

ROYALTY

50,000  
EXPECTED  
FOR VISIT

The B.C. Festival of the Arts, the largest festival of its kind in Canada, will be even bigger this year due to the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales, says festival coordinator Sandy Edgar.

Edgar, guest speaker at this week's Prince George Rotary Club luncheon, said about 50,000 people are expected along the route the royal couple will take from Prince George airport to city hall: down Highway 97 to 15th Avenue, along Patricia Boulevard to Dominion Street, past the fire hall and to city hall.

Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, will be here May 4 to officially open the arts festival at a ceremony in the Coliseum. They will first be greeted by dignitaries at city hall.

Edgar used the opportunity to announce that the opening ceremonies of the festival will be sponsored entirely by The Citizen.

"It's absolutely super," she said. "It's allowing us to pay for the entire area of activity."

She and her committee want to have the Coliseum and its ceremonies at a standard the community can present with pride — decorations, lighting and sound for the performances and even the staging which will be needed.

In total, more than 1,500 festival participants are expected to come here.

Members of Theatre B.C. alone will bring more than 300 people into Prince George, she said. They will represent 12 provincial regions, each of which has had its own drama festival from which the best entries have been chosen to perform here May 3.

Another 500 drama competitors will be sent here by the Association of B.C. Drama Educators, which has invited a 10-member award-winning Japanese troupe to perform here.

Aside from drama and the first inclusion of the B.C. student film festival, competitions in dance, music and speech arts will be held throughout the city.

At least two arts or crafts shows will be presented, including special displays at Fraser-Fort George Museum.

Aside from the more commercial aspect of the shows, some of the performers will be taking part in an outreach program to take the entertainment to rest homes and the Prince George Regional Hospital.

Edgar commended the College of New Caledonia, which will be the centre of several activities, for its co-operation in helping the festival to plan ahead.

"CNC has bent over backwards," she said.

music  
festival

Bart Wagner and Michele Scott, participating in the Prince George and District Music Festival Wednesday, tied for the senior solo trophy for organ recital from Old Dutch Foods Ltd.

Erin Forrest was awarded the Farr Installations Ltd. trophy for junior solo in the organ class. The Clandonald Logging Ltd. trophy for junior solo was awarded to Zenta Burgelis, while the Prince George and District Credit Union trophy for senior solo, classical, was awarded to Jacqueline Jago.

Results from the organ portion of the festival are:

Class 651 (modern, two years study or less) — Erin Forrest, 88.

Class 652 (modern, two to four years study) — Kristy Paulhus, 87.

Class 653 (modern, more than four years study) — Bart Wagner, 88.

Class 661 (modern, with mechanical aids, two years study or less) — Tisha McGregor, 88.

Class 662 (modern, with mechanical aids, two to four years study) — Zenta Burgelis, 88.

Class 663 (modern, with mechanical aids, more than four years study) — tie, Bart Wagner and Michele Scott, 88.

A portion of the instrumental section of the festival was held Wednesday afternoon with the rest of the classes postponed until Friday.

INSTRUMENTAL

Class 228 (brass diploma class concert group, open) — Gwyneth MacKenzie, 93.

Class 239 (elementary school nine or more players, second year) — Immaculate Conception band, 83.

Class 235 (elementary school duet, second year) — Christine Zoble and Leona Zaluski, 84.

