Ben Green, Lookout

Santa spends a few minutes discussing Christmas wishes with a guest of the 25th Annual Supply Ship Christmas Party held in HMCS Protecteur’s hangar on Dec. 3. The ship hosted special needs children from six elementary schools that included a tour of the vessel, lunch, arts and crafts, and a special visit from Santa.

The sudden echo of hooves on the hangar’s metal roof causes every child’s ears to perk up, but the smiles on the faces of the adults are larger than those of the children in anticipation of what’s about to happen.

In a distant corner, a pair of charcoal-coloured boots dangle down from an open hatch followed by bright red pants and jacket with snow-white trim. An eruption of excited screams reverberate off metal walls. Santa Claus has once again come to HMCS Protecteur.

The supply ship has been an annual stop for Santa for the past 25 years. Since 1986, Protecteur and the ship’s company have played host to a Christmas party for special needs children from elementary schools across Victoria and the Mosaic Learning Centre.

The event is one every crew member looks forward to just to see the joy the holidays can bring to a child.

“Seeing their faces just explode with smiles when you hear the ‘clip-clop’ up on the hanger roof, it happens every year,” said SLt Kevin Millman, the Unit Public Affairs Representative.

“Everyone at the exact same moment has an ear-to-ear grin. Seeing all the kids so excited, it’s just fun.”

About 35 children aged six to 12 from Cloverdale, View Royal, Tillicum, George Jay, Macaulay, and James Bay Elementary schools attended this year’s festivities on Dec. 3. Accompanied by teachers, some parents, and assistants, the children were taken onboard the ship and given tours of all decks by members of the crew.

See Navy on page 5

A visit from the man in red

Ben Green
Staff Writer

Protecteur supplies holiday cheer

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CFC Esquimalt delivers for charity

Shelley Lipke, Staff Writer

Each year for the past five years, CFC Esquimalt has consistently raised more than half a million dollars through the Government of Canada Charitable Workplace Campaign (GCCWC)-United Way. This year was no exception with the base topping its goal of $700,100. This year’s target ended in 100 to mark the Naval Centennial year.

On Dec. 8, during the annual wrap up pancake breakfast a full Nelles Block saw the cheque presentation of the target goal total with a plus sign beside the number, signifying that donations are still being collected and tallied.

Base Administration Officer Cdr Doug MacKeen announced the total and presented the cheque. “You people amaze us,” said Linda Hughes, United Way of Greater Victoria’s Chief Executive Officer. “People work hard in the Canadian Forces and even though many military members are deployed away from their family for long periods of time, they still think of their community and of other people. This sets an example for all of us and is absolutely amazing.”

The campaign officially closed on Dec. 10 and unit, base and Spirit awards will follow in January and February.
Everyone makes mistakes. Even the best musicians in the world play a wrong note here or sing the wrong line there, something PO1 Andy Reljic knows all too well. This is why an unfortunate error during Division Day on Dec. 2 left him thinking the show must go on.

Having served 42 years in the military, PO1 Reljic was in line to accept the third clasp to the Canadian Forces Decoration (CD3), an infrequent award due to the length of service it requires. When it came time to honour his accomplishment, he was given a CD2, an award he’d received 10 years earlier for 32 years of service.

Set to retire from the CF Music Branch at the end of this month, PO1 Reljic says the error, which has since been rectified, wasn’t an ideal note on which to end his military career; however, that one moment will not define his four decades of hard work and dedication.

“I’ve taken pride working for the Formation and the wonderful work we in the navy do,” he says. “I still believe what we contribute to the community is so important, I’m just lucky to have been able to serve this long.”

Growing up in Toronto, PO1 Reljic developed a passion for music, specifically the tuba. Excelling in his high school band, he was invited to play with the Royal Regiment Band as a teenager. Soon after his sixteenth birthday, he became a full-fledged member of the military band for two and a half years.

In 1971, PO1 Reljic signed up with the Canadian Forces and, after completing his recruit training in Nova Scotia, moved out to Victoria to join the CF School of Music. He has been fortunate to spend his entire career wearing a navy uniform, he says. Among his various postings, he contributed to the Stadacona Band at CFB Halifax and the Naden Band here as a tuba player and section leader low brass. He also spent eight years as an instructor at the CF School of Music. He has played with the Victoria Symphony, Symphony Nova Scotia, CBC Recording Orchestra, and Bolshoi Ballet Orchestra.

His love of music and his service to the navy have given him irreplaceable memories and opportunities.

In 1995, while participating in the International Band Festival in China with the Stadacona Band, PO1 Reljic lugged his 30 pound Rudolf Meinl 5/4 tuba up 1,200 steps to the top of the Great Wall. He jokes that he may be the only person who has played the tuba on top of the historic site.

