

FREE - donations accepted

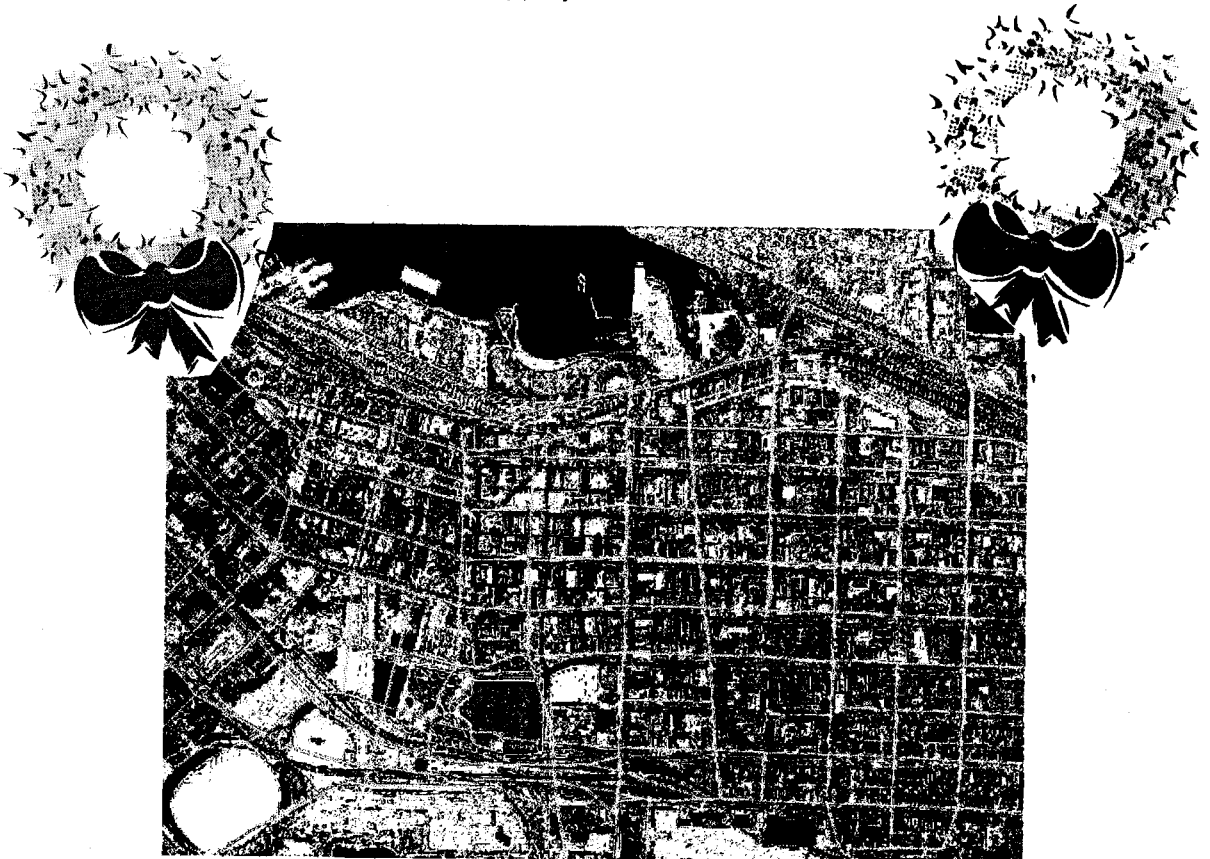
# Carnegie



## NEWSLETTER

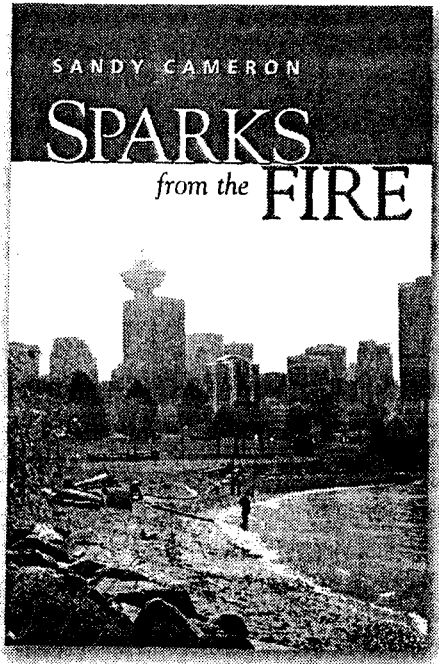
DECEMBER 15, 2000

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



..AND HERE WE ARE!

# SPARKS *from the* FIRE



"If a culture is to be whole –  
if a culture is to heal – it is vital to hear the  
voices of all its citizens. Sandy Cameron is  
one of those voices. He speaks for the  
ordinary of us – the miner, the fisher, the  
street worker – the ones who keep the  
wheel turning. He speaks for the vital of us,  
the silent of us. Listen!"

– KATE BRAID

## Christmas Eve At Muskrat Lake

### On Christmas Eve

the entire village  
went tobogganing  
on the sloping banks  
of Muskrat Lake.  
Everyone was bundled up  
in mukluks, parkas  
mitts and scarves.  
Some came to watch,  
others to ride  
on this restive night  
of clouds and stars.

Some toboggans scooted down  
like otters.  
Others slide sideways,  
and still others turned over.  
Tiny children  
with wide eyes  
were held firmly by parents  
who rode with them.  
Everyone who wanted a ride  
found a place on a toboggan.  
No one was left out.

Jeremiah, who was six, ]  
tugged on my arm.  
Come for a ride, he said,  
and I rode with Jeremiah  
and as many of his friends  
as would fit on the toboggan.  
Down the hill we went  
with shouts and screams  
and the toboggan skidded sideways  
and we all fell off  
and Jeremiah jumped up,  
eyes shining,  
and ran after the toboggan.

Big, fluffy flakes of snow  
began to fall from the dark sky.  
Children tried to catch snowflakes  
on their tongues.  
and older folks stood still  
and let the large flakes  
land on their heads

and outstretched hands.  
 Gradually people started  
 to go home.  
 There were children to put to bed,  
 and hands and feet to be warmed.

It stopped snowing.  
 and stars were visible  
 among the clouds.  
 In the distance a wolf howled,  
 and the dogs at Muskrat Lake  
 took up the call.

Sandy Camcron

from Sparks from the Fire

## Literacy

Toni was eighteen  
 and living with a man  
 in his fifties.  
 She was taking a grade ten  
 English course and  
 reading the musical play  
*My Fair Lady*,  
 adapted from George Bernard Shaw's  
*Pygmalion*.

Neither the language  
 or the plot  
 interested her,  
 although she thought  
 the flower girl  
 was a lot smarter  
 than the professor.  
 What she really wanted  
 to talk about  
 was her twenty-two year old sister,  
 mother of two children,  
 who committed suicide  
 by hanging herself  
 with a bedsheet  
 in a closet  
 too small to stand up in.  
 The police remarked  
 that it must have taken her  
 a long time to die.

Sparks from the Fire is poetry from the pen of a man who has done many things. Sandy Cameron has been a prospector, a miner, a logger and a teacher in many parts of northern Canada from Yukon to Labrador. In the book are poems about the north, about the land and its people and what Cameron has learned from them. Here are epics that bring to life the cold of the north, a near meeting with a grizzly, a sweat lodge, and the lonely cry of the loon.

