

**RCMP AND HOSPITAL AT ODDS WITH ASSAULT CENTRE**

# After a rape: Get evidence or comfort victim?

by JACK NITTEL  
Staff Reporter

Citing differences of philosophy and doubts about staff qualifications, spokesmen for Prince George Regional Hospital and the RCMP say they will not refer rape victims to the Rape Assault Centre here.

The centre, which has a 24-hour telephone line that went into operation July 6, is staffed by volunteers and has a \$3,400 annual operating budget, all of which is raised through private donations.

Problems between the hospital and the centre first surfaced six months ago when Eleanor Crowe, a founding member of the organization, spoke at a staff meeting of emergency ward nurses.

Crowe said she was asked if the centre counselled victims to report the rape to police. She replied that the centre's philosophy is to present options to the rape victim and let the victim decide what she wants to do. Bringing the police in is just one of those options.

Pat Kaspro, head of the emergency ward, said Crowe was also critical of the amount of support nurses gave to rape victims and suggested that emergency ward staff were more concerned about gathering evidence for the RCMP than look-

ing after the emotional needs of the rape victim.

Hospital staff and RCMP have traditionally maintained close contact with each other when dealing with rape victims: RCMP count on hospital staff to gather much of the physical evidence that may tie a victim to a rapist.

Hospital staff take swabs, hair samples and fingernail clippings if the victim says she is going to take the rapist to court, Kaspro said.

"There's no question this shouldn't be happening to someone who has just had a traumatic experience, but it's absolutely necessary if the woman is going to lay charges," she said.

Kaspro concedes there are deeper reasons for not referring victims to the assault centre. There's a widespread feeling among staff that rape centre counsellors reinforce the belief that all men are potential rapists and that the law suppresses women.

As well, many hospital and RCMP personnel feel that rape victims are being steered away from reporting a sexual assault.

"Someone is going around telling everybody who will listen that they had a terrible experience with the police," said Cpl.

Larry Weber, training officer for the Prince George detachment.

Crowe and another rape counsellor who requested anonymity said there have been instances when the RCMP response to a rape complaint has been skeptical and aggressive. "Some women who have gone to the police after they've been raped have said they would never go to the police again," said Crowe.

She said it's unfortunate that there can't be closer liaison between their organization, the hospital and the RCMP but emphasized that the top priority for the Rape Assault Centre is to look after the victim of a sexual assault.

And one way of doing that, she said, is to return to the victim some control over her life. "We won't counsel victims to go to the police and we won't counsel them not to go to the police. We leave it up to them. It's their decision."

Another rape relief counsellor denied rape victims are coerced to accept the philosophy that all men are potential rapists and that the law is suppressive to women and children.

"A woman may choose to adopt our views, but when we're dealing with a victim of a sexual assault, the only thing we're

concerned about is the emotional and physical needs of the victim.

"We're not out to make them accept feminist philosophy," she said.

A part of that philosophy is that men should be held responsible for their actions. To that end, some sexual assault centres will suggest that the victim confront the attacker. This is an option Cpl. Weber fears could lead to violence.

"To me, that's asking to be shot," said Weber. "If a psychiatrist recommends that kind of thing for the victim, that's fine, but I really question the expertise and qualifications of the people they have working here."

As far as Crowe and two other counsellors are concerned, the confrontation tactics have been blown out of proportion.

They have yet to confront a rapist and said it could be a year before they feel comfortable enough to try it.

Crowe added, however, that psychiatrists don't always know what is best for the victim of a sexual assault. "We reject the notion that experts know everything about what a victim of a sexual assault is feeling."

"We believe our experience as women, and in some cases as victims, can be more valuable than anything the so-called experts can tell a rape victim."

## Boy, 10, seriously injured

A 10-year-old boy is in serious condition in hospital today following a hit-and-run accident at about 8 p.m. Wednesday on Shady Lane. Jamie Douglas Lynn, of Prince George, was struck by an eastbound vehicle near the entrance of the Shady Lane Motel. The driver left the scene of the accident and Lynn was taken to hospital with head injuries.

RCMP are asking anyone who may have witnessed the accident to phone the local detachment at 562-3371. The vehicle is described as a pick-up truck, either red or green, possibly a Ford, with a canopy on the back.

## Hotel sale confirmed

Rumors about the sale of the Prince George Hotel were confirmed today by the new owners.

Gerry Coole, president of Coole Hotel Co. Ltd., says his firm has purchased the downtown hotel from Mid-North Hotel, but did not disclose a price.

The hotel will be managed and operated by Coole's sons Robert and Ted, starting today.

The Cooles have been active in the Prince George hotel industry for nearly 25 years.

## Smokey's watching

The forest fire season begins April 15 and the B.C. Forest Service is reminding the public that burning permits are required outside of municipal boundaries.

The purpose of the permit is to ensure that burning is conducted safely, said Dawson Wallin, the forest service's fire prevention coordinator in Prince George.

Permits are required year-round for burning machine-piled debris from land clearing operations, broadcast burning of forest debris from logging, and any prescribed burning to enhance wildlife or domestic cattle range.

During the fire season, anyone planning to do any burning whatsoever will need a permit and should contact the nearest Forest Service district office before a fire is lit.

