



WIDE-EYED WARNING

Fashion contact lenses come with a risk. » C1



WILD KINGDOM

Animals coming down to urban areas in search of food. » A3

B.C.-made therapy the cornerstone of world's AIDS fight

BY CARMEN CHAI

Vancouver researchers have become the first in the world to confirm that an aggressive treatment for HIV significantly cuts the number of people contracting the virus that causes AIDS.

For every 100 patients using the so-called highly active antiretroviral therapy, or HAART, scientists recorded a three-per cent decrease in HIV diagnoses in British Columbia, said Julio Montaner, lead researcher and director of the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, which is affiliated with the University of B.C.

The United Nations HIV/AIDS program director, Michel Sidibe, hailed the research and said the results mean the UN is embracing HAART as the fundamental worldwide prevention strategy for AIDS.

The research was made public Sunday at the annual meeting of the International AIDS Society, in Vienna.

"Today is a big day for us in B.C. and Canada," said Montaner.

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A FESTIVE WEEKEND



Peruvian musician **Anaconda** performs Sunday at the Surrey Fusion Festival, one of many festivals that took advantage of sunny skies throughout Metro Vancouver on the weekend. The multicultural event brought together the sounds, colour and food of over 25 countries. » Entertainment, C3

Anti-gang crackdown takes a bite out of murder rate

Drop in slayings due to success in obtaining guilty pleas: police

BY KIM BOLAN
VANCOUVER SUN

Vancouver is on target for a record low number of homicides in 2010, partly due to the success of investigations targeting violent regional gangs, the inspector in charge of the major crime section says.

Insp. Mike Porteous said with so many gangsters behind bars, shootings in the city have "dropped drastically" and the murder rate has plummeted.

There have been six slayings in the city so far this year and charges have been laid in four of the files. There were 20 in Vancouver in 2009, with charges laid in just four cases all year.

Porteous was in charge of the high-profile Project Rebellion, which targeted the city's south slope gangs and led to 209 charges against 28 people on

40 separate indictments.

Already nine of those accused have pleaded guilty to a range of charges, including firearms counts, assault and attempted murder.

Porteous said the number of guilty pleas is above average due to the strength of the evidence gathered in the project and the work of the special prosecution team, which "took the bit in the teeth."

Porteous added that there were likely so many guilty pleas because so many of the accused in Project Rebellion were denied bail.

"A lot of these guys were incarcerated right away."

Judges accepted that "if you are carrying around a loaded gun or trafficking in guns, it is for a nefarious purpose," Porteous said.

The guilty pleas followed.

CONTINUED ON A4

OPINION

Gambling grab morally no different than dealing drugs

STEPHEN HUME

VANCOUVER SUN



The unseemly haste to embrace online casino gambling by my provincial government is motivated by one of the many sins that afflicts us: greed for more money.

For more than 30 years, B.C. governments have justified their jostling at the unsavoury gambling trough. They spout high-minded rhetoric about why this is a good idea — keep the money at home; benefits outweigh social costs, etc.

Yet some research suggests that perhaps a third of gambling revenue is extracted from problem gamblers, observes Adrian MacNair, writing for

the *National Post*.

In moral terms, how does extracting cash from gambling addicts differ from selling crystal meth to drug addicts on grounds that if you don't, somebody else will?

The idea of government grabbing the house advantage in gambling establishments — that means the game is rigged to ensure that while the suckers lose, a usurious profit is guaranteed government — began with Social Credit.

It continued with the now-sanctimonious NDP, which let us not forget, promptly lost two consecutive premiers to gambling scandals.

But it ramped up to a new level of hypocrisy under the present Liberals.

They promised to curb the expansion of publicly sanctioned gambling while in opposition, then promptly expanded

gambling while ruthlessly hacking at the "social benefits" by slashing grants to the non-profits and charities that relied on gambling funds.

So entertain no illusions from the smarmy Liberal spin machine. Greed and hypocrisy drive the present decision to grow online casino gambling, one of the most predatory and addictive of all the gambling arenas.

Greed: because government itself so lusts for the dirty cash that comes from gambling it appears prepared to sacrifice any principles to corner it.