But there are also poems about the author's own inheritance as he speaks of his mother, his father, his uncle, the war and how his past colours his understanding of his life and how he moves in the world he cares so deeply about.

Sandy Cameron currently lives in Vancouver, where he volunteers at Carnegie Centre in the Downtown Eastside, a neighbourhood that is constantly the target of sensationalist media stereotyping of poor people. In a sequence of poems set here, Cameron describes the real community and the people who live in the heart of Canada's third largest city.

## VANDU

Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users

# Annual General Meeting

December 16 at 2:00

at 40 W. Hastings

(beside the New Portland)

**Election will be held for  
 New Board Members**

If you are interested in running for the board please  
 contact the VANDU office @ 683-8595

snacks and busfare provided

(Carnegie & DERA handed out the following last week)

## Why we are picketing the Empress Hotel today

It's not the worst hotel on East Hastings Street, but

the Empress is on the way downhill - fast. If it continues its current slide, it will be included among the Vancouver Police Department's list of the 10 worst hotels in the neighbourhood within two years. Since the current owner, John Ahn, took over couple of years ago, he has been running the hotel into the ground and showing blatant disregard for his tenants.

The Empress used to be one of the best hotels in the Downtown Eastside. Many of the residents had lived there for years but, since it changed ownership, long-time residents have been moving out in droves

John Ahn has a dubious reputation as landlord. His Coquitlam trailer park was a complete shambles until Tenants Rights Action Coalition and the Municipality cracked hard down on him. When he owned the old Austin hotel on Granville and Davie, he hired thugs as hotel staff to push out residents prior to gentrifying the building. It is now a Ramada Inn.

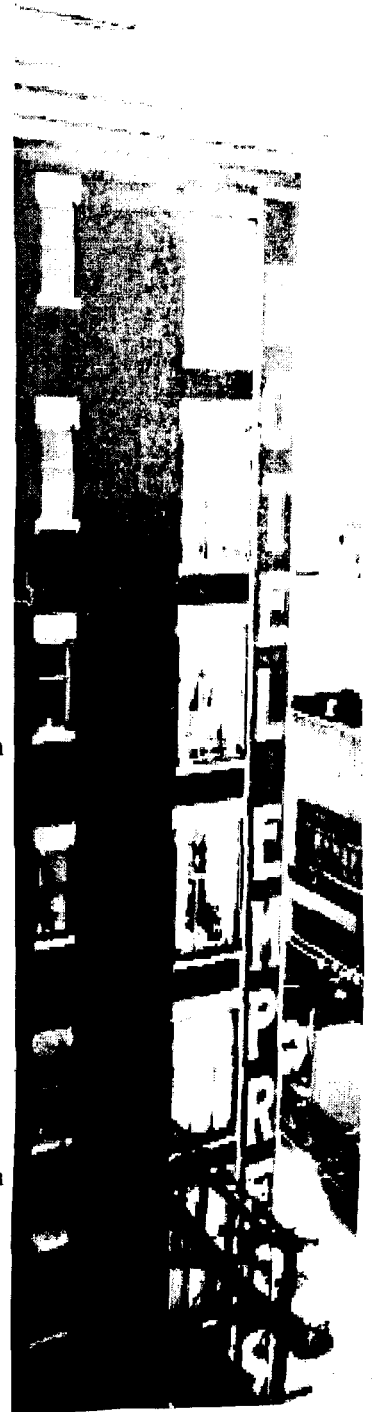
Ahn's first act after buying the Empress was to fire the hotel's two full-time housekeepers, both of whom had worked there for many years. Shortly after that, he increased rents without legal notice. When tenants fought back, the Residential Tenancy Branch ordered financial compensation and the reinstatement of house-keeping service. Ahn responded with one part time housekeeper who also works on maintenance.

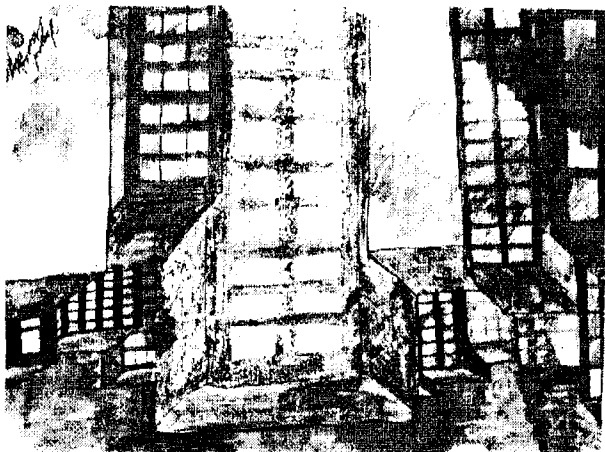
As a result, cleanliness in the hotel is rapidly deteriorating. But that's not all:

- Plumbing problems in a building with one collective bathroom per floor go unrepaired for days, sometime weeks.
- Despite an illegal \$20 visitors fee, room break-ins have become a regular occurrence. So have illegal evictions.
- The landlord opens people's mail as a matter of habit.
- Heat has become unpredictable as the furnace is turned off and on at the owner's whim.
- Advocates have been forced to ask for police escorts to get access to residents upstairs.

John Ahn makes his money by squeezing his tenants for everything he can get out of them, while putting as little as possible back in. Meanwhile, the City allows him to run the hotel's main floor bar with impunity, raking in even more cash.

The City needs to put more pressure on Ahn to change his practices. Instead of documenting the 10 worst hotels, we need to stop their owners before they get that bad. **We don't want slum landlords anymore!**





## des media workshops <sup>5</sup>

invites all in the community to our video/painting/drawing and activated video space art show.

The opening night is Friday, December 15, from 7-10pm at Gallery Gachet, 88 East Cordova Street. There will be food, music, community member's art and good vibes. Following the opening the Gallery will be open as an activated video space.

Please come by to record your stories, readings, interviews, public service announcements and more. Members of the des media collective will give you a VHS copy to keep! The dates and times for this aspect are Wednesday to Saturday, 1-4pm, except from Dec.24 through Jan.1, 2001.

**A brief bit from Chris Laird**  
-the Community Health Committee (CHC2) heard Donald MacPherson talk about his report on the 'Four Pillar Approach' to dealing with the drug issue that the Mayor came out in favour of. Chris said it was well-received and, at the same meeting, they were told that \$5 million has been earmarked for Hep C in the recent money voted in Victoria.

### **The A, B, Cs of hepatitis**

Hepatitis, the "infection and inflammation of the liver," comes in many different forms: A, B, C, E, F and G.

In Canada, only A, B, and C are common.

Mode of transmission:

- Hep A is transmitted through the fecal-oral route.
- Hep B and C are transmitted through the blood and body fluids.

### Immunization:

- Hep A: During the two weeks following exposure to the virus, a possibly infected person can be immunized with a ISG shot.
- Hep B: There is both a hepatitis-B globulin serum for immunization and a vaccine.
- Hep C: There is no immunization or vaccine shot available.

### Symptoms:

For all three viruses, the symptoms are: nausea, loss of appetite, fatigue, fever, abdominal cramps, dark urine, light or whitish-colored bowel movements, and yellow color to the skin or eyes.

