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SECTION B

LOCAL

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ARTS - B3
Award-winning album designer
dreams some of his best ideas
BIRTHS AND DEATHS - B7



Library looks for architect

Kitchener council wants better idea of building's construction costs

BY TERRY PENDER
RECORD STAFF

KITCHENER

An architect will be hired to develop conceptual drawings for a new central library in downtown Kitchener.

The drawings are needed for a better estimate of construction costs, Sonia Lewis, the Kitchener Public Library's chief executive officer, told city councillors yesterday.

Lewis appeared before the finance and corporate services

committee to officially bury the notion of sharing a central library with the City of Waterloo.

She also sought the continued support of city councillors for a new central library on the Centre Block, which is the block immediately east of City Hall.

"The Kitchener Public Library board remains committed to its central library project," Lewis said.

"We seek your direction today regarding this project."

She said the library wants to proceed, in partnership with such groups as the Centre Block Steering Committee, which includes senior city staff and private-sector representatives.

An architect will be hired soon, and a document will be created for soliciting development proposals from the private sector. These could take a few

months, Lewis said.

City councillors have already committed up to \$32.5 million to the central library library project. The early cost estimates for the library ranged from about \$40 million to \$55 million.

The estimates don't include the \$10 million the city spent to buy up most of the properties on Centre Block, which is bordered by Young, King, Ontario

and Duke streets.

The central library project was stalled after October because the Kitchener and Waterloo public libraries were talking about sharing a new central library. Then Waterloo city council voted to expand that city's library system instead.

The final report on the joint-library talks was filed with Kitchener councillors yesterday. **SEE LIBRARY: PAGE B6**

Preparing for a free fall

Hang-gliders love their sport, but are ready for an emergency

BY KAREN KAWAWADA
RECORD STAFF

KITCHENER

One-by-one, they climb into what look like brightly coloured, human-sized cocoons and strap themselves into the middle of a giant triangle hanging from the gymnastics rings at Margaret Avenue School in Kitchener.

Once they're suspended in hang-gliding position, with their helmets and harnesses properly secured, longtime glider Gary Tiknor, 49, gives them a push, the way you'd push a kid on a swing.

They swing up, once, twice, maybe a third time. Then, without warning, Tiknor yanks them off-centre and lets go, sending them into a wild spin.

The spinning simulates what might happen in an emergency, if the glider experienced a structural failure or if there was a mid-air collision, said Tiknor, a Kitchener man who's been gliding at least 27 years.

Even at just a metre and a half off the ground, the sudden spinning looks frightening. But if the members of the Southwestern Ontario Gliding Association were doing this in a real emergency, they might be 1,000 to 2,500 metres in the air.

That's why they do this at least once a year — to keep their skills sharp and to inspect and re-pack their parachutes on a regular basis.

In one quick motion, hang-gliders like Toronto's Troy Whitmore yank their parachutes out of the pouches on their chests and throw them away from themselves.

It happens in about a second, but they're not random throws, said Whitmore. Pilots have to throw the chute into a clear space so it doesn't get tangled up with the glider. That means they have to quickly determine which way they're spinning.

In a real emergency, the pilots would stay strapped into their damaged gliders, and they would rely on their parachutes to get them and their gliders safely to the ground.

Nobody in the club, which has about 30 members, has ever had to use a parachute in an emergency, although some have been flying for nearly three decades.

But other gliders have used the method and have been saved from injury, said Kitchener member John Burk.

"I actually feel safer when I'm strapped into the glider than when I'm standing on the roof cleaning out my eaves," said Burk, who has been gliding since 1991. "I trust the glider, I



Gary Tiknor pushes Shane Wright in a simulated hang-glider control bar at Margaret Avenue School in Kitchener. They were participating in a parachute deployment and repack exercise.

can feel the resistance, I know it's holding me up and I'm not going to fall."

Far from feeling scared, "you feel quite at peace and at one with nature," Burk said. "I think it's the freedom. It's being able to soar like a hawk. It's the closest thing you can be to Superman."

Tiknor said "it's the closest we can come to sprouting our own wings and flying."

