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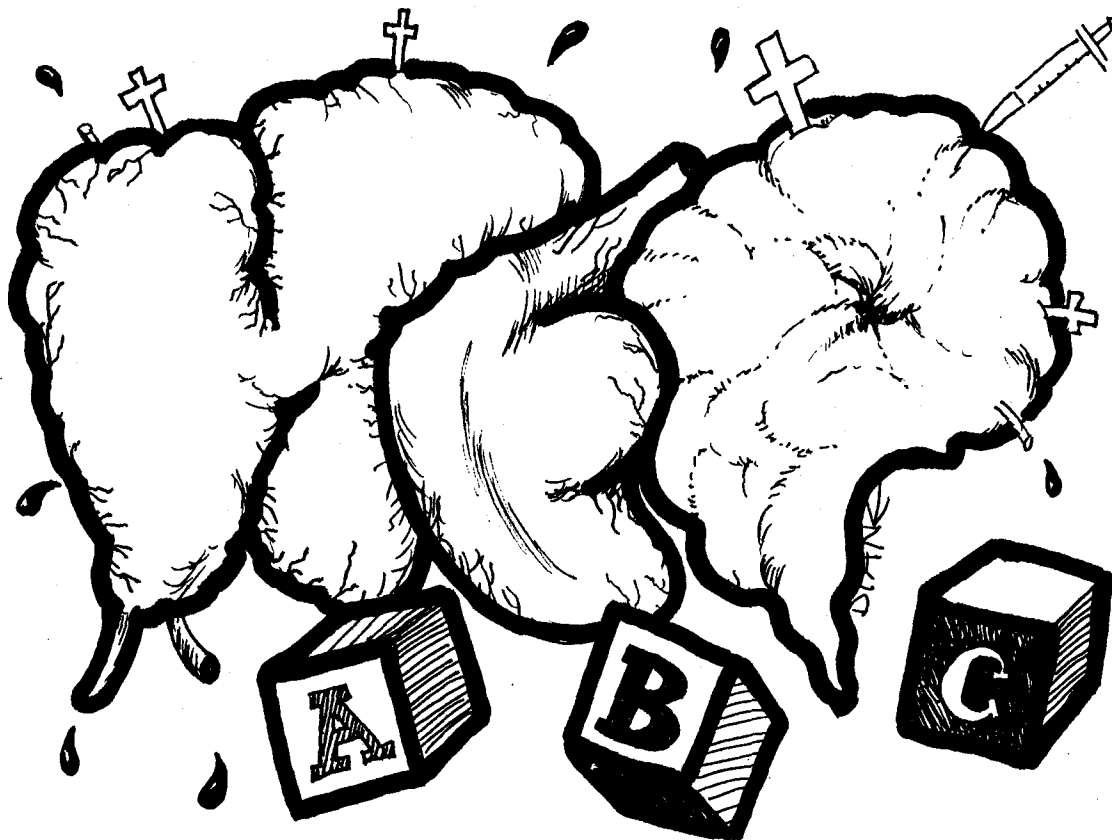
NEWSLETTER

MAY 1, 2000

401 Main Street, Vancouver. V6A 2T7 (604) 665-2289

NATIONAL HEPATITIS CANDLELIGHT HEALING CEREMONY May 1st, 2000 7:30 p.m. Vancouver City Hall (12th & Cambie)

In remembrance of all those who have died from Hepatitis, especially Hep C, and particularly the children who have died and those who continue to live with this life-threatening disease.





AN OPEN LETTER TO HEALTH MINISTER ALLAN ROCK

MR. ROCK, MORE DELAYS MEAN MORE DEATHS YOU MUST INTRODUCE POLICIES TO CURB THE HEALTH CRISIS IN VANCOUVER

Dear Minister:

I remember the day very clearly in June, 1997 when one thousand wooden crosses were struck in the ground of Oppenheimer Park, as a testimonial to the 1222 people who had died from drug overdoses since your government came to power in 1993.

When I first wrote to you in 1997 following that event, and many times since, I called on you to show leadership in stemming the needless deaths from HIV/AIDS and drug overdoses of injection drug users. The situation is only more urgent now. Rose Morris; Chris Miler; Donny Eng; George Bluebird; Jeff Trombley; Darcy Evans; Al Turcott; Michel Beauchamps; Wolfgang Forstner, ... these are only a few of the people who have died needlessly.

Today, almost three years later, after many letters, meetings with you, many expert reports, and too many pleas for help, 740 more people have died, and the death toll is still rising. Despite a few changes, little has improved. The fundamental components for a comprehensive program to improve the health of injection drug users, and to increase the safety of our community as a whole, have not been put in place.

The death toll continues to climb because your government refuses to hear the growing number of experts who have called for action and outline remarkably similar and specific measures to address this crisis.

In May, 1997, the National Action Plan on HIV/AIDS and Intravenous Drug Users, funded by your own Department, sounded the alarm bell *and* urged the federal Minister of Health to "take the lead in ensuring a coordinated and integrated response to all recommendations in this National Action Plan".

In September, 1997, the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board declared a health emergency in the Downtown Eastside, facing the highest rate of HIV+ among drug users in the western world.

In June, 1998, BC's Provincial Health Officer, Dr. John Miller, issued his own report "Pay Now or Pay Later" and recommended that "controlled legal availability of heroin in a tightly controlled system of medical prescription should be tested as an option, as part of a comprehensive harm reduction program."

In August, 1998, I introduced a motion in the House of Commons which received widespread support, calling on the federal government, in co-operation with the provinces, to "implement clinical, multi-centre heroin prescription trials for injection opiate users, including protocols for rigorous scientific assessment and evaluation."

In December, 1998, the Canadian Medical Association passed a resolution recommending that you investigate the option of prescribing heroin for opiate-dependent individuals, following the same approval protocol in practice for the use of any therapeutic drug in Canada.

The Vancouver/Richmond Health Board (VRHB) also released a report in 1998 on Safe Injection Sites, drawing attention to the fact that evidence suggests safe injection sites "may substantially reduce overdose deaths". The VRHB reported that, as a comprehensive continuum of care, safe injection sites can "help establish a critical link between injection drug users and health and social service providers."

In November, 1999, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network issued a report that called for sweeping



changes to Canada's Drug Policy, urging that "Canada must reverse the negative impacts of the current legal status of drugs on drug users ... (and) adopt alternatives to the current approach." This report also called on Health Canada to fund an "ethical and legal analysis of four or five situations or scenarios frequently encountered in the provision of HIV-related services to drug users (such as providing an injection room for drug users in a residential or institutional setting)."

More recently, Vancouver Medical Researchers Dr. Michael O'Shaughnessy and Dr. Martin Schecter, as part of the North American Opiate Medication Initiative, have called for clinical trials that would prescribe heroin to addicts under strict medical controls.

We also have strong evidence from Europe that shows that their comprehensive approach of treatment, social support, drug maintenance and safe injection sites has had dramatic effects in helping individual drug users and empowering the health and safety of local communities. Their common sense approach is clearly working and many European experts have visited Vancouver to tell us what they have learned. Yet we still have no commitment from you to move to a similar approach in Canada.

