

Calgary Street Talk is published by CUPS Community Health Centre

CALGARY Street TALK

**SOLD BY
DONATION**
Thank You
Your vendor
pays 60 cents
per copy.

JULY 2008 VOL. 12 NO. 7

A SPARE CHANGE NEWSPAPER



CHRISTMAS IN JULY
Calgary Donates by the Busload to Charity

Vendor Code of Conduct

Calgary Street Talk vendors are proud of their newspaper and the people who sell it. They each sign a Code of Conduct that stresses the importance of a high standard in customer service because they realize that the conduct of one affects all the others. On occasion, certain persons obtain copies of *Calgary Street Talk* and sell them without authorization; this can be accompanied by undesirable behaviour. The authorized vendors and the publishers are anxious to eliminate such incidents.

If you witness or experience any unacceptable behaviour, please report it directly to the offices of *Calgary Street Talk* at 221-8780.

Vendors Needed

Calgary Street Talk has openings for new vendors. If you are looking for a way to earn money while learning new skills, this is the job for you. We require our vendors to be genuinely interested in working and trying to improve their circumstances. We currently have a number of excellent locations available.

For more information, please contact *Calgary Street Talk* at 221-8780.

Top Sellers

June's top sales leader was #539 **Jenny H.**, and in second place #4 **Mike Abhar**, followed by #381 **Wade Ackerman**.

Vendor Incentive Program

#381 Wade Ackerman: Wade for helping those wild kittens find homes and for all the ideas that he comes up with.

We are dependent on supporters to donate to our Vendor Incentive Program. We like to award at least one \$25 food gift certificate to deserving vendors each month to recognize initiative, improved sales or to acknowledge participating in the *Calgary Street Talk* program.

For information about the Vendor Incentive Program please call 221-8674.

VENDOR BIRTHDAYS IN JULY 2008

- #242 **Eugene Martin** - turning 19 again!
- #251 **Ed G.** - Keep going Ed!
- #539 **Jenny H.** had a birthday in June. Welcome Jenny.



Drop-In Centre NEEDS Backpacks

Local charities can benefit from your spring clean

By Ken Price

By now you've finished all your spring cleaning - the garage is organized, the closet by the front door is cleared out, and even that nook under the stairs has been excavated, right?

Something like that, anyway.

Well, if you've dug up things you're not sure what to do with, you might want to consider looking at the 'needs' lists of local charities. Several organizations post 'needs' lists on their websites specifying items they are frequently running out of.

Currently, the Calgary Drop-In Centre is in dire need of backpacks. Many homeless people carry everything they own around with them, so backpacks are particularly important to them.

The Drop-In Centre is also always using items like tampons, lip balm, sunscreen and clothes. You can phone the Drop-In Centre at 263-5707.

CUPS Community Health Centre is also always taking donations such as clothes, toiletries, medications such as Tylenol or cough syrup, and baby needs like diapers and formula. In particular, CUPS can always find a use for steel-toed work boots and hard hats. Often, the only barrier to employment for several people is just needing boots and a hard hat. You can phone CUPS at 221-8780.

After you finish cleaning out that crawl space under the stairs, you're probably going to want to tackle the pantry. You might want to keep the Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank in mind while you're scrubbing out the back of the cupboard.

They, too, have a needs list posted on their website. They are always taking donations of any frozen food, including meat, still in its original store packaging. The Food Bank is also always grateful for pasta sauce, juice, canned foods, and rice. You can phone the Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank at 253-2059.

You can find the needs lists of these organizations on the websites below.

Calgary Urban Project Society

<http://www.cupshealthcentre.com/donations.htm>

Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank

<http://www.calgaryfoodbank.com/donatefood.html>

Calgary Drop-In Centre

http://www.cdics.com/donations/donation_wishlist.htm ■

Street Talk Distribution

Here is a list of authorized active *Street Talk* vendors, each of whom works his or her own hours.

The best time to find one is during the morning, lunch and afternoon rush.

Vendor #1: "Saint"- Pete
17th Avenue & 7th Street SW

#2: Bob Bland
6th Avenue & 2nd Street SW

#4: Mike Abhar
4th Avenue & 1st Street SW (A.M.)
Eau Claire Market (lunch & early P.M.)
6th Avenue & 4th Street SW (late P.M.)

#7: Andie
23 Ave. & 4 St. SW

**#19: Norm
"The Mayor" Mansell**
City Hall, 8th Ave. & Macleod Trail SE

#68: Rob Champion
Plaza Theatre, Kensington

#187: Bruce S.
8 St. & 9 Ave. underpass AM
4 St. & 9 Ave. underpass PM

#217: Carolyn Miller

#242: Eugene M.
The Bay at 8th Ave. & 1st St. SW

#251: Ed G.
18th Ave. & 4th St. SW

#253: Darrell S.