The next chapter for PO1 Reljic will see him trade in his uniform and seafaring life for khakis and hidden water hazards. In the new year he’ll attend Camosun College in the Advanced Diploma Golf Operations Programme.

He won’t be putting his tuba away though. When he’s not in class, he’ll continue his role as the leader of a local Dixieland band.

PO1 Reljic says he’ll always be proud of his first career and he’s confident that the navy to which he’s dedicated so much of his life has a bright future.

“I just see the professional dedication everywhere,” he says. “Everyone’s committed to their tasks, taking pride in their jobs. I see that in our new sailors and musicians. As it moves into its second centennial, the navy is in good hands.”

The saying “end of an era” gets used all too often, but for this sailor it’s fitting. For a career full of pride, service, professionalism and music, PO1 Reljic will be missed.
The Tourist is a light-hearted film romp

W. Andrew Powell
The GATE

Opening this weekend in theatres, Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie star in the action-comedy The Tourist. The Tourist is simple proof that star power does not necessarily make a movie great. Looking at Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie on screen, it’s easy to expect a lot from them, after all, we’re talking about two of the biggest film stars of the last decade, and it was directed by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, the man behind The Lives of Others? You also have Paul Bettany, Timothy Dalton, and Rufus Sewell up there on screen, and somehow things just feel a little ridiculous.

Miraculously though, unlike a lot of critics, I actually still enjoyed The Tourist, at least as a light-hearted romp. Jolie stars as Elise, a smoldering wealthy woman who is being followed by half of the English and French police as she wanders through Paris. The reason for her popularity with police is pretty simple; it turns out that her well-to-do husband, the enigmatic Alexander Pearce, walked off with over $2 billion dollars that he stole from an English mobster and shortly after that Alexander went into hiding. Now the government wants their cut of the cash to the tune of $744 million in taxes, but Alexander is nowhere to be seen.

In fact, Alexander has not only gone into hiding, it’s believed he also went under the knife for millions worth of plastic surgery to dramatically alter his appearance so he can hide from police. Receiving a note from Alexander, Elise is told to take the next train to Venice and find a man on the train who looks like him and convince police that the man is actually her husband. That man ends up being the demure Frank, played of course by Depp, an American math teacher who is headed to Venice on a lonely vacation until Elise shows up and essentially whisks him off his feet.

As the police realize that Alexander is trying to dupe them though, the English mobster shows up and promptly takes the bait, believing that Frank is actually Alexander.

What follows is a spirited, whimsical race around Venice to uncover the truth, and find out where Alexander is hiding. What I really liked about The Tourist was that the movie has a lot of fun with the story, the setups, and the fact that it feels like it was based on a spy novel from the 1950s or 60s. As always, both Depp and Jolie play our every ounce of charisma to make you love them, but while Jolie is an effortless bombshell, it’s Depp who is clearly the star of this story. The Tourist is filled with great performances from all of the actors involved though, including all three of the main antagonists: Paul Bettany, Timothy Dalton, Steven Berkoff, not to mention Rufus Sewell who makes a brief but wonderful appearance. These actors, director Henckel von Donnersmarck’s whimsical take on the story, and the film’s overall retro tone are what made The Tourist so much fun to watch. I undoubtedly left the film with a smile on my face because von Donnersmarck got the kitch value of the material and made it memorable.
Navy brings holiday cheer

Continued from page 1

The group was also accompanied by members of the Esquimalt Lions Club who are vital in arranging the event every year. Jack Smith, a former President of the Lions Club, says every year, the children look forward to the experience of being on a navy vessel.

“Think it means a great deal to them,” said Smith. “When they hear they’re coming on a big boat to see all the sailors, that seems to be the highlight of the whole thing.”

After the guided tours, the children were treated to lunch, arts and crafts, and Christmas carols all provided by various members of the crew. That was just the warm up though. Little did the kids know that each one of them was going to receive a personalized gift presented to them by Santa.

Daryl Dreimel, a Lions Club member who helped coordinate the event, said he contacts the schools a few months ahead of time and asks them to fill out a questionnaire for each child attending, including a list of hobbies and interests. That way they can personalize a gift for each child on the day of the event.

Funded by the Friends of HMCS Protecteur – an organization comprised of community and business leaders committed to the welfare of the crew – the information collected by Dreimel is then passed onto crew members who go shopping for each child on the day of the event.

As Santa handed out the gifts this year, the many smiles and hugs indicated that no child went home disappointed.

Along with the Lions Club and school representatives, the event went smoothly in large part due to Sgt Christine Jack who organized the ship’s side of things.

