

CITY

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JUSTICE

Driver who ran over woman loses licence for 3 months

By ANDREA PEACOCK
The Daily Courier

A woman found guilty of driving without due care resulting in the death of another woman has had her licence taken away for three months and will serve 20 hours of community service.

Sharon Scott, 72, struck 88-year-old Julie Gillespie in the alleyway behind The Daily Courier on Nov. 23, 2014.

Scott, a West Kelowna resident, was a contract driver for The Daily Courier at the time; her job was to pick up bundles of newspapers and deliver them to Peachland.

Gillespie was walking home from the casino in the dark along Doyle Avenue when Scott hit her between her headlights and drove over Gillespie, dragging her approximately nine metres.

Since her arrest, Scott maintained she did not see Gillespie and thought the bump she drove over was a dip in the road.

Crown counsel dropped criminal charges in February 2015, deciding there was insufficient evidence to prove Scott intended to leave the scene after the accident.

Last month, Judge Ellen Burdett found Scott guilty of driving without due care and attention.

In court Thursday, Crown counsel Murray Kaay said he did not advise imposing a fine on Scott because of her financial situation.

"Frankly, I don't think Ms. Scott, from what we heard, is in a position to pay that fine," said Kaay. Instead, he suggested imposing a three-month driving prohibition, which he said would be a hardship on Scott, who relied on her vehicle to earn a living.

He also suggested Scott go on probation for one year and complete 20 hours of community service.

Before the judge announced her sentence, Scott read a short letter she had written.

"I'm extremely sorry for all the heartache and sorrow for Mr. Patrick (Gillespie's partner) that I put him and his family and close friends through," she said through tears. "It's my wish that one day they can forgive me for the trouble that I've caused."

Burdett also read a victim impact statement submitted by Sean Patrick, Gillespie's partner, outlining the hardship and the expenses he has faced since Gillespie's death.

Patrick's letter also expressed a willingness for reconciliation through limited contact with Scott.

"I want the offender to know that I forgive her," stated the letter.

For the sentence, Burdett said she needed to balance the degree of responsibility of the offender and the seriousness of the offence.

"The consequences in this case were very serious," she said. "The degree of responsibility on the part of Ms. Scott, in my view, is on the higher end of the scale. I did find that it was a significant lapse of attention that caused Ms. Scott not to see Ms. Gillespie."

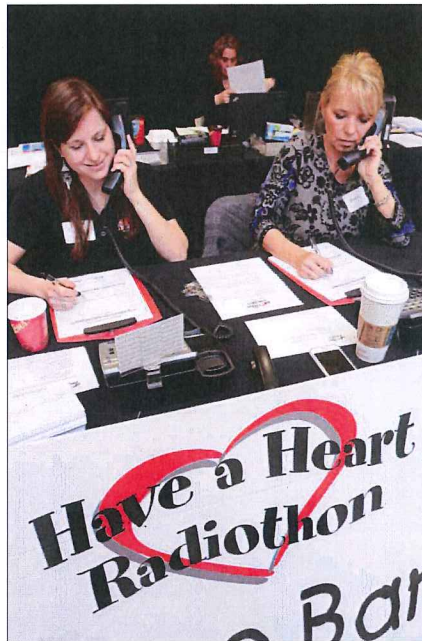
Burdett stressed that the sentence was not being imposed due to the death of Gillespie.

"It's being imposed because of the inattentive driving of Ms. Scott," she said. "So any sentence of this court, particularly where probation or a fine is involved, should never be taken to have any meaning in terms of the human life that has been lost."

"My sentence must deter others from having lapses of attention from driving and emphasize that all motorists must exercise full attention while operating motor vehicles."

Burdett accepted Kaay's submission to impose 20 hours of community service along with one year of probation and a driving prohibition of three months.

Burdett agreed not to impose a fine on Scott after deeming Scott "completely unable to pay a fine."



GARY NYLANDER/The Daily Courier

Radiothon benefits KGH

Cynthia Evans, left, with Sun FM, and Beverley Seymour take donations over the phone during the 13th annual Have a Heart Radiothon at Orchard Park mall on Thursday. The 12-hour live broadcast raised money for Kelowna General Hospital's new perinatal unit, which replaces the existing labour and delivery unit, postpartum and neonatal intensive care unit in the Strathcona Building. The new unit will be an elevator ride to the hospital's new operating rooms, allowing timely access for urgent caesarean-section deliveries.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

Chain-reaction crash follows sudden turn

Police say 4 vehicles damaged in collision in downtown Kelowna

By Daily Courier Staff

A car involved in a chain-reaction crash blew through an intersection, across a pedestrian walkway and over a concrete barrier before rolling on its side and hitting another car in a parking lot downtown Thursday morning.

