



THE
LISTENING
POST
IS
OPEN!

FREE - donations accepted.
CANADIAN
NEWSLETTER
JANUARY 15, 2001
401 Main St. Vancouver B.C. (604) 665-2289

The Listening Post is open!

After four years of planning and dreaming, the Listening Post at 382 Main St. is now open and available for use by the community. Several events came together a few years ago that helped to create the vision, and knowing this may help you understand the idea of this new space. I was in San Francisco in 1996, training in spiritual direction, and heard of a project called "Listening Post" in the Tenderloin district. It was a hotel room where people could come for spiritual accompaniment. The idea resonated within me and stayed with me. Could this happen in the Downtown Eastside? I trusted the path would open if it was meant to be. In the meantime, several people began the Silent Retreats for Inner City Folks. These have been held twice a year since the fall of 1996, offering sweat lodge, meditation and one-on-one spiritual listening, all in a community of silence. The Retreats have been beneficial and powerful for many, providing the opportunity for people to enter into their places of pain and struggle, and discover within themselves a source of spirit and wisdom. Following the retreats, we have heard a consistently expressed need for on-going mutual accompaniment and space for our spiritual, healing journeys.

In addition, while working at Carnegie, I experienced the constant demands on people in this community: residents, volunteers and staff alike. Many of us bemoaned the lack of quiet, or some place to escape for a few minutes to collect our thoughts, listen deeply to the inner voice of wisdom, pray, or just breathe deeply. Sensing this need served to fan the flame of the idea of a Listening Post.

Last year I met Lorraine LaMarre. She had a similar vision and we joined forces to work actively to bring the vision to life. When we saw the space in the Bruce Erikson Place, we knew it was the right spot.

We decided that nothing would be lost by asking. The housing society welcomed our idea. We were able to secure private funding for our basic costs for one year (people hours are on a volunteer basis) and then all that remained was permission from the city for a Change Of Use Permit. This ended up being the most difficult part! We applied in June and six months later, after the 3 month moratorium was over, we received our permit on Winter Solstice Dec. 21.

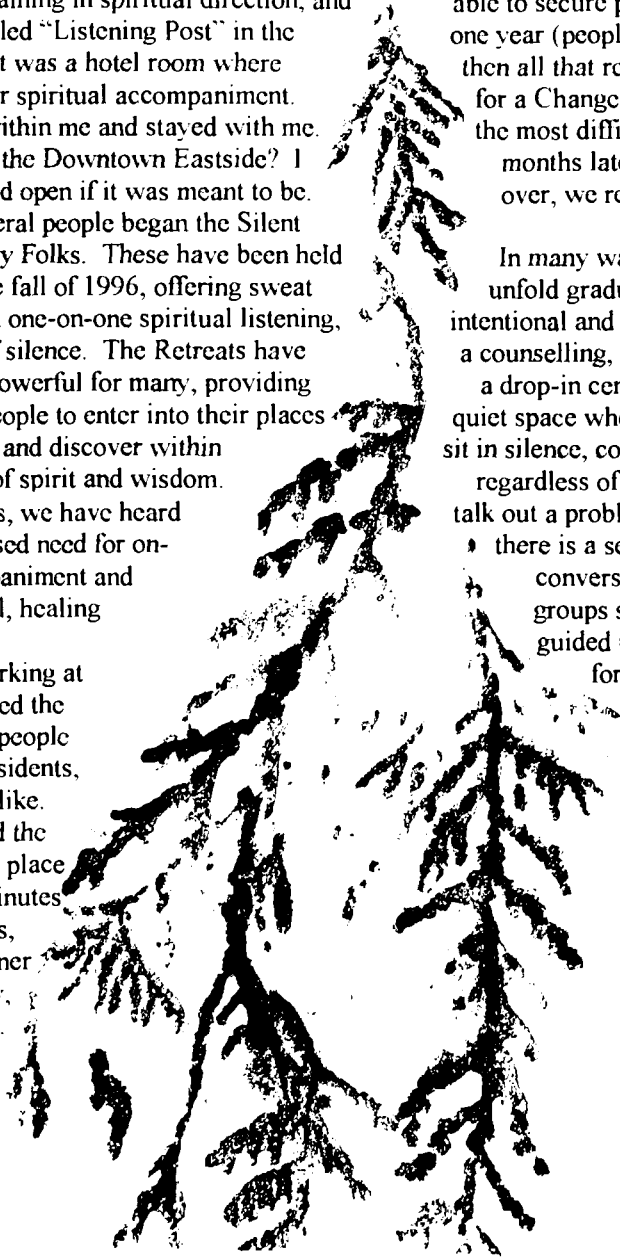
In many ways, the delay has allowed the idea to unfold gradually, and the space to be set up in an intentional and thoughtful way. It is not meant to be a counselling, advocacy or referral centre. Nor is it a drop-in centre offering food or coffee. We are a quiet space where you will be welcome to come and sit in silence, collect your thoughts, pray or meditate, regardless of gender, creed or race. If you need to talk out a problem or are seeking spiritual guidance,

there is a separate listening room for one-on-one conversation. In addition there will be small groups such as meditation sittings, circle and guided prayer times. It will also be available for special occasions. On December 22

to celebrate Winter Solstice, a group of women from the Breaking The Silence Campaign ended the evening by carrying candles down

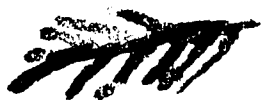
Hastings Street singing, and placing them in bowls of earth in a circle in the space. On

December 3 we had an opening blessing which combined several traditions and faiths. The soft light from everyone's prayer candles, and their words of blessing and hope for the Listening Post created a sense of the Spirit available within and among us.



Starting January 2 we plan to be open from 12:00 to 7:00 Monday to Friday, and 4:00 to 8:00 on Sundays. Meditation sittings will be given by Dal on Tuesdays at 5:30, and by Margot on Wednesdays at 5:30. Praying with sacred texts will be led by Kathi on Wednesday at 4 and Thursdays at 11, and praying for others on Sundays at 6:30 led by Lorraine. At other times we will have 2 people present making the space available for your individual use. You are welcome to come and experience the space for yourself. The vision is now a reality, and will be made sacred by your presence.

