

# north shore news

## A look back

### The year's most intriguing, insidious and inspirational stories - Part 1

North Shore News

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The anti-development movement was big in 2014, although not big enough to stop massive projects in Lower Capilano, Lynn Valley and Harbourside. But while some developments sashayed seamlessly from blueprints to bulldozers, West Vancouver's new public safety building seemed to trip over its own feet as design concerns delayed construction.

North Vancouverites watched business boom on the port and history suffer in the stern, as the city bade bon voyage to a piece of shipbuilding history in 2014. But even amid an election, a teachers' strike and West Van's top cop turning in his badge, no story moved people like the death of North Shore Rescue leader Tim Jones, whose memorial service was akin to a state funeral.

January

City Loans Lonsdale Energy Corp. \$12 Million

The City of North Vancouver lent municipal heat supplier Lonsdale Energy Corp. more than \$12 million following a unanimous council vote.

Mayor Darrell Mussatto defended charges the utility is a white elephant.

"There's a huge market for white elephants out there because every energy utility around would love to buy and operate Lonsdale Energy Corporation."

Baby Jesus Nabbed on New Year's Deep Cove Catholics had their prayers answered when a teen returned their missing Messiah statue. It turned out the fiberglass likeness of baby Jesus had been plucked from Saint Pius X Catholic Church's nativity scene and dragged to a New Year's Eve party.

A teen parishioner returned the figure, albeit with one missing arm. "We may have to use it inside next year," commented Father John Horgan.

West Van Man Arrested in Fraud Case A high-rolling West Vancouverite who allegedly bilked investors out of \$625,000 faced nine fraud charges after U.S. authorities sent the expat back to Canada. Adam Alexander Keller

allegedly told investors he was an expert trader who could yield clients big returns through no-risk investments.

Keller allegedly took money from nine investors - including one woman's cashed-in RRSPs - and put their cash in his personal bank account.

History Buffs Rally to Save Stern Despite protests, the City of North Vancouver scrapped the increasingly unsafe Flamborough Head. "It actually represents all the victory ships that were built - all the men and women in the community that built them - right here on our waterfront," argued Ivan Leonard. Keeping the rusting piece of history would likely cost \$2.4 million, noted Coun. Rod Clark. "The taxpayers have paid through the nose on this one... There comes a point where we have to cut our losses and we've come to that point."

Tributes Pour in for Tim Jones North Shore Rescue's longtime team leader Tim Jones died Sunday, Jan. 19 on Mount Seymour. He was 57.

Fellow volunteers, politicians and backcountry adventurers praised Jones for being the innovative and obstinate architect behind hundreds of backcountry rescues. "What drove Tim was saving lives. He didn't let anything else get in his way," said NSR volunteer Jeff Yarnold. Jones once jumped from a helicopter to find a snowshoer who'd fallen 61 metres down an ice slope. The men spent two nights in a snow cave while a storm howled and avalanches tumbled, recalled NSR volunteer John Blown. Jones was instrumental in Transport Canada's approval of long-line helicopter rescues, according to Peter Murray of Talon Helicopters. "He'd say, 'This is what we're doing and you're going to approve it. This has to be done or someone's going to die.'" Less than 24 hours after a memorial was held for Jones, his son Curtis

led a team to Grouse Mountain to rescue a group of hikers. Veteran NSR volunteer Mike Danks was named team leader in February.

#### North Van Traffic Stop

Nets Forgery Lab North Vancouver RCMP discovered a mobile forgery lab in a cube van during a traffic stop after the driver gave police a fake name. Police found bags of ill-gotten mail and approximately 500 pieces of stolen identification including driver's licences, and social insurance cards.

#### February

##### West Van Police Chief Steps Down

West Vancouver Police Chief Peter Lepine and two senior cops stepped down shortly after the release of an internal report describing a toxic work environment. Mayor Michael Smith emphasized harassment wouldn't be tolerated but acknowledged "inappropriate behaviour has been going on for a long time." After Lepine's resignation, former officer Todd Mosher claimed he was fired for filing harassment complaints against supervisors. "I'm not the only one. I'm the only one putting my name to it," Mosher said.

Lepine accused Mosher of being "very selective" in his account.

Former Abbotsford deputy police chief Len Goerke took over as WVPD chief.

#### March

##### Four-year Terms for Councils

The province announced mayors, councillors and school trustees will serve four-year terms instead of the current three - much to the chagrin of City of North Vancouver Coun. Pam Bookham. "If the province was serious about reforming the municipal electoral scene, they would be looking at campaign finance reform far before tinkering with term limits."

##### Low Level Road Spurs Export Growth

Port Metro Vancouver celebrated another record-breaking year as shipments of metallurgical coal weighed in at 26 million tonnes, a 14-per cent jump from last year. sPotash was up 20 per cent while grain shipments rose 10 per cent. Seaspan wasn't left out, adding a 300-tonne gantry crane as part of a \$200-million upgrade.

