

# Carnegie

## NEWSLETTER

FREE - donations accepted.

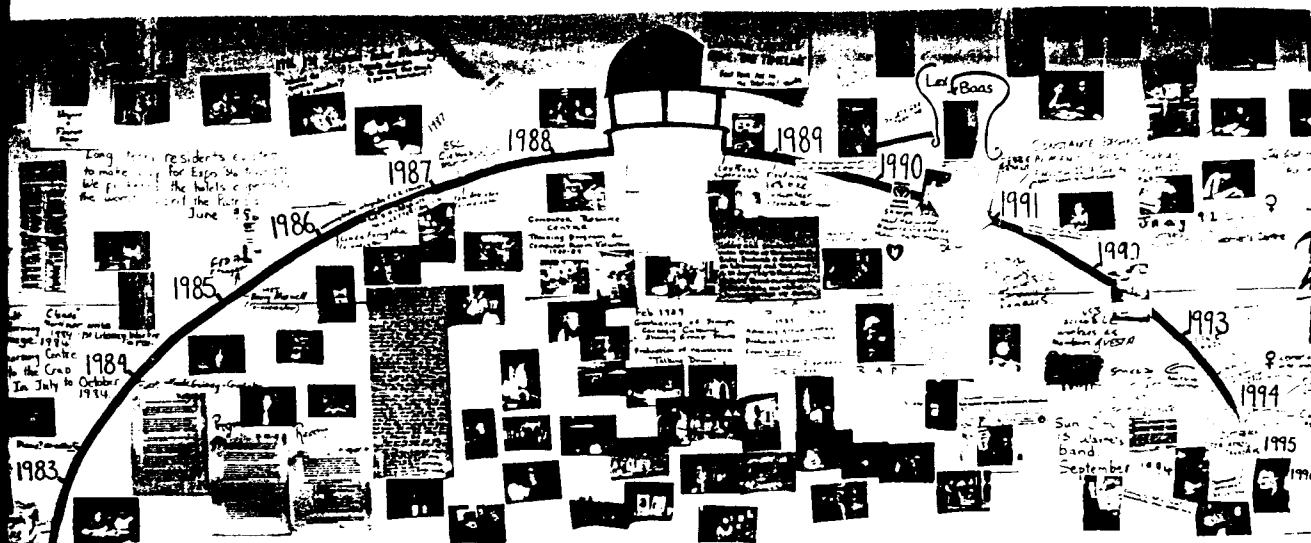


MARCH 15, 1997.

401 Main Street, Vancouver V6A 2T7 (604) 665-2220

"Education is the most important thing in a country; without it a country has lost its soul." (VIET VU)

"I am Man Chui Leung and I have been using the Carnegie Learning Centre for 10 years. My parents always come to use it as well, just to practice their conversation. I started tutoring 6 months ago. ...for the VSB and the Ministry of Education to only look at education programs in terms of numbers and quantitative development or progress is to be out of touch..."



This is a letter of asking. I wish it was a letter of compliment instead to the Carnegie Learning Centre. When I came to Carnegie I had never heard about a volunteer system, ESL, or GED, and really wasn't much interested in anything but staying straight with life. I had been terminated from a job in Ontario and had nearly lost my life in a motorcycle accident. I knew I needed a new start but at forty-seven nobody much

wanted let alone needed me. I think I was doing my best not to be a depressed person.

With me being allowed to learn *WordPerfect* at my own pace it has allowed me to have another chance to learn to get above a seventh or eighth grade school level; to help others with resumes, cover letters, patient's letters for doctors, client's letters for lawyers, teachers with examinations and students with essays. It has allowed me to learn to type, business and commerce, and a little something for life. I was thanked for helping someone else to start again. I'm recognized for this and it feels OK. You know, being part of the volunteer staff is a very important place to me and I grow with it most all the time.

I know the vast amount of intelligence that leaves here isn't what the colleges are looking for, not yet, but at the same time there are numerous Learning Centre students who have been allowed to start that new learning process again - the opening up, the new habit of exploring some new avenue of life.

I've observed students get their GED and go on to the next step. These people just didn't have the confidence at the time of the younger, more agile student, or the outlook, but with casual patience, understanding and guidance, they succeeded in their mission.

Please I wish you could have a look at what I'm saying in relation to the funding. I know it has been a great benefit to a lot of new starters.

Am I allowed to look forward to seeing an act toward the positive on this matter? Nothing in this whole world could make me happier.

Sincerely yours,

Michael McCormick



"Carnegie Centre has been an easy place to feel at home while I am upgrading... the staff and tutors are very helpful and the atmosphere here is relaxed and encouraging." (GLEN JOHNSON)

"The Carnegie Learning Centre is a valuable place for people living in this area, known to be the poorest urban community in Canada. The long-term savings in crime, drug abuse and poverty prevention will far outweigh the money spent now." (LEITH HARRIS)

"I am 68 years old. I have learned for years here and would like to keep this Learning Centre." (TRI TAT)

"...a daycare worker, that's what I'm going to school for, that's what I want to be. It is very hard for me to go to another school. Let Carnegie Adult Learning Centre continue teaching me and other students who need to work on ourselves - being the best at what we want to be." (CATHERINE GABRIEL)

"Most of the people who are students in this Centre have endured many hardships in their lives but have never given up. Their courage is always a wonderful example to me. Your consideration of the needs of these students would be greatly appreciated." (JOAN DOREE)

"It is time that politicians stopped measuring everything in dollars and cents and started thinking about the needs of low income people." (IRENE SCHMIDT)

"I am 63 years old. They have taught me very well - I know my change, how much to spend in stores, how to use a computer, reading and writing stories for the Newsletter. Keep this place going." (ALBERT ANTHONY)

"We have an active tutor training program, women's group, creative writing group, First Nations' group. Many of our students are also from our neighbouring Chinatown. Some students are learning to count, do

basic numbers, read and write. This is the poorest urban area in Canada." (SHARON JOHNSON)

3.

"My English is improving...more confident, more self-reliant...I've learned how to apply for a job and am planning to look for one soon... make my life more meaningful...contribute..participate. How enchanting to think about all this! But now everything will go down the drain..." (KITTY CHOW)

"...people who step into positions of importance by right of birth or, more specifically, nepotism. Few...are consciously treacherous, some are not even fools, but as a class they are incapable of leading us. They could not do so even if their materialistic interests did not constantly trip them up. They have been artificially stupefied... utterly unable to grasp conditions in an area [for] which they 'must' make decisions." (DEAN KO)



Fred Yuen / Alex Yuen

Goddard & Smith International Reality

**Re: Downtown Eastside residents "not up to par."**

Dear Mr. Yuen:



Further to our conversation (March 6), people in this neighbourhood are deeply insulted by your comments quoted in the *Vancouver Sun* article (March 5) regarding residents of the Downtown Eastside "not being up to par." This community is continually confronted by remarks and actions taken by individuals like yourself who know little about it yet feel they can make massive generalizations, which are always negative.

Your self-serving comment about the residents not being up to par only serves to legitimize your own work in this community, to sell property as if it were some personal cause to, as you put it, "change the neighbourhood". Obviously you think the kind of change you're talking about (i.e. gentrification) is all for the good and has no detrimental consequences. Nothing could be further from the truth. Gentrification has enormous consequences for poor neighbourhoods like the Downtown Eastside. As is the case in other cities (and I mentioned several obvious examples), it typically leads to displacement and homelessness. This is the kind of change we can do without.

May I suggest a little education beyond property appraisal, marketing and sales; one that includes an understanding of the existing Downtown Eastside community. All you could tell me on the phone is that there are a lot of drugs down here (again, only negative comments about here and now). I asked you a simple question: How many people live in the Downtown Eastside? ...and you said "Tons." Tons? I can just imagine what kind of picture you must paint of this neighbourhood for prospective clients.

I remind you that, although this community is financially poor, we are not powerless to influence the kind of development that may occur. I would suggest more sensitivity, more understanding and even humility if our co-operation is to be sought by you and/or such clients.

Sincerely,

Tom Laviolette

Carnegie Community Action Project.

## Trashhopper says...

I would first like to retract my last article that said "you can't beat Tom's soup at the Carnegie." It should read "*Tony's*" soup. Sorry Tony.

Welcome to the Downtown Eastside - approach with greed. This seems to be the policy with the developers coming from Hong Kong and even Texas. Say what? Even the local chug-a-lug clubs are being invaded by aliens. The other night at 1:30am something happened at the UFO nightclub at 7 Alexander. An ambulance and a bunch of police cars with flashers on were there. People on the street, all through the area of Powell, Carrall, Water and Columbia, were drinking bottled beer and coolers. Off sales for alcohol are supposed to end at 11pm, so where'd these 100 + Surreyites get the booze, and why is the loud noise coming from Club Mora at 6 Powell until after the 2am closing time? Who is paying off the police and Shitty Hall to allow all the street partying and noise to go on 'til 5am sometimes? The people at CityGate think they have troubles?!

