

FREE - donations accepted.

Carnegie

NEWSLETTER



SEPTEMBER 15, 1997.

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



cretin / kret-n / n.

1. A kind of idiot.
2. A stupid, vulgar, insensitive person.

Some time ago the man trying to act like a mayor, Philip Owen, was referred to in this newsletter as being at his "cretinous best" on a radio program.

This remark got under his extremely thin skin - and his executive secretary apparently started steaming orders to get the information on housing necessary to straighten us all out.

I thought Owen was either sadly misinformed or dense as he backed up the hallucination that he and/or the City of Vancouver had built over 13,000 units of social housing in the Downtown Eastside! He included every room in every cockroach hotel along both Hastings and Granville and even threw in some of the beds at hostels and detoxes for good measure.

I was wrong on one count - he believed this!
 Okay. He'd lied for several years about access to Crab Park and then stabbed us in the back. He's been quite up front about Kassem Aghtai, the owner of Woodward's (for now) having the right to do as he wants - in line with the NPA city council wanting to add 2500 condos to the Victory Square 'neighbourhood' with "no impact."

Back to *cretin*. Muggs Sigurgeirson, the President of the Carnegie Association, was on national CBC Radio talking about the garbage strike. She laid out the points quite well - that the West End is suffering the occasional overflowing trashcan while East Van is mired in mounds of festering garbage, rats, smell, needles, garbage fires and serious health hazards. She also pointed out that Owen is passing the buck, trying to blame the provincial NDP government for any and every negative impact of the strike. It's a fact that the City is saving millions of dollars by not resolving this, by not bargaining in good faith or even talking with the union. Muggs talked for about 10 minutes but in a monologue - Owen came on and talked after Muggs finished.

He didn't admit to anything -

- that he's doing what his financiers want to both save millions and make the outside workers suffer;
- that he doesn't give a shit about the Downtown Eastside or people in general who don't vote



for him or (since he's going to "retire" from politics after this term) the NPA/big money;

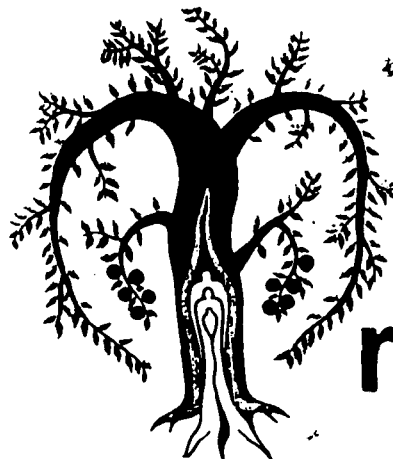
- that he's more interested in getting a cushy job with some corporation in a couple of years; ...and said this:

"Muggs Sigurgeirson is a supporter of the NDP government so she should get them and the union to straighten this strike out." Seriously.

And the word *cretin* came immediately to mind - again. Owen is the Mayor. He's not supposed to practice being stupid publicly, but does so at many turns. He won't admit that he's screwed up this whole garbage thing, that people in our community are getting ill and suffering from his vulgar and insensitive character, or that anything is his responsibility. If it wasn't for the deepening danger of this situation he could just be written off as a pathetic, dismal excuse.

Call the media.. write letters to the editors of the *Sun* and *Province*.. call the union and call Shitty Hall.. if you'd rather do something direct, get a few dozen bags of garbage and spread them all over Owen's front door.


By PAULR TAYLOR




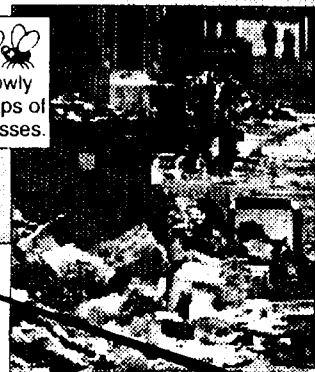
read


— RELAX & ENJOY.—




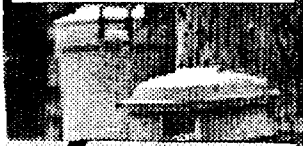
Davie and Bute 
It's higher class, designer garbage, but the smell on the street is straight off the rack.


Hastings and Main 
The horror. The horror. The strike's heart of darkness beats slowly here, buried deep amid waist deep heaps of sludge, needle packages and rat carcasses.





Home Depot 
Yikes! They've started bulldozing the trash here to keep it in line. But the heap keeps growing.


Point Grey (west) 
A few bags (neatly packed and piled of course) in the alleys. And why is someone throwing away a hummingbird feeder?



Vine and 4th 
A little bit of garbage in the bins, but nothing over the top. Residents appear to have been tackling the problem themselves.

Dunbar and 20th 
The trash is starting to pile up again, overflowing on a couple of corners. And some kind soul has put plastic buckets on the street.

Commercial and Charles 
Now appearing at The Fringe, theatre of the grotesque. It may be politically correct garbage, but it's getting bigger and smellier all the same.

Granville and 41st 
It's limited to one corner, one bus stop, but the fallout is revolting. Corn cobs. A wet, mangled sock. Cigarette packs. Fast food containers.

Cornwall and Yew (No flies)
Outside Starbucks and not a thing on the ground. Where's the trash?

Yew and 41st (No flies)
Strike? Garbage? Where?



By their smell you shall know them.

Of all the neighborhoods in Vancouver, the Downtown Eastside is suffering the most from the current civic labour/management dispute. The poorest and most vulnerable people in the city are being held to ransom in disgraceful, nauseating conditions - a daily dose of rotting garbage, rats, maggots and unbearable stench.

The garbage is piling up, and nobody seems to care. If this happened on the west side, they'd have called out the militia by now to clean it up.

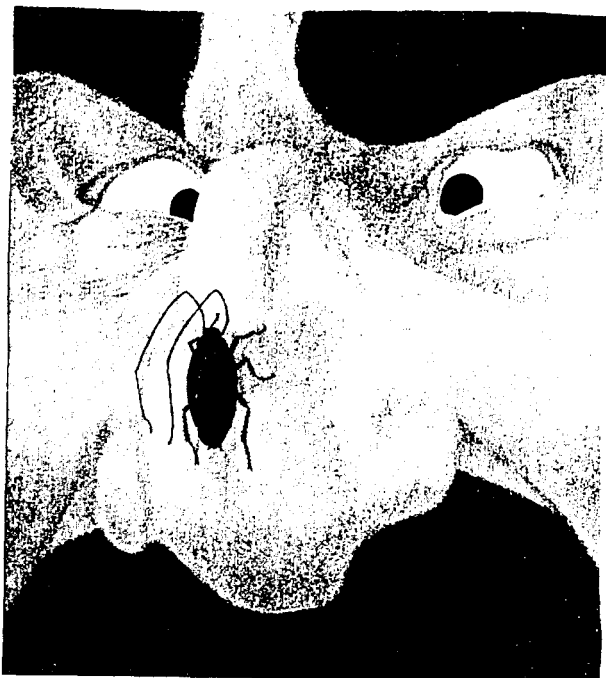
Mayor Philip Owen is serene. He says the city is holding up well under the strike. Of course, he doesn't have to wade daily through the filth on our streets and lanes.

