

Second abduction try mobilizes cops

GIANT JEWEL ECLIPSES RECORD



JOHN MAHONEY THE GAZETTE

THAT'S A LOT OF CARATS! Vincent Boucher shows off the world's largest cut Paraiba tourmaline in Montreal yesterday. The stone, which weighs almost 192 carats, is estimated to be worth as much as \$125 million. Boucher, a Montreal financier, tells **Mike King** he plans to tour the globe with the gem, which is dubbed the Ethereal Carolina Divine Paraiba. **Story, Page B1**

POINTE CLAIRE

Two students report being grabbed by man in red minivan

PAUL CHERRY
GAZETTE CRIME REPORTER

Increased police patrols will continue around schools in Pointe Claire today while investigators search for a man they believe has made two attempts in nine days to abduct young students in the same neighbourhood.

Montreal police commander Jacquelin St. Pierre said patrol vehicles will be very visible around schools in the suburban city. He made the comments during a news conference yesterday, held mere hours after a 13-year-old girl told police she was grabbed by a man driving a red minivan with rust on it.

The girl, a student at École secondaire Félix Leclerc, was on Westbank Ave. near Duke of Kent Ave., walking to school. She managed to free herself and make it to the school to get help.

Montreal police Constable Daniel Lacoursière said the man had asked the girl for directions before grabbing her.

On Oct. 6, a 12-year-old boy, a student at St. Thomas High School, told police that a man — also driving a red minivan — tried to abduct him shortly after he got off a school bus around 3 p.m. That was on St. Louis Ave. at the corner of Marsh St.

Please see STUDENTS, Page A6

BETS ARE OFF

Horseracing track goes silent after 102 years

Waging ceased for good yesterday at the Hippodrome de Montréal, still known as Blue Bonnets, with the collapse of Quebec racetrack operator Attractions Hippiques, which shut its operations across the province. **Paul Delean, Page B1**



SNOW REMOVAL

A heavy issue for Montreal voters

Candidates take heed: In a city like Montreal, snow removal possesses the same importance as levee maintenance in New Orleans. **James Mennie, Page A4**

IMPAIRMENT

Cyclist's death spurs calls for random testing

Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the Canadian Automobile Association say a 23-year-old cyclist's death Tuesday shows a need for police to be allowed to test drivers who show no signs of alcohol impairment. **Max Harrold, Page A7**

PRISONER ABUSE

Former diplomat says Canada ignored his warnings

A former Canadian envoy says he sounded alarms about abuse in Afghan jails almost a year before the feds said they had no credible reports of detainee abuse. **Page A14**



LITERARY GEMS

Eight local writers nominated

Former Gazette journalist Eric Siblin is among Quebec finalists for the Governor General's Literary Awards. **Kathryn Greenaway, Page D3**

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Jewellery takes people's minds off your wrinkles."

SONJA HENIE

WEATHER

Mainly sunny with cloudy periods

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It's a gem of a start for Billionaire

Financier acquires world's rarest precious stone

MIKE KING
THE GAZETTE

Montreal financier Vincent Boucher wants his **Billionaire Business Inc.** to become as known for coloured gemstones as **De Beers Diamond Jewellers Ltd.** is for clear precious stones.

Boucher is off to a good start as owner of the largest

cut Paraiba tourmaline, which, at nearly 192 carats, shatters the Guinness World Records holder with its mass of just under 52 carats.

He expects his tourmaline to soon be certified by Guinness and included in the 2011 edition of the Guinness Book of World Records (the 2010 version is already out).

Although valued at between \$25 million and \$125 million, what the 36-year-old company CEO called a "perfect and flawless stone" isn't for sale – yet.

In presenting what he has named the Ethereal Carolina Divine Paraiba to The Gazette

at the **Kaufmann de Suisse** exclusive jewellery boutique on Crescent St. yesterday, Boucher said he will tour the globe with the oval-shaped clear turquoise gem once it's officially recognized as the biggest.

It was already certified in June by the Gemological Institute of America, the foremost authority in gemology.

Boucher explained the value is estimated on the rarity and investment factor and the unlikely possibility of having to replace it for insurance purposes.

"Paraiba tourmaline is the world's rarest precious gem-

stone," he said.

"One carat of a vivid incandescent natural neon-like bluish-green Paraiba tourmaline runs as high as five-figure U.S. dollars."

When estimating a value for a world-record breaker of 191.87 carats, Boucher added that one has to consider an exponential increase in worth of at least 10 times the value per carat.

And as it becomes increasingly one of the most sought-after gems, the price of Paraiba tourmalines escalates accordingly.

Please see PRECIOUS, Page B2

won't be very well placed to participate in a U.S. upturn if we've priced ourselves out of the market as the soaring value of our loonie squeezes exporters' competitiveness.

Please see BRYAN, Page B2

INSIDE BUSINESS



Loonie soars higher

The robust Canadian dollar continues its rapid ascent, gaining a full cent against the American greenback.

Page B6

Collectors buy gem

CONTINUED FROM B1

There is one Paraiba tourmaline (named for the Brazilian region where the vast majority are found) mined for every 10,000 diamonds, and Boucher pointed out only 50 kilograms of the gem have been recovered to date.

“It is so rare, it’s only for collectors,” noted Moneca Kaufmann, vice-president of **E.P. Kaufmann & Co. Jewellers Inc.** and manager of the Kaufmann de Suisse boutique here.

She said Boucher began supplying the family-run business, established by her father, Emil Pius, in 1954, with precious stones at the beginning of the year. A 44-carat Paraiba tourmaline provided by Billionaire Business is for sale at the local Kaufmann de Suisse for \$2 million.

The Ethereal Carolina is part of the Planetary Collection held by Billionaire Business, the firm the former Canadian Space Agency employee founded in 2000 with his own money.

The holder of degrees in physics, political science and aerospace engineering spent the first seven years researching the \$200-billion international precious stones market and began acquiring gems two years ago.

He has had the Ethereal Carolina for six months and declined to say how much he paid for it.

On the Web: www.vincentboucher.com

mking@thegazette.canwest.com



CERTIFICATE

**The largest cut Paraiba Tourmaline, named
Ethereal Carolina Divine Paraiba, is owned by
Billionaire Business Enterprises Inc. (Canada).
It measures 36.44 x 33.75 x 21.85 mm and has
a weight of 191.87 carats, and was unveiled in
Montreal, Quebec, Canada on 14 October 2009.**

**Canada High Financier Vincent Boucher, B. Sc.
Physics, M. A. Government Policy Analysis and M.
Sc. Aerospace Engineering, is President and 100 %
Owner of Billionaire Business Enterprises Inc.**

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