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SECOND FRONT

POLICE BEAT



Suspects get away

Prince George RCMP established a perimeter with a radius of more than a dozen blocks after an attempted robbery at a lingerie store near Fifth and Central early Saturday evening.

No weapon was produced, and there were no reports of injuries. A hold-up alarm went off at 6:13 p.m. and a young man and a young woman fled the store.

Eight or nine police vehicles responded, one from a half block away. Some officers tried to track the suspects with police service dogs.

The perimeter that was set up included police cars posted to Eighth Avenue, Burden Street, Harper Street, the 200 and 300 block of Johnson Street, around Carney Street and across the Bypass at Ahbau.

The suspects were not located. The man is described as a native in his early 20s with short dark hair. He is about five feet, five inches tall. At the time of the incident he was wearing black jeans and a multi-coloured jacket with yellow panels.

The woman is described as native and in her mid-20s. She has shoulder-length reddish hair. She was wearing a very dark jacket and white slacks.

Electronics stolen

Early Sunday, unknown suspects broke the patio door lock to enter a home in the 800 block of Irwin Street.

A TV, a VCR and a phone were stolen.

CDs, VCR taken

Someone entered a home on Quadrant Crescent Saturday to steal more than 100 CDs, a VCR and other items.

The thefts were reported at 10:10 p.m. It appears the culprits entered through an unlocked door.

Rocks tossed at cars

Late Saturday night a male in the 500 block of Ewert Street was reported throwing rocks at cars.

Police patrolled the area. The suspect was gone on their arrival.

Car thieves busy

At least three vehicles were reported stolen in Prince George during the weekend.

■ One was a blue 1989 four-door Toyota Camry with the licence number HNH 032. It was spotted leaving the parking lot of a fast-food franchise near 10th and Central at 7 p.m. Friday.

■ The second was a white 1987 Toyota Camry with the licence number SDJ 591. It was taken from 795 Central Street West.

■ The third vehicle reported stolen was a hunter-green 1998 Jeep Grand Cherokee with licence number 732 AEK. It was reported stolen Sunday evening from 886 Alward St.

If you are following any of these stolen vehicles or see it occupied, call 911 immediately. Do not try to stop the vehicle or the occupants.

Checks target drivers

RCMP have released results from road checks conducted Thursday and Friday on Highway 97 South and Highway 16 East.

The Prince George Highway Patrol carried out the checks about 2,000 vehicles with the help of the Vanderhoof Highway Patrol, ICBC compliance officers, conservation officers and Radio Communications Canada.

Police charged seven motorists with seatbelt infractions and issued two warnings. Eight drivers received tickets for inadequate equipment, and there were 111 warnings to other vehicle owners. There were 29 charges under the Motor Vehicle Act and 35 warnings. Under the Wildlife Act, conservation officers checked 55 hunters. They charged one person, and charges are pending against another. In addition, there were two warnings. Four moose were seized, and so were four firearms. One driver was charged under the Liquor Act, and two motorists were issued warnings. There was one warning under the Criminal Code.

There were charges against 13 drivers of commercial vehicles, and one warning was issued. Under the Radio Communications Act, one driver was charged, and warnings were issued to nine others. Of the total checked, two vehicles were impounded, and four were towed, RCMP said.

Clothing found

On Sunday Quesnel RCMP obtained some articles of clothing that had been discarded on the Quesnel River Walk close to the smokehouse.

The way the clothing was discarded appears to be suspicious, police said.

Any person who can identify the grey t-shirt and two pairs of cutoff jeans is asked to call Quesnel RCMP at 992-9211 and ask for Const. C.K. Durdle.

Window smashed

Some time Saturday night a green Chevy pickup was damaged while parked in the 2400 block of Pinnacles Road in Quesnel.

The owner had been attending a house party and had parked his vehicle near a driveway. He returned to his vehicle to find the driver's-side window smashed. Eggs and a chemical had been thrown at the vehicle. He also found that his wallet had been stolen from inside the car. Police ask anyone with information to call Quesnel RCMP or Crime Stoppers.

Doing his share

'I like to help people who are worse off than I am,' Citizen of the Year explains

by PAUL STRICKLAND
Citizen staff

John Flatt is the Prince George Citizen of the Year for 2001.

The award was presented Friday by Prince George Community Foundation president Noreen Rustad at the Citizen of the Year Awards Evening.