Kathi Bentall

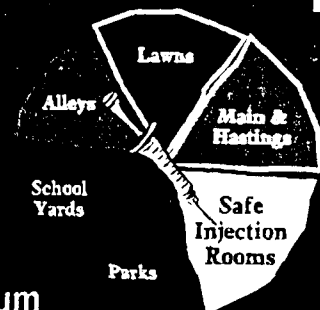


21st Century Posada in the Downtown Eastside

A young couple, let's call 'em Mary & Joe,
are homeless 9 days after check issue day
Joe's a carpenter, but doesn't get much work
in th rainy season, Mary appears 2 B pregnant
They go to th Carnegie
It closes at 11
They go to th Dug Out
They get coffee and muffins, but are told
they can't sleep there
They go to Look Out
It's full
They go to The Door Is Open, it's closed
They go to Mary's Place,
they won't take Joseph
They go to th Haven,
they won't take Mary
They go to Affordable Housing
They are told to come back on Monday
when th office is open
They go to Cordova Detox
They have to go on th waiting list
They go to 4 Sisters Housing Co-op
They are told th Co-op isn't taking any more
applications, th wait-list is full
So, does their Holy Child get born in a sleeping
bag on a piece of cardboard
in Oppenheimer Park?

Diane Wood

CCAP
presents



Community Forum Sensible Solutions

featuring
TONY TRIMINGHAM
from New South Wales, AUSTRALIA

whose son was found dead of an
overdose in a hospital car park.

TONY WILL TALK ABOUT...

His emotional response and positive
solutions following his son's death.

Safe Injection Sites & Heroin Maintenance

Wednesday January 17th
12:00 PM
Carnegie Theatre, Main & Hastings
Free Admission - Refreshments

Tony Trimmingham started Family Drug Support after he went public about the death of his son Damien from a heroin drug overdose. "There is a stigma attached to heroin," Mr. Trimmingham said. "Families feel the shame -- they are treated differently to families that have lost children to illness or a car accident." FDS runs a 24 hour help line. FDS philosophy is to strengthen and develop the harm reduction approach to alcohol and drug issues.

THESE ARE THE FACES

The Carnegie Centre CD Project

I listened to the Carnegie Centre CD. "These Are The Faces", with its 31 performers and 18 songs, over and over again. Something in me responded



deeply to this thoughtful, sometimes sad, sometimes hopeful, sometimes angry music. "I know you." I said to the songs on the CD. "Yes, you know us," the songs said. "We sing your yearning. We sing what is too heavy to be borne. We sing from the heart."

Although there is a wide range of styles on the 18 tracks of the Carnegie CD, I feel a strong blues influence on some of the music. The musicians who wrote and now sing these songs know what it means to be a human being, and what a human being is up against. The pain of injustice, of exclusion, of un-lived life is here, but so is the healing power of music to break through numbness and despair, and create a vision of what ought to be.

Many people were involved in the Carnegie music project, and it took three years to make the CD. It was a grassroots effort, conceived, planned and fundraised by the musicians.

The lead singers on the Carnegie CD are Brian Cunningham, Earle Peach, Robert Escott, Mary Sue Bell, Peggy Wilson, Suzi Hollman, Rosetta Stone, Dave McConnell, Mark Oakley, Robert Lemieux, Bharbara Gudmundson, Nancy Delyzer, Rudolf Penner, Andy Costenuitt, Anita Stevens, Mystery Doug, C.R. Avery, Rob Doucette and Mike Richter. The CD was produced by Stephen Nikleva and engineered by Earle Peach.

This Carnegie CD is part of the history of the Downtown Eastside — a history of struggle for human

rights and dignity. Powerful corporate forces constantly vilify our neighbourhood, perhaps under the twisted notion that if they deny the humanity of the residents and the history of a community, they can destroy both the people and the place for their own profit. At the centre of our community, however, is a long tradition of resistance and caring. The book *Hastings and Main* (New Star, 198?) shows the strength of the Downtown Eastside. So do the Downtown Eastside poets, artists, the *Carnegie Newsletter*, and the many hundreds of volunteers in our neighbourhood. And so do the musicians in the Carnegie CD Project.

The Carnegie CD is entitled "These Are The Faces," after a song by Robert Doucette. Here are some of the words (sung to a sweet melody) that describe much of what is best in our community:

"These are the faces. These are what you look upon. We're calling all races and together we shall give so that all of us may live on and on."

The Carnegie Centre CD "These Are The Faces," is available at Four Corners Community Savings on the northeast corner of Hastings and Main. Just go to one of the tellers. If there's a line-up, take a number from the machine on the table in the centre of the main floor. The price of the CD is \$7.50 per copy. This soulful music is an authentic part of the dynamic, multicultural life of the Downtown Eastside.

By SANDY CAMERON

On Tuesday, January 23, Carnegie musicians will be officially launching their first CD "**These are the Faces**" at the Silvertone Tavern, 2733 Commercial Drive. Please come to celebrate the completion of the 18-song CD, which took over three years of dedicated hard work by our musicians and other supporters. The party, of course, will feature music from the CD as well as other offerings by the musicians. There will also be yummy snacks prepared by Silvertone, an opportunity to thank all the people who helped along the way, and a visual display of the recording process. Admission is by donation and CDs can be purchased there for \$15. They can also be purchased at Highlife Records and Black Swan for \$15 and locally at Four Corners Community Bank for \$7.50.

We hope to see everyone there at 8:00 PM on January 23!

New People, Places and Things

Brand new places, new people, new things
Hopes and dreams remain the same
But everything is so different
Life must go on and I've got to be strong
Sometimes I just want to break down and cry
Letting everything go
What I feel inside
What matters to me
It's my life
You have yours so help yourself
Blame and shame, that's all I know
I am now in the place where
the wind blows softly through the sky
Will the pain leave or will it stay
Haunting me like the shadows
are they creeping closer.. are they coming?
You will never know until they crawl on you.

