



THE CAPITAL AND VANCOUVER ISLAND

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Transitional shelter became lifesaver

Former tent city
campers found
hope at My Place

SARAH PETRESCU
Times Colonist

Douglas McLean said moving from the since-dismantled tent city on the courthouse lawn into the My Place shelter on Yates Street 18 months ago likely saved his life. “I was one of the first people picked to be in here and I stayed until the end,” said McLean, a.k.a. Poet, at a farewell barbecue for shelter residents and staff on Friday afternoon.

The transitional shelter, in the former Boys and Girls Club, will close next week and the final four residents sleeping in tents in the gym will be moved to other housing.

The shelter was one of three with temporary funding from the provincial government to help transition homeless people from the tent city into more permanent housing.

The province invested more than \$26 million to house homeless people and purchased four buildings — the Central Care home on Johnson Street, Mount Edwards Court seniors home on Vancouver Street and the Super 8 and Tally Ho hotels on Douglas Street.

McLean, 56, has just moved into the Super 8, but said he'll miss My Place.

“It's the people here and the space. I changed a lot,” he said, describing how he gained more control over his drug use. His anxiety about being robbed or intimidated waned through him being in a safe place. “I've lost a lot of friends [to overdoses], but not a single person has died here.”

McLean said he used a music



Outreach worker Kaela Nystrom serves a burger to former My Place resident Douglas McLean, a.k.a. Poet, at a farewell barbecue for staff and residents at the transitional shelter on Friday. DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST

room and then delved into painting abstract works that were recently featured in an art show. He's preparing to participate in the Moss Street Paint-In this summer.

“I believe that instead of using more drugs, I painted. I had something else to do,” he said. “There's a lot of good memories here and I'm grateful for what was done for me.”

Grant McKenzie, from Our Place Society, said 90 people have come through My Place since it

opened and all now have housing. The organization also operates the transitional shelter Choices in View Royal, which is set to close at the end of the year, and the mat program at First Metropolitan Church on Quadra Street, as well as its own housing.

“A lot of the success we've had has to do with the outreach workers who are really focused on meeting people where they are at,” McKenzie said.

Michael Marchand, 30, said it was an outreach worker at My

Place who helped him get a doctor's appointment and put on a methadone program.

“I'm feeling great and moving forward,” said Marchand, who has been at the shelter for a few months.

He has been homeless for more than a year and also stayed at the tent city for a short period. He said since methadone helped him stop using drugs, he has been able to get a casual labour job and work on what he wants to do in the future.

“I totally appreciate the help,” he said.

McKenzie said that while it's sad to see My Place come to an end, he has noticed the effects of more people being housed in Victoria.

“We're not seeing as many people in the early morning at Our Place,” he said about the drop-in centre on Pandora Avenue.

“That means less people are likely being woken up on the streets and coming in.”
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Man accused of attempted murder

LOUISE DICKSON
Times Colonist

A Victoria man has been charged with attempted murder using a firearm after a car was hit by gunfire in Oaklands last weekend.

Dennis Salvador, 45, is also charged with intentionally discharging a firearm while being reckless to the life and safety of another person, and with possessing a firearm — a Sig Sauer pistol — without a licence and registration certificate.

The name of Salvador's alleged intended victim is protected by a publication ban. The offences are alleged to have occurred on Sunday in the area of Ryan and Shelbourne streets.

On Friday, Salvador, a heavyset man with long brown hair and a beard, appeared by video link in Victoria provincial court from the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre where he has been in custody since his arrest in James Bay on Sunday.

His lawyer, Geof Simair, asked for the case to be adjourned until Thursday. It is not known if Salvador will request a bail hearing at that time.

At 2:20 a.m. on Sunday, Victoria police received a 911 call from a woman who said someone had shot at her car. She was not injured, but police found bullet damage on the car.

The incident led to the closing of the 1700-block of Kings Road for much of Sunday after officers identified a suspect and surrounded a house. Police asked people to avoid the area as they cordoned off the block.

The Greater Victoria Emergency Response Team was called out.

Forensic identification officers, major crime detectives and canine officers were also on scene.

People living in the area said they heard a flash grenade go off in the house about 10 a.m.

Officers executed a search warrant at the house after spending hours outside calling for the suspect to come out. They later found the suspect in James Bay.
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Bail depends on proof of flight

LOUISE DICKSON
Times Colonist

A man charged with two counts of attempted murder after allegedly driving a car at his ex-girlfriend and her new boyfriend is expected to be released on \$5,000 bail on Tuesday.

But first, Sebastien Normandin, 46, must show authorities at the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre and his Victoria bail supervisor a photocopy of a plane ticket in his name to Montreal.

On Friday, Victoria provincial court Judge Jennifer Barrett agreed to release Normandin on the condition he be driven straight from the jail to the airport by his mother. Barrett also asked a member of the regional domestic violence unit to follow his mother's car to the airport.