“Sgt Jack took it this year and she did a great job organizing everything for it,” said SLt Millman. “It went off flawlessly.”

Not only did the crew of Protecteur make the holiday season extra special for the children they hosted, but surely their good deeds put them on Santa’s Nice List.

Ben Green, Lookout

Fasten your seatbelts: one student from George Jay Elementary takes the wheel on the bridge.
Family Crisis Crisis Team brings more awareness to a sensitive issue

According to Tina Wagner-Kulak, Second in Command (2IC) at the Family Crisis Team, “education is the key for prevention” when it comes to domestic abuse. This was the exact message being promoted in October during the fourth Annual Family Violence Awareness Week throughout the Canadian Forces (CF). With no evidence of domestic abuse being more or less prevalent in military families, the week looked to shed light on the issue in hopes of reaching both civilian and serving families in the community.

With the help of a designated week, the CF maintains their responsibility to educate and hopefully prevent family violence. Along with its prevention programs, the CF provides a number of services for public and military families, including those being affected by perpetrators, one of those services being the Family Crisis Team.

The Family Crisis Team is a group of individuals from all over CF Esquimalt who teach education and prevention for domestic abuse. Members of the team come from various sections of the base including Health Promotions, Military Family Resource Centre, Military Police, the Chaplains, and Formation Social Workers.

Lt(N) Lyn Kingsley, Psychosocial Services Program Leader, says, “This isn’t a punitive measure, we’re here to support both perpetrators and victims. We want to help them [perpetrators] get the tools to respond differently in high stress situations.”

Both Lt(N) Kingsley and Wagner-Kulak encourage anyone struggling with domestic abuse in any capacity to contact someone they are comfortable with to begin the healing process. These people don’t necessarily have to be trained professionals; just someone they can open and feel secure with.

For more information or to make an appointment, contact the Health Services Clinic at 250-363-4411. No referral is needed for appointments.

IN BRIEF

Don’t visit Wikileaks with DND computer

Wikileaks is a website that publishes submissions and leaks of sensitive government, corporate, and military documents, otherwise unavailable to the public. It attempts to preserve the anonymity and un-traceability of its sources.

On Nov 28, Wikileaks released a vast cache of more than 250,000 U.S. diplomatic cables in an embarrassing leak that undermines U.S. diplomacy. Due to the high volume of documents that Wikileaks intends to release in the coming months, the files are being released in batches. The final number of files that will be released is not known at this time.

This was the third major release of cables in 2010. In July, Wikileaks released over 92,000 documents and in October, over 400,000 additional documents were released.

DND/CF computers are not to be used to visit the Wikileaks site or any other websites containing such information. Such use constitutes “unauthorized use” in accordance with reference A. The Canadian Forces Network Operations centre (CFNOC) may monitor attempts to view this site’s material and will report attempts to the affected chains of command.

Reasons for not accessing the site are as follows:

• The site attracts a large volume of traffic. Given the nature of the material, third parties could collect and exploit visitor data or deliver malicious software through downloaded files.

• Conducting web searches for this information may expose the user’s computer to malicious search engine poisoning attacks.

• Some information on Wikileaks remains classified and could constitute a breach of security policy if viewed from, or downloaded to, DND/CF computers.

• DND/CF personnel should also consider the similar contamination risks posed by the Wikileaks site to their personal equipment, including computers, smart phones or portable devices such as USB keys. As data transfer from these devices could potentially introduce Wikileaks materials to DND/CF machines, electronic import of data to DND assets from the Wikileaks site using personal equipment is not permitted.

For more information contact CFIOC Ops, Major Mark Young, at 613-945-3188.

Come out for Santa Run

On Dec 20 CF Esquimalt Firefighters from two platoons will cover the community from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. with lights flashing and sirens blaring on their shiny red fire truck in their annual Firefighters Santa Run.

As they make their way through Dockyard, Naden and Work Point housing areas, Santa will hand out candy canes to children as parents are encouraged to donate food items or cash for the Mustang Seed Food Bank.

The run will go down Campbell and Moresby Streets in Dockyard, and Hotham Street in Naden before proceeding through the residential areas of Work Point.
Lt Michelle Wilson  
Regional Cadet Public Affairs

On the afternoon of Dec. 1, members of the Regional Cadet Support Unit (Pacific) (RCSUP) gathered for the fourteenth annual United Way Golf Challenge.

Hosted by the Air Cadet Office, the competition had nine holes set up in various locations in the headquarters building, each with different challenges representing the locations of the holes.

Golfers faced obstacles such as navigating around desks in the Orderly Room, and through drums and a tambourine and up a music-stand ramp in the Music Advisor’s office. Several “holes in one” were registered throughout the course.