Glad to see the Sport Cafe at 109 E.Hastings has



closed. Sorry to see other places of the same persuasion are still open. I hear the police are now hitting the 'johns' instead of the women; next thing you know shooting drugs in public in broad daylight might be illegal. You just never know!

The government has finally decided to stop the 3-month limbo wait for new people needing welfare. Also, the Parks Board has done two good things for a change: the PNE will be developed into green park space and an old salmon stream will be redeveloped. Any memorials or things like the AIDS Memorial will have to meet public okay.

I am dismayed to hear the drug police are picking on Chinatown's herb stores again. These herbs and

other home remedies have been used for thousands of years in Asia, yet because they are different from Canadian drugs they are getting picked on. Go figure.

Have a good month. Be safe.

**Sharon:** *Smile, tomorrow's another day.  
Don't give up the fight.*

Carl



## In the Dumpster

**binner@vcn.bc.ca Fax: 684-4842**  
**mcbinner@hotmail.com**

Dear fellow bidders & bidderettes.

Spring has sprung & the grass has riz, I wonder where the birdies is? "The bird is on the wing." Isn't that absurd? I always thought the wing is on the bird. - *Red Skelton*

Spring will soon be here. I'm ready for it. I hope we will be able to get all the non-returnable bottles and cans off the streets & out of the stores.

As you know, the Vancouver School Board has decided that "the Carnegie Learning Centre is not a viable facility" (**VIABLE: = Capable of living and growing**) "educationally or fiscally" and has decided to cut all funding on April 1st. Two weeks ago I went to their new centre on Powell Street to see what they had to offer. In order for me to spend time on one of their computers I had to take a course in something like upgrading in math, science, English or the like. When they asked me to enroll the first question was do I have ID?! In the approximately 6 months I've been around the Carnegie Learning Centre I've never heard anyone, including myself, being asked for ID.

I have, however, heard our Learning Centre mentioned on buses, the skytrain and even while walking in Kitsilano. We all know of its "informal

atmosphere, accessibility, its **proven ability** to help those whom other institutions have let down.. its sensitivity to the people of the Downtown Eastside.

Please sign the petition, write or e-mail or fax the Minister of Education:

*Paul Ramsey,*  
*Minister of Education,*  
*Parliament Buildings, Victoria, V8V 1X4*  
**webmaster@www.gov.bc.cz**  
**Fax: 387-3200 Ph: 387-1977**

My God, he has no face, no form  
I know he's here, I feel his warmth  
I hear his strength in the pounding surf  
I see his angels circling the Earth  
I feel his touch guiding my way  
He answers my cries when I pray  
When my nights turned down a darker road  
My god, he came & lessened my load  
I saw thru my tears a glistening light  
And my god was there on that lonely night  
He sent an angel to stand by my side  
for he knew I wasn't ready to die  
He feels my pain, my anguish & shame  
He knew too well from where it all came  
From a trembling child with scared blue eyes  
locked in a dark room he heard my cries  
Since I was small, that angel's been here  
just now I realize and it all comes clear  
many times my life should've been gone  
I knew in my heart, but I was wrong  
I have travelled many paths of darkness & shame  
not knowing my god, my angel, my name  
I thought it was luck the times I did fall  
and didn't pass thru death's one-way wall  
My god pushed me back, it wasn't my time  
I have many mountains I still must climb

Now for the Ken Report:

Volume is way up. United We Can now accepts  
DADS rootbeer cans & Spring water 2-litre bottles

May The Bins Be With You. and Hey! Be careful  
Mr. McBINNER

PS: Sharon, keep up the good work in the  
Learning Centre. *Mr. McB*



I have an angel holding my hand  
guiding my way in the white hot sand  
Though I can't see his face & he has no form  
My god has been there ever since I was born  
He'll be with me until I pass thru death's wall  
My angel will tell me when he calls  
So if you see shadows on the street  
But only one woman who looks a little beat  
It's only my angel + me that you see  
asking my god to please set me free  
And if you hear voices in your dark pain  
listen really hard to what he's saying  
My god is here for all who care  
And the love he gives is all too rare  
He can help ease your pain  
and cast away your shame  
He can make your days once again warm  
Even though he has no face or form

Diana Goverlock





## VOLUNTEER VOICE

\*Volunteer Recognition Week April 13-19

\*Next Volunteer Committee Meeting

**APRIL 2nd, Wednesday**

**2pm in the Art Gallery**

Daytrips, Upcoming activities, Dances

*All ideas and concerns welcome!*

\*Science World passes are available!

*\*Volunteers of the Month for March*

Happy Birthday to Mike McCormick (50 !!)

### MEETINGS:

March 18, Tues, 2:30: SENIORS

March 27, Thur, 4pm: Community Relations Ctee

April 1, Tues, 4pm: Program Committee

April 2, Wed, 4pm: Finance Committee

April 3, Thur, 7pm: Board of Directors

April 14, Mon, 3pm: Library Committee

April 15, Tues, 4pm: Oppenheimer Park Ctee.

Recently, the Vancouver School Board has seen fit to withdraw from its precious 12-year commitment to the Carnegie Community Centre. This period saw unparalleled growth in the student body as well as the income for the Learning Centre's Co-ordinator: 1985 - Barry Maxwell \$6.50/hr.

1987 - Linda Forsythe \$12/hr.

1993 - Lex Baas \$66,000/yr.

1996 - Brian Graham \$80,000/yr.

The Learning Centre has gone through many changes since it opened on Nov. 4, 1983. Many agencies have generously funded it: King Edward campus, Vancouver Foundation, and many smaller agencies. All appreciated the efforts put forth by the volunteer tutors and staff.

The number of staff really increased from two in 1989 to nineteen in 1996. Over this period of gluttonous exploitation of 'full-time-equivalents' and the efforts of many dedicated tutors, the learning centre crowded its way into the Art Gallery and, in some cases, onto the 2nd floor.

Legitimate concerns were raised and some turned to anger. Research discovered that the majority of the students were from outside the D.E. When this was questioned, the learning centre staff closed ranks and became isolated. The learning centre itself became a separate entity from the rest of the Carnegie Community Centre.

This was enough for the community. The Association sought to re-claim their Learning Centre.. the school board got vindictive, picked up their toys and 'went home'. They (the VSB) had always had free rent, free power and even free renovations. They profitted from being here. (Otherwise, why would they have been here for so long?) That the VSB should treat the Carnegie Centre and this community this way is an outrage.



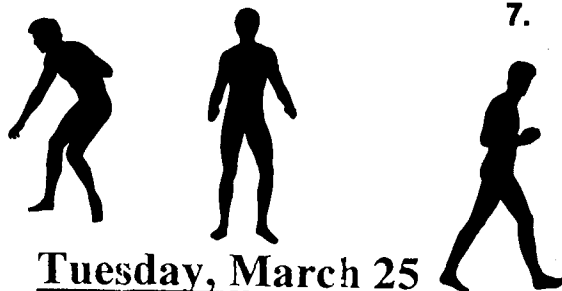
Diana Tull

# SARTI WALK

Don't miss the first walk of 1997  
with Bob Sarti!

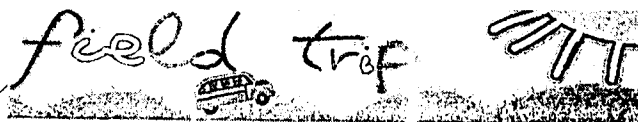
Join us to experience the  
Sentinel Stroll in West Vancouver  
(behind Park Royal)

Vancouver's ancient  
volcano  
Squamish Indian cemetery  
& more!



**Tuesday, March 25**

Meet at the info desk at 10:00 a.m.