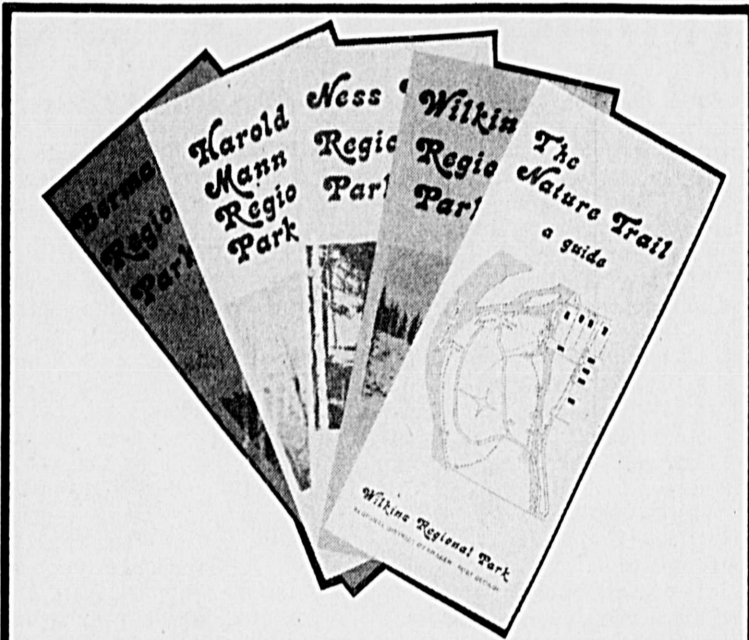
Class 236 (elementary school trio, second year) — Kathy Milanovic, Erin Forrest and Suzie Fowlie, 84.5.

Class 1000 (other instruments solo, junior and senior) — Juanita Bright, 82.

Class 1001 (other instruments ensemble, junior) — Juanita Bright and Carrie Flynn, 84.

Class 1002 (community music group) — Prince George Wind Ensemble, 89.

The festival continues today and Friday with the honors performance featuring top contestants in the festival at 7:30 p.m. Saturday in Vanier Hall.



Region sets goals  
for park projects

by MALCOLM CURTIS  
Staff reporter

The eagle has landed as far as the development of regional parks around Prince George is concerned.

Five years ago, in high-flying times, planners optimistically envisaged a sheaf of park projects in the Fraser-Fort George Regional District, serving residents from Valemount to Mackenzie. In the works were waterfall retreats in the Robson Valley, new lakeside picnic spots and a 25-kilometre long hiking trail along the Fraser River.

With the downturn in the economy many of those plans have been shelved or put on the back burner.

The district board votes today on a bylaw setting out a new regional parks plan to replace the

blueprint mapped out in 1981.

The goals for park development have changed, making the existing bylaw obsolete, said district planner Derek Trimmer.

The district has established six parks, with two more being worked on this year.

The emphasis for new development is being placed on Giscome Portage Regional Park, site of historic Hubble House and former stop-off for fur traders, 45 km north of Prince George. The district has set aside \$15,000 for the park on top of government grants, donations and money from fund-raising efforts.

The other park being developed is McMillan Creek, located in the city north of the Nechako River, where parking facilities off the Hart Highway and a trail are contemplated.

Why are they needed?

Plans to build a park at Fort George Canyon, downstream from the city and connected by a riverside hiking trail, have been downgraded in importance.

Lower priority is also given to potential parks at Vivian-Verdant Lakes, Tabor Lake and various trails built near the city and at Hixon, 60 kilometres south.

Parks once planned for West Lake, (where a provincial park has been established), Summit Lake (where there is a Forest Service recreation site), Tudyah Lake, Nukko Lake, Morfee Lake near Mackenzie, and Rainbow Falls near McBride, have been scrapped in the proposed new parks plan.

With all the wilderness around Central B.C., recreational opportunities would seem to abound, so why are regional district parks needed?

According to the parks plan they are intended to add to the quality of living for regional residents.

The need is thought to be greatest in the Prince George area, because 85 per cent of the region's population is here and also because much of the surrounding rural land has been, in the jargon of planners, "alienated."

The Mackenzie area and the

Robson Valley are two other areas which should be taken into account, the parks plan says.

It is proposed that the district try to serve the needs of rural communities in its parks program without duplicating services provided by another level of government.

"The regional district may also as policy consider the establishment and maintenance of public access to lakes as regional parks," the proposed bylaw says. "But this is not a policy or commitment to assume responsibility for public access to lakes generally."

Work on the district's six developed regional parks is headed by a full-time co-ordinator who hires a summer staff of two to do maintenance work and upkeep.

The district had planned on using the federal Katimavik youth program for further upgrading, but since the plan was scrapped this year by the Mulroney government different options will have to be looked at.

In the past, work has been done by young and adult offenders through the Intersect community service program.

Other work is handed out on a contract basis. About \$114,000 has been budgeted this year for the parks.

