

# THE PRINCE GEORGE FREE PRESS

VOL. 1 NO. 2

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1994

PHONE 564-0005

## Sex offender does it again

*Parole Board thought it wouldn't happen, says RCMP*

By DAVID HEYMAN

Prince George Free Press

The head of the Prince George Sexual Assault Centre doesn't understand why sex offenders are allowed around young children.

"How could someone have an eight-year sentence and not have a restriction against being with someone under a certain age? Why would that have not been a rider (on his first sentence)?" asks Lorraine Hilland.

"This happens again and again. At some point these (criminals) need to be in therapy for life or they'll keep offending."

Ms. Hilland was responding to the conviction of a repeat sexual offender, who was sentenced to eight years in jail for sexually assaulting an 11-year-old Prince George girl.

Ralph Furgason, 45, of no fixed address, pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting the girl between January 30, 1993 and June 16, 1993.

Police say Mr. Furgason is a repeat sexual offender, and at the time of the offense was on parole for a similar offense for which he received an eight-year sentence in Kamloops in 1987.

Prince George RCMP knew he had arrived in the Prince George area around May, 1993, but say because Mr. Furgason was classified as a "non-reporting parolee" they decided not to inform the general public. Police say parole officials don't consider non-reporting parolees likely to reoffend.

From her perspective, Ms. Hilland is upset that this is not an isolated case. "I guess one of the big frustrations from our point of view is we keep seeing these little ones abused so often...by repeat offenders," she says.

Ms. Hilland says she'd like to see more details about the case released to the public, with the exception of the victim's identity. "For too many years we've had our head in the sand. It's happening all the time. We need to take a severe look at it."

## Look out/Here we come!



Bel Grewal lets son Nathan drive, while daughter Kallee sits in the crash formation. The Grewals took advantage of the snow at Rainbow Park to have an accelerated Sunday. ROB BIRON/FREE PRESS

## Residents getting snowed under plan, says mayor

The mayor of Prince George is frustrated with the decision by city council to save \$150,000 on the snow removal budget, and he fears it could result in people leaving the city.

"We're a winter city. I simply don't see how we can continue to attract people to our community if we don't make one of the absolutely basics of survival in the winter a priority in our community," says Mayor John Backhouse.

Mayor Backhouse said things were fine when the City went to its current snow-removal policy back in 1991. "Quite honestly, I was starting to feel very good about winter and the level of service. (City staff) were getting praise from the community. People were able to get out of their homes after a snowfall in a very short period of time. In my

24 years in Prince George, I've only been stuck once where I had to get a great deal of help."

Mayor Backhouse says \$150,000 is about half a per cent on the average person's taxes and it would be worth it to get the snow removed quickly. "Some people would say that's a lot, some people would say that's nothing. It's about 17 dollars on average, I don't know. They may save that on their taxes, but one taxi, because you can't dig your vehicle out, drops down the savings." The mayor argues this kind of thing makes people unhappy living in Prince George. "The frustration level, and the crying in the community just builds and people start heeding the thought of leaving."

Six of eight city councillors voted in favour of saving \$150,000 dollars on the snow removal budget this year.

Cliff Dezell was one of them. "I think it's an educated guess by our engineers. I'm convinced by them that they can continue to go at a high quality of service. We are talking about a bit of a delay in some of the residential areas...and I think that's an acceptable risk to take."

Here are the changes: The City will use only City equipment rather than renting from private companies. This will reduce the hourly operating rates of the equipment and will result in what the City calls "higher utilization".

Crew shifts will be held to a "normal" eight hours to reduce the cost of overtime.

The City will rent equipment in the event of back-to-back snowfalls or in case higher accumulations in residential areas are too much to handle.

## INSIDE

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Another side

Derek McLelland's family wants his story told.

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Lest we forget

Scars of war fresh to those who suffered losses.

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New look

Kelly Road is showing off its new theatre.

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Back home

Trevor Shoaf is glad the WHL is in Prince George