...Sign up with Kathi on the 3rd floor

## DEYAS NEEDLE EXCHANGE: DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE ROUTE

DAILY 5:30pm-1:30am

5:30 - 7:00	Driving: Cordova, Franklin, Dundas, Commercial, Woodland Park, Clark Semlin,
6:40	WISH
7:00	Vernon & Hastings
7:15 - 7:30	Hawks & Hastings
7:30 - 8	Driving: East Hastings, Cordova
8 - 9	100 Block East Hastings
9 - 9:45	Driving: Portland Hotel, alleys, Cordova to Clark
10:30-11:30	Driving: Dundas, Joyce, Kingsway, Fraser, First Ave, Seymour
11:30-11:45	Granville Street, 1000 block alley
11:45	Boystown
12-1:30	Driving: Main at Georgia, Broadway, Commercial, Clark, Vernon, Dundas, Templeton, Franklin, Hastings, Cordova

### NOTE:

12:30-1:30 Other van at 100 block E. Hastings

VAN TRADES: 5 needles, point for point  
BULK TRADES AT OFFICE: 14 day/42 week

OFFICE: 221 MAIN STREET, 685-6561  
HOURS: 8:30am to 8pm every day

## DEYAS NEEDLE EXCHANGE: CITY ROUTE

DAILY: 5:45pm-11:45pm

5:45	St. Paul's Hospital (Thurlow side) stop
5:55	Boystown
6:00-6:15	Granville Street
6:15-6:30	1000 block Granville alley stop
6:30	Boystown
6:45-7:15	100 block East Hastings
7:15-7:45	Driving: Portland Hotel, alleys
7:45-8:45	Driving: Broadway, Commercial, 12th, Fraser, Kingsway, Clark, Franklin Strip
9:30-9:45	Hastings & Semlin stop
9:45-10:30	Driving: Franklin, Vernon, Hastings, Cordova
10:30-11:15	100 Block East Hastings
11:15-11:45	Portland Hotel, alleys

VAN TRADES: 5 needles, point for point  
BULK TRADES AT OFFICE: 14 day/42 week

OFFICE: 221 MAIN STREET, 685-6561  
HOURS: 8:30am to 8pm every day

**DAILY 12:30am-8:30am**

12:30-1:30	100 Block East Hastings	
1:30-2:00	Driving: Portland, alleys	
2:15-2:30	Driving: Granville, Boystown	
2:45-3:15	100 Block East Hastings	4.45
3:15-3:30	Driving: Portland, alleys	5.00
3:30-3:45	Driving: Cordova	6
3:45-4:00	Dundas & Lakewood stop	
4:00-4:45	Driving: Franklin Strip, Vernon, Hawks, Hastings	



4:45-5:00  
5:00-5:15  
6:15-7:00

7:00-8:00

8:00-8:30

100 Block East Hastings  
Driving: Portland, alleys  
Portland, 100 Block East Hastings,  
Hastings, Hawks, Vernon, Franklin Strip,  
Clark, Broadway, Main  
100 Block E. Hastings, Cordova, Hawks, Hastings  
FE: Limit 5 rigs  
es, point for point  
14 day/42 week

OFFICE: Limit 5 rigs  
needles  
FFIC

**VAN TRADES: 5 needed**  
**BULK TRADES AT OFFICE**  
**OFFICE: 221 MAIN STREET, 685-6561**  
**HOURS: 8:30am to 8pm every day**



鄰舍茶聚

Pre-school Room, Strathcona Community Centre, 601 Keefer St.  
奇化街 601 號士達孔拿社區中心二樓幼兒室

March 23, 1997 (Sunday), 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
一九九七年三月二十三日(星期日)下午二時正 至 四時正

特別嘉賓: Mr. John Atkin (約翰·亞堅一先生)  
屆時將出席和居民參與有獎幻燈放映及遊戲  
Community Specialist: Mr. John Atkin  
will have a slide presentation on  
Streathcona and play game (with prizes) with us

Coffee & Snacks Are Provided 具備茶點供應

Come to meet new friends & neighbours and share your concerns  
of our neighbourhood!

請前來與區內街坊會面和分享對社區事務的意見!

17.57  
**Roberta Bain**

13 Years

**Signal Hill Elementary**  
Mount Currie B.C.

For more information, please call Susan Wong,  
Community Development Worker, at 254-9496  
查詢請電 254-9496 與社區發展工作幹事黃寶珊小姐聯絡

EVERYONE WELCOME  
歡迎各居民屆時踴躍出席





I wish to share with all of you the reasons why I am unable to condone or participate in the de-listing hearing through which I, mistakenly, hoped that justice for my family, myself and others could be gained.

I do so acknowledge the individual sincerity of Panel members who are, unfortunately, caught up in a regime of moral madness that is continuing the abuse and untruthfulness that I and others have experienced at the hands of an element of the leadership of the United Church of B.C.

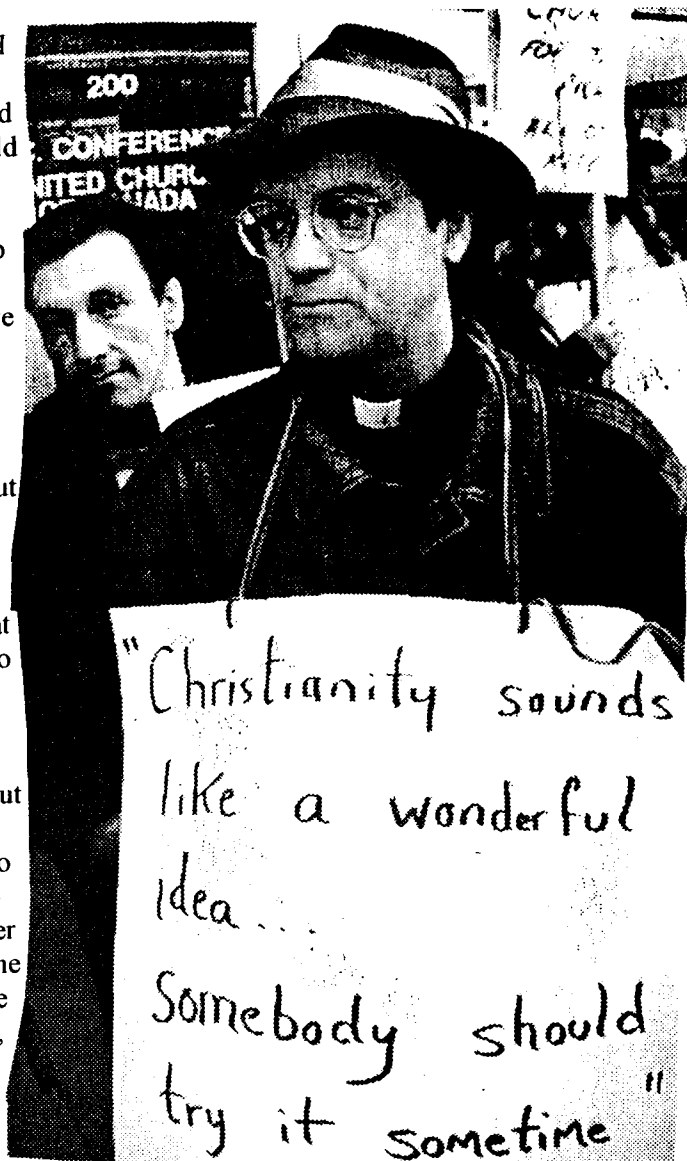
As Ephesians 6 describes, our battle is not with flesh and blood but with spiritual forces. I therefore take my stand not against individuals but against the spirit of mammon that has taken such strong hold in our church, and which allows our church to spend over \$100,000 in driving me out of the ministry while it can't find one tenth of that amount to maintain a food bank in Port Alberni to feed many impoverished native children.

Beyond this moral madness is the basic fact of the improper process that has been at work in Presbytery and Conference since my firing without cause in January, 1995. Mr. Jon Jessiman, legal counsel for the United Church, has been central to that process since my firing. He has not only represented and advised the church, but presided over my appeal of my firing. Since August 28 1996, the present hearing to consider expelling me from the ministry has been presided over by Mr. Jessiman, despite the fact he was intimately involved in all negotiations between myself and the church for nearly two years before the meeting.

This involvement included advising my former employers, both Comox-Nanaimo Presbytery and the B.C. Conference of the United Church, communicating their position in writing and orally to both myself and my legal counsel, and even preventing a final agreement between myself and Presbytery in March, 1995, through his direct advice to church officials.

By blocking an agreement between myself and the church, Mr. Jessiman created a situation which imposed enormous suffering and privation on my family and I, since I was unable to practice my livelihood and ministry. The poverty and terrible anxiety imposed on my two children by this action has never been acknowledged or rectified by the church; on the contrary.

Mr. Jessiman's role in these negotiations has been far from neutral, but has reflected an ongoing yet unproven assumption by him of wrongdoing on my part; an attitude reflected in comments made by him to





my legal counsel in February, 1995, which were highly damaging and prejudicial.

On the basis of this bias, and his role as legal counsel for the church in its dealings with me, Mr. Jessiman should never have assumed the position of Judicial Officer of the present hearings; a point we have made time and again which has been ignored by the Panel. However, now that evidence has just been submitted by the Presbytery's lawyer which confirms that Mr. Jessiman actually blocked an agreement between the church and myself in 1995, the continuation of Mr. Jessiman in his role as Judicial Officer is completely unacceptable. But even that fact is not the main issue.

