

Put ice rescue training on hold, inquiry says

Paola LORIGGIO *The Canadian Press*

TORONTO — Risky ice rescue courses that send firefighters and firefighting students into treacherous, fast-moving currents should be put on hold until they can be performed safely, a coroner’s inquest into the deaths of two Ontario men recommended Thursday.

Jurors looking into what led to the deaths of Gary Kendall, 51, and Adam Brunt, 30, in separate ice rescue training exercises said the province should convene an expert committee to determine whether such training can be carried out in swift water without endangering participants.

The committee should consider what equipment, techniques, locations and standards would be required to bring the risks down to an acceptable level, the jury suggested.

The jury’s 15 recommendations, which are not legally binding, were issued after the inquest heard from multiple witnesses, including fire officials, over more than two weeks.

A spokesman said the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development would be looking closely at the recommendations.

“We also encourage private training operators to ensure they are aware of them as well, including the recommendation to put this kind of training in abeyance until after further government decisions are made,” Murray Gaudreau said Thursday in an email.

“We will continue to review the recommendations and will strive to address the jury’s findings as we implement changes to improve our policies and procedures,” Gaudreau said.

Brunt’s father, Al Brunt, said the recommendations brought some hope that others would be better protected in the future. But he said the real relief will come when the government adopts the jury’s suggested policies.

“The people that are opting to get into first responders as a career deserve to be protected, deserve safety... Just to take a training course they shouldn’t have to put their life on the line and that’s hopefully what these policies, once enacted, will protect going forward,” he said outside the inquest.

“The closure aspect will come in time,” he added.

The lawyer representing Kendall’s family said they were pleased to see issues that had haunted them for years finally get attention.

“One of the questions that came up time and time again during this inquest is whether it’s possible to do this training safely at all, and everyone who testified only gave anecdotal evidence,” Alex Van Kralingen said after the hearing.

Now, he said, experts will make that call.

“The only sad thing for me is that we did not have this coroner’s inquest after the 2010 death of Gary Kendall,” he added. “The family, as you know, asked for an inquest at the time because they felt that there were systemic issues surrounding this sort of training, which were not being properly managed. No one listened to them and Adam died in 2015.”

Kendall, a veteran volunteer firefighter, and Adam Brunt, a firefighting student, died five years apart during ice rescue courses involving the same training company.



Logging equipment gets a clean in the parking lot of CN Centre on Thursday morning in preparation for the Canada North Resources Expo this Friday and Saturday.

Resources expo hitting CN Centre

Frank PEEBLES *Citizen staff*
fpeebles@pgcitizen.ca

Four acres of industry will be on display this weekend.

Starting today, CN Centre is home to the indoor-outdoor extravaganza that revs the heaviest engines in our local economy. The Canada North Resources Expo only comes every two years and it is only on for two days, though, so the rush is on.

The forest industry is naturally the focus of the event (it began as the Forest Expo back at its genesis), but mining, agriculture, construction, transportation, energy, safety, environmental protection and more will all get some of the lime-

light, plus all the crossover points.

Tools – large and small – will be one of the visual draws, but the expo is also about problem-solving for people involved in industry, upgrading your company with the best in capital investments, and getting close to the cutting edge of goods and services linked to the work we do on the local landscape.

It is also about human resources.

“At the show, you’ll find exhibitors who are looking to grow their ranks and hire new employees,” said a statement from the expo organization. “Companies on the hunt for new talent will have signage at their booth to indicate they are recruiting. If you are thinking about a new career, come with your resume and

meet prospective employers.”

It is a feast for the eyes and ears. All over the premises will be Tonka toys all grown up, live demonstrations, and chances to touch everything from saw-mills to big rigs. It pushes brain buttons for men and women, girls and boys.

Because of the family-friendly nature of the event, Saturday is officially Family Day at the event. Anyone with a regular admission ticket or complimentary pass can also bring the entire rest of their immediate family for free as long as you contribute a donation to the Salvation Army Food Bank.

The Canada North Resources Expo runs today and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Ticket price is \$10.

Slade brings jazz, blues north

Frank PEEBLES *Citizen staff*

It isn’t everyday that someone living in California and Hawaii opts to put down roots in Prince George. When Julie Slade joined that exclusive club, she was rewarded with the enduring affection of the local music scene.

Slade will be on stage tonight at the Oakroom Grill alongside two-thirds of the Zavan Trio – Eric Tompkins on guitars and Kenny Ogilvie on bass. Together they will cook up their own blend of jazz and blues.

“There will even be some Rolling Stones thrown in there for variety,” said Slade, who also has classic rock in her repertoire.

It all started with jazz, in her formative years, so the rocking always was a prominent appetizer. She and her sister were a child duo performing at church, then she evolved to the solo spotlight as a band student in California.

She grew up a few hours drive north of San Francisco in a town called Miranda and, after rehearsing all school year, the ensemble would hit the road for appearances at other high schools and the occasional jazz festival.

It was through that practical education she got to take a clinic from jazz

legend Bobby McFerrin. The 10-time Grammy Award winner was the voice behind Don’t Worry Be Happy and The Cosby Show theme song, and globally renowned for his unique vocal abilities.

Seeing him personally break down his technique for aspiring fellow performers made a strong impact on the young Slade.

Miranda is a town of less than 600 people. It is situated almost exactly halfway on the American western seaboard, looking out onto the ocean from a vantage point only about 40 kilometres away from shore.

Out across that sea was Hawaii, so after high school that is where Slade went and she remained on the island state for 10 years, adding rock vocals to her experiences fronting a band in Kona.

She knew the small town had limited opportunities for an upwardly mobile young person. She gave in to another transoceanic bout of adventure and followed a relationship to Prince George.

The relationship faded but by then she had fostered other connections. Musicians lined up to work with her, starting with her first regular accompanist in Prince George, David Sproule, then adding the likes of Dawn Boudreau, Curtis Abriel, Cindy Larsen, and many other

musical allies.

Lately she has been adding names like Lincoln Thorne (Rebel Linx), Nick Tindale (The Burden, Bright City Heights, Genevieve Jade, etc.), Keith Rodger (Tequila Mockingbird Orchestra), and many more.

Her most frequent collaborator is Tompkins, who regularly calls on her for vocal support of his many ongoing musical projects. She is happy to come out to join the on-stage fun.

“You have to be really outgoing (to be front-vocalist), and I’m a quiet type of person, but when you do go on stage you have to project your confidence,” she said. “I love how music lets me express myself through songs. For all of us, really, certain songs hit home and if you’re a musician, a singer, you get to express that. I choose the songs that are about heartache, going through hard times. I think a lot of people can relate to that, and its what blues is all about at the core. I think the beauty of the blues is in the simplicity of how that’s expressed.”

She will be in the soloist centre tonight, flanked by Tompkins and Ogilvie, starting at 8 p.m. The concert is a presentation of Mad Loon Entertainment.

There is no charge to attend; the menu is available for dining and drinks.

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08 11 18 25 34 35 38 The bonus number was 44

Last Friday's Lotto Max EXTRA for B.C. were
01 07 68 78

Wednesday's Lotto 6/49 draw winning numbers were
03 05 09 22 37 46 The bonus number was 10

Wednesday's BC-49 draw winning numbers were
01 17 24 26 34 39 The bonus number was 44

Wednesday's EXTRA winning numbers were
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