In addition, each golfer was challenged to wear a costume and bring their best golf club. Entry fees went to the Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign.

After many laughs and possibly a few dents, results were tallied and trophies were presented. Awards went to MCpl Linda Burke for her base drum beater club, Capt Jacqueline Zweng for best dressed golfer and Lt Michelle Wilson for most honest golfer (with 69 strokes). The top golfer award went to the Regimental Sergeant Major, CWO Todd McGowan.

The golf challenge coincided with another RCSUP challenge involving the Deputy Commanding Officer, Maj Ken Washbrook’s moustache, one that he claims “was born in 1981 at CFB Gagetown.” At the September kickoff, Maj Washbrook issued a special challenge to the staff that if they could raise $500 for the GWCWCC he would shave his moustache. After the amount was raised in an hour, he issued a further challenge, pledging $500 to the campaign if other members with a moustache shaved theirs off, and if those without a moustache promised to grow one over the holidays.

With the RCSUP staff looking on, WO Tom Hobour and Maj Washbrook both had their precious moustaches shaved.

A further challenge was then issued, with Maj Russ Lacey donating an additional amount to have WO Hobour shave his head. After all was said and sheared, $1,640 was raised, seven moustaches and a head of hair were removed, and eight moustaches were started.

This was the final event for the Regional Cadet Support Unit’s contributions to the GWCWCC, capping off unit barbecues, a craft and bake sale, weekly raffles, and a cook-off competition.

Above: RCSU1 – Cdr Rod Hughes, a true maple leaves fan, navigates around the Sea Cadet Office’s Hole # 3  
Left: With great concentration, Captain Irene Green shaves off the moustache of RCSU (Pac)’s DCO, Major Ken Washbrook.

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The PSP Manager, on behalf of CFB Esquimalt and the Maritime Forces Pacific, would like to thank our corporate partners for their firm commitment and support toward the Morale and Welfare program of our Canadian Forces (CF) personnel. Our sponsorship and donation program exceeded our expectations this year again.

Thank you to all our sponsors and donors who contributed so generously this year. Thank you for collaborating with CFB Esquimalt’s PSP Sponsorship & Donations Department. Together as a force we have improved our local morale and welfare programs!

As a result of your generous support to the International Fleet Review, the MARPAC Navy Ball, CNC Navy 10K, Formation Family Fun Day, and PSP Sports Programs - we were able to produce exceptional programs that allowed the navy, in its Centennial year, to connect with the visiting naval participants and dignitaries, and also with our own Canadian general public.

So let me re-iterate how thankful we are for the generous support you gave to our Naval Centennial events. I look forward to maintaining a strong bond between your company and the PSP Morale and Welfare Program at CFB Esquimalt and the Maritime Forces Pacific formation.
When sailors are in distress and need rescuing it’s an involved, complicated affair.

To prepare for the unlikely event, about 500 military and civilians took part in search and rescue exercise on Nov. 30 off Esquimalt Harbour. HMCS Algonquin was the on-scene command ship for what was a complex exercise.

The goal was to practice rescue skills and test medical expertise when faced with a wide range of casualties including decompression sickness. Handling casualties with decompression sickness is specific to rescuing a diver or even more dramatic should a submarine be in distress.

“When a submarine is in distress due to an explosion, collision or flooding there are only two options,” explained Fleet Support Physician Assistant MWO Maurice Chapman from the destroyer. “The crew can remain within the submarine, sometimes for up to seven days depending on the air quality, pressure level and supplies on board, or they can escape. In this scenario we had 16 casualties who needed to be rescued.”

The casualties wearing bright orange protective suits bobbed in the water while awaiting rescue from Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats, which transported them to the ship. Once on board, medical staff examined the tags that hung around the neck of each casualty describing the severity of their condition. Some suffered trauma, lacerations and broken limbs, while others suffered varying levels of decompression sickness.

“As triage officer, I was the first medical person to assess the casualties and had to determine whether they needed treatment for straight trauma, or trauma and the recompression chamber,” said MWO Chapman.

With the ships hangar set up like a MASH (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital), complete with cots, medical supplies and a hyperbaric oxygen chamber, the simulated treatment involved more than 30 medical staff began.

As the number of casualties mounted on the ship, the recompression capabilities were quickly overwhelmed. Maritime Forces Pacific headquarters kept in close communication with the ship and deployed a Cormorant helicopter from 442 Transport and Rescue Squadron in CFB Comox and a Sea King helicopter from 443 Maritime Helicopter Squadron in Pat Bay.

Each took turns hovering above the flight deck to lower search and rescue technicians. Once on board, they harnessed the casualties and signaled to winch them into the helicopter.

