

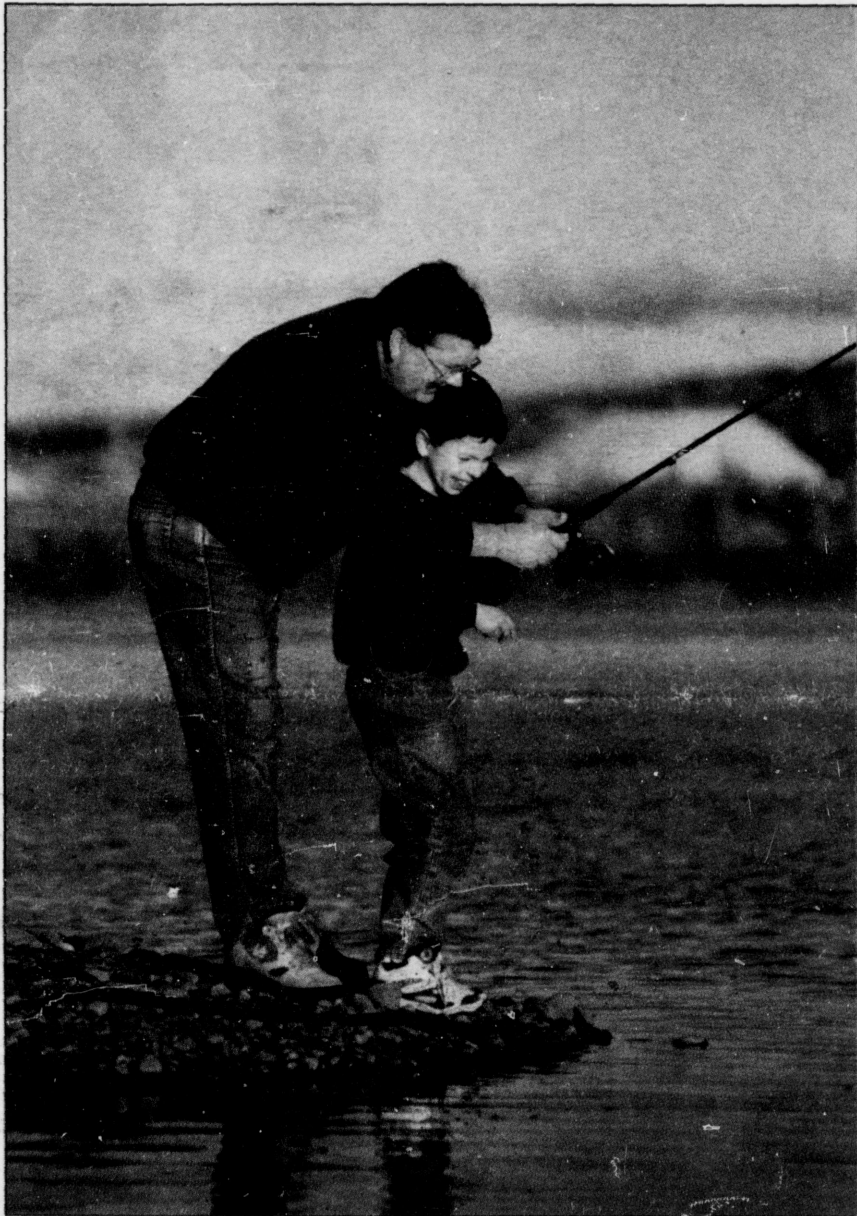
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Last Chance/Before the snow



Clark Furtin shows son Allan, 8, the right way to cast the line. The pair took advantage of the last winter-free days to do a little fishing on the Fraser River, near Cottonwood Park. Now that Mother Nature has brought winter with her, it's time to prepare for ice-fishing.

ROB BIRON/FREE PRESS

Welcome to our first issue

Good morning, Prince George and welcome to the first issue of the Free Press.

We hope that as you read through these pages you will see a lively, alternative voice for Prince George readers.

We want to bring you the stories of Prince George and every week we will strive to be a mirror on this dynamic city.

Prince George is full of terrific opportunities and we're excited about being part of the growth and expansion.

We hope you like what you see and if you have any ideas, suggestions or criticisms, please feel free to call.

Bob McKenzie, Publisher

CNC staff get a raise

The 175 members of the support staff at the College of New Caledonia have come to terms with management on a new two-year contract.

Effective November 1, workers get a one per cent increase in the first year and 1.1 per cent the next. The first-year raise works out to be actually about 1.1 per cent because of the elimination of a salary scale.

The union is local 29 of the PPWC (Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada). Local 29 second vice-president Sue McAllister says bargaining started just after Thanksgiving Day and wrapped up within a week.

The support staff includes all non-teaching positions like groundskeepers, cafeteria staff, classroom aids, and clerical staff. The contract covers workers at all five campuses of CNC.

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Rising above

Vesna Rukavina makes a smooth switch to college.

Family sues PGRH over mom's death

By DAVID HEYMAN

Prince George Free Press

Prince George Regional Hospital is facing a lawsuit from the family of a woman who died during surgery.

The husband and three children of Vivi Andersen, who died shortly after surgery on her cancerous bladder two years ago, say PGRH and the surgeon who did the operation were negligent in their duties. Leif Andersen and his three children have decided to represent themselves and have just recently dumped their lawyer.

The case will be difficult for Mr. Andersen, who has been diagnosed with cancer and says he is exhausted from the treatment. He initially agreed to an interview but later turned down the request.

In court documents, Mr. Andersen is critical of urology specialist Dr. Mogamat Hassan for not recognizing his wife's

problems during surgery sooner, and he's critical of the hospital for not having another urologist on-call as a backup in case something went wrong.

The provincial government has been heavily criticized in recent months for not funding PGRH properly, and for not providing the proper incentives for specialists to stay in Prince George. But Mr. Andersen's former lawyer says it's not right to connect the two issues.

"It's not fair to say this case had anything to do with any lack of funding at PGRH and it has nothing to do with the resources of the hospital," says Roy Stewart, who heads the Hospital of the North Society that has been the lobbying the government for months for more funding.

Vivi Andersen, 49, died November, 1992 at PGRH. The coroner's report details the entire incident. It says Mrs. Andersen was nervous about going in for bladder surgery. She had had chemotherapy and surgery but the report says Dr. Hassan

was having difficulty figuring out why she wasn't responding to the treatment. Dr. Hassan speculated it might be because of her silicone breast implant, but she was reluctant to have it removed. Dr. Hassan also recommended removal of her bladder, but Mrs. Andersen made no decision on whether to go through with it.

The operation lasted only 75 minutes but hospital staff soon realized something was wrong.

Four hours later, Mrs. Andersen was back in intensive care but her condition remained the same and she was rushed into the operating room. Surgeons found a hole in the lining around her bladder. They drained the fluids from her abdomen, put her back in intensive care with an external drain, and immediately made plans for her to be transferred to Vancouver General Hospital. But she continued to bleed uncontrollably and, as she was being transferred from her hospital bed, she died despite attempts to revive her.