Under any due process, justice must not only be done but must be perceived to have been done. Justice, or any semblance of a fair and impartial procedure, could not possibly have been done at any step of the present hearing while Mr. Jessiman was the one responsible for making rulings or giving advice to the Panel. Such rulings and advice were not impartial, nor could they have been.

Accordingly, I consider the entire hearing to date to have been irredeemably flawed, biased and improper. The consistently partisan nature of the Panel's comments and rulings, which we have documented as having been prejudicially in favour of Presbytery on over 80% of occasions, is a concrete example of the biased impropriety of which Mr. Jessiman's involvement in the hearing is but the most blatant embodiment.

Since I believe and have experienced that the present hearing is consistently improper, biased and flawed in the extreme, I have no recourse but to appeal its procedure and conduct to a civil court, and call for a judicial review of its proceedings. Until such a review is made by an impartial, external body, I consider the de-listing hearing to be illegitimate, and I feel personally absolved from participating in it.

On an ethical and moral level, the spending of tens of thousands of dollars on this hearing by the United Church is not only repugnant but completely contrary to the purpose and spirit of the church. If \$38,000 can be spent by the United Church on one lawyer's salary in less than a year, then why was the Loaves and Fishes Food Bank in Port Alberni closed by the same church in 1995 because it "couldn't afford" its monthly cost of \$1200? Why must native children go hungry while lawyers personally profit from conflict in the church?

Such behaviour is a complete mockery of Christ and our people. If it could somehow serve him or human beings for this hearing to continue, then it should. But there is nothing to suggest that anyone but lawyers will gain from its continuation. Such biased, unfair and costly internal hearings make a sick joke of the proud claims of our church that we are "resisting evil and seeking justice" in the world. On the contrary, again.

Despite the great personal cost involved in participating in the hearing, I have done so because of my desire for the truth of what happened in Port Alberni and my ministry to come out. But the level of impropriety in the hearing has reached such a scale that any further involvement by me in it would only undermine this aim and legitimate a wrong that must be addressed by a higher power.

For this reason, I am appealing not only to the civil courts for a judicial review of the entire de-listing hearing, but am extending that call to the World Council of Churches. I publicly appeal to the latter organization for an immediate investigation into the circumstances around my firing without cause and my barring from ministry at the hands of both Comox-Nanaimo Presbytery and the BC Conference of the United Church of Canada. I request that this investigation probe the role of the United Church of B.C. in the illegal speculation in First Nations hereditary land in Ahousaht and its conduct in the Native Residential Schools in Ahousaht and Port Alberni.

I wish to thank all those who have supported me in this fight, and ask that their prayers be translated into



action to see justice prevail for those who cannot win it for themselves.

11.

I make this stand and appeal in accordance with my ordination vows as a minister of the Gospels and in the name of the justice and truth of God, and of her suffering people.

(Rev.) Kevin D. Annett

(Editor's note: Kevin was fired when he began ministering to the needs, both spiritual and material, of Native people in Port Alberni. He invited them into the congregation but they met with blatant racism. He gained their trust and heard bitter stories and complaints against the United Church's activities, both past (like the murder of children at the residential schools) and present (like the land speculation, among others). Kevin received the following letter from the church's other lawyer:

Dear Rev. Annett and Mrs. Annett:

March 7, 1997.

I write on behalf of the United Church to demand that you cease and desist making public statements (either verbally, in print or electronic media) which contain misleading and erroneous statements about the United Church, its officers, officials or counsel. Further erroneous, unfair or misleading statements made in regard to the following groups or people will be considered grounds for commencing legal action against you. Specifically you are required to cease and desist making public statements against:

The British Columbia Conference of the United Church of Canada, its officers and counsel;  
Comox-Nanaimo Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, its officers and counsel;  
St. Andrews Church, Port Alberni, its ministers, officers, or individual members of the congregation.

Yours truly,  
G.R. Schmitt, Q.C.

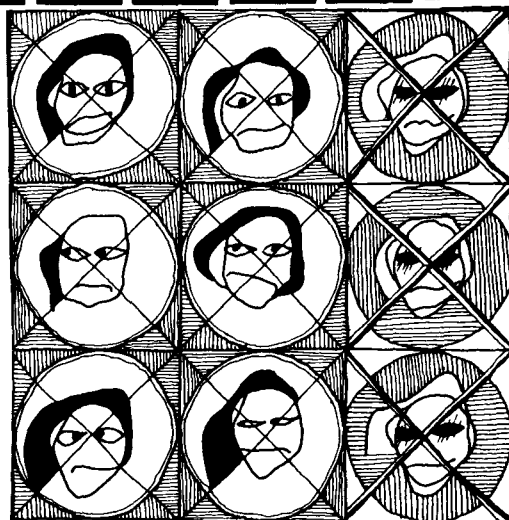
Kevin's response: "The hearing isn't even over, but they know that the press will question me when they go public. I've said nothing that isn't true and provable. They're trying to shut me up before I say anything."

PUBLIC MEETING AT UBC TO FOCUS SUPPORT. CALL 665-2289 FOR INFO.

**Those that take the most  
from the table, teach  
contentment.  
Those for whom the taxes  
are taken, demand  
sacrifice.  
Those who eat their fill,  
speak to the hungry.  
Those who lead the country  
into the abyss, call ruling  
difficult**

**for ordinary folk.**

Bertolt Brecht



N O R M A L

deviant

# NO! TO APEC LAUNCH

NETWORK OPPOSED TO ANTI-PEOPLE ECONOMIC CONTROL ...of our 1997 campaign against APEC!

*People's Conference Against  
Imperialist Globalization —  
Continuing the Resistance!*



- theatre & music
- discussion panel\press conference
- community "speakout"!
- questions & strategizing

## COME SPEAK OUT ABOUT APEC!

Between now and November of this year, the federal government and the corporate elite will continuously feed you information about the upcoming **APEC Leaders Summit** in November. They will try to convince you to support APEC and its program for complete free trade in the Asia Pacific.

On Thursday, March 20 at the Kalayaan Centre, the **NO! to APEC** coalition gives you a chance to **SPEAK OUT!** and say what you think about free trade. Come and talk about how NAFTA (another free trade deal) has contributed to your life and **SPEAK OUT** against APEC!

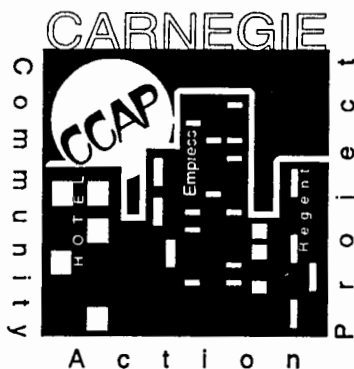
The public launch also includes theatre presentations and panel discussions and will take place between 10am and 1pm. The launch is part of the momentum the coalition is building for an anti-APEC conference in November 1997.

"The People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalization: the Struggle Continues" will expose and oppose the anti-people policies of APEC and will aim to build a basis of unity in the grassroots community for future campaigns against imperialism and its tools for globalization (ie. NAFTA, APEC).

To combat increasing media coverage about the lie that APEC means a better life for everyone, the coalition offers a NO! to APEC Newsletter and other resource materials for people interested in uncovering the truth about this deadly economic force. Also, monthly popular education workshops about APEC are held at the Kalayaan Centre every third Saturday of the month between 11am and 6pm, beginning April 19.

For more information, call the **NO! to APEC** coalition at **215-1103**.

imperialist globalization = marginalization



Newsletter of the Carnegie

## Community Action Project

March 15, 1997

**Want to get involved ? Call 689 - 0397 or come see us at Carnegie (2nd floor)**

### ***Will we ever get anti-conversion and anti-demolition by-laws for the hotels ??***

**R**ecent events in the Downtown Eastside, including the March 5 *Vancouver Sun* article detailing the frenzied real estate speculation surrounding the Woodward's development or the impending conversion of the Dominion Hotel to a tourist hotel, have many people asking why there exist no city by-laws preventing the loss of residential units through conversion or demolition.

For many years, individuals and organizations like DERA have been asking for demolition and conversion controls as a measure of defense against hotel owners finding more profitable uses for their buildings. The 1986 Expo evictions, the gradual increase in hotels converting to backpacker hostels or the Patricia Hotel now only accommodating tourists are prime examples of units lost through conversion in the neighbourhood.

