

# north shore news

## Highs and lows of 2014

### A mishmash of the year's crashes, clashes and flashes of brilliance, Part 2

North Shore News

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It may have felt more like a ceasefire than a truce, but the labour battle between teachers and the province finally ended with a six-year contract - just in time for a late start to the school year.

2014 was an election year, and while two North Shore mayors ran unopposed, City of North Vancouver Mayor Darrell Mussatto had to campaign through a three-way dogfight to keep his grip on the mayor's chain.

We saw environmentally minded residents and energy projects clash in both council chambers and court this year and we begrudgingly added the word "sextortion" to our vocabularies, but the legacy of 2014 may be one of hope and HOpe, as the new mental health treatment centre at Lions Gate Hospital opened its doors.

July

Gambier Woodlots Put On Hold

Gambier Island cottagers no longer had an axe to grind after winning a temporary reprieve in their fight to save a swath of trees from logging.

The Ministry of Forests opted to hold off awarding two woodlots pending extensive community and First Nations consultation.

Programs at Church in Limbo

The demise of the Capilano United Church left community groups feeling forsaken.

The church's decision to silence services two months after celebrating its 100th put scouts, daycare and many other programs in jeopardy. The building is scheduled to remain under the provincial arm of the United Church of Canada until June, 2015.

Tsleil-Waututh Gets Go-Ahead for Pipeline Challenge

The Tsleil-Waututh Nation won the right to challenge the legality of the National Energy Board's review of Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion, following a decision by the Canadian Federal Court of Appeal.

The case hinges on whether the NEB was legally entitled to start their review prior to the federal government consulting with the band. The pipeline project could be sent back to the starting blocks if the court finds for the Tsleil-Waututh.

August

West Van Beaches Unsafe for Swimmers

An E. coli outbreak left swimmers stuck in the sand at Ambleside, Dundarave, Eagle Harbour and Sandy Cove beaches this summer.

The cause of the E. Coli levels - which can cause gastrointestinal illness - was never determined. Asked if waste from another river washed up on West Van beaches, Vancouver Coastal Health officer Dr. Mark Lysyshyn was noncommittal.

"Logs from the Fraser River come up right on the shore in West Vancouver. I'm not sure if logs float by the same patterns as fecal matter."

West Van Water War End is Near

One more drink and you're cut off.

That was West Vancouver's message to Montizambert Wynd - the unincorporated community that's been tapping into the district's water supply since the 1960s.

Council voted to give the 16 properties one last extension before letting the relationship run dry Feb. 18, 2015.

## Yacht Crashes Into CN Rail Bridge

Four passengers were sent to the hospital after a 58-foot pleasure craft careened into the CN rail bridge at the Second Narrows. The captain of the Hakuna Matata was relying on autopilot at the time of the collision, according to boating consultant Grant Drummond. "It's a miracle, just a miracle, that no one was killed and no one went overboard because that front end is just totally mangled."

## North Van Man Jailed for 'Sextortion'

Mark Webber was sentenced to 60 days in jail - to be served on weekends - after sending a sexually explicit video of a young woman to her Facebook friends. Webber, 23, found the video on a stolen cellphone and tried to blackmail the young woman into sending him nude photos. When she didn't comply he sent the video to her friends and posted it on a pornographic website. The crime was planned to humiliate his victim, said Judge Steven Merrick. "What strikes me about this crime is just how mean it is."

A Place of Help and Hope for Recovery Turning Point, a nine-bed women's only alcohol recovery centre, opened its doors in August. The centre could be the first in a range of treatment facilities for North Shore residents struggling with addiction, according to District of North Vancouver Coun. Doug MacKay-Dunn.

## September

### District to Buy Keith Lynn School Site

The District of North Vancouver paid \$5 million to buy the shuttered Keith Lynn secondary site and turn it into a highway off-ramp.

The school district has the money from the sale earmarked for the \$49 million replacement of Argyle secondary.

### Faith Restored by Return of Photos

A North Vancouver resident was reunited with his family heirlooms thanks to a homeless man.

Thieves broke into Glen Lancaster's home in May and made off with a floor safe containing an album of family photos - despite a sign stating Not Worth Stealing.

"I had no expectation I'd ever see (the photos) again," Lancaster said.