The union, CUPE 1004, is philosophical. After all, they say, that's what a strike is supposed to do - cause hardship.

It's true the rest of the city isn't doing that badly. If you live in a West End apartment, your garbage is picked up by private companies. If you have a nice single-family home, you can store the bags in your garage or basement, or pay a guy with a pickup truck a few bucks to cart it to Coquitlam. But the Downtown Eastside has a high concentration of city agencies which depend on the city garbage removal service. And people living in hotel rooms just don't have the luxury of storing garbage until a better day.

Fire fighters have been putting out five garbage blazes a day in the neighbourhood. A constable slipped on garbage and broke a wrist last week. The pile of garbage was almost up to the second floor in Carnegie. The ventilation had to be shut off or the people in the library would have asphyxiated. The city fire marshal then declared the dump a fire hazard.

Finally, after many pleas, a crew of non-union city managers cleared the garbage away on Sept. 12, and cleaned up the lane running between Hastings and Pender as far as Carrall St. But there is no guarantee when - if ever - they will be back, or



what will happen in the rest of the neighborhood.

The solution is clear. This neighbourhood has to be declared an exception, and both sides agree it should be kept clean by union workers. In the last civic strike, the inside workers recognized that vital services are in this area - they didn't picket Carnegie or the Evelyne Saller centre. If outside workers did the same, it would be a much needed public relations boost for them. Lord knows they could use one. But the union won't even answer Carnegie's phone calls and the mayor keeps passing the buck.

The strike won't be decided in the Downtown Eastside. All that's happening here is needless suffering.

Robert Gabriel

A Celebration of Local Writing



read



WHO: Readers and writers from the Downtown Eastside. All are welcome to attend and participate.

WHAT: 2pm-4pm Readers and writers will be reading from their own and others work\ at an open mike.

4-4:20pm Scenes from "50 Years Credit" - a new play by Oskiniko Larry Loyie (author of Ora Pro Nobis : Pray For Us).

4:30-5pm Food! Coffee, juice, cold cuts, veggies, dip, fruit, bread, cake ...!!!

WHEN: *Friday, September 19*, 2pm - 5pm.

WHERE: Carnegie Centre Theatre.

WHY? September 8th is International Literacy Day. Every year the Vancouver Public Library and the Carnegie Learning Centre like to have some kind of an event at Carnegie in September to celebrate!

Contacts: *Sarah* Evans (Learning Centre) 665-3013

Andrew Martin (Carnegie Reading Room) 665-3015



binner@vcn.bc.ca
 mcbinner@hotmail.com
 Fax: 684-8442

In The Dumpster

Greetings fellow bidders & bidderettes,

Summer's almost gone but the garbage strike remains. As most of you know, there was a bin put on fire at the rear of Jimmy's Discount on Sept. 9. Upstairs there is a Chinese Society club. In the evening there are sometimes elderly people there. Someone could be killed. Maybe that's what Shitty Hall is waiting for. Maybe they get a kickback from the funeral parlours.

Gary Groove is not well enough to do his column. It seems he caught a breathing disorder from the garbage he breathed in. Trashhopper says he's going to stay in Amsterdam until the strike is over. He says he'd rather breathe in the daffodils there.. but insists he doesn't inhale.

Now for the Ken Report:

Welcome back Ken! It seems once again as I go into United We Can, everyone is too busy working to stop and chat. Anyway, Ken's looking well rested after his trip.

May The Bins Be With You. - and hey! let's be careful out there.

By MR. McBINNER

The word "charity" was obviously present & presented by the gamblers, who said that charity was to receive the money turned over to government by those who run gambling games in the province.

The dictionary, which is supposed to be the last word on language, defines "charity":

- Love of fellow men; kindness; affection; leniency in judging others.
- Beneficence; liberality to those in need or distress; alms-giving; trust for advancement of education etc.; an institution for helping those in need.. help so given.

Nowhere does it say "proceeds from gambling games transferred to government & used for social expenses". Nor does it say anything else regarding gambling.

Since the English dictionary is used to establish the legal meaning in court for all language usage, it should also be applied to all government usage of words. Since it is not, we see before our eyes the changing of our language into meaningless crap.

TORA



Endangered Species

Hérons built twenty-five nests
in three fir trees
close to the aquarium
at Stanley Park -
a strange place to build
a heron colony,
but not so strange
when you remember
that herons are fast losing
their homelands.

Jean and I
went to see the herons
in early spring, 1997,
and the first thing we noticed
was an eagle
sitting in one of the nests.

A few weeks later
we returned to the colony,
and saw herons
on almost every nest.
We also noticed
many broken eggs
at the bottom
of the three trees.
We didn't know
how the eggs had fallen
from the nests,
and neither did the park officials
whom we phoned.

The purpose
of our third visit
was to see
the baby herons,
but the colony
had been abandoned -
not one heron to be seen.



A park worker told us
that eagles had attacked
the young herons, forcing
the adults to move.
He also cleared up the mystery
of the broken eggs,
saying that eagles
had been stealing them.
One generation of herons
was eliminated at this place -
an endangered species indeed.

Yet eagles are
an endangered species as well.
Concrete and steel
cover the earth,
taking Nature's place.
Where will Her creatures live
in a man-made world?

The Downtown Eastside,
Vancouver's oldest neighbourhood,
is under siege
as those with much
push out those with little.
Like the herons
and the eagles,
the residents of this community
are becoming homeless.
Not only are homes
destroyed with gentrification:
A circle of friends is destroyed,
a neighbourhood,
a small world in itself,
a world that people
who are dispossessed
cannot hope to rebuild.
Citizens become refugees
in their own land.
We, too, are an endangered species.

Sandy Cameron

In the Sept. 1 *Carnegie Newsletter*, Muggs Sigeirson had her name on an article about small suites that I'd like to respond to. Throughout the article the writer referred to the current proposal at 122 W. Hastings as being sponsored by "another developer", "another group", and that the project would be turned over to a "community group".

DERA is that sponsor group. We were approached by a realtor to flesh out an idea for this property; we then called the meeting to inform residents about what we were working on and to ask for input from interested community members. We're confident that our reputation in this neighbourhood is somewhat better than that of Brad Holme and his cohorts, with whom our name was unfortunately linked in this article. We are and always have been completely up front about this or any other idea we may promote and always will be.

What we are trying to tell people, whether this project goes ahead in some form or not at all, is that there are massive forces of change sweeping through our neighbourhood and most of them are being generated by outside sources. We, as a community, can stand by and watch them consume us, or we can work creatively to be innovative and harness that energy to benefit our own objectives.

The new projects mentioned - The New Portland, Bruce Eriksen Place, VanCity Place - are only possible with a substantial investment of subsidy dollars from governments. Taken together, these sites will provide fewer than 200 units (85 or so of which are replacement units - the Portland - and don't actually create more housing). We are losing SRO rooms to conversion (i.e. backpacker hostels, tourist suites, charged by the DAY) at a staggering pace and legislation, if implemented at all by the City of Vancouver, will only "regulate" that process. One-for-one replacement is promoted as a safety valve to deter hotel owners from converting. If an owner of an SRO hotel with 150-175 square foot rooms converts to tourist use, does anyone seriously think this city council will insist on replacement units being 300 sq. ft.?

