



MARK BRETT/Local Journalism Initiative
Children's author Yasmin John-Thorpe, left and Martina Zamecnik of the 360 Learning Academy are pictured with some of the books the Pentiction author donated to the academy.

RIF donates books

By Pentiction Herald Staff

Pentiction author Yasmin John-Thorpe has donated multiple copies of her Reading Is Fun books to area schools, learning academies and private tutors.

Last year, the children's writer, 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 material for early readers and students challenged by dyslexia.

The books are now available in British Columbia.

"It's the hardest thing I've ever done because I can't create, I have to use these words, these letters, these vowels," said John-Thorpe in an interview. "When I'm writing, I will find I can't use a certain word because it's a long vowel... I need a short vowel."

Norma Hill, a private tutor, is impressed by the books which come in different levels and are



Norma Hill, left with Yasmin John-Thorpe.

beautifully illustrated. Hill worked with a 13-year-old and found John-Thorpe's books to be worthwhile.

"I find these books very useful because he (her student) doesn't read fluently. He can read every single word, but goes plunk, plunk, plunk. Even after one lesson using this book, he was reading more smoothly. I noticed that even though he could decode, he wasn't necessarily understanding. These

books really help him understand. "Because he's 13, I thought he'd think they were too elementary, too 'little kid', but he really enjoyed the activities at the end of the book and didn't feel bad using a book that was so simple."

RIF Books are drawing praise from Megan Windeler from the OSNS Child and Youth Development Centre.

"Reading books with children is a way to connect many modes of development — language development, social development, and cognitive development. It helps with relationship building and is such a valuable activity for preschool children. These useful books will be added to the centre's preschool library and they will use the books throughout the year for the children who attend the program," she said.

Reading is Fun (RIF for short) Books are also available in Washington and Arizona. They will be for sale on Amazon or by visiting: RIFBooks.com



MEGHANN FLETCHER/Special to The Herald

Award-winning photograph

Pentiction photographer Meghann Fletcher snapped this shot of a duckling going exploring, which captured second place in the Backyard Habitats category of the BC SPCA's 2022 Wildlife-in-Focus contest. It will be featured in a 2023 calendar that goes on sale in October.

HERITAGE

The Greer block

Editor's note: This is the third installment in an eight-week series profiling a selection of Pentiction's heritage structures that speak to the unique attributes and human history behind the buildings. The articles also complement the current exhibit at the Pentiction Museum, Made Right Here, which will be on display until the new year.

By DENNIS OOMEN
Special to The Herald

The Greer Block was built by Charles Greer during the boom times of the early 1920s.

Greer, who came to Pentiction in 1905, was a businessman who involved himself in many ventures. He had pre-empted land near the mining community of Fairview and was involved in the building of the Alexandra Hotel in Oliver. Greer also had the Ford dealership in Pentiction as well as other interests throughout the South Okanagan and served as a city councillor.

He typified the ambitious, forward-looking individuals who were resilient, optimistic and always ready to seize an opportunity.

To me, the Greer Block at 410 Main St. is more than a straightforward commercial building; it symbolizes Greer's faith in the community and his willingness to venture his own time and money to develop a new retail and business presence in a little town that

was just beginning to prosper.

As it happened, Greer died of a stroke just before the block was completed, but his name remains on the building's façade. Greer was also a noted prohibitionist who did his level best to keep the sale of liquor strictly under control.

His anti-alcohol activities were shared by his wife, Mrs. Maria Greer, who was, incidentally, the first woman to vote in Pentiction after women claimed the franchise in 1918.

Greer was the first to utilize concrete block construction in Pentiction, using "rusticated" concrete blocks that were textured to look like hewn stone.

Architecturally, the Greer block has some interesting features that include brick pilasters (supporting columns that stand proud of the wall) a cornice or protruding brick detail that runs along the top of the façade, a triangular pediment in the centre of the façade, and globular finials at

each top corner. The building's name and date are prominently set in a date stone above the top floor.

If there is a historical architectural classification for the building, it would best be described as Edwardian Classical Revival. Greer's building now has a thriving street-level wine bar and restaurant.

Dennis Oomen is the curator of the Pentiction Museum and Archives.



Charles Greer



Special to The Herald

Look closely and you'll notice all kinds of intricate architectural features on the Greer Block at 410 Main St.

DT alleys eyed for cultural activities

Long-neglected alleyways are brimming with potential for cultural events, says the Downtown Pentiction Business Improvement Association.

To help highlight the spaces' potential, the DPBIA is partnering with Slackwater Brewing for a pilot project on Sunday, Sept. 25, from 3-7:30 p.m., in the alley behind the brewery on the 200 block of Martin Street.

Visitors to the family friendly event "will see a partial alley transformation such as painted buildings and ground, artwork, lighting installations, three interactive musical acts, a kid's art sta-

tion, beer garden and more. This event is also being supported by The Pentiction Art Gallery, Pentiction Arts Council and the City of Pentiction," said DPBIA executive director Brett Turner in a press release.

"The project is designed to raise awareness and put forward the idea that downtown alleys can be used for much more than simply dumpsters and deliveries. In fact, they can be vibrant, energetic spaces which help bring people together."

Turner said the DPBIA is planning two other alley transformations next spring.



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