

# Contractors name Métis Society in non-payment suit

The Prince George Métis Housing Society has been caught in the middle of a lawsuit between the contractor it hired to build a housing unit and the subcontractors waiting to be paid.

A&J Contracting Ltd. was hired by the Society to construct a five-unit row housing project in the 500-block of Carney Street. A&J Contracting then ran into some financial difficulty and, as a result, various subcontractors are suing them for builders' lien claims. The project was abandoned by A&J in January of this year but is now complete after another contractor finished the job.

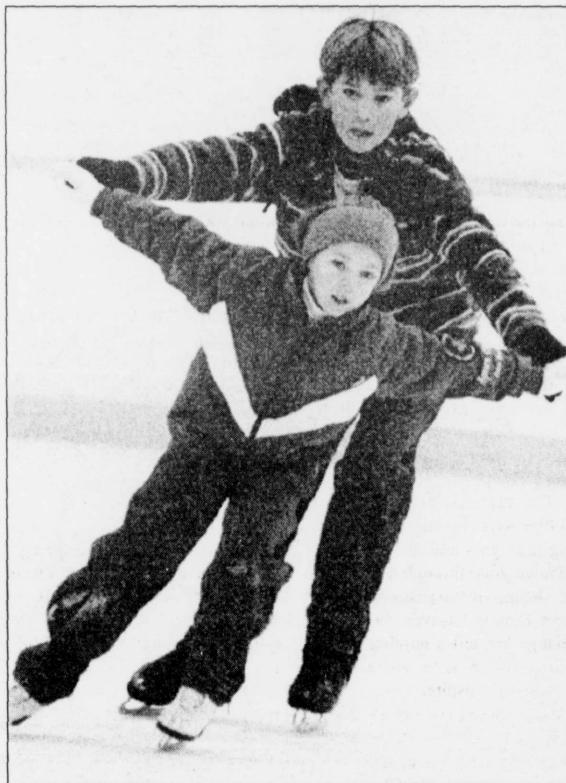
The lawyer for the Society, Garth Wright, says even though the Métis Housing Society is named in the lawsuit, it has complied with the law at every stage. "It is true that lawsuits are commenced and that my client is a named defendant, although to say that we're being sued, with most people's understanding of the law, would give people a false impression. The claims that are involving my client are under the Builders' Lien Act and that gives the people who are making claims the right to sue the owner of the property, and it's because my client owns the property that they're being sued. There is no direct claim against my client."

Mr. Wright says the society will probably be able to avoid paying damages. "That's highly unlikely here because there is a bonding company involved and I expect the bonding company will pay all, or substantially all of the lien claims."

The bonding company acts like an insurance company, promising to pay all subcontractors if the contractor can't pay for whatever reason. The lawyer for some of the subcontractors, Terrence Matte, says the ones he represents have put their legal actions against the Society on hold for now. Instead, he says he's pursuing the bond company, the Western Surety Company, for the thousands of dollars that have gone unpaid.

The Métis Society had not responded to media requests for an interview before press time.

## Practice time/For the future



Kate Langcaster and Kyle Postmus of the Spruce City Figure Skating Club are starting to learn the intricacies of pairs skating. The two nine-year-olds were working at the Elks Centre on Saturday. ROB BIRON/FREE PRESS

## ► Did you know?

Provincial forest policy has and continues to encourage the domestic use of logs harvested from B.C. Forests.

Generally, only those logs deemed to be surplus to B.C. milling requirements are permitted by the Ministry of Forests to be exported. Log exports represented 1.3 per cent of total log production.

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# Courts change for kids

The newly-formed Prince George group lobbying for tougher action against sex offenders has managed to get promises of minor changes to the new Prince George courthouse now under construction.

The manager of court services, Dennis Bell, says thanks to Citizens Against Child Exploitation, there will be a special room set aside for children to play before testifying in court cases. The room will have toys, chairs and games for children to keep them occupied while they wait.

CACE had also requested a closed-circuit television system be set up so kids could testify in another room. Mr. Bell says the courthouse will be wired for it anyway, but he doesn't know if they'll be able to get the hardware to do it.

## Man beaten

An elderly man was severely beaten in the area of Fourth Avenue and George Street in the early hours of December 5.

The victim, whose name has not been released, was rushed to hospital. He was reported in stable condition with non-life threatening injuries.

Police are asking for the public's assistance in finding anyone who witnessed the assault by calling the Prince George RCMP at 561-3300, or Crimestoppers.

## One man found, another missing

There was a happy ending Monday to the story of a missing man. Police say they found Philip Strom, 46, unharmed after he had been missing for a day. Police were particularly worried about Mr. Strom as he had been described as mentally challenged.

In an unrelated matter, police are looking for another man who also went missing. Kevin Lein disappeared December 3 or 4 and has not been seen or heard from since. Anyone with information on his whereabouts is asked to phone the Prince George RCMP at 561-3300, or Crimestoppers.

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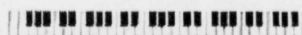
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