

## TOWN TALK

## CRYSTAL BALL RAISES ALMOST \$3 MILLION FOR KIDS

*Children's Hospital Foundation fundraiser to bankroll mental health treatment*



MALCOLM PARRY

**KIDS WIN:** Jennifer Johnston, an interior designer and mother of three, chaired the 31st-annual Crystal Ball that reportedly raised \$2,815,129 for the B.C. Children's Hospital Foundation. That sum will help fund mental-health treatment at the hospital and aid physicians practicing elsewhere in B.C. The event's west-coast-forest theme was fitting for Johnston who figuratively emerged from the bush to participate in and to chair her first gala. Raising a truckload of dough was also appropriate for Johnston, who rides with husband Scott Warren in a full-load Ford F150 pickup. He is president of Crossborder Vehicle Sales that exports hundreds of low-mileage Canadian vehicles, 90 per cent of them light trucks, to bargain-eager Americans.

**YEA FOR JAY:** The 1984 Chevrolet Scottsdale pickup owned by artist Jay Senetchko still exists and it's still in Canada. But you wouldn't know it from his *The Course of a Distant Empire* exhibition at Jennifer Winsor's Gallery. Representing the passage of seasons, Senetchko's five huge gilt-framed paintings show dozens of rather strange folk doing and undoing the same tasks around and on the disintegrating vehicle. The locale of each work is a mirror-imaged version of Alberta's Tonquin Valley, near where Senetchko said his real Chevy "died." The vehicle is being restored, perhaps with a happier outcome than the artist envisages in his works "eternal recurrence ... (where) all tenses collide and mobility collapses into oscillation between decadence and destruction." Go see.

**MORE GEORGE:** Ceramicist Janaki Larsen and fashion designer Hajnalka Mandula recently celebrated a year at their collaborative 7 E 7 Atelier St. George. With its racks and shelves of designer clothing and housewares, the Seventh-at-Ontario facility echoes the name of Le Marché St. George. That's a 1904-built east side corner store to which Larsen and Pascal Roy added art and artisan components that, according to one customer, "created a neighbourhood." The 7 E 7 facility (atelierstgeorge.com) also houses *The Wild Bunch* floral studio. Its style somewhat echoes that of a neglected building beneath Granville Street Bridge that Alain Dubreuil converted into a public-access facility that some called "magical." After city hall forced L'Espace Dubreuil's demolition, cultural animators Regis Painchaud and Lorraine Fortin looked at the 7 E 7 site for a continuation that, in their way, Larsen and Mandula have achieved.

**ROCKS POPULAR:** Yes, Aiya Feldman appeared here two weeks ago with bijoux from Hong Kong's Dehres firm she wore at the Vancouver China-

town Foundation gala. Dehres managing director Ronen Zion dramatically upped the ante at the Crystal Ball. That was by adorning Feldman with a necklace of oval diamonds, earrings of smaller stones, a 2.43 carat pink-diamond ring, and bracelet of 28 two-carat diamonds. Asked for retail value, Zion made a quip about never paying retail, then figured that \$4.3 million would do it. Too much for a gala donation perhaps, but Zion did hand over a \$39,000 royal-blue sapphire pendant frothed with brilliant-cut diamonds.

**EXTRA CARE:** While today's Toronto Argonauts readied to win the Grey Cup in Ottawa, retired five-time winner Michael "Pinball" Clemons flew to Vancouver. The 11-season running back came to help frustrated youngsters break out of real life's scrimmages and advance downfield. That was through Surrey-based SOS Children's Village B.C., which is part of a 68-year-old global organization aiding orphaned and abandoned children. It supports 40 foster children locally, some of them in five homes it has built. Donations would see five more added on an available adjacent site. SOS youngsters receive some financial and residential support beyond age 18. At its recent event, the organization honoured Tom Watson, a former foster child whose success in business may, like Clemons, inspire those under care today.

**HOP TO IT:** What's next when your co-owned farm grows nine varieties of hops? For Ben Reeder, it entailed joining four other fellows to found Squamish-based Backcountry Brewing and promptly win the B.C. Beer Awards' Rookie of The Year trophy and other medals. Regarding the over-hopping of craft brews, especially IPAs, Reeder said: "When there's no guidelines, people like extremes, and they want to find the edge." Backcountry has avoided falling over that edge. The payoff? Josh Pape, the Wildebeest-Bufala-The Diamond-Bells and Whistles partner-bartender, said: "Your beer outperforms all the others."

**BIRDMAN OF LIONS GATE:** Activities entrepreneur Kevin Thompson wants the Ministry of Transportation to OK his clients paying \$250 to \$300 to ascend one of the Lions Gate Bridge's 115-metre towers (Sun, Nov. 28). The same climb once cost me nothing. Meanwhile, Thompson's potential SkyHuggers should know that more than a panoramic view awaits. Firstly, there's the near-vertical ladder within a steel-box structure that, on sunny days (when you'd want to go up), gets mighty hot. Secondly, birds abound in there, all producing guano that, in an oven-like enclosure ... well, you get the idea.

**DOWN PARRYSOPE:** The certainty of a Crowbar Hotel stay might pry reparations from scofflaw convicted fraudsters. malcolmparry@shaw.ca 604-929-845



Malcolm Parry's photograph shows what SkyHuggers may expect if the Ministry of Transportation permits \$250 to \$300 ascents of Lions Gate Bridge. PHOTOS: MALCOLM PARRY/PNG



Ceramicist Janaki Larsen and fashion designer Hajnalka Mandula hosted a first-anniversary celebration at their 7 E 7 Atelier St. George.



The *Death By Water* painting from Jay Senetchko's *The Course of a Distant Empire* exhibition backed him at his Winsor Gallery opening.



Scott Warren's wife Jennifer Johnston chaired the Crystal Ball to benefit B.C. Children's Hospital Foundation's province-wide mental health programs.



Aiya Feldman wore \$4.3-million worth of jewelry from Dehres principal Ronen Zion who donated a \$39,000 pendant to the Crystal Ball.

