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Carnegie

NEWSLETTER

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604-665-2289

401 Main St., Vancouver, BC V6A 2T7

DECEMBER 1, 2002



1971 photo of Lark

teen eyes, looked malnourished and was underweight. Last seen January 1998.

5 foot 4 inches (152 cm), 100 lb (45.4 kg)

16 years, 5 foot 4 inches (163 cm), 130 lb (59 kg)

17 years, 5 foot 10 inches (178 cm), 150 lb (68 kg)

18 years, 5 foot 4 inches (163 cm), 130 lb (59 kg)

19 years, 5 foot 4 inches (163 cm), 130 lb (59 kg)

20 years, 5 foot 4 inches (163 cm), 130 lb (59 kg)

1971 photo of Lark

DECEMBER 6

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A time...

**To reflect on violence against women here in the
downtown eastside and around the world**

**To hold a moment of silence for the women who have
been murdered and are still missing**

**To think about all the women and girls who live daily
with the threat of violence**

To take action to STOP it.

WOMEN WERE NEVER MISSING?

Submitted on behalf of Breaking the Silence Against Violence

On December 6th we will once again march through the streets of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside to remember the lives of women who have died through violence on the National Day of Remembrance for the Montreal Massacre of fourteen middle class women, Not to take away from the pain their families have endured but...

WHAT ABOUT OUR OWN WOMEN? Alarm bells were tolling **LOUDLY** with the numbers of missing women increasing. We, the women who organized the annual march always knew that there was something more to the mystery of the missing women; if the surface was just scratched a little bit we knew that a mass grave site would be discovered, when one woman was found. Women do not simply "go missing" women have daily routines that most followed, women kept in touch with family members; their children long ago apprehended but not forgotten, these women had families and were Moms, sisters, daughters, cousins, aunties, friends, companions and most of all **LOVED**.

It is tragic that some of the women who were "missing" from the downtown eastside were never really missing as we now know. Through the lack of action and investigation on the part of various police forces trusted with public safety, the reports from people who knew of the farm where the women were last seen was not taken with the degree of seriousness that it should have been, it is too late.

Certainly some of the deaths and disappearances were preventable had investigative techniques been implemented earlier. The only conclusion one can come up with for this lack of investigation is that some of the women had transient lifestyles, were street workers, were women living in poverty, were homeless women, were women living in a violent neighbourhood, were women with addictions, were women!

People pass through the neighbourhood of the downtown eastside pointing fingers, laughing, staring and gaze at the violence that has become the norm for many in the area. We, as a society; politicians, community members, decision makers, and citizens are all responsible for what has happened to the "Missing Women" not just the police or RCMP.

Physical assault is not the only form of violence inflicted on women everyday in the downtown eastside: issues of homelessness, addictions, healthcare, and poverty are real forms of violence to women. Lack of care, empathy, support systems, medical intervention, treatment centres etc are contributing to this violence and keeping women in unsafe situations. Society's neglect of these issues perpetuates violence against women.

Sarah DeVries wrote a poem long before she herself would be listed as "Missing." It is printed here (We are grateful to Sarah's family for allowing us to print this poem)

Women's body found beaten beyond recognition
 You sip your coffee
 Taking a drag of your smoke
 Turning the page
 Taking a bite of your toast
 Just another day
 Just another death
 Just one more thing you so easily forget
 You and your soft, sheltered life
 Just go on and on
 For nobody special from your world is gone
 Just another day
 Just another death
 Just another Hastings Street whore
 Sentenced to death
 The judges gavel already fallen
 Sentence already passed
 But you
 You just sip your coffee
 Washing down your toast,

She was a broken down angel
 A child lost with no place
 A human being in disguise
 She touched my life
 She was somebody
 She was no whore
 She was somebody special
 Who just lost her way
 She was somebody fighting for life
 Trying to survive
 A lonely lost child who died
 In the night, all alone, scared
 Gasping for air.

By Sarah deVries



Today he (Pickton) goes to court as another four names are added to his known victims list. How haunting are Sarah's words. She knew that no one would listen when it came to the truth of women's lives and how they are dismissed as whores. This is the hardest lesson society should have to learn. As a society we should all be ashamed of ourselves for not paying attention to the signs, for not hearing the alarm bells, for not listening to women who were visiting the farm, and had in fact disregarded these women's lives as valueless.

In passing the downtown eastside neighbourhood safety office recently, I could not help but note how ironic it is that at least seven of the eighteen women who were recently reported as missing are now positively identified as victims of alleged serial killer Robert Pickton... if only we had paid attention sooner.

The Disability Review Process Is Deeply Flawed, And Is Making People Sick With Anxiety And Stress

Three Provincial Associations Protest Review Process

In a letter to Murray Coell, the Minister of Human Resources, dated October 17, 2002, representatives from the B.C. Society of Occupational Therapists, the Physiotherapy Association of B.C., and the B.C. Association of Social Workers, said that it was unrealistic for the Ministry to expect that 19,000 people with disabilities could complete the 23 page Application Form by the January 15, 2003, deadline. They pointed out that 100,000 British Columbians cannot find a family doctor, and that it would be impossible for those with a disability to find a doctor, and have sufficient interaction with her/him, to fill out the form accurately by January 15/03.

The three Associations stated clearly that they could not support the disability review process as it was, and asked for a meeting with the Minister. They did get some consultation with Ministry officials, but no commitment to change the process. The occupational therapists, social workers and physiotherapists then called a press conference for November 21 at the office of the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities. They intended to publicly call on the Ministry of Human Resources to make changes to the review process, including a change to the deadline of January 15/03.

One-half hour before this press conference was to take place, the Ministry of Human Resources sent a fax to the three Associations that contained two significant changes to the disability review process. (1) The Ministry said it would exempt 5,000 people with a mental illness from the review. These 5,000 were part of the 19,000 citizens who received the notorious 23 page Application Form. They will be personally contacted by their Employment and Assistance Workers, the fax said, and will also receive a letter confirming that they will not need to be reassessed. No criteria were given by the Ministry for deciding who these 5,000 people are going to be, so watch out for this one.

(2) The Ministry is extending the deadline for the completion of the Application Form from January 15 to March 15, 2003 - two months.

These changes are victories, and the pressure put on government by the occupational therapists, social workers and physiotherapists, along with people



with disabilities and their advocates, helped to win them. This is not the end of the struggle for justice and dignity, though. The story behind the disability review process is one of enormous government insensitivity and bullying. Many people with disabilities are becoming sick with stress and worry, and some have threatened suicide, or committed suicide, over the punitive Application Form.

All three of the health/social work professionals at the press conference said they were aware of the pain, humiliation, turmoil, anger and fear that the 23 page Application Form had caused, and they said that the government did not have the resources in place to help people adequately. Margaret Birrell, Director of the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, said that her office was getting one hundred calls a day from people in anguish over the review process. She also said that her office is receiving about one call every day from people threatening suicide, or sometimes bringing news of a suicide, and that this level of despair had never been seen at the BCCPD before. There's an important, untold story around the question of just how many people have died, are dying, and will die as a result of Gordon Campbell's cuts to social programs and the public service. Maybe some courageous journalist of integrity will take it on.

The Disability Forum

Anxiety and concern over the disability review process were expressed at a Disability Forum on the evening of November 20, at the Roundhouse Community Centre. The Forum was organized by the Vancouver Status of Women and the Anti-Poverty Committee. Well over 200 people attended the Forum. Many of them were citizens with disabilities who had not yet filled out the Application Form. Many citizens from support networks also attended.