Hypocrisy: because this is a way of grabbing money while evading accountability with voters — something that actually levying a tax to raise needed funds requires.

Predatory: because British research shows that online gamblers are 10 times more likely

to be problem gamblers. And research in the *Canadian Journal of Public Health* warns that the ease and convenience of gambling from home with virtual cash amplifies risk.

Government says risks are controllable but now faces a lawsuit from a woman with gambling addiction who lost \$331,000 even while enrolled in the voluntary self-exclusion program that's supposed to address problem gamblers.

Meanwhile, the Liberals raise the gambling ceiling. Gambling with virtual cash online, problem gamblers can now lose up to \$10,000 a week — that's more than \$500,000 a year — using credit cards that charge up to 20 per cent vigourish, oops, interest.

Housing and Social Development Minister Rich Coleman makes the feeble argument that a government-sanctioned

local gambling website is okay because some British Columbians already gamble on offshore websites.

So what? Some people are predatory sex tourists. That doesn't make it right.

Coleman cuts a ridiculous figure.

Here's the politician responsible for helping people with addictions and their social problems actually making his most vulnerable clients easier prey for their demons.

Furthermore, his government now invites casino gambling culture into the home under conditions where guidelines purported to regulate against irresponsible gambling are rendered impotent.

The existing rules prohibit minors from gambling establishments; they prohibit permitting gambling by intoxicated people; they claim no tolerance

for unattended children while gambling takes place.

How can any of these be enforced for online casino gambling?

Coleman is welcome to his fantasy, but people aren't stupid. They know this is just about the money.

The B.C. Lottery Corp. estimates that by expanding online gambling, it will capture about \$40 million a year in increased revenues. We're told the target is to triple that in three years. Government wants to entice people to gamble more, not less.

And so, in exchange for the quick but dirty cash, the Liberals add yet another political lie to their ever-expanding list of broken promises and ideals sacrificed at the unholy altar of greed.

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EDUCATION

Levelling a silent playing field

Conference discusses challenges facing students who are deaf or hard of hearing

BY VIVIAN LUK
VANCOUVER SUN

As part of her English literature classes, Rosalind Ho has to watch old films. But lack of subtitles and poor sound quality make it hard for Ho, who has severe hearing loss, to know what’s going on.

To get through her classes at the University of B.C., Ho has to use cochlear implants and a frequency modulated system, which allows her professors to speak into a microphone and transmit their voices into her hearing aids.

Even then, she needs the help of at least three people — an interpreter, a captioner and a note taker — to assist if she misses things.

“A teacher would say we need to know the material [from the movie], but it’s an older movie without any closed captioning,” Ho told the International Congress on the Education of the Deaf on Sunday.

“I had a sign language interpreter, but he had trouble hearing the sounds, which meant I had trouble getting information.”

Ho’s comments about the learning barriers she has faced were made at a Vancouver conference where educators and researchers from around the world discussed challenges facing people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Speaking with Ho were David



Kwantlen University student David McGregor (left), UBC student Rosalind Ho and Emily Carr’s Kelsie Grazier spoke at the International Congress on the Education of the Deaf.

McGregor and Kelsie Grazier, both from Vancouver.

Grazier is hard of hearing. Like Ho, she also required a FM system and the help of a note taker when she studied at Langara College. But unlike at UBC, the note takers at Langara are unpaid and do not always show up for class or write detailed notes, Grazier said.

“It’s very tiring to write out the notes, lip-read the professor, and search around the classroom for a student who had said a comment and the professor said, ‘Yes, that’s a very important point,’” said Grazier. “By the time you’ve located the person, it’s too late. They’ve already said it and moved on to the next thing.”

Growing up, Grazier, 21, went to school with hearing students. Her experience has been positive for the most part, but she has encountered teachers and classmates who did not accommodate her disability.

“In Grade 2, my teacher wouldn’t wear the FM system because it didn’t go with her outfit,” she said. “In college,

it’s even more difficult because you’re left to your own devices, and the support isn’t always there.”

McGregor, who prefers to sign even though he can speak English, was bullied in elementary and high school.

