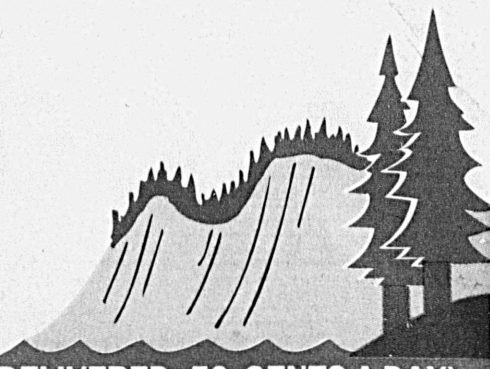


High today: 21
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Details page 22

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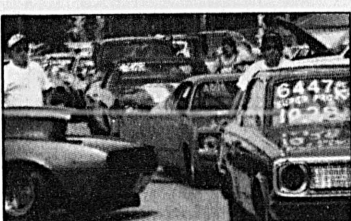


TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1999

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TODAY

COMMUNITY



PAGE 13

Life in the fast lane

SPORTS

John Hopson considered leaving his hometown to play junior hockey next year, but a talk with the new coach and GM of the Spruce Kings made him decide against a move to Vernon. /8

CANADA

Hundreds of Calgary homes were evacuated on Monday after explosions ripped through an oil recycling plant. Two employees were missing and at least five people were injured. Cause of the blast wasn't immediately known. /7

WORLD

As many as a million tourists are expected to visit the tiny southwestern corner of England to view the last total eclipse of the sun in the 20th Century. Big traffic jams are expected and emergency crews will be on full alert for Wednesday's big event. /14

Cornered

by Baldwin



"We do so communicate. I left you a note on the fridge."

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Gay Pride proclamation OK'd

by BOB MILLER
Citizen staff

City council endorsed a proclamation for Gay Pride Days, Sept. 3-5 at Monday's council meeting, but it won't carry the signature of Mayor Colin Kinsley.

Councillor Anne Martin volunteered to sign the proclamation as acting mayor for the month of August. She said she's had her eyes opened to hatred and intolerance and to not proclaim Gay Pride would be discrimination.

"As acting mayor this month I will sign it," Martin said.

Councillor Murry Krause, who moved the proclamation be endorsed, said it's important to support the request the same as council does others.

If the city is to attract businesses and professionals it's important to show tolerance for diversity, he said.

When the matter has been rejected by other councils and it's gone to court, invariably the gay activists have won, said Councillor Denise Goodkey. It would be a silly waste of money if Prince George city council wound up in court.

Goodkey said she's walked in the last two Gay Pride parades and most of those in it are heterosexuals who are walking in support of a friend or family member.

"We're making a mountain out of a molehill," she said.

Councillor Dan Rogers said it's wrong to equate endorsing a proclamation with endorsing a lifestyle. If council doesn't support the proclama-

tion it would be discrimination based on sexuality, he added.

Councillor Cliff Dezell said there are groups he wouldn't support a proclamation for, such as hate groups, but turning this one down would be discrimination.

Mayor Colin Kinsley said he won't support the request and it's unfortunate that council is divided on it. This year's request has become more of an issue, the mayor said, but as he sees it, it's a matter of sexuality that calls for personal choice.

The proclamation was endorsed by city council on a vote of 5-3. Mayor Colin Kinsley, and councillors Shirley Gratton and Ron Thiel opposed the motion. Councillors Dan Rogers, Anne Martin, Denise Goodkey, Murry Krause and Cliff Dezell supported it. Councillor Don Grantham was absent.

Forest fire threat down

The cooler temperatures in the North during the past 24 hours has presented a reprieve from the recent flurry of new forest fires, said an official with the B.C. Forest Service's Prince George Fire Centre.

As of Monday afternoon, only four new fires were reported to the centre since Sunday afternoon, and two of those are in the Fort Nelson and Fort St. John area, said Mike Dittaro.

The lightning experienced since Friday sparked 40 new fires in the North. Most were small spot fires and all but seven have been extinguished, said Dittaro.

Temperatures are expected to remain around 23 degrees Celsius for the rest of the week and rain is also expected. The fire danger rating in the Prince George region remains at a moderate level, said Dittaro.