Robin Loxton of the B.C. Coalition of People with Disabilities said they were overwhelmed with the numbers of people coming for help, and the situation was "very scary". Dr. Margaret McGregor from Mid-Main Clinic said this flawed disability review process was creating a health crisis of massive proportions, and she thought the process was so complicated and punitive that it seemed to be designed to make people give up.

After the panel presentations the meeting broke into four groups, each with advocates and social workers. A few doctors and lawyers were also available. Each group discussed support strategies and future plans, and then reported back to the main group. This part of the article has been written with the help of notes contributed by Lee Donahue.

A person from the Canadian Labour Congress expressed solidarity, and encouraged people to lobby the B.C. Medical Association. After all, doctors are supposed to fight illness, not create it. The disability review process is threatening to throw thousands of people with disabilities into much deeper poverty than they

are in now. Medical Associations know that there is a direct link between poverty and poor health. The Ontario Medical Association has said, "Poverty kills more people in Canada than cancer." (1) In an article in *The Kingston Whig-Standard*, Dr. Dennis Raphael of York University is quoted as saying, "If you ask the question, 'What can you do to threaten the health of the population in general?' Well, you reduce welfare payments, remove social housing units, eliminate rent control and don't raise the minimum wage." (2)

Among the suggestions that came up at the meeting were:



- * that all health care workers, including doctors, refuse to fill out the form, and reject the review process as it exists.
- * that an ongoing umbrella group be formed to protest this brutal process, and support anyone involved with the Application Form. The Anti-Poverty Committee has helped people defend themselves against the violence of the system.
- * that a letter (or petition) be drafted that individuals and organizations can sign, that speaks to the deeply flawed nature of the disability review process.
- * that all of us be aware of how much stress and anxiety have been created by this vicious review process, and that we watch out for each other and support each other - something many people in the Downtown Eastside know how to do. The Vancouver Status of Women has offered help and counseling to anyone in need, and the Carnegie Learning Centre has formed a Disability Review Support Group which meets on the third floor of Carnegie every Tuesday morning at 11:00 a.m.

Conclusion

Nineteen thousand Application Forms were sent out by the Ministry of Human Resources. As of Nov 15, about 3,000 of these forms had been returned to the Ministry. That leaves 16,000 forms to fill out. Now the Ministry is going to remove 5,000 people with mental disabilities from the list (without apologizing to them as it should do). That leaves 11,000 citizens who still have to deal with the disability review pro-

cess and its intimidating Application Form. These people need all the help they can get. The new deadline of March 15, 2003, is still too early in order to complete this complicated process with integrity. In my opinion, the provincial government should scrap the disability review process entirely, and leave poor people with disabilities alone. The review process is based on a profit-driven way of seeing the world that is the opposite of the humane values of ordinary Canadians, and the health problems arising out of this flawed process could cost more than the money saved by making poor people with disabilities even poorer.

Meanwhile, we continue to fight for respect and justice. Sometimes we think that we can't go on, but we go on all the same - and we go on together.

By SANDY CAMERON

- (1) Brief to the Ontario Social Assistance Review Committee, by the Ontario Medical Association, Jan 9, 1987.
(2) "Governments ignoring link between poverty and disease," by Prof. Ian Elliot, The Kingston Whig-Standard, Sept 25, 2002. See PovNet (povnet-issues@vcn.bc.ca).



The Wolves Within...

An old Grandfather, whose grandson came to him with anger at a schoolmate who had done him an injustice, said to his grandson, "Let me tell you a story.

"I too, at times have felt a great hate for those that have done so much, with no sorrow for what they do. But hate wears you down, and does not hurt your enemy. It is like taking poison and wishing your enemy would die. I have struggled with these feelings many times."

He continued, "It is as if there are two wolves inside of me. One is good and does no harm to anyone. He lives in harmony with all around him and does not take offense when no offense was intended. He will only fight when it is right to do so, and in the right way. But the other wolf, ah! He is full of anger. The littlest thing will set him off into a fit of temper. He fights everyone, all the time, for no reason. It is useless anger, for his anger will change nothing. Sometimes it is hard to live with these two wolves inside of me, for both of them try to dominate my spirit."

The boy looked intently into his Grandfather's eyes and asked, "Then how do you know which one wins, Grandfather?"

The Grandfather smiled and replied, "The one I feed."

The Ten First Nations Commandments

Treat the earth and all that dwell there with respect.

Remain close to the Great Spirit.

Show great respect for your fellow-being.

Work together for the benefit of all man-kind.

Give assistance and kindness wherever needed.

Do what you know to be right.

Look after the well-being of mind and body.

Dedicate a share of your effort to the greater good.

Be truthful and honest at all times.

Take full responsibility for your actions.

FRIDAY (December) 13TH !!!

D J MIXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXmas Dance

7 – 10pm, Carnegie Theatre

Surprises, Snaxxxx

Come and have a Holly Jolly Time!



Carnegie Disability Review Support Group

* meets every Tuesday morning at 11:00 a.m. at the Carnegie Learning Centre, third floor, 401 Main St.
* we do not have advocates at the Carnegie Learning Centre, but we will help people find advocates. We are a group where people support each other. We help people read the Application Form, and make an action plan. We do have some volunteers who will go with you to meet an advocate.

Carnegie Learning Centre

Need an advocate to help with your disability review application?

1. 411 Seniors' Centre, 411 Dunsmuir St. 604-684-8171

Who? For people age 55 and up or people with disabilities.

What? Will help fill out the first part of the application and witness signatures. (A typist is available from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm.) Will provide referrals for the second and third parts. Will also provide general referrals for those who have difficulty with the first part.

When? The office is open Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm

2. Downtown Eastside Residents Association. (DERA) # 1-425 Carrall St., 604-682-0931

Who? Anyone who lives in the downtown eastside.

What? Will provide assistance with all aspects of the review application and letters of reference for doctors.

When? Phone in and book an appointment.

3. First United Church, 320 East Hastings St. 604-681-8365 Who? No age or gender restrictions.

What? Will help fill out the first part of the application. They will also help to make appointments with qualified doctors and assessors.

When? At 9:00am on a first-come/first-served basis. Spaces fill up quickly so get there early.

4. Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, 320 Columbia St. 604-681-8480 Who? For women.

What? Will help with certain parts of the review application. Further information is available from the mental health advocate. **When?** Weekdays from 10:00am until 4:45pm. Week-ends from 12:00pm until 5:00.

5. Kettle Friendship Centre, 1725 Venables St. 604-251-2854 Who? People with mental health issues.

What? Will help with all aspects of the application. They will also help to make appointments with assessors.

When? Call ahead to make an appointment. Morning office hours:

Mon, Wed and Fri from 9:30 until 12:00. Afternoon office hours: Mon-Thurs from 1:00 until 5:00.

6. Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, #1600-1130 West Pender St, 604-689-3144

Who? People with multiple sclerosis. **What?** They will help with all aspects of the form.

When? Call ahead to make an appointment. Office hours are from 8:30am until 4:30pm.

7. BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, #204-456 West Broadway St. 604-875-0188

Who? No age or gender restrictions.

What? Call Michael at 604-875-0188 to make an appointment to attend an information session. Sessions are limited to between 15 and 20 people and are approximately 2 hours long.

When? Michael's office hours are Monday to Friday from 9:00 until 1:00.

8. Downtown Community Health Centre, 569 Powell St. 604-255-3151

Who? Anyone who lives in the downtown eastside.

