

OPINION

A8

0741

The Daily Courier, Wednesday, June 27, 2012

email: jon.manchester@ok.bc.ca

EDITORIAL

Wrong time for a photo-op

Premier Christy Clark should have cancelled her appearance in West Kelowna on Tuesday and headed across the lake to Joe Rich instead.

As the province battles severe flooding woes, the premier was speaking about the goodness of smoke detectors in homes.

West Kelowna has signed on to a provincial campaign to encourage people to get, install and test smoke alarms.

We don't want to belittle this campaign. It's quite important actually. Like seatbelts, most of us know that having a smoke alarm in the house is a no-brainer, and yet each year people die because they didn't have one, or it

wasn't working.

The announcement, likely planned and tightly scripted for some time, could have waited, however.

It just doesn't seem that important this week while Verdelle Muttitt's property in Joe Rich washes away into Mission Creek, septic fields flood on Parsons Road, the city turns on pumps to prevent an overflowing lake from saturating downtown and much worse is happening in nearby communities, Sicamous especially.

Fire alarm campaigns can be announced anytime.

It's tricky business for leaders to know when to go to a disaster scene. They want to be helpful, not a photo-

op hindrance, but we're sure Muttitt and others would have liked to have been able to tell the premier about their flooding issues.

Having the premier on the scene would offer a little reassurance to them.

And we're not suggesting Clark is unconcerned about B.C.'s flooding problems — the actions of her cabinet and MLAs during this crisis and knowledgeable responses when questioned by reporters Tuesday show the government is on top of it — but holding a smoke-alarm photo-op in the midst of such a crisis sends a message that priorities are mixed up.

— *City Editor Pat Bulmer*