“I wore two hearing aids, and they would pull it off,” he said with the help of an interpreter. “[Deaf students] would get at me for being so oral, like, ‘What’s wrong with you, why do you speak sometimes?’ It was tough, and I got in a few fights because of it.”

McGregor, who studies business, said he does not always have access to an interpreter at Kwantlen University. Often, he would have to approach his professors after class to clarify lecture material.

“It’s very frustrating and I feel like a fool,” he said.

To level the playing field for deaf students, Ho, Grazier and McGregor said they would like to see standardized access to paid note takers, interpreters, captioners and TVs at all post-secondary institutions in B.C.

“I’m a student, I have a right to education, I’m in this regular classroom, so I should have the same education and information as everyone else,” said Ho.

“People need glasses to see, and people hard of hearing need hearing aids to hear,” said Grazier. “It’s just something you need to survive.”

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FROM PAGE A1

B.C.-made therapy the cornerstone of world’s AIDS fight

“I don’t remember the last time a made-in-Canada strategy to address a global epidemic has taken this kind of initiative.

“We thought of it, modelled it, tested it in B.C. And now we have the United Nations embracing our proposal and making it the cornerstone of the global fight against HIV.”

HEART, a cocktail of three drugs taken daily, was first given in 1996 to stop HIV from progressing into AIDS, to extend life expectancy and to reduce HIV-related deaths.

The new research shows that the treatment also seems to have a secondary effect — a reduction in the emergence of new cases.

This is being credited to the fact that the cocktail lowers the viral load of those who are HIV positive to the point where they are less likely to transmit the virus to their partners.

Study investigators conducted a population-based report examining data from B.C. to look at the success of the HAART program.

They gathered data on the number of HIV tests done and new HIV diagnoses from the BC Centre for Disease Control while figures on viral loads, cell counts and HAART use from the HIV/AIDS centre were collected.

Results showed that between 1996 and 2009, the number of patients receiving HIV treatment increased from 837 people to 5,413, while the number of new HIV diagnoses in that same period fell drastically from 702 to 338 people, a 52-per-cent decrease.

Rates of sexually transmitted diseases and hepatitis C infections have increased during the past 15 years, which suggests these findings cannot be accounted for by decreasing sexual HIV risk behaviour, the study reported.

Montaner said HIV testing has steadily increased in B.C.

Previous results of mathematical models on the effectiveness of HAART have varied from predicting elimination of HIV to potential worsening of the epidemic. The study, funded by the U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse, appears in the current *Lancet* medical journal.

Postmedia News

» FUNDING CONCERNS | B1

VANCOUVER

Drivers and cyclists break the rules on Dunsmuir bike lane

Commuters slow to adjust to new traffic signals including the no-longer-permitted right turn onto Hornby

BY GRAEME WOOD
VANCOUVER SUN

Commuters along Dunsmuir Street in downtown Vancouver are having to adjust to new traffic signals along the newly installed cycling path — or face a traffic ticket.

Vancouver Police Const. Grant Winterburn, of the traffic enforcement division, said he’s handed out several tickets to motorists who have been caught illegally turning right off Dunsmuir since the cycling path opened on June 15.

The problem is that motorists are crossing bike lanes where cyclists — using the separated cycling path where a vehicle lane once existed — have a green light going east- and westbound. As the cyclists are

going straight through, there’s a risk they could T-bone motorists turning right.

“You drive by habit and that’s the problem,” Winterburn said, pointing out there are two new no-right-turn signs at the corner of Hornby and Dunsmuir next to the light and on the median. “When motorists turn there it’s really a green light for the cyclist to go through.”

On Saturday, *The Vancouver Sun* witnessed several traffic violations on the bike path by both cyclists and vehicles. Two vehicles illegally turned right at the corner in only 15 minutes.

The second vehicle was driven by Barry Wilks, a resident of Manning Park who had lived and driven in Vancouver for several years. Wilks was pulled over by Winterburn and given a \$121 ticket.

“I didn’t see the sign. I didn’t expect we couldn’t turn right... I was watching. I was expecting to see a bike come whipping by on my right but there weren’t any and I was looking in the mirror,” said Wilks, noting he was trying to park on Hornby.

During the pilot cycling path project, which cost the city \$800,000, drivers will have to access Hornby from Georgia Street.