Chris also sits on the St. Paul's advisory committee as a rep from the Downtown Eastside with special interest in matters relating to diabetes and Hep C

-December 13 was Chris's birthday!

## IN THE DUMPSTER

By Mr. McBinner  
binner@vcn.bc.ca

Greetings fellow binners & binnerettes.

Once again it is Christmas time. It amazes me that I am still on this earth, considering the way I used to abuse myself. I've been known to consume mass quantities only to get the swine flu.. as a reward for drinking like a pig. There are so many people I wish to have a merry Christmas so, for fear of missing someone, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all! Sing don'tie lock, and gung hey fat choy to all my Asian friends.

If all goes right I will be getting my new video camera on Welfare day and will be able to tape all the Carnegie Christmas celebrations. Unfortunately my other camera got ripped off by someone I trusted. Try to bestow a kindness to some people even though some of them think they can walk all over you. Someday when they really need help it will be too late for them.

If you are cooking your own turkey this year try this. Put 1 lb. of popping corn in with the dressing and mix 1/4 ounce of marijuana with the seasoning. When the popping corn pops the turkey will be done and so will you when you eat it.

Remember I live in an alcohol free environment. Please feel free to give me a drink.

Happy holiday and hey! Let's be careful out there.



## Wishlists

About a month ago there was an article on PovNet, and their new website that was presented at the third birthday celebration held at the Public Library. Penny Goldsmith is the co-creator and maintains much of the information and links at this computer service, having current info and activities in poverty law, advocacy, housing, homelessness, workfare and a host of others. Penny helped me get familiar with getting connected, and we put the *Newsletter* on an email thing with Ontario. It's called Ow-Watch-1 (that's a small '1', not number '1').

The Harris government has been in office for 5 years. There won't be a running commentary on what he has done, as the media and activists in that province have done excellent work in showing what he and his buddies are and what they trail behind them when they slither. Some recent stuff forwarded on the computer has a great deal to do with us, as Gordon Campbell and his Liberal/Socred bunch are hot to trot and have already expressed envy and the wish to copy what Harris and, to a lesser extent Klein, have done in Ontario and Alberta in grinding people down.

1. (Proposed) Mandatory drug-testing for all welfare recipients. Every person getting income assistance would have to get a urine test. If traces of any illicit substance are found, that person would be cut off. If you refuse to be tested, you get cut off. Government media hype has ministers and Harris saying that kids shouldn't have to wonder if their mother or father is using drugs as the reason why they don't have nice

clothes or toys or even food. This is obscene, labeling every poor person as a closet drug addict.

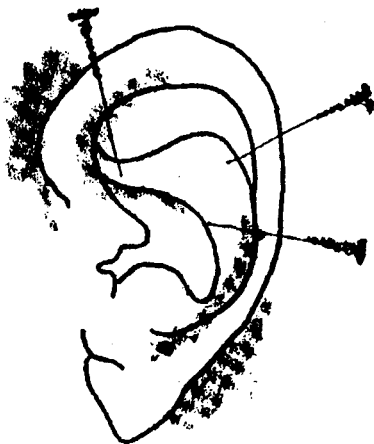
2. The poor-bashing damage wrought by Harris & cronies is couched in sweet garbage, but the realities are known to every social worker, agency, advocate and service provider. Harris tops off his slime by publicly promising every child a Christmas gift, and the only reality is a recording at his 'office number' giving names of already overburdened charities. It's obvious that Harris, Klein and others of their ilk see poor people as to blame for poverty and want to make it a crime. The political opposition in Ontario brought forward a proposal, changing only the word "welfare recipient" for "Member of Provincial Parliament" and demanded that each MPP submit a urine sample before getting *their* paycheque!

The reality is that since 1995 Harris has reduced welfare rates by 22%, increased the number of homeless in Toronto alone to over 30,000 people, caused 568,742 people to be cut off (249,894 were children) all while the cost of living goes steadily up "People are far worse off," says report after report, yet the misery of poverty and the humiliation of the humble is spin-doctored as success and challenges.

The last issue of *The Long Haul*, End Legislated Poverty's newspaper, had articles on the resurfacing idea of a guaranteed annual income (GAI). There is a just version, whereby every person has an income adequate to meet basic needs and a host of corollary programs to serve as a decent safety net. There is a corporate version, giving every person regardless of their personal economic worth the same – say \$5000 a year. At the same time it would eliminate all other forms of income assistance. There would be no welfare, employment insurance, seniors supplements or tax breaks.. you get your 5K and *'see you next year'*

Heads-up: Campbell and Liberals/socreds/Reform will put the NDP to shame in their drive to grind down the poor and exalt the rich and well-to-do. Each has already said they will not increase welfare rates; Campbell wants to lower them and bring in Workfare, where taxes of the middle class working people pay for up to half of any minimum wage and low-paying jobs are given to people who only get \$500 a month. This is legislated poverty with a vengeance. Stay tuned for reports on what the struggle will entail if Campbell and cronies get in.

By PAULR TAYLOR



## Acupuncture for Addiction

The science of acupuncture is thousands of years old and has been proven to help, relieve and even cure many medical conditions.

What's offered is a treatment that takes about 45 minutes. It is not a miracle "cure", but it will relieve a lot of the discomfort of "kicking" while it restores the body's energy and internal functions to normal. It alleviates withdrawal symptoms so that mental and physical stability are achieved as soon as possible. Used with other treatments, such as counselling, it is a strong aid to recovery.

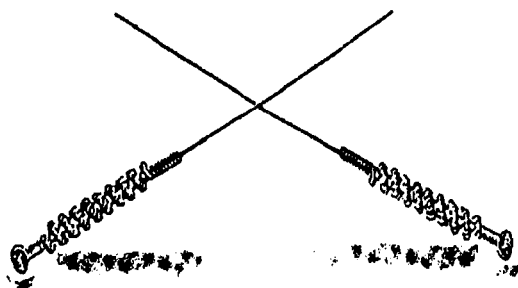
### Acupuncture's Effects:

-Physically it relaxes and reduces stress, decreases pain, increases energy and immunity, helps withdrawal and normalizes sleep.

-Mental/emotionally, it helps you feel more clear, alert, calm and focused.

If you are interested:

Downtown South Clinic, 1292 Hornby Street  
4:45 to 6:45 Monday to Friday



### Another Broken Promise

On March 31, 1997, the then-Ministry of Human Resources introduced a restructuring of the unemployable category. The definition of a person with a Level One disability was introduced in October 1997.

The BC Coalition of People with Disabilities has been engaged in a campaign since then to see Disability Benefits, Level One repealed and replaced with a new Benefit entitled "person with a medical exemption." Despite government assurances, the new Benefit has not been implemented.

Since the Level One/Level Two system was brought in, Advocacy Access advocates have seen many people with severe disabilities granted Level One when they should be on Level Two. This is the main reason we want to see Disability Benefits Level One eliminated: it undermines Disability Benefits Level Two. Also, Level One's application process is more complicated than Level Two. Because the former is a temporary designation, recipients must reapply when their Benefit expires.

A committee of BCCPD representatives and senior Ministry staff was established in January 1999 to develop a new Benefit. After intensive negotiating and community consultation, both parties signed off on 33 recommendations in June 1999. The recommendations created the new *person with a medical exemption* Benefit. The Ministry delayed implementing the new Benefit, and the BCCPD found it necessary to lobby hard to get the proposal put before Treasury Board. In spring 2000, it finally appeared before Treasury Board, but was rejected on the grounds that there were insufficient funds to implement the program.