I AM WHATEVER YOU SAY I AM

I am a slut, a whore, a bitch
I am an addict
I am needy and needed
I am ashamed
I am hurtful and have been hurt
I am helpless
I am hopeless
I am dead
I am lonely
I am strong
I am weak
I am a dreamer
I am fragile
I am stupid
I am foolish
I am insecure
I am unhealthy
I am desperate
I am a victim
I am ruined
I am trying
I am determined
I am hardheaded
I am going to be successful

*Myhila Kozak
aka Fallen Angel*

SILENT WISHES

Promises broken
words unheard
silence taken
Life without meaning
Life without hope
You must learn how to deal
You have to know how to cope
Don't speak a word
Don't tell a soul
Don't let it hurt you
No one must know

ROCK DEMON

5

I'm going crazy
my mind races
my heart pounds
the pain is a rush
I don't want it to show
so I don't ~~make~~ it bleed
I want to
I want the pain
it burns within my skin
my hands shake I want to scream and run
run to the one I need
he likes seeing blood when I cut myself
such a reassuring sight
telling me I'm still human
that I bleed too
my eyes don't cry so my veins do
I want more I need to live
give me something
I need to have rock
the comforting love
that comes when I need it
I will never stop
until I do. when I die
it will be in the arms of my love
the arms of my rock demon
he'll whisper in my ear
sleep my child
let it all go
no more pain
no more suffering
no more broken hearts
I brought you to this place
and you owe me nothing
you gave yourself to me
but still you owe me nothing
if love you rock demon
please
don't ever let me go
love myhila kozak
aka fallen angel



Rositch to blame for feed-in frenzy

BRYCE ROSITCH, THE CONTROVERSIAL spokesperson for the Community Alliance, has been silenced. On Tuesday, he announced he is stepping down, away from the swirl of outrage he generated when he attacked the concentration of social services in the Downtown East-side and the city's harm reduction strategy.

His one moment of success came last summer. His organization spooked Mayor Philip Owen into declaring a 90-day moratorium on new facilities in the neighborhood to deal with addiction problems. Since then, assaults on Rositch have been relentless. There were protests at his office at 120 Powell St. East, and articles vilifying him in Carnegie Centre and DERA newsletters. Rositch says he has found feces and garbage in his doorway, and eggs were tossed at his windows.

Rositch is not without political influence. His sister, Lynne Bryson, is friend and campaign manager to NPA councillor Lynne Kennedy and was elected to the NPA board last month. Bryson and her brother, along with Grant Longhurst and Jan Paul Shason, are prominent members of the Gastown Business Improvement Association, a major player in the Alliance. Shason is the NPA godfather. Longhurst stepped down from the NPA board to run its last campaign, but is now back on the board.

Rositch regularly complained to his friends in power, but in a letter to me, he says he was abandoned. "I have asked for help from the mayor and city council, the city manager and the chief of police, but have received nothing." The help he did receive from city staff and po-

allen garr

Bryce Rositch is a man who enjoys stirring the pot. But when he is splashed as a result, he claims he is a victim. Don't believe it.

lice, he insists, they initiated on their own.

This is hardly the case.

There has been a protest in front of Rositch's office every Monday afternoon for the past two months. The Anti-poverty Action Committee—a group of Commercial Drive urban guerillas that protest everything from police brutality to APEC—set up a soup kitchen to feed street people. Their point: Rositch and the Alliance want to get rid of the downtrodden in the neighborhood; we welcome them.

Last Monday, 50 people enjoyed vegetable soup, stuffed green peppers, organic juice and a bread roll. The whole event was carried out with almost military precision. By 3:45, three police cruisers and five cops, one undercover and four uniforms, were already in place. Most, by the way, were up to their old tricks and vio-

lating the police act by displaying no visible names or badge numbers.

Minutes later two young men appeared with a folding table. As a crowd of folks arrived to be fed, another group poured out of a white sedan carrying the food, a propane stove and Styrofoam containers for individual potions.

The surveillance was equally impressive. As the serving began, one cop videotaped the activity, and others shuffled the folks along so they wouldn't rest their meal containers on Rositch's window sills. Vancouver-Richmond health inspector John Chong made sure all regulations were being met. The city's senior planner for the area, Nathan Edelson, hustled back and forth between the urban guerillas and Rositch's sister, tucked away in a board room at the back of his offices. It was a kind of hand-holding exercise to try and get the two sides in this battle to talk with each other.

The city's drug policy co-ordinator Donald MacPherson and another two uniformed cops soon joined the group. An hour later, the table was folded, the remaining food put back in the car and the garbage collected. Everyone drifted away as quietly as they had come.

One can only wonder what more Rositch could ask for. He stands in the way of a major initiative—which is supported by the cops and also happens to be the mayor's pet project—to deal with the city's overwhelming problem of drug addiction.

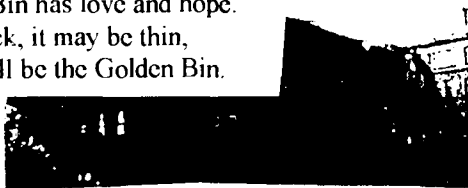
Bryce Rositch is a man who enjoys stirring the pot. But when he is splashed as a result, he claims he is a victim. Don't believe it.

The Golden Bin

(Dedicated to Tom Lewis)

I pray this year that I will win
The chance to dive that Golden Bin,
The Golden Bin it holds no tin -
Has coffee, brass and maybe gin
it just might hold a dream or two
A lotto ticket.. trips to the zoo..
-TVs, radios, computers old,
There's just no telling what it may hold.

You'll know I found the golden bin
For on my face will be a grin,
A VCR maybe I've found..
A brick of gold -maybe a crown.
One thing I know I'll find no dope, but
The Golden Bin has love and hope.
It may be thick, it may be thin,
But still it will be the Golden Bin.



The Golden Bin is full of grace.
It's full of love for every race.
The Golden Bin is never locked.
The Golden Bin is fully stocked.
Maybe I'll find some boots or socks.
The Golden Bin it holds no rocks.
From the east, north, south or west,
That Golden Bin will be the best.

Unlike the uncaring city tart
The Golden Bin gives from the heart
In sun, snow, sleet or rain,
It gives and gives with no pain.

The goose that laid the golden egg
Knows that I won't need to beg
No needles in that Golden Bin
The Golden Bin someday I'll win.

Mr. McBinner



'Garbage' comparison disturbing

Writer bashed the poor

To the editor:

Bryce Rositch's letter as spokesman for Vancouver's Community Alliance was indeed enlightening and informative as a perfect example of an all too-common poor bashing. ("Downtown wants fair treatment," Oct. 20).

Mr. Rositch's repeated calls for "equal treatment to any other community" demonstrate a complete disregard for the unique challenges typically faced by an historic community, born near the docks of a major port city. Even though he admits that the Alliance "are not experts in social sciences, or in drug treatment," he has the audacity to go on to say that "they are the experts at...the well-being of our own community." How ridiculous to assume you have the latter without the former!

His ignorance regarding drug addiction is further revealed when, in the same breath, he calls for law enforcement to deal with

someone injecting drugs and another person dealing drugs, like they were the same people instead of victim and predator.

