

# News

## Briefly

### Business

**Vitality: The Entrepreneurial Spirit in Harsh Economic Times**  
Thursday, April 16, 7 p.m. at

Oso Negro, 604 Ward St.

This is the second conversation café hosted by the Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership. The first one was held on Friday March 20 and focused on arts, culture and economic development.

This week's presenters are Russell Precious, Zoe Creighton, Mike Stolte and Paul Edney who will share ideas about business as a lifestyle in which people and the planet are of equal consideration to profit. Following their brief presentations, the café crowd will split up into small groups to discuss questions generated by the presentations.

To learn more about the speaker series, contact Anna Planedin at aplanedin@theciel.com or 352-9192 ext. 221. To learn more about the work CIEL does, visit www.theciel.com.

# Grain CSA triples in size

Community Supported Agriculture project to grow more organic grain for Kootenay consumers

by Chris Shepherd

Like a seed planted in fertile soil, the local grain cooperative has grown after its first season.

The Creston Grain Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) went from 200 shares in 2008 to 600 shares for the coming growing season, says Matt Lowe, a co-founder of the CSA.

Lowe is excited the CSA is able to offer more grain to more people this year. Three farmers in the Creston Valley plan to grow 60,000 pounds of grain and 12,000 pounds of lentils this year.

He says he expected this growth, though admits he didn't know exactly how the CSA would look after its first year.

"It started with an idea and when you have an idea, you never know where it goes," Lowe says.

The CSA started in 2008 as an attempt to provide locally grown, organic grains to residents and to support local food production. Because CSA members pay for their grain upfront, the farmers receive a guaranteed income and if a crop



Sacks of grain about to be loaded onto sailboats for the journey from the southern end of Kootenay Lake to Nelson. The grain was grown as part of the Creston Grain Community Supported Agriculture project tripled the amount of grain it will grow from last year.

fails, the cost is spread out among all the shareholders.

"When you spread out the risk, no one loses his shirt. Most importantly, the farmer doesn't," says Lowe. That means the farmer is able to learn from any mistakes and then plant a crop next season.

Last year, 180 families and a local bakery bought up all the

available shares (200 of them).

The cost of membership has gone up this year, from \$100 to \$125, but Lowe expects CSA members will get their money's worth this fall.

In the pilot year, three farmers grew organic red fife wheat, korasan wheat, hard spring wheat, spelt and oats. When the time came to harvest and distribute the grain, each member received 80 pounds of grain.

All three farmers have room to grow more grain and coupled

with the enthusiastic response the CSA had last year, it didn't take much for CSA organizers to decide to triple production.

Lowe expects CSA members will get 100 pounds of grain for their share this season. Last year, the farmers had little experience growing organic grain but what they learned last year should help them this season.

The farmers also have a better sense of what it costs them to grow the grain which is why the price has gone up.

Beyond supporting local farmers and organic food production, Lowe says the CSA helps fight climate change because the food doesn't have to be transported as far as it does under traditional food systems.

Further to that goal, some of the grain will be brought to Nelson by sailboat.

Last year, four sailboats brought 5,000 pounds of grain from a dock near Creston to Nelson. Lowe says a similar trip will happen this fall and will involve more boats and more grain.

| KOOTENAY  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | Olympic Dreams     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
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| CROSSWORD |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | by Dave Macleod    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|           |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | Answers on page 13 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| ACROSS    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | DOWN               |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
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