

INSIDE

WHERE'S THE WHALE?

If it was a wayward grey whale that a tugboat operator saw near the Port Mann Bridge, it won't last long in fresh water, experts warn.

Story B5



PROJECT BREWING

Former Labatt site in New West takes shape.

Story B2



THE VANCOUVER SUN

WESTCOAST

SECTION

B

TITANIC ARTIFACTS ARRIVE | B5

NEWS

GRATEFUL DAD THANKS POLICE | B7

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Zoo spared trial on cruelty charges for hippo's treatment

A VANCOUVER SUN EXCLUSIVE

BY NICHOLAS READ
VANCOUVER SUN

The criminal justice branch of the provincial ministry of the attorney-general has decided to stay cruelty charges against the Greater Vancouver Zoo, arguing that because a new enclosure has been built for Hazina, the zoo's hippo, it is no longer in the public interest to pursue the charges.

Two counts of cruelty to animals were laid last May after it was alleged by the B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals that for 19 months the Aldergrove zoo kept Hazina, a two-year-old hippo, alone in a dark shed with a pool so shallow she couldn't float.

The SPCA further alleged that the only stimulation provided to Hazina during her confinement in the wooden shed were a rubber tire and a ball, and that she was forced to stand for months on a concrete floor.

The charges under the B.C. Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act were believed to have been the first laid against a major Canadian zoo, and carried a maximum penalty of \$2,000 and/or six months in jail.

But Stan Lowe, communications counsel for the criminal justice branch, said when the zoo completed construction of a new hippo enclosure last June, it was in full compliance with B.C. SPCA requirements and therefore should no longer be prosecuted.

"We reviewed the matter and we determined it was no longer in the public interest to continue this prosecution, given that it achieved compliance and there was a very low risk of re-offence," Lowe said.

Marcie Moriarty, general manager of cruelty investigations for the B.C. SPCA and one of the lead investigators on the case, said the society was bitterly disappointed by the Crown's decision.

She said the fact that the zoo finally complied with SPCA directives last June doesn't negate the fact that Hazina was kept in substandard conditions for 19 months prior to the new shelter's construction.



B.C. SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS/VANCOUVER SUN FILES

THEN: The B.C. SPCA took these pictures of Hazina in her dark, wooden shed at the Greater Vancouver Zoo, during its investigation into how the zoo was treating the female hippopotamus. Her pool was too shallow then for her to float in.

"This gives the message that as long as the person stops causing distress to an animal, they don't face any repercussions for their actions," Moriarty said. "It means that the zoo could, say, get a baby elephant now, and keep it in substandard conditions for a year or more. But as long as they have something in place in a year or two, they'd be okay."

"We fully and still believe that an offence took place when the zoo permitted Hazina to grow up in substandard conditions."

Vancouver Humane Society spokesman Peter Fricker, who alerted the SPCA to Hazina's treatment in the first place, agreed.

"Anyone who saw the television images of Hazina's abysmal circumstances and who followed the long history of her solitary confinement must wonder just how bad a

See PROVINCE URGED B4



PETER BATTISTONI/VANCOUVER SUN FILES

NOW: Hazina the hippo moved into a new enclosure last June that is in full compliance with SPCA requirements.

Hippos' history at the Aldergrove zoo

■ The Greater Vancouver Zoo was charged with two counts of cruelty to animals in May 2006 for keeping Hazina, a female hippo, in dark wooden shed with a pool too shallow for her to float in.

■ The charges, which were stayed Tuesday, were believed to be the first laid against a major Canadian zoo.

■ In 2004, the zoo was stripped of its accreditation by the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums for its treatment of hippos acquired before Hazina.

■ In 1983, two hippos died when they crashed through the ice of their pool. Two more, named Gertrude and Harvey, died in 2004 and 2005 respectively, Gertrude of kidney failure and Harvey of intestinal problems.

Angry public backs store

City politicians bombarded with messages about closing

BY FRANCES BULA
VANCOUVER SUN

VANCOUVER | Cheapskates' fate has become a hot potato for Vancouver politicians, who are being bombarded with messages from people angry that the popular sports equipment consignment business may close because the owner says bylaws are too onerous.