The most disturbing part of Mr. Rositch's letter, however, is where he states the Alliance "supports...providing its share of caring for those in need. But do not use our neighbourhood as the dumping ground for your problems." In two short sentences he has defined "those in need" as "problems" and, by suggesting such problems are being "dumped," has also equated these people with garbage!

Mr. Rositch and the Community Alliance need to educate themselves and climb down off their high horse if there is to be any "fairness" in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

ELIZABETH STONARD,
VANCOUVER



Lobby group doesn't get it

Bryce Rositch and other members of the Community Alliance of Gastown and Chinatown businesses paint themselves as victims of an organized campaign to silence them in the continuing debates about drug policy. (No defence for ugly tactics in debate on drugs, *Vancouver Sun*, Dec. 22). But the alliance's internal documents show it to be an aggressive, highly politicized lobby group that's not averse to throwing its weight around and using bullying tactics against elected officials.

The Alliance has long been on record as opposing more social housing or social programs in the neighbourhood — a sure formula to phase out the low-income community as gentrification advances. No wonder Rositch & Co. have reaped the enmity of so many in the neighbourhood.

Rositch, a Gastown architect, and other alliance leaders, showed their hand Aug. 3 when they met behind closed doors with the mayor and a group of city councillors. Documents obtained by community groups through the Freedom of Information Act reveal the alliance's threatening and elitist posture, even with their allies in the business-friendly Non Partisan Association (NPA), the majority party on council.

"Our demands are not negotiable," said the alliance in its confidential written follow-up notes to council. This business lobby opposes social programs aimed at reducing the tremendous carnage of the drug scene and the damage it does to the Downtown Eastside community at large. This put them at odds with all three levels of government, Vancouver police and health and social agencies.

Alliance leaders want to make decisions for the entire community, but they won't talk to other residents.

Undaunted, alliance members warned councillors they'd work to unseat them if they didn't toe the line. This is no idle threat; several Gastown business activists are well placed in the NPA leadership.

"We will deal only with direct policy makers... We will not be drawn into trying to solve the problems," declared the alliance. "We state again that it is our desire to work with the mayor, city councillors and



the city manager. But if we cannot work with you, we will work against you."

Alliance leaders want to make decisions for the entire community, but they won't talk to other residents. They prefer to lobby behind closed doors or promote their views in stage-managed news conferences and interviews.

Most of the business leaders (excepting Rositch) live outside the Downtown Eastside. If they're so concerned to reduce the drug scene in the neighbourhood, why are they not campaigning to establish services and affordable housing in their home communities for local drug users?

Rositch complains that he gets personal abuse from residents. Well, lots of people have got into arguments, been called names, even lost friends in the past couple of years. It's something that unfortunately happens when you get involved in a controversial issue that doesn't have any obvious, totally perfect solution.

However, he has had his version aired sympathetically in the news media and he has had closed-door meetings with city councillors and regular sitdowns with the police.

The alliance also enjoys the undivided attention of city planners and engineers who are assigned specifically to minister to them. That doesn't sound very much like being silenced. It sounds more like a pretty loud voice.

Rositch's biggest complaint is the food lineup in front of his place of business every Monday at 4 pm. The lineup was established by a loose group of younger people (under age 35, a growing demographic in the neighbourhood) employing a perfectly familiar and legal tactic from the days when civil rights crusaders used to leaflet segregationist businesses.

I've recently visited the lineup three times. It's an orderly operation, no different from many other food

giveaways in the neighbourhood. There is actually no leafletting or interfering with passersby or customers, just feeding hungry people.

The alliance's law-and-order approach to the drug problem has already been tried. In the past decade, there've been more arrests at the corner of Main and Hastings than at any other locale in Vancouver, perhaps in Canada. And just look south of the border to see how successful the "war on drugs" has been.

For many months, city workers have been trying to reduce confrontation and get the sides to sit down and talk. But what is there to say to someone who doesn't want to discuss solutions, and will only deal with "direct policy makers"?

The test will come in January, when the city, with the support of the provincial and federal government and health authorities, unveils its package of initiatives for a comprehensive approach to the drug problem. If the alliance decides to take part in the process constructively, then there might be something to talk about.

The train is leaving the station, Mr. Rositch. Are you getting on board?

By BOB SARTI
[*Vancouver Sun*, Dec. 28, 2000]



[The following was sent to the *Vancouver Sun* in response to their front-page article on the victimization of Bryce Rositch. No part of it was printed or included in the collection of responses appearing in the January 2, 2001 paper where his supporters were portrayed as the clear majority. Not really surprising, but such manipulation of public education is inherent in both the *Sun* and *Province*.]

Editor, 22 December 2000

Deinstitutionalization of mental patients and the practice of giving many of them one-way tickets to the Downtown Eastside is an ironic issue to compare

to the story on the trials and tribulations of Bryce Rositch (*Sun* front page, Dec. 21).

The feeling of many of the residents who partook of the Food Not Bombs' soup distributed outside 120 Powell Street (Rositch's business & residential address) is that Rositch could well live in the Hampden Hotel next door, a residence for such deinstitutionalized people, given his verbal and written diatribes against thousands of people who make the Downtown Eastside their home.

Rositch was quoted as claiming to be official spokesperson for "30,000 individuals, 5,000 businesses and 150 community groups" in an article in the *Vancouver Sun*. This was during the formative months of the so-called Community Alliance. He claimed to speak for all these people and groups, unbeknownst to the vast majority of those listed, and made personal politics and class war the message in meetings with civic, provincial & federal politicians. Written presentations to civic bodies concerning the 10,000 souls living in my neighbourhood are quite stark: "We will not be drawn into trying to solve the problem" "We will not negotiate" "We will speak only to policy-makers" "We will fight [harm reduction] to the death" "It's their choice so let them die" (from a statement by the business alliance to the Mayor and City Council, Aug. 2000).

Rositch and cronies have been vehemently opposed to social housing, services in the area that aid the vast majority of low-income residents, and any new endeavours such as probation offices, shelters for the homeless, storefront treatment options, methadone programs, etc. They cover this ongoing activity by demonizing drug users and condemning any agency that provides a service used by drug addicts. They have focused on drug addiction as the most venal sin; the hoped-for universal depiction of drug addicts as 'scum' can easily be manipulated to depict any service or agency that treats these people as people as part of the problem. It is precisely this kind of rhetoric that prompted community activists to visit Rositch's office and ask for an explanation. Dialogue was not to be.