The person with a medical exemption program would have cost \$5 million to implement. This is a small amount, as a percentage of the total Ministry budget. Although we have been assured that the new Benefit will be passed in 2001, past experience gives us little room for optimism. The delay and possible demise of the program is yet another clear indication that issues concerning people with disabilities are not a priority in BC.

[—from *Transitions*]

By Tom McGregor and Jane Dyson

# Continue the Struggle!



The invitation was clear – “Please come to the Carnegie theatre on Saturday, Dec.9<sup>th</sup>. It’s a tribute to people who created and sustain End Legislated Poverty (ELP). and to honour Jean Swanson’s retirement.”

Jo-Anne Ross greeted the roomful of people who have worked with Jean and in anti-poverty. It was almost like a Thanksgiving or Christmas where you go home and everybody you know – family and friends – is there. The atmosphere was relaxed, and introductions were first made of each of the staff at ELP: Nikki Mayer is the new editor of *The Long Haul*, ELP’s newspaper; Linda Moreau has been staff for several years and began as a single mom volunteering; Rachel is responsible for the FLAW (FrontLine Advocacy Workers) section of the paper and related networking; May is developing Women In Poverty kits for training and organizing; Rose Brown, who, after years of organizing and training workshops and more is taking a leave of absence to go to Australia...

Donna Thomas, president of ELP, told of how she had gotten involved in her own struggle and saw that there were thousands like her.

Linda spoke of the two basic things she keeps up front – the first is the practice of noticing; noticing what is going on around you, seeing what poverty and the systemic blocks do to people... the second is choosing; choosing what response you take and what action will best help change what you’ve noticed into something better.

Jean was introduced and, as always, quickly sought to get people to focus on the movement, on poverty and on the many people who we all work with. She gave a short history, starting with the Solidarity Coalition formed in 1984 over Bennett’s “restraint” cutbacks and shafting of the poor and working people. When it began to fold, Jean saw the need to continue direct anti-poverty work with DERA, BC Teacher’s Federation, the Unemployed Teacher’s Action Committee, First United Church and a few other groups. They began by putting facts and figures together about poverty, the legislative blocks and ties that keep people locked in it, and developed this info into being part of the curriculum at schools and unions. School Boards were exposed to the message and after a 5 year struggle the provincial government approved a universal, non-stigmatising school lunch program and put several million dollars into it! This was the tip of the iceberg.

ELP fought against welfare cuts introduced by the socreds and got them rolled back; it started talking about the Corporate Agenda with the awareness and sensitivity of the proverbial ‘canary-in-a-coal-mine’ (feeling danger before anyone else does) and got the famous string example in use, where the wealthiest 10% of Canadians get a string over 60 inches long to represent their share and the poorest 20% get a string minus .3 inches long as they have nothing but debt and despair and no way out.

Jean spoke of making “Justice not Charity” the rallying cry for anti-poverty work and of the growing number of groups and organisations that joined the coalition. Poverty has increased over the years as the Federal government cut transfers and went ahead with the GST and bad trade deals. ELP kept fighting, establishing *The Long Haul* paper and expanding the network to get info and ideas from everywhere. BC Benefits came in and the education need grew apace. The underlying light in all this was the spirit of inevitable, expected victory. Solidarity with the



WTO protests in Seattle came after years of involvement with Action Canada, the Council of Canadians, the Labour Movement and more who all are affected by this corporate agenda.

Jean has a book coming out in the Spring. It's called **Poor-Bashing: The Politics of Exclusion.**

Libby Davies was greeted with cheers. She was just re-elected to take on the federal government as NDP MP for Vancouver East. Libby began working with Jean at DERA in 1973 and the two have been fast friends ever since. Her humorous stories of their 'exploits' had the whole room laughing.

She left the mike with Jo-Anne, who next welcomed the newest member of ELP - UNN (United Native Nations) and its president Scott Clark. His energy and First Nations perspective are joined with the message that UNN is not going to be isolated. There is so much to share.

The global nature of Jean's contribution was Frank

9 Gilbert's story of being in a village in Greece with a short-wave radio as his only connection to the rest of the world. He finally found As It Happens being broadcast on an international wavelength and heard Jean Swanson talking about legislated poverty in Canada!

One after another, people who have known and/or worked with Jean thanked her, sang songs and even cried. Cecilia, from the Filipino Women's Centre, got it straight when she said "community activists can't retire!"

Jean came back up and said, "Okay you guys, it's getting a little thick." She went on to name many people in the room and highlight their accomplishments. Things in the future may include a stint as a Raging Grannie and even another campaign for office. One thing for sure, Jean's just getting started.

PRT



**\*News:** The federal government, in what's hopefully a beginning of a national effort, publicly responded to Chief Simeon Tshakapesh of Davis Inlet Labrador and is providing both funds and people to set up a long-term detox facility in that community. It made national press during the election with a chilling story of almost every child in the village addicted to sniffing gasoline. The isolation and oppression that have been with First Nations peoples for centuries, as well as the efforts to exterminate culture and traditions, have had far-reaching consequences in terms of substance abuse. Both the official letter and the media reports state that the presence of the federal government will be accompanied with comprehensive treatment and respect for Native culture and values. Let's see if this is an isolated case prompted by media, or a genuine program that can be modified to be used in every province and territory.

-submitted by Margaret Prevost

**The Learning Exchange**, UBC's storefront office at 121 Main Street (between Powell and Alexander) is now open to the public, Monday to Friday from 1:00 to 5:00. The office serves as a home base for UBC students, staff, and faculty who are working or volunteering in the Downtown Eastside. We hope the Learning Exchange will become a place where people from the Downtown Eastside and people from UBC who share common interests can make connections and begin working together.

In our conversations with people in the Downtown Eastside over the past two years, we have been advised that UBC needs to proceed with its community outreach effort slowly, gradually, in close consultation with people in the neighbourhood. In keeping with this advice, we are aiming to base the development of our programs on relationships with organiz-

ations and individuals that are already active in the community.

The volunteer program is called Trek 2000, in honour of UBC students who, in 1922, marched from the downtown area to what is now the UBC campus to demand that the government complete construction of the first UBC classrooms. This 1922 march was called the Great Trek.

Last year, we recruited 30 UBC students to do volunteer work in 10 organizations in the community. This year, we have about 50 students volunteering in 12 organizations. The students are doing 1:1 literacy tutoring in the elementary schools, helping teenagers with homework at Ray-Cam Community Centre, helping out at Triage, the Lookout's Living Room, YWCA Crabtree Corner, and other organizations.

The Learning Exchange is part of a coalition that is waiting to receive a grant from Industry Canada to set up Internet workstations in 17 locations in the Downtown Eastside. The coalition includes DERA, Triage, Native Health, Lookout, Strathcona Skills Connection, Chinese Cultural Centre, Tradeworks, and the Door is Open.

The three Learning Exchange Internet sites are up and running and can be used by anyone from the neighbourhood Monday to Friday from 1:00 to 5:00. There are also three word processing computers available. Based on suggestions we are receiving from people who are using the workstations, we are planning to offer classes in basic computer skills in the New Year. The staff at the front desk, Jin Li and Dionne Pelan, and the two students who work at the Learning Exchange, Perry Bulwer and Marianna Ward-Murray, are available to help people learn how to use the computers.

