

NEWS BRIEFS

JULIAN TABLES TOXIC BILL

On Wednesday, MP Peter Julian, (Burnaby-New Westminster) tabled a private member's bill in Ottawa which would require all household products containing toxic substances to have clearly-marked labels specifying their toxic contents. Julian said his bill follows many other jurisdictions that have already enacted similar legislation, notably the European Union and the State of California in the United States.

POLICE SEEK HOME INVASION SUSPECT

Burnaby RCMP are seeking help identifying a man connected to a home invasion and brutal sexual assault Dec. 7. Four males burst into a home near Clinton Street and MacPherson Avenue at about 3:45 a.m., sexually assaulting one resident. On Feb. 18, one of the four suspects was arrested. Police are trying to identify another man (pictured at right) seen the night before on surveillance video. The suspect is described as a dark-skinned, wearing a puffy dark blue jacket, shorts, and white running shoes. He was wearing a large chain and a black ball cap with a white insignia in front. Those with info can call Burnaby RCMP at 604-294-7922 or Crime Stoppers.



EMPLOYMENT FAIR

The CAVE Employment Resource Centre is presenting a one-day hiring fair March 17 at the Firefighters Club in Burnaby. Local and national employers will be accepting resumes for current and future job opportunities. They will also be highlighting career opportunities. The fair is 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Firefighters Club is at 6515 Bonsor St. More info at www.cave-employment.com.

what they're saying at:

BURNABYNEWSLEADER.COM

Re: Olympics offers opportunity for local homeowners

'We've seen properties ranging from \$300/night to \$100,000/month. It's a wild world out there!' —vansun

Buried under a sea of things

Why does clutter clog up so many people's homes?

By Wanda Chow
NEWSLEADER

After carting the boxes around for decades, Jack Cooney was finally ready to get rid of his childhood train sets.

The New Westminster resident had been spending \$130 a month on storage, where boxes were piled to the ceiling. He no longer saw the point.

So there he was at the storage locker showing his collection of Lionel trains to a prospective buyer.

As the fellow browsed, Cooney was flooded with memories. He saw a locomotive his grandparents had given to him for Christmas when he was six. That was the year his grandparents' home burned to the ground on Christmas Eve, and among the few items they rescued was Cooney's present.

"I'm sorry," he told the potential buyer. "I guess I'm just not ready to sell this all yet."

It was years before he was able to part with his collection. In between, he went on a train collecting binge, dedicating a room in his house to the hobby until he could hardly get into the room, it was so full.

That's when he challenged himself to sell it off, part of a new attitude towards dealing with a lifetime of clutter.

Clutter has become an industry of its own in recent years. TV shows, books, workshops and services on the issue are everywhere and have helped bring the all-too-prevalent problem out into the open.



MARIO BARTEL/NEWSLEADER

Lynne Davidson, a personal organizer, says books collections are a notorious source of clutter. She's managed to whittle her own collection to a few volumes that have significant meaning to her.

But when it comes to tackling the piles of boxes, paper and assorted knick-knacks in our homes, perspective is key.

After all, as Burnaby professional organizer Lynne Davidson says, "It's not about the stuff."

Consumerism equals accumulation

Part of the problem is that our consumer society advocates spending our way to happiness. Stuff is cheap and disposable. The more people have, the more it piles up.

Davidson's 13-year-old son Devon has an incredibly neat and tidy bedroom. The floors are clear, all his clothes are hung in the closet or tucked into drawers. The single mom talks often

to her son about needs and wants and only spending money on things they really want.

"His room is neat because he doesn't have a lot of stuff and everything has a home," Davidson said. "The key is not to have too much stuff."

Dr. Ingrid Sochting, a registered clinical psychologist, agrees consumerism is fueling people's clutter habits, noting that the economic crisis is helping people reconsider their tendency to accumulate things.

Low level depression can cause some to procrastinate, due to a lack of energy, which only causes the stuff to build, making the task of organizing that much harder, said Sochting, a professor at the University of British Columbia's faculty of medicine.

Emotional attachment to stuff

The door to Tracy Janzen's garage was almost jammed shut by the floor-to-ceiling piles of boxes behind it. Realizing this was a fire safety issue, she decided to do something about it.

She took a course on decluttering and realized she'd been avoiding the problem for years partly due to a reluctance to revisit memories such as past relationships.

"I was cluttered in my head," she said of the impact the possessions had on her.

Then there was the fact former roommates left behind the detritus of their lives when they moved out. With her four current roommates buying into the project, they formed something of a support group, forcing each other to make decisions on their stuff and giving permission to throw items away.

PLEASE SEE THERE ARE MANY REASONS ON A14

NEWS

RAFE COMING TO TAKE ON PRIVATE POWER

For those interested in run-of-the-river projects, two presentations are planned this month in New Westminster and Burnaby to deal with the controversial topic. The Save Our Rivers Society (SORS) is sponsoring the presentations, March 18 in Burnaby and March 25 in New West. Discussion will be on the threats to the environment and economy posed by private river power projects. The Burnaby presentation is 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Bonsor Recreation Complex (6550 Bonsor Ave.) and features Rafe Mair with SORS and Andy Ross from the Take Back the Power campaign and a video presentation by Damien Gillis. The New Westminster presentation is at the Centennial Pavilion in Queen's Park from 7 to 9 p.m. and features Rafe Mair and Joe Foy of WCWC. The Council of Canadians and the New Westminster Environmental Partners are also sponsoring the event. mmcquillan@burnaby.com

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David Lam (Coquitlam) Campus: Tues Mar 17, 5pm, Rm A1470

New Westminster Campus: Thurs Mar 19, 5pm, Rm 2201

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