DERA is not content to simply maintain and sta-

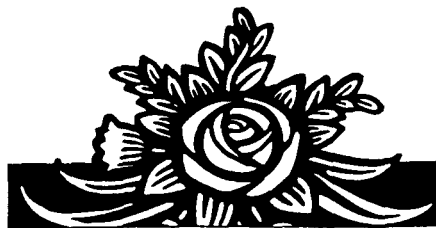
bilize the current rental market for singles' units in this neighbourhood. We are determined to find new ways to steadily increase the housing stock here; to make sure that low-income housing is not a sunset industry in the Downtown Eastside. There are fewer than 10,000 long-term residents living here now and we are genuinely at risk of extinction when all of the mega-developments get built over the next ten years. (Witness what has already started on Granville with mass evictions.)

There is a time to assess, to analyze, and to lobby: senior governments, all of which we have done and will continue to do. But if we don't develop community built, self-sustaining housing that our residents can control - and yes, even own - we will ultimately be swept aside like so much construction rubble.

As Muggs says, do start sharpening your pencils, but be prepared to sharpen every skill you never thought you had as well to attack this onslaught. We can rebuild this community our own way in so many different ways if we give ourselves credit for being able to stay one step ahead of the gentrifiers, who keep yowling with their mass hallucination about this being an "urban wilderness".

We can win, and we can do it by beating them at their own game: invest, consolidate, re-invest. The funding dollars required to trigger redevelopment are minuscule compared to traditional government subsidies. Our job is to get that money and set it to work in our community - working for us. We think it can be done and we're determined to keep trying. Our community deserves better than it's getting.

Ian MacRae, President,
Downtown Eastside Residents' Association



LET HER DANCE

Take her hand and lead her
 Through every path you take her
 Let her know your love for her
 Is stronger than the evening or
 The morning light that shines through
 Open windows and catches all
 Of the beauty that she is

Smile at her for nothing
 Just to let her know you think of her
 Make it always easy as you celebrate
 Another day of life and all the lessons
 That you wander through together
 And fall apart

And always let her dance
 Let her always be the woman that she needs to be
 And if she needs to be alone now let her go away
 Knowing she'll be with you another day
 Always let her dance
 Let her know that you'd never hold her too tight
 And let her go if she feels she needs a little time
 Always let her dance

Listen to her saying
 That she needs to have some time alone
 Hold her as she's crying
 And let her know that it's you who's dying
 When she hurts - for in your eyes she sees
 the one who understands her every want and need

And so you wait for her and wonder
 If every night could be this lonely
 For you know that every second
 You'll be thinkiing of her only
 But the time passes quickly and she's home again
 And she'll tell you she's never going to go again

Phillip Sandifer



internal combustion

in the back lane
 sparks flash on my name
 then burst into flame
 I roast red

true to my nature
 I grab the gasoline
 the fire flickers higher
 with every shaking head

I met a former arsonist
 who became a fire chief
 in the rain I asked for water
 we sat and shared a cup

then I began to smolder
 he read my signal smoke
 and bolted from the kitchen
 saying I was too far gone

I gag and choke
 reeling and confused
 friends stay back
 till the fuel's all consumed

S. Millar



Security? Guards

If you live anywhere in the Downtown Eastside from Gastown to Chinatown you may have seen them. They sport white short-sleeve shirts, black boots and slacks, crew cuts and walkie talkies. Some, who ride bicycles and wear yellow jackets, strangely resemble police officers on bike patrol.

These do-gooders patrol our streets fighting crime in all its shapes and disguises. Finally, there is help for our woefully understaffed Vancouver police force. But how much do these rent-a-cops do to help with inner-city crime? These upstanding young men work very hard at ridding the neighbourhood of the criminal element that hitherto have made our streets unsafe to walk. Are they arresting the multitude of drug dealers, pimps and johns who prey on underage street workers? *Not exactly.* They are, however, dealing with much more insidious criminals: the people who may not 'look right', people who ask for spare change and those who stand in one place a little too long. These hardened criminals and villains are bullied away from the streets. "Move along" or, more correctly, **MOVE OUT** is the call of the day for the "ne'r-do-wells" of Gastown.

Most, if not all, of the targets of the security guards are people who *live* in this area. Yes, they are the very residents of the Downtown Eastside. The people who call this place home are not permitted to walk the streets of their own neighbourhood without harassment. **Vagrancy, loitering and panhandling are not illegal**, yet all of these acts are treated as crimes.

You might assume that these upholders of the law have extraordinary powers at their disposal, that they can detain people; well, again, *not exactly.* You could make a citizen's arrest if you saw someone committing a crime. (Most of us just dial 911.) These guards may only do the same. In reality, they have no more power than you or I.

If, however, someone was on private property like a restaurant or store and causing a disturbance, guards could ask that person to leave. Security



guards are not allowed to touch the person unless he or she refuses to leave or attacks them. Guards are only to use reasonable force when removing someone from the premises. What exactly is reasonable force? Well, this is a bit of a gray area. Inflicting injury on someone is not reasonable force. Basically, unless a security guard is going to make a citizen's arrest for a crime you have committed, they can't physically touch you. No arrest, no touch.

These guards are hired by local business associations and operate solely on local residents' ignorance of the law. But in this case what you don't know *can* hurt you. Recently on a Water Street sidewalk two security guards were seen kneeling on a handcuffed man. The man, whose face was bleeding, was crying out in agony. This sort of behaviour is unlawful. In fact, it's called assault. Security guards are not permitted to carry or use handcuffs, firearms or batons (clubs). Pepper spray is not to be used either. It is strictly for use in defense of an attacking dog, not people.

Gastown business owners are treating Gastown like it's their business when in fact it's a neighbourhood, our neighbourhood. **Sidewalks are public property.** Security guards are only perm-

itted to operate on private property.. A security guard must show you their security employee license and identification card with their employee number on it when it is demanded. If they ask you to leave an area of the sidewalk or to move on, tell them that you are on public property and are committing no crime. If they persist, inform them that they are harassing you and that you will file a complaint with the Ministry of the Attorney General.

When you send a complaint to the Ministry of the Attorney-General, try to get a witness to give their name and phone number to include in the letter whenever possible. Forward it to:

Bill MacDonald,
Compliance Inspector,
Security Program Division,
Ministry of Attorney-General,
#5 East 8th Ave., Vancouver. V5T 1R6
Fax: 660-2382

(All info is confidential and no names will be disclosed.)

People need to realize that panhandling is a symptom of a much larger problem, one that cannot be solved by pushing it out of sight.

The "not in my back yard" (*nimby*) approach doesn't work, because the Downtown Eastside is our backyard.

By TODD KELLER

(This article first appeared in *Main & Hastings*.)



The Living Saint G.Gust

Mother Teresa; Sister of love,
Peaceful rest has calmed your time.
We who are less hopeless by you
Kneel in joy that your love lives on.

1997



I'm deeply saddened by the death of Princess Diana. I watched the funeral on TV. It was a moving experience.