What? Will help fill out the 1st part and attempt to provide references for the 2nd and 3rd parts of the application.

When? Phone in to make an appointment. The office is open between 8:30am until 8:30pm.

Due to government cutbacks, we cannot compose obituaries for deceased people. Please have your obituary done while you are still living.

Please excuse me for spelling poorly; my memory is fading and it's going to get worse.

BEN CAISSY 1930 -?

- *Lifetime member of the Bridge Club — Granville, Burrard and Patullo bridges.
- *Member of the Okanagan Boxing Team. Boxed in the 5 Division; apples, pears, peaches, apricots and cherries.
- *A gifted tap dancer — hot, cold, and beer taps.
- *Dedicated pool player — ran a hundred three times in one week (to catch a bus to get to the pool hail). Married three times, still have the same cue. Ran 2 perfect games — didn't scratch.
- *An abused child, he grew up with a chip on his shoulder, 'til his parents moved away from the sawmill.
- *Became a born again Christian and joined the Hell's Angels. Tried to straighten them out.
- *Outstanding athlete — 1006 Seymour Street, 4 hours without an umbrella.
- *Physical instructor — bodybuilding, weightlifting, powerlifting, shoplifting.
- *25 years as a professional shoplifter — machine shop, welding shop, blacksmith shop. P.S. No sweatshop.
- *His hobby was collecting: Welfare, UIC, and Compensation (hat trick).
- *Married to a wonderful woman — I fed her, Welfare dressed her, landlord gave her work for her spending money.
- *Addicted to drugs. Took medication to ease the pain. Took wallets, car keys, credit cards, VCRs TVs and disc players.
- *Very loyal to my social worker — never missed a cheque in 25 years. Twice took a taxi from the Okanagan because the airline was on strike.
- *A fine guitar picker - picked guitars for fifty years - never once caught.
- *Passed the Bar many a time — never became a lawyer.
- *A recovering alcoholic — recovered half my empties.
- *Had a complete medical last week — doctor says it don't look good.

Wait 'til he sees my obituary.

The body can be viewed in the sports TV room (along with the rest). Took erly retirement but can't remember if it was when I left school or shortly after!



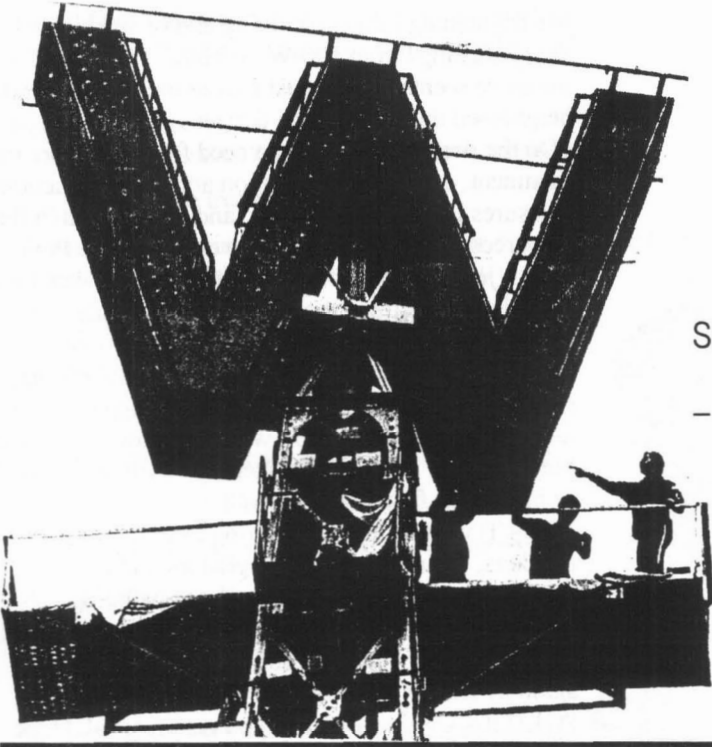
**Comments?
Concerns?**

**Contact
Jenny
Wai Ching
Kwan, MLA**



Working for You

1070-1641 Commercial Dr, V5L 3Y3
Phone: 775-0790 Fax: 775-0881
Office hours: Tuesday-Friday, 9am-4pm



Shawn and friends at the top of Woodward's
– and finding an eagle's nest under the **W**

Letter of Support for the Woodward's Squatters

We, the undersigned, are writing this letter to support the Woodward's Squatters in their struggle for social housing and social justice. In response to recent statements made by Chief Constable Jamie Graham and others, we would like to make four points that he and others need to understand, if they truly want to achieve a peaceful resolution to the situation.

1. There are over 150 homeless people camped in front of Woodward's.

Squatters and their supporters have been keeping count of the numbers and origins of the people sleeping outside, and we know that the overwhelming majority of Squatters are homeless and in need of housing. We know that it is one of the most peaceful blocks in the Downtown Eastside.

2. We oppose the police attacking homeless people.

The Vancouver Police Department should spend their time and money policing real violent crimes that go on in our city every day. Should they attempt a violent solution to this political crisis, they will only provoke a public backlash and entrench hostility to the police. Both times that the police have used force and violence, it failed to deter people from continuing, and failed to shift public support and opinion away from the Squatters.

3. We oppose the eviction of homeless Natives from unceded Native land.

We are all living on Coast Salish land, a people that have signed no treaty to extinguish their sovereignty over the land. Over one third of the people sleeping around the building are homeless Native men and women. This is surprising given the high levels of aboriginal poverty in the DTES, Vancouver and Canada as a whole.

4. We demand decent and dignified housing for all.

Winter shelters are an inadequate response to homelessness. Shelters are, by themselves, just a Band-Aid. Winter shelters are simply a Band-Aid on a Band-Aid. We the undersigned demand that the Police do not attempt any removal of homeless people camped around the Woodward's building without finding housing for all of them.

Signature

Keep On

Be Grateful you ain't dead.
Took a friend on a ride today
down St.Paul's way
Inside we both pray
we see each other out
out on the outside
pretty soon someday

So even if Christmas ain't your gig
and maybe it just gives you the blues
Be thankful my brother for the fact you're walkin'
with more tomorrows ahead to pay your dues

So this New Year I'm gonna jump
gonna jump and jive, glad to be alive
You take care now, ain't all that bad
got just as many reasons to be happy
as reasons to feel bad
be thankful for all your friends, present and gone
God loves you, you all keep on keeping on.

R. Loewen

FIRST NATIONS JOURNEYS

with Gary Johnson of the Squamish Nation

A program that will be exploring First Nations culture, heritage rediscovery and current issues.

Sponsored by: Capilano College, Carnegie Cultural Sharing Program, Carnegie Learning Centre

**Monday's from 2-5pm, 1st floor Theatre
Wednesday's 12-3pm, 3rd floor Classroom #2**

For more information: 604-665-3013

It sure looks different...

- outside Carnegie, that is. The police presence on the corner 24/7 has made it a non-hangout. It's a relief to the Community Centre as the increasing confrontations between those involved in the open drug market and people/staff/security were ugly.

As far as the look - look west and east but especially west right now, and see that the people are being pushed into smaller and smaller areas. The lanes and alleys are dangerous, with users and the street scene crowding in. On most days (and nights)

it's frightening for people living and/or working along Hastings from 100 W. to 100 E., but this initiative seems to have just moved the problem and heightened the fear and the danger.