A drug maintenance program and safe injection sites require your approval as Minister of Health. There is a strong case to be made for both of these measures, to save lives, reduce the harmful effects of illegal drugs on the street, improve safety and decrease crime.

Attitudes towards such programs have changed dramatically within the medical community and the community at large over the past three years. The Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU) has done an excellent job of helping to change attitudes and biases about drug users. They have been outspoken in challenging current high threshold services that are inaccessible, and a law enforcement system that has degraded and marginalized drug users, and misspent countless dollars in the process. VANDU members have worked to support the Drug Resource Centre in the Downtown Eastside to help bring about understanding and dialogue on what really needs to be done to improve their own health and the safety of the community. Your support of the Drug Resource Centre is appreciated, but it's simply not enough. The Resource Centre is a step in the right direction, but on its own it cannot resolve the crisis and harm involved in obtaining drugs illegally on the street.

Beyond any doubt, we need a comprehensive harm reduction strategy here in Canada that includes:

- education;
- better treatment options;
- expanded methadone treatment;
- programs for drug maintenance trials;
- safe injection sites;
- housing and social supports,



to end the negative stereotyping of Injection Drug Users and enable people to rebuild their lives.

In February of this year, "Keeping the Door Open", a symposium on health, addictions and social justice at St. Paul's Hospital, brought together medical experts, drug users, community members and service providers, all in support of a comprehensive harm reduction model.

Provincial and municipal levels of government in British Columbia have indicated their support for a

comprehensive program. BC Premier Ujjal Dosanjh, in the recent leadership race stated his support for a "comprehensive harm reduction model including drug maintenance and accessible treatment models."

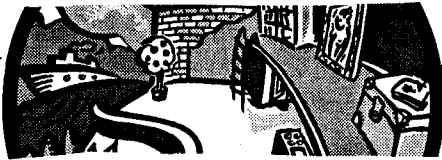
My question to you is: With such overwhelming evidence, why has your government refused to act while so many lives are being cut short by this health crisis?

In 1997, a few months after I stood in Oppenheimer Park in the midst of those 1000 crosses, I stood in the House of Commons and I asked you how many more lives would have to be lost before your government takes action. Mr. Rock, today I'm asking that question again and this time I implore you, let your answer to that question be "none". Act on the reports that are piling up and swiftly put them into action. We cannot afford another year, another month, or even another day of death, of devastation and harm to our community and to the individuals who are at risk.

A comprehensive harm reduction strategy has been researched, evaluated and debated. It is clear from my discussions with community leaders, police, healthcare providers, drug users and municipal and provincial officials, that this is the favoured approach. What is now required is your leadership and political will to bring the three levels of government and the community together to address this health crisis.

Yours sincerely,

Libby Davies MP
Vancouver East



MAIN AND HASTINGS GROUP: TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

The purpose of the group is to work together on a strategy to close the open drug market at Main and Hastings through the provision of comprehensive services for people with addictions that incorporate harm reduction, treatment, prevention and enforcement. This strategy is meant to contribute to an overall plan for dealing with substance abuse in the Downtown Eastside and the City generally. The closing of the drug market requires the opening and expansion of new and additional resources in the Downtown Eastside and in other areas of Vancouver and the region.

The focus of the work is on:

- saving lives among drug users
- returning the streets to the community so people of all backgrounds can be safe
- contributing to the overall quality of life in the community

"Main and Hastings" is the name of the group in recognition of the large drug market at this corner

and the challenge it presents to come up with solutions that will make a difference for the better in the lives of drug users and the community.

FUNCTIONS

The group has four main functions:

1. To work together on a common drug strategy.
2. To provide opportunities for collaboration among the participating groups in areas where we can act now
3. To bring to the table ideas and plans from our respective organizations for which advice and support from the group will be valuable
4. To share information

MEMBERSHIP

The group is composed of representatives from agencies with a priority interest in the corner, and with the drug population. At present the members agencies are Carnegie Community Centre, City of Vancouver, Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society (DEYAS), Neighbourhood Safety Office, Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), Vancouver Native Health Society, Vancouver Richmond Health Board & Van Police Dept..

For info: Michael Clague, Margaret Prevost

665-2220

THE CIRCLE OF HOPE

ADDICTION TREATMENT ON DEMAND

May 6 9:30 am to 9:00 pm

May 7 noon to 5:30 pm

Britannia Centre – Commercial Dr. & Napier
Vans pick people up at Carnegie, Oppenheimer,
the Portland, etc. at 11 am on Saturday, May 6.

*In a spirit of inclusion we invite all community
groups and individuals to join us in this exciting
project.*

Planned Events

- First Nations Drum Groups, dancers and speakers
- Multicultural entertainers and speakers
- Seminars: Youth in Recovery; Women in Recovery;
Addiction in the Workplace; The Medical Nature of
Addiction.
- Bridging Circle (community and addictions)
- Grief counselors on site. Food. Community Services
and Addictions Information Booths

Walk of Honour Treatment-on-Demand Rally
Candlelight Vigil

Call 215-2287 for info or to offer support.

The Price I Had To Pay

Growing up without the mother I needed so bad, waking up in the middle of the night alone made me so mad. Once again she was out getting drunk and high, without a simple kiss goodnight, without a simple kiss goodbye. I grew older, and her addiction she could no longer hide, and no longer did she care how I felt deep inside.

Still a young girl playing the mothers role, making the decisions, always at her beck and call. When she thought I was the stronger one, able to handle it all, she decided to introduce me to the drug that made her fall. Soon I met the monkey that she carried on her back; by my fourteenth birthday I was already fixing smack. Soon, I reached a point of no return. The dope man had to be paid, that's what I started to learn. When I felt like there was no hope, I knew it was time to call for more dope.

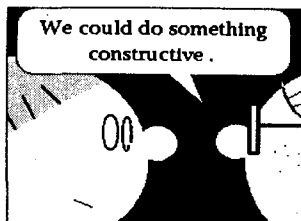
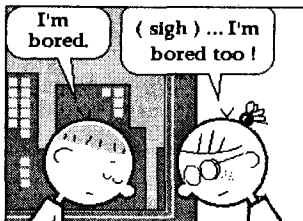
I just wanted her to say, "I LOVE YOU".. the price was so very high what was I to do. Just wanting to sooth her pain, on her worst day. Robbing, stealing, selling my soul- there had to be another way. The guilt soon got worse for her, so deep in her own denial. The only way to gain her love was to pay for that special smile.

The day I found her dead, laying on the bathroom floor. She died when I was gone on my way to score. I guess she was so tired, so sick of the game. Now I am here alone and nothing will ever be the same.

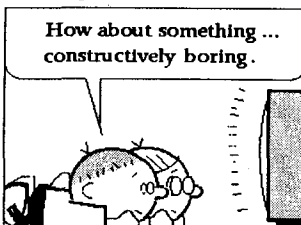
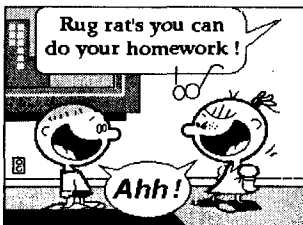
After all the years of feeling so gone, the healing process seems so very long. Maybe if I start loving myself, then I will realize I did nothing wrong. Patience is a virtue, with this long road ahead, this pain and anger that needs to come out, is what I really dread.

