

NEW WESTMINSTER

Drive-by shooting rattles hood

MATT KIELTYKA - New Westminster residents had their sleep interrupted by the sound of gunfire early Thursday morning.

Royal City police were called to the 2100 block of Dublin Street around 3:20 a.m. to find a home and a car riddled with bullets.

Police taped off a Ford Taurus with rear driver-side window shattered and the front of a white home at 2219 Dublin St. near 21st Street.

No one was injured and police say they're not sure whether the shooting was random or deliberate.

An investigation is under way.



CARMINE MARINELLI

New Westminster police were busy investigating after a drive-by shooting in the Royal City early Thursday morning.

Feedback

» E-mail: van24feedback@sunmedia.ca

RE: HIGHWAY SIGNS: The previous writer was not being ignorant or complaining, he was stating fact. Out of respect to you, Mason Ducharme, it's disrespectful to think your language is the only one. This land you mention is native land and it's everyone's land. We all live here just like you. Don't you think it's unfair for all other languages to be ignored? You aren't the only culture on this Earth. And I do have native ancestry.

- Mich Foster

THE MAN WHO thinks it terrible to see "Native Indian language" on road signs had better do a bit of reading and travel in the B.C. interior. Aboriginal signs are everywhere since this land was occupied by foreigners who speak English and French or vice versa. Perhaps he should move to another country so

he doesn't have to use the word Canada, a derivative, so I have read, of the aboriginal word "kanatka", meaning village.

- Connie Weber

DEAR MARK SMITH: What is the cost of living on unceded territory for the past how many hundreds of years? I'll tell you, it was devastating! It's comments like yours that show me racism against First Nations people is alive and well. For that, I'm sorry because my children have to live in a world where people think they can belittle our culture and our languages. Well, we are not going away and if it takes more of these cheap signs to let people know "we are here", I'm in support of having the whole country putting up signs with official traditional languages.

- P. Daniels

LAST I CHECKED, my ancestors were here long before any French and English settlers. Your ancestors, the least they could do, is give us a little recognition to tourists who come to Canada. Everyone was in uproar when they wanted to give Stanley Park a secondary, First Nations, name. Now we cannot even have signs in our native language without disapproval?

- Mitchal Steinberg

PRETTY FUNNY STUFF, Mark Smith. This is indigenous soil and you are considered a visitor here. Highway signs, which include the Squamish language, are crumbs in comparison to the losses of homelands, water, food fishing, hunting practices. We as the indigenous people, consider English the foreign language of this continent.

- Kat Norris

Fight the fear: Let's start talking



Michael SCHRATTER

Ride Don't Hide

I'd like to start this second instalment of the mental illness stigma column series with a story from the road.

Back a week or two ago when I was cycling through the fog on the Oregon Coast highway, I stopped in the village of Wheeler for some dinner at a place called the Tsunami Bar and Grill.

The vacationing family at the table next to me inquired about where I was heading with my bike and how does it relate to the www.ridedonthide.com t-shirt I was wearing. I told them of the campaign and a bit of my story.

At first there was an uncomfortable silence and some disbelief. But then the talk turned into something magical. Grandma spoke of her working years as a psychiatric nurse and how proud she and her health team were to see all but a few of their patients leave their hospital and go back to work, back to their lives. She said a patient's fear of being stigmatized was always the last and often hardest hurdle to overcome.

Sitting across the table, the 17-year-old granddaughter spoke of how her best friend got kicked out of school recently because the teaching staff couldn't handle her behavioural turbulence. The school couldn't deal with her bipolar disorder.



At this point our waitress stopped, took a deep breath, apologized for eavesdropping and asked if she could join our chat. She sat down and spoke of how she was the first among three generations to finally get a handle on her family's history of depression. This was accomplished with medication and therapy.

She told of how her mom self-medicated with alcohol and of how her grandmother was lobotomized twice because "the first medical procedure didn't stick". The woman

added how amazing it was to talk openly about her struggles and not feel ashamed, and of how the great weight of that shame felt so isolating.

If our society has us believing mental illness is shameful, then part of surviving the affliction is to successfully hide. It means good people, some training since childhood, wasting their emotional and mental energy concealing, becoming experts at creating a successful facade.

My mental illness is something I told no one. Now I am telling someone in the loudest way possible. Why? Because I believe if we talk about the absurdity of mental illness stigma it will begin to disappear. If we can share the common story of how mental illness affects our lives, we will see it for what it is - a variation of the human condition. To harbour mental illness stigma is to harbour a stigma against humanity.

End the stigma. Let's get talking.

My name is Michael Schratte. I am a grade five teacher and Vancouver 24 hours columnist. I am trying to cycle around the world in effort to battle the stigma associated with mental illness (M.I.) one pedal at a time.

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