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Rio gets a liquor licence

The Rio Theatre has received a licence from the city to serve alcohol to its patrons, but venue owner Corinne Lea says provincial red tape means she might have to wait another month before the drinks start to flow. Council unanimously approved the licence Thursday for the "struggling" 582-seat, single-screen theatre on East Broadway at Commercial Drive. – 24 HOURS

Schratter focusing on youth

While cycling the globe, Michael Schratter's been promoting mental health in classrooms around the world. Today, he's speaking at a B.C. teacher's conference. Youth matter, because 70% of mental health problems begin during childhood or adolescence, yet only one in five Canadian kids get the services they need. Check it out: ridedonthide.com/about/facts. – 24 HOURS

Grade 3 and 4 students from Sir Wilfrid Laurier Annex line to leave the class room during the B.C. ShakeOut Earthquake Drill in Vancouver, Thursday. CARMINE MARINELLI, 24 HOURS

Quake drill 'second nature' for kids

MICHAEL MUI
24 hours

More than 200,000 Metro Vancouver residents of ducked under tables and chairs to prepare for the 'Big One' Thursday morning in preparation for a threat that has a significant chance of shaking up the region in the next decade, according to experts.

The event had thousands of B.C. students preparing for the worse. The news comes as the Vancouver School Board released a new assessment earlier this month highlighting 48 city schools that still need drastic seismic upgrades.

"It is critical in a true earthquake that everyone knows what to do," said school board chair Patti Bacchus during a drill at Laurier Annex. "If there is someone unaccounted for, there are now 300 staff in the Vancouver School District that have been trained in the emergency response team. They are prepared to go into the school if a student hasn't come out."

Emergency services also practiced their own drills, which involved training inside simulated collapsed buildings, converting local fire halls into temporary emergency shelters and practicing with sound equipment to detect quake survivors.

"The possibility is high to have an earthquake," said Capt. Mark Pullen of the Burnaby Fire Department. "(We're training) to prepare for it, to make it second nature do to these things. When it hits, there's going to be a different atmosphere."

UBC seismologist Elizabeth Hearne said there's about a one-in-10 chance of a large quake striking off the west coast of Vancouver Island in the near future, which could potentially prove devastating for Richmond and the North Shore.

"The 'Big One' everyone talks about is the Cascadian magnitude 9.0 earthquake," she said. "The last one was 500 years ago, and they occur every 300 to 700 years."

Hearne said the Juan de Fuca tectonic plate sliding underneath the plate B.C. sits on has built up an "elastic" stress in the past half-millennium and could potentially release at any time.

The second Great British Columbia ShakeOut, with more than 500,000 participants across the province, is aimed at increasing awareness of the three cardinal earthquake rules: drop, cover and hold on.

michael.mui@sunmedia.ca

Ride Don't Hide bicycle stolen near Kamloops

24 HOURS – The Ride Don't Hide campaign raising awareness about mental illness suffered a setback Thursday when Michael Schratter's borrowed bike was stolen.

The incident happened near Savona, just outside Kamloops, where the *24 hours* columnist made a stop on the last leg of his round-the-world tour aimed at reducing the stigma surrounding mental illness.

After finishing lunch, Schratter was about to set off on his second 75-kilometre ride of the day but wanted a jolt of caffeine to combat road fatigue. He asked his escort vehicle to drive him to a nearby gas station to get a coffee but in the process, his $4,000 bicycle was accidentally left behind. The group quickly realized their mistake, but when they returned, the bike was already gone.

"It's just like finding a wallet loaded with cash or a diamond ring," said Schratter, whose cousin had lent him the lightweight carbon fiber racing bike to complete the Canada portion of his 15-month global trek.

He pleaded for whoever took the bike to return it – no questions asked.

"Maybe the person who took it doesn't realize it wasn't just abandoned. I suspect that person doesn't know it's a key piece of this journey to help people with mental illness."

Schratter's spirit, however, was buoyed by the immediate assistance he received from his sponsor, Willie Cromack of John Henry Bikes in North Vancouver. He is shipping Schratter his own personal bike to finish the nearly 3,400 km he has to go before completing his journey in Vancouver Nov. 12.

"I refuse to let it get me down."

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