##### HSBC Drops Condo Account

A North Vancouver strata council joined several small businesses dropped by HSBC in favour of international accounts. "It does rub against the grain when I walk by the local branch and I see the sign on the front that says 'Come Talk To Our Friendly Staff,'" said Dogwood strata council chairman Bill MacMillan.

##### City of North Van Expands Smoking Ban

A new bylaw pushed smokers 7.5 metres from doors and windows and banned lighting up on restaurant patios.

Patios that previously allowed smoking are exempt from the bylaw.

##### City Spurns Amalgamation

Despite entreaties from the District of North Vancouver, the City of North Vancouver resisted a reunion.

"Until they've dealt with their liabilities like concrete asbestos pipes. .. I'm not interested in talking to them," said city Mayor Darrell Mussatto.

Some city councillors accused the mayor of bullying following an email Mussatto sent to the chamber of commerce after the organization appeared to support amalgamation.

Mussatto wrote he was shocked by their stance, particularly after the political capital he'd expended co-operating with the chamber.

"I will certainly have to re-assess this relationship - if on the basis above, you can say we actually have one," he said.

##### Ecole Cedardale Tops Fraser Institute Rankings

The Fraser Institute gave Ecole Cedardale 10 out of 10 in its annual school survey. The school welcomed the score but West Vancouver Teacher's Association president Rob Millard bemoaned the evaluation for creating a "crazy-town" attitude where parents ultimately creating funding instability by chasing high-ranking schools. "It's just a huge waste of time. More and more parents are opting out of the (Foundation Skills Assessment) because often they are stressful for their kids and it's demoralizing."

#### Sled Dog Louie Returns Home

A North Vancouver man collared his pup after the former Whistler sled dog spent nine feral days eluding would-be backcountry rescuers. Scott Robarts said he was cautious when he saw Louie, his emaciated lab-husky near the Grouse Grind.

"What was going through my head was, 'OK, I can't screw this up,'" he said. "He's probably slippery as an eel if he wants to be and if I scare him, he'll bolt."

#### Council Halts Seymour Projects

No new development projects will be considered in Seymour until March 2016, following a unanimous vote by District of North Vancouver council. Council ditched developments in part to cope with a traffic nightmare faced by many commuters - including Coun. Doug MacKay-Dunn's wife.

"She who must be obeyed was telling me that she ran into a traffic jam on the way out of Seymour and she ran into a traffic jam on the back way back into Seymour and she asked me: 'What are you doing about it, Doug?'"

Protest Decries Election Changes More than 50 protesters rallied at North Vancouver MP Andrew Saxton's office to rail against legislation they alleged would disenfranchise voters. The Fair Elections Act would end the practice of vouching for voters who don't have proof of address. "It's essentially Harper trying to change the rules of the game to win while the rest of us lose," said organizer Brigitte DePape. The bill makes sure "every vote is a legitimate vote," countered Saxton.

First Nations Buy B.C. Assets The North Shore's Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations joined with Vancouver's Musqueam band and the Aquilini Investment Group for a \$57.9-million land deal. The deal centres around 40 acres of surplus provincial land between Brentwood and Metrotown adjacent to BCIT.

"We're buying land that was originally ours," said Tsleil-Waututh Chief Maureen Thomas.

#### April

#### Project Gets Council's Blessing

And council said, "Let there be redevelopment," giving Lynn Valley United Church the right to finance a new, smaller church through construction of a neighbouring four-storey apartment building. "We're changing a healthy place of worship to a healthy place of worship with a lot of additional housing on it," said district Mayor Richard Walton.

#### Province Reneged on CapU Funds

On the eve of Capilano's conversion from college to university in 2008, the province reneged on \$6.3 million in transition funding and \$6 million in annual base funding.

"We had always said if we get the base funding corrected we would be in pretty good shape, but we never got the base funding," said former Cap president Greg Lee.

The school's decision was "very unwise" said West-Vancouver Capilano MLA Ralph Sultan.

Harbourside Gets Council Approval City of North Vancouver council approved a development that will place roughly 800 strata and rental units and 300,000 square feet of commercial space on the waterfront along Harbourside Drive over the next 10 to 15 years.

While some praised the site as a place to live and work, Coun. Pam Bookham blasted the project's lack of connectivity. "It flies in the face of every planning principle that has guided where we put density."

Students Shut out of Graduation Only a handful of Capilano University's last class of studio arts students graduated in 2014. Several students felt shortchanged after administration cut all first-year classes -including several prerequisites - after assuring students all required

courses would be offered.

Arts student Michaela Hanemaayer transferred to Emily Carr where she ended up having to repeat several courses she'd taken at Capilano. "I've lost a year," she said.

Maison Moves Ahead in West Van West Van council approved the 103-bed Maison Senior Living centre on Sentinel Hill - despite neighbours' fears over toppling property values. The centre devoted a floor to treating memory problems such as dementia, noted Coun. Michael Lewis. "Denying the need for this sort of facility, in this case, is a little bit comparable to being a climate change denier."

May

#### CapU President Urged to Step Down

The Capilano Faculty Association called for university president Kris Bulcroft to resign. The call followed a court ruling that found the school's board of governors in violation of the University Act when it failed to consult with the university's senate before suspending a swath of programs to make up for a \$1.4-million budget shortfall.