The Learning Exchange has joined Community Directions, and Sue Sorrell, our manager, has begun participating on the Alcohol and Drug and Community Economic Development working groups.

We are looking for ideas about how UBC's resources can help strengthen the Downtown Eastside, and we are eager to learn as much as we can about the community so our efforts will fit with what people in the neighbourhood want to see. If anyone has suggestions, comments, or questions, please drop by, or call us at 408-5164.

By Margo Fryer

Director of the Learning Exchange

## FREE HOLIDAY MEALS



**Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>**  
**Union Gospel Mission**  
616 E. Cordova St.  
Starting at 10:30am



**Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**Franciscan Sisters of Atonement**  
385 E. Cordova St.  
Usual, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month hot meal.  
12noon to 4:30pm

**Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>**  
**Women and Children only**  
Tickets available at the **Downtown Eastside Women's Centre** (44 E. Cordova St.) starting  
Tues., Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>  
Dinner will be held at 475 Alexander St.  
Seating begins at 12 noon.

**Friday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
**Mission Possible, 543 Powell St.**  
Must get a ticket in advance.

**Sun. Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> to Tue. Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>**  
**The Dugout, 59 Powell St.** will be open for 72  
hours straight and serving coffee and snacks.

**Sunday December 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**Carnegie Community Centre**  
401 Main St. Will be open all night and serving  
drinks and snacks.



**Monday, December 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**Harbour Light / Salvation Army**  
119 E. Cordova St.  
Begin seating at 10:30am

**Monday, December 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**Quest - St. James Church**  
303 E. Cordova St. 10:00am



If you know of an event we missed please  
let us know! 665-2220 Carnegie  
**PRINTED: December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2000**



**December 15 Friday**

**"Karaoke With The Stars"**  
7 - 10pm Theatre



**December 16 Saturday**

**Photo's With Santa**

12 - 2 pm

**All Kids, Young & Old, Welcome!**

**December 17 Sunday**

**Children's Christmas Party**

11am - 3pm, Theatre

**Brunch, Entertainment, Crafts**

**Cultural Sharing Solstice Celebration**

7 - 10pm Theatre

**Indian Time Drummers, Growing Spirit**

**Drummers & Nisga'a Dancers**

**December 19 Tuesday**

**Christmas Crafts**

9:30 - 11am - Theatre

**"Flutation" - Featuring Tone On Flute**

1 - 3pm

**Holiday Music&Christmas Cabaret**

6 - 10 pm

**December 20 Wednesday**

**Ad Hoc Theatre Co.**

7 - 10pm

**December 22 Friday**

**Volunteer Christmas Party**

3 - 5 pm, Theatre

**Gifts & Snacks For All Volunteers!**

**Seasonal Music By Colleen Muriel on Flute**

**Dance - "Cooking With Pam"**

**Singing Dance Time Favorites**

7 - 10pm, Theatre



**December 23 Saturday**

**Christmas Choir With Olivier Wong**

2 pm (Theatre)

**Carols and Seasonal Songs**

**December 24 Sunday**

**Christmas Eve**

**Carnegie is open all night, to 7 am.**

**Music, Videos, Games**

**Free High Run Pool Tournament**

**Snacks, Late night meal & breakfast at 5 am**

**December 25 Monday**

**Free Christmas Breakfast**

5 am 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

**Christmas Dinner**

**Flute Music By Colleen Muriel**

(Tickets on sale at concession On December 20, \$1.50)

**December 26 Tuesday**

**Traditional Boxing Day Dinner**

**and a gift from Santa. Theatre**

**Four Sitzings: 1:00, 2:30, 4:00, 5:30**

**Music by JOY, PEGGY, AND SUE**

(Watch for posters regarding tickets)

**December 28 Thursday**

**Hanukkah Dinner**

5 pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

(Tickets on sale at concession December 22, \$1.50)

**December 31 Sunday**

**New Year's Eve Dance**

**Bring in the New Year with:**

**"Flap Jack Bug Splat"**

8pm - 1am

**January 1, 2001 Monday**

**New Years Day Dinner**

5 pm Theatre

(Tickets on sale at concession December 27, \$1.50)





### I can't afford to be free, why should they?

Every morning the gulls and crows  
mount our wanton air  
They dance a wild fandango over last night's debris.  
Beneath the Clark street overpass a man  
is trying to sleep off all the centuries before him  
He trembles and tightly clings  
to his pink tinged blanket  
The exiled fetal position he assumes is unfamiliar  
He wants to keep warm.  
His girlfriend is atop walking the overpass  
She is waiting for some semblance of a snorkeler  
smoking rock to appear.  
They say she dreams the echo  
of a childhood gone mad  
It seems unlikely that she or any of the busy trucks  
passing by will see the beauty of themselves  
or this, another sunrise.  
Over on Powell the police are changing shift  
and keeping their shiny badges hid  
They need to stay incognito in case  
someone mistakenly asks them for clemency.  
A man dressed in ratty army fatigues is waiting  
for a bus to take him to a local  
mystery meat hamburger joint  
There he can purchase a seminary breakfast  
and plan for the next war at the same time  
All these few  
are but this morning's glimpses of the many.  
Each single perception vibrates  
like a silent rainbow in the dark.  
Everyone and everything  
is seeking a kind of redemption  
called the downtown eastside  
You and me  
seeming to have so many parts to play

have been destroyed  
or paired off in despair  
Every pole is a reminder of all the  
stuck on allegiances and self-righteous speeches  
we have to bear  
if only we could find  
the right kind of responsibility  
the right kind of petty-bourgeois bouquets.  
The concept of escape seems ludicrous now  
it's much easier to steal ourselves  
and stay paranoid instead.  
If indeed we are the same  
why do you act so differently?  
Maybe were ashamed of being caught...  
Little flecks of rainbow  
recognizing ourselves as good kindly people  
smiling at the poor  
then stepping over all the drug induced drains  
that clog up our neighbourhood.  
"Who am I, you ask?  
"What can I offer but my own guilt?  
"What can I give to a mad stranger who claims  
to be my brother, my sister, my daddy  
or even my misunderstood mum?  
"Heart-rending reflections and less humanity  
exposed by the insane.  
Self-destructive individualism that wants to  
coo you and steal more of your poverty"  
"I'm not buying," you say. OK  
Some say, "No one cares about me  
why should I care about them?"  
"Why should I add their misery to mine?"  
"I'm just a consumer of goods"  
"I can't afford to be free.  
"Why should they?

Lee Donohue

try to pay the rent and try to feed themselves. Without assistance, many people simply cannot manage. The new "non-needs based" rules do remove people from the welfare system. The trouble is these people may actually be worse off without assistance.

### **RULES TO CONFUSE, DISCOURAGE & DISQUALIFY**

A report from the US-based Children's Defense Fund -called *Welfare to What?* -published in 1998, details circumstances where families are denied assistance, not because they are no longer needy, but because of a failure to meet bureaucratic requirements. For example, the following situation is cited: "In Iowa's PROMISE JOBS experiment, the majority of families punished for failure to meet welfare-to-work requirements told researchers they did not understand those requirements."