Our developed areas

Here are the six developed regional district parks:

■ **Wilkins Regional Park:** Home to a pair of bald eagles, 14 km west of Prince George in Miworth, this 57-hectare park has 800 metres of shoreline on the Nechako River with parking, picnic facilities and nature trails. There is access to the river for boat launching.

Possible expansion includes extension of shoreline to the west and the addition of an island in the river, to the east.

■ **Berman Lake Regional Park:** This 38-hectare park is one of the first regional parks to be developed. It has a beach and canoe launch on Berman Lake, 45 km west of the city. Boating, picnicking and fishing are some of the park's attractions.

■ **Ness Lake Regional Park:** This park borders on the south-east end of Ness Lake, 32 km northwest of Prince George. There are trails, a picnicking, parking and a beach area with change house.

■ **Harold Mann Regional Park:** Named after a pioneer who intro-

duced truck logging to the Prince George region, this small park is perched on the northern shore of Eagle Lake, off the Upper Fraser Valley Road, 50 km northeast of Prince George and 20 km west of Upper Fraser. Bird-watching and picnicking within sight of the Rocky Mountains are the main features.

■ **Koeneman Regional Park:** This is a small roadside park in McBride off the Yellowhead Highway, 217 km east of Prince George. There are picnic facilities on the banks of the Fraser River with mountain views. A heritage log house in the park is used by the Robson Valley Community Arts Council.

■ **George Hicks Regional Park:** Salmon spawning in Swift Creek can be seen in this park near Valemount, off Highway 5, 297 km east of Prince George. There is parking and picnic tables available.

Pamphlets are available from the Fraser-Fort George Regional District office, 1717 Third Avenue. Phone 563-9225.

Speech festival next

Right on the heels of the current music festival comes the Community Speech Arts and Drama Festival, from Sunday to Wednesday in Prince George Playhouse, with a concert to be held at 7:30 p.m. March 27.

The 285 entries include individual participants as well as choral groups and groups presenting plays.

The first play will go on the boards at 1 p.m. Tuesday, when Pinewood Drama Club's production of Cinderella is presented in competitions for Grades 4 to 7.

Some of this district's best young actors and actresses will be competing in this festival. Some of them are already well-known to theatre audiences while others are making their names in one production after another.

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ANALYST'S VIEW:

Concessions the key  
to coal mine's future

by Canadian Press

VANCOUVER — A negotiator appointed by Quintette Coal Ltd. will likely win concessions from the firm's bankers as well as breaks on rail and port charges, says Midland Doherty analyst Geoff Carter.

But the British Columbia government, which would have to grant some of the concessions, has no intention of getting involved, Tony Brummet, minister of energy, mines and petroleum resources, said Tuesday.

"It's not in the interests of any party to see the mine close," Carter said in a telephone interview from Toronto. Carter predicted the mine will continue to operate at break-even before interest payments to the banks. In a Midland Doherty report last December, Carter estimated Quintette would lose \$60 million to \$80 million a year for several years after paying interest to the banks.

On Friday, Denison Mines Ltd., which owns 50 per cent of Quintette and operates the mine, said it had hired former Canadianair president Gil Bennett to review all aspects of the mine's operations.

Denison president Jake Fowler said from Toronto that Bennett won't have any authority to make decisions. "He will negotiate with all parties and then report back to Quintette's shareholders," said Fowler.

Asked if the provincial government would agree to a meeting if one was requested by Bennett, Brummet said: "It depends on the conditions. It's hypothetical. At this point in time I don't see that we will get involved."

Brummet said it is a matter for the buyers and sellers to sort out. He said if there is a request for lower rail charges it would be left to B.C. Rail and the government wouldn't interfere.

The Bennett appointment comes as the first principal payment of \$40 million on the company's bank debt falls due mid-year.

"Bennett will play hardball with

the bankers, the unions, the railway, the port and the Japanese steel mills," said Carter. "All sides will have to give a little and they probably will to keep the mine operating."

Carter says the mine is superfluous to the Japanese steel industry's needs. The mills can buy all the coal they want for \$20-a-tonne less from other mines, but it suits them to keep a surplus of metallurgical coal to keep prices depressed worldwide.