CapU Accused of Censorship After the faculty association called for Bulcroft's head, laid-off arts professor George Rammell called for Bulcroft's head back following the seizure of his unflattering sculpture of the university president. Rammell depicted Bulcroft as a ventriloquist dummy in response to cuts that suspended his studio arts program.

The university cultivates a workplace where "harassment and bullying are prohibited," stated board of governors chairwoman Jane Shackell. The effigy was eventually returned to the artist - in pieces.

"The idea that the head of the board would be judge, jury and executioner of a censorship project - it's just not their role," Rammell said.

Cyber Sleuth Spots Heartbleed Collingwood grad Justin Bull was among the first to recognize the Canada Revenue Agency was vulnerable to a software bug called Heartbleed. The 23-year-old cyber security nut notified the department - but not before a hacker stole 900 Canadians' social insurance numbers.

"It was a race against time," Bull said.

Jail Time for Man who Lit Friend on Fire A North Vancouver man was sent to jail for just under two years for setting his homeless friend on fire following a drunken argument.

A witness testified Brian Kenneth Pert doused Russel Rozel with liquid at a camp near the highway called the grassy knoll. "I saw a flame go across," the witness told the judge. "He just went up so quick. ... poof."

New William Griffin Taking Shape The new William Griffin rec centre is slated to replace Delbrook and the old William Griffin centre when it opens in the fall of 2016.

The centre includes a preschool, a gym, and a leisure pool.

Judge Lowers Boom on Fired West Van Teacher A former educator who spent three decades fighting his dismissal isn't welcome in court anymore. Roger Callow - who taught in West Vancouver from 1968 to 1985 - had his 30-year battle against the West Vancouver school district squashed by Justice Colin McKinnon of the Ontario Superior Court.

"His behaviour suggests that he views the Canadian court system as something akin to a perpetual all-day all-you-can-eat buffet," McKinnon wrote.

Donations Support Novaco Rebuild Novaco Childcare got the money to rebuild from fire damage after a fundraising push by the North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce. The chamber raised \$110,000, leaving the remainder of the \$200,000 construction cost to be covered by insurance and other contributions.

The Norgate daycare was a burnt-out shell following a suspicious early morning fire on Dec. 28, displacing about 30 children.

Former Top Cop Consults for Pot Biz After declaring Canada's marijuana prohibition laws "a failure," former West Vancouver police chief Kash

Heed started work advising commercial medicinal marijuana growers as a security consultant and policy advisor.

June

**Parents Rally to Save Swangard** A group of North Vancouver parents rallied to make sure elementary athletes got their year-end track meet after the event was cancelled due to a rotating teachers' strike.

"The kids have worked so hard. We just decided to take matters into our own hands," said Desiree Kranenvijk, one of the parents who helped get liability insurance, permits and equipment in place to stage the meet.

**West Van dedicates park Boundaries** for the biggest park dedication in West Vancouver history were drawn around Whyte Lake in order to defend 120 hectares of old-growth forest from development.

**Robbery Spree Nets Five Years** A 69-year-old man who deserted from the U.S. Air Force four decades ago was sentenced to five years in prison for a string of armed robberies. Thomas John Schwartz held up several North Shore grocery stores at gunpoint more than 40 years after fleeing to Canada due to his disillusionment with the Vietnam War.

He lived a quiet life in Squamish under the assumed name Thomas Stone.

"I knew it was wrong," he said of the robberies at his sentencing.

**Lynn Valley Towers Get Green Light** Bosa got the go-ahead to redevelop Lynn Valley mall, swapping Zellers for six towers, 377 condos and 22 townhouses. The extra density is needed to lure the "lost generation" of young people back to North Vancouver, according to Mayor Richard Walton. The development is intended to resuscitate the morgue-like mall, although detractors pointed to the project's impact on the North Shore's gridlock.

**Lower Cap Towers Approved** Two towers at Capilano Road and Marine Drive will etch their way into North Vancouver's skyline following council's decision to bid farewell to the Grouse Inn. The development includes 262 units housed in 23-and 19-storey towers.

"We don't have an excess of land and I don't know what else of value could be built," said Coun. Robin Hicks.

**Thieves Hit North shore Rescue Caches** Burglars hit four North Shore Rescue backcountry emergency caches over a month and vandalized a helicopter pad in the process.

The damage exceeds \$25,000, according to NSR search manager Doug Pope. Thieves made off with tents, sleeping bags, gas stoves first aid equipment and tools.

Both caches have been used to keep lost hikers alive overnight amid bad weather. "We've obviously got a disturbed individual here," said exasperated team leader Mike Danks.

**West Van Public Safety Design Hits Snag** Glaring design deficiencies sent West Vancouver's public safety building back to the drawing board - putting the already delayed project further behind schedule. Most serious was the small portion of shared

space allotted to police and fire services.

The West Vancouver Police Department has until Dec. 31, 2017 to vacate their current digs on Marine Drive.

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