(continued)

(continued from front page)

What is driving all this is rising land values in the Downtown Eastside. As the gap increases between revenue generated from rents in the residential hotels and the value of the land they sit on the greater the potential for hotel owners to convert or demolish. As gentrification evolves in the Downtown Eastside the gap between property values and existing uses (i.e. low-income housing) will continue to grow. This is why CCAP strongly encourages the city to endorse conversion and demolition controls in the Downtown Eastside.

For the City of Vancouver to enact anti-conversion and demolition by-laws it would require the permission of the provincial government. This is a time consuming process of a year or more. The Downtown Eastside is running out of time.

In any event, demolition and conversion controls need to be part of a greater plan at securing low-income housing. This, for example, could include using the shelter allowance of welfare as capital for building low-income housing, the purchasing of hotels for non-profits to operate, stricter standards of maintenance, one-for-one replacement, incentives to hotel owners to upgrade hotel units, a continued provincial social housing program and public-private-community partnerships for low-income housing. And there are likely more actions that could be taken.



# Sound the Alarm !!

———— *We've reached the half way point* ————  $\$325/\text{month}$   **50%**

What has been known by CCAP and many hotel residents, that monthly rents have been rising above \$325, has now been confirmed by a recently released city study. And the numbers are very worrisome.

The study, "*1996 Survey of Low-Income Housing in the Downtown Core*," written by the Housing Centre, City of Vancouver, reported that **just over half (52%) of the residential hotel rooms rented at or below \$325 per month in 1996.** In other words, nearly half of all the hotel units in the Downtown Eastside and Granville Street neighbourhoods rent above the welfare rate ! In comparison, the proportion of rooms rented at \$325 a month or less was 72 % in 1992 and 63% in 1994.

Of course, we all know what that means. More and more residents of the Downtown Eastside are forced to put some of their living allowance or greater than 65 % percent of their income (the affordability standard is 30% of total income) towards their housing.

What is also not too surprising is that those areas of the downtown core that have been the subject of rezoning and revitalization efforts by the city have also had the greatest decrease in the number or hotel rooms renting at or below \$325 per month. Just look at the Granville Street neighbourhood. Also known as the Downtown South, in 1992 the area mostly east of Granville Street was rezoned to high density residential. Since 1992 the area has had a drastic reduction from nearly 75% to only 25% of all the hotel units in 1996 renting at or below \$325 per month.

Victory Square, the most recent area the focus revitalization efforts, has experienced a similar drastic decrease with only 27% of hotel units at or below \$325 per month.

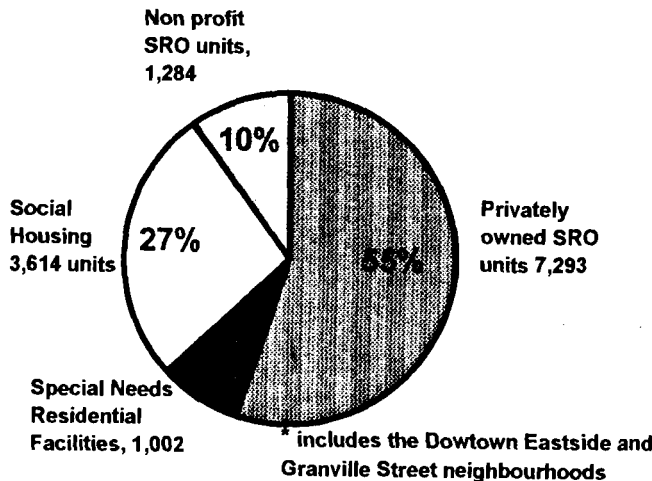
There are likely a combination of reasons behind rising rents. However, with the Downtown South and Victory Square areas experiencing the greatest reductions this would suggest that neighbourhood upscaling (i.e. gentrification) plays an important factor in rents rising. Coupled with hotel conversions and greater numbers of individuals faced with renting hotel rooms and the conditions are prime for hotel owners to raise rents. According to the study rent increases have been anywhere from \$10 to \$75 over \$325.



# Numbers on Housing in the Downtown Eastside

Here are the latest figures on low-income housing in the Downtown Eastside. The data is from the same study confirming rent increases in the Downtown Eastside and Granville Street Neighbourhoods. CCAP has modified the city data somewhat to identify the number of Single Room Occupant (SRO) units operated by non-profits societies. For example, the Portland, Abbott Mansion and Hampton hotels are operated by non-profits or the Old Continental operated by the City of Vancouver.

## Low-Income Housing in the Downtown Core\*, 1996



### the hotels (SROs)

Over the past five years, the SRO stock has decreased by just over 400 units. The largest loss was the conversion the of the Patricia Hotel (195 rooms) to strictly tourist use. Also Hartney Apartment (347 W Pender - 20 units) was converted to a backpackers hostel by the same owner/manager of the backpacker hostel on Main Street. Two other SRO buildings were destroyed by fire, the Walmer Rooms (67 E Hastings - 21 units) and 807 Homer (8 units).

Another two reopened, the Chelsea Inn and the Lucky Rooms, adding 45 units back to the stock. However, the Chelsea now rents monthly at the following rates: an internal room, no window \$350; rooms facing back alley \$375; rooms facing Hastings St. \$425. Wow, what a great deal ! NOT !

### social housing

Since 1991, social in the Downtown Core has increased by 647 units. Since 1994, the only new social housing project to open was the Jim Green Residence (67 units). However, there are a number of projects on the go. Take a look at the list upcoming projects.



**DOWNTOWN STD CLINIC - 219 Main; Monday - Friday, 10a.m. - 6p.m.**  
**EASTSIDE NEEDLE EXCHANGE - 221 Main; 9a.m. - 8p.m. everyday**  
**YOUTH Needle Exchange Van - on the street every night, 6p.m. -**  
**ACTIVITIES 2a.m. (except Mondays, 6p.m. - midnight)**  
**SOCIETY 1997 DONATIONS**

Paula R. - \$25	Diane M. - \$15
Wm. B. - \$20	Lorne T. - \$20
Lillian H. - \$25	Mel L. - \$20
Joy T. - \$20	Sara D. - \$20
Frances - \$25	CEEDS - \$10
Charley B. - \$15	Susan S. - \$30
Libby D. - \$20	DEYAS - \$75
Guy M. - \$10	Brigid R. - \$10
Tom D. - \$10	Amy E. - \$10
Rene F. - \$30	Kay F. - \$5
Sam R. - \$20	Anonymous 67
Neil N. - \$13	Rick Y. - \$63
Sonya Sommers - \$100	
Census Employees - \$200	
Holden Hotel - \$5	LSS - \$1230
B.C. PLURA - \$1000	

## **Carnegie** **NEWSLETTER**

**THE NEWSLETTER IS A PUBLICATION OF THE  
 CARNEGIE COMMUNITY CENTRE ASSOCIATION**

**Articles represent the views of individual  
 contributors and not of the Association.**

**Submission Deadline  
 for the next issue:**

**27 March  
 Thursday**

## **NEED HELP?**

**The Downtown Eastside Residents' Association  
 can help you with:**

- \* any welfare problem**
- \* information on legal rights**
- \* disputes with landlords**
- \* unsafe living conditions**
- \* income tax**
- \* UIC problems**
- \* finding housing**
- \* opening a bank account**

**Come into the Dera office at 425 Carrall St. or  
 phone us at 682-0931.**

**DERA HAS BEEN SERVING  
 THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE  
 FOR 23 YEARS.**





## Long Live the Learning Centre

You've probably heard that some things are changing in the Carnegie Learning Centre - that the Vancouver School Board is pulling out its support on April 1.

What does this mean in terms of the Learning Centre's long-time program for community-based literacy for people of the Downtown Eastside? Well, let me make it clear - the Learning Centre was teaching adult literacy long before the school board came onto the scene, and it will continue to do so, no matter what.

Specifically, after April 1, the programs that are the heart of our approach to learning will carry on.

**\* the aboriginal program; \* the drop-in; \* the morning discussion group;**

**\*Sheila Baxter's writing group; \*the volunteer tutor program.**

As in every program in Carnegie, volunteers will be the indispensable element that makes it all happen, but there will also be staff in the Learning Centre to help coordinate all aspects.

The Carnegie Association has reached agreement with the East Vancouver Skills Connection and Human Resources Development Canada (formerly CEIC) to provide funding.. at first on a trial basis and then possibly for the long term. The adult education section of King Edward campus of the Vancouver Community College will also provide support.

We look on this as an opportunity to get away from the tyranny of statistics that has plagued us ever since the school board got involved. The school board insisted that every student be registered and documented so that it could get its money from the provincial government, but Carnegie doesn't work like that. It's more unstructured here - we're not going to turn away people just because they don't tell us where they live, or what grade they reached in school.