Rositch and the alliance crew have stated plainly that they have no alternative to the four pillar approach to the drug problem – prevention, treatment, enforcement, harm reduction – but then

stoop to personal attacks on individuals in the community who are working on aspects of this model. Prevention and enforcement are the only methods that are supported, and the police and courts are righteously condemned for not being severe enough even though the "war on drugs" approach in the United States has been shown to be a failure. When arguments promoting the adoption of US methods flop, Rositch's political ambitions are re-focused. He has made erroneous accusations about the Dugout, a United Church service on the next block for poor and homeless people, and falls back on this facility's impact on his property and business value as reason to shut it down, even though it has been in the same spot for over 40 years and is one of the best-run operations in the area. It serves a clientele that Rositch condemns as the 'element from lower Hastings' when in fact the Dugout's patrons reside or are part of the entire Downtown Eastside. Attendees at the daily AA meetings are from all over the Lower Mainland.

Rositch is not a good neighbour, as I lived right across the street from his space for several years, and he would have all-night parties with loud music and the hell with noise bylaws.

It is equally ironic how one individual can get eight police officers on hand to supervise a soup giveaway involving 12-15 people. He cites threats, vandalism and his personal victimization to justify this gross misuse of public servants. He claimed that people stormed his office even though the door is always locked. He claims loss of business, cancellation of meetings, intimidation of clients... even though the food giveaway happens at 4pm one day a week..

It is sad when local residents and people working to better the lives of people are stereotyped and trashed by a few people claiming god-given rights to do so. Rositch is still hoping to be elected to City Council and his mentor, Lynne Kennedy, will continue advising him on tactics and strategy to keep positive change out of the Downtown Eastside. Issues of poverty, homelessness, job opportunities, training, treatment, crime, drugs, alcohol, sex, families, business, a needle exchange, advocacy, gentrification, social housing, mental illness and recreational facilities and more are intertwined and inseparable. The drive by groups and community activists are in tune with this whole picture, and reaction is normal

to such as Rositch and the stance that no dialogue, negotiation, or solving the problems will be even attempted..

When Rositch claims a right to express his views, having a food giveaway outside his office is a good act for people who will be seriously affected by implementation of what Rositch and cohorts rant about. It is equally sad when this blanket condemnation is continued by Ian Mulgrew in the next day's paper, calling local residents "thugs" for challenging Rositch. No dialogue, just take what Rositch has said at face value and keep the lop-sided misinformation going. I hope the *Vancouver Sun* has more integrity than this.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul R. Taylor, volunteer editor, Carnegie Newsletter
401 Main Street, Vancouver 665-2289

hasta lavista

so he's going off
shoot jumbo pot seeds at
lazy lizards thru a pina-
colada straw his hammock
swaying gently in the welcomed
shade of tree ripening
bananas
and coconuts

and so what his
angelic teen bride's hopelessly
devoted adoring him bathing
in perfect water falling
hiking the narrow
hillside paths through
dense fields of
wild coca
I'll forget to remember him
too never
liked him anyways
and all those
wild parrots,
monkeys....



edi ochre

Street Level University



[The part printed –

I admire Bryce Rositch for his twist on details and events that turns deception into front page news.

Kudos to the *Vancouver Sun*!

Bryce tells that the community's hostility toward him is all a lowlife reaction to his civic virtue, and fails to admit that his neighbours are angry about the frequent and all-night parties in his building.

He talks of feeling intimidated and afraid, which is how I felt when Alliance members were beating me with picket signs while chanting "Kill Yourself" because I showed up at their rally costumed as the Grim Reaper.

[The part not printed –

As the *Vancouver Sun* considers rumour and innuendo printable, Ian Mulgrew has a forum to betray the Downtown Eastside - after all we've done for him! It's not just anyone who makes it into the Carnegie Centre reeling drunk, never mind being tolerated while mumbling incoherently throughout the entire Annual General Meeting.

Shawn Millar

Humanities 101 was born out a few UBC students and friends seeing that poverty and social circumstance doesn't translate into a shutdown of learning. They started a 'project' (for lack of a better word) to enroll people from the Downtown Eastside in a course to include philosophy, architecture, classics, literature and much more.

They lobbied for funding and engaged over a dozen professors to volunteer their time to hold forth in their respective fields, and got the class to be alive with participation. The course ran for 14 weeks, and included meetings both here in the DE and on the University of BC campus. It was, of course, free.

The first Humanities 101 course ran about a year ago and a Science 101 was tried next. The ongoing involvement of students and professors in the life of the Downtown Eastside has worked its magic, since now they have managed to convince the Portland Hotel to give the storefront space at 40 W. Hastings to a series of weekly lectures.

The first one was January 3 and the free food helped the crowd of about 40 people ready themselves for listening to Andrew somebody, who is either a professor or a post-graduate (Ph.D) in Philosophy, to talk of Plato's Allegory of the Cave. There were several people from media with cameras and mikes getting in the way, but those sitting down get used to that kind of feeding. It's a chance to get down in the downtown...

The introduction and inaugural was funny enough when those speaking recalled the first '101' class opening with 15 minutes on safe injection sites - polarizing those in attendance - then an American cop talking about street safety or something. Andrew works by day as a cop in Seattle...

Anyway, this fledgling Street university has no tables, chairs, phones, computers, or anything else - just a warm space with electricity and a chalkboard. Kind of like Calcutta, where all you need if you want to start a school for the street kids is a wall and the ability to whistle to call class to order!

The lectures are scheduled for each Wednesday evening at 6:30 with food at 6pm.

Interested in Creating Your Own Website?

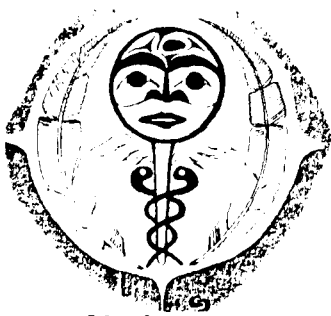
HTML WEBSITE COURSE

Beginning Wednesday, January 17

Time: 1:00pm Duration: 3-4 Wednesdays

Carnegie's 3rd floor Learning Centre

Requirements - a disk if you have one,
a Carnegie Membership Card (\$1)



Vancouver Native Health Society Constitutional Objectives

1. To improve the health status of Native people by:
 - a. encouraging and improving the access to and development of health care services for Native people;
 - b. confronting those issues that directly impact on the health status of Native people; and
 - c. improving relations and promoting communications between health care professionals and the Native community.
2. To assist, support and undertake, if necessary, any program or activity designed to promote health care in Native people.
3. To secure or acquire the funds, real property or other assistance necessary to meet the Society's purposes.