#273: Ray R.
Safeway at 410 - 10th Street NW

#381: Wade A.
9th Avenue & 1st Street SW

#383: Gordon E.
12th Avenue & 14th St. SW

#397: Lois O.
6th Avenue & 4th Street SW

#442: Steve Gale
Banker's Hall

#509: Barbara Randle
Kensington Safeway

#515 - John Beck

#519 - Ed Legault

#520 - Shane Taylor

#539 - Jenny H.
7th Avenue & 1st Street SW

CALGARY Street TALK

JULY 2008 VOL. 12 NO. 7
A SPARE CHANGE NEWSPAPER

Publisher: **Robert Perry**

Editor: **Ken Price**

Distribution: **Gaylein**

Design & Layout: **Unicorn Graphics**

Contributors: **Jon Bateman, Trevor Baxter, Karen Beisel, David Bell, Tasha Brown, Rob Champion, Marina Giacomini, Jordan Hamilton, Victor Hornbacher, Ron Murdock, "Saint" Pete, Herman Pontes, Ken Price, Tim Wild**

COMMUNITY
CUPS
HEALTH CENTRE

Calgary Street Talk is published monthly by Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS) 128 - 7 Ave. S.E., Calgary, AB T2G 0H5 Telephone: 221-8674 or 221-8780 Fax: 221-8791 E-mail: streettalk@cupshhealthcentre.com

CUPS HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA SINCE FEBRUARY 2007.

Calgary Street Talk is produced to offer an income, business-skills development, and a voice for people on the margins of our society. Vendors pay 60 cents per copy and resell to the public. Please buy only from vendors with an I. D. badge. The opinions expressed in Calgary Street Talk are those of the writers; they do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper, its advertisers, publisher, or CUPS.

The photographs on page 2, 6, and 10 are used under the conditions set by the Creative Commons license. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/>

Calgary Street Talk welcomes your comments, questions, suggestions and article ideas. Please write or telephone. Letters to the editor are assumed to be for publication, must be signed, must include phone number, and may be edited for length.

Pro bono

According to Statistics Canada, 45 per cent of Canadians - about 12 million people - do volunteer work. The highest volunteer rate is in Saskatchewan with 54 per cent of people giving their time. ■



photo by Ken Price

If I had a hammer... Volunteer Keegan Seltner helps to build a fence for a family recently housed through the Rapid Exit program.

Christmas in July

Groups from across Calgary pitch-in for charity

By Ken Price

It felt like Christmas came early this year as there seemed to be an outpour from different groups from around the city who were in the giving mood and donating to charity.

First came a phone call from Montgomery Jr. High. They said they had everything on CUPS' 'needs list,' which they saw on the CUPS website, and said they were ready to deliver. In fact, their school stage was full of stuff and filled an entire school bus.

Staff at CUPS especially got a kick out of the 70-pound box of toothpaste, amongst the clothes and toiletries that also arrived.

The collection was initiated by four students and became a competition between 18 classrooms.

Then Street Talk received a call saying volunteers from Parkdale United church and St. Lawrence Anglican church were pitching in to help a family that was recently housed through the Rapid Exit program.

There were about 10 volunteers who helped furnish the home with a variety of kitchen items, sheets, towels, mattresses, and enough food for several days. Before the family had completely moved, the volunteers had already begun building a fence for the house.

The kids were going to miss the volunteers, explained the mother of the household who asked to remain anonymous. They look forward to seeing the volunteers everyday.

Two of the sons were eager to help the volunteers build the fence and learn construction skills. They mentioned it was the first time the family had their own home and were happy they were "all together."

Of course, that wasn't all Calgary had to offer. CUPS also received a visit from a group called Peace by Piece who came deliver 20 new quilts to CUPS clients (see the back page of this issue for a full article). The group Peace by Piece makes and delivers 60-100 quilts to various non-profit agencies every year.

It's very fitting that former Calgary Street Talk vendor Ron Murdock was thinking about charity in the summer this month. See his article on page 14 on how various charities receive a great deal of help during the Christmas season but find resources thinning during the summer months. He says the Spirit of Christmas should be year round, and from what CUPS has seen here this month, he has nothing to worry about. The generosity of Calgarians has been amazing! ■



Montgomery Jr. High donated an entire busload of items they had been collecting throughout the year for CUPS.

CANADA *apologizes to* Residential School Survivors

Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to offer an apology to former students of Indian residential schools. The treatment of children in Indian residential schools is a sad chapter in our history.

In the 1870's, the federal government, partly in order to meet its obligation to educate aboriginal children, began to play a role in the development and administration of these schools.

Two primary objectives of the residential schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture.

These objectives were based on the assumption aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal.

Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, "to kill the Indian in the child."

Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.

Most schools were operated as "joint ventures" with Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian or United churches.

The government of Canada built an educational system in which very young children were often forcibly removed from their homes, often taken far from their communities.

Many were inadequately fed, clothed and housed.

All were deprived of the care and nurturing of their parents, grandparents and communities.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultural practices were prohibited in these schools.