In this connection I would like to pay tribute to the heroic efforts of the four school board staff who have stuck with us through thick and thin - Sharon, Wendy, Brad and Claude. They tried their hardest to make the system work, and their commitment to the people of this community is very evident.

The next phase will be a difficult one, with a lot of questions to be answered. It will be a transition no matter what happens, so it will require the patience of everyone.

The school board has made a lot of money off this community through its financing formula with Victoria. It short-changed us by bringing in students from other neighbourhoods and even other municipalities for instruction right here in Carnegie, when our own needs - of local and low income people - were so great.

Students and other members of the community will be attending a school board meeting March 24 to let the Trustees and public know just how this sleight-of-hand occurred and what the consequences have been.

We are going to express in no uncertain terms that the Carnegie Learning Centre is a going concern, whether they like it or not.

By MUGGS SIGURGEIRSON



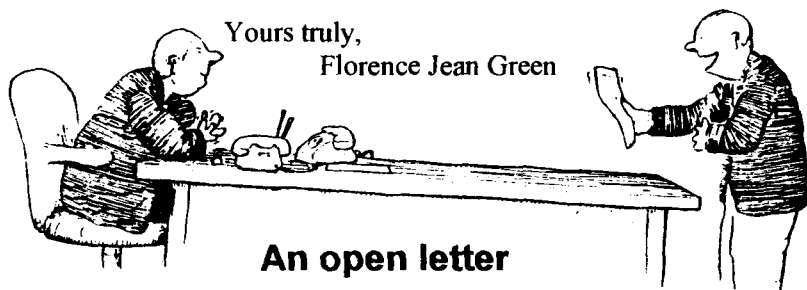
## The Story of The People On Vancouver Streets and the Homeless

I am writing this story about the Carnegie Centre.

I am a student in the learning centre and I am happy. I have been coming to the centre for 17 years and it has helped me to learn to read, my writing and math. The Carnegie centre is a good place to come to learn for the people in Vancouver on the east side which is the hard side of the streets. I have been on the street all my life and it's been hard on me to see the people sleeping on the streets and dying on the streets. I have seen babies on the streets and in the rooms, or the babies left in the rooms when the parents run away and leave them. The people in Vancouver who live on streets have no hope because the governments will not help them and that is when the Carnegie centre comes in handy for the people who come for help and to learn to read and write. The people who come to the learning centre do whatever it takes to start on the right road and it helps them. The women who come help out as well as the men.

Living on the street is hard but we make it day by day. The people, and especially young people, have a hard time to live and if the M.S.S. will not help them they look for help at the learning centre. Between the people and me, we are the people who have seen all the pain on the streets and it is not a nice place to be.

The government closed the doors on me and the people so I moved and moved... I was only a pony girl. The young have voices but no power to have them heard. We all have hearts and minds. The first nations native people are looking for help also and around the world native people are having a hard time. Native people are also on the streets. Young native children sleep on the streets, go to jail and die in hotel rooms. Native women are selling their bodies for money; young native women are having babies and running away, leaving the babies in the rooms... sometimes a baby dies. It isn't right for people to live like that and the government knows but won't do anything. They do not care for the people - if they did care they would help them.



Yours truly,  
Florence Jean Green

### An open letter

"...power, of which knowledge is the effect."

*Wordsworth*

Does power co-operate or does it's very concept negate the question's relevance because of the inherent victimization that must be ascribed to?

The Vancouver School Board has tried to justify its present attitude towards the Carnegie Learning Centre with jocular but less than amiable behaviour. It conveys, by design, that knowledge and its acquisition are totally irrelevant to the greed they display. In fact, they want us to believe that learning must take the proverbial back seat when the almighty dollar is considered. It seems that the VSB has reneged on its commitment to



our neighbourhood. They seem to have no sympathy for those whose experience of the classroom has been destructive! There is no sense of responsibility towards this community unless there is money to be made. Sadly, the profit motive remains in control.

This community mistakenly tried to partner with what we legitimately thought was a caring bureaucracy, a partnership that the VSB not only agreed to but avidly encouraged. They told us that they had no idea what was going on at Carnegie and, with wringing hands, exclaimed their dismay and sincere hopes for the future. It now seems that this proposal was only meant to stall for time. No partnership was ever intended and, in my opinion, the VSB actually *wanted* us to kick them out of Carnegie. At the very least they acted in bad faith.

Were we wrong to expect this educational bureaucracy to be honest about "economic mobility" in the Downtown Eastside? Are we naive to expect ongoing support for a creative and positive learning process for the downtown eastside community? Time and time again the women and men of this community have been treated like they are just another useless commodity in a social system with no room for its 'mistakes'. The Vancouver School Board can be proud of the fact that they too can now number themselves amongst the many who have abused and manipulated this community.

It seems that the VSB is so full of false pride that it thinks it can relax and allow its accountants to become masters of Vancouver's educational ship. These money managers arbitrarily choose the destiny of thousands of people in need of a decent educational experience. They keep trying to justify their self-interest (i.e. DE Education Centre) - something other than what our community has chosen for years in Carnegie's Learning Centre. People's dignity is deserved here yet community members are shunned by the VSB; the very same institution that once conjured up images of false authority, dishonesty, straps, violence and self-loathing for the disadvantaged is at it again.

Welcome to 1997. This must be the new order! One would almost believe that the VSB wanted this whole community to reject them. Does Alan MacLeod, chief administrator, want us to walk away accepting that the present situation is what he meant when he told Ken Harvey, Adult Ed. administrator, to "handle it"? Does Brian Graham, administrator of Adult Ed. in the Downtown Eastside (and the Gathering Place) represent any semblance of real partnership and/or consultation with this community? Does the fact that the community's will was rejected when we elected to hire someone with a strong literacy background and vision for the Centre for the position Graham was given - the community was unanimous in this; the VSB was unanimous in following orders (from Graham's friend Harvey?) to hire their yes-man.

One can only ask sarcastically, "What partnership was the VSB talking about?" Was it a partnership with the staff of the VSB? I don't think so. Was it a partnership with the volunteer tutors? It doesn't look like it. Was it even a partnership with Carnegie's Director or the Board of the Association? ...not if you read the minutes. Well, was it a partnership with those members of the VSB staff who are so adept at finding more official students to register? Holy lessons, Batman, could this be it?!!

The poor and the injured have always been ignored or taken advantage of. Right now the bureaucrats at the VSB think it's more important to earn big dollars from English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs than



it is to play the role of educator and help the illiterate in the Downtown Eastside.

Does Mr. Harvey care if we believe that he runs the VSB like a private business? I was always (perhaps incorrectly) under the impression that public funds were used to pay people like Harvey.. that public consultation in the form of school boards, parents, Volunteers, PTA's, community centres, educational theorists, politicians, psychologists, sociologists, students and the rest of the general public were encouraged to speak up and find progressive solutions for our future. I had no idea that that process of consultation had been replaced by a secret general ledger.

Illiterate people have been condemned, by a bureaucracy called the Vancouver School Board, to stay marginalized, to fail and be without hope, because this VSB receives money from the Provincial government for every student registered in their phony programming called ESL. If this is what Harvey and his assistants want - more money - then perhaps they should go into banking or insurance or stocks and stop leeching off the downtown eastside. I mean, has all the trouble of the last 3 years been about funding or about education?

The upper echelon of the VSB has yet to find time between their Wizard of Oz meetings and their fitness centres to actually listen to the students they claim to care so much about. It's obvious that even within the VSB, communication problems are enormous. Instead of meaningful dialogue we have to watch irresponsible mechanisms designed to shut out input become more and more pervasive. Paperwork gets done but staff go on stress leave. Criticism voiced by a board member or committee chair is twisted and perverted until it resembles something akin to treason. The truth stays hidden within the closed and petty minds of hypocrites who would rather use one-sided stories to keep their status and agendas.

It is incredible to me that an organization as large and important to the Province as the Vancouver School Board could, at the same time, be so pessimistic and unable to even recognize the negative educational experiences of many residents of the downtown eastside. It's also embarrassing and disgusting to hear VSB staff at all levels trundle out stereotypical attitudes about "the disabled" or "the learning impaired". We're not here to categorize students' abilities for our own aggrandizement! We are here to help people find trust and



confidence in themselves.. to realize that learning can be a positive and self-rewarding experience for everyone - staff, students and volunteers. On the down-side the VSB is reduced to problem-solving by avoidance - by accusing others of petty little crimes and by acting cowardly, day after day. One can only wonder why so few are paid so much to be so incompetent... to be completely unable to discuss or manage educational philosophies. So few are so sure of what you should do when they can't or won't do it themselves

Some employed people are more than willing to use and abuse the community to justify their paycheques. Some are making \$40-\$50 an hour off the illiterate and now, by pretending to teach ESL as well, it allows them to maintain this with no community consultation. These same people cried to the School Board during contract negotiations that the downtown eastside was so unique, so different, so special...