Old Age

Every morning early the pain wakes me
 Pushing me out of my bed, warm and heavy with
 dreams.
 These old bones cannot rest in the deep and caseful
 sleep of former years.
 Comfort is only a negotiation, won with pills and
 moderation.
 I yearn to do all those things which now are
 impossible.
 Grandmother, I dreamed of you - your hair a
 youthful brown and makeup the colour of suntan on
 your face.

Wilhelmina



I believe in myself, and in my friend's and family's
 faith in me to do what is the best for me to do. In my
 strength to do well after release and to continue in
 my schooling and to look for work. I believe God as
 being my Creator and I believe my life has gone
 down rocky paths for a reason, maybe just so I will
 appreciate even more when my life is going
 smoothly. I believe that everyone should be able to
 have the highest possible education at no cost. I

believe in what I see, what I know, and what I have
 experienced. I believe that I am intelligent and
 pretty. I believe that it is only I who can decide how
 to live my life for the better or for the worse. I
 believe that I purposely relapse as a form of self
 abuse, to hurt myself because sometimes I feel
 unworthy of anything better. I believe that the world
 is a beautiful creation to be enjoyed by everyone,
 rich or poor. I believe that there is beauty in
 everyone and everything.

I don't believe in hurting people or in unnecessary
 violence. I don't believe that the war on drugs will
 ever be won or that a higher education will ever be
 free. I don't believe that my life will stay the same
 forever. I don't believe that people can never
 change. I don't believe that wars serve a purpose,
 and I don't believe in the death penalty. I don't
 believe in racism or in the difference between
 religions. Sometimes I don't believe in myself I
 don't believe that child abuse should be able to
 happen. I don't believe that the drug addicted are
 non-treatable or that those incarcerated in prisons are
 unable to be rehabilitated. I do not believe in hating
 or in not forgiving those who have done me wrong
 in the past. I do not believe in forgiving child
 molesters, child abusers, or killers of children. I
 don't believe that the key to my future should be
 thrown away. I do not believe that all hope for me to
 change is gone.

Diana Jean Govenlock

To Rebecca, with love: *As you measure out your
life in cigarettes and condoms used*

Sometimes I'm ashamed to be a woman
When I see my friend so eager to be used
-so eager to be treated like shit
And loving the bastards to boot.
Giving them all her money, her body, her soul
For What?
A quickie in the park
In exchange for some fairy story about Barons and
noble blood.
Damn their eyes - the the bastards!
We shall avenge her humiliation, her anxieties, her
disappointments.
Last night my blood pressure sky-rocketed
While I tried to contain my anger
While I tried to be a "lady"
and not beat the face off the bastard
who one more time pushed her face into the shit:
who lied, who stole, who pretended
to understand her travail
to assist her in her problems
Social Workers be damned
Especially Baron Von Shieves.

Wilhelmina Miles

'Twas The Season

Christmas was as Christmas is
The time to share, the days to give,
To throw a dinner, to roast some birds
First you have one, ask for seconds, then thirds
Take your pick from six or seven
It's way better than going to 7-11
You gorge yourself - you're in seventh heaven.
- The sky's the limit! Have all you like!
I'll load things up, then take a hike
to stash stuff away for a rainy day
At this festive time we must make hay
Because next week will be not feast but famine
..can't afford to be carefree, try to examine..
These 5-week months are cruel and unusual
To be kind in December then cruel in January
Breaks all the rules.
However, Happy New Year to all, and to all
a good night!

Robyn Livingstone

ASSASSINS

History never tells us anything
Those personal stories of men
Fire burners are never happy with
The ordinary way of life each day
Society holding out the big carrot
The good life that cannot be had
So wonderful, shining, beautiful
Heard a man on the street say that
Cold nights are good for fornication
At a poetry reading I'm interested
More in what is not happening
Those hot embraces and kisses
Beside someone, holding hands
Life is not just some fairy tale
Revolutions are not just whims
They are fought with real soldiers
Standing erect for the parade
And the king is the one who has
Nothing to lose by being naked
A poor humble shepherd that is
Always watching over the sheep
Stepping on the hoarfrost that's
On the mountain, those sharp shards
Like shots ringing through a forest
Green, Brown cedar and hemlock
That hide the assassins there at night.

Daniel Rajala



The Corridors of Death

City Hall - the be all and end all -
Drags its feet, won't toe the line
They pen manifesto's; they put things off
If you make any noise they brush you off.
First they etch it in stone, then 3-month delays
Oh, don't bother to phone,
They've got no comment..nothing to say.
They'll call your bluff with the runaround
Don't take this guff or let them get you down
We've got the numbers. We've got real power.
The clock is ticking away, hour upon hour,
Put your boots on and get ready to march
To save people's lives and end this Councils farce!

Robyn Livingstone

Miracle morning when the moon was full
in the western sky at 7:30 –
something I'll never see again in this lifetime
a miracle so obvious it hit me like a freight train
..if only all the subtle magic was that easy to see

There's a person I'm afraid I could love
I could wrap her in my loving arms
and shelter her from the cruel world
I could be her knight errant
She could be my queen

She knows of whom I speak
pity scorn and laughter might be all I get
for my little proclamation
but then again I fall in love almost daily
so the compliment is made of grains of salt

I love you but I could forget just as fast
you must feel the fire if you want the warmth
even embers will do sometimes
in a pinch

Al Loewen

Strollin' and Thinkin'...

The roses bloom on Pender Street
early mornings I walk seeing my breath
43 and Hendrix on the headphones
I walk and walk
wondering why and where it all went wrong

My son says sorry Dad can't come visit
gotta do homework and I hafta to laugh
an inventive lie I must admit
he's a tough guy who loves babies
he's a midnight scrapper who's too tough
to let his friends see the side
who loves kittens, hallucinates in the kitchen
chasing maybe moths in the midnight hour

so I say go ahead son be a bum
it's your heritage your legacy
but be polite and it doesn't hurt
being well-read educated polite
a pleasure to be around

like Jimmy Stewart says in Harvey
you can be either one of two things
smart or pleasant try to be pleasant
the rest will handle itself
pass the love my grandfather gave to me
and that I gave you to someone now
when your time comes too
you'll make it thru
we always do

Al Loewen



Homeless homeless is when the homeless become
more homeless again and again. Sheltered from the
sun or warmed by it, an overhang to keep the rain
off or a wall to block a cold wind... then someone
says move on or else, with threats or insults.