“The helicopters transferred one casualty to Victoria General Hospital and two with significant trauma and decompression illness to Vancouver General Hospital. Others were transferred to Fleet Diving Unit (Pacific) (FDU) to be treated at their recompression chamber,” said MWO Chapman.

Civilian agencies involved in the exercise included the Vancouver Island Health Authority, B.C. Ambulance, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, B.C. Ministry of Health Emergency Management and B.C. Coroner Service.

Major marine search and rescue exercises in the past have involved B.C. Ferries, and the Clipper Service to Seattle. This exercise was specific to the navy’s requirements to examine procedures that might be used anywhere in the world.

This Formation-wide exercise also involved Base Logistics, FDU, and Formation Medical Services. Sailors from HMCS Victoria acted as the casualties requiring medical help.

“It’s been six months of planning to organize this exercise,” said submarine staff officer Lt(N) Rob Sutherland. “Patient tracking was one important aspect of this exercise because DND needed to track each casualty, their method of transportation, their location and then notify their families,” he said.

The exercise, known as SMASHEx 10-2, also tested the new Joint Logistics Operations Centre (JLOC), that would play a primary role when a navy ship has an emergency.

Chilean medical officer Cdr Andres Llarena, who was directly involved with the recent Chilean mine rescue, was on board Algonquin as an observer. “While we are not a NATO country, it’s still good to internationally work together and talk the same language. We are all in the same line of work and the protocol is the same,” he said.

SMASHEx 10-2 was followed up with a briefing involving the many departments to look at the lessons learned, what worked well and what can be improved upon in two years time.
Fleet divers run for Christmas dinner

Shelley Lipke
Staff Writer

Fleet Diving Unit Pacific’s first annual Turkey Run last Sunday was more successful than organizers could have imagined, raising twice the amount its participants had hoped.

Blocking the roads with a convoy of eight vehicles and a loudspeaker bellowing out a message from the Navy Bomb Disposal truck, divers ran from car to car collecting money for Christmas hampers.

The message echoing through the streets was, “We are the navy dive team. We are here raising money for the West Shore Christmas Hamper Fund in order to put a turkey on the table of each family. Open up your wallets and purses to help us out.”

While traffic was considerably backed up, the small parade brought smiles instead of scowls to the faces of inconvenienced motorists. People waved and happily obliged with donations as high as $60.

One driver after another rolled down the window to pass on bills or coins. One motorcyclist stopped and dug into his gear to find his wallet. People even came out of their houses with cash.

While the dive team set out with a goal of $6,000, to their amazement they raised more than double that amount. After six hours and three circuits of their route, total was a whopping $13,109.35.

“There were 60 divers running today and none of us imagined this inaugural event would be so successful,” said Training Officer and event organizer Lt(N) Walter Dubeau. “We are very happy with the outcome and generosity of the people today.”

Contributing to the success were many local businesses who sponsored the dive team.

“Tim Horton’s provided morning coffee and muffins for the divers, Serious Coffee provided coffee all day for us, Original Joe’s in the West Shore Shopping Centre provided a well-deserved lunch, and the Six Mile Pub provided a spectacular buffet including refreshments after the run. MacDonald’s made the single biggest donation of $1,000, and we would like to thank all the corporate sponsors and members of the public who donated for this worthwhile cause and helped to make it an extremely successful event,” said Lt(N) Dubeau.

Not all support was financial. West Shore RCMP and the Military Police led the convoy to ensure both the divers and motorists were safe. Transportation Electrical Mechanical Engineering (TEME) sent along a bus and driver with seats for 40, but at any given time only about five were in use, as the rest of the runners were out on the street eagerly collecting donations.

“About half way through the day Gail Ireland, director of the West Shore Christmas Hamper Society stopped to see us at Millstream Village and was thrilled to hear we had already raised $8,000. Then she couldn’t thank us enough when she heard the total at the end of the day.”

Last year 688 families were fed by the society and if the numbers are similar this year each family will receive a turkey along with their Christmas hamper thanks to FDU(P)’s initiative.

“The energy was great all day and the esprit de corps was above and beyond,” said Lt(N) Dubeau.

“This was a great first year and we are looking forward to doing this for many years to come.”
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Shelley Lipke
Staff Writer

Seeing is believing, or is it? Human eyes and minds have built in limits of perception that can be cleverly and deliberately tricked.

That is what the new Visual Trickery exhibit at the Maritime Museum of British Columbia is all about. This progressive exhibit features the art of photo manipulation old and new.

Dating as far back as the 1920s, it looks at hand colouring of images, panoramic views, photo collages, 3-D pictures and progressive moving images. "We are hoping this exhibit will continually develop, and we are encouraging the public to get involved and make photographic submissions," said museum curator Cuyler Page.