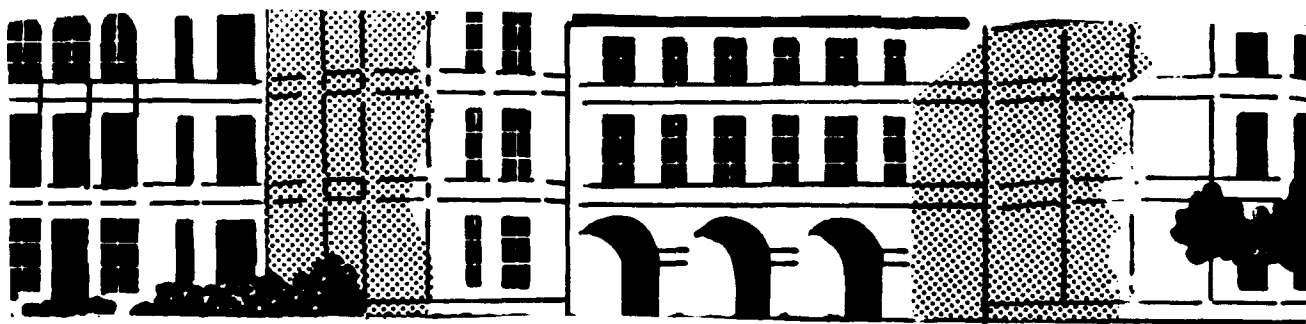
The Downtown Eastside is a very special neighbourhood of sharing and hard work. It is the most generous and giving community I have ever experienced. What people share is not the material wealth of capital or class.. it is the love and poetry of hope. This community has inherited a callous school board, alcohol and

drug addictions, prostitution, pawnshops and, worst of all, condescending sneers from people who don't live here but do make a living from other people's misery. The only thing left is the generous blessings everyone is still able to give one another - the poetry of hope and the gift of true knowledge. To me, to the people of this community, literacy is more than pieces of paper for the province... it's people.

I think the VSB and its employees should be ashamed of themselves for their comments and actions towards the Carnegie Learning Centre and its volunteers. If the VSB believes that by leaving the building at 401 Main they can continue their negative behaviour in this community.. they are in for a big surprise!

LEIGH DONOHUE

Chair, Carnegie Education Committee



**Public Meeting**  
**"An Information Exchange"**

with

*Mt. Pleasant MLA*

**Jenny Kwan**

and

*People living and working*

*in the*

*Downtown Eastside/Strathcona*

*Communities*

at

Jenny Pentland Place

540 East Hastings St.

March 19th 1997

6 pm to 8 pm

Do you have concerns about your community?

Ask questions, discuss issues

Speak your mind

*Find out what the Government can do for you*

*This is an annual meeting sponsored by the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona Coalition.*

**公眾會議**

這是所有在市東區及  
士達孔拿區居住或工作的人士  
和省議員 關慧貞小姐  
一個意見交流的好機會

地點: 潘蘭大廈 (喜士定東街 540 號)

時間: 一九九七年三月十九日  
晚上六時至八時

如果您關心您居住的地區，  
請出席這晚的聚會，  
將您心中的問題提出，和大家一起討論。

這項活動是由市東區及士達孔拿區聯合會為大家提供的



## Suicide: The Ultimate Risk

*To be or not to be...* This is the perennial question for an ever increasing number of people living in this perilous age. More and more people wake up each morning wondering if this game of life is worth playing, and statistics show that a greater number are deciding that it is not.

Recently I did some studies on suicide and life after death; many case histories involved people who seemed not to have a very strong spiritual or religious dimension to their lives. They seriously believed that death would be a final, absolute escape from their problems for them, and that all that'd be left was eternal dreamless sleep. Maybe this is why suicide is called "the easy way out".

In developing or discussing my ideas about suicide, I decided to concentrate and meditate on the metaphysical or spiritual aspects of the issue.

I looked into several books searching for answers and found various beliefs:

- a) souls of suicides survive bodily destruction, but then roam in the astral plane of existence, visiting grieving friends and relatives to apologize;
- b) suicides are re-born to finish what they had started - they do not escape their problems but



increase them;

c) the soul is annihilated in a 'Lake of Fire' or suffers eternal agony in some form of 'hell'.

When these and other possible consequences of suicide are considered, one must ask: Is it really worth the risk? Would it be like trading in a headache for a few weeks on the rack?

If you have severe problems and are trying to free yourself from the pain & suffering in your life then please don't consider suicide to be a safe solution or viable option. If any of these beliefs are even close to the truth it makes no sense at all to ignore everything and go right ahead with plans for self-destruction. If you really believe that God and the afterlife are just fragments of humanity's imagination and aren't willing to even admit the possibility of such then...

If, on the other hand, you are willing to believe in the possibility that life has a higher spiritual meaning and purpose, then it's in your best interests to deal with your problems and keep yourself alive.

I believe we owe it to ourselves to make every effort to improve ourselves, to fight the good fight - that we will eventually be rewarded for our patience, perseverance, forgiveness and forbearance.

By RICHARD HANDY

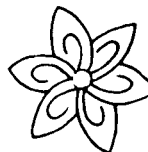
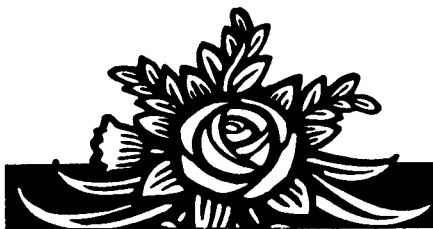
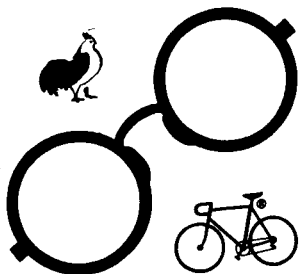


### I'd Pick More Daisies

If I had my life to live over again, I'd try to make more mistakes next time. I would relax. I would limber up. I would be sillier than I have been this trip. I know of a very few things I would take seriously. I would take more trips. I would climb more mountains, swim more rivers and watch more sunsets. I would do more walking and looking. I would eat more ice cream and less beans. I would have more actual troubles and fewer imaginary ones. You see, I am one of those people who lives prophylactically and sensibly and sanely hour after hour, day after day. Oh, I've had my moments; and if I had it to do over again, I'd have more of them. In fact, I'd try to have nothing else. Just moments, one after another instead of living so many years ahead each day. I have been one of those people who never go anywhere without a thermometer, a hot water bottle, a gargle, a raincoat, an aspirin, and a parachute. If I had to do it over again, I would go places, do things and travel lighter than I have.

If I had my life to live over again, I would start bare-footed earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the fall. I would play hookey more, I wouldn't make much good grades except by accident. I would ride on more merry-go-rounds. I would pick more daisies.

Nadine Stair, age 85.





**Cecilia Battersby** made a donation of \$10 to the Carnegie Seniors. She said a big thank you for the help of first floor staff in her search for a good place to live. Thank you, Cecilia.

## The Downtown Eastside Is ...

I am a senior in my late 60's. It is pure hell to get the things I need in Vancouver's downtown area. I want to take the bus from the Women's Centre but I can't. My painful, stiff old legs cannot manage the walk to the bus stop up the hill at Cordova and Main. I have to rest several times as I go back to the stop at the rear of the Army & Navy store.

It is pure hell going around those construction sites, where the builders make it extremely difficult for people in the area. They seem to do it on purpose. The Women's Centre isn't the only place that's hard to reach or exit from by bus, but I go there for meals. I'll have to give up because no one cares about transportation in the area. Thank goodness it's moving soon, so I'll just have to wait for them to re-open in the new place before I can go for meals again. A friend of mine had her purse snatched near the Women's Centre and it scared her so much she stopped going too.

I go to the Carnegie Centre, where they are so concerned about funding right now. I worry that I may not be able to get away from the city anymore on seniors' or volunteers' trips. They are great for my morale.

Every time I go to Carnegie I worry about my safety on the corner outside. I saw a guy the other day check a needle then shoot up right on the corner of Main&Hastings in plain view, then urinate against Carnegie's outer wall. A young family (father, mother and little girl) were there with me just waiting for a bus. The father had to turn his daughter's face away to shelter her from the scene. Incredible! And it goes on all the time.