But councillors are also reluctant to move too quickly to change the bylaw, which was amended last November in a move supported by dozens of other residents, including Block Watch captains who want more ways to stem the tide of local property crime.

In the meantime, Cheapskates owner Barry Gilpin is facing two charges of violating the bylaw for two incidents in which bicycles were sold before they went through the required 35-day waiting period.

Gilpin says those charges, along with council's recent move to allow bylaw officers to ticket people more easily, are even more reason for him to close his store.

"They could come in here every day and ticket me for whatever, a pair of hockey pants that I hadn't held for five days. I'd be bankrupt in five seconds."

Gilpin said neither of the bicycles was stolen. He is only being charged with not having kept them the 35-day waiting period required by the bylaw, a fact police have confirmed.

The 35-day requirement was actually put in place in 2002. Gilpin has objected numerous times to the increasing regulation of second-hand goods, saying his system of operating, in which he does not give out cash and only mails cheques to sellers after their item has sold, is a safeguard against crime. He has complied with some of the requirements. As a result, police have recovered a handful of stolen bikes from his store over the years, he said.

The bylaw was amended recently to require second-hand store owners dealing in certain goods — not clothing, records, knick-knacks or books, for

See TEACHER LIKES B4

Malik ordered to pay up or lose building

BY KIM BOLAN
VANCOUVER SUN

VANCOUVER | A Vancouver businessman acquitted in the Air India bombing must pay up or face losing the Yaletown building that houses his clothing company.

Ripudaman Singh Malik and his wife were ordered in B.C. Supreme Court Tuesday to pay more than \$600,000 to HSBC on outstanding mortgages for the property within six months or there will be a forced sale of the building.

HSBC began foreclosure proceedings on the building at 1030 Hamilton in November.

According to Tuesday's order, the Maliks owe HSBC \$322,818.05

Financial woes

■ Ripudaman Singh Malik has had financial troubles since March 2005.

■ His Yaletown building has been the subject of foreclosure.

■ Action has been filed against his Shaughnessy mansion, at 6475 Marguerite St.

on a second mortgage, plus \$295,632.53 for a third mortgage.

See MALIK OWNS B4



We'll flatter your pants off, poll shows

80% of people surveyed here admit to kissing up to get someone into bed, the highest rate in Canada

BY DENISE RYAN
VANCOUVER SUN

BRITISH COLUMBIA | Polishing the apple, sweet-talking, kissing up — call it what you want — 80 per cent of B.C. respondents to an international survey admit they use flattery to get prospective partners into bed.

That's the highest rate in the country according to the 2007 *Harlequin Romance Report*.

But don't rush to judgment — Vancouver dating and relationship expert Rosalyn Dietsch of Compatible Introductions asks: "What else would you do? I see it as a positive."

And America's Dating Coach Patti Feinstein said in an interview from Chicago that our use of flattery may even be a sign of

Canadians talk about sex

■ Almost 50 per cent of Canadian respondents to the survey have sent a sexually explicit e-mail, text message or instant message.

■ Approximately one in three men has had a "cyber affair" with someone online.

■ Nearly three-quarters of all men and women would forgive their significant other if they flirted with someone else, but men are more than twice as likely as women to forgive their partner for having sex with someone else (20 per cent

men, nine per cent women).

■ Four of five Maritime respondents have posted a profile on an online dating service.

■ Forty per cent of men and women from Saskatchewan and Manitoba admit they have engaged in cyber sex.

■ One in five Alberta men would forgive their partner for having sex with someone else while Ontarians are four times less likely to forgive.

Source: 2007 Harlequin Romance Report

social and cultural advancement. "Someone who has social skills knows how to give a compliment. People who are lacking in social

skills don't do it. An honest compliment is personal, it's not a line, and it works."

Kudos to us, then.

Vancouver matchmaker Jane Carsters says even when it comes to getting started on the path to love and serious relationships, "clients that are serious about finding a partner may use flattery to get to the next date." Carsters says she can match clients according to their own criteria — religion, education, height, looks — "but if there is no chemistry, it doesn't work. Everyone loves to be flattered and feel attractive."

Ethically, UBC assistant professor of philosophy Scott Anderson says the sincerity of the compliment is something to consider. If it is sincere, "to compliment someone you want to go to bed with seems entirely reasonable.

See WATCH OUT B4