The experience in Ontario is no more illustrious. Mandatory workfare, with its "participation agreements", is about eventually disqualifying people from receiving assistance, more than it is about preparing people for work. This thrust is detailed in the 1999 Broken Promises report (Workfare Watch): "They use language in here like "non-compliance", "recipients", "cancellation" "first occurrence", "each subsequent occurrence"; it's put out as an information sheet but in fact it's a contract. It says, "the contents of this document have been explained to me and I've received a copy". Well, when you're in that situation with a couple of kids you'll sign anything. "I didn't even really read it, I just said OK".

- Kelly, Peterborough, Ontario



## **GOD BLESS EVERYONE**

Merry Christmas to every person and Happy New Year to everyone.

What is the meaning of Christmas? To forgive each other. To meet each other. To love each other. To eat together. To bless each other. And to be friends.

I love all of you. Merry Christmas.

Nahid Nasirabadi



Christmas

was usurped by the Christians  
Evangelists sought to convert Pagans  
and adopted their rituals and day  
How else could it have held such sway?

In fact most or all Christian holidays  
are pre-christian in origin -

Solstice - when the sun appeared directly over the  
equator - was celebrated and feared  
Saturnalia was celebrated by the Romans

By Persians, Mythras - god of light

By Jews, Hannukah - feast of lights

In Egypt, Horus, with Isis his mother's rite

Star myths are important in many religions

Creation myths, fertility myths,

reindeer, Santa Claus, decorated trees,

turkey dinners, greeting cards of pagan festivities

Do not denounce our ancestor's proclivities..

Let us resurrect their gay revelries

And remember they all died for love

that transcended the myth of god above.

A. Kostyniuk

**DOWNTOWN STD CLINIC** - 219 Main; Monday - Friday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
**EASTSIDE NEEDLE EXCHANGE** - 221 Main; 8:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. every day  
**YOUTH 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.-\$40 Nancy W.-\$20 Eve E.-\$20  
 Margaret D.-\$30 Shyamala G.-\$18  
 Joy T.-\$30 Val A.\$36 Wm B-\$20  
 Thomas B.-\$41 Harold D.-\$7 Pam-\$22  
 Rolf A.-\$45 Bruce J.-\$50 Paula -\$10  
 Kettle -\$18 Sonya S.-\$140 BCTF-\$25  
 Nancy H.-\$35 Bill G.-\$150 Wes K.-\$30  
 DEYAS-\$200 RayCam-\$25 LSS-\$25  
 Wisconsin Historical Society -\$10  
 Heather S.-\$18 John S-\$50  
 Yukiko -\$10 VEDC -\$25 Paddy -\$60  
 Rockingguys -\$30 Peggy -\$25  
 Anonymous - \$71

# Carnegie

## NEWSLETTER

FREE - donations accepted.

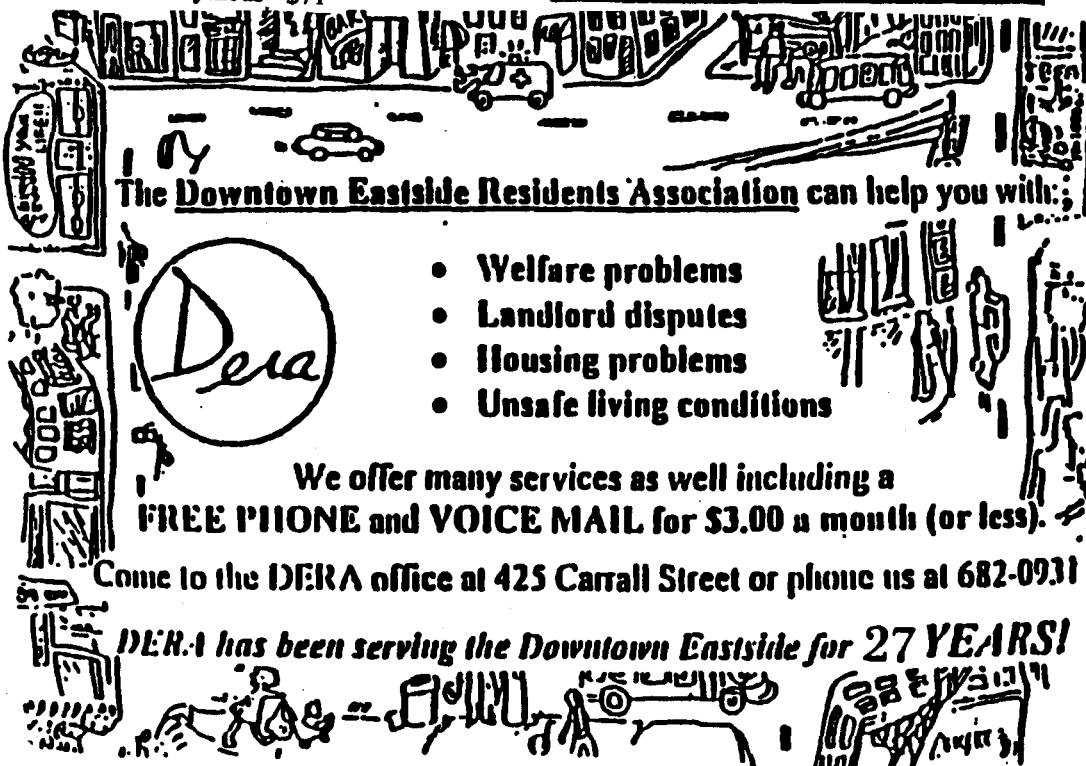
401 Main Street, V6A 2T7 665-2289

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**

**Thursday, January 11**



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

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

**We offer many services as well including a  
 FREE PHONE and VOICE MAIL for \$3.00 a month (or less).**

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

**DERA has been serving the Downtown Eastside for 27 YEARS!**



## Welfare Repeal: How Low Can We Go? Canada and the U.S. Converge on Welfare Reform

Welfare used to be as low as you could go, the bottom of the barrel. Not anymore. Welfare is now harder to get in both Canada and the United States. Increasingly, needy people are being disqualified from receiving assistance, being turned away from the welfare system. True, some of those turned away do find jobs. But, still others cannot and do not find work. Poverty activists in the United States despair at what they call "welfare repeal". They have seen "welfare reform" give way to new regimes that make it impossible for some people to get any help at all. This is the key convergence in welfare policy between Canada and the United States

On both sides of the border, we have come to expect that some people in our communities will have no income whatsoever, - not from welfare and not from work. The growth of homelessness and the staying power of food banks are a sad testament to this new acceptance. Correspondingly, changes in welfare policy reflect inherent expectations of what can and should be done about poverty. The rise of "welfare repeal" means that welfare cannot be properly called an option of "last resort" anymore. Many people are increasingly barred from that "last resort".

### A VERY CONDITIONAL "SAFETY NET"

There is still a peculiar wariness in Canada and the United States that welfare systems are too generous. The predominate thinking is that people should not enjoy welfare as a "right". Not if they have done drugs. Not if they don't work(fare) for their welfare. Not if they have been convicted of fraud. Not if they are 16. Not if five years have passed. Not if their papers are not in order. (There will be more on these specific examples later.) Being needy is not enough. Welfare has become a very conditional safety net.

"Ending welfare as we know it" - the popular refrain of President Clinton - has become both theory and practice in both countries.

