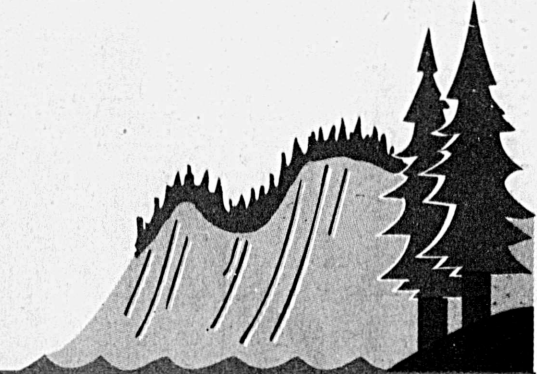




Low tonight: -4
High tomorrow: 1
Details page 2

PRINCE GEORGE
CITIZEN



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1994

79 CENTS



Citizen photo by Brent Braaten

Old St. Nick will be at the Fraser-Fort George Regional Museum Sunday for an open house

Youngsters visit Christmas past

by GORDON HOEKSTRA
Citizen Staff

The wind howls around the corners of the schoolhouse. Cold, white snow is clearly visible outside the large windows.

Children sit quietly in wooden desks, hands folded in front of them. They do not speak until spoken to.

Everything is made of wood — the floors, the walls, the ceilings.

Welcome to school in 1910 courtesy of the Fraser-Fort George Regional Museum — Christmas 1910 to be exact.

Betty Burbee's Grade 3-4 split class at Heritage Elementary School has been learning about Canada this year and has focused on Christmas past in December.

They got a taste of an old-fashioned Christmas first hand

Thursday morning, visiting the museum and taking part in an old-time French-Canadian luncheon back at the school.

"We've learned what they did, what they eat and how they decorated the tree," said nine-year-old Gillian Knox, who's in Grade 4.

The Heritage students really got into the spirit of the trip back in time, dressing up in period costume. The girls wore gingham dresses and bonnets; while the boys wore wool pants, suspenders, neck-strangling buttoned-up long-sleeve shirts and caps.

"The kids at school were laughing at me a little bit," said Curtis Saunders, 8, with a twinkle in his eye.

"It's actually just for the fun of it," said Burbee, "and to add a lit-

tle more authenticity to the visit."

The students also learned about the different kinds of Santas from days gone by, said Aleesha Gillette, 8.

One of those Santas from the past — St. Nicholas — visited the children and handed out candies in the old schoolhouse.

Commented one of the students: "They didn't change (Christmas) too much."

The old-fashioned Christmas at the museum is open to the public until Dec. 18. There's an open house from noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

You can also visit the old-fashioned school house for Christmas readings and hot apple cider.

Call Cindy at 562-1612 for more information.

\$2.7 MILLION LESS

Recycling cost under budget

by BERNICE TRICK
Citizen Staff

Here's a Christmas present for taxpayers in the Prince George region.

You'll pay at least \$2.7 million less than the estimated \$48.4 million for a recycling program in the new Regional Solid Waste Management Plan being implemented by the Fraser-Fort George Regional District.

That's because recycling work is being contracted out to Crown Packaging Ltd. (formerly CPL Paperboard) of Prince George to provide the service for residential, industrial and institutional sectors.

By using the contractor, taxpayers will save \$2.2 million in capital costs and \$750,000 in operating

costs by not having to hire workers, buy trucks and other equipment, construct a recycling facility or market the material.

It will cost taxpayers about \$239,450 in operating costs annually to rent recycling bins and pay the contractor for hauling the materials to its premises in the BCR Industrial site from Mackenzie, McBride, Dunster and Valemount, where drop-off depots are established. Crown Packaging was awarded the contract Thursday by regional district directors at the recommendation of the standing solid waste committee, which reviewed proposals by four bidders — two from outside the region.

The contractor is offering a better proposal than planned by

FFGRD in that it will accept mixed paper products like catalogues, telephone books and magazines along with cardboard and newspaper and metal food and beverage containers. The contractor has a three-year contract which can be renewed Jan. 1, 1998.

There will be 10 drop-off depots in Prince George, three in Mackenzie and one each at McBride, Dunster and Valemount. The contractor is responsible for the inspection, maintenance and cleanup of drop-off depots in Prince George.

In the four other communities, regional district officials will regularly inspect the depots and inform the contractor when it's time for the bins to be emptied.

Dead man's mother calls for public safety

by MARILEYN STORIE
Citizen Staff

A Bella Coola woman whose son was murdered in Prince George by a prisoner in breach of his parole is calling on federal and provincial jurisdictions to put the safety of the public first.

Marjean Fichtenberg said she felt compelled to speak out and write to the House of Commons after listening to remarks made by MP Warren Allmand this week.

Allmand said people don't understand the implications of not allowing those serving life sentences for murder to apply for parole after 15 years.

"I can assure you, Mr. Allmand, that most of us ordinary folks do have the ability to understand," Fichtenberg writes. "Politicians and bureaucrats do not have a monopoly on being able to understand what is going on in our country."

Fichtenberg's son was murdered in Prince George by Paul Butler, 28, who was on parole for several violent crimes, including armed robbery.

When he was released in August 1993, Butler was supposed to remain at a Prince George halfway house under stringent conditions that included a curfew. He slipped away from the house and was free for a week before he met Dennis Lee Fichtenberg, 25, on Sept. 3.

Fichtenberg's son invited Butler to stay at his place. On the following evening he was murdered by Butler in his mobile home.

