

I'm sure you've heard the calls after dark here in the 'hood. My spouse takes great pleasure in hearing the soft, gentle 'hoo hoo' calling out to her. "Do you hear the owls?" she asks. Yes, yes. The calls differ depending on the time of year, but they always add to life.

We have a family of resident Great Grey owls not far from where we live on James Road so it's a common sound, always soothing and pleasant. A

bit of trivia: Great Greys are the world's largest owl species by length; big guys! Several other types of owls can be seen here -- resident and some rare, seasonal migrating visitors, like the Snowy, Long-eared and Barred owls.

Most owls, including our Great Greys with their natural camouflage, make sightings rare but when you do see one, it's truly a blessing. I have only seen one up close once while I was in a blind, and it was absolutely beautiful!

Their calls, though, are widespread and heard by most residents of our neighbourhood. Biologists say we have about a dozen owl species in the Central Okanagan at different times of year as seasonal migration brings them through. Owls are flying through northern B.C. in large numbers right now -- the biggest migration in years. They're following shifts in prey, like more rodents than usual.

"It has been such an amazing year up there," said Jeannine Randall, a bird biologist with the Mackenzie Nature Observatory north of Prince George.

On a different note, birds that overwinter need our help. Feeders with black oil seeds work for all types of birds, and leaving flower and plant seed heads uncut until spring provides natural food. We do this every year and are treated to all sorts of small ground and bush feeders flitting about on cold winter days, adding life to the winter landscape.

And if you want to share your photos of birds and other critters, you can use the Hall Road **Wildlife Tracker** -- our own platform. Go to wildlife.hallroad.ca and enable location services when prompted. Once enabled, you'll be taken to the map, where you can see wildlife sightings submitted by other people in the neighbourhood.

Northern Hall Road Area: The Creation of 'Eldorado Estates'

By Ken Buhler



The Eldorado Estates portion of the Hall Road area was built in the mid-1980s after the O'Reilly subdivision was developed a decade earlier.

When Godthard Johnson died in 1972, he willed the undeveloped portion of his land to the Rutland Seventh-day Adventist Church, which he helped found. The church subsequently sold six acres to School District 23, which planned to build an elementary school on what's now the upper half of Johnson Road.

Mel Sager owned more than 20 acres at the north end of Hall Road, including Woodland Crescent, and developed the Oliver Jackson land at the south end. Mel, Bob Lennie and Larry Chalmers bought the 18-acre Pomrenke farm along with the upper portion of the Johnson property.

To extend O'Reilly Road to the north, the three men exchanged a six-acre portion of the lower Pomrenke property (where the soccer field, playground and small forest now stand) for the school district land between Alberta Court and Johnson. To connect to O'Reilly Road from the lot at 2584 O'Reilly, they had to buy 20 feet of land from Eileen Powell on the East Kelowna Bench above to accommodate the road allowance.

The developers intended to provide large lots for a prestigious lifestyle in a unique forested area. Thus the name "Eldorado Estates" for the properties I've framed in the map (all lots in the Pomrenke parcel and all lots above the jagged line in the Johnson section.) The lots were to be a half-acre each. To accommodate a pond at 2649 O'Reilly, the lot was doubled to a full acre.

In 1980, the hillside above 2722 O'Reilly Rd. slipped because of the water flow above and below ground. That four-lot plan became a two-acre parcel at the north end of O'Reilly Lane.

The road names of Alberta Court and Manitoba Place came about because the developers hadn't applied for their choice of names in advance, so they had to pick from available names. The new sections of O'Reilly, Dunsmuir and Johnson were so named because they extended from existing roads.

Snakes of Hall Road: Our Slithery Neighbours

By Chip Monk



With fall temperatures in East Kelowna, Hall Roaders may still notice some rustling in the grass, gardens or hillsides.

Don't worry—most of our local snakes are harmless and would rather avoid people than meet them.

The most common snake in our area is the Western Terrestrial Garter Snake. These slender reptiles vary in colour from greenish to brown, and you can easily identify them by the stripes running down their bodies. They eat rodents and insects, making them valuable members of our ecosystem.

East Kelowna is also home to the Northern Pacific Rattlesnake, B.C.'s only venomous snake. Spotting them around the Hall Road area is rare, but they tend to hang out in nearby grasslands, rocky outcrops and open hillsides. Rattlesnakes are generally shy and often give a warning rattle if they feel threatened. The best advice is to give them plenty of space and allow them to slither away on their own.

If you encounter any snake, don't handle it. Keep your dog leashed, watch where you step while hiking and savour the chance to watch these fascinating creatures from a safe distance.

After all, snakes were here long before Hall Road emerged — and they help keep our neighbourhood healthy, one mouse at a time!