I have violated my body, my heart and soul. Peace and Serenity is my very first goal. I pray for a peaceful place for every child that might be led astray. Every time I turn my head there is another child that has to pay.

- unsigned



H
MAIN by Rick Nordal



You Want To Make The Streets Safer?

If you want to make the streets safer, you had better insist that all levels of government respect the human rights described in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976), and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) - all of which Canada has signed.

During the past twenty years, powerful corporations, with the assistance of governments over which they have great influence, have been conducting a global war against human rights because these rights are seen as a restraint on their private power.. or on what they call "the market".

For example, the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), passed by the Canadian government in 1966, contained five human rights including the right to income when in need and the right to adequate income. Under the enormous pressure of business lobby groups, the federal government abolished the Canada Assistance Plan on April 1, 1996 and replaced it with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). Four of the five human rights in CAP were wiped out, including the right to income when in need and the right to adequate income. The way was opened to desperate poverty in Canada, and the increase in homeless people, food bank users, panhandlers and squeegee kids that we see today is a direct result of the loss of the human rights in CAP.

At the same time as it abolished human rights for low income citizens, the CHST cut \$7 billion in federal transfer payments used for health, post-secondary education and social assistance. Critics of the CHST could see that a bitterly hard time was coming for poor and unemployed Canadians. Provincial governments were now free to refuse welfare to people in need, and were not required to maintain adequate welfare rates. As predicted, welfare rates fell right across Canada, and when you take into account a cost-of-living increase in B.C. of well over 100 percent from 1980 to 1999, the rates for income assistance are viciously low - and these low rates help keep down wages for people in the labour market.

Government policies have caused the increase in



panhandlers and squeegee kids. Instead of changing these policies by restoring the human rights in CAP, raising welfare rates, developing a national housing plan and creating decent jobs at decent wages, governments have attacked, and in some cases criminalized, panhandlers and squeegee kids. This is a cynical strategy of blaming the victim, and it completely ignores the causes for increased poverty in Canada. Surely there will be a place in Dante's *Inferno* for those who practice such political cynicism. As Sir Thomas More said in his book, *Utopia*, printed in the year 1519, "if you don't want thieves and beggars, stop making laws that create thieves and beggars."

The Charter Committee on Poverty issues (CCPI) is considering a challenge to the government's decision to destroy the human rights in the Canada Assistance Plan and, in December 1999, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights strongly condemned Canada's decision to abolish CAP. If we want safe streets, we'll have to fight for our human rights - for ourselves and for all the world's peoples.

By SANDY CAMERON
to be continued

ROCKING CHAIR

Someone came knocking; no one answered or ever will
'cause I live in a calloused bit of heart too scarred up
to ever give the world a chance to lay out their rap
Door is closed, heart is dead, brain lobotomized long ago

This empty rocking chair rocks in the wind
On a prairie wind this heart reaches out in blindness
They say the stitches will come out next week
but they've been saying that for years now

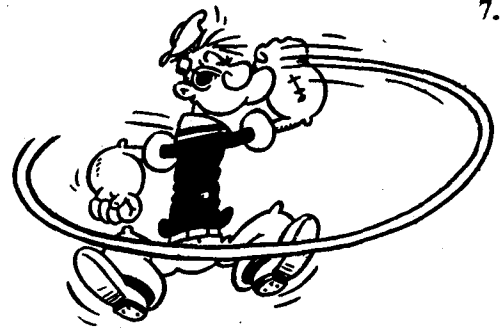
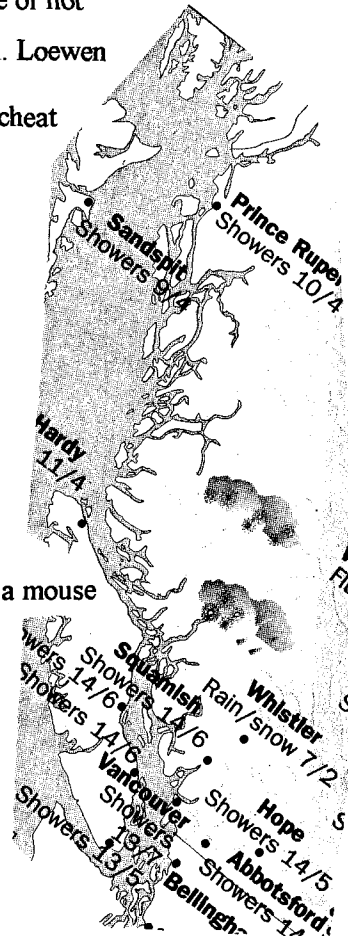
The sun rises whether or not we're awake to see
babies are born taxis collide everyday, yet
in the prison where I imitate life it looks the same
if you didn't know better you'd say someone was alive in there

So to those I actually fool into thinking the heart still bests
I'm sorry I have wasted your time
the rocking chair holds memories, regrets, stories
I no longer know whether they are true or not

R. Loewen

it rains I close my eyes sometimes I cheat
it rains I chew bubblegum
it rains I go splash in puddles
it rains I wear rubber boots
it rains I get to dream
it rains I want to forget
it rains I want to be cleansed
it rains it doesn't change anything
it rains I feel sad
it rains I cry
it rains I feel so alone
it rains I really feel the missing
it rains the sorrow never drowns
it rains I see a penny near the drain
it rains I see a kitty it's dreaming of a mouse
it rains my hair gets damp
it rains I just hang around
it rains I just sit & plan
it rains it smells in the alleys
it rains I can't always understand
it rains I "just be" it "just is"
it rains I just don't know
it rains I want to sing

Andrea Pearson



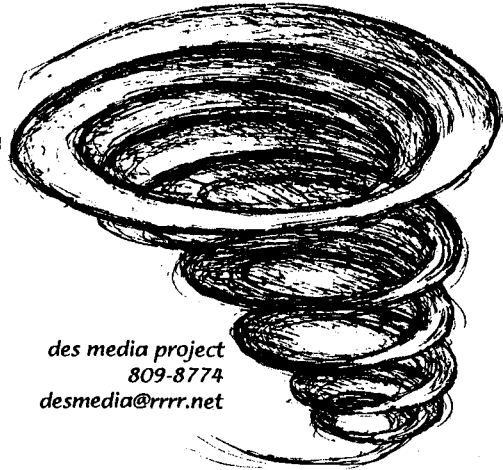
GENERATION X - Y2K

Thanks for coming round
from the outskirts of
your comfort zones
Thankx for caring
when many others turned away
afraid to be noticed
concerned with themselves
involved in their agendas
But you, students of
institutes of higher learning
have and will always respond
and react to the beating down
of the have-nots
of the Great Society
It's assuring to know
you'll come when called upon
to assist us in taking on the
establishment's poisonous powers
of creeping, calculated destruction
corrupted, decadent corporate world
their oppressive, stifling agenda
the Tyranny of these tyrants
must never be tolerated
they are to be stopped in their tracks
if we give them an inch
they will take the universe
everytime like clockwork
tic toc tic toc tic toc
beware
when you enter our communities
we are and will be on guard
and as always
vigilant

Robyn Livingstone

A Media Workshop For the People!