Club members mostly fly

from a site in Teviotdale, near Palmerston. An ultralight airplane tows the gliders to a height of about 760 metres, then the hang-gliders are on their own to fight thermal updrafts that will keep them in the air.

New pilots can learn the basics in a few lessons but it takes about a year to get comfortable with it, Burk and Tiknor said.

The initial investment is high, with new gliders costing about \$5,000, not including

lessons, a harness and other equipment. Once that's out of the way, it's affordable, Burk said.

"Once you've got the equipment and you're a member of the club, it's cheaper than golf."

Those who want to give hang-gliding a try can have a tandem flight with an instructor. For more information, see www.hangflyer.com or www.tohg.ca, or call 894-6277.

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Downtown's upper floors to get money

BY TERRY PENDER
RECORD STAFF

KITCHENER

Dozens of quality apartments and condominiums may be built among the upper floors of buildings in the city core if a new program is successful.

"I think it's a great project," Mayor Carl Zehr said yesterday of the move to provide grants and interest-free loans to landlords who want to renovate upper storeys of their downtown properties to create more residential housing.

City politicians unanimously supported the program yesterday when it came before the finance and corporate services committee for approval.

"I think the plan is very, very good in principle," said Coun. Chris Weylie, who wanted to know why the city would be willing to provide so rich an incentive.

Under the scheme, known as the Upper Storey Renovation Program, landlords can qualify for up to \$100,000 to help pay for the cost of building high-quality apartments or condos in existing downtown buildings.

Half that amount would be a loan, and half a grant.

The city felt it had to increase the size of the grant because research indicates landlords were not likely to participate in the program if the funding was 80 per cent loan and 20 per cent grant, said Sylvia Wright, the manager of downtown community development.

The program is expected to



"I really think it's the incentive we need to get some things going"

Geoff Lorentz
Kitchener Councillor

help create 50 to 70 new apartments or condominiums downtown.

"I really think it's the incentive we need to get some things going," Coun. Geoff Lorentz said.

And while Lorentz called the incentive package exciting, he wanted to know if more units could be created for that money.

"Have we talked to all the property owners who have the potential to create units?" Lorentz asked.

Wright said a representative sample of landlords was surveyed in preparation of the new policy.

"Residential intensification downtown simply creates a ready market for downtown goods and services that is most sustainable over the long term," says the staff report prepared for councillors.

SEE RENOVATE: PAGE B6

Police persuade pair not to fly Nazi flag

BY CHERRI GREENO
AND LIANNE ELLIOTT
RECORD STAFF

KITCHENER

The Nazi flag that was displayed from a Kitchener home will not fly again, Waterloo regional police said yesterday.

Police and the hate crime team said the tenants in the house on Margaret Avenue have assured them the flag bearing the swastika will no longer be made visible to the public.

Staff Sgt. Bryan Larkin said this assurance came after police and the tenants sat down together and discussed the matter.

"It was discussed in a ratio-

nal way," Larkin said last night. "A mutual decision was reached not to fly the flag anymore."

Larkin wouldn't give details about when the meetings were held or what police said to persuade the tenants to stop flying the flag.

The tenants did not return The Record's calls last night.

Kyle McKee, 19, and roommate Nathan Touchette, 26, mounted the flag at 247 Margaret Ave. near Guelph Street last Thursday.

The flag was taken down Sunday but McKee and Touchette had said they intended to fly it again tomorrow, Adolf Hitler's birthday.

SEE FLAG: PAGE B6

Your Kitchener Market

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH OPERATED BY KITCHENER

Market Shops
Tues - Fri 10am-6pm
Sat 7am - 4pm

300 King Street East Downtown Kitchener
2 hours free parking

Farmers' Market
Sat 7am - 4pm

A DI ROBERTO Fruits & Vegetables

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Bananas | \$.35/lb |
| Pineapples | \$2.49 each |
| Seedless Grapes | \$.97/lb |

Join us for Taste the World
(wine & food sampling seminar)
Thursday, April 21
Log on to www.kitchenermarket.ca
and click on Fun Stuff for complete details.

Last day to register for the April 21st event is today

Specials in effect Tuesday, April 19 through Saturday, April 23

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