Kelowna RCMP say four vehicles were damaged in the collision at the intersection of Lawrence Avenue and Ellis Street.

They say a Toyota RAV4 was northbound on Ellis when it rear-ended a Hyundai Sonata.

The Sonata driver had failed to signal on suddenly turning left at the intersection. The Toyota driver mistakenly pressed the accelerator pedal instead of the brake.

Police believe that when the Hyundai was hit, its driver also mistakenly pressed the accelerator, which sent it into the parking lot.

After rolling over, the Sonata hit a car in the lot, which pushed that car against another one, causing damage.

The Hyundai driver, a 68-year-old woman, sustained minor injuries and was treated at the scene. The Toyota driver, a 30-year-old Kelowna woman, was not injured.

Const. Jesse O'Donaghey said police interviewed several witnesses at the scene.

"Thankfully, no pedestrians were involved in this collision, which occurred at a regularly busy downtown intersection," O'Donaghey said.

"Police would like to remind motorists to look ahead, plan your turns in advance and always use your signals," he added.

Alcohol is not considered a factor in the crash, and police aren't recommending charges.

VALLEY IN BRIEF

Water project funds announced today

Representatives from the Okanagan Basin Water Board and Okanagan Nation Alliance will gather with federal and provincial politicians today in Kelowna for a funding announcement.

The media event will take place at 11:30 a.m. at Manteo Resort.

A media advisory from the water board declares the announcement will involve "significant federal funding for a project to better understand water needs in our valley... this project is aimed at helping make the best water-use decisions possible."

Paul's Tomb trail reopens for use

Paul's Tomb trail in Kelowna has reopened following a closure due to fallen rocks.

The trail in Knox Mountain Park was closed after a rockfall Jan. 19. A geotechnical expert was called in to assess the situation before crews could clear away the debris.

Aboriginal women to be remembered

A service to remember missing and murdered Aboriginal women will be held Sunday in Kelowna.

The event is to take place outside the Kelowna courthouse on Water Street, beginning at noon.

Speakers will include Pauline Terbasak of the Okanagan Nation Alliance, Michelle Novakowski of the Elizabeth Fry Society and city councillor Mohini Singh.

Aboriginal women accounted for 16 per cent of all reported female victims of homicide between 1990 and 2014, Statistics Canada says.

Charging stations planned downtown

Two charging stations for electric vehicles will be installed at the museum parking lot in downtown Kelowna, pending council approval expected Monday.

The stations are proposed as a partnership between the City of Kelowna and FortisBC.

Plans are for the utility to cover the \$25,000 installation cost and for the city to cover all resulting electricity charges, estimated to be anywhere from \$1,500 to \$9,000 annually.

The venture is described as a pilot project to test demand. Other electric vehicle charging stations already exist at some local wineries, hotels and educational institutions.

Kelowna parks to be renamed

Some small city-owned parks with big views will get new names on Monday.

McCarren, Providence and Tulameen parks — all in the Kettle Valley neighbourhood — should be joined together and renamed as Providence Park, City of Kelowna staff say.

Similarly, Mountainside and Rockview parks should be consolidated and renamed Mountainside Park, staff say.

The changes are intended to limit public confusion about park entrances, staff say.

— The Daily Courier

COMMENT

Original Hotel Eldorado built by colourful countess

One of the Heritage Week events set for next Sunday will take place in a Kelowna hotel that's celebrating its 90th anniversary.

The original Hotel Eldorado was built in 1926 by Countess Bubna, an aristocratic Englishwoman who got her title from a seven-year-long marriage early in the 20th century to an

Austro-Hungarian count. The fact she got divorced in a time when marriages were expected to last forever is just one of the remarkable things about the countess's life.

Her mother, Mary Caroline Michell, had a long affair with one of the world's richest men, the Duke of Sutherland, and secured a fortune upon his demise. But not before she



RON SEYMOUR
Pravda

spent six weeks in a London jail for burning some of the duke's documents.

"The whole affair caused quite a scandal in Victorian society, and poor Duchess Mary was labelled The Jailbird Duchess in the press," says Claire Smith-Burns of the Kelowna and District Genealogical Society.

For Heritage Week, the society has produced reports on the builders and notable figures associated with some of the landmark structures around the Central Okanagan.

"The idea is to make history come alive, to tell people a little bit about heritage personalities," says Smith-Burns.

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