The des media collective invites downtown eastside residents interested in telling their stories, writing, making video, photography and art projects to join us in developing collaborative community productions. We are an art collective



des media project
809-8774
desmedia@rrrr.net

April 25 2000

Letters to the Editor: "Province Newspaper"
Re: Story by A. Tanner and use of Narcan

I am somewhat bewildered by some of the content in the Drug Overdose story of this Tuesday. We expected some form of media hustle by Ms Kwan's office regarding drug overdose deaths, as there was a person from her Office interviewing folks last week regarding ODs. [overdose death]

Ms Kwan's representative was told, and given a protocols outline, of the Overdose Program that operates in Chicago - that the sole use of narcotic antagonists such as Narcan to deal with drug overdoses has limited potential. In short, if folks aren't breathing, or CPR isn't happening for them, the use of Narcan would have limited potential. I put in front of Ms Kwan's staff the Chicago Proposal and stated that this Agency would happily enter into a partnership with the Provincial Government, and others, to train high risk addicts in overdose procedures. Instead the article in the

from different backgrounds starting a weekly workshop at the Carnegie. The des media workshop will center on expressing yourselves, documenting life, empowerment and creativity.

Using basic art materials, installation, writing, photography, video, and other art forms you can gain knowledge and cultivate self-expression. Your participation in the workshop will form the framework for short or long term projects.

We are hosting an open house on Thursday May 4, 3-6PM in the 3rd floor classroom at Carnegie Center to launch the workshop. Come on by, watch videos, meet us and have a cup of special tea served by a local tea artist and some delicious carrot cake! After that the workshop will meet every Thursday, same time and place.

*for info phone 809-8774, or email desmedia@rrrr.net

Province seems to be the extent of this government's and Ms Kwan's concern regarding deaths from drug overdoses.

Our Neighbourhood Safety Office, VANDU, and DEYAS will hopefully develop a Program to train high risk addicts to deal with drug overdoses. One cannot wait for the Provincial Government to take action regarding this matter, nor, it seems, to take the loss of these lives seriously.

At least the NDP Government seems consistent in this matter. It solicited the Vince Cain report in 1993 and has met few of the 62 recommendations contained within it. It has neglected most recommendations by its own Chief Provincial Health Officer regarding solutions to addiction and drug related deaths in their yearly annual report.

In short, we had 39 OD deaths in this Province in 1988, 331 OD deaths in 1993, 312 deaths 1996, 413 deaths in 1998, and this year the numbers dying are higher than ever before. What do we receive from the Provincial Government to assist the Community in dealing with this -eleventh hour pre-election posturing that serves to reflect upon the years of inaction that is the Provincial Government's true track record in this matter.

John Turvey, Executive Director
DEYAS (Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society)

*This is the third and final part of Gil Puder's paper "Recovering Our Honour: Why Policing Must Reject the War On Drugs." Gil wrote a book on this issue. Again, as his views and principles seem to have pissed off the wrong people, Gil died at 40 of a sudden and lethal case of cancer. Not to worry.. just a coincidence...

3. THE ROAD AHEAD

The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.

"On Liberty"

- John Stuart Mill

The critical change that must occur is our acknowledgement that drugs rarely cause crime, while money almost always causes crime. Before complaining about drug crime and the associated health costs or tax burden,²⁸ people should realize that these evils are the offspring of prohibition,²⁹ a disaster of our own creation. Our unwillingness to recognize reality is an embarrassment, prompting one distinguished police chief to lament, "it's the money, stupid!"³⁰ The CBC National News recently featured Winnipeg police busting biker-supported pot-growing operations, sandwiched between a report on a Vancouver journalist threatened by bikers, and a feature story on the Hell's Angels³¹. Yet when asked how to make progress against the drug profiteering that bankrolls this criminal organization, a spokesperson admits that it's beyond control while predictably calling for more funding³². This simply echoes the policy of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police³³, who concede that trafficking profits generate economic power for criminal organizations, yet respond by urging the Government of Canada to provide "appropriate resources," for more enforcement. By refusing to endorse a lawful drug supply which would end this black market cash cow for criminals, I hope police of all ranks and agencies realize that our intransigence allows the perception of "Support your local Hell's Angel" stickers on our patrol cars. To force policing to admit that it cannot win this drug war, voters and policymakers need to "just say no", to more of the public's money for cops, guns, and jails. For public service addiction to the taxpayer's wallet, "cold turkey" may be the only cure. Once decriminalization finally receives it's overdue opportunity, marijuana is the obvious place to start. By responsibly allowing limited access to the relatively harmless (and in many cases, quite useful!³⁵) cannabis plant, we can redirect hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to important social issues. A government regulated marijuana distribution system would create employment, generate revenue to promote health and education, cut off funding from organized crime, and finally provide police with a credible mandate for enforcement against the few black marketeers who remained. Similar to alcohol and nicotine, cannabis could be effectively controlled at the community level by regional legislation and municipal bylaws. I'd be happy to see adults purchase marijuana from a liquor store, or consume in a licensed establishment, enforcement responsibilities then turning to legitimate public order issues such as supplying to minors and consuming in public. Fearmongering notwithstanding, there is simply no downside to allowing controlled access to this substance.

Regarding heroin and the opiates, the decriminalization trials in Switzerland have been such an overwhelming success, by crime, economic, health and public approval standards, that replication of the process must be implemented in this country, and none too soon. The British Columbia Chief Coroner's exhaustive analysis of illicit injection drugs³⁷ finds our Canadian responses hopelessly inadequate, and in need of a broad-based, multi-disciplinary approach. A large scale and carefully monitored medical trial could at last provide lawmakers with an opportunity to rationally evaluate alternative control mechanisms. When heroin finally receives the serious examination that it deserves, other substances such as cocaine and chemical drugs might then be

critically studied on their own merits, rather than in the current climate of irrational fear. Which control methodology would prove least harmful to society is, of course, open to informed speculation. What we've spent billions of dollars and countless lives proving, however, is that criminal prohibition isn't it. Progress will not be easy, and there will be no shortage of naysayers lining up to promote everything from legitimate concerns to "chicken-little" styled hysteria. While people would rightfully view this presentation as critical of certain policing practices, we must remember that many groups have contributed to history's most expensive failed social experiment. Whether it's counselors dependant upon government funding, politicians with career plans, doctors with monopolistic treatment clinics or simply citizens blinded by propaganda and faith, there's plenty of blame to go around, and the concurrent incentive to deny necessary changes. Critical examination, however, invariably exposes the traditionalist's threadbare and self-serving logic.