On the positive (?) side, the need for much more in treatment, education, prevention and harm reduction measures is blatantly obvious, and have to match the resources and energy going into enforcement. Police have a job to do, but thankfully the social issues tied inextricably to life in the Downtown Eastside are at least recognised (and kind of dealt with) by many others. Poverty, homelessness, race, class, housing, safety, sex, drugs, alcohol, jobs and on and on are all factored in - or should be - when decisions are made but each area's decision-makers see their specialty or interest as first and foremost.

POLICE want to arrest and bring to trial the law-breakers, seeing in terms of predators and prey; HEALTH pros look to the disease or pathology of people, treating patients regardless of their rapsheets BUSINESS is by nature profit-seeking but can, again by nature, be most cold when that is affected; POLITICIANS - well, now you get personal. Hope is best at the beginning, and the new crew (COPE) has to be given a chance to work on problems that are years old.

Community is what everyone claims to be part of...

We are in the grip of one of the most fascist blocs ever to disgrace government in Victoria. The exacerbation of all the issues noted above is part n' parcel of cutbacks and scrapping of services done by the Campbell Liberals and their masters at the Fraser Institute. *They* think Gordie isn't going fast and far enough. For the hundreds of homeless and vulnerable and 'just stuck' now, there will be thousands in less than 2 years. Kudos to the people at and supporting the Woodwards encampment. If positive change is not brought about now we will be in the same boat as Ontario, with the Harris Tories being mouthpieces for the clone of Fraser - C.D.Howe Institute - and *their* next level at the Business Council on National Issues. Toronto has over 30,000 homeless people; in the States the estimate is in the low *millions*.

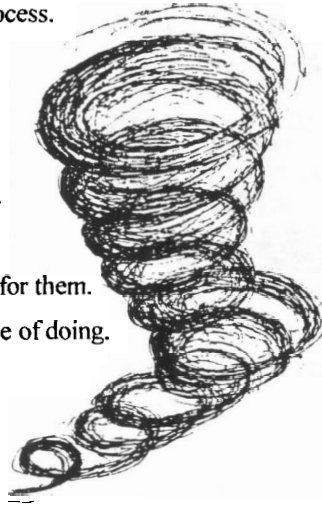
Look around corners and see what's happening now in terms of getting either ten times worse or standing our ground and fighting for a future that we want to live in. Princess Margaret's question is real.

PRT

To All Our Volunteers who are most appreciated, just a short reminder of your Personal Rights as a human being. Some may seem simple, but can be a huge challenge and risk also. Just so you know, I am behind you.
Colleen

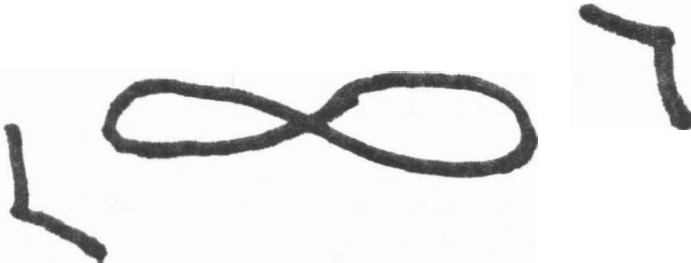
Personal Rights

1. The right to initiate / alter / terminate relationships.
2. The right to be treated with respect.
3. The right to act in ways that promote your dignity and self-respect as long as others' rights are not violated in the process.
4. The right to feel good about yourself.
5. The right to change your mind.
6. The right to say "no" and not feel guilty.
7. The right to experience and express your feelings.
8. The right to ask for what you want.
9. The right to make mistakes and to be responsible for them.
10. The right to do less than you are humanly capable of doing.
11. The right to ask for information.
12. The right to do what you want with your body.
13. The right to do what you want with your time.
14. The right to get what you pay for.
15. The right to do what you want with your possessions.
16. The right not to assert you rights.
17. The right to have your limits respected.
18. The right not to offer reasons or excuses for your behavior.



i love this so
i don't need pins and needles
i'm warning you to be fair
i'm checking out
as a super unknown
an old and tired friend
to make you disappear
i don't care
thanks
it's out of your hands
i slipped away
i'm the only one who knew
no time to turn around
it's taking way long
it's a memory
i know i will
that was before
now it's good-bye
i'm all you ever knew
say it

charles fortin



WHAT IS YOUR DREAM FOR THE FUTURE?

This is a profound question. Most of us may think of tomorrow or next week in personal terms, but what kind of world do you want your children and grandchildren to grow up in?

Please take time and write out your thoughts. It's up to you if asked for permission to print responses.

Princess Margaret

Theatre Workshops at Carnegie

Learn to Act, Direct or Write a Play

Become familiar with the Nuts & Bolts of Theatre





Drop In!

Every Thursday Afternoon, 12pm – 2/3pm
Classroom #2, 3rd floor, 401 Main

Info: Rika or Dan at 665-3003; Jay at 708-5448

"We  not

EXXONerate Saddam

Hussein for his actions. We will
Mobilize to meet this threat to
vital interests in the Persian 
until an  ble solution is reached.
Our best strategy is to  prepared.
Failing that, we  ming
to kick your ass."

An Open Letter to the President of the United States
of America

Mr. Bush:

Good morning sir. Like you, I am a father and an American. Like you, I consider myself a patriot. Like you, I was horrified by the events of this past year, concerned for my family and my country.

However, I do not believe in a simplistic and inflammatory view of good and evil. I believe this is a big world full of men, women, and children who struggle to eat, to love, to work, to protect their families, their beliefs, and their dreams. My father, like yours, was decorated for service in World War II. He raised me with a deep belief in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, as they should apply to all Americans who would sacrifice to maintain them and to all human beings as a matter of principle.

Many of your actions to date and those proposed seem to violate every defining principle of this country over which you preside: intolerance of debate ("with us or against us"), marginalization of your critics, the promoting of fear through unsubstantiated rhetoric, manipulation of a quick comfort media, and position of your administration's deconstruction of civil liberties all contradict the very core of the patriotism you claim. You lead, it seems, through a blood-lined sense of entitlement.

Take a close look at your most vehement media supporters. See the fear in their eyes as their loud

voices of support ring out with that historically disastrous undercurrent of rage and panic masked as "straight tough talk."

How far have we come from understanding what it is to kill one man, one woman, or one child, much less the "collateral damage" of many hundreds of thousands. Your use of the words, "this is a new kind of war" is often accompanied by an odd smile. It concerns me that what you are asking of us is to abandon all previous lessons of history in favor of following you blindly into the future. It worries me because with all your best intentions, an enormous economic surplus has been squandered. Your administration has virtually dismissed the most fundamental environmental concerns and therefore, by implication, one gets the message that, as you seem to be willing to sacrifice the children of the world, would you also be willing to sacrifice ours.

I know this cannot be your aim so, I beg you Mr. President, listen to Gershwin, read chapters of Stegner, of Saroyan, the speeches of Martin Luther King. Remind yourself of America. Remember the Iraqi children, our children, and your own.

There can be no justification for the actions of Al Qaeda. Nor acceptance of the criminal viciousness of the tyrant, Saddam Hussein. Yet, that bombing is answered by bombing, mutilation by mutilation, killing by killing, is a pattern that only a great country like ours can stop. However, principles cannot be recklessly or greedily abandoned in the guise of preserving them.

