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$1,000 A DAY FOR 'BLATANT GHETTO'

Judge fines owner of Clearview Manor for not fixing fire safety defects

By CAM FORTEMS
Daily News Staff Reporter

The owner of an apartment building in North Kamloops — characterized as a "blatant ghetto" by a social activist — will pay $1,000 a day until significant fire safety defects are fixed.

A B.C. Supreme Court justice handed down a contempt of court ruling Thursday against Jason Hari, the Surrey-based owner of Clearview Manor.

Hari was fined $1,000 for not meeting an earlier court-ordered schedule to bring the building up to standard. The City of Kamloops, which brought the enforcement action, can also file for its legal costs.

Hari is on the hook for $1,000 a day until the building is brought up to fire code standards. The fine is against Hari personally, not any company that he operates.

Bob Hughes, executive director of ASK Kamloops, said the building is well known for drug problems and run-down conditions.

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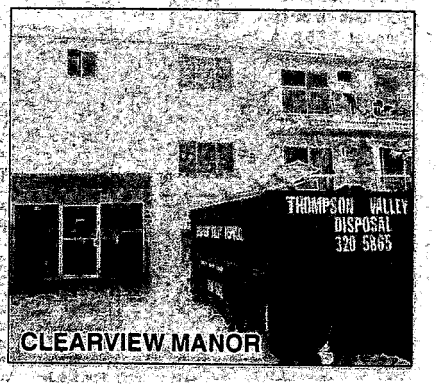

CLEARVIEW MANOR

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Tenants went without water, heat

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"It's been a notorious place from every comment we've ever heard."

Problems for Hari and his tenants began last November, when City fire inspections revealed significant problems. Then, over the Christmas holidays, tenants were without running water and heat for 10 days.

Hari put some tenants up in local hotels but work was delayed because he refused to make timely payment to a Kamloops contractor who imported and installed a new boiler system.

The landlord filed an eviction notice for tenants in early February, claiming the extensive work needed required them to move. He also indicated he would raise rents.

The evictions were overturned by the Residential Tenancy Branch.

Hari could not be reached late Thursday for comment.

Hughes said the building serves a function as a home for people struggling with low-income but basic fire-safety can't be ignored.

"This guy operates on a whole other galaxy," Hughes said, calling Clearview Manor "a blatant ghetto."

City community and corporate affairs director Len Hrycan said the contempt of court application came after a long process of negotiation with Hari, both inside and outside court.

Significant fire safety issues include lack of firewall separation and areas of refuge needed in case of a building fire.