Concerns abound regarding U.S. political pressures,³⁸ and there is certainly recent evidence of interference with other countries' domestic drug policies.³⁹ We might politely ask certain Americans to mind their own business, and point out their own, much more dangerous pushers, who traffic nicotine death from the tobacco fields of the Southeastern states, and export cheap weapons, which are the industrial world's most shameful product. Most Canadians would be embarrassed to learn that our drug laws were formed in an atmosphere of religious intolerance and racism⁴¹ Do we really want to emulate our southern neighbours, whose similar laws are succeeding where the armies of the Confederacy failed, by putting enormous numbers of black men behind bars? I resent opinions that our government should use its police to intervene in people's personal body choices, when those same voices invariably invoke the cause of freedom to champion everyone's right to own a gun. Ending the drug war means it's time for Canadian patriotism to mean something more than an excuse to argue over a flag on a parliamentarian's desk.

I have some hope that the threshold for change has been reached, since it appears that mounting evidence is overwhelming even the most ardent drug warriors. When the World Health Organization suppresses valuable research⁴² on specious grounds,⁴³ amidst unseemly rumblings of well-funded political lobbying, this is perhaps a last, desperate attempt to conceal one of the shattered myths upon which the drug war is founded. Promoting censorship may be justifiable to people whose careers are imperiled by the truth,⁴⁵ yet this is invariably both ineffectual and short-lived, with those responsible earning only contempt from those upon whom they perpetrate the act. It is my fervent desire that Canadian policing will choose the high road, placing integrity and public safety first, while shedding our traditional role of defending established interests. Musashi wrote that, "the warrior's way is the twofold way of pen and sword;" we've spent the Twentieth Century proving that we can use one, and now it is time to pick up the other.

Perhaps the best wisdom of all comes from the minds of the pure and uninitiated, whose thoughts are untainted by a lifetime of misinformation. Viewing a televised documentary on injection drug use, including disturbing images of a man killed by his father, my nine-year old son watched an interview with addicts who explained a myriad of disorders that were ruining their lives. Not once did he ask his father the cop why these criminals were not in jail. His advice to me was, "Dad, those people are sick." I hope someone other than I will listen.

28. *Conservatively estimated to total \$1.37 billion for the year 1992 in:* Single, E. et al, The Costs of Substance Abuse in Canada. (Ottawa: CCSA, 1995).

29. Friedman, M., "The Drug War as a Socialist Enterprise," Keynote Address. (Washington, D.C.: Fifth International Conference on Drug Policy Reform. 91.11.16).

30. McNamara, J., from, "The War on Drugs is Lost". The National Review. 96.02.12, 42

31. McAuliffe, M., "Hell's Angels." The National. (08G. 98.03.04), *and* Sherren, R., "Bust," The National (CBC, 98.03.04), *and* "Dangerous Offenders," The Maoazine (CBC, 98.03.04).

32. Dalstrom, Cst A., from Klnes, L., "Hell's Angels, Police Try to Use Media For Own Ends," The Vancouver Sun, (98.03.10). A1.

33. Canada's Drug Strategy (CACP, 1996).
34. Morgan, J., and Zimmer, L, Marijuana Myths. Marijuana Facts: A Review of the Scientific Evidence, (New York: Under Smith Center, 1997) pp. 6-16.
35. *Ibid*, pp. 16-25.
36. Uchtenhagen, A. "Summary of the Synthesis Report," in Uchtenhagen, A., Gu-willer, F., and Dobler-Mikola, A., (Eds.), Programme for a Medical Prescription of Narcotics: Final Report of the Research Representatives (Zurich: Institute for Social and Preventive Medicine at the University of Zurich, 1997).
37. Cain, V., Illicit Narcotic Overdose Deaths in British Columbia. (Burnaby: Office of the Chief Coroner, 1994)
38. Vincent, I. "Enforcers challenge cannabis liberation movement," The Globe and Mail, 98.04.06.
39. Marr, D., and Lagan, B., "The Real Drug War Why the US Won't Let Australia Reform Its Drug Laws", The Sydney Morning Herald. (Australia: 97.07.19).
40. Keegan, 384.
41. Giffen. et al, 45-97, 150-154.
42. Hall, W., et al.
43. Cannabis: a health perspective and research agenda, (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1997), 29.
44. Abraham, C., Marijuana flap gets pot boiling at WHO," The Globe and Mail. (Toronto: 9803.03), and "Marijuana Special Report High Anxieties," New Scientist (98.02.21).
45. International Narcotic Control Board, Annual Report (United Nations, 1997). Chapter 1

how vicious are we?

one of our daughters
 still a girl
 is below my balcony
 keeping 6 in the alley
 while a native or latino or black man
 shoots up behind her whose
 valuable skin is torn by
 objects more comforting
 than our harsh hand
 locking her up again and again
 because we cannot stand
 to see her love where we do not

she's our white renegade terror come true
 and consequently we refuse
 to help her
 no help for her
 standing in a chinatown doorway
 leaning there actually quite defiantly
 smokin a cigarette

and ready
 to not take
 any shit
 from police
 whose handcuffs
 scar the wrists of

our
 abandoned
 daughter



- * Kindness is a language that the dumb can speak and the deaf can hear and understand.
- * Every form of addiction is bad, no matter whether the narcotic be alcohol or morphine or idealism.
- * To be simple is to be great.
- * Don't take life too seriously. You will never get out of it alive!

Bud Osborn

submitted by Videha

**DOWNTOWN
EASTSIDE
YOUTH
ACTIVITIES
SOCIETY**

**STD CLINIC - 219 Main; Monday - Friday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
NEEDLE EXCHANGE - 221 Main; 8:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. every day
NEEDLE EXCHANGE VAN - 3 Routes
City - 5:45 p.m. - 11:45 p.m.
Overnight - 12:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Downtown Eastside - 5:30 p.m. 1:30 a.m.**

2000 DONATIONS Libby D.-\$55
Sam R.-\$15 Nancy W.-\$20 Eve E.-\$3
Margaret D.-\$6 Shyamala G.-\$18
Joy T.-\$25 Jennifer M.-\$2 Val A.-\$36
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Rolf A.-\$45 Bruce J.-\$50 Beth L.-\$2
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Nancy H.-\$35 Bill G.-\$150 Wes K.-\$30
DEYAS-\$200 RayCam -\$25
Wisconsin Historical Society -\$10
Heather S.-\$18 John S-\$50
Yukiko -\$10 VEDC -\$25
Rockingguy - \$30

FREE - donations accepted

Carnegie

NEWSLETTER

101 Main Street, Vancouver V6A 2T7 (604) 685-2289

THE NEWSLETTER IS A PUBLICATION OF THE
CARNEGIE COMMUNITY CENTRE ASSOCIATION
Articles represent the views of contributors
and not of the Association.

