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Wednesday evening stroll/Gentle ride



Mackenzie Cupp has the best seat in the house. As Sheila and Chris Cupp take part in the Two Rivers Canoe Club race on the

Nechako River, Mackenzie enjoys the scenery. In the back canoe are Ian Chadwick and Martine Asselin. JOHN MCKENZIE/FREE PRESS

Radon forces renovations

Scientist says it's 'not an emergency situation' in local schools

By DAVID PLUG

Free Press staff writer

Enough radon to warrant renovations has been found in parts of Harwin Elementary School.

A second set of tests by the Ministry of Health confirms that the old wing of the school has "slightly elevated levels" of the carcinogenic gas, enough for "some small long-term risk ... particularly for smokers."

Radon gas is a naturally occurring product of radium decay that sneaks into basements and accumulates in older buildings with poor ven-

tilation. Radon gas is odourless and flavourless and has proven links to lung cancer.

"It's not an emergency situation," says radiation scientist Dave Morley, author of the report. "Radon is not that uncommon and I'm surprised that Harwin is the only Prince George school we found with it."

Out of several districts tested for radon, Prince George ranks among the lowest, he says.

Radon monitors in the library and a classroom in the old wing showed twice the average levels as those in the new wing which has a forced fresh air system. While the average

radon readings in the library during school hours was 263 Bq per cubic metre, concentrations as high as 650 Bq per cubic metre were measured. Becquerels (Bq) are a unit of radioactivity.

Workplaces can't have radon levels above 500 Bq per cubic metre but the regulations for schools have a lower limit, 200 Bq per cubic metre, because of the presence of children.

The risk of contracting an illness from that much radon is compared by Mr. Morley to occasional exposure to second-hand smoke. It would take over 15 years of exposure for the

Turn to Fans, A4

Inmates sour over crowded 'Hilton on Hill'

By CHERYL JAHN

Free Press staff writer

It's been dubbed "The Hilton on the Hill," but at least one inmate says it's anything but.

Louie Wilson says he's been housed in the infirmary for well over two weeks. He's not sick, however. He's there because the jail is full and

getting fuller everyday.

"They're overstacking people right now. We're on overflow. They're stuffing people into the hospital unit, into segregation. And, they're thinking of putting people into the gym," says the outraged inmate.

Those inmates in "overflow," he says, are in what's called lock

down (confinement to their cells) for 45 minutes, six times a day as opposed to twice a day, as was the case in the old jail. He claims the inmates in overflow are not allowed the same privileges as the other inmates; they're not permitted Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous meetings, for instance.

As well, he cites a number of "glitches" with the new jail.

"We weren't in here for a week and they were having computer problems, they were having problems with the locks on the cell doors, they were having problems with the plumbing so the water pressure was way down and the

Turn to Warden, A11

INSIDE

A4



Grocery scramble

Local stores stock up to meet lock out demand.

A9



What next?

Will Glen Clark really be kinder and gentler?

B3



Retro rebels

Weeping Tile breaks rules - finds success.

B5



Pumping hard

Tim deGrace gains strength through races.

Quotable

"Guys sitting at the campground should go get their first aid right now." Page A3