PaulK



THE RAINBOW

When the people
stop mourning
Mother Teresa
& Diana



They should
start loving
each other
more

Pearl

DOWNTOWN STD CLINIC - 219 Main; Monday - Friday, 10a.m. - 6p.m.
EASTSIDE NEEDLE EXCHANGE - 221 Main; 8:30am-8pm everyday /
YOUTH Needle Exchange Van -3 Routes: City (5:45pm-11:45pm); -
ACTIVITIES Overnight (12:30am-8:30am) Downtown Eastside (5:30pm-1:30am)
SOCIETY 1997 DONATIONS

Legal Services Society -\$1250

Paula R. -\$30	Rocking Guys-\$30	
Wm. B. -\$20	Diane M. -\$15	
Lillian H. -\$25	Lorne T. -\$20	
Joy T. -\$20	Mel L. -\$20	
Frances -\$25	Sara D. -\$20	
Charley B. -\$15	CIEDS -\$10	
Libby D. -\$40	Susan S. -\$30	
Guy A. -\$10	DEYAS -\$75	
Tom D. -\$10	Brigid R. -\$10	
Rene F. -\$30	Amy E. -\$10	
Sam R. -\$20	Kay F. -\$5	
Rick Y. -\$63	Neil N. -\$10	
BCCW -\$50	Sharon J. -\$50	Joan D. -\$5
Sonya Sommers -\$100	Holden Hotel -\$5	Mike M. -\$15
Census Employees -\$200		Bill G. -\$20
B.C. PLURA -\$1000		Ray-Cam -\$40

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:
Friday
26 September

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.

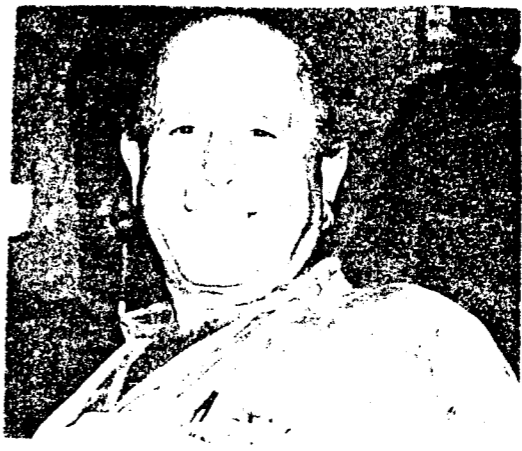
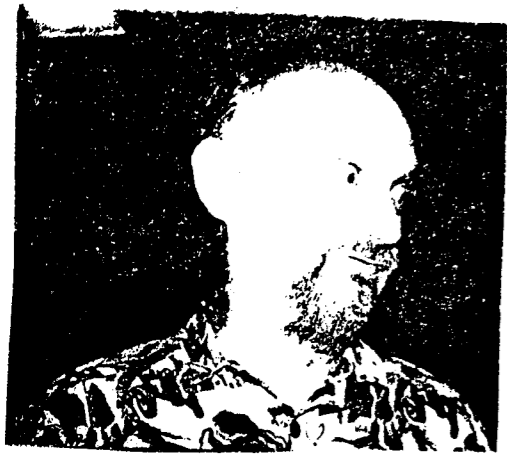
**DERA HAS BEEN SERVING
 THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE
 FOR 24 YEARS.**





So long Dan!

A while back, Dan Tetrault had a farewell party at Carnegie. He got a big cake and a roast from many who have either helped when they could or just watched as he worked as the Acting Director for almost a year. Here are some of the people celebrating with him as he takes a six-month leave of absence.



Hello from Marilyn!

Please allow me to introduce myself: I'm the new director of Carnegie. I started working here on August 18th.

I've worked in the Downtown Eastside for the past 16 years with the Mental Patients Association, assisting people facing criminal charges to get their rights in the court system.

I want to thank everyone - volunteers, patrons and staff - for being so pleasant and helpful to me. I know it's not easy to break in a new director, but your genuine good-natured manner with me while I'm learning the job is greatly appreciated.

I hope to spend the rest of my working years with Carnegie and the residents of the Downtown Eastside. Thanks for the warm welcome!



M.O.D.E.

ALLEY BEHIND THE GARBAGE

1-800-Garbage

To: Donald McFart, Marilyn, Bev, Lou, Deb
From: Garbage Crawler of the Alleys
Re: Garbage found.
Date: September 12, 1997.

Bill and Marla decided that the only way to pull off a Sunday afternoon quickie with their 10 year-old son in the apartment was to send him out on the balcony and have him report on all the neighbourhood activities. The boy began as his parents put their 'plan' into operation. "There's a car being towed from the parking lot," he said, "and an ambulance just drove by." A few moments passed. "Looks like the Anderson's have company," he called out. "Matt's riding a new bike and the Cooper's are having sex." Mom and Dad shot up in bed. "How do you know that?" his startled father asked. His son replied, "Their kid is on the balcony too."



Sam and Dave were travelling in the wilderness. Sam turned and noticed a bear about a mile behind them and they decided to pick up the pace a bit. It soon became apparent that the bear was following them; in fact the bear had broken into a run.

Sam quickly removed his backpack and rummaged through it. Astonished, Dave asked what he was doing. Sam replied that he was going to remove his boots and put on running shoes. Dave said, "Are you crazy? You'll never outrun a bear just by wearing running shoes!" Sam replied, "I don't have to outrun the bear. I just have to outrun you."



A young man went into a drug store to buy condoms. The pharmacist said condoms came in packs of 3, 9 or 12 and asked the young man which he'd like. "Well," he said, "I've been seeing this girl for awhile and she's really hot. I want the condoms because I think tonight's *the* night. We're having dinner with her parents and then we're going out, and I've got a feeling I'm gonna get lucky. Once she's had me she'll want me all the time, so you better give me the 12-pack." The young man made his purchase and left. Later that evening he sat down to dinner with his girlfriend and her parents. He asked if he might give the blessing, and they agreed. He began the prayer but continued for several minutes. The girl leaned over and said, "You never told me you were such a religious person." He leaned over and said, "You never told me your father was a pharmacist."



Poem for the occasion of the opening of
Four Corners Community Savings April 15, 1996