**Submission Deadline
for next issue
Friday, May 11**

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

- * Welfare problems;
- * Landlord disputes;
- * Housing problems;
- * Unsafe living conditions;

**Come to the Dera office at 425 Carrall Street or
phone us at 682 - 0931**

**DERA has been serving the Downtown Eastside
for 26 years!!!!**

Because I am an Indian

*Every time I walk proudly on this; God's given land, I am criticized;
Because I am Indian.*

*Each time I put a smile upon my face, I am not recognized;
Because I am Indian.*

*Many times I've given things out as big as my heart, I am laughed at;
Because I am Indian.*

*A lot of times I've complimented the beauty of that person,
But was treated as a doormat; Because I am Indian.*

*Each time I've searched for a friend to share my jokes with, I am questioned;
Because I am Indian.*

*Many times I have poured out my feelings, instead my character is impugned;
Because I am Indian.*

*A lot of times I have asked for help spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally;
With no sympathy, I was turned down; Because I am Indian.*

*Many times when things got rough and tough, I gave my support, but was not thanked,
And put on the rebound; Because I am Indian.*

*If I were to express my feelings, by yelling and screaming, I am down-graded;
"Oh, that stupid/crazy Indian." Because... I am Indian !!!*

*So why can't they stop stereotyping me, and see me as a human being;
Because I am Indian.*

*So to read back all of this in writing, it won't be overlooked now;
Because I am Indian.*

*So now if I do dance 'til sunset with the Eagles singing above at a Pow-Wow;
That is good, Because I am Indian.*

*In the next version of this poem, I am not trying to sound so rude,
Because I am Indian.*

*So to put this in another perspective note, it is good to be a crazy Indian;
Because I am Indian.*

*In retrospect of my nature, I am proudly identified as first Nation; So please listen,
Because I am Indian.*

*In our White Brother's wisest words, "You have to be a little crazy, to get along, or
you'll be called, "nuts." So he says; "Let's go Indian." I say; "No."
Because I am Indian.*

Marie Keyespapamatao

OPEN FORUM: On a Community Health Initiative by University Students @ Downtown Health Clinic

What: Expanded hours – Saturdays 10-1, Sundays 10-5 (everyone welcome); Saturdays 1:30-5 (women)
Wednesday & Friday evenings 6:30-9:30 (open house)

Who will work there: Student doctors, nurses and social workers (supervised by a Doctor and R.N.)

Goal of the Forum: Get input on services that students could provide during these hours.

When: Wednesday, May 3rd, 7:00 pm **Where:** In the clinic at 412 E. Cordova (255-3151)

MAY | DAY

For the past 113 years, May 1st has been a day to recognize the existence of a working class, to celebrate its international solidarity, to show its strength of opposition to the bosses and their governments, and to put forth its vision for a different world.

Originally a pagan holiday celebrating the changing seasons and fertility, the modern day celebration of May Day grew out of the militant struggle for the eight-hour workday. May Day was declared an international working class holiday in 1889 to commemorate workers' rights and working class power.

Against a backdrop of increased local and global class polarization, May Day "Carnivals Against Capitalism" are being organized throughout the world and in cities across Canada, including Victoria, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto and Ottawa. Vancouver's Carnival Against Capitalism, called by the Vancouver Direct Action Network, will rally at 10 am at Victory Square on Monday, May 1st and proceed with a march, street theatre, and non-violent direct actions through the city's downtown financial district.

An alliance of Community and labour activists have come together to produce the "Mayworks Festival Of Working Class Culture and Politics." It's a do-it-yourself community festival of 56 events over 34 days. Art and culture have always been powerful forces, reflecting back working class imagination, resistance, and aspirations for a better world. Marketeers have begun mining working class cultures, taking everything from inner city music and clothes to revolutionary icons – using them, in turn, to sell everything from software to T-shirts and soft drinks.

Labour and the left looked around and saw management soft-selling their control of the workplace with videos and artsy marketing gimmicks. The ruling class was getting its message out, shaping the way working class people saw themselves and their problems. The first "Mayworks Festival of Culture and Working Life" in 1988 challenged the high-brow notions of art.

This year's Mayworks put out a call for proposals inviting progressive groups and individuals to organize their own events on the theme of working class culture and politics. But there are more fundamental changes to this year's festival.

Since NDP welfare reforms began in 1995, over 100,000 people have disappeared from the welfare rolls in BC – this during a period of high unemployment, especially for youth. Meanwhile, employment in BC has been falling in the heavily unionized forestry and mineral industries and those jobs that have been created tend to be part-time and in the non-unionized service sector, most often taken up by youth, women, people of colour and immigrants.

A growing underclass of chronically unemployed, underemployed, or low paid workers has been created in BC, a development mirrored in capitalist economies all over the world. This year's festival reflects a broad international vision of working class culture beyond the shop floor from workers in the growing service sector to those in welfare, unemployment and immigration lines, from working class households and communities to class on the reserve and in youth cultures. Class struggle issues of housing, sexism, racism, transit,

immigration, mental health, workplace control, wages, sexuality, clean air & water, access to welfare, education and medical services, policing – and more – hit the Mayworks stage.

For present day Mayworks organizers, the tag “working people” – while favoured by some unions and the NDP – misses the point. May Day is a day to recognize the on-going struggles of workers, whether employed or unemployed, as a class.

By Suzanne Baustad

I went through the 16-page Mayworks guide with my reading glasses and a pen, and these are some of my picked-to-click (events I/we can afford)

WORKING CLASS STRUGGLE IN LATIN AMERICA

Friday May 5, 7:30 pm at La Quena, 1111 Commercial Dr.

A public forum focusing on the effects of the Neo-liberal model being imposed on Latin America. A night of political speakers, video presentation, and discussion. *Free.*

TRIBUTE TO CUBAN AND LATIN AMERICAN YOUTH

Sunday May 7, 2-5 pm at the Rebel Centre, 2278 E. 24th

A report back from the Latin American Youth Conference on Neo-Liberalism held in Cuba in April 2000, where 5000 youth planned strategies to combat Neo-liberalism & Globalization. Speaker: UBC student activist Julia Payson and film: “Cuba Va” on youth & democracy. *Free.* (Buffet lunch -\$5 donation)

FUNKORAMA Sunday May 7, 7-10 pm

at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre (Venables & Victoria)

A multimedia, spoken word, music funkorama by and for local youth. Part of the Youth Driven Youth Action conference. *Admission by donation.*

THE PANAMA DECEPTION (UK 1992) Monday May 8, 7 pm

at La Quena, 1111 Commercial Drive

This film exposes the motivation behind the US takeover of the Panama Canal Zone. *Pay what you can.*

ABOVE THE LAW II: THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY (Canada 2000)

Wednesday, May 10, 9 pm at the Blinding Light Cinema, 36 Powell St.

This new video looks at the 1995 Gustafsen Lake standoff & how the Canadian & BC governments turned a land dispute into a major military campaign. Co-Producer John “Splitting The Sky” Hill will discuss his video with the audience. *\$5 - \$7 sliding scale.*

WELFARE AND WORKERS Saturday May 13, 1-4 pm

in the Carnegie Theatre, 401 Main A forum presented by End Legislated Poverty. *Free.*

THE FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY Sunday May 14, 6-8 pm

at La Quena, 1111 Commercial Drive A discussion of the impact of globalization on women. Preceded by the film: “Modern Heroes Modern Slaves”, the story of the 2000 people, mostly women, who daily leave the Philippines to seek work abroad. Each day 4-6 of them return home in coffins. *Free.*

CLASS AND TECHNOLOGY Wednesday, May 17, 7:30 pm

Forum / Workshop at SFU Harbour Centre 515 W.Hastings St.