So far this year, the total number of fires is significantly less than this time last year, said Dittaro. There have been 126 fires reported to the fire centre since May, compared to 425 over the same time period last year.

The Forest Service is continuing to ask for the public's assistance to report fires. People who see smoke or fire are asked to call the Forest Service at 1-800-663-5555 or toll free *5555 on the B.C. Tel mobility and Cantel cellular networks.

RCMP staffing tackled

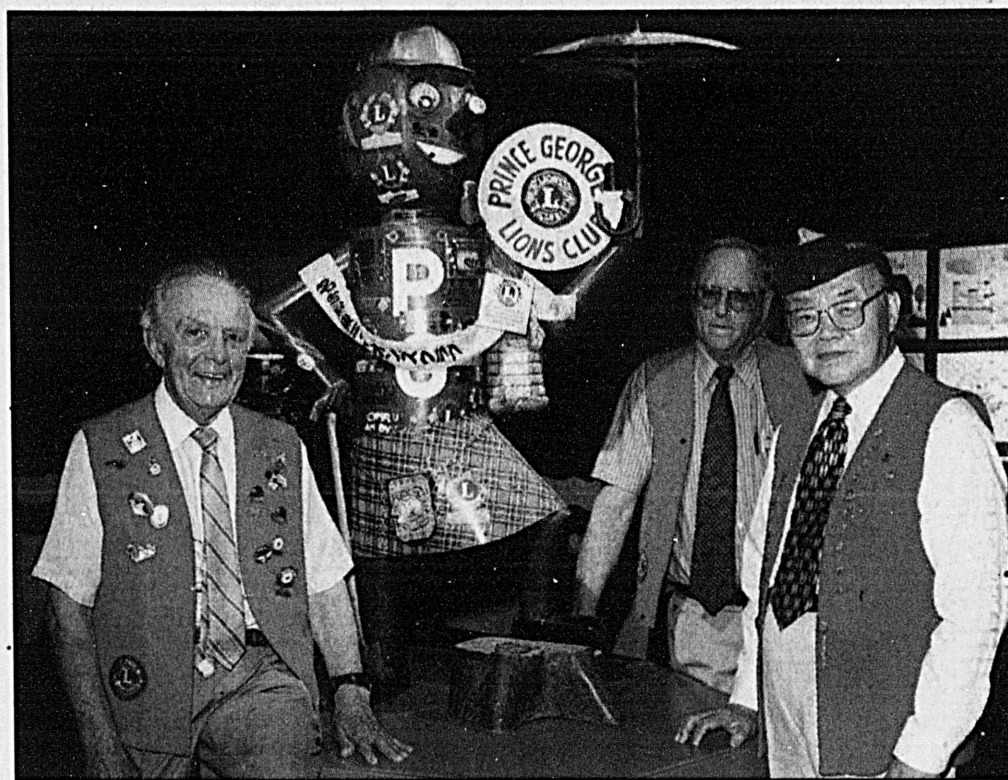
Mayor Colin Kinsley and senior city staff will meet with RCMP Superintendent Steven Leach to discuss manpower shortages that prompted redeployment of the Team Policing Unit earlier this month.

They hope to find out if the unit can be resurrected and failing that, someone to contact in the federal government.

In a report to council, director of administration Rob Whitwham explained the Mounties will be 10 officers under strength by Sept. 1 compounded by the fact some front-line members are on sick leave.

Councillor Cliff Dezell asked if Whitwham knew when the detachment would be up to full strength and was told that 136 RCMP recruits will be headed to B.C. in March of 2000, but no one knows how many would come to Prince George. To another question, Whitwham said the city pays only for the number of officers in the detachment. "You don't pay for full strength if it isn't there."

Councillor Denise Goodkey said downtown merchants feel the loss of the Team Policing Unit will set them back months, if not years. She estimated the city is saving about \$50,000 a month with 10 fewer police officers and perhaps this money could be used to hire some extra security for downtown. The mayor said tremendous growth in some cities, like Calgary for example, is resulting in growing police forces there that are luring some Mounties away. He said he's been told that four or five RCMP from here are joining the Calgary force.