Of course, there is some divergence between Canada and the United States regarding the specifics of system privatization, some of the reasons people are disqualified from receiving benefits, and the precise implementation of welfare protocols. However, the overwhelming sameness of the thrust towards "welfare repeal" is remarkable. As someone who has opposed many of the changes to welfare in Ontario, I often find policy precedents for a tighter system in the United States.

### THE WRONG TESTS: LIFETIME BANS AND BENEFIT LIMITS

In the United States, the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act mandated work activities for all recipients, and a 5-year total lifetime limit for receiving welfare assistance. As of yet, there are no lifetime limits in Canadian jurisdictions. However, the Harris government in Ontario has introduced a "lifetime ban" for people convicted of welfare fraud. These are the wrong tests for the wrong reasons.

Both lifetime benefit limits and the implementation of a lifetime ban fundamentally challenge the core purpose of welfare. Both are arbitrary protocols, indifferent to the objective needs of people who may well require help. We once viewed welfare as the last safety net, below which a person ought not fall. Now there is no limit to how far you can fall. Both Canada and the United States have moved away from granting welfare assistance based on the simple neediness of a potential recipient. Exclusion is also the focus of other new welfare rules in Ontario, such as mandatory drugs testing, and ending benefits for 16 and 17 year olds.

Even without assistance, needy people still have to

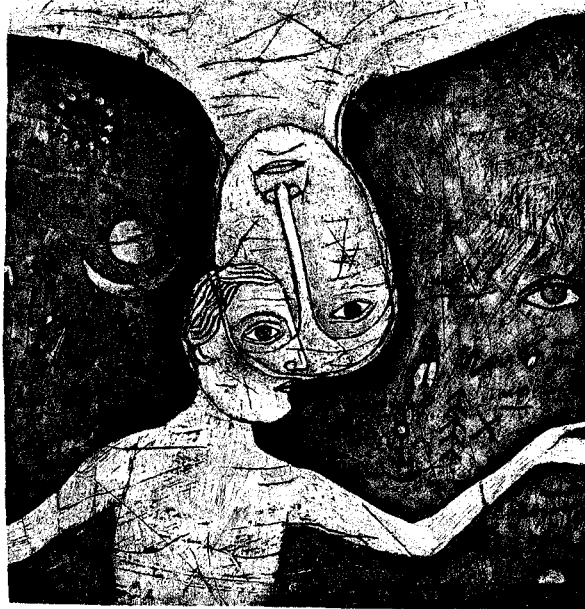
## PROFITING FROM "WELFARE REPEAL"

Multi-national companies like Andersen Consulting have successfully won contracts across Canada and the United States to implement the mechanics of "welfare repeal". Andersen Consulting negotiates payment as a percentage of the savings to the state treasury. Its a seductive offer for client governments. The Harris government is paying Andersen Consulting a percentage of welfare savings, up to \$180 million dollars, for savings achieved in "modernizing" the province's welfare system. The company will have no difficulty meeting its target. When you take a close look at Andersen Consulting's "efficiencies" and "innovations", they create savings by making welfare harder to get, whether you actually need help or not.

In Ontario, Andersen Consulting's Consolidated Verification Project is a rigorous review of every aspect of every welfare recipient's file. As opposed to judging people's need, the focus is on finding the criteria to disqualify people. For example, if a document is missing, whether it's two days old or twenty years old, if a recipient's paperwork is not in order, they get kicked off. The more people off welfare, the more money Andersen Consulting makes. Simply set up obstacles that vulnerable people find too difficult to maneuver, and more people fall off the rolls. One strike, and they're out.

Another example from Workfare Watch: "On October 1<sup>st</sup> I read my mail. Welfare said I needed all of this documentation: proof of my land tax, proof of my utility bill, proof of admittance and release date from rehab, contract from CAS [Children's Aid Society] for the two kids, school attendance records. I had to get all of this by October 21<sup>st</sup>. On October 7<sup>th</sup> I had a meeting with my worker. They said if they didn't get the documents they would put my cheque on hold. I just didn't get the documents together when all of this other stuff was going on. I phone the welfare office two days before I was to get my cheque to tell them I was working on getting the documents but I didn't have them yet. They told me I was going to be terminated because I didn't have the documents in. They didn't want to hear any explanation."

In past contracts, Andersen Consulting has helped governments privatize and contract out functions in the welfare system like employment counselling and



training, job preparation and even the administration of the program itself. The following observation appeared in the *New York Times* in 1996: "Before the new welfare law, moving people from welfare to work was the domain of nonprofit organizations and three relatively small businesses (America Works, Curtis and Associates, and Maximus). Now, some large companies see a potentially multibillion-dollar industry that could run entire welfare programs for states and counties."

## CONCLUSION

In both Canada and the United States, "welfare repeal" is taking hold not just in policy, but in the public imagination. When it comes to welfare, the "truly needy" have become the exotic object of our collective concern. They exist in rhetoric, contrasted against the fraudulent claims made by the "lazy pregnant cheats" of political lore. On both sides of the border, governments encourage our suspicions about the "undeserving". Welfare is now very rarely upheld as a fundamental right of citizenship. Rather, welfare is a tab that every level of government would rather not pay. And it is certainly an expense that governments' encourage their taxpaying citizens to scorn. The answer to "how low can we go?". There is no bottom.

From the **Ontario Coalition for Social Justice**)

#305-15 Gervais Drive, Toronto, M3C 1Y8

Phone: 416-441-3714 Fax: 416-4414073



groping under the mistletoe: a series of prime time specials revolving  
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homeless guy th  
college friend of  
suffering the effe  
yeah, traditions.

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## Slave

All messed up,  
No where to go.  
Feelings lost,  
a broken home.  
Too small, too young,  
to understand.  
Why my grandpa,  
raised his hand.  
My mama left me,  
all alone.  
Not knowing  
what was going on.  
The kind of man

he really was.  
All the pain  
he really caused.  
He touched, he played.  
Now I wish  
he never stayed.  
He drove me into  
booze and drugs.  
I never liked  
his kisses, his hugs.  
Now I sit and,  
curse his grave.  
I hate him forever.  
I was his slave.

-Rachel Plamondon



**December 5, 2000**

**Dear friends,**

Thank you to the many people who voted in  
the recent federal election, despite the barriers  
that made it difficult.

I'm very proud to be part of East Vancouver  
and to represent our community in Ottawa. I  
am truly inspired to work as hard as I can, for  
safe affordable housing, justice for aboriginal  
people, safe and healthy communities and  
protection for our environment.

Thank you for your support!

Yours sincerely,

**Libby Davies, MP**  
Vancouver East

## A Higher Purpose

When Parties run for parliament  
To be a power in government  
Some candidates shade the truth  
To trick you in the voting booth.  
These so-called 'clever' shysters sometimes win  
And their phony platform planks are cast into  
the dustbin..  
And so we cast our ballots honestly  
after quietly trudging to the polls  
We're not so dumb, as the politicians think  
Our votes cannot be bought for the price of a drink  
We, the residents of Vancouver East,  
won't get sucked in.. refuse to be fleeced..  
Libby was victorious, she won fair and square,  
She topped the count with thousands to spare  
All highs, no lows, all comers she defeated  
And so on to Ottawa for her second term.  
She thanks all her supporters, whoever you are,  
Confidence and trust will be many times returned  
Sleep tight tonight - we did alright!