The permits are free and are available by contacting offices in Prince George, Vanderhoof, Fort St. James, Mackenzie, McBride or Valemount.

No permit is required for a campfire.

## Electricians back on job

Electricians have returned to work at the Northwood Pulp expansion site after staying off the job for two days.

The walkout came Tuesday when an electrical foreman was fired by Flanders Installations, the site contractor.

About 170 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 2203, put up a picket line and most called in sick Wednesday.

Flanders and IBEW have apparently resolved the problem, although the dismissed foreman has not been reinstated.



Alice and Co.

Alice goes to trial to save her head in a 45-minute musical production, *Trial of Alice In Wonderland*, by Beaverly Elementary Grades 1-7 today, 7:30 p.m. at the school. Whether or not Alice is convicted is up to the audience. Admission is free. Michelle Hodges, left, plays the White Rabbit and Erin Steward is Alice.

## FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

### 'Polite' meeting held

Ninety-eight people attended the last of eight public hearings on Family Life Education, held Wednesday at Mackenzie elementary school.

The meeting ran about two hours with 12 people presenting briefs, said Paul Harris, Public Relations Officer for the Prince

George School District. Of 26 written briefs submitted, 17 opposed Family Life Education, six called for more information and three favored it.

"They were polite and respectful of each other," Harris said.

The public hearings were organized by a task force

studying Family Life Education for the Prince George school district.

Family Life Education is a program which may include subjects like sex education, maintaining self-esteem, decision making and other social and interpersonal studies.

Whether the program is

ever offered in the Prince George school district, and what the course content and extent of the program would be, depends on the school board.

The school board will make its decision after the task force has submitted its findings. No date is set.

Briefs from the public will be accepted until April 30.

## 1,000 dancers compete

The third-largest dance festival in B.C. begins Saturday at Vanier Hall.

About 1,000 dancers from as far away as Alberta and Vancouver will compete in the Prince George Dance Festival, which for six to 12 top competitors will be a stepping stone to the B.C. Festival of Arts in Kamloops, June 2 to 5.

Winners and the recipient of a \$1,000 scholarship will be announced during Wednesday's honors performance.

Youngsters and not-so-young begin competition Saturday at 9 a.m., with Highland and Dance being the major categories.

Each category has a number of separate divisions.

## Slate elected

One of the driving forces behind the formation of Prince George's Mardi Gras has been elected president of the society.

Bill Opdahl, who was vice-president last year, was elected president Wednesday at a society meeting.

Other directors elected are past-president Susan Cameron, Barb Birch, Ken McDonald, Joe Fouchard, Colin Kinsley, Ron Thiel, Barb Haddock, Cameron Sutherland, Ken O'Neill and Hugh McKay.

A vice-president, secretary and treasurer will be elected from the 10 directors at a board meeting later this month.

## CITY PILOT KILLED

### Crashed helicopter found

The pilot of a Bell Jet Ranger helicopter, missing since Tuesday night, was found dead in the crashed aircraft at 5:20 p.m. Wednesday.

The pilot, Robert John McPhillips, 34, of Prince George was on a night instrument training flight when he radioed Quesnel airport at about 9:30 p.m. Tuesday that he was returning to Prince George after encountering snow.

The helicopter, belonging to Northern Mountain Helicopters, was found crashed in a gully in a heavily-treed area about 20 km northwest of Quesnel by Northern Mountain employees spotting from a

company helicopter.

Minutes after locating the downed aircraft, military search and rescue personnel were lowered from a Labrador helicopter and retrieved the body. It appeared McPhillips, a pilot with Northern Mountain for seven years, died on impact.

Jim Lorie, Northern Mountain's chief pilot, said the company had one helicopter and one airplane searching for flares or a fire within hours of McPhillips' disappearance.

At first light, 14 company helicopters and two company airplanes were in the air as well as two aircraft from Okanagan Helicopters and one from Viking Helicopters.

The search was coordinated from Northern Mountain's dispatch office.

Lorie said.

A twin-engine Buffalo was dispatched from CFB Comox shortly after radio contact was lost with the downed helicopter. Two military helicopters joined the search early Wednesday, a spokesman for the rescue co-ordination centre said.

A decision is expected later on whether an inquest will be held.

## Builders scramble for job

by LYNDIA WILLIAMS  
Staff reporter

It's a buyer's market: If you're looking for someone to build you a school.

The school district pays for big projects, like building schools, out of large chunks of money isolated and approved for specific use. It had \$1,467,200 available to shop for a contract to build Springwood elementary school. Another \$213,000 was applied for in anticipation of cost overruns.

But the winning bid in an eight-way fight for the contract came in at \$1,394,581. The bid was made by Norcan Construction Ltd. and approved by the school board at a meeting Tuesday.

Two other bids also came in under \$1,467,200 but only the Norcan bid was under the total estimated cost. The school district installs its own building accessories, including furnishings, chalk boards, gym equipment and library shelving. The bill for that is estimated at \$72,500.

That still leaves the school district \$119 in the black for Springwood elementary school.

"It's an indication of a lot of competition for scarce work. They must have cut their costs to the bone," said trustee Graham Farstad, head of the district operations committee.

Art Erasmus, assistant superintendent of district operations, said it is unusual for a bid to be less than the estimated cost.

"We are very pleasantly surprised," he said.

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