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THE VANCOUVER SUN

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FINAL EDITION

## City staff moves to protect rentals

CONDOMINIUMS | Council urged to reject strata conversion

BY FRANCES BULA  
VANCOUVER SUN

**VANCOUVER** | City staff have made an unusual move to preserve what they say is desperately needed rental housing, by saying that council should refuse to allow the owner of a relatively new condo building to convert his rental building to strata units.

That's even though two-thirds of the 36 tenants at the Maguire building on West Broadway in Kitsilano have said they're okay with the conversion, the current rents in the building range from \$1,300 to \$2,900 a month, and the owner has offered to pay the city almost half a million dollars towards its affordable housing fund.

Housing director Cameron Gray says the last time the city refused a similar conversion request was "when Carole Taylor was on council, sometime between 1986 and '88." Vancouver was going through a similar housing crunch then.

"The vacancy rate in Kits, which is where this is, is now zero. These renters are going to have to find homes somewhere else if this happens," Gray said.

The building, which was only occupied in 2004, is not in any of the areas that Vancouver has tried in the past to preserve from demolitions or conversions and it's not even in one of the broad swathe of apartment zones that council will be deciding in May should also be protected from demolition or conversion.

But councils do have the right to stop any landowner from converting to strata because the provincial Strata Property Act allows them to regulate conversions and to take into account "the priority of rental accommodation over privately owned housing" in an area. The city did allow a similar conversion by the same owner of a building on West 12th two years ago.

See **WE CANNOT** B5



Bertha Marshall and cousins (left) in a photo taken before the sinking of the Titanic. Bertha, aged 17, (right) in her graduation photo. She wrote of her Titanic experience for her high school annual in Portland, Ore.

## TITANIC MEMORIES

**BOWEN ISLAND** | Passenger list from historic liner showed up in grandson's home

BY SID TAFLER

A passenger list seems like a peculiar item to take when you're rushing to escape a sinking ship.

But other than the clothes she wore, the list of second-class passengers sailing on Titanic was the

only thing Elizabeth Watt managed to save, along with her 12-year-old daughter Bertha.

Now, 95 years later, the 12-page booklet of names, which was lost for years, has turned up in the Bowen Island home of Donald Marshall, 76, the grandson of Elizabeth, and son of Bertha.

The passenger list could be worth thousands on the frenzied auction market for authentic Titanic items, but Marshall, a retired Vancouver

See **BOOKLET LOANED** B4



### Book of memories

- A list of second-class passengers sailing on the Titanic has been held for generations.
- 95 years after the sinking, the 12-page booklet of names has turned up in the Bowen Island home of Donald Marshall, 76, whose mother Bertha Marshall and grandmother survived the sinking.
- 1,503 passengers and crew died in the tragedy, which saw the ship sink 3,800 metres below the surface of the North Atlantic Ocean.
- A Royal BC Museum's exhibition, *Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition*, runs until Oct. 14.

Source: RMS Titanic Inc. Vancouver Sun

## Barista turns passport line into cash

**VANCOUVER** | Night worker created her own day job as a line-sitter at Sinclair Centre

JESSE FERRERAS  
VANCOUVER SUN

By night, Kaley Levene is a Starbucks barista in Port Moody. By day, she's an entrepreneur, waiting in line-ups at the Sinclair Centre passport office in downtown Vancouver so you don't have to.

After waiting eight hours to get her own passport before she heads off to Australia in early June, she received a

call from her father, offering to pay her an hourly wage that she would normally make at her job, to have her stand in line for him at Sinclair Centre when he did not have time to go himself. And that customer has now multiplied into a few more as she cashes in on the hours it has been taking people to apply for passports.

"I only have like a month to make all the money that I need, so I might as well get money where I can," Levene said.

Her career as a professional line-sitter began last week when she was hired by her father. She made about \$200 on her first day.

"I waited about eight hours to get

my passport," she said. "My dad paid me, his boss paid me, and then a random lady on the street paid me," she said. "I'm going away and trying to save money, but I work nights so I don't really have very much to do during the day, so it's perfect."

At the time she was holding a place in line for only one person, but said that she had five more people who asked her to hold spaces for them in line at Sinclair Centre. But she is not yet sure when she'll be waiting in line again.

"I don't like to do this a lot, it's not like I've done it very much," she said.

See **WOMAN HAD** B6



GLENN BAGLO/VANCOUVER SUN

For a fee, Kaley Levene stands in for others applying for passports.

## Report rejects tuition fee removal

BY JANET STEFFENHAGEN  
VANCOUVER SUN

**B.C.** | A comprehensive review of post-secondary education in B.C. recommends an end to tuition fees for adult basic education and a re-examination of financial assistance programs for post-secondary learners.