Butler stabbed Fichtenberg six times before taking his keys and wallet and fleeing east in the victim's pickup truck. He was arrested near Winnipeg on Sept. 9.

The judge called it "a cold-blooded murder." Butler was sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole for 13 years. The minimum period of ineligibility for parole is 10 years, but can be extended up to 25 years if aggravating circumstances surround the offence of second-degree murder.

Fichtenberg can't forget that her son's death could have been prevented through more cautious releases of offenders.

"What seems to be lacking is

your and other like-minded politicians' ability to understand what the majority of Canadians want," Fichtenberg wrote to Allmand. "Canadians are fed up with seeing their sons, daughters and other loved ones brutally murdered."

"We are fed up with seeing our peace officers being gunned down. We are fed up with laws that give convicted killers the benefit of the doubt, while ignoring the rights of Canadians to live in a safe society. We are fed up with seeing our courts of law being undermined by the unilateral decisions of a Corrections Canada which very often fails to take what is supposed to be their number one mandate — public safety — into account when releasing dangerous criminals into the midst of unsuspecting people."

The SafetyNet Conference, hosted by CAVEAT (Canadians Against Violence Everywhere Advocating Its Termination) and the Canadian Police Association has sent its report, detailing 146 specific legislative and policy amendment recommendations to federal and provincial politicians.

New murder trial ordered

A Fort Ware man who is serving a life term in prison for the second-degree murder of his girlfriend will get a new trial.

Gerald Smaaslet, now 33, was convicted in February 1992 for the murder of Donna May Charlie, 22. He was sentenced to life in prison.

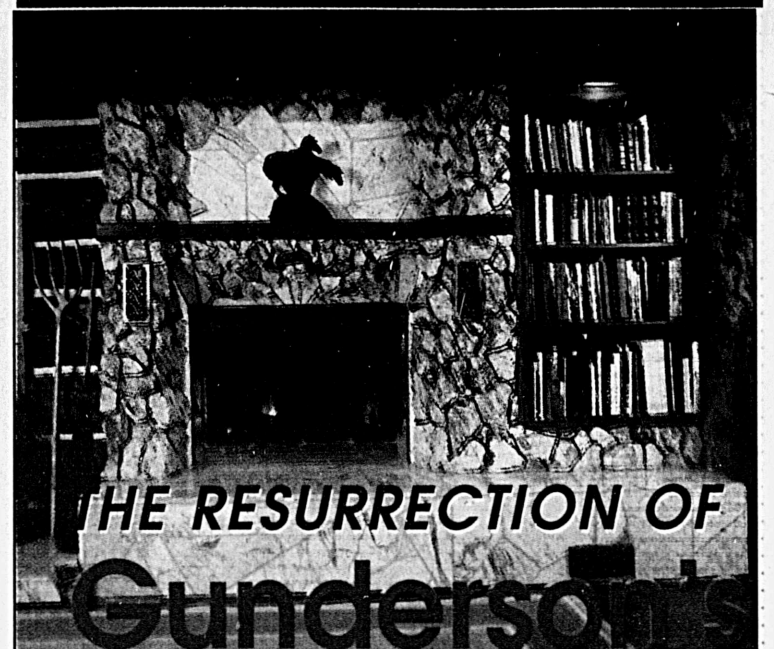
Charlie's headless body was discovered April 17, 1991, buried in a vacant lot near the Sportsmen's Motel. The couple had been staying at the motel during a 1990 vacation in Prince George.

An autopsy failed to determine how Charlie, also of Fort Ware, had died. Fort Ware is a remote Indian reserve 450 kilometres north of Prince George.

A panel of three B.C. Court of Appeal justices overturned the conviction Thursday and ordered a new trial.

Smaaslet denies he killed Charlie. He told the trial judge that he and Charlie had been drinking and doing drugs for several days.

A TALE OF 20,000 HOURS OF RENOVATION, page 25



THE RESURRECTION OF Gunderson's

barn

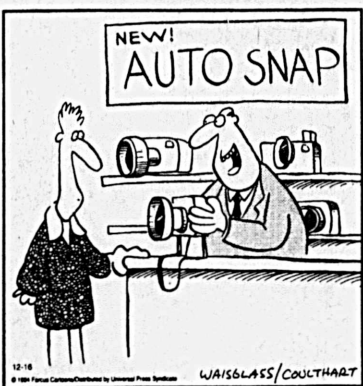
Built in the 1920s, a pioneer's hand-crafted log barn in Smithers has found new life as showpiece home. Photo shows the living room, with fireplace stone from an abandoned mine.

photo courtesy of Gary Fliegehen

INDEX

- Ann Landers32
- Bridge38
- Business21-23
- City, B.C.2,3,12
- Classified35-41
- Comics30
- Coming events32,34
- Crossword37
- Entertainment30,31
- Horoscope38
- Lotteries41
- Lifestyles32-34
- Movies31
- Nation8,10
- Sports13-20
- Television41
- World11

Farcus



"You don't even have to go on vacation — just put it on the tour bus and it takes its own pictures."



CSIS probed other parties

OTTAWA (CP) — Canada's spy agency investigated possible South African attempts to influence several Canadian political parties — not just Reform — in the late 1980s, a Commons committee was told today.

"CSIS did check possible relations or covert influence of the foreign country . . . with other political parties, not just Reform," said Michel Robert, acting chairman of the agency's watchdog.

Robert, citing legal restrictions, refused to identify the country.

But Reform Leader Preston Manning has confirmed it was South Africa.

