



Politics

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KELOWNA

Drug activity on the increase

Social agencies reporting a rise in downtown core

By ANDREA PEACOCK
The Okanagan Saturday

Drug use and sightings of drug paraphernalia are on the rise in Kelowna, according to local social agencies.

"There seems to be more activity of that nature in the last six months around us," said Randy Benson, executive director of Kelowna's Gospel Mission.

"We know that many of the people we serve are dealing with addictions or mental-health issues, so the complexity of the problems they deal with are challenging sometimes."

Benson said he and his staff do their best to limit the amount of drug use that goes on on their block. "Our policy is drugs and drug use is not allowed inside the building. If people come into the building and there's drug activity, then we don't give them service," said Benson.

"If there's drug activity outside, we instruct them to move along. We try to be responsible for our block and the area right around us."

Despite continued efforts, Benson said he often sees drug deals occurring on Leon Avenue, where the Gospel Mission is located, and also in City Park.

They key is working closely with the RCMP and downtown patrollers to keep drug use at bay, said Benson.

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ANDREA PEACOCK/The Okanagan Saturday

Solemn occasion

Family, friends and colleagues gathered to remember Judge Anne Wallace, who died suddenly after succumbing to a brain hemorrhage. The flags at the Kelowna Courthouse were lowered to half mast on Friday morning in her honour.

KELOWNA MOUNTAIN

Developer suing, being sued

By ANDREA PEACOCK
The Okanagan Saturday

A Kelowna developer is deep in lawsuits once again.

Mark Consiglio's Kelowna Mountain development has been a topic of controversy since he and his wife Nicola bought three pieces of property totalling 700 acres for more than \$7 million in 2005-06.

Consiglio and his supporters have invested tens of millions into an amphitheatre, Greek-style sundial, welcome centre and four long suspension bridges.

Consiglio has been at odds with the Central Okanagan regional district, which has jurisdiction

over the property, for years. Now he's filed a lawsuit.

The regional district has zoned the 160-acre Kelowna Mountain parcel as low density (RU1), which limits uses to agriculture, agri-tourism, a winery and other rural purposes.

In 2014, Consiglio petitioned the court to clarify the district's definition. The B.C. Supreme Court declined, saying the bylaw's definition "means what it says."

Consiglio then took the judge's ruling to the B.C. Court of Appeal, which ruled against Kelowna Mountain.

Kelowna Mountain is suing the regional district for its 100-person restriction on Kelowna Mountain's business license.

"Holding weddings, conferences, concerts and special events is critical to the overall financial success of the business," said Consiglio's wife Nicola via email.

"This new restriction has caused severe damage in our world and has spooked mortgages. We have been left with no choice but to seek the court's help to find a solution."

However, the zoning restriction is not new at all, said Bruce Smith, RDCO communications officer.

"They've got a business license to operate as an agri-tourism operation under the existing zoning on the property. The 100-person limit is from the agri-tourism zone, which is under RU1. Nothing has changed."

Smith said Kelowna Mountain could bring in a request for zoning.

"They have not made any applications. They made an application a number of years ago, but it was returned because it was considered incomplete," said Smith.

Smith said he could not speak directly on the current litigation, but only that the regional district lawyers had responded, and the next step will be setting a court date.

"We have had many obstacles in the past 10 years in building this tourist attraction, and we will overcome this one too," said Nicola.

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It's daylight savings time again. Remember to set your clocks back by 1 hour before going to bed tonight

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Art galleries collect Lego for dissident Chinese artist after firm refuses order

By The Associated Press

LONDON — Ai Weiwei is taking on Lego, brick by brick.

Art galleries around the world are collecting plastic pieces for the dissident Chinese artist after the Danish toy company refused to supply its product for his latest project.

Ai, whose work is often critical of Chinese authorities, says Lego last month refused a bulk purchase order from an Australian gallery where he plans to build a new artwork on the theme of freedom of speech.

Ai called the move "an act of censorship and discrimination," but Lego says it can't endorse the use of its bricks in projects with a "political agenda."

London's Royal Academy, which is currently mounting an exhibition of Ai's work, is encouraging supporters to fill a BMW in its courtyard with Lego bricks that will be shipped to Ai.

Other galleries have also taken up collections, including the Brooklyn Museum in New York, Berlin's Martin-Gropius-Bau and Australia's National Gallery of Victoria, where an exhibition of Ai's new work is due to open in December.

Lego reported sales of 14.1 billion Danish kroner (\$2.1 billion) in the



Weiwei

first half of 2015, which makes the privately owned company the world's biggest toy-maker, surpassing Barbie manufacturer Mattel Inc. China is one of Lego's biggest growth markets, but the company said Ai's case was the product of longstanding policy, not politics.

Lego said it had a decades-old policy of not "actively engaging in or endorsing the use of Lego bricks in projects or contexts of a political agenda."

"This means that in cases where we receive requests for donations or support for projects from artists, we kindly decline in the cases where we are made aware there is a political context," the company said in a statement.

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