

WESTSIDE

Kids' recreational fishing weekends return to Shannon Lake

One of the regional district's most popular family recreation programs returns this weekend in Shannon Lake and Kelowna's Mission Creek regional parks.

Opening activities for the annual Go Fish program will be held today (Sunday, April 25) at a special netted-off fishing area in Shannon Lake

Regional Park.

Volunteers with the Peachland Sportsmen's Association will not only help kids learn to fish, they'll prepare a barbecue for families who attend.

This marks the fourth year for the children's recreational fishing program, put on by regional district parks services and its partners, the Kelowna and Dis-

trict Fish and Game Club, Lonely Loons Flyfishers Society and Peachland Sportsmen's Association. It's supported by the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, the Summerland Trout Hatchery and the Ministry of Environment.

Each weekend until June 6, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., youngsters under 16

will be able to catch one rainbow trout each day, without the need to have a fishing license.

Each Saturday at the Hall Road pond in Mission Creek Regional Park, volunteers from the Kelowna and District Fish and Game Club will provide equipment and expert fishing guidance there, while members of

the Peachland Sportsmen's Association will lend their fishing expertise to participants in Shannon Lake. Each Sunday, regional parks staff will provide equipment and will be available to help youngsters as they try their luck at both locations.

With the support of the Freshwater Fisheries Society of B.C., each fishing

area will be stocked with rainbow trout measuring 25 to 30 centimetres. The fish were reared at the Summerland Trout Hatchery.

"This urban fishing program for youngsters is unique because it brings the experience of fishing closer to home," said Mark Siemens, manager of the hatchery.

"Many of the children taking part with their families in these Go Fish weekends might not normally be able to participate in the sport of fishing."

Anyone driving to the two locations to participate is asked respect the neighbours by parking only in designated parking areas.



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▼ LAW

Legal reasons behind Jaffer's plea

The judge who presided over the sentencing of Rahim Jaffer told the former MP "I'm sure you can recognize a break when you see one."

It smelled to high heaven. Here was a former federal politician with alleged continuing influence over the government charged with impaired driving and possession of cocaine but a plea bargain resulted in those charges being dropped in favour of a far less severe conviction for careless driving.

That was one heck of a break.

We all know about innocent-until-proven-guilty but at the sentencing hearing the Crown and defence lawyers agreed on a statement of fact that suggested that there would have been no problem proving his guilt.

He blew over .08. There was cocaine found in his coat pocket.

Why, then, a plea bargain? Was this about political connections?

It wasn't. In fact, given recent developments, I suspect that political influence might have more likely been exercised against Jaffer instead of in his favour.

It was about the fact that all Canadians have a basic set of rights that we



ACHIEVING JUSTICE

Paul Hergott

take very, very seriously.

We take those rights so seriously that our laws require our judges to acquit in certain circumstances when those rights have been trampled on.

It's not willy nilly. Judges are required by law to strike a balance to uphold the reputation of our justice system.

One basic right requires the police to give you the opportunity to talk to a lawyer before they interrogate you or, as in this case, require you to take a breathalyzer test. If the police fail to do that, any evidence they obtain in violation of that right is likely to be disregarded at a trial.

It makes some sense. You have a basic right, the police disregard that right to get evidence, so for the Court to allow that evidence would be unjust.

In Jaffer's case, I understand the lawyer he wanted to talk to called the police station while the breathalyzer was being administered but the police inexplicably failed

to put the call through to Jaffer.

Other basic rights protect us all from being treated unreasonably by police.

I think we all agree that a strip search is an extreme invasion of our privacy and that it should be avoided unless there are reasonable grounds for conducting one.

If the police conduct a strip search for no good reason while arresting you, the court may use acquittal to try to restore the reputation of our justice system that had been sullied by the police.

I understand Jaffer was strip-searched and that there was no reasonable justification for that extreme invasion of his privacy.

In the end, the Crown was faced with the possibility that a trial would result in Jaffer's outright acquittal.

In the hopes of getting any conviction at all, the Crown entered into negotiations with Jaffer that resulted in his guilty plea to a lesser offence.

The police are very powerful. They walk around with guns. They can arrest you and put you into a cell. If they want to strip search you, there's absolutely nothing you can do to stop them. You are at their complete

mercy.

With few exceptions, it is my view, police officers do the very best job they can and are mindful of our rights, being careful not to trample them.

There are exceptions though, as in the case of Jaffer.

I am thankful our system provides consequences for the exceptions. I am comforted that I am less likely to be unfairly subjected to a strip search because of those consequences.

Without explanation, the ways of our justice system can seem very unjust.

Unfortunately, the media seems to contribute to the problem, because the strong smell of injustice makes good news.

The next time you come across a news story that leads you to question our justice system, please pop me an e-mail and I will attempt to explain the situation properly in one of my columns.

This column is intended to provide general information about injury claims. It is not a substitute for retaining a lawyer to provide legal advice specifically pertaining to your case. Paul Hergott is a lawyer at Hergott Law in West Kelowna.

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