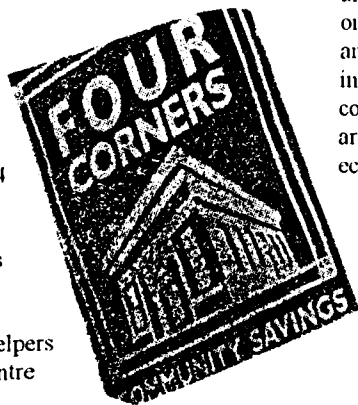
I speak here today as a member
of the downtown eastside community of the poor
I am here to celebrate the opening
of four corners community savings
and to declare our hope and our trust
that this sandstone building this rock
become both a stumbling block and a cornerstone

a stumbling block for the many predators
who descend upon our vulnerable community
a stumbling block for banking interests
of greed and obscene profit
a stumbling block for banks bankrolling
homelessness and suffering
a stumbling block for banks of discrimination and
humiliation

our hope today is that four corners community savings
become a stumbling block
for real estate jolns cruising our streets
looking for cheap and quick
conscience-less gratification and development
we trust that the enterprise within this building
becomes a stumbling block
for the check cashing joints pubs and hotels
that operate like loan sharks

and also today with the opening of this service
to our community
we declare our hope and our trust
that this building become a cornerstone
for the downtown eastside
a cornerstone among many others
anchoring and defending our community
cornerstones such as
the carnegie centre

dera
deyas
the lookout
main and hastings
crabtree corner and the 44
the dugout
crosswalk
st paul's and st james
triage
the portland hotel
neighbourhood helpers
the women's centre
native health
and first united church



our hope is for this banking service
to join with these and other cornerstones
to strengthen and sustain
our most vulnerable suffering afflicted and besieged
community
our most creative beloved and spiritually inspired
community
our community that is therefore
a tremendous gift to this city

a real community
into which four corners must live its part
in making community here
a community characterised by mutual aid
direct personal help
as each of us helps one another down here everyday
in countless ways
from passing a kind word
sharing a sandwich
buying a cup of coffee
or bending to lift each other when we fall

we trust that four corners community savings
become a cornerstone as caring institutionally
as we are to one another individually
here
in the downtown eastside
where we mourn our many deaths together publicly
and celebrate our achievements collectively

as with this celebration today
the opening of a bank unlike any other bank in canada
and like only 2 banks in the united states
one located in the south side of chicago
and the other
in the lower east side of new york city
communities where poor where hardpressed human beings
are threatened as we are by similarly cruel
economic institutions

so our hope and our trust today
is that four corners community savings
fulfill the same saving role
as those other rare banks do
for our brothers and sisters in new york and chicago
our comrades in resistance
in the global war against the poor
in our struggle for life more abundant

Bud Osborn



Bud Osborn

Vancouver's Downtown Eastside Poet

A poet can survive everything, claimed Oscar Wilde, but a misprint. Bud Osborn has survived even that.

It came from the ceremonies to launch a special bank serving some of the poorest people in Canada in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Over speeches by Glen Clark, former premier Mike Harecourt and popular local politician Jim Green, "the afternoon's biggest applause," wrote Elizabeth Aird of the *Vancouver Sun*, went to Osborn when he finished this final verse of his poem to mark the opening of Four Corners:

*so our hope and trust today
is that four corners community savings
fulfill the same savings role ...*

"Saving role" it should have read, not "savings." One is a financial, the other a spiritual investment. Yet the day and its coverage were a triumph for the community -- *our most vulnerable suffering afflicted and besieged community our most creative beloved and spiritually inspired community our community that is therefore a tremendous gift to this city.* That meant more to Osborn than words.

No one else speaks "as a member of the downtown eastside community of the poor" in quite the

same voice, or articulates so forcefully to outside interests what membership in it means. Nor do many Catholics like Osborn ("God relies on human beings to relate him") heed the call to social justice with as much integrity through their life's work.

Born in Michigan in 1947, he survived a brutally dysfunctional childhood which seemed bereft of any form of grace. His father committed suicide, his sexually abusive mother often tried and his aunt murdered his grandmother, making an unhappy end seem preordained.

His 1995 collection of poetry, *Lonesome Monsters*, describes one of Osborn's many suicide attempts in "When I was 15." On a reading tour years after the event, "this girl came up who'd just gotten out of the hospital, whose circumstances were uncannily similar, clutching a copy of this poem which she'd xeroxed." It gave her strength, showing her she wasn't alone.

It was the ultimate compliment for Osborn. "I read poets," he says, "and they understood me better than I understood myself. It helped me to read these people."

Meeting "ranter" Jack Micheline, an associate of the beats--the rambling, counter-cultural, road-walking poets of the '60s--was his greatest inspiration. "Forty, homeless and broke," Micheline made poetry out of the facts of his life and urged Osborn to do the same.

Lonesome Monsters, which is dedicated to Micheline, states up-front: "Resemblances to people alive or dead are purely intentional." Vivid, jagged verse dissects all manner of experience and everywhere finds God. The precipitous window of death in "Keys to Kingdoms"--the story of when Osborn was almost killed over five missing dollars--draws a meditation on divine mercy. "Down Here", a long and beautiful ode to the Downtown Eastside, ends with a *prayer not a curse to the tragic & sacred mystery of our beautiful suffering eternal worth.*

Having left the U.S. during the Vietnam war, Osborn came to Vancouver from Toronto with Marie, the co-protagonist of many of the pieces.



Both overcame their dependence on drugs and converted to Catholicism. After following a long and hard route together, the two went their separate ways. "Marie lives a profoundly spiritual life," Bud explains. "She's a much more private person, while I find myself ever more drawn to public expressions." A battle-weary smile inflects the last observation.

Friend and fellow Downtown Eastside activist Sandy Cameron sees in Osborn something of the Old Testament prophet. A favourite book of Cameron's is theologian Walter Brueggemann's *The Prophetic Imagination*, with its exegesis on "the articulation of pain."

For Osborn, articulating the pain of the Downtown Eastside has meant talking to churches and to concerned groups, meeting with city councillors and planners, sitting on the regional health board to represent the community (it has the Western world's highest rate of HIV infection), and spray-painting the boarded up windows of buildings waiting idly on the real estate market amid homelessness and unliveable living conditions.

He believes the giant threat of gentrification--market-driven development suffocating the social housing and hotels affordable to this poorest of communities--is one Christianity is mandated to fight.

The bible is replete with struggles for land and community, Osborn points out; the Promised Land, the Kingdom of Heaven. "God is community. You come here and you find God. What makes a traditional community---caring, knowing who your neighbour is---is here. Here, who I am is important rather than what I am and what I have to give. This is a spiritual gift, this community.

"I felt more at home, more free here, than anywhere else. I decided to commit myself here, and being free to make that choice is how I'm able to do it."

In October, 1996, Osborn started the Political

Response Group (PRG). "an independent group formed to protest the abandonment of a community of the poor by elected government officials, and the assault of upscale development on the integrity of the Downtown Eastside." Its multi-media presentation, "Community in Crisis," incorporating slides, dance, monologues, an oral history of the area and readings by Bud, has been performed to acclaim in Vancouver-area churches and community centres.

Says Cameron, "John Milton was Cromwell's secretary but there's somehow a prevailing notion of the poet as 'removed' from the world. That's completely contrary to Bud."

In Osborn's case it's the poet's wonder at beauty and God's presence which fuels the activist. After articulating its pain in well-chosen words, he relates an act of unselfish community to explain best what makes the Downtown Eastside special.

"I have a friend who's a native fellow, just turned 25, and he's a hard core drug addict diagnosed with full-blown AIDS.

"I saw him again at that block of E. Hastings, supposedly the most infamous block in Canada, and he was walking beside a very old white man with a walker. He said this white man had been knocked down in broad daylight and robbed of all his money the week before and since then he'd been accompanying him on his errands to protect him and reassure him and keep him safe. I thought that was very remarkable."

