

# INSIDE

## BATTLE FOR THE CANUCKS

The final piece in Ian Mulgrew's series focuses on the days immediately before and after the sale of the hockey team was finalized. **Story B3**



## PLEDGES

Support is pouring in for a Douglas College graduate helping African orphans. **Story B5**



THE VANCOUVER SUN

SECTION  
**B**

# WESTCOAST

APPEAL FOR AXE ATTACK SENTENCE | B4

NEWS

GIANT WAVE INJURES SHIP'S CREW | B2

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## Man injured in bungled hanging stunt

**BURNABY** | Amateur trick for YouTube leaves 23-year-old in critical condition

BY KELLY SINOSKI  
VANCOUVER SUN

An amateur stunt video of a mock hanging nearly turned into a horror flick after a 23-year-old Burnaby man ended up unconscious and hanging from a tree.

RCMP say two men had gone to a North Burnaby park Wednesday afternoon with plans to film a mock hanging to post on the Internet video site YouTube. However, the scene went wrong after one of the men unintentionally hanged himself with

a rope. His friend, who was filming, at first thought he was just acting and didn't realize until a short time later that he was in trouble, police said.

It's not known how long the man was hanging from the tree. He was taken to Royal Columbian

Hospital, where he was listed in critical condition Wednesday night.

His condition had improved by Thursday and he was to be moved out of intensive care, Cpl. Alexandra Mulvihill said.

"Time will tell, but we're all

just hoping he'll improve from there," she said.

Mulvihill said the mishap should serve as a warning to amateurs who want to shoot shock footage or attempt stunts they've seen on TV or in the movies — even if they believe they have taken all the proper safety precautions.

In this case, the man had been

buckled into a harness for the shoot, police said, but unintentionally hanged himself with a rope he had slipped around his neck.

Police say it's not believed there was any intent by his 22-year-old friend, also from Burnaby, to cause harm.

See **MEN UNPREPARED B7**

Nurse, former nun Margaret Vickers named to Order of Canada

*Lifetime of care earns highest honour*



DAHPNE BRAMHAM  
VANCOUVER SUN  
COLUMNIST

Margaret Vickers received a surprising phone call from Ottawa in November. She had been named a member of the Order of Canada. But she was told it had to be kept secret until Dec. 28 and it might be the end of 2008 before the induction ceremony is held at Government House.

It seems there's a bit of a backup of recipients.

After she hung up, she realized the only person she knew of who had been given Canada's highest honour was Conrad Black. "And he had his taken away," she says with a laugh.

She doesn't travel in the circles some other recipients do, people such as Phoenix Suns basketball star Steve Nash; Vancouver artist Jeff Wall; Wayne's father, Walter Gretzky; David Letterman's sidekick Paul Shaffer; or, Louise Arbour, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who also appeared on the December list.

Hers is a quiet, humble life of dedicated service; a life of poverty, chastity and obedience.



IAN SMITH/VANCOUVER SUN

Margaret Vickers has dedicated her life to service and compassionate care.

She was the sixth in a family of 13 from Miramichi, N.B. She trained as a nurse in Antigonish, N.S. and worked at hospitals in New Brunswick, Ontario and Michigan before landing in

Berkeley, Calif., in 1955. She worked only three weeks at that hospital and left without collecting her pay cheque.

"Abortions were being done there and vasectomies, and mothers were not taking

home their babies. I decided that this was not for me. The ethical issues were eating away at me. I decided I couldn't work there."

See **HOLISTIC B6**

## Province buys New West hotel

Surrey's turn is coming as government acquires low-cost housing and shelter sites

BY FRANCES BULA  
VANCOUVER SUN

**NEW WESTMINSTER** | The Royal City is the latest municipality to benefit from a provincial government push to buy older buildings to protect them as low-cost housing stock.

BC Housing announced Thursday it has bought the 59-unit College Place Hotel for \$4.9 million, part of an effort to grapple with a steady increase in homelessness throughout the province in the past decade.

Housing Minister Rich Coleman promised that Surrey is one of the municipalities that will see a similar acquisition soon.

"We're keeping our eye on the marketplace everywhere and we're pretty aggressive," said Coleman, who launched an unprecedented campaign last year to buy older hotels and apartment blocks in the province's poorest neighbourhoods, for low-income housing or to be used as shelters.

Mayor Dianne Watts, who has been lobbying energetically for Surrey to get a share of the program, welcomed the promise.

"At this point, we're going for whatever we can get," said Watts.

"We're in discussions on some projects that we're hoping we'll tie up quickly."

Since last February, BC Housing has acquired 10 hotels in Vancouver, two apartment blocks in Burnaby and three in Victoria, as well as sites in Prince George, Quesnel and Kelowna.

The plan is to put the former private properties under the management of various non-profit groups experienced in housing, homelessness and mental health and to focus on making the rooms available for those most likely to become homeless.

As well, Coleman has promised that the province will provide supports — help with mental-health and addiction issues — to residents so they don't land on the street again.

Some space in the New Westminster hotel will be converted to provide 15 shelter beds, which Mayor Wayne Wright welcomed.

"We need it, we need the people off the street."

Wright said the last homeless count found about 90 people on the street in New Westminister, but he believes a new homeless count in March will show the numbers are higher now.

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## West-side school closures announced

Queen Elizabeth annex could be sold to help pay for UBC school expansion

BY JANET STEFFENHAGEN  
VANCOUVER SUN

**VANCOUVER** | Debate is expected to start today over a plan for the city's west-side schools that could see the closure of one elementary school, the opening of another to serve burgeoning University of B.C. neighbourhoods and the relocation of a popular high school.

The school targeted for closure

is Queen Elizabeth annex, a small K-3 facility on Crown Street. The newly released plan would see the annex sold to help cover the cost of moving University Hill secondary into a leased UBC building and transforming its current site into an elementary school.

Despite protests from parents and school employees at a special board meeting Thursday night, trustees voted 6-3 to begin public consultations leading to a decision by March about whether to go ahead with the proposals.

See **REPORT IS B7**

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