The award recognizes Flatt's outstanding commitment to Prince George as a community, she said.

"It was certainly an honour," Flatt said Sunday. "I really enjoy serving the community."

"The work I do, I do because I like to do it," he said. "The Lions' Club motto is, 'We serve,' and we don't get paid for it."

"What I was told, when I was a kid, was to do your share for the community," Flatt said. "My father did, and I did the same."

Flatt is a tireless community volunteer who has worked on behalf of people with mental and physical disabilities for more than 50 years, Rustad said.

Flatt was born with visual and physical disabilities and lost much of his hearing later in life. He is legally blind and lives with complex medical needs, and yet his positive attitude has made him a leader in helping those less fortunate than he, she said.

"I like to help people who are worse off than I am," Flatt said. "That's why I work with the CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind) and the Canadian Mental Health Association, and why I raise funds for the Child Development Centre."

Flatt's long association with Lions Club International has brought many worthwhile Prince George projects to the attention of funders and decision makers, Rustad said.



Citizen photo by Brent Braaten

John Flatt, the 2001 Citizen of the Year, poses with his trophy.

"I do a lot of Lions volunteer work," Flatt said. "One of the projects I had years ago was arranging to take disabled children to summer camp at Camp Winfield in the Okanagan. I did it for 11 years. One of my other Lions projects was getting hearing aids for people who can't afford it," he said.

Flatt's involvement with the implementation and building of the North Nechako Lions Hall on Austin Road (now the Hart Community Centre) led him to serve as a director of the centre for 23 years, from 1977 to 2000, Rustad said. He has been actively involved with the CNIB since 1967 and is fondly known as Mr. CNIB to national, provin-

cial and local board members, staff and volunteers, according to a release from the Prince George Community Foundation.

"I've helped get better laser equipment for eye care for the hospital," Flatt said. "I've also helped get equipment for the low-vision clinic on the fifth floor of the hospital operated by the CNIB."

"I do a lot of fundraising for the CNIB," he said. "Next year we'll be selling raffle tickets for classic cars, with proceeds going to the blind in northern B.C. and the Yukon. I'm chairman of the CNIB advisory board for northern B.C. and the Yukon."

Fruit program keeping bears away

The Northern Bear Awareness fruit exchange program exceeded the group's goal of reducing the amount of unpicked fruit trees within the city, says the team's fall coordinator Mark Roberts.

"We were overwhelmed by the response from the community," Roberts said. "We had over 125 fruit-tree owners directly involved, with many more calling for information on how to reduce the bear attractants in their yards."

The second annual program brought together people who were unable to use their fruit with those who wanted to pick and use the fruit.

Homeowners can reduce the attractant of fruit in their yards in a number of ways, Roberts said.

"Certainly pruning or removing trees that produce fruit is the easiest way of reducing the fruit produced; however, for people who would like to keep their fruit trees, using portable electric fencing is an effective way of keeping bears away," Roberts said.

The impact of drawing bears into residential areas is significant, he said. Fruit-attracted bears quickly find garbage as another attractive food option.

"Unfortunately, homeowners who allow bears to feed on their fruit trees begin the process of unnatural food source habituation for the bears," Roberts said. "Bears which have learned that residential areas are a good source of food are a public safety risk and are ultimately destroyed."

The last report from the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection said a total of 54 black bears have been destroyed this year in the Prince George area, nearly doubling the number put down in all of 2000. According to local conservation officials, 31 of the 54 bears were destroyed after Sept. 1. For more information about the fruit exchange and the work of the Northern Bear Awareness, call 563-5437.

FACTBOX

Reminders of bear-proofing measures for homeowners:

- Pick all fruit from trees and remove it from the ground underneath trees;
- Store garbage in your home, garage or in a sturdy shed until collected;
- Wash barbecue grills after each use, cover and store securely;
- Keep pets in an enclosed area. Pet food should be securely stored;
- Don't throw cooking oil or grease outside;
- Don't put meat, fish or animal parts in compost bins;
- Reduce the use of composts and consider protecting them with electric fencing.

Health committee set for visit

by BERNICE TRICK
Citizen staff

Premier Gordon Campbell will host a Dialogue on Health today in Vancouver.

Sindi Hawkins, minister responsible for health planning, said the day-long forum will bring together about 140 health-care professionals, administrators, patients, community leaders, union representatives and other experts from throughout the province.