Tim Storey found the safe in a ravine while looking for bottles and cans and tracked down Lancaster to return the photos.

Lancaster plans to have the pictures digitized.

### West Van Opposes LNG Export Plan

Despite being hasty and confused the first time around, West Vancouver council reaffirmed its call for a ban on liquefied natural gas tankers in Howe Sound.

Their appeal to the federal government was in response to a proposed LNG plant southwest of downtown Squamish.

"I had this nightmare of the perfect storm: the LNG tanker coming out from Woodfibre crashing into an oil tanker coming out of Burnaby; but it was all getting mopped up by the stuff coming off the garbage barge," said Coun. Michael Lewis.

The initial call for a ban raised the ire of John Weston, MP for West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country, who levelled unprecedented criticism at the council.

"I disagree with the motion, the way it has been passed and its timing," he wrote.

Ex-server Wins Award A North Vancouver woman won a B.C. Human Rights Tribunal award after being ousted from her job while pregnant. Stephanie Lipp, 25, was awarded \$9,500 after the tribunal agreed Mavericks Sports Lounge discriminated against her. "I just sincerely hope that any woman who's been treated like this, that she sees that it's possible to go in and win," Lipp said.

Kids Headed Back to School Kids finally went back to school Sept. 22 after a contentious labour struggle that included a strike, a lockout and the reversal of a provincial law. In January, the B.C. Supreme Court struck down a law that took away teachers' right to bargain for class size and supports - fining the province \$2 million. The province "did not

negotiate in good faith," according to Justice Susan Griffin, who accused government negotiators of trying to provoke a strike.

Teachers voted for strike action in early March while the province sought a 10-year deal.

Negotiations were fruitless - resulting in the cancellation of summer school - until veteran mediator Vince Ready entered the fray in September and helped guide both sides to a six-year contract. "Without (Ready) it would've been impossible because there was absolutely no trust there," said West Vancouver Teachers Association president Rob Millard.

**Reza Moazami Guilty of Human Trafficking** A pimp who ran a teen prostitution ring across the Lower Mainland, including out of North Vancouver hotels, was convicted of human trafficking. Moazami was found guilty of living off the avails of prostitutes, using coercion and other charges of sexual assault and interference.

**City of North Van Votes Down Draft OCP** The official community plan to guide the city's

growth, transportation and economy over the next 10 years died in council chambers.

Despite receiving comments from 4,600 residents - the majority of whom supported the OCP's aims - council didn't reach consensus.

The rejected OCP allowed for secondary suites or coach houses - but not both - which was enough for Mayor Darrell Mussatto and Counc. Craig Keating and Linda Buchanan to vote against the plan.

Amalgamation proponent Coun. Guy Heywood voted nay in part because the government seemed to be shaping the community instead of the reverse.

The OCP first seemed in peril at a May meeting when council opted to move their vote to September.

"It seems like a long ways away when we talk about September, but in fact this is very tight," advised director of community development Gary Penway.

October

**West Van Fisheries Site in Huge Land Deal** The Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam nations became owners of three properties worth more than \$307 million as part of a venture with Canada Lands Corp.

The properties include an \$11 million, two-hectare parcel of vacant land on Marine Drive in West Vancouver formerly occupied by the fisheries department.

**Cap Students Split with National Org** An acrimonious split marked the end of a three-decade relationship as Capilano University students parted ways with the Canadian Federation of Students. The student body views the national federation as a money pit offering largely redundant services, according to student union president Brittany Barnes. The divorce will result in an increasingly fractured student movement, cautioned CFS co-ordinator Brent Farrington.

**\$1.5 Million in Band Funds Not Properly Accounted For** Two members of the Squamish Nation's elected council were stripped of their authority over financial matters after an independent investigation revealed a significant portion of the band's emergency fund wasn't accounted for.

The investigation revealed former band services department head Krisandra Jacobs and elected band manager Glen Newman had cheques made out to themselves. They cashed the cheques without keeping proper records of who got money or how it was spent.

The cheques were cashed so emergency funds would be available for band members, according to Jacobs and Newman.