Robyn Livingstone



## NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS

By PAULR TAYLOR

\*Food Not Bombs holds a small event each Monday at 4:00, giving out some good food from a pot set up outside 120 Powell Street.

This is the office of Brice Rositch, co-chair of the so-called Community Alliance, political wannabee and righteous defender of business and property owners. It's been said a number of times in recent issues that a small number of individuals have got this scheme going to disperse low-income people. It starts with demonizing drug users as the rot that everyone loves to hate; calls for the virtual shut-down of all services and programs that in any way aid such people, and goes on to condemn the very community agencies that provide them.

The goal – close down DEYAS (needle exchange, health van, youth detox, street nurses, counselling) -close down DERA (advocacy, tenant/landlord disputes, housing, job-training, economic activity...) -close down Native Health (clinic, counselling, detox, HIV/AIDS programs...)

-close down First United Church (food, clothing, showers, advocacy, the Dugout\* and the WISH drop-in for female sex-trade workers)

-close down the Portland Hotel society (housing and life skills and acceptance of dual diagnosis users)

-close down Lookout (emergency shelter, housing, aid for homeless and mental health consumers)

The list can go on for pages but the goal is to get all these organisations closed down because they all provide services which drug users *and hundreds of other people* use every day.

Back to Food Not Bombs. Their effort to bring a bit of reality to the attention of Rositch has made for some fairly high level meetings. After a rally outside his office where residents called for him to come out and explain his attacks on them, he wrote to City Council and ranted about 'what can decent people do', that he was 'held prisoner', that he 'lost money' etc.etc. Food Not Bombs showed up the next week and has made it a standing event ever since, but the

response is the same. Rositch and his handful "refuse to negotiate", "will not be drawn into trying to find solutions", "will meet only with policy-makers." He won't even open the door to talk to this small group BUT has meetings with the director of Carnegie (after ascribing responsibility for the line to us), a senior Planner from the City (blaming him for not working hard enough in shutting down or relocating the Dugout), the health inspector (blaming him for not bending or breaking rules to declare the food unfit) and his sister Lynn Bryson (for moral support?). The star beside the Dugout above tells the story of the *modus operandi* – it's been in the same place for over 40 years, serving free coffee before 8 in the morning and being a drop-in and location for daily AA meetings for years. Rositch used all the blaming tactics above, and he and his handful have been relentless in their condemnation of this service. They have blamed every scrap of litter, every pile of trash, every person not of some self-defined status on that block and, by extension, every adjacent block, to be responsible for tremendous losses of money, business, property value and even mental health. Rositch was personally responsible for getting the afternoon soup giveaway shut down, and his political mentor - councillor Lynne Kennedy – told Council that "the community" supported the opening of a sidewalk alcohol service outside of the Club Elite (next door to the Dugout and AA, across the street from a school and kitty corner to family housing) when no one except Rositch and his cronies did.

okay

Why or how does such an extreme bunch get so much attention from the municipal government? Look no further than the Non-Partisan Association and its hold on said government. Without a Ward System, the NPA has a lock on power and its Board controls the nominating process. Unless you are nominated by this group of unelected people, you will not be part of the slate of candidates in the next

election. If you are in office and displease them by voting contrary to what they want, you will not be endorsed. Witness what happened to Chiavario and Herbert. The bunch gathered around Rositch include members of the NPA top brass, principle funders and fundraisers, owners of printing presses and much property in the downtown, waterfront, Gastown and downtown eastside. No matter how extreme or what violations of human rights or public decency goes on, this bunch get treated like bona fide 'concerned citizens.' They play a game with dreaming up new associations (one per person) and demand a seat at the 'table' for each one.

The recently released paper calling for a Four Pillar approach to dealing with drug issues is the result of 3-4 years of work by activists and community groups, reaching around the world to get information and ideas. The Mayor gets in front of it and kudos to him, but it still has many weak places. The City, thru this same mayor, declared a 90-day moratorium on any new drug-related services, to give Rositch and crew a chance to scuttle a resource Centre that has been worked on for over 2 years. Everything is in place but the City has to issue the permit or license. This is the same with any new initiative - the City, by withholding the permit, can shut down anything. The delay has worked quite well, since stalling had kept it in limbo until August 11, 90 days more until November 11, and now, with the City refusing to sign the required "Good Neighbour Agreements" and the holiday season and legal crap, it can be delayed until the provincial election in the Spring.

The public support for the new approach is growing by leaps and bounds as the current war on drugs, incarceration of users and condemnation of all harm reduction methods, is a failure. Rositch and cronies will welcome a Campbell Liberal provincial government, hoping that all this social shit and 'approach' will die with righteous, class-conscious money-makers back in charge.

The community goes ahead with drug & alcohol strategies, with a revised housing plan, with a network of Internet computers, with phone and mail services for low-income people, with a whole bunch of Aboriginal energy and spirit, with housing for women and families and users and non-users and economic development that serves and employs local residents in their own community. Struggle is good, clash is better, spiritual revolution is our goal!



## Thinking about Birthdays

Thinking about birthdays as I get older  
Most of my life living with my foot on  
The gas pedal right to the floor, hard  
All those years that I lived in my youth  
And carried the keys to heaven and hell  
Now, like coming back from the Future  
Haunting all the places, the knots tied  
Now in the bars, the old drag queens  
That have sucked prunes for too long  
Everywhere, the ship is going down  
It is best to make love like a demon  
In a big city, that has fallen from grace  
Count every Christmas light on the crane  
Rising high, to a dark blue starless sky  
Looking at an avocado plant, my baby  
The seed, takes so long to start growing  
First two leaves like wings spread out  
Centre ones, a face glowing with light  
Like me turning Forty Six; twenty six  
Now at night the leaves looking like the  
Leather that some bibles are bound in or  
The leaves that cuban cigars are rolled in  
Grateful, to have all the time, eternity  
For the work that I enjoy doing the most  
There is freedom, from some addictions  
Found out, what that word HOLY means.

Daniel Rajala

# DEATHS IN B.C.

- IN BRITISH COLUMBIA LAST YEAR, THERE WERE 17 MURDERS.
- THERE WERE 18 PEDESTRIAN DEATHS.
- NEARLY 400 PEOPLE DIED OF A DRUG OVERDOSE.
- WHAT IS OUR PRIORITY?

## Years

Where all the years went I can't remember.  
I can't see through the haze of drugs,  
I don't want to remember.  
So much has been lost, so much hurt, so much pain.  
The drugs kept me sane.  
I will have nothing to gain if I use drugs again.  
Only more heartache and pain.  
Happy and free is all I want to be,  
drugs have taken nough from me.  
I will not let them take my sanity.  
I know that I am getting better with time.

My life is finally mine.  
Drugs will not take what's mine this time.

Miranda Lynn



## GIFTS TO REMEMBER

It's the gifts on those frosty Christmas mornings in the 30's I remember most...the little bag of jelly beans...the Japanese orange in the toe of my sock...the Jew's harp...the Come-Back...a pencil box...a Pocket Ben...Granny's heavy woolen sweater that came almost to my ankles...Hurlburt's Story of the Bible... a black Waterman's fountain pen... And best of all...The Pilgrim's Progress ...and, as the years slipped by, much, much more.

- Sam Roddan