A large part of the exhibit features over 50 framed prints from the Canadian Pacific Rail (CPR) Magic Lantern Slide series shot in 1920 at Vancouver’s English Bay. This hand-tinted work is part of the new Visual Trickery exhibit at the museum that showcases the art of photo manipulation.

The Capilano Suspension Bridge, the Calgary Stampede, English Bay in Vancouver and the Malahat drive are all featured in prints. Upon initial inspection of the prints something is peculiar – they are all in colour. "In those days, glass plate slides were used to hold the light sensitive chemicals. They would coat a piece of three inch square glass with photo chemicals and put it into the camera. There it acted as the film, making black and white images when exposed to light. Artists then hand painted yellow, red, green and blue in chosen places on the glass slides. When inserted into the projector at the Magic Lantern theatre, the scenes appeared in full colour."

All images in the Magic Lantern series were shot in bright sunshine and because of the slow film speed they show great clarity and depth of field. The scenic detail is amazing. "The images are beautiful, but I think even more interesting is the hand-tinted artwork," says Page.

Several years ago Bill Jeffries, Director of the Simon Fraser University Gallery, worked to curate the traveling exhibit with Michael Lawlor, who had collected and repaired the original slides. The slide images were digitally scanned and enlarged to create the prints now on display.

These prints travelled across Canada as an exhibit showcasing the art of CPR’s Magic Lantern slides from the early 1900s. Now they are in Victoria and included in the Visual Trickery exhibition.

"It’s interesting to look at them and compare them to modern digital photography we have today. The colour of blue in the sky in each print is the same and the grass is all one colour."

The exhibit also features a collection of panoramic images from the provincial archives shot in the 1860s with single camera shots. "We have hands-on activities that challenge the public to rearrange the images to find the right order of the panoramic, and also use a light table to tint the film to see the effect it creates," said Page.

Visual Trickery will continue to evolve as the public submits other pieces; the exhibit will be open for public viewing until the end of March 2011.
Keeping your kids safe during the holidays

If you are a parent or caregiver of young children, take extra precautions to ensure a safe and happy holiday season. Choking, poisoning, and fire hazards are serious dangers for young children, particularly at this time of year.

Every year, there are new parents who may not be aware of how holiday celebrations can be hazardous to infants and toddlers.

Even experienced parents may not be aware of the risks and dangers,” says Alyson McKendrick, Coordinator, Safe Start, the injury prevention program at B.C. Children’s Hospital. “It’s easy to become distracted during the holiday season, but by taking a few simple measures, parents can enjoy the festivities without having to worry about their children being injured.”

Safe Start offers the following tips to prevent injuries during the holidays:

Trees and Decorations
A child learns about objects by touching, feeling, and tasting. Decorative, coloured tree lights can be appealing for young children to put in their mouths, which can cause severe burns. Young children can also pull trees onto themselves when they try to pull on decorative ornaments or try to pull themselves to a standing position using the bottom branches. Be aware that trimmings that look like candy or food may provide an extra appeal to young children to put the item in their mouths, which can cause choking.

Make sure your Christmas tree is secure. Never use lit candles on a tree or near evergreens. Always use non-flammable lights and decorations, or avoid incandescent decorative lights completely.

Take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable.

Keep small, removable parts of ornaments out of children’s reach.

Hanukkah Traditions
Curious young children will be attracted to flickering lights of a menorah and fire hazards. Menorahs are set high, and dreidels can pose a choking hazard.

Make sure your menorah is kept on a high surface and is not too close to the edge of a table.

If your child enjoys blowing out candles, make sure to tie hair back so it cannot catch on fire. Have an adult supervise and stay near small children.

Replace smaller dreidels with larger ones.

Toy Safety
Small pieces can come off and become choking hazards, and batteries and magnets can cause choking as well as internal chemical burns.

Inspect all toys to make sure they are in good working order.

If a toy uses small batteries or magnets, ensure curious toddlers cannot get access to them.

Select toys that fall within your child’s recommended age level. Most toys have age recommendations listed on the package.

These are based on safety hazards, not how smart your child is.

A New TV?
More than 100 children are brought to emergency departments each year as a result of TV sets falling on them.

Ensure your TV is placed on low, sturdy furniture. Anchor the TV to the wall. If you have a child who is interested in exploring and getting their hands on objects, make sure you tie hair back so it is not too close to the edge of a table.

Make sure children never sit too close to a TV. They may accidentally pull the TV onto themselves.