It was the fifth continuation of the bail hearing for Normandin, a thin-faced man with grey hair and glasses, who appeared by video from the correctional centre.

Normandin is also charged with dangerous operation of a motor vehicle on Dec. 27, 2016, recklessly harassing and causing another person to fear for

their safety on Nov. 30 and Dec. 27, 2016, assault causing bodily harm on May 8, 2015, and assault on Dec. 13, 2014. The bail proceedings and the names of Normandin's alleged victims are protected by a publication ban. Crown and defence will return to court on June 6 to set a date for Normandin's next court appearance.

After arriving in Montreal, Normandin must report in person daily to the West Operational Centre. He must not leave the Greater Montreal area or travel to Vancouver Island without advance, written notice of his Victoria bail supervisor, Barrett said.

Normandin must have a telephone landline in Montreal and give the number to his Victoria bail supervisor and to the operational centre. He will be under a 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew, Barrett ordered.

When he comes to Vancouver Island, Normandin must live with his mother and remain in his residence at all times, with a few exceptions for court appearances and appointments with his lawyer.

Barrett also imposed a red-zone restriction on Normandin, preventing him from going anywhere east of

Quadra Street. She also ordered him to have no contact with his alleged victims or their families.

He must advise his Victoria bail supervisor of any intended or ongoing close relationships and refrain from continuing those relationships until those people have been advised of the criminal allegations, Barrett said.

In Victoria and Montreal, he must abstain from drugs, including marijuana. He is not to possess any weapons or live in a home where people have weapons.

Normandin is not to be in the driver's seat of any vehicle.

Barrett also ordered Normandin to take dialectical behaviour therapy and placed him under an order that would allow mental-health treatment.

Police were called to Gillespie Place, off Rockland Avenue near Moss Street, at 6:40 p.m. on Dec. 27, 2016, after a report of a serious crash involving two vehicles. One car had significant damage, Victoria police spokesman Const. Matt Rutherford said at the time. Major crime investigators became involved because of the seriousness of the offence, he said.
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City's debate on off-leash plan for dogs in three parks awaits staff report

Victoria will wait until next month to decide whether to try out morning off-leash hours for dogs in three city parks.

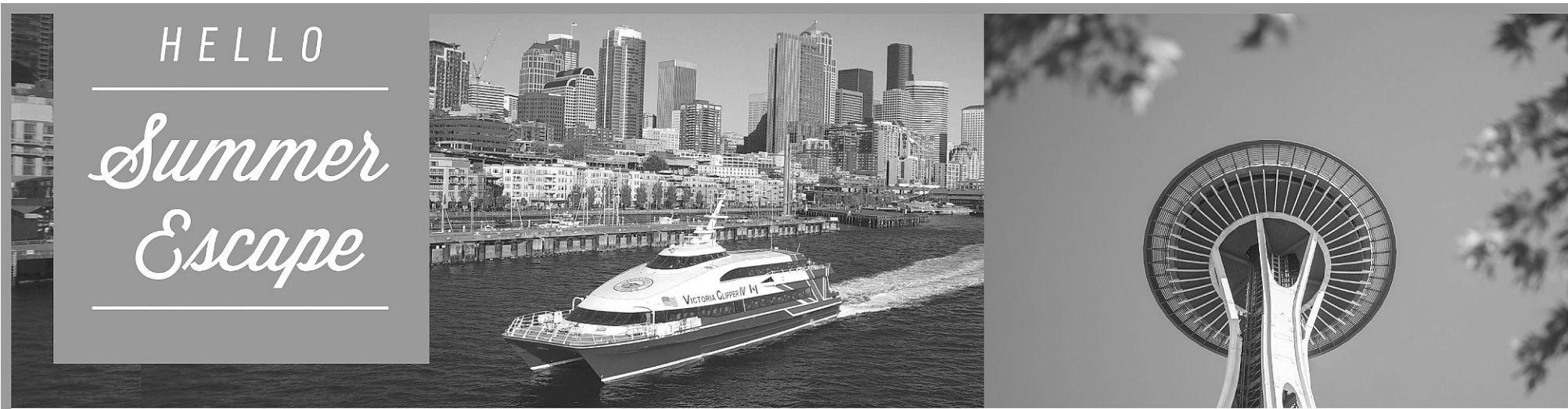
Councillors have deferred consideration of a motion recommending the city run a pilot program to allow dogs

to be off-leash between 6:30 and 8:30 a.m. in Fisherman's Wharf Park, Gonzales Beach and Spencer Park.

Staff will report to council on the implications of running the test at the next quarterly update. There are about

75 city parks in Victoria. They include 13 off-leash areas.

With the exception of the off-leash areas and private property, all dogs are to be on a leash in Victoria.
—Times Colonist



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