But the review, by former attorney-general Geoff Plant, rejected calls from some for the elimination of tuition fees for post-secondary education, saying that would cost B.C. institutions \$1 billion a year and wouldn't improve learning.

See **REPORT MAKES** B4



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# NPA's annual meeting shaping up to be lively

**VANCOUVER** | Many people of various alliances are competing for vacant board seats, and an anti-poverty group plans a protest

BY FRANCES BULA  
VANCOUVER SUN

The annual general meeting of Vancouver's ruling Non-Partisan Association promises to be a highly charged event again this year, accompanied by the usual mystifying politics and abundance of rumours, along with a new feature — a protest by the Anti-Poverty Committee.

Wednesday's meeting will see an unusually high number of people running for the vacant board seats this year, with 16 people competing for eight open positions on the 15-member board.

In other years, board members have sometimes simply been acclaimed or there may have been only one or two more candidates than openings.

NPA president Matthew Taylor denies that is a sign that two slates are competing with each other.

"I know that rumour is out there and it's true some prospective candidates have preferences among the elected politicians, but I think it's just a sign that the organization's healthy."

Several candidates appear to have close connections to NPA Mayor Sam Sullivan, while NPA Coun. Peter Ladner says there are "five or six" candidates with whom he has some affiliation.

"But there are candidates that have been encouraged by various different people," said Ladner. "I do want people [on the board] who I know will bring useful talents. All I want is a board that is effective and where there won't be any unnecessary fighting."

In the meantime, the board nominations committee, concerned that the election could result in a completely new group of directors forming a majority on the board, has urged members to support three existing directors who are running again, so the board has "continuity" with people "who have been strong champions of the strategic initiatives and the NPA renewal."

The committee is urging members to re-elect Taylor, as well as Downtown Eastside businesswoman Yvonne de Valone and entrepreneur David Choi.

Some candidates have connections to Sullivan or to the federal Conservative party, with which he has close ties. They are lawyer George Cadman, former campaign worker Colin Doyle, and Andrea Smith, a former assistant to Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon and a current assistant to Conservative MP Gary Lunn.

Ladner did not identify which candi-

dates were affiliated with him. However, a number of them list in their biographies connections to business groups, a sector with which Ladner, the former editor of *Business in Vancouver*, has had close contacts.

One candidate, Victoria Mendes, was Ladner's campaign manager in the last election.

In the meantime, the Anti-Poverty Committee has advertised that it will be holding a protest outside the Main Street meeting place where the annual general meeting will be held.

"The NPA is a failed political party," says the committee's website. "Their legacy is a brutal assault on poor people with women, indigenous people and

racialized communities as the primary targets."

Ladner is now embroiled in a lawsuit with one Downtown Eastside advocate, whose organization lost a grant after Ladner made a motion to deny it. He said the group, the Downtown Eastside Residents Association, was too closely connected to the Anti-Poverty Commit-

tee.

The NPA board sets the rules for nominations in elections, something that can decide whether incumbents are forced to compete for their spots on the slate. As well, the board can veto a candidate altogether, not allowing him or her to run.

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## 'We cannot have a continuous loss of rental stock'

From B1

Gray noted that Vancouver isn't likely to see a rash of this kind of conversion attempt or political debate, because there aren't many buildings in this situation. Most developers stratify their buildings when they're being built, even if they plan to rent them out for a while, so that they don't have to come to council later for permission to convert. But a few developers have decided they would rather have them classified as rental buildings, which helps them save some money on insurance costs with the Homeowner Protection Office.

"This is an unusual recommendation, but it's unusual to have large applications like this," Gray said.

It is a sign, however, of how concerned city staff and politicians are about the increasingly difficult housing market.

NPA Coun. Suzanne Anton, whose party generally prefers to see a minimum of government interference and a maximum of market solutions to housing problems, said this will be a "tough decision to make" given the shortage of rental housing in the city. "It is an expression of our general anxiety over the loss of rental housing."

Coun. Raymond Louie, with Vision Vancouver, said he will support the staff recommendation. "We cannot have a continuous loss of rental stock."

Building owner Les Sallay's representative, Chuck Brook, said Sallay has offered to pay \$15,000 per unit, the amount that Downtown Eastside hotel conversions are charged, which would put \$440,000 in the affordable housing fund. As well, the building hardly represents affordable housing in Vancouver, with rents up to \$2,900, Brook said.

However, Gray notes the low-end rents of \$1,300 are what is considered affordable — 30 per cent of gross income — for someone making \$52,000 a year.

Voting on the recommendation has been put off until May 17.

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8	1	3	6	5	9	4	7	2
7	4	6	3	2	1	8	5	9
6	2	5	4	9	3	7	8	1
9	7	4	1	8	5	6	2	3
1	3	8	2	6	7	5	9	4
2	5	9	7	1	6	3	4	8
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