Fireplace Safety
Gas fireplaces are popular, but the glass in front of the fireplace can get as hot as 200°C (400°F) in six minutes and can take up to 45 minutes to cool down. Young children can get severe burns to their hands, face, arms, and shoulders when they touch or fall against the glass of a gas fireplace.

Stay close to children if they are in a room with a gas fireplace that is on or has been recently turned off.

Purchase specially-designed fireplace screens and guards. Ensure they are secured.

Visiting Others
The homes you visit may not be childproofed. Each year, curious toddlers choke or get poisoned by exploring and getting their hands on items not meant for children.

Alcoholic drinks, hard candies, and nuts should be kept well out of young children’s reach. If they are within reaching distance, find a safe playing spot away from these items.

Keep young children away from all plants. Plants like mistletoe berries, holly, and poisenetta are either poisonous or can cause irritation if touched or swallowed.

Bring safe toys and foods for your child when visiting.

If you are entertaining in your own home, make the indoor space a smoke-free environment. Set up an outdoor smoking area for guests who need to smoke.

Designate a safe space for visitors’ purses and coats.

Place purses on the top shelf of a cupboard or on a table to prevent swallowing by small children.

For more information and tips visit the Safe Start website: http://www.bchildrens.ca/KidsTeensFam/ChildSafety/SafeStart/default.htm
From water to ice, CPO2 Thomson takes on new role

Ben Green
Staff writer

The music stops. In the centre of the rink stands a statuesque figure, arms raised, costume sparkling, smile cemented to her face. Years of dedication has led to this point, and CPO2 P.J. Thomson knows it.

In the eyes of every skater, he sees the ecstasy of a flawless routine and the agony of a failed one. Unfortunately, he can’t control the outcome, but his job has prepared each skater for the opportunity to succeed. At the beginning of the new year, CPO2 Thomson will be trading in his military uniform for that of a volunteer as he helps organize the 2011 Canadian National Figure Skating Championships.

Taking place Jan. 17-23 in Victoria, CPO2 Thomson will be one of the volunteers that will make sure the event goes without a hitch. It’s a position he has trained for at the Juan de Fuca Skating Club, Thomson was contacted by Skate Canada in 2008 - the governing body for Canadian figure skating - to see if he was interested in volunteering at some of their larger events. These included large regional events, national competitions and the London Olympics. For most competitions Thomson is invited to, he has the role of Properties Coordinator, a job that keeps him on his toes from before the skaters take the ice to well after they leave it.

“Basic duties [as Properties Coordinator] are going to be things like setting the rink up prior to the athlete’s arrival,” said Thomson. “When you go into a rink at the national level you have to set up different rooms for media, rooms for the athletes, the athlete’s families, and VIPs making sure that everything is where it has to be.” He ensures there are enough chairs and tables, and he dresses the rink, putting up welcome signs and sponsor signs. He ensures the rink is ready for the athletes when they arrive and that it’s maintained throughout the competition.

At the 2011 championships, skaters will compete at either a junior or a senior level. Skaters will compete in all categories including men’s and women’s singles, ice dance, and pairs. With the athletes training at the Archie Browning Arena and competing at the Save-On-Foods Centre, Victorians should take advantage of the easy access to such a high level event, says Thomson.

“If they’ve ever watched it on TV and they think, ‘Wow, those guys are jumping high!’ until you’ve actually been there and seen the speed and the distance these people are covering when they’re jumping, it’s incredible,” says Thomson. “With pairs, when they throw their partner for a triple Salchow or a triple loop, it’s a massive amount of airtime. It’s just incredible to watch, the speed and the artistry that comes with it – it’s mind-boggling.”

While many of the young skaters he works with were probably not even born when he first started volunteering, Thomson says it hasn’t lost its thrill.

“It’s when you’re out there and you’re watching somebody four, five, six years old and they’re out on the ice and they’re doing whatever they’re doing and they get it,” said Thomson. “Whether it’s the first time they can get up by themselves, the first time they can get around the rink by themselves, the first time they successfully do a small jump, and they look at you and their eyes are like saucers, like ‘Did you see that? Did you see me?’ When they get it, that’s what it’s all about.”

Figure skating seems to be a family affair for the Thomsons. With his daughters still active in the sport and his wife also a volunteer at the upcoming championships, Thomson hopes the rest of the city will share in the passion they have for the sport when the event gets underway in a month.

To inquire about any volunteer opportunities at the 2011 Canadian National Figure Skating Championships contact CPO2 Thomson at 250-363-1126.

To purchase ticket packages, visit the Save-On-Foods Memorial Centre’s box office, go online at www.selectyourtickets.com or call 1-866-514-5050.
WO Dan Flynn (right) is awarded the General Campaign Star South West Asia - 1 Bar.

