

briefs
local news

NAOMI RESULTS

Researchers are presenting the first round of results from the NAOMI study this morning. The study is a three-year clinical trial comparison of prescribed heroin with optimized methadone for people with chronic heroin addiction.

17 SYLLABLES

Organizers of the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival Haiku Invitational invited budding poets from around the world to submit poems for the annual contest. The winning haiku will be featured in buses and on Sky-Trains during the festival. For more visit vcbf.ca.

PETRO DOLLARS

The province announced yesterday that the October sale of oil and gas rights made \$151 million in bonus bids, bringing the year to date total to \$2.17 billion. The province sold 217 parcels of land in northeast B.C. covering 143,666 hectares at an average price \$2,214 per hectare.

EDUCATION ADS

The B.C. Teachers' Federation launched a province-wide ad campaign focusing on school closures, overcrowded classes and neglected special-needs students, yesterday. The campaign – dubbed When Will They Learn? – arrives in time for school trustee elections scheduled for Nov. 15.

GREENIE JUMPS

Premier Gordon Campbell received a green stamp of approval from former B.C. Green Party leader Christopher Bennett, who joined the B.C. Liberals, yesterday. Bennett previously worked for federal Green Party leader Elizabeth May and Vancouver Mayor Sam Sullivan.

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POLITICS

Crime trumps homelessness

The priority is homelessness but the message is crime.

Two weeks after declaring his main goal was ending homelessness, Non-Partisan Association mayoral candidate Peter Ladner's election "action plan" is instead heavy with an anti-crime agenda.

Ladner is promising more cash for new police officers, he's pledging more public dollars for private security and he wants to turn uniformed city workers into the "eyes and ears on the streets."

But Ladner's cautious platform, made up of more than 50 "priorities," is short on actual funding promises.

It appears only two pledges listed in the NPA's 14-page document – funding more police officers and upgrading police facilities – call for significant city funds; neither is backed by dollar signs.

In releasing his platform yesterday, Ladner promised to work with senior governments to find the funding to solve the city's homelessness, addiction and mental health crises.

"We are not going to say that, because of the desperate need for shelter for homeless people, the city will take that on," Ladner said.



- Rob Kruyt, 24 hours

NPA Vancouver mayoral candidate Peter Ladner released his party's election platform.



- Rob Kruyt, 24 hours

VISION Vancouver mayoral candidate Gregor Robertson took aim at NPA's plan.

"We have to insist that other levels of government come to the table."

But Vision Vancouver mayoral candidate Gregor Robert-

son said Ladner was "running away" from his party's record on homelessness.

"I don't think the problem has been solved, but we see Mr. Lad-

ner deciding all of a sudden that crime is his primary focus."

Vision has yet to release its own platform.

- Irwin Loy, 24 hours

VANOC goes to market

Yes, we're in the red, but don't be alarmed, says Vancouver 2010's money man.

Organizers of the 2010 Winter Olympics and Paralympics released their 2007-2008 annual report yesterday. It shows a \$48.1 million deficit on \$122.3 million income and \$170.4 expenditures through July 31, 2008. Last year, VANOC recorded a nearly \$61 million surplus.

Chief financial officer John McLaughlin said it's a matter of timing. Payments from sponsors in January 2009 and the International Olympic Committee in March 2009 are expected to reverse the shortfall.

"It's not necessarily indicative of a good year or a bad year; it's just indicative of what we did," he said.

McLaughlin said 79 per cent of revenues are committed, not counting tickets. VANOC will go on a \$1 billion shopping spree over the next 16 months seeking goods and services ranging from transportation, energy

Numbers

- Venues: \$487.15 million spent to date
- Payroll: 773 full-time equivalents
- Days until opening ceremony: 483

and anti-doping equipment to accommodation and food and beverage.

Despite the global economic crisis, McLaughlin still forecasts a balanced \$1.63 billion operations budget. A revised business plan is expected in early 2009.

"The situation we're finding ourselves in right now is pretty unparalleled," he said. "Trying to predict what's going to come out of it is hugely challenging and we wouldn't pretend to be able to predict."

- Bob Macklin, 24 hours

Roundhouse, Coal Harbour have 2010 Games plans

The Roundhouse could be Canada Olympic House in 2010.

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is in talks with the Canadian Olympic Committee to use the Yaletown community centre's exhibition hall from Feb. 4-March 2, 2010 as a meeting place for athletes, coaches, their families and friends and sponsors.

Stanley District director Peter Kuran expects the performance centre to be a Cultural Olympiad venue, but the rest of the complex would remain open.

The 1888 red-brick Roundhouse was restored for Expo 86 and houses Engine 374, which hauled the first transcontinental train to the

West Coast in 1887. Nearby David Lam Park will be one of two civic Live Sites.

"It's a fantastic location," Kuran said. "I think the COC and Cultural Olympiad realize that."

Coal Harbour community centre, however, would be off limits to the public from Jan. 1-March 31, 2010. Kuran said users would be shifted to West End community centres while 120 people from various agencies use Coal Harbour to coordinate logistics for 1,600 Olympic and Paralympic dignitaries.

"This would be a first-ever for an Olympics, which is to have all levels of government and other governing bodies all together," Kuran said.

- Bob Macklin, 24 hours

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