Avoiding war while accomplishing national security is no simple task. But you will recall that we Americans had a little missile problem down in Cuba once. Mr. Kennedy's restraint (and that of the nuclear submarine captain, Arkhipov) is to be aspired to. Weapons of mass destruction are clearly a threat to the entire world in any hands. But as Americans, we must ask ourselves, since the potential for Hussein to possess them threatens not only our country, (and in fact, his technology to launch is likely not yet at that high a level of sophistication) therefore, many in his own region would have the greatest cause for concern. Why then, is the United States, as led by your administration, in the small minority of the world nations predisposed toward a preemptive military assault on Iraq?

Simply put, sir, let us re-introduce inspection teams,



On the other hand, should you have faith in the best of this country to support your leadership in representing a strong, thoughtful, and educated United States, you may well triumph for the long haul. Lead us there, Mr. President, and we will stand with you.

Sincerely,
 Sean Penn
 San Francisco, California

inhibiting offensive capability. We buy time, maintain our principles here and abroad and demand of ourselves ingenuity to be the strongest diplomatic muscle on the planet, perhaps in the history of the planet.

The answers will come. You are a man of faith, but your saber is rattling the faith of many Americans in you.

I do understand what a tremendously daunting task it must be to stand in your shoes at this moment. As a father of two young children who will live their lives in the world as it will be affected by critical choices today, I have no choice but to believe that you can ultimately stand as a great president. History has offered you such a destiny. So again, sir, I beg you, help save America before yours is a legacy of shame and horror. Don't destroy our children's future. We will support you. You must support us, your fellow Americans, and indeed, mankind.

Defend us from fundamentalism abroad but don't turn a blind eye to the fundamentalism of a diminished citizenry through loss of civil liberties, of dangerously heightened presidential autonomy through acts of Congress, and of this country's mistaken and pervasive belief that its "manifest destiny" is to police the world. We know that Americans are frightened and angry. However sacrificing American soldiers or innocent civilians in an unprecedented preemptive attack on a separate sovereign nation, may well prove itself a most temporary medicine.



WE CARE

What is a "MORON"

The most telling bit of world news in the last little while has been that the Chretien Government felt it was necessary to issue a comment stating that the President of the United States was not, in fact, a moron.



Not a Moron

For any of you that missed it, during a George W. Bush speech to NATO, the Canadian Prime Minister's Communications Director, Francoise Ducros, uttered this aside to a few Canadian Broadcast reporters, "what a moron." The Canadian reporters, being reporters, reported it.

During the furor that erupted from Ducros's statement, one could have heard an international political pin drop. Collectively, the apparent world wide opinion was, "well... duhhh." The Prime Minister leapt to the President's defense, not with laudatory tales of Bush's intellect, foresight or deep knowledge and understanding of complicated international issues.. no, Chretien said, "He is not a moron, he is my friend."



Well, I got that going for me"

For those of us who like to think of ourselves as morons, a comfortable old shirt that limits our expectations of ourselves, I believe that if we held a vote to see if George W. Bush could join our club, he would be excluded. While there could be many reasons for his exclusion, the most determining is that Prime Minister Chretien is correct, he is not a moron. He is in fact, an imbecile.

It is a shame that Francoise Ducros has lost her job in the Prime Ministers Office over her misnomer. It would have been interesting to hear her opinions of other foreign leaders - Tony Blair for instance. Or better yet, to see where some of our local leaders rank out on the bell curve.



"I hope I rank higher than Gordon Campbell"

Not Chili Bob

Computer Room: December and January

Every Wednesday we work as a group 2-3pm, then *one-on-one* until 6pm. The exception is on the 3rd Wednesday of the month: Women Only (2 - 4:30)

December 4th — Learn how to build a webpage

December 11th — how to use HTML to build and extend your web pages.

December 18th - "Women's Web Wares" *Women ONLY* Search the Internet for stuff relevant to you

January 8th — "Happy Happy" Search the Internet for happy things and other good cheer.

January 15th — "Learn yerself HTML nd other fun stuff" The easy way to learn how to build a website with HTML and make the instructor redundant!

January 22nd — "Women's Web Wares" Women ONLY* Search the Internet for stuff relevant to you

January 29th — "Let's get Crafty" Find free patterns on the Internet for all your craft needs!

SWEATSHOP SURVIVOR SPEAKS OUT

Join Carmen Julia Silva, fired for her union organizing efforts at the Duro Bag factory in Rio Bravo, Mexico in a wide ranging conversation about union busting, unsafe working conditions and human dignity in the notorious "free trade" factories on the US-Mexican border.

December 7, 1:30PM

**SFU Harbourside, 515 W.Hastings
Room 1800, Vancouver, BC**

Sister Carmen Julia is part of a brave and tenacious group of workers who were fired and blackballed for trying to organize a free and independent union at Duro Bags in Rio Bravo, Mexico. (Duro makes high-gloss consumer bags for retailers like Banana Republic, The Limited, J.Jill and Distinct Marketing Designs.)

Their experience, sadly, is typical of the labour and human rights abuses that prevail in the *maquiladora* zone along the US-Mexican border, and in many other sweatshop areas around the world, including some right here in Vancouver. Wherever sweatshop conditions prevail, workers face lethal workplace conditions, sexual harassment, child labour and attempts to crush their unions.

This public meeting is part of a North American tour by fired Duro workers, an attempt to reach out to working people across the continent to ask for our solidarity. Their struggle for dignity and human rights is at a critical point, and there are things that Canadians can do to help. Attend this meeting and learn what you can do to support the Duro workers' demands-

- * Reinstatement of fired workers
- * Restoration of their independent union that was illegally "stolen" from them by the CROC union
- * Improved conditions in the factory

This event is sponsored by the Canadian Labour Congress, the Maquiladora Solidarity Network, the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, Oxfam, No Sweat SFU and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. For more information or to arrange press interviews with Carmen Julia Silva, please contact Tom Sandborn at 604-224-1182 after December 1, 2002.

NO LOGO: COELL FREE FALL!

Got routine form letter today
from the 'ministry of fear' re
change o' file
(why not change o' universe?)
from mr. coell from hell:
complete with 2010 Olympuke Bid Logo
on upper right(wing)corner;
so i get under \$200/month: support"
less than many an executive on corporate welfare
SPENDS
on one power lunch/brunch!
so dealing with coell bureaucracy is
one rancid thing enough —
now i get to see how El Gordo
the Godzilla Guano Man will likely spend
untold millions
(which could be used for health/
social/housing/relief)
and know what i want to do?
puke bile all over
mr coell & mr campbell!
keep your logo up your bums
your corporate welfare bums (fat ones two!)
where it
BELONGS!

john alan douglas



Fire

As far as I am concerned, the Earth is a time bomb. The centre of the earth has lava and rock around it. We have oil under the earth. We have gas too! We have water and land. Water doesn't mix with oil.

Water makes fire with electricity. We have fire in the sky, we have earthquakes that open the earth and sometimes water mixes with oil.

We have fire in the sky – it's called the sun – so we can have warmth.

Doris Leslie

News from the Library: December 2002
Some of the new Titles received

The Best Olympics Ever! Helen Lenskyj 796.48 len

Helen Lenskyj's work takes a political approach to what happened at the Sydney 2000 Olympics most of her discussion is focused on disclosing what the Olympic industry suppressed in the period leading up to the event. She discusses the social and economic costs and other key issues related to Sydney's Olympics in what has been called "A solid and comprehensive analysis of the 'hidden' side of Sydney 2000".

Because of wide patron interest in this work we are letting it circulate for just one week as a special reference loan and taking a waiting list of names from those wishing to read it.