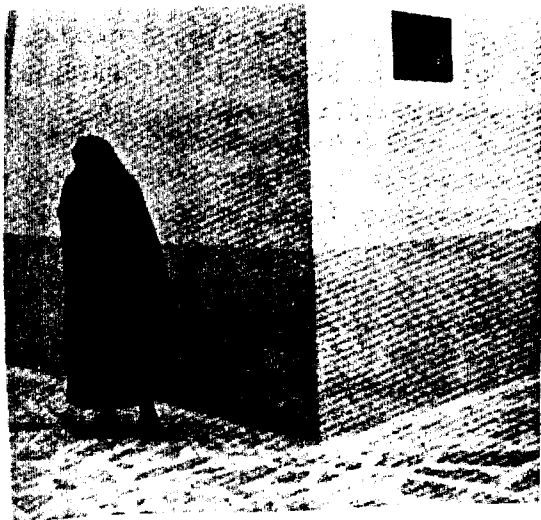
It exacted a poem equally remarkable for the author's own, unrelenting empathy. *James is a drug addict, ends the last verse, and knows he will never live half the length of time the old white man has been alive.*

Osborn calls it "One of the Most Beautiful Things I Have Ever Seen."

By SABITRI GHOSH

(*This appeared in the *Catholic New Times*.)

Lonesome Monsters is available in bookstores around the country or from Anvil Press, Suite 204-A, 175 East Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V5T 1W2

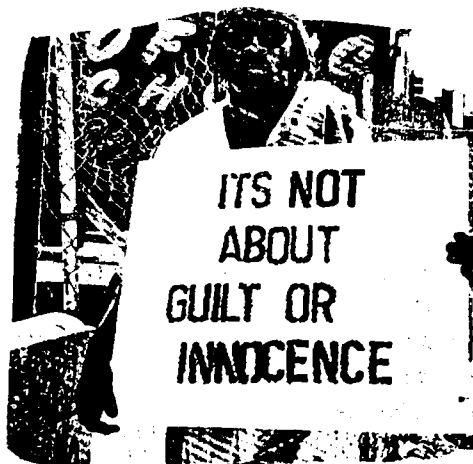


Good Morning

Propped up conveniently on crumpled sections
Of old newspapers,
Twisted and piled in a most precarious pyramid.
The eyes of the blond man are riveted
Upon the old woman.
Bearing down on those filthy rags
He imagined she'd worn since time immemorial.
As always with these people,
These perfidious vagabonds,
He anticipated the piteous mewling,
The tales of woe he knew all too well
To be nothing more than a desperate ruse
Of some scandalous street magician,
Tongue rattling, hands moving furtively
Across the crucible of the eye
In that subliminal flash that can
Only be interpreted as the
Faintest flicker of magic.
Something you knew not to be true
Yet wanted to believe, those sad stories,
Money to ride a chariot to the moon,
Money for hot coffee and a crusty bagel,
Money for parlaying a wicked,
Non-negotiable past into the mundanity
Of three-tiered cakes and
Sweet apple pies, or perhaps.

A soft warm bed.
All those mannequins peeking out
And the cherubic faces of angels
Who appear in the night
Delivering the hot food and warm blankets.
This was the wrought-iron bed
She told them on which she could sleep forever.
This was the place she called home.
She thinks that she'll lose it one day.
She thinks she'll lose it
By mortgage foreclosures, or perhaps
A seizure by some heartless banker.
And she is afraid her lovely home
Will be defenestrated by some
Raving lunatic one night, maybe
During the dead of winter,
She would be beaten and kicked into oblivion.
Weeks later she'll wake up in some cool,
Antiseptic hospital, fighting death-demons,
And finally,
The horde of white-jacketed tormentors
Who'll come to drag her away
To some state-run hospital for crazies,
Where she'd be constantly bombarded
With the shock treatments and
The psychotherapy and the Lithium
They'll take her so far out.

*- Reginald Sinclair Lewis
Waynesburg, Pennsylvania*



DAVE'S NEWSLETTER
Issue Number 1: September 4, 1997.

JEROME MORRIS
In Memorium

On Friday, August 22, 1997, I think it was in the afternoon, Morris curled up on a pew in First United Church and died. Rhonda, his best friend, later learned that his liver had quit. This from drinking too much Chinese cooking wine, particularly of the salty variety.

My first distinct memory of him was when he knocked Brian off of his crutches onto his butt and another Native American guy off of his cane onto his butt. Being fairly quick-witted, I decided this was a man to be wary of.

I was mistaken. I often saw him on East Hastings Street, usually with Rhonda. Actually, it was just as usual to see him a block and a half behind her calling, "Rhoondaaa," in a kind of low husky roar. They fought a lot but were obviously inseparable.

I got to know him by giving him tobacco. If he didn't feel like a smoke he wouldn't take one if offered. They lived out at times. At different times he told me that he was Cree, a welder and formerly a drug dealer for which I think he served eleven years plus in prison. He was now an aimless alcoholic.

Rhonda told me that he was given up or taken from his mother when he was eleven years old and raised by various others. I don't know what kind of education he had or if he went to residential schools. He was a very intelligent man.



Morris was thirty-seven years old when he died. He hadn't seen his mother for twenty-six years, yet the Ministry of Social Services insisted on sending his body to this old woman in Inuvik. She is in her eighties. I don't know whether she cared for Morris or not.

I do know that Rhonda cared for him very much and that he was her best friend. She tried, without success, to persuade the bureaucrats to bury his body here, where she and his other friends could grieve him and say good-bye. They refused.

I saw Rhonda yesterday. She told me that Morris was buried three thousand miles away on Monday, September 1, Labour Day. She is despondent. She recently paid a big price to turn her life around. I hope she will stick to her plans.

Not too long before he died, I gave Morris a framed print of Geronimo who was a fierce warrior and a Holy Man. He reminded me of Morris. I also gave him a large Native American mandala. I gave it to my mother nine years ago. When she died last year, my step-father returned it to me. It was lucky for her and for me. I think it was lucky for Morris also. He's at rest now.

My last memory of him is when we sat on the familiar bus bench in front of First United. It was Sunday, August 17, my birthday. We shared a smoke and he wished me happy birthday and gave me a big hug. Christ said, "Love one another." We did.

Dave Beamish

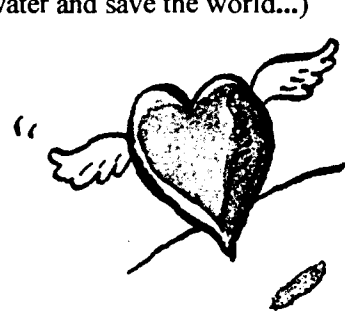
NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS

* Brad Holme, illustrious developer who imposed the eyesores of the Van Horne (named after the bozo who wanted to clearcut Stanley Park) and its clone across the street, has been forced to buy 35 of his own condos - while his mother bought 5 - because innocent buyers were rare indeed.

Welcome to the Downtown Eastside!

* Paul Taylor and Lisa David are getting married in February (1998). (I thought I was just here to walk on water and save the world...)

PRT



Letter to the Editor - *Vancouver Sun*

There's something new in the Downtown Eastside; rats now share our sidewalks! The city's green light on eight foot high mountains of rotting garbage has apparently met with much enthusiasm from Vancouver's formerly modest rat population, and this past week I've seen them bounding in places and numbers that none bound before. Where will they lead their new litters when the garbage is finally removed? I imagine restaurants and residential hotels look inviting enough.