Dope dealing is so common in the area that I've an idea who the sellers are, beyond the ones who shout their wares. I see people searching for hidden packages and finding them. I guess the dealers

(I ask that the woman requesting this be reprinted last issue forgive my forgetfulness. Editor)

**The Neighbourhood Safety Office**, at 12 East Hastings, is putting together a list of girls who are missing.

If you have any friends or relatives who worked the streets or hung around and are missing, please contact Deborah Mearns or Dave Dickson at **687-1772** (phone) or **687-1776** (fax).

Please - this is important that we can compile a list and help find these girls and women so we can help them get home. Thank you.



and buyers have some kind of arrangement. Surely more police protection, police on foot patrol, is needed, both for people living in the area and for those waiting for buses.

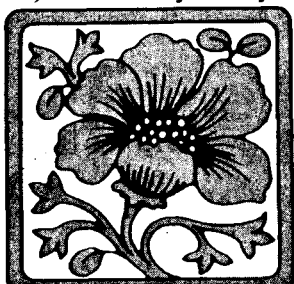
Hotel owners in the area seem to want to convert to condos or just charge higher rent to tourists and not except long-term tenants. This is a hard thing to deal with, this result of somebody's planning.

By DORA SANDERS

## Sublime Funeral

I don't know why I spontaneously pulled my mountain bike up to the curb at the front of a long row of hungry men in front of a downtown eastside drop-in centre three years ago, and asked a chubby man with a broom if he needed any help. Perhaps it's because I wanted to feel needed, or I wanted to make my own life more meaningful, or some other equally selfish reason. And I don't know why I keep going back. But I do know that I've taken much more than I could ever repay.

Last year we had a funeral in St. Paul's (the small chapel between the drop-in centre and the sandwich line) for a twenty-four-year-old



prostitute who had overdosed on heroin in her Gastown hotel room.

The chapel was nearly full, and very quiet. There were a couple of anonymously donated fresh flower arrangements in front of the cheap, closed coffin. Most of the congregation were other prostitutes dressed in their working clothes, and a few pimps. Several women apologized to Brother Tim for having nothing black to wear, except lingerie and leather mini-skirts.

Father Mel performed the sacrament, and the funeral service seemed very long to me, when really it must have been rather short since there were not many expressions of grief. Father Mel described to us in his sermon a woman who was thoughtful, patient, forbearing. Fictional, in other words, since he had never actually met her, and none of her friends had much specific information to offer except that she might have been born in Montreal, and she liked to get high. The real woman, whoever she had been, had suffered and now was dead. That was all that really mattered, and was all Father Mel should have said, I felt. But



everyone else seemed to enjoy the wordy sermon.

When the service was over Brother Tim served some doughnuts and coffee donated by the Sisters, and many of the working girls told Father Mel that when their time came, they hoped to receive such a lovely eulogy. "A nice funeral is perhaps the last and only thing human beings can give each other," replied Father Mel.

One of the mingling women asked Brother Tim, "Why is the coffin closed? She OD'd, didn't she? She wasn't shot in the face or nothing, was she?"

"I never asked how she died," he said. "That's how it arrived. You can open it if you like."

When she asked to borrow a knife to cut the plastic seal, three vicious-looking switchblades were immediately handed up to the altar.

"Why didn't they put any make-up on her?" someone said when the casket was opened.

"They didn't even comb her hair," said another.

As I gazed down upon the small, frail-looking body, I realized what they meant. No effort had been made to prepare her for viewing. The woman in the coffin just looked cold and dead with not even the slightest residual impression of what her power had, or could have, been. It was hard to believe that she had ever given anyone in this world either joy or pain.

But then something strange happened: One by one, the roomful of working girls began to gather around the coffin and open up their small purses upon the corpse. They began to apply their own make-up onto the dead woman's face, and braided her hair with ribbons from their own. And slowly, as they gossiped and worked, the corpse was transformed before us. Not because the cosmetics made

her look better but because the simple, loving attention of the other women made us all see for the first time that the dead prostitute had really mattered, and her short life had been significant.

And more than anything I have ever witnessed during my time as a volunteer, that event changed me and left me forever impressed by the human life force that we all possess. A force which, amazingly, keeps pressing back against the dismal barriers, no matter what.

Some of the women then began to softly sing "Heartbreak Hotel" while they worked, and I could not imagine a more appropriate hymn for that sublime funeral.

By Bart Campbell

*(Editor's note: The title of this was changed. Bart wrote a thing last summer, aired over 5 days on CBC Radio, in which he constantly referred to the neighbourhood as "skid row". You'd think by now he'd have learned where he is.)*



There was once a murderer and a thief waiting in hell to be judged. The Buddha, in compassion, decided to give the man as much merit as possible so he looked for any kind deeds he may have done.

The Buddha found that the man, in a past life, had refrained from killing a spider. He had one of the spiders in Paradise drop the man a spider web rope so he could climb his way there.

The man started climbing and after quite a long time he looked down and saw that all the sentient beings had grabbed onto the rope and were also climbing up after him. In a panic he said, "Get off! Get away! This is mine!!" ...and the line snapped. He fell back to where he'd started.

The moral of the story is: "A spider's web of compassion is strong enough to hold all beings but nothing can support the ego or the self."

The story ends by saying It is not the business of the Lotus Blossoms what has happened.

Submitted by Dean Ko

This issue has a lot of people using their anger in as positive a way as possible. There is incredible control being displayed, so far, to not expose the continuous actions taken by the school board bureaucrats and highly-paid administrators, but this exposure is, to my mind, part of taking the High Road.

- VSB got \$900,000 a year for running adult ed. here, but only spent \$600,000. They milked us and this community as a cash cow for \$300,000 a year
- the four staff are getting almost no outside support as other VSB employees fear for their jobs
- other adult learning centres are silent, just glad that the cuts happened here and not to them
- the union will only help the staff within the narrow confines of their contract - the entire core issue of being treated like dirt or personal commitment to this community: "nothing we can do"
- the total non-support or even consideration from their supervisor, Brian Graham.
- the sleazy scam whereby both Graham and Harvey learned of the Carnegie Association and

Lee Weinstein applying for funding from a federal literacy initiative and having the VSB apply for exactly the same money. The VSB didn't get it because an independent educational institute had to partner with them and every one in the city refused. Harvey is well known as a \_\_\_\_\_.

- the powerful presentation at the VSB meeting by parents and teachers from MacDonald School was answered like it was a report on cleaning supplies. One of the NPA idiots tried to blow them off but a young mother got to the mike and yelled in his face - "You asshole!"

- this says nothing of the strain, stress, frustration,

## Maybe I Won't Come This Way Again

Morning sun is a rare pleasure  
which calls me out  
to walk west on Pender Street to Clark,  
then north to Powell  
and west to the fish dock  
past the B.C. Sugar Refinery.  
Being Sunday  
the Marine View Coffee Shop is closed  
but it's closed forever now -  
the Port of Vancouver has other plans.  
Workers don't know these other plans  
made by strangers seen only through glass,  
and darkly.

Seagulls swirl and cry in the bright sun  
over the Lions Gate Fisheries,  
over the Marine View Coffee Shop,  
closed forever.

Maybe I won't come this way again.

Fishing boats rock in the slick water.  
Miss Amy, Polaris, New Venture -  
The goddess, the star, and the journey  
are in these names,  
and the boats, like Zen temples,  
point to the door at the bottom of the garden  
which opens slowly.

The Lions glisten with new snow,  
a small cloud touches Mount Seymour,  
the harbour sleeps in golden light.  
Where will the boats go when the dock is closed?

anger, anxiety, fear, loss and confusion that staff and tutors and students have been put through because of the stupidity and enlightened self-interest of the large number of highly-overpaid bureaucrats only protecting their pointlessness.

As Dean Ko so aptly puts it:

"The way these Philistines think, you can only get certain jobs if you have been to one of the right schools; if you fail and have to be fired, then someone else from one of the right schools takes over and so it continues. *This may go unnoticed when things are prospering, but becomes obvious in times of disaster or unprosperity.*"

Come out on March 24. (Bring rotten eggs.)

PAULR TAYLOR



The ice plant is already closed, and  
it won't re-open --- ever.

"Try BC Ice and Cold Storage,"  
a sign says brightly.

Under the sign there's a newspaper cartoon  
on a grimmer note,

a prophecy,  
a cry for help,  
a picture of some people in a cage  
at the zoo;

we know it's a zoo,  
and in the next cage is a giraffe,  
we can see his long neck and small head.  
Visitors are watching the people in the cage,  
and a sign on the cage door reads  
"Riff Raff."

One of the ice plant workers has drawn an arrow  
to the caged people,  
and written in pencil beneath the cartoon,  
"After the ice plant closes."

Oh, my brother, my sister,  
Maybe I won't come this way again.

*Sandy Cameron*