Sometimes a quick shelter doesn't keep out rain or
snow.. one begins the middle-of-night wanderings
looking for a place to rest. Who knows these things
except the homeless.. me and maybe you?

There should be more locations where poor people
are safe from weather, unhealthy circumstances or
real or imagined danger. I was going to send in a
letter describing our #10 bus, Carnegie stop, and
finding a twenty on New Year's Eve but this is far
more important. The oppression coming down on
street people is beyond human words. Human beings
found dead in bags or by trash bins as if to say that is
all they are or were!

Low or no income people face silent horrors every
day. Many wealthy people don't realize that this vast
difference leaves them unable to see that we are the
same creatures. Mis-diagnosis also comes from this
vast difference. To say poverty is not a factor in
mental health issues is false teaching. Sometimes it's
the reason for a person's failing health or madness. I
suggest some of these life-long high earners try
divesting (!), then they'll see. Remember the high
rollers who suddenly lost it all when the stock
markets crashed? They killed themselves while the
poor simply starved. Sorry to say it but it's true.

Happy New Year and watch out for the sweet
things in life. Peace.

By MIKE BOHNERT



The energy crisis:

Ideology trumps common sense

There is a delicious free trade irony in the energy deregulation fiascos unfolding in California and Alberta -especially in the stunned disbelief coming from business. Here we have Jayson Myers, chief economist for the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association (CMEA) on Alberta's skyrocketing natural gas prices: "I think it's a major crisis. If companies have to cut costs, there will be an impact on their employment."

Earth to Mr Myers: What did you think the FTA was about?

The Canada-US free trade agreement (FTA) handed the United States guaranteed access to Canadian oil and gas. During the 1988 election the CMEA was one of the most aggressive promoters of the agreement -- a deal which virtually wrote in stone that Canadian prices for natural gas would be determined by peak American demand. But, of course, it doesn't stop there -- it's the nature of ideology that the more you swallow the hungrier you get. Having given the US guaranteed access to our oil and gas (we can't reduce exports to increase domestic supply or use differential pricing) the Canadian government and the provinces are hell bent on giving up all regulatory influence over electricity prices through massive deregulation.

In California, the North American pioneer in electricity deregulation, prices have actually tripled in many areas and doubled in most, prompting the politicians to scramble for their political lives and put a cap on prices. This desperate effort to shut the barn door after the horses have escaped has brought once powerful corporations to the brink of bankruptcy: Pacific Gas and Electric and Edison face the prospect of eating \$8 billion in energy costs they can't pass on to consumers.

Kaiser Aluminum has shut its two US smelters because they can make more money by selling their

electricity; several fertilizer companies have shut down plants. Major shortages of those products are predicted for next year.

Ralph Klein is having night sweats over his political future, too, as his deregulation experiment careens out of control. The Alberta Power Pool auction of electricity in early December pushed generation prices from \$40 per megawatt hour to more than \$130. The Industrial Power Consumers Association are in full panic mode: "For some of my members it is catastrophic," said president Dan Macnamara. "These new price levels are downright scary."

Ontario's move to a deregulated market and the dismantling of Ontario Hydro has prompted power generators and marketers to talk openly about getting substantially higher prices in adjacent American jurisdictions. This will inevitably result in higher prices in Ontario.

It is a neo-liberal article of faith that deregulation increases "choice" and reduces prices. In practice it is doing neither, but when the medicine fails, the prescription is to give even stronger medicine.

Canadian governments are thus pursuing even more deregulation through more trade deals. First, there is the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), and then there is the services negotiations at the WTO which would make global energy deregulation literally irreversible.

AIT negotiators will present provincial trade ministers with an energy chapter in February next year. If agreed to, it will most likely lead to what is called "retail wheeling" - in effect creating electricity spot markets in every province and a virtual futures' market for electricity speculators. This is a formula for wild price volatility and would make the goal of longterm price stability unachievable.

And what the AIT is hinting at, the WTO agreement on services - the GATS - will make irreversible. The

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
ACTIVITIES City - 5:45 p.m. - 11:45 p.m.
SOCIETY Overnight - 12:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
 Downtown Eastside - 5:30 p.m. 1:30 a.m.

FREE - donations accepted

Carnegie

NEWSLETTER

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**

Monday, January 29

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
 Glenn B. -\$100

Anonymous -\$77

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!

O.D.

Heavy hands pushing my eyelids closed. Wont let go. I try to fight against this power. I try to will my eyes open, to see the blue sky one more time, yet failing. I can hear the birds as they circle overhead, the sharp blast of a car horn and a siren, far off in the distance. All reality is fading away, and all I can see is darkness, all I can feel is pressure, pressure to give in to the great power forcing my eyelids down, to succumb to the desire to enter a realm of nothingness. I know what awaits me, I have been there before, so free, free from thought, free from the heaviness of being a part of a machine. Heavy hands push against my eyes, forcing the darkness to invade all that was me. Silence. Caressing my brain these hands massage all the anger that was me, until the emptiness explodes into the stark reality of what is happening. Black and white. My eyelids open wide. A flash of a picture, a street without sounds- how odd- the hands return, to caress me back into a dreamworld of darkness, of nothings...

Blinding white light. I struggle to keep my eyes closed, to block out the pounding in my head, the chaos and confusion that is now me. I see you, i watch your lips move but I hear nothing, you are nobody to me, please just leave me alone, i want to cry out, but I feel as if I am not really here, that this is just a dream, you are hurting me, i feel the knife as it plunges into my stomach, I feel it tearing its way up to my neck, I scream, i try to fight you but i am too weak, terrified, I rip the needles from my hands, the blood, crimson against my pale skin, running down my arms, the mask closes down over my face, suffocating me, killing me, why? I choke on my vomit, i cant breathe, i cant see, i cant yell for help. The hands return, pushing my thoughts away once again, willing the darkness to come, to take away all that is frightening me, to fly me to a place, safe and hidden from the world. I don't want to wake up, this is how i want it to be forever, just never ending nothingness. Freedom.

Diana Govenlock



GREAT EXPECTATIONS IN A PRAYER

Jesus... meek and mild.....are you there? Can you hear me? Could I just get a warm place to rest? perhaps sleep?...something to eat...clean clothes... towel...a bit of soap.. A miracle for fear. A little something to hold back the fucking night.. Are you there gentle Jesus? Do you hear me... do you hear?....