Are technological advances a help or a hindrance to the class struggle? *Free.*

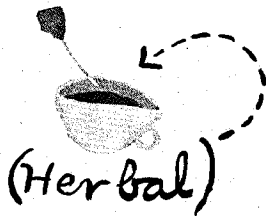
My Being

Electric wild life
promise my safe passage
guide my soul
evaporate my pain.

Elastic future
stretching across my whole being.
Inviting me to stay,
swallowing me whole.



Cat
Astrology
Book



Elaborate vision
disregard my faults,
I beg you not to judge.
Pardon my mistakes,
evict all the evil
like a bad tenant.
Electric wild life
promise my safe passage.

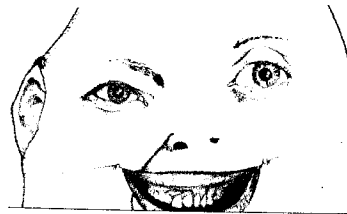
Nicole Eggie

Notes from the Reading Room

This past week we've been doing some shifting and weeding in the collections. We're trying to make room for new material coming into the Reading Room and to accommodate other material we've had stored in the back on our overflow shelves. We've got nearly everything out, now, so keep an eye out for books you haven't seen before. If you can't find your favourite section or your favourite book, just ask the Reading Room staff and we'll show you where it's been moved. We hope that you'll be able to find things faster and easier, and that you'll see all the new items more readily. Let us know what you think.

In the past, previous Reading Room staff had been in the habit of accommodating Carnegie card patrons by using the Reading Room's library card (yes, the Reading Room has one, too, just like its patrons) for placing holds and checking out items. Recent experience has shown us that this practice can be very costly. As a result, the practice is discontinued.

By the time this column is in print the Federal Treaty Negotiation Office display banners will



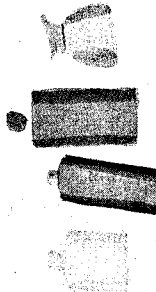
Cry of the disenfranchised

nightfolk are pariah
our sungod society ignores those
of the afterhour
denies equality for those whose sin
is waking with the rising moon

our callous system don't do business
with the likes of you who starbathe
daytiniers only need apply
'nd if you don't
you're the one who's fukt

the nocturnal spirit is
exited pineal majic
tinkling last laugh of yin
you can't apply sun protection factor
to your brain
and the late cat gets the early bird

Edi Ocre



Creams, Lotions
& Gels

have moved on. They are scheduled here only for a week. We placed a note book and pen on a table so that those who stopped for a look could, if they wished, record their thoughts about the display. Thanks to those who left their remarks and hope everyone stopped to have a look at them.

We want to make special mention of Taum Danberger in this column. It was his idea, originally, to give proper mention and credit to people who had returned Carnegie Reading Room books and other items they'd found around the community. We neglected to name him for this very activity. Please consider yourself so-named, Taum, with our thanks.

Dick Turner, Acting Branch Head
Carnegie Reading Room

Checks for welfare cheats 'illegal intimidation'

DERA calls ministry's unannounced visits to verify residency an invasion of privacy

By Chris Miller
Staff writer

THE GOVERNMENT'S response to welfare fraud has crossed the line into invasion of privacy, says Frank Gilbert, a spokesman for the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association.

DERA receives weekly complaints from low-income tenants who are upset about home verification checks, but afraid to resist them. "It's intimidating when a welfare worker and two police officers show up at your door," said Gilbert. "Are you going to say they can't come in?"

The verification checks—performed by a Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security employee, often accompanied by police—are intended to ensure that people who receive government assistance for rent actually live in rental suites.

People sometimes claim to live in rental properties so they can receive welfare cheques, then split the proceeds in collusion with unscrupulous landlords.

The checks are necessary to protect taxpayers and welfare recipients from being exploited by landlords, which is a widespread problem on the East Side, said Nancy Cheung, co-ordinator of the city's Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams.

The verification officer works on one of 16 teams that provides a variety of services, including

checking livability standards. Gilbert said residents have no problem with most of the work—some of which involves home checks—but the enforcement visits upset them.

"Whatever we do, we're not going to make everyone happy," said Cheung. "But the true victims are the ones being taken advantage of."

She focuses her checks on the small proportion of East Side hotels and rooming houses—about 20 of 100—that have been identified as problem spots, Cheung said. About 6,000 East Side residents live in hotels and rooming houses.

Cheung said the verification officer tries to be as unobtrusive as possible when she enters an apartment, but a police presence—

which she admits can be unsettling for tenants—is necessary for protection.

"I know for a fact she's had a number of incidents that have really frightened her," she said.

Tenants aren't always home when she checks buildings. At suites where no one answers the door, the verification officer will enter rooms—with the permission of the landlord—to make sure someone lives there. "She can make a good judgment pretty fast if there's someone in the room or not," Cheung said.

But Gilbert said the verification officer shouldn't be there in the first place. Tenancy regulations require landlords to give 24-hour written notice before entering a tenant's room, and include an explanation for the entry. If a resi-

P.S. MUELLER



E-HOMELESSNESS

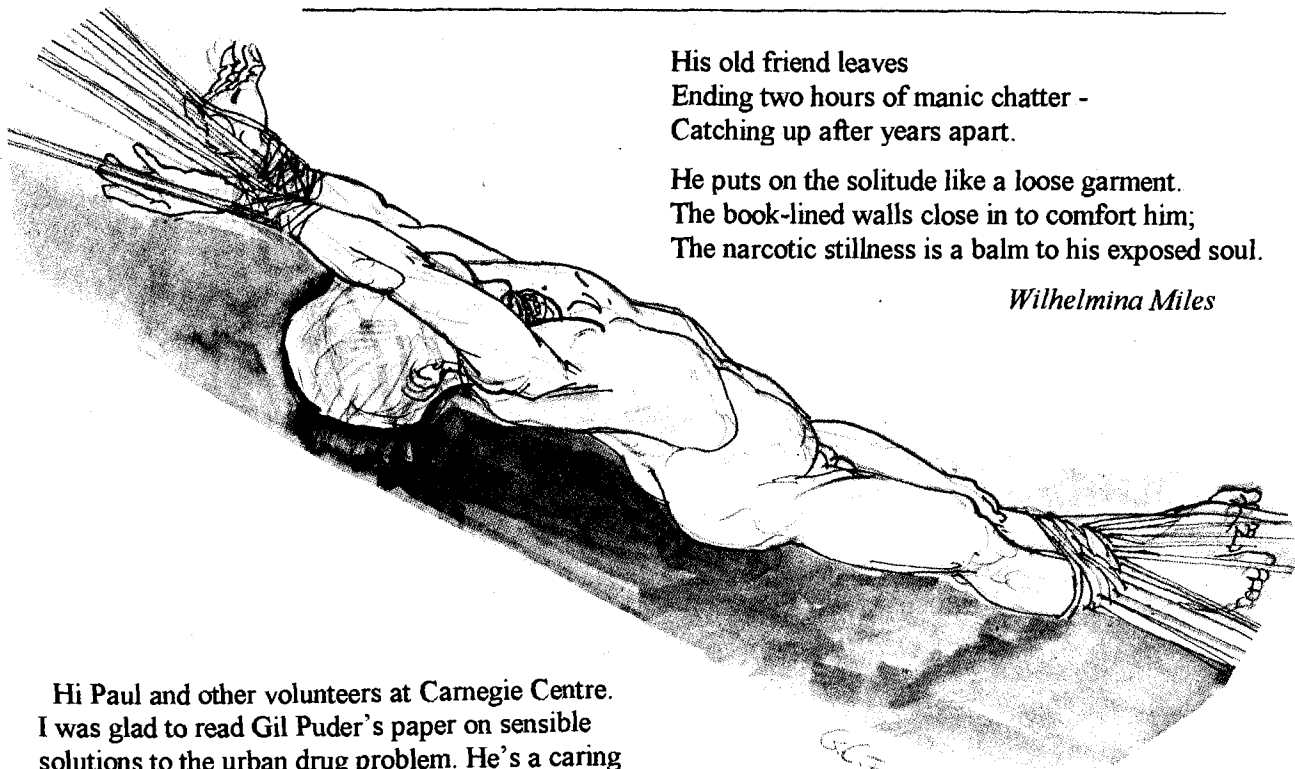
dent challenges the entry, an arbiter must resolve the standoff.

