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## Fraser float/Classroom raft



Students from CNC and Vancouver's Langara College begin their 1,000 km journey down the Fraser River by passing under the Yellowhead Bridge on Thursday. The students are part of the Fraser Studies Program, a 13-day floating classroom. JOHN MCKENZIE/FREE PRESS

## ▼ No tickets

# Blame getting passed around

By CHERYL JAHN

Free Press staff writer

Police agencies in the north are doing the best they can to enforce the Attorney General's new victim surcharge levy, but it's tough to do without the resources.

Police in Prince George, Quesnel, Williams Lake and other smaller detachments didn't receive enough of the new tickets.

The new 15 per cent levy, which will be tacked onto all fines for provincial violations as of July 1, requires new ticket design.

Unfortunately, the various northern detachments didn't get enough of the new tickets to cover what they need.

"At the present time, our members are issuing a lot of warnings," says RCMP Constable Gord Molendyk. "There are a few tickets here, we do not have a large supply, and we have divvied them up amongst the members. However, there is a shortage of them."

Suzanne Bell, project manager for the Attorney General's ministry, assures that more tickets had been shipped out to the various detachments late last week.

"I'm told by ICBC, who handles the printing and distribution of the tickets, that 100,000 were

Turn to Police, A2

## Another potential bidder antes up for Ruby Park

Crown Lands is not letting earlier failure stop it from trying to sell off Ruby Park.

The province has negotiated a sales agreement for the contentious 17 acres, at the intersection of Highways 97 and 16, though officials are being tight-lipped about the agreement.

"We're negotiating with a client," says Crown Lands branch development officer Rick Potter. "There's a sales agreement which, if completed, the client has a year to complete rezoning of the property."

The client currently has the agreement in hand, and if it's amenable, it's off to city council for rezoning.

Only after the rezoning is successful would the sale be complete.

Other than that, Mr. Potter is reticent to comment, not even divulging if the client is local or not.

Unlike the ministry's prior attempt to sell the land, public notification of the intention to sell is not required, nor is an auction. Rather it is a matter of whoever has the best offer gets the land.

Last spring, there were two lower mainland companies with offers in to develop the land commercially. The deal fell through when it became clear city council, in particular newly-elected mayor Colin Kinsley, wouldn't support the rezoning.

## Independent school fans offer cautious support of menu

By CHERYL JAHN

Free Press staff writer

The Prince George Independent School Society is cautiously optimistic about District 57's new report on choice within the public education system.

The report, released at the latest regular school board meeting, outlines a number of initiatives for adding alternatives for parents to choose from. The first of nine recommendations in the report states that the board recommend "the

establishment of at least one traditional school by September, 1998."

For the president of the local Independent School Society this is great news.

"It has the dressings, the outward appearances, of being exactly what we are looking for," says Dr. Drew Digney. "But it's a question of what the inner workings are. I am pleased, though, that the board is responding to an obvious need in the district."

But the enthusiasm is tempered with some reservation.

"The proposal still states that the

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traditional school will operate within the boundaries of the district's collective agreements. So there are still some of the inefficiencies we see inherent in the public system," he explains.

That has always been a primary concern for the society, which stresses the need for more accountability from the teachers to the students and parents. With an independent school system, the society maintains there would be direct

accountability to the parents whose children attend.

As well, he has other concerns, such as those involving student behaviour and discipline. For instance, when a student is "acting up," what degree of leeway will school administrators have for dealing with it?

However, the president of the District Parent Advisory Council Mike Millard, who sat on the Choice Panel, states that the parameters are whatever the parents, teachers or students want — it is simply a matter

of putting forward a proposal for consideration.

And that is precisely what Dr. Digney intends to do.

"Once I've read the whole report over, I want to write to [board chairperson] Shirley Bond and request more information about how exactly we'll put a proposal forward," he says, adding that, if it is everything the Choice Panel and the board make it out to be, the closest thing to an independent school may be no more than a few months away.