True to form, dawdling on the part of the city is to the detriment of the D.E. Mayor Owen recently attended a community meeting announcing his support of former chief coroner Vincent Cain's comprehensive harm reduction strategy for our illicit drug crisis. The Mayor's only immediate action, however, completely contradicted the principles of Mr. Cain's recommendations, opting instead for a two-week, hundred thousand dollar police blitz in the neighbourhood. While local merchants are flashed by a spectacular police presence, the safe fixing site and the Pender detox stay closed as the Coroner's Report sits on the shelf. Is the industrialized world's highest rate of HIV conversion (here in the D.E.) appropriately addressed by this kind of charade?

Speaking of civic procrastination, whatever happened to the proposed anti-conversion/demolition by-law? The provincial government expedited the amendment to the Vancouver Charter in June to allow the city to make a timely response to the urgent need to safeguard existing low-income housing. So far the only action it has inspired is mass evictions by hotel owners (approx. 200 evictions on the Granville strip alone). The City has vaguely hinted that the by-law may be implemented as part of CityPlan, already two years behind schedule and delayed indefinitely...

Why the city bides its time with such urgent matters is beyond me. Other communities may not be as directly and profoundly affected by these issues as the Downtown Eastside, but ultimately all of Vancouver suffers with homelessness, epidemics and rodents in the streets.

Shawn Millar

A DEGRADATION OF TRUST

Garry Gust

Glen Clark, also known as Bill Bennett the Second, has sent out a cold-hearted proclamation stating that the tax payer should not be responsible for the care of children who's parents are on welfare.

The last I heard, people on welfare pay the same 7% B.C. sales tax as everyone else, but I guess that doesn't count to the neo-right-wing NDP.

Just last month, Glen(B.B.II) Clark personally handed over a \$300,000 cheque to help pay for the new Cultural Library/museum complex on Columbia St. This cheque was the final installment of one million dollars of public money given to the project.

Why was this \$1,000,000 the **responsibility** of the taxpayer? Because the heavy-hitters on the Board of the library/museum complex helped to fund Glen Clark's campaign in the last election; a sort of reverse(you-scratch-my-back...) kickback of private and public money.

Just two blocks away from the opening ceremony of the museum complex, the Pender Detox centre stood locked and empty because the NDP government says there is no money to fund its reopening. I'm sure Glen Clark also believes that it's not the taxpayers responsibility to help drug addicts kick their habit.

However, a recent Simon Fraser University report was published, and supplied to the B.C. government, that stated it's cheaper to have detox centres functioning because if drug addicts are getting treatment, they are not out breaking into cars and homes to steal property that can be converted into cash for their next fix; not to mention their lives might be salvaged by such treatment. The above is the

fastest growing crime in the lower mainland.

But because drug addicts aren't known for getting out there on election day to vote, they are of no consequence to the "New" NDP. That's why it's doubly important for the voters of this community to start searching for alternative candidates to defeat the neo-right NDP in the next provincial election.

A MODERN ECHO FROM VOICES OF THE PAST

In 1955 J.B.Priestly foresaw the Western world as an 'economic, social, and cultural system dominated and saturated by the drive to consume material goods, reflecting the deceptive world of advertising obsessively promoted through the mass media.' The outcome of this system would be a 'consuming society which stifles creativity, and **distorts real human feelings, needs, and emotions.**' Mr Priestly called this conditioning Admass. Admass has caused North Americans to become flippant overconsumers, and the greatest producers of waste garbage on earth.

MASS SOCIETY - Peter S. Leuner defined Mass Society as being a society with a high degree of private industrialization, and a powerful media. A Mass Society would nourish conformity, mediocrity, and alienation.

In 1958 John Kenneth Galbraith wrote of an Affluent Society where 'increasing production in the private sector of the economy, leads to a situation of private affluence accompanied by public squalor.'

An affluent society dominated by the private sector seeking profit above well-being, 'expands the output of nonvital consumer goods creating social chaos. This is aggravated by the **artificial** stimulation of consumer demand through advertising, and the excessive expansion of consumer credit provisions. 'This imbalance between private and public sector output means the National Product may still rise although human welfare may decline.'

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

To the

Director of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa, Canada

September/2nd. 1945

Sir,—

I hereby make application for admission of the undermentioned child into the ALBERNI Residential School; to remain therein under the guardianship of the Principal for such term as the Minister of Mines and Resources may deem proper:

"Care was taken to avoid too close an inquiry ...";

The Hidden History of the Native Residential Schools

by (Rev.) Kevin Annett

"I remember her as very little. She was crying for her mother at the top of the stairs. Then the Principal, Mr. Caldwell, kicked her hard and she fell down the stairs. She never moved after that."

- Harriett Nahanee, Alberni Residential School survivor,
on the death of Maisie Shaw in 1946

We can only heal when we are able to tell the whole truth of our pain. None of the many victims of the church-run residential schools have been able to tell their story because that truth has been buried as completely as the bodies of the children who died in those schools.

Two eyewitnesses say that children were killed in both of the United Church-run schools on Vancouver Island. But the RCMP and the church are denying such murders occurred, and the Mounties even refused to take the testimony of Harriett Nahanee, who claims to have witnessed one of the killings.

Nevertheless, there's a chance now for the whole truth about the residential schools to come out. All of the facts have to be known - and they exist: both in the memories and lives of the residential school survivors and in buried government records that have just begun to surface.

I've been researching these records for two years now, and they show that the churches have been concealing what really went on in the schools. For nearly a century, church and state worked together to steal native land and resources under the guise of "bringing civilisation" to the Indians. In fact, it appears that the residential schools were used as a cover for businessmen and other friends of the church to grab native land and then rake in big profits by selling the land to others.

I helped uncover such a land grab when I was a United Church minister in Port Alberni, between 1992 and 1995. It seems the United Church sold native land, entrusted to it by the Ahousaht Nation, to the grandson of

a church missionary and school principal, in 1953, for only \$2,000, despite it being 40 acres of prime timber. This land ended up in MacMillan-Bloedel's hands in 1994, at a price of \$750,000. Mac-Blo just happens to be a financial contributor to the United Church.

Making this public didn't endear me to certain church officials: nor did my allowing residential school survivors to speak from my pulpit about their abuse and hopes for justice. Doing so got me fired without cause in 1995, and then thrown out of the church altogether just this year after a kangaroo-court that cost the United Church over \$150,000.