"We're facing a huge problem in health care and need to find ways to make the system work," said Hawkins. "The premier is willing to commit to having an open, honest discussion

to ensure patients are getting the best health care possible."

Art Kaehn, vice-chair of Fraser-Fort George Regional District, will attend the session.

The Select Standing Committee on Health, comprised of 11 MLAs, will be in Prince George Oct. 30 from 1 to 9 p.m. at the Ramada Hotel.

Prince George North MLA Pat Bell said the public is to attend and make presentations. The first presentation at 1 p.m. will be made by Dave Richardson, CEO of Northern Interior Regional Health Board.

The session will be chaired by Val Roddick, MLA (Delta South).

Pipeline session goes tonight

The future of the oil pipeline leading south from Prince George is the subject of a public information session set for tonight at the Civic Centre.

The session about plans for hydrostatic (pressurized-water) testing of the line is scheduled to run from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

A presentation by Plateau Pipe Line Ltd. starts at 7:15 p.m. Plateau Pipe Line Ltd. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Calgary-based Pembina Pipeline Corporation.

The hydrostatic testing, designed to locate weaknesses and potential leaks, is one part of preparations for reactivating Plateau's Western Pipeline from Prince George to Kamloops.

The whole length of the pipeline between

Taylor and Kamloops was shut down after a rupture July 31, 2000, along the northern segment near Chetwynd.

The break was repaired and service between Taylor and Prince George's Husky oil refinery was restored by late Sept. 2000, but the southern portion of the line between Prince George and Kamloops has not been reopened.

At tonight's public information session representatives from Plateau Pipe Line will talk to local residents not only about the scheduling of the hydrostatic testing program, but also about safety measures being taken and future plans for the Western Pipeline.

Plateau invites all members of the community to attend.

Small Business Week events planned

The Prince George Chamber of Commerce has three events planned as Small Business Week continues through Saturday:

Wednesday

■ The Chamber of Commerce hosts a forum discussing the crisis in B.C.'s skilled workforce from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Civic Centre.

It includes keynote speakers, a panel discussion, opportunities for feedback and a dinner.

Keynote speakers are David Baxter, executive director of the Vancouver-based Urban Futures Institute, and Brian White, director of

the World Travel and Tourism Council's Human Resources Centre in North Vancouver.

Thursday
■ Luncheon speaker is Kevin Falcon, B.C.'s minister of state for deregulation.

Falcon will outline the process that is being used to reduce the regulatory burden and red tape in B.C. Begins at noon at Days Inn.

■ The Business Development Bank of Canada, suite 100, 177 Victoria St., hosts a Business Around Town social.

Refreshments and hors d'oeuvres served from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30.

FIRE ALARMS

Some homes in the Miwirth area had to be evacuated late Sunday afternoon when vehicles burned and propane tanks caught fire.

There were no reports of injuries.

Prince George RCMP responded to the call about the fire on Bergman Road at 4:01 p.m.

Officers found four vehicles engulfed in flames. The propane tanks nearby that had caught fire were venting.

Three residents in the area had to leave in case of a possible explosion from the propane tanks.

As of 6:20 p.m. Sunday the fires had burned themselves out and the residents were returning to their homes. Firefighters went to the scene where a person was trapped in an elevator in the city Saturday.

No one was injured. Fire crews stood by until elevator repair people were on the scene.

Also on Saturday smoke was reported in the area of Irene Road. On arriving a fire crew found a homeowner doing yard cleanup work and burning leaves. Firefighters saw that the fire was extinguished.

In other fire news:

—The city fire department got a call about young people lighting a tree on fire in Rainbow Park Saturday. A fire crew found no evidence of fire.

—Fire alarms went off in a city home Sunday morning. Firefighters found that the resident making toast had activated the alarm.

—On Friday fire alarm had sounded in a building on Johnson Street. Firefighters in this case, too, found that an occupant's cooking had set the alarm off.

—Also from the start of the weekend through the noon hour Sunday, fire crews responded to 14 calls for medical assistance.

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Making your

Halloween Safe

Halloween is approaching and the days are getting shorter. BC Hydro is concerned about public safety and will make every effort to ensure street lights are working in your neighbourhood.

Please report any street lights that are not working by phoning BC Hydro at 1 888 POWERON (1 888 769-3766) before Friday, October 26, 2001. Staff will be available to take your calls between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

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