Little White Squaw: A white woman's Story of Abuse, Addiction and Reconciliation/Eve Nash: 921 N24 nas

Those of us who heard Eve Nash speak at The Health Contact Centre when she launched this book a few months ago would agree with the reviewer in the Globe and Mail who says "In a world increasingly short of miracles. her story will not leave you untouched, and for that reason alone it is worth the read"

Old Soldiers Sometimes Lie! Richard Hoyt : 813.54 hoy

More than five decades ago, MacArthur permitted General Tomayuki Yamashita, the famed Tiger of Malaya, to be executed for alleged war crimes against the Filipino people. Now, Dr. Tomiko Kobayashi, the general's granddaughter, is determined to clear Yamashita's name. "With the help of a disillusioned ex-CIA operative, Tomi is dead-set on exposing the dirty truth behind American intelligence operations in postwar Japan. But, even fifty years later, there are still those who prefer that the past stay buried, even if it means silencing Tomi's voice forever."--BOOK JACKET.

Just another Indian! Warren Goulding: 364.152 war

Goulding discovered that between 1990 and 1994, nearly 500 Aboriginal women had been reported missing in Canada's West, and little was ever done to ascertain their whereabouts. Goulding gives a detailed description of professionals, from Crown prosecutors to forensic anthropologists, doing an outstanding job marshalling evidence, dealing with a cynical media, and using everything at their disposal to eventually bring Crawford to justice. This is a disquieting case that should be read by those interested in the disturbing treatment of Native peoples by the criminal justice system and the media, and society's indifference to it all.

Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution /Dudley Weeks: 303.69 wee

Problems that 'just won't go away' can be settled through methods developed by one of America's leading experts in conflict resolution Weeks shows readers how to turn conflict into lasting partnerships and ensure a fruitful outcome.

Mary Ann Cantillon, Librarian



Sign on her door:

"You see, I don't believe libraries should be drab places where people sit in silence, and that's been the main reason for our policy of employing wild animals as librarians."

-Monty Python



Mary Ann Cantillon, Librarian

Close the School Of the Americas!

Si Se Puede-We can do it!

On November 18th, in front of the Anglican Church Cathedral on West Georgia, a group of 20 or so dedicated people lit candles and held tiny white crosses, as they held a vigil against the terrorism which many people do not know about. This is the terrorism caused by the graduates of the US Army School of the Americas which is known as SOA.

Amongst those holding these little crosses this very wet Vancouver morning were young people from Hijos (children of the detained, disappeared, exiled or tortured) in South and Central America: Marta Torres, an exiled human rights lawyer from Guatemala; Deirdre Kelley of Victoria, who for the past seven years has been doing this vigil on location outside the SOA complex in Fort Benning (Deirdre's cross had the name of one the children massacred with 900 other civilians at El Mozote); John Payne of CTFCA, and many other organizations.

John Payne spoke about the importance of continuing this work which began 20 years ago with the genocide in Guatemala. He said that solidarity has taken a broader scope that covers the Americas as a whole, including working to help immigrants and refugees living in Vancouver as well as participating in SOA-Watch annual events such as this vigil.

The website of SOA Watch reminds us that the graduates of the "School of Assassins" are still very active and young people are being recruited to be trained in this notorious school as terrorists/soldiers, then unleashed either back home or in neighbouring countries where they now carry out unspeakable acts in everything from silencing dissent to promoting NAFTA and crushing unions. More than 60,000 Latin American soldiers have been trained in this school and have become the most notorious human rights abusers.

John Payne reminded us that we should walk humbly in solidarity with our suffering neighbours to the South. He went on to quote "What it means to be humble. The word comes from humus, meaning earth. If we take this in the sense of being grounded it means knowing who you are and who you are not. What does it cause you to do or not to do? Being good in some things does not give you the right to control everything. It does not give you the right to not hear or suppress someone else's voice. It does not give you the right to be silent when you have a voice to raise."*

.The group went on humbly but strongly in the pouring rain to unfurl their magnificent home made banner in front of the American Consulate. Those of us who witnessed walked away with tears very close to our eyes but hope in our hearts.

* quoting Joan Chittister

For Information on SOA check out the website <http://www.soaw.org>

Book Review

Not long along, I went over and got a book entitled "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" by Ernest Hemingway. Poor old Harry, the hero, went to East Africa on safari and he ends up on a cot in a tent, with gangrene, waiting for the plane to take him out, and they would probably have to cut off the leg, as in those days they didn't have penicillin.

Harry always married rich women, you know, as that way he wouldn't have to work, and he would have time to work on his novel, as he was a journalist. Harry was saving up all of his life experiences until he had enough knowledge to write that one great novel. But life is not always so good that way, it seems, and here's where he's ended up.

I remember one time a newspaper editor asked me to go to a barbecue at his place, over on the West Side, and I decided to go out of idle curiosity. I wanted to see what the other side lived like.

Well, he had a sort of condominium thing - a few squirrels were running around in back, and it seemed to be a bit small, too many people were squeezed in too close together, but it was reasonable. Not like having your own house, though, which you can call home. He showed a few movie slides, or something, and I decided to go home.

I remember standing and waiting for the bus, looking all around me, and the streets were deserted, sort of lonely. I started to think: "What would you do if someone decided to rob you? There's no police. And what would you do when you live here: it's boring?" Well, I went away with a sort of funny taste in my mouth, like I wanted to get out of here.

It's no better on the other side.

That is not to say that you shouldn't try for success, but money and success are tenuous at best.

Now, take my sister. I remember when they had that big house, and the car, and all those trips to Europe and all that. In fact, I used to go there sometimes, when they had everything and I had nothing, and I used to feel like a bum, although nobody ever suggested that I was a bum, but that was the way I felt.

Sure, they worked for their money, but maybe she should have gone for an operation, and she couldn't get time off from the job, as they needed her badly on the job, and later she began to suffer pain, and she took up drinking to kill the pain. But sometimes

something goes wrong in your life. Just like it happened to poor old Harry. A simple thing like a scratch on the leg.

At the last report, (from my other sister), my sister was seen on the streets of Victoria — panhandling!

And all this goes to show that this can happen to any one of us. People say: "It could happen to your own sister, you know. Well, it did happen to my own sister!

What do you do when all else fails? You might have to get help from Upstairs. I did. I sometimes remember a song I heard many years ago: **I Believe**.

I believe that every time I hear a newborn
baby cry

Or touch a leaf, or see the sky

I believe that somewhere in the

Great Unknown

The smallest voice is heard.

Epilogue: Now, you may be wondering, did Harry ever get back to civilization? Well, I won't tell you. I suggest you read the story.

By Robert R. Rich



Editor

The City of Vancouver could save lives and injuries if they put a pedestrian-controlled crosswalk on Hastings between Columbia and Main. Many people jaywalk on this block and a Police Sergeant told me it is the worst block in the city for pedestrians being hit by vehicles.

Many jaywalkers are impaired as legal (Regent & Brandiz Hotels –northside; Balmoral –southside) and illegal (open air drug market) intoxicants are readily available. Even a police presence on th block doesn't stop many impaired pedestrians from jaywalking. Their judgment and reaction times are not right and many take big chances crossing this block.

The traffic moves way too fast and could be slowed with a crosswalk. There are pedestrian-controlled crosswalks between Cambie & Abbott and between Abbott & Carrall; the traffic moves much slower.

Let's have it installed now. Let's not wait and have it studied for years.. let's save people from death and crippling injuries now. Even saving 1 life makes it worth doing,

...or is the City not interested in saving a drunk or a druggie?