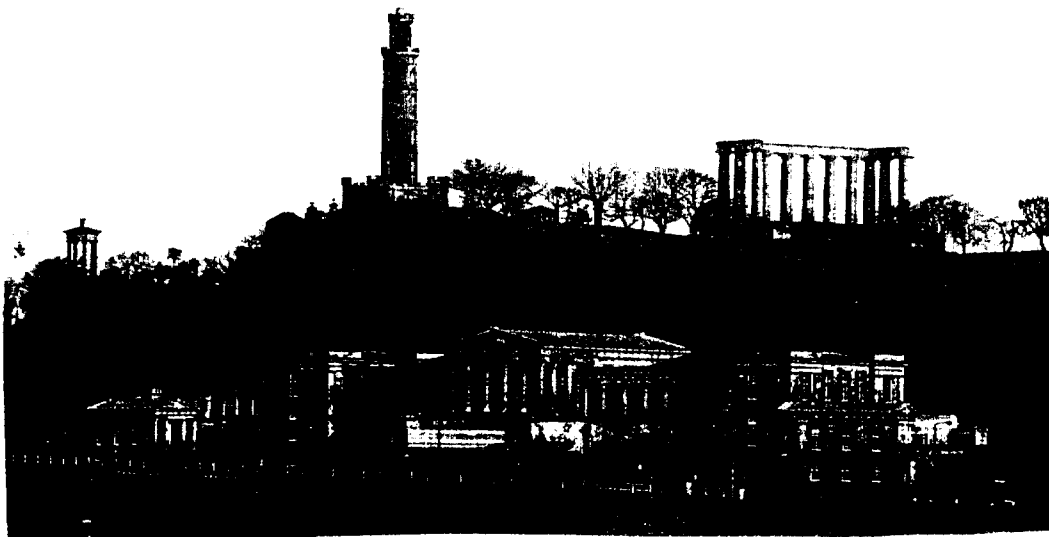
The "liberal" United Church would not have moved so harshly against me unless there was a lot at stake: namely, money. The church stands to lose millions of dollars, and more, if it faces lawsuits from all the native people it has harmed. Fifteen Port Alberni natives are already suing the United Church and the federal government for over \$50 million for damages they suffered at the Alberni school.

The United Church is, shamefully, trying to avoid responsibility for the schools by counter-suing the feds and saying Ottawa was in charge of everything. The church has even refused to apologise for the damage it caused, relying on the "We were only following orders" argument well known since the Nazi Holocaust.

The research I have been doing proves that the United Church is not telling the truth. The church was completely in charge of the schools and given a free hand by government agents to do whatever it wanted with the children there, including ignore protests from native parents, run substandard buildings described by Indian Agents as "appalling firetraps", and abuse generations of children.

I'm doing my research on two residential schools, at Port Alberni and Ahousaht, the native reserve north of Tofino on Vancouver Island. The United Church ran both of these schools for nearly fifty years. In that time, the government had to conduct twenty-one separate investigations of both schools because of all the protests and petitions from native elders and even white teachers at the schools. These protests named, among other things, the brutal beating of children, the unsafe conditions in the schools, Principals kidnapping and holding children against their will and administering drugs illegally, church officials arresting native elders for potlatching and dancing, and the lack of proper food and care in the schools.

Despite this over fifty years, not a single investigation ever criticised the church or any official, or found anyone guilty of any wrongdoing! Each and every time, the government whitewashed the church and its actions.



This whitewashing was so blatant that, for example, after the Ahousaht school burned down in 1940, the Indian Agent, Gerald Barry, actually wrote in his fire report to Ottawa: "*As this was the property of the church, care was taken to avoid too close an inquiry.*"

With this kind of mutual back-scratching going on between church and state, it's small wonder that actual murders could be covered up for so long.

Lawyers have advised the United Church not to ever admit wrongdoing or apologise for anything, or else it may be legally culpable. The best way for the church to do so is to simply deny responsibility for the schools. But a single piece of evidence I discovered recently blows this strategy out of the water and makes the church responsible for the abuses.

It's an Admission Form that every parent had to sign when their child or children were directed to attend the Alberni Residential School. It surrendered guardianship rights over the child to the Principal - that is, the church - even though the government had traditionally been the legal guardian of native people.

If Ottawa was in charge of the schools, as the United Church is desperately claiming nowadays, why would it make the church the legal guardian of every student? As guardian, the Principal had absolute control of their lives. A legal haven was thus created for abusers, pedophiles, and even murderers.

So now we know how abusers and killers could get away with it for decades. The real question is, how do we get justice today, and thereby also get healing?

Harriett Nahanee and other survivors of the residential schools are working with myself and others to bring to light the hidden history of the schools. We will be holding public forums to make the church admit its wrongdoing, return stolen native land, compensate its victims, and reveal what it knows about the deaths of Maisie Shaw and Albert Gray, among others.

We'll be holding such a forum at the Carnegie Centre, in the theatre, on Friday, September 26 at 7 p.m. It will be a chance for you who have suffered in silence to speak out and work for justice. Together, we are not only stronger, but able to move past the pain and into the light where we belong.

For your own sake, and in the spirit of Maisie and Albert, come to the forum. Don't let them bury the truth any longer.

For more information, phone: Kevin Annett 462-1086 or 224-8782

Harriett Nahanee 985-5817



Love is what I need
Love is what I seek
Only love can heal me
Only love can seal my
destiny
Only love can shape my
future

Elizabeth Thorpe

NO! to APEC coalition

Network Opposed to Anti-People Economic Control

Dear sisters and brothers,

As you may know, this November Vancouver will host the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Leaders' Summit. It will entail the most massive security operation in Canadian history as leaders of some of the world's most corrupt and brutal regimes, and representatives of the most powerful and greedy multi-national corporations, will be attending this event.

The NO! To APEC Coalition is organising against APEC and the Leaders' Summit on a number of fronts. One important aspect of this campaign will be a rally and march to demonstrate our opposition, both against what APEC and "free" trade represent, and the negative effects that the Leaders' Summit will have for the residents of Vancouver. In particular we will be focusing on what this event has meant for the residents of the Downtown Eastside.

It's sure that any "undesirables" will either be continuously harassed by police or just taken off the streets in massive 'clean-up' operations.

Organising now is necessary to make the march as meaningful, educational and enlightening to all participants and the thousands who will notice only minor inconvenience from the virtual occupation of our neighbourhoods by private and public armies.

There will be stops and speakers along the route - from Oppenheimer Park to Canada Place - and ideas, issues to address and the broad range of injustices to expose are all welcome as input.

The organising initiative is with the Coalition, care of the Kalayaan Centre at 451 Powell Street. If you would like to be involved in the organising and planning work, call 253-1565 or 215-9190. Childcare and transportation subsidy is available and the rooms are wheelchair accessible.

Percussions on Fraser Street

brakes squealing
radios blaring
people shouting
buses farting

I lift my nose
to the gritty air,
insulted and indignant

cl & as

Fraser Street Romp

Street and burnished wood;
blast against shared vibration,
shuddering our souls.



rejection
(at the beach)

lump in the throat
tight stomach
tears in the eyes
alienation

controlled feelings of love
which when freed
are rejected

families nearby
caring,
sharing & I with my quivering
body wanting to walk with the
girl who walks back and forth,
alone

anita haviva stevens

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US TO
CELEBRATE OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY

誠邀大家一起慶祝我們的二十五週年紀念

THERE WILL BE A **BIG** CELEBRATION

連串 盛大的慶祝活動即將推出



Above Events Take Place on Sept. 27(Sat) 10:00a.m. & Sept. 28(Sun) 2:00p.m.
上述活動將於九月二十七(星期六)上午十時 及二十八(星期日)下午二時 舉行

601 Keefer Street Vancouver BC V6A 3V8

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(604)254-9496



華埠奇化街 601 號