Gilbert said the residents he has talked to claimed that no notice was given. He said the government wouldn't act this way in the richer West Side, but respect for people's rights seems to slide in low-income neighbourhoods.

In many cases, tenants aren't aware of their right to refuse entry, said Gilbert. Even those who are aware may be afraid to resist the checks because they've had brushes with the law in the past.

"Most people just say, 'It's not worth it. I have to live in this place,'" he said. DERA advocates are trying to educate residents

about their right to refuse entry, but Gilbert thinks only a lawsuit will put a stop to the practice. "They want 80 per cent of people off welfare, no matter what it takes," said Gilbert. "I've never seen such mean-spirited people, such mean-spirited legislation."



His old friend leaves
Ending two hours of manic chatter -
Catching up after years apart.

He puts on the solitude like a loose garment.
The book-lined walls close in to comfort him;
The narcotic stillness is a balm to his exposed soul.

Wilhelmina Miles

Hi Paul and other volunteers at Carnegie Centre. I was glad to read Gil Puder's paper on sensible solutions to the urban drug problem. He's a caring individual able to express his thoughts and understanding on paper and be a police officer. Hopefully his observations will make a difference in policing here and elsewhere.

Thanks to the Carnegie Community Action Project and the Newsletter for bringing this information to us. Maybe someone could read these papers (Gil's) on Co-op Radio or some other media. We do need answers to the terrible problems of drug use, poverty and imprisonment by the government.

"Poverty is the destruction of the Poor." [Proverbs]

Mike Bohnert

Of a certitude he regrets the estrangement
While her tone says continue the arrangement
And so we go on unable to repair the heart
The damage is done and the love so tender
has been put asunder

Will we weep inside until we die?

Oh God what have I done?

Take care young ones for regret lasts a lifetime
and you may get very old.

Mike Bohnert

Community Directions Needs Our Support

The Asset Inventory

The media, a few misguided entrepreneurs and the occasional unscrupulous politician trash our community of the Downtown Eastside constantly. The only thing they see is skid road. Perhaps they think that if they demonize us, it will be easier for them to push us out of our neighbourhood.

We know that the Downtown Eastside is a vital community filled with talented and caring people. For example, the Carnegie Centre alone has over 350 volunteers who make this dynamic community centre work. In co-operation with Community Directions, a coalition of over 40 groups, Haedv Mason is going to record the strengths and skills of the Downtown Eastside-Strathcona communities. She is coordinating, with the help of a grant from the Vancouver Foundation, an Asset Inventory that will bring to light the talents and skills in our neighbourhood, and help to organize these skills to build a stronger community. Every member of the community has something to contribute. The Downtown Eastside/Strathcona neighbourhoods are rich in multicultural experience and caring. We are powerful, and the Asset Inventory will catalogue some of that power.

The Asset Inventory is also gathering all the research that has been done in the Downtown

Eastside/Strathcona communities. We don't need more research or more experts. We need to use wisely the research we have, and the skills of the human beings who make up our community.

From the middle of March to the middle of May, fifteen Downtown Eastside residents will be going to visit the many groups in our community, and they will ask people to fill out the Asset Inventory Questionnaire. The people who are doing this inventory are looking for what is positive about our community. They are looking for individual skills, group activities, and for suggestions from residents about how they want to be involved in community building.

This Asset Inventory is important because it will show the strengths of our community, and it will make visible a Downtown Eastside that is much more positive than the negative image of skid road. If we don't fight back, those who want to stomp us into the ground for their own profit will just keep stomping. The Asset Inventory is one way of fighting back, and the information it collects will be helpful to Community Directions as that coalition tries to build a process of dialogue which unites our complex community.

The history of the Downtown Eastside is a history of the struggle for human rights, whether that be the struggle of First Nations people for Justice, the struggle of working people for trade unions, the struggle of Chinese-Canadians for the full rights of citizenship, the struggle of unemployed workers for work and wages, the struggle of Japanese-Canadians for redress after World War Two, and the ongoing struggle of all peoples for dignity and respect. Our history, our meeting places, our support systems, our friends with all their compassion, skills and experience, our poetry, our united voice, and our community, Vancouver's oldest community, are worth fighting for.

If you would like more information about the Asset Inventory, or if you would like people from the Asset Inventory to visit your group, call Haedv Mason at 713-4465.

By SANDY CAMERON
to be continued



MONDAY WASH DAY

once upon a time
Downtown Eastside
on a Monday morn-
ing was awash with
the flapping clothes
lines of the weekly
clean-up.

Symbols of family,
love of life, cleansing
spirit of sunshine &
fresh air... A loud
hurrah and three
cheers of readiness
for the new week to
come.

Sam Roddan



The Western Canada Society to Access Justice
NEIGHBOURHOOD LAW CLINICS
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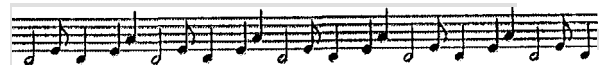
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you in court preparation. This service is provided
by qualified volunteer lawyers. This service is not
associated with LegalAid or the Salvation Army.*



Carnegie Community Centre
Association.....Presents....

The Carnegie Classics

Two classical music concerts

First-time ever in the Downtown Eastside!
The Amadeus Trio
Playing Bach, Haydn, Mozart and more
Tuesday, May 2, @ noon on the third floor

And...

Back by popular demand!
Pacific Piano Trio, with special guest
Playing Mozart, Telemann and Beethoven
Sunday, May 14 @ 4pm, in the Theatre.