MS Jeremy Wood is awarded the General Campaign Star South West Asia for his service with Joint Task Force Afghanistan.

Cpl Jennifer Morgan is awarded the General Campaign Star South West Asia for her service with Joint Task Force Afghanistan.

Cpl Kamrooz Raissi is awarded the South West Asia Service Medal and South West Asia Service Medal - 1 Bar.

PO1 Andy Reljic is awarded the third clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration for 42 years of service.

SLt Daniel Huot is awarded the first clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration for 22 years of service.

CPO2 Troy Morey is awarded the first clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration for 22 years of service.

PO1 Steve Calvert is awarded the first clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration for 22 years of service.

WO Dan Flynn is awarded the first clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration for 22 years of service.

WO Colin Winkler is awarded the first clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration for 22 years of service.

PO2 Trevor Ford is awarded the first clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration for 22 years of service.

PO2 Kelly McLaughlin is awarded the first clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration for 22 years of service.

PO2 Gary Wickstrom is awarded the first clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration for 22 years of service.

Sgt Andy Tiekenheinrich is awarded the first clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration for 22 years of service.

MCpl Andree Thibodeau is awarded the first clasp to her Canadian Forces Decoration for 22 years of service.

LS John Johnson is awarded the first clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration for 22 years of service.

LS Patrick Knight is awarded the first clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration for 22 years of service.

Cpl Richard Martin is awarded the first clasp to his Canadian Forces Decoration for 22 years of service.

Lt(N) David Bedleure is awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration for 12 year of service.

Lt(N) Katy Rainville is awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration for 12 year of dedicated service.

CFB Esquimalt Base Commander, Capt(N) Craig Baines awarded numerous medals and made several presentations during a divisional parade Dec. 2 at the Naden Drill Shed.

Photos by Cpl Malcolm Byers, MARPAC Imaging Services
CPO Rogerson receives his new rank from Cdr Wamback (right) and Lt(N) Barbagallo (left).

PO2 MacDonald is promoted by Cdr Wamback with assistance from PO2 MacDonald’s wife Laurel.

Lt(N) Mark Schofield is awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration for 12 year of service.

Cpl Eric Hermanson is awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration for 12 year of service.

Cpl Andrew Nolan is awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration for 12 year of service.

Cpl David Campbell accepts a Base Commander’s Commendation Award for his outstanding support and commitment during June’s International Fleet Review. His professionalism and dedication were determining factors in the excellent instruction of designated personnel from across the formation in their responsibilities as VIP drivers.

PO2 Stewardson is promoted by Cdr Wamback with assistance from PO2 Stewardson’s father Don.

PO2 MacDonald is awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration for 12 year of service.

Cpl Eric Hermanson is awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration for 12 year of service.

Cpl Mike Vogt accepts a Base Commander’s Commendation Award for his outstanding support and commitment during June’s International Fleet Review. His professionalism and dedication were determining factors in the excellent instruction of designated personnel from across the formation in their responsibilities as VIP drivers.

MS Jarrett Teague accepts a Base Commander’s Commendation Award for his ongoing commitment in the implementation of the Base Administration Officer’s Safety Program within the Accommodation Section and his vigilance in identifying and taking immediate action to correct several unsafe situations.

Lt Robert Anderson receives his promotion to Captain.

Yvon Girous accepts a Base Commander’s Recognition Award for his outstanding work in repairing the Canadian Coast Guard Hovercraft used in Search and Rescue Operations.

Cpl Andrew Nolan is awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration for 12 year of service.

Ryan Hendrie accepts a Joint Task Force Games Certificate of Achievement Bravo Zulu for his troubleshooting skills during the provision of service support to the Olympic Maritime Operations Centre’s communication networks. His work ensured the many critical computer systems were functional throughout Operation Podium, the CF security support to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter and Paralympic Games.

Personnel Support Programs Manager Dave Molinari accepts the CF National Health and Fitness Award from, and on behalf of Capt(N) Craig Baines and CFB Esquimalt. The award recognizes CFB Esquimalt and the navy for their support of the Maritime Command 2010 Health and Physical Fitness Strategy.

Cpl David Campbell accepts a Base Commander’s Commendation Award for his ongoing commitment in the implementation of the Base Administration Officer’s Safety Program within the Accommodation Section and his vigilance in identifying and taking immediate action to correct several unsafe situations.

Sgt Norman Dalcourt accepts a Base Commander’s Commendation Award for his work coordinating vehicle requirements for activities in support of Navy Day, Canadian Naval Centennial and the International Fleet Review.

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