David Mah photo

George Fabi, left, past director of the Prince George Lions Club, Mac MacDonald, past president of the club, centre, and Roy Yip, past president and past zone chairman of the club bid adieu to Big Sam, the steel Mr. PG who was donated to the Fraser-Fort George Regional Museum on Monday.

Steel Mr. P.G. given home at museum

Mr. PG's globetrotting alter ego, "Big Sam" as he was dubbed by the local Lions Club years ago, got a permanent berth at the Fraser-Fort George Regional Museum on Monday.

Members of the Prince George Lions Club donated Big Sam to the museum at a ceremony attended by Club members George Fabi, a past director; Mac MacDonald, past president, and Roy Yip, past president and a past zone chairman.

Bib Sam, also known as the steel Mr. PG, was a central figure in the museum's recent Mr. PG Goes to Market exhibition, a unique and historic representation of the city's official mascot, said a press release from museum manager Tracy Boychuck.

Big Sam was built in the mid-1950s by then Lions Club president George Buck, and was used as a visitation mascot for the Prince

George Central Lions Club, according to a history provided by the club.

Big Sam attended Lions conventions in other parts of B.C., Washington state, Oregon and California. At the time of the 1976 Lions Club international convention in Kobe, Japan, Big Sam was visiting Prince Rupert when a freighter captain, who was also a Lions member took him to Kobe.

After the convention he toured the Orient and Europe and sometime during these travels the local club lost track of him, the history says. In 1977, Nelda Loveng of Prince George, saw a clipping about the Lions "Iron Man Jock" in the Edinburgh Evening News. She contacted the Prince George Chamber of Commerce. Having found their mascot, now adorned with a kilt and umbrella, the Lions made arrangements for Big Sam's long-awaited return, it says.

Motorists asked to watch out for scooters on city streets

by ARLENE WATSON
Citizen staff

Patricia Mary Crowley says she's had one too many brushes with death while travelling on her scooter.

Motorists need to be more aware, said Crowley. "They need to realize that I am a pedestrian and should be treated like one — not a vehicle."

She said cars are constantly cutting her off and come very close to her when passing her.

Crowley began traveling in her scooter three months ago because of her arthritis.

She said Aug. 7, while crossing the intersection at 15th Avenue and Highway 97, she was cut off by a driver. Crowley was heading towards the Yellowhead Hotel on the pedestrian crossing, when a car made a left turn right in front of her, "she didn't even see me," said

Crowley. She said due to her allergies she travels a lot at night. But despite the bright headlight, reflectors and horn, cars don't seem to notice she's there, said Crowley.

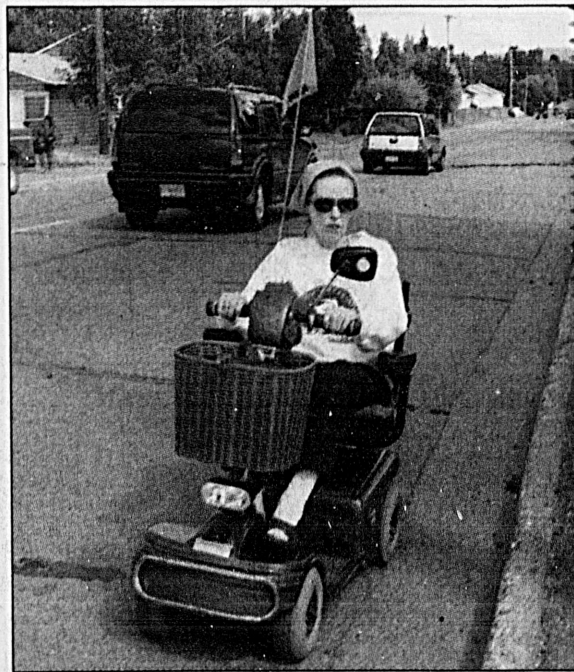
"This has just happened too many times," said Crowley. "If I honk at them, they don't hear me."

She said she travels a great deal on the side of the road because of the lack of ramps for getting on and off the sidewalks.

She said she's contacted the city to ask for improvements for people traveling by scooters or wheelchairs.

Until they make repairs, however, she wants motorists to take more care. People should be yielding to her when she's crossing an intersection, she said.

Patricia Crowley on her scooter.
Citizen photo by Brent Braaten



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