

Subject: [Fwd: Re: Oversize Chess Pieces + Newspaper articles from the weekend]

Date: Mon, 05 Jul 2004 21:52:19 -0700

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: Re: Oversize Chess Pieces + Newspaper articles from the weekend

Date: Mon, 05 Jul 2004 20:37:47 -0700

From: Lyle Craver <lcraver@shaw.ca>

To: Maureen McKeon Holmes <Maureen_McKeonHolmes@dnv.org>

CC: Mayor Don Bell <mayorbell@dnv.org>, Councillor Alan Nixon <anixon@dnv.org>, Councillor Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org>, Councillor Janice Harris <jharris@dnv.org>, Councillor Lisa Muri <lmuri@dnv.org>, Councillor Maureen McKeon Holmes <mmckeonholmes@dnv.org>, Councillor Richard Walton <rwalton@dnv.org>, fonvca@fonvca.org

Dear Mayor McKeon Holmes,

I've taken the liberty of passing your e-mail concerning chess equipment to Messrs. Bruce Harper, Stephen Wright and Mrs. Lynn Stringer who are BC Chess Federation President, Junior Coordinator and Vancouver Island Vice-President since Costco is not normally thought of as a good place for purchasing chess equipment.

For me Sunday afternoon was spent taking part in a simultaneous chess exhibition by grandmaster Pia Cramling of Sweden who is in town for the Western Canadian Open which begins this coming Friday. She is one of the top 10 women in the world and was here with her husband Juan Bellon (who is a grandmaster in his own right) of Spain and their VERY cute two year old daughter. She took on 28 players and I was one of all but four players who got royally thumped. Since the exhibition was at St. John's School (at 10th and Yew in the heart of the "Greek district") we were of course interrupted by car horns blasting more or less continuously from 2:30 pm onwards. Bellon seemed surprised until told him "I suppose it's no surprise for you to know that we are in the Greek district of Vancouver and that there are not too many Portugese here - they're over on Victoria Drive and probably a lot quieter right now..."

On District matters there are two newspaper articles I expect you've seen - the North Shore News article about the mayoralty situation and the Vancouver Province article today (July 5th) on page A11: "Trail Injuries up in North Van" (subtitle: "North Shore Search and Rescue kept busy by bike crashes and exhausted hikers")

On the latter, previous Province articles concerning North Shore Search and Rescue have reported that the cost to District taxpayers is roughly \$1200 for every rescue they undertake and that the bulk of their call-outs concern mountain bikers. NSSAR does not bill their clients for fear this would cause fewer people to seek help when needed. This means that District taxpayers are substantially subsidizing this sport since the North Shore Mountain Biking Association statistics say that between 60-68% of bikers in our mountains come from off the North Shore (e.g. all three municipalities which means the percentage who are District taxpayers is even lower).

We hear constantly from the NSMBA's friends about what a financial benefit they bring to the community though besides the various cycle shops, the odd bar and coffee shop I'm mystified as to who benefits - I know my business doesn't and I don't know anyone other business in our immediate area (which as you know is Lower Pemberton) who does. Even more so I do not know of any financial benefit mountain biking provides to the District of North Vancouver despite the despoiling of District forests and the costs of ambulances and fire trucks we routinely hear in our neighborhood.

So what's the solution? Clearly we need a solution that is revenue positive for the District that will both cover the cost of ambulance / rescue services and protect District taxpayers against lawsuits similar to the Murao case of last year.
(<http://www.richmond-news.com/issues03/101203/news/101203nn2.html>)
This is the case I'm sure you've read plenty about which led to the Richmond School Board cancelling all school ski trips.

The easiest solution would be a system of Off-road Bicycle Licencing which would cover the cost of rescue and insurance plus a suitable premium to allow Parks to restore the damage these riders cost the District environmentally. Enforcement would be simple - get caught without a decal or plate and be impounded. This would be an entirely suitable part of the Alpine Strategic Study currently under way as would other measures I advocate such as District deciding what zones are appropriate for riding trails and what kind of separation from residential neighborhoods District wants. (Hint: "everywhere" and "none" are NOT acceptable answers)

The bottom line is that there are clear financial costs involved to the District in allowing unrestricted off-road riding and the District ought to be aggressively seeking ways to financially benefit from an activity which by NSMBA's own statistics is NOT dominated by District Residents. Not to do so is abdicate one's responsibility to District taxpayers.

Concerning the mayor's chair (covered in the NS News article) I think Mayor Bell clearly spelled out the options at Council shortly before the federal election was called and he said fairly clearly that if he resigned before 1/1/2005 there was an absolute legal requirement for a by-election - that Council in fact did not have a choice before that date. Given everyone expects Parliament to sit before 2005 (and thus Mayor Bell would have to resign and become Don Bell, MP before that time) I don't see how Council could successfully pull an end-run around the Municipal Act on this point. I cannot imagine taxpayers would reward any such move by the current Council at the next election either.

Over the past decade District taxpayers have paid some of the highest tax increases in the GVRD so rather than spend the cost of a by-election on other programs I'd rather see the money not spent at all by District. Having said that I have no reason to disbelieve Mayor Bell's understanding of the law so while I would prefer not to pay out the cost of a by-election either but that is the cost of democracy.

Best regards,
Lyle Craver
4797 Hoskins Road

----- Original Message -----

From: "Maureen McKeon Holmes" <Maureen_McKeonHolmes@dnv.org>
To: <lcraver@shaw.ca>
Sent: Saturday, July 03, 2004 2:17 PM
Subject: Oversize Chess Pieces

Dear Mr.. Craver:

A number of months ago, I spoke to you about oversized chess pieces. I finally found a beautiful set at Costco of all places. There are now only two remaining sets in the lower mainland and they have been marked down. The king and queen stand about three feet tall and the set is made out of a resin product. It took me two trips in my car to get them home and as I write my kids are in the backyard playing chess....gotta love it.

Maureen