November

**West Vancouver Tops Spending List** West Vancouver spends more and collects more tax - per person - than any other Lower Mainland municipality, according to the Fraser Institute. In 2012, West Van spent \$2,118 per resident and collected \$2,548 in taxes per resident.

The regional average for spending was \$1,384. The average amount collected through taxes was \$1,916.

**Heavy Rain Hammers North Van**

Approximately 20 North Vancouver homeowners were digging through a swamp of mud and pumping out their basements after 164 millimetres of rain fell in 24 hours. The 50-year deluge caused mud and debris to clog culverts on Hastings and Kilmer creeks, leading to a torrent that jumped the road and caused evacuations, the temporary closure of Argyle secondary, and an estimated \$1 million in damage.

**Towers Approved for Lower Capilano** In their last act before standing for re-election, District of North Vancouver council voted to bring Larco's 451-unit development to the former CapWest Athletic Club site. The phased development includes 18-and 12-storey towers, four low-rise buildings, and a community centre - slated to be built within eight years.

"The community of Lower Cap will see the light at the end of a long tunnel," said Coun. Alan Nixon.

**Coach Houses OK'd Across North Shore** The Districts of West and North Vancouver each moved to allow coach houses despite concerns over parking and regulation. "I would say that infill housing or coach housing is for most of the people in this community. Because that's who's coming to ask for it," said West Vancouver Coun. Trish Panz.

**Mussatto Wins Fourth Term** City of North Vancouver Mayor Darrell Mussatto fended off development-opponent Kerry Morris and amalgamation-proponent George Pringle to win his fourth term. While his eight per cent margin of victory was far slimmer than in the last election, Mussatto picked up enough council allies to give his slate a majority over the next four years. Holly Back is the only new face on city council. District of North Vancouver voters added 30-year-old engineer Mathew Bond and former provincial New Democrat Jim Hanson to council.

West Vancouver voters also returned each incumbent on the ballot, making financial advisor Christine Cassidy council's only new addition. West Vancouver's school board consists of: Nicole Brown, Sheelah Donahue, Pieter Dorsman, Carolyn Broady and Dave Stevenson. North Vancouver's school board will be led by Barry Forward, Cyndi Gerlach, Franci Stratton, Jessica Stanley, Susan Skinner, Christie Sacre and Megan Higgins.

**Teachers Put Brakes on Program** A program linking money spent at Chevron gas stations with classroom projects fuelled outrage among North Vancouver teachers. "This is a big corporation which clearly, probably has ulterior motives," said North Vancouver Teachers Association vice-president Martin Stuiblé. "When you take (the money) provincial governments can wipe their hands and walk away." Chevron funded 30 projects at 12 North Vancouver schools and 22 projects at West Vancouver schools.

December

**HOpe Centre to Tackle Mental Health** The newly completed \$62 million HOpe Centre opened its doors Dec. 10 on the southeast corner of the Lions Gate Hospital. The 26-bed psychiatric unit is sorely needed, according to Dr. Allan Burgmann, head of Lions Gate Hospital's in-patient psychiatry program. "Having mental illness is kind of like being plopped into a small boat and cut adrift in a torrid sea," Burgmann said. The building's open and inviting design was intended to help combat the stigma around mental health, according to Burgmann. Private donors contributed \$24 million to the facility with West Vancouver philanthropists David and Greta Ho donating \$10 million.

**Binning House Goes Back to Estate** West Vancouver's historic Binning House was returned to the estate's trustees following a B.C. Court of Appeal ruling that marked the end of a lengthy legal tug-of-war.

The courtroom quagmire kicked off after the B.C. Supreme Court forbade The Land Conservancy from selling the 1941 progenitor of West Coast modernism.

However, the December ruling determined the estate's trustees never had authority to turn the house over to TLC.

**Seymour Slide Creates New Lake**

A lake was formed where much of the Seymour River used to be after 50,000 cubic metres of rock - including boulders the size of houses - gave way near Twin Bridges.

The North Shore's newest geographical addition formed over six hours, extending 850 north from the slide site. "The rocks are not moving. They're just settling down a little bit," said Metro Vancouver environmental management superintendent Mike Mayers. The lake has claimed at least two hectares of forest, sections of Fisherman's Trail, and the Twin Bridge.

Thank you for reading and see you next year.

Merry Christmas!

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