The huge amount of public money that has been invested in northeast coal — about \$1 billion in the town of Tumbler Ridge, rail and port facilities — means there are a lot of political as well as commercial considerations, Carter said.

Carter predicts that the rail and port charges will be cut and the provincial government will give a break on royalties.

But Brummet said the govern-

ment isn't considering a break on the royalty it collects on the coal or the surcharge of just over \$3 a tonne it collects to pay for the B.C. Rail spur line.

"The banks will likely agree to restructure the loans," said Carter. "The \$700 million in non-recourse debt is spread among 56 banks. No one bank is over-exposed and if they get their interest payments it serves no purpose to close the mine down."

Quintette president Paul Kostuik said Tuesday the mine wouldn't close down.

He did confirm, however, that the Japanese are requesting price and volume cuts and that Quintette would need to restructure its debt if the Japanese requests are met.

He declined to comment on reports in the Japanese trade press that the steel mills had requested a \$21-a-tonne rollback. Quintette now is shipping at \$94.29 a tonne.

Survey to determine  
'street kids' problem

A group of citizens concerned about homeless youth in Prince George are forming a society to deal with the problem of street kids.

Richard King, a member of the recently-formed emergency youth shelter committee, says the first task will be to do a survey to identify how many young people may be in this situation.

"I wouldn't like to guess at numbers, but we know there are some who are hanging out in the area of the MacDonald and Canada Hotels who are sleeping in cubby holes," he said.

He believes the majority — some as young as 12 years old — range from youths who "leave home because they're just problem kids to those running away from violent

and abusive home situations."

Also included are "middle-class youths who have a fight with their parents and usually end up at friend's home."

King urges anyone who would like to help out with the group and the survey to attend the next committee meeting at 7:30 p.m. Monday at St. Giles Presbyterian Church.

The last time a youth hostel operated in Prince George was in 1979, according to Scott Bonner, director of Intersect Society, which works with youth and adult offenders ordered by the courts to perform community service.

"At that time, the hostel closed down because there wasn't enough need for it," says Bonner, who noted the cost for a night's lodging was \$2.

The people who used the hostel, located at King George V elementary school gymnasium, were transient youth passing through the city, cycling tourists and adults who needed temporary shelter, he recalled.

He said the hardest task in trying to come to grips with such a situation is differentiating between local homeless youth and transients, to determine first if there is a problem in Prince George and how big it might be.

Irradiated food fears  
calmed by researcher

by DIANE BAILEY  
Staff reporter

Radiation is the wave of the near future in food preservation, says a medical biophysics researcher with the Whiteshell Nuclear Research Establishment in Pinawa, Manitoba.

Clive Greenstock told the Prince George Chamber of Commerce Wednesday chemicals which have traditionally been used to sterilize food, like ethylene dibromide, have been found to cause cancer and have been banned.

With consumers unlikely to give up the convenience of packaged foods or the luxury of fruits and vegetables from around the world, radiation will fill the void.

"The International Atomic Energy Agency has just approved the use of ionizing radiation for food preservation and sterilization," he said.

It can be used to delay or prevent sprouting, retard the ripening of fruit or kill the germs and bacteria that cause spoilage, said Greenstock.

Canadians who have eaten strawberries imported from Eastern Europe, where the irradiation of fruit and vegetables is common, have already been exposed to this method of food preservation.

Soviet and American astronauts carry irradiated food into space with them, partly for the packaging convenience and partly to prevent the spread of earthly germs.

Greenstock admits there are no guarantees the technology is free of hidden risks.

"You can never give everyone a total assurance of anything," he said in an interview.

"It is a matter of relative risk."

He said tests on the irradiation of meats, poultry and fruit over the past 30 years have resulted in a large body of research, largely positive.

About 95 per cent of the studies conclude the method is "perfectly fine," Greenstock said. The remainder of the studies urge caution.

"We don't have any choice right now," he said. Even completely natural food has its share of problems.

"Natural food is better because it doesn't have additives. But it has bugs and disease," Greenstock said.

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North

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