By SAM RODDAN



Vancouver/Richmond Health Board

Working Together for Better Health



The Vancouver/Richmond Health Board announced a 5-prong initiative to make the hoped for positive change in direction for the Downtown Eastside. The problem is drugs and a host of issues that are linked

They gave handouts at a meeting where community members heard of the done deal, and reactions were cautious at best: fury, outrage, condemnation, fear...

The plan laid out seems to be the result of extensive consultation, but there is a gap between what has been worked on for a couple of years and what was 'brought down'. It is all inextricably connected to the need to get development permits from the City of Vancouver, and politics rises out of the black hole.

The Vancouver Agreement, between federal, provincial and municipal governments, represents the commitment of all three levels to work together on such fundamentals as improving health and safety in the Downtown Eastside. It's adopted the four-pillar approach – prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction. These are the first five points:

1). Redesign of the physical space at the corner of Main & Hastings. The goal is to reduce the illicit drug activity and improve the safety of pedestrians and patrons of Carnegie Community Centre. The side entrance ramp will be rebuilt to form the building-side wall to the washroom steps. Where the ramp is now will become a patio space abutting Carnegie and on the level of the Centre's 1st floor. Access and use will come under Carnegie policy of patrons not being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The cement cover over washroom stairs comes down and bus stops are moved a few metres. General consensus on these changes was arrived at after over a year of meetings between Carnegie users, Centre staff, the police, drug users, health officials and city bureaucrats. It was trashed by Insp Gary Greer a couple of months ago as being muddled by community people always talking about needs of residents – the police get their budget and top jobs through the NPA-controlled City Council. This aspect – changes to the streetscape – will

reduce the current congregation of users at the front and Main Street side of the building.

2). The Contact Centre will be located on the 1st floor of the Roosevelt Hotel at 166 E. Hastings. It will be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The entrance will be from the alley and the alley will be repaved.

This is to be a point of first contact for street people and users for safety, counselling, information on OD prevention and health matters, space for music and literacy, and referrals to other services. It's to be run as a place where police can send people needing refuge and safety, and is to be managed by the Health Board in co-operation with Carnegie and its Street Program. The Street Program staff and activities will be indoors but will continue working on the corner. One aspect of this that seems to have drawn a blank is its use by kids. If, as advertised, it is a "health facility", anyone age 14 and up has a legal right to complete access. There are a growing number of kids in their early teens coming to the DE – on a dare, for drugs, running away, selling sex, to see friends, ... – and a 24-hour open door can be a magnet. Predators, drugs, pinups, and access to it can be very dangerous without conscious policy and enforceable guidelines, which reads like a recipe for authority but can't just be ignored or left to ad hoc judgments by whoever is on staff at any given time. Inherent in this aspect is the reality of users and dealers and many others with safety inside and perhaps concentrated congregation outside...

3). The Community Health Clinic at 410 E. Cordova is slated to relocate to 569 Powell. The Health Bd. bought the building last Spring – again with a perceived gap in process – and announced it as the site for the proposed Resource Centre for drug addicts. It was precisely this that spooked the business and property owners to form the so-called Community Alliance and give form to their whining (see letters regarding Rositch et al in this issue.) The building is now

to be home to expanded services of the Clinic (8:30 am-10pm, 7 /wk "in one accessible location. Primary care, mental health services, nutritional support, women-only hours, medication management, counselling and addiction services will be *coordinated* from this centre. It will be managed and staffed by the Health Board. An aspect of this that needs stern movement is the time factor. Development permits are the purview of the City. If the Non-Partisan Ass-[holes] remain freaked or ridden by the business alliance and take their class-babble as gospel, the permit approval will become dependent on so many amendments or so-called "good neighbour agreements" that watered-down compromise will seem inevitable. The best immediate approval means 6 months, which becomes 10. The last 90-day delay, mentioned in Garr's article, gave time for the much flouted march and importation of death-wishers (see Shawn Millar's letter).

4). The LifeSkills Centre will occupy the facility to be vacated by the Health Clinic at 410 E. Cordova. It is to be a daytime education centre focusing on "preparing clients for employment and life in the community." It will have basics like showers, laundry, an instructional kitchen, training area, classrooms and self-help/peer based programming. The proposal has the Health Board calling the shots, and this has gotten hard reactions. The Resource Centre and aspects both here and referred to in #3 above were and still are seen as possible with a community agency in charge. People who worked with the RC committee for over 2 years feel cheated, discarded.

It comes across as a sop to the Strathcona Area Merchants Society (SAMS) and their almost-rabid rants against treatment or the "element from lower Hastings" – doublespeak for the poor.

5). There is a methadone clinic in Blood Alley that's run by a Dr. deFlaming. He is employed by the Health Board. For some reason this clinic is being closed and the services relocated to the old Pender Street Detox at 59 W. Pender. This announcement is news to the Chinatown business lobby, Henderson Developments and Tinseltown/International Village who have been adamant in promoting their "pride in being at the forefront of gentrification." Back to the Development Permit approval. The two Chinese Councillors will certainly be vehement in demanding that this be denied, while the gasbags are equally

vehement in promoting the sanitisation of Gastown (the closure of the methadone clinic in Blood Alley).

At this point all of the above is an announcement and is going forward as a proposal, albeit with the backing in principle of 3 levels of government and the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board. Politics and backroom deals will twist and turn, but the upshot will range from concrete drills at Main & Hastings to a modicum of new services. The danger inherent in the Health Board running the whole show is that the street problem will just worsen with little in the works to reduce alienation. Children, kids, police, treatment, prescription narcotics, housing, poverty, sex-trade workers, sustenance and spirituality...

By PAULR TAYLOR

On The Wings of the Wind

I stand and listen every night
to hear your whisper
if I listen very hard
I hear my name whispered so softly
on the wings of the wind.
Melodic and mysterious
the whisper of a tune
I hear our song
that we once danced to
the brush of the wind
against my still form
as I gaze out over the fence
So like your soft caress
drops of rain kiss my cheek
like my tears on this lonely night
are you missing me, too?
I dream of you
holding me, kissing me
loving me
then I awaken, alone
I look out my window
and search for your face in the clouds
how I long to hear you call my name
on the wings of the wind

Written for Tatoo,
my first love.
I will never stop loving you
May you rest in peace for eternity.

Diana Govenlock