

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## NORTH VANCOUVER

## Teen critical after falling from roof

A 17-year-old girl was in critical condition last night after falling six metres and smashing her head on the concrete below while climbing a fence at a North Vancouver school.

The accident at Lynn Valley elementary happened early Saturday.

RCMP said she was among a group of teens who sneaked onto the school's roof for a sleepover.

## SURREY

## Elderly man killed

An elderly man was struck and killed by a car while crossing an unmarked intersection at 64th Avenue and 122nd Street on Friday afternoon. Police are still investigating but said the incident "doesn't appear to be criminal" and that it does not appear speed, alcohol or road conditions were factors.

## QUESNEL

## One dead in barn fire

A woman believed to be a resident of Quesnel died in a barn fire reported at 7 p.m. Thursday. The structure had living quarters in the loft.

## VANCOUVER

## Ski jump rally today

Women's Ski Jumping will hold a rally today in support of including the sport in the 2010 Winter Olympics. The event starts at 1 p.m. at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

## KITIMAT

## Alcan ruling upheld

The B.C. Court of Appeal has upheld a ruling by the B.C. Supreme Court allowing Rio Tinto Alcan to sell power from the Kemano station with no obligation to smelt aluminum. The plant is the largest employer in the community, and the population dropped by 13 per cent between 2001 and '06 due in part to job cuts at the smelter in order to sell power.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

## Union OK's new rules

The Hospital Employees Union voted 94 per cent in favour of new labour adjustment measures that will mean health-care workers negotiate their new contracts in 2010 without legislative restrictions on their ability to negotiate contracting-out issues. The approved measures are part of a settlement to last year's Supreme Court ruling striking down legislation passed by the B.C. Liberals in 2002.

— News Services



The developer of the Sofia, an 81-condo project at Sophia and East 11th in Vancouver, has pulled out of the project. ARLEN REDEKOP — THE PROVINCE

# Developer pulls out of condo build

## EAST VANCOUVER: 81-unit Sofia project 85-per-cent complete

BY GLENDA LUYMES  
STAFF REPORTER

A Vancouver developer has pulled out of a Mount Pleasant condominium project — leaving buyers wondering what will happen to their investments.

The Sofia on East 11th Avenue and Sophia Street went into receivership last Monday, according to *CBC News*. The 81-unit project was about 85-per-cent complete.

It's not the first time the developer, the Eden Group, has pulled out of a project. In November, Eden cancelled two condo developments worth about \$95 million before the buildings got off the ground. About 55 buyers had deposits refunded.

Company owner Bill Eden told media at the time that the civic workers' strike had caused costly delays, while rising labour and material expenses were prohibitive.

Eden could not be reached for comment yes-

terday, causing speculation over the fate of the Sofia. Many of the units were sold about two years ago. A two-bedroom suite in the Sofia is listed on the contract assignment website [www.buildingdigger.com](http://www.buildingdigger.com) for \$599,900.

Greater Vancouver Home Builders Association CEO Peter Simpson said he was "concerned" to hear about the Sofia, but hadn't been able to reach Eden to ask what had happened. "It's very disconcerting for me, and I think for any developer out there. It reflects on everyone," he said.

But Simpson said that while construction costs are causing challenges for developers, he doesn't see a trend developing.

"Major developers would never dream of doing anything like this," he said. "The major developers would just suck it up. Their reputation is at stake. They'd swallow their losses and finish the project. With a smaller developer, it can be more difficult."

Simpson said there have been 78,000 hous-

ing starts in the Vancouver area in the last four years. "It's a strong market. It's only a very small number where things like this are happening," he said.

Simpson recommends anyone pre-buying a home to take their contract to a real-estate lawyer to review it. By law, buyers have a seven-day right of refusal to back out of the contract. The law also requires developers who may have had problems in the past to disclose that information in the contract.

"This is a moot point for the people in this case," he said. "This has to be a big worry to them right now."

Simpson said the receiver could find another developer willing to finish the project and honour the existing contracts or ask buyers to pay more. "If there's a debt it might be a difficult situation," he said. "My hope is that, at the end of the day, the people will get their homes at the price they paid."

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# Family told to get rid of goat weed-whackers

NANAIMO — The City of Nanaimo has ordered a family to get rid of two pygmy goats they have been using as living weed-whackers.

When blackberry bushes took over their backyard last spring, Parsley Kehoe and her cousin Brian decided not to use pesticides. Instead, they brought in sibling goats Aira and Bebida.

And it worked. But small farm animals are prohibited in the city by bylaw. City staff ignored the little goats until July, when a neighbour complained about the noise.

Kehoe disputed the ruling at city council in September, asking councillors to change the "outdated" bylaw. Last week, staff presented a list of six reasons why the goats

have to go, including a risk their waste will leach into nearby water supplies.

Kehoe didn't think much of the staff excuses and hopes councillors will learn a lesson from Seattle, which recently reclassified goats as domesticated animals like dogs or cats. Pygmies weigh between 20 and 45 kilograms and

are smaller than some large dogs.

Art Goetsch, lead research scientist at Langston University in Oklahoma, didn't think much of the argument either. He says goats "take the nutrients from problem plants" when they eat them and return most of the benefits to the soil through feces and urine.

— Canwest News Service