Winterburn’s biggest concern is that cyclists — many of whom can zip down Dunsmuir at about 30 km/h and are not as visible as cars — could be seriously injured if they strike a car turning right.

The same no-right-turn rules apply at Dunsmuir and Seymour, but only yield signs for right turns have been installed at the intersections of Homer

and Cambie.

Motorists at those intersections also need to look ahead to see if cyclists are coming from the west.

But motorists are not the only ones guilty of traffic violations.

At Hamilton Street, *The Sun* saw 30 cyclists ride by in 15 minutes. While seven were required to stop at a red light, four didn’t bother.

Seasoned cyclist Ronald Wong, 41, from east Vancouver, did, but admitted he’s run a few reds of his own.

“I’ve probably violated the bike rules myself just because sometimes you don’t see any traffic around and you’ll do something to get to the other side more quickly,” Wong said.

He added the bike lane has been positive for cyclists.

“I like it because it does feel

like I’m separated from the traffic but I’ve never had any problems before anyway. But I guess for a lot of beginner bikers it would make them feel safer,” he said.

Arno Schortinghuis of the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition said it would be wise for cyclists to take extra caution at intersections.

“The intersections are always going to be the point of conflict if there is going to be any,” Schortinghuis said.

To ensure motorists are aware of cyclists, Schortinghuis suggested the city paint the bike lanes inside the intersections so they are more visible.

No one from the City of Vancouver was available for comment Saturday.

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FROM PAGE A1

Anti-gang crackdown takes a bite out of murder rate

Shane Gidon pleaded guilty to all six of his charges — including two counts of attempted murder and using a firearm in the commission of an offence. He got a four-year sentence.

Christopher Barr pleaded guilty to seven of 21 firearms charges and got a five-year sentence.

Earlier this month, John Holler and Kyle Van Leeuwen pleaded guilty to three firearms-related charges. Holler got 809 days in jail, while Van Leeuwen got a sentence of three years minus time served — less than the 41 months his own lawyer had recommended and the four years sought by Crown Anne Clark.

Porteous didn’t want to comment on the Van Leeuwen sentence beyond saying “some judges think carrying around a loaded gun is more serious than others.”

In several of the Rebellion cases, some charges were stayed as part of the plea agreements.

And in the cases of Gurveer Pabla, Tejinder Malli and Bimal Sharma, all charges laid as part of Project Rebellion were stayed.

Malli and Sharma, who police alleged were part of the Buttar gang, had each been charged on two indictments with break and enter and causing

a disturbance. And Sharma faced an additional 16 counts of breaching court orders. Pabla had been facing two assault charges and one breach, before all the counts were dropped.

Sixteen other accused remain before the courts on a wide range of charges, from firearms trafficking to murder.

Of those, 10 remain in custody, including four members of the Sanghera family, whom police blame for rampant gun violence on the city’s south slope between 2007 and 2009.

Porteous said that the VPD treated Project Rebellion like a homicide file, pulling out all the stops in collecting evidence.

“We did that without having a murder we were specifically investigating,” he said.

He described the decrease in violence in Vancouver since the crackdown as “remarkable.”

“We went from dozens and dozens of shooting incidents to just a very small fraction of that.”

Porteous also credits anti-gang work throughout the region by the RCMP and integrated units like the Gang Task Force and the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit and arrests of key gang leaders in the United Nations, the Red Scorpions and others linked to the violence.

“They were just shooting each other all the time and when they are in jail, they can’t do that,” Porteous said.

Even the gangsters still on the streets are not behaving the way they did a few years back.

“You can’t have a war if there is nobody to fight against,” Porteous said.

That doesn’t mean there is no longer an organized crime problem in Metro Vancouver, he said, but for now, the arrests “have defused things.”

“Our gang slayings dropped severely. The homicide rate is way down. I don’t want to jinx anything, but we are on track for an all-time low.”

The end result is that homicide detectives can devote more time to other unsolved files, Porteous said.

“Our solve rate is close to tripled because investigators are not run off their feet.”

He said the climate in the city between the fall of 2008 and today “is just night and day.”

“Even one less gang murder is huge because they are so labour-intensive.”

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