



**Cancer claims ex-MLA Hawkins**

Sindi Ahluwalia Hawkins, the former Kelowna-Mission MLA, succumbed to cancer Tuesday after battling myeloid leukemia. Hawkins passed away in Calgary surrounded by her family. Earlier Tuesday, Premier Gordon Campbell renamed the Southern Interior Cancer Centre in honour of her tireless work and public service from 1996-2009. "Today is a sombre day for British Columbia; we have lost an inspirational person, an advocate, a role model and an inspiration leader," he said in prepared statement. Opposition leader Carole James cited Hawkins support in her battle with cancer with warmth and tenacity. "The fact she continued that work throughout her diagnosis and treatment is a testament to her selfless commitment to others."

— QMI AGENCY

**Paralysis no obstacle for painter**

MATT KIELTYKA  
QMI Agency

A crowded room of people stood in awed silence as local painter Cody Tresierra worked his latest masterpiece.

The hushed appreciation is understandable.

After all, it's easy to be moved by a man completely paralyzed from the neck down, confidently producing a work of art with nothing more than a brush in his mouth.

But the Cloverdale resident, who has created more than 500 paintings since 1986, downplays his extraordinary gift.

"I use the brush the same as any other person," Tresierra said Tuesday while painting at Yaletown's Raw Canvas. "When I started they were pretty shaky, but colourful. It was pure colour straight out of the tubes and onto the canvas."

He's since joined up with Canada's Mouth and Foot Painting Artists and has turned a hobby into a profession, though you'd never



Artist Cody Tresierra demonstrates his technique as he works on a still life at Raw Canvas gallery in Vancouver, Tuesday.  
PHOTO CARMINE MARINELLI

know it by talking to the man who nearly lost his life in a car accident at age 19.

"The paintings are a little bit better now," he said in straight-faced modesty.

His wife of eight years, Elvie, told *24 hours* a restless and

adventurous soul lies beneath that modesty.

"He thinks his art is OK, but of course everyone else thinks it's excellent," she said. "He's like that. He doesn't think he's in a wheelchair. He wants to try everything and explore.

Sometimes I feel like I'm handicapped because I can't keep up."

And if there is one trait Tresierra would want to instill on other paralyzed people looking for inspiration, it would be a willingness to try.

"Right after the accident, I was kind of recluse. Just go out and try something, whether it's music, painting, drawing or sports," he said. "The more you do, the more you want to do it and get out and experience things."

**CBSA fees threaten cross-border Amtrak service**

BOB MACKIN  
QMI Agency

Canada Border Services Agency inspection fees could scuttle the Amtrak train service that was expanded in August 2009.

Amtrak Cascades' evening arrival at Pacific Central Sta-

tion may be discontinued after October. NDP tourism critic Spencer Chandra Herbert said more than 90 per cent of those who arrive on Amtrak Cascades from Portland and Seattle are overnight visitors and the average stay in Vancouver is four nights.

"To scupper that because of an investment of \$500,000 on the border issue doesn't make economic sense," Chandra Herbert said.

Mayors of Vancouver, Seattle and Portland and Tourism Vancouver have pleaded with officials to resolve the issue

and keep the trains moving. Chandra Herbert said the loss of the second train could harm a potential soccer tourism boom in 2011 when fans of the Vancouver Whitecaps, Seattle Sounders and Portland Timbers are expected to travel by the thou-

sands in the region to see their respective Major League Soccer team.

"Traveling by train is environmentally friendlier. It's also a much nicer ride and you don't have to sit in a border lineup," Chandra Herbert said.

**SUSPECT NABBED**

**ARREST**

Vancouver police arrested Aaron Frederick Bourcier, 33, on Sept. 14 for allegedly attempting to meet young girls for sex over the Internet. Vice investigators posed as a minor to exchange e-mails with the accused after receiving information through www.cybertip.ca in late August. Police arranged a meeting with Bourcier who believed he would meet with two 13-year-old girls. He was arrested at the scene. Police also found child porn on his computer.

**GOVT FUNDING**

**ALZHEIMERS**

The province plans to spend \$1 million to bolster three Alzheimer Society of B.C. programs, Health Minister Kevin Falcon announced Tuesday. The funding expands education, fitness and programs in Richmond, Burnaby and other municipalities outside the Lower Mainland.

**MALL EXPANSION**

**RICHMOND**

Fairchild Group, owner of Aberdeen Centre, is reporting it has sold 75 per cent of the retail and office space in its new Aberdeen Square extension at the iconic Richmond mall. The redeveloped centre is said to be the largest Asian-style international retail centre in North America. The six-storey, 160,000-square-foot tower opens Wednesday.



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