D. Murray, Regent Hotel

Dear Editor,

I would like to express my heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Arne Ristvedt whose life was needlessly wasted by the actions of our current government. I would also like to thank them for permitting Arne's story to be made public, thus putting a name and a face to at least one of the many reported successful and attempted suicides predestined by the draconian measures of the Ministry of Human Resources and the Liberal government with their review of the status of thousands of British Columbians, who by virtue of being disabled by physical and/or mental illnesses, are forced to subsist on the already punitive disability benefits existing in this province.

No longer can Ministers Coell and Cheema dismiss as "anecdotal" the reports of suicides attributed to anxiety and despair caused by the reassessment of the status of people with mental illness. Threatening the financial and health services security of the most vulnerable of our society is an irresponsible and uncaring act perpetrated by bullies.

Perhaps Arne's death will reinforce the message people with mental illness and their advocates have been communicating to government since this outrageous and ill planned process began. Namely, that lives will be lost.

Sincerely,

Terry Morris
Mental Health/Social Justice Advocate
President CANDO Society

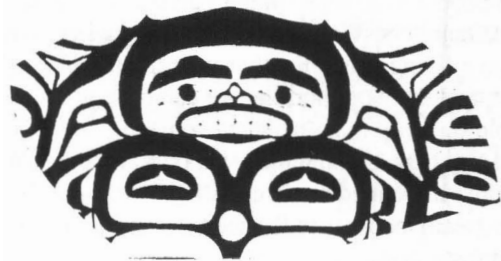


Hi, I was just speaking with the Native Courtworker who's being left to handle all and every problem that clients coming before the courts are experiencing. She said a young man of 19, with a mental disability of some sort was released from Court and his coat was left in the Smithers lockup.

He had no money for anything including bus fare. The Courtworker tried to get his coat but could not access it, tried to obtain bus fare to Prince George (his home) but Human Resources said he did not qualify as he had to work for two years first. There was no help for him at all anywhere.

Anyway the Courtworker helped him obtain a coat at the Salvation Army store, gave him her last bit of change from her pocket (\$5.00 bill plus change) with kleenex (in case he had to take a dump in th bushes) and left him on the highway. He was going to hitch hike to Prince George. He uttered his appreciation and was left on the side of the road.

The Court worker may be able to have this client speak to the press. He is being treated in a very inhumane manner and but for the Native Courtworker his situation was untenable. People are being murdered along Highway 16 and a young, naive, mentally challenged boy is as vulnerable as anyone. Help!



This is not just a war on the poor. This is also a war on all those who work with the poor. The government has downloaded the costs and responsibilities that they should be paying for *and* dealing with onto all kinds of other organizations, who do not have the money or energy to meet all the demands.

Please bear in mind that when you swarm offices demanding that people get help, the people you are swarming are often themselves under assault, and

may have little money or energy to offer. Workers in these organizations are burning out under demands that have been foisted on them by the government.

We must go public with these stories. The court worker should be bringing people like the young man described, to all who have the ability to do something.

Bring him to the local newspaper, bring him to a reporter to demand that the story be told so people can help, bring him to a union office and demand that the union slogan "a injury to one is an injury to all" is acted upon, bring him to a church and demand their help for this UNACCEPTABLE situation. Bring him to other non-profit advocacy or social justice agencies and ask for their help. Call for a group of people to come together to go to the "Smithers Lock-up" to demand his coat.

This is what we have been doing here for people in crisis. We will even go out on the street with big signs saying "government forcing people to beg" and we will raise money if we can't get it from anywhere else. This only takes three people.

We must not accept this kind of injustice quietly or only tell each other. There are lots of people who will come forward in outrage when they are made aware of the situation. The key is to develop a group of allies that you can call on at short notice. You need people who are willing to give you their home phone numbers. We have enough people here who are on a flying squad list that we can put out a call at night, and the next morning we can have at least 20 people show up to help defend someone.

The key here is community support and to use all the alternative media and email lists because the mainstream media usually needs to be shamed into reporting stories.

Once the 'oppressors' (for lack of a better word) realize that a lot of community people are mad about something they usually suddenly realize there is something they can do to help after all and the situation gets resolved.

Obviously we need to do this on a bigger scale to end the current war on the poor.

Cindy from Victoria Anti-Poverty Coalition.

COOL & CRAZY ART MArT



GALLERY GACHET

88 east cordova st

Dec 7-8 & 14-15

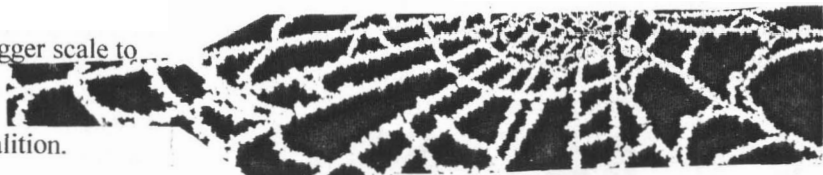
noon - 6pm

Cheap and Unique Real art by real live artist

To Be Yours

To be seen, to be noticed, to be zeroed in on
Rarely will magic happen, appear and catch fire
Rules of the Game are not always enforced
To achieve some small fame which is hard to attain
can intoxicate and ruin.. doing danger to your tunes
Take a breath, cool your fever that radiates on – it'll
pass in good time if you chill & twirl your wand.
Is love fate, is it real, can you touch it, or just feel?
It takes you down, rolls you over, rings your bell!!
Is it lasting, enduring, or like ice melting away...
Make an account of your options: I beg you to stay.

Robyn Livingstone



DOWNTOWN STD CLINIC - 219 Main: Monday to Friday, 10am - 6pm
EASTSIDE NEEDLE EXCHANGE - 221 Main: 8:30am - 8pm every day
YOUTH NEEDLE EXCHANGE VAN - 3 Routes:
ACTIVITIES City - 5:45pm - 11:45pm
SOCIETY 604-685-6561 Overnight - 12:30am - 8:30am
Downtown Eastside - 5:30pm - 1:30am

2002 DONATIONS Libby D. -\$81
 Sam R. -\$20 Eve E. -\$18 Nancy H. \$50
 Margaret D. -\$22 Sabitri G. -\$22
 Hulda R. -\$25 Val A. \$18 Wm B. -\$27
 Harold D. -\$21 Mary C. -\$71 Paula R. -\$35
 Rolf A. -\$75 Bruce J. -\$18 Peggy -\$25
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 Bill G. -\$100 Wes K. -\$36 Charley B. -\$25
 DEYAS -\$125 RayCam -\$25 LSS -\$200
 John S. -\$36 Paddy -\$75 Sarah E. -\$10
 The Edge -\$200 Maggie R. -\$100
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 Mennonite CC -\$85 Rosemary Z. -\$40
 Joanna N. -\$40 Jenny K. -\$18
 Charlotte F. -\$20 Nancy C. -\$50
 Debbie -\$20 Glen B. -\$100 Penny G. -\$40
 Jelly Bean -\$20 Louise's Mom -\$20
 Gram -\$100 Anonymous -\$21

Free - donations accepted

Carnegie

NEWSLETTER

401 Main St, Vancouver V6A 2T7

Email: camnews@vnet.bc.ca

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

Submission Deadline
for next issue:

Thursday, December 12

The Downtown Eastside Residents Association
 can help you with:

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

Come to the Dera office at 425 Carrall Street or
 phone us at 682 - 0931
 DERA has been serving the Downtown Eastside
 for 29 years!!!!

BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS
Providence Health Care, St. Paul's Hospital,
The University of British Columbia and
The Ministry of Health, British Columbia, Canada

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: The VANDU Needle Exchange Table

On July 16, 2002, in the wake of the Vancouver Police Department's decision to close the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users' (VANDU) needle exchange table, I wrote a letter to the Police Board outlining the potential public health impacts of this decision. In the letter, I made it clear that we, at the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, had a long-standing respect for VPD, and that we shared in the responsibility for failures in the communication between VPD and health researchers tracking the HIV epidemic in the Downtown Eastside.

In my previous letter, I outlined that we had published several peer-reviewed scientific papers that demonstrated that the strongest risk factor for syringe sharing [and in turn the spread of blood-borne diseases] in Vancouver was difficulty accessing syringes 1,2. When we later investigated the reasons among those who reported such difficulty, 71% attributed their difficulty with access to the DEYAS exchange being closed at night, and over 36% attributed it to difficulty meeting the exchange vans. Indeed, it was for such reasons that the VANDU table was set up, namely to improve access to syringes when the DEYAS fixed site exchange is closed. In the paper we recently published, we argued strongly that a fixed source of sterile needles be opened 24 hours a day in the heart of the open drug scene 3. .

In my previous letter, I speculated that the VANDU table was likely reaching a very 'high risk' population. This suggestion was based on the available evidence 4, but further study was required. Some of this research is now complete, so in the spirit of improving communication between enforcement officials, community groups, and those doing public health research in the Downtown Eastside, I am writing to provide you with additional scientific evidence of the critical public health function being served by the VANDU table.

We have recently performed an independent evaluation of the impact of the VANDU exchange table through the Vancouver Injection Drug Users Study (VIDUS). As most of you will know, VIDUS has followed over 1400 injection drug users and evaluates risk factors for HIV seroconversion by taking blood samples and performing epidemiological and qualitative research. In our recent analysis, we compared those individuals who reported obtaining syringes from the VANDU table to those active injection drug users who obtained syringes from other sources. The results confirmed our previous speculation. In fact, the risk profile of the population being served by the VANDU table is staggering, considering what is known about the HIV epidemic in Vancouver. In an adjusted analysis, we found that those who obtained syringes from the VANDU table were more likely to be sex-trade workers, frequent injectors of cocaine, and those who require help injecting. We have previously found these variables



to be associated with both difficulty accessing syringes and HIV incidence 1,2,3,5. In addition, we also found that obtaining syringes from the VANDU table was associated with being less likely to discard syringes in an unsafe manner (ie on the street), suggesting that VANDU is benefiting the community at large through their syringe recovery efforts.

In our enclosed article, we noted that several risk factors for syringe sharing are independent of difficulty accessing syringes, and we argued that expanding access to syringes as an isolated intervention would not be sufficient to prevent the continued

spread of HIV in Vancouver. We expect that all those in the community will agree. However, until the necessary public health interventions are in place I, our data indicate that the table will continue to play a critical public health function.

We expect these data will contribute to the large and growing respect that VANDU has earned within the international public health community, and it is noteworthy that VANDU is receiving the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network's Human Rights Award next week in Montreal for their efforts. Our recent findings are presently being written up for publication in a scientific medical journal.

Sincerely,

Martin T. Schechter OBC, MD, PhD, FRCPC

Professor and Head, Department of Health Care & Epidemiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia Canada Research Chair in HIV/AIDS and Urban Population Health

National Director, Canadian HIV Trials Network

Director, Centre for Health Evaluation and Outcome Sciences
Director, Epidemiology & Population Health, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS

5804 Fairview Ave, Vancouver, BC, CANADA V6T 1Z3

email: martin.schechter@ubc.ca

1. Wood E, Tyndall MW, Spittal PM, Hogg RS, Montaner JS, O'Shaughnessy MV, Schechter MT.. Unsafe injection practices in a cohort of injection drug users in Vancouver: Could safer injecting rooms help? CMAJ 2001;165(4):405-10.

2. Wood E, Tyndall MW, Spittal PM, Li K, Hogg RS, Montaner JS, O'Shaughnessy MV, Schechter MT. Factors associated with persistent high-risk syringe sharing in the presence of an established needle exchange programme. AIDS.2002 Apr 12;16(6):941-3.

3. Wood E, Tyndall MW, Spittal PM, Li K, Hogg RS, Montaner JS, O'Shaughnessy MV, Schechter MT. Syringe exchange and difficulty with needle access during an ongoing HIV epidemic. International Journal of Drug Policy 2002;13(2): 95-102.

4. Responding to an emergency: Education, Advocacy and Community Care by a Peer-Driven Organization of Drug Users. A case study of the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU). Prepared for: Hepatitis C Prevention, Support and Research Program Hepatitis C Division Population and Public Health Br.

closure of VANDU's table occurred in July. Studies support clean syringes being available to the most high-risk users and coincidentally find that these people access such at the VANDU table. Similar studies show the same high-risk clientele utilizing the DEYAS Exchange but broaden the scope of demographical data, as referred to in the previously published letter from Judy MacGuire. The PhD says

"...several risk factors for syringe sharing are independent of difficulty accessing syringes, and we argued that expanding access to syringes as an isolated intervention would not be sufficient to prevent the continued spread of HIV in Vancouver."

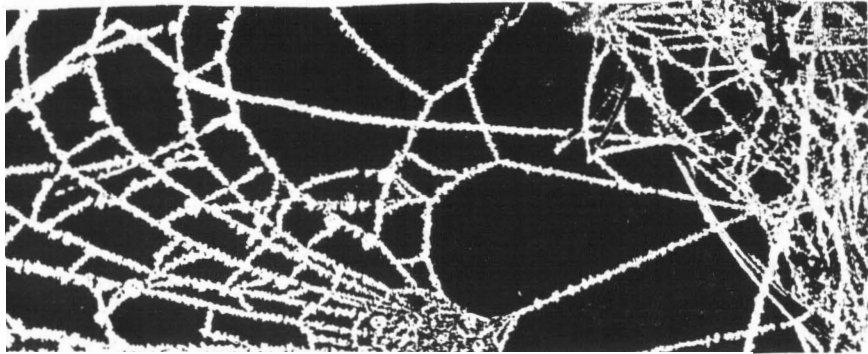
The principle of 'exchange' is not tallied against a practice of distribution *sans* exchange but is only referred to tangentially as VANDU has 'volunteers' scouring alleys for dirty needles in imitation of (or competition with) DEYAS. The factor outside the academic community's purview is both groups seeking funding to enable a 24-hour fixed site exchange, with DEYAS having years of experience and many programs/ services and studies supporting its work and seeking to de-centralise; all crucial in its ongoing struggle to maintain and expand the same with government and health authorities.. VANDU seeming to covet identical support without identical or similar experience.]

"Who are you to question a PhD?!!!"

prt



[*The above was dated in early September; the



DECEMBER 6

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A time...

**To reflect on violence against women here in the
downtown eastside and around the world**

**To hold a moment of silence for the women who have
been murdered and are still missing**

**To think about all the women and girls who live daily
with the threat of violence**

To take action to STOP it.

**Please join us in a candle light vigil and march through
Vancouver's downtown eastside on the evening of
Friday December 6, 2002**

**We will be gathering at the corner of Carrall & Hastings
Street at 7 PM and marching to the Memorial Pole in
Oppenheimer Park**

Please bring your drum & dress appropriately for the weather

**If you would like more information, please contact Marlene at 665-3005 or Valencia at Breaking
the Silence Against Violence at 255-5811**