

# State of school playground sparks parent's concern

## Broken glass and alcohol bottles litter yard

by Roxanna Thompson  
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Liidiit Kue/Fort Simpson

A mother of two young children says Bompas Elementary School's playground is a hazard.

Tracy Brown often takes her sons to the school to play on the outdoor equipment. Litter, graffiti and evidence of public drinking have marred the family's recent visits.

On Aug. 23 Brown's oldest child Tristan Blyth, 4, cut his hand on broken glass while playing. There is smashed glass all over the yard and around the playground equipment, Brown said.

"It's completely unacceptable," she said. In addition to the glass the family found graphic drawings of male genitalia on the slides.

"My kids shouldn't have to see that," said Brown. Brown washed the graffiti off of the slides while Blyth volunteered to pick up the recyclable garbage. After searching around the school he filled a standard size green garbage bag as well as a small white garbage bag with recycling including approximately 15 mickeys.

There were beer cans right on the play structure and broken beer bottles under it in addition to other assorted litter, said Brown.

"People need to show some respect for their environment because it's disgusting not to mention a safety hazard," she said.

Brown said she has one friend who won't bring her young daughter to the playground because it's too dangerous.

People who are using the playground as a drinking location and a litter catch should think of the younger children that go there to play, said Brown. She would like to see the yard thoroughly cleaned up and surveillance cameras installed.

Having broken glass and bottles on the playground has been an ongoing problem, said Chris Kingsbury, the school's principal.

The problem is worse during the warmer months, particularly after long weekends, he said. On Tuesdays after long weekends the concrete walkway crossing the schoolyard always has broken glass on it, he said.

Up until two years ago the school's custodians would have maintained the yard during the summer.

### Hours changed

Two years ago, however, the custodians' hours were changed so they end work between five to 10 days after classes stop and begin work again shortly before classes resume.

On Aug. 26, Kingsbury said he expected the yard would be cleaned-up prior to the start of school on Aug. 30. When back at the playground on Aug. 29 Brown found the area around the equipment was still covered with litter and broken glass.

Blyth collected another half a garbage bag of recycling. Kingsbury swept glass off the walkway.

The school has asked the Department of Public Works and Services to install cameras in the yard to deter people who use the area to drink and do drugs, said Kingsbury. In the



Tracy Brown holds up just two of the many alcohol bottles she found on the Bompas Elementary School playground.

past the RCMP detachment has also been asked to check the yard in the evenings.

The department is looking at a variety of options to increase security in the schoolyard, said Mike Burns, the assistant deputy minister

for Public Works and Services.

Cameras are one option, he said. Burns was unable to say precisely when measures would be installed but expected it would be before the end of the fall.

## Education upgrade

Thinaago/Nahanni Butte

Samantha Konisenta, the Nahanni Butte Dene Band's finance clerk, has left her position to study business administration at Grande Prairie Regional College.

Birthday wishes go out to Marilyn Marcellais on Sept. 2.

## Taking in the fresh fall air

Sambaa K'e/Trout Lake

Community members are keeping busy boating and doing on the land activities.

Students returned to Charles Tetcho School on Aug. 30

## The first step

Ka'agee Tu/Kakisa

Staff with FSC Architects and Engineers from Yellowknife held a community meeting in Kakisa on Aug. 31 to gather information and ideas about the planned community complex. Community members were asked about the kinds of events they hope to hold in the new building.

Staff from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada will be hold-

ing a meeting in the community on Sept. 2.

Happy belated birthday to Iain Leishman on Aug. 29.

## Board slides and grinds

Liidiit Kue/Fort Simpson

The grand opening of the Fort Simpson skatepark will take place on Sept. 2 at 4 p.m. The event will include a barbecue and skateboarding demonstrations.

The Seven Spruce Golf Course will be hosting one of its final tournaments of the year on Sept. 11. The First Air Open will be a two-person scramble format over 18 holes.

## And the winner is

Deh Gah Got'ie Koe/Fort Providence

The winners of the hamlet's yard beautification and cleanest yard contest have been announced. In first place with \$300 is Agnes and John Silverthorn followed by Jim and Margaret Thom who won \$200 and Kelvin and Darlene McLeod who won \$100.

Deh Gah School will be hosting a welcome back to school and meet the teachers barbecue on Sept. 8 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

## COMMUNITY Clips

with Roxanna Thompson

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The school will be hosting a fall cultural camp with a focus on medicinal plant collecting for education staff in the region from Sept. 13 to 17 at Telemia Lodge.

## Help through the hard times

Acho Dene Koe/Fort Liard

A grief workshop will be held on Sept. 22 to 23 in the hamlet's culture room from 1:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will be doing a program intake in the community on Sept. 2 to 3 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Father Wes Satanski will be celebrating mass in Fort Liard on Sept. 5 at 11 a.m.

Birthday wishes go out to Margaret Klondike on Aug. 31, John Gonet on Sept. 2 and Doris Duntra on Sept. 4.