Tragically, some of these children died while attending residential schools and others never returned home.

The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian residential schools policy were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on aboriginal culture, heritage and language.

While some former students have spo-

ken positively about their experiences at residential schools, these stories are far overshadowed by tragic accounts of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children, and their separation from powerless families and

stand before you, in this chamber so central to our life as a country, to apologize to aboriginal peoples for Canada's role in the Indian residential schools system.

To the approximately 80,000 living former students, and all family members

trolled, and we apologize for failing to protect you.

Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry.

The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long.

The burden is properly ours as a government, and as a country.

There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian residential schools system to ever again prevail.

You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time and in a very real sense, we are now joining you on this journey.

The government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly.

We are sorry.

In moving towards healing, reconciliation and resolution of the sad legacy of Indian residential schools, implementation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement agreement began on September 19, 2007.

Years of work by survivors, communities, and aboriginal organizations culminated in an agreement that gives us a new beginning and an opportunity to move forward together in partnership.

A cornerstone of the settlement agreement is the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

This commission presents a unique opportunity to educate all Canadians on the Indian residential schools system.

It will be a positive step in forging a new relationship between aboriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us. ■

**People came together
across Canada to grieve and heal on
June 11th
as painful memories of Canada's residential
schools were evoked, and the wait to hear
Canada say 'sorry' came to an end.**

Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized in the House of Commons to the students of residential schools, many of whom have been traumatized by the physical, sexual, and mental abuse suffered there. Since the 19th century, the Department of Indian Affairs took about 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Metis children from their communities and forced them into residential schools. As some people infamously stated, their mission was to "kill the Indian inside the child." The program of "aggressive assimilation" sought to force the children to adopt the English language, Christianity, and Canadian customs. The last residential school closed in 1996. Printed here are excerpts from Stephen Harper's apology delivered in the House of Commons on June 11th.

communities.

The legacy of Indian residential schools has contributed to social problems that continue to exist in many communities today. It has taken extraordinary courage for the thousands of survivors that have come forward to speak publicly about the abuse they suffered.

It is a testament to their resilience as individuals and to the strength of their cultures.

Regrettably, many former students are not with us today and died never having received a full apology from the government of Canada.

The government recognizes that the absence of an apology has been an impediment to healing and reconciliation.

Therefore, on behalf of the government of Canada and all Canadians, I

and communities, the government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes and we apologize for having done this.

We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions, that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this.

We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this.

We now recognize that, far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately con-

The Road to Street Life

Story and photo by David Bell
This article was originally published in the Calgary Journal.

David Finn, 42, lives a pretty normal life. He gets up in the morning, grabs something to eat and then he heads to work. Something for dinner, a little more work, then it's off to bed to get some sleep before it's time to start the process again the next day.

There are, however, some differences between David Finn and normal. Finn sleeps under a board that leans against a wall - 24 feet from some very active railroad tracks - outside.

David Finn is homeless.

He gets up in the morning, walks over to a nearby grocery store and with pennies buys a white bun and a can of store-brand cola. It costs 82 cents including tax. While some of the store cashiers would prefer that the coin be rolled; most empathize with Finn's situation.

His 'work' is panhandling along a busy street in southwest Calgary. He doesn't get a T4 slip because the only tax he attracts comes largely from the junk food that makes up a good part of his diet.

Finn chooses to live outside rather than in a shelter for reasons of independence and choice.

"I don't want to be around it," he said of the environment that exists in some shelters. "I'm homeless but I don't want to be constantly reminded of it, that is why I stay outside," Finn said.

Sometimes, living on the street has an appeal to homeless persons over the structure and rules of the shelter environment, said a worker with the Calgary Urban Project Society.

Adam Melnyk, Outreach Coordinator with CUPS, has known Finn for about four years.

"This is something that people don't commonly acknowledge. When you live outside, you live a kind of free lifestyle," Melnyk said, adding "I think you get kind of hooked on that; that could be an addiction in itself."

Panhandling gives David Finn choice over when and what he eats. "For three dollars I can eat like a king," he said.

Lunch might be a couple of chicken legs from the hot case; dinner a small frozen pizza - if they are on sale - or a peanut butter and jam sandwich. It all depends on how successful his 'work' was that day.

Finn panhandles but he doesn't grind. Grinding, said Finn, is what aggressive panhandlers engage in.

"I just have my sign. I walk towards you, I pass you, I don't force myself on you or make you feel uncomfortable," he said.



David Finn's father left when he was five years old. Having a parent die or leave early increases the risk of falling into homelessness.

"I ain't out there to violate people's personal space, I don't grind because it is shaming myself even more than what I am."

He can sleep through the deafening sound of the trains that pass close to his home, partly because he has adjusted to his environment, over time.

Sometimes, misconceptions about the homeless population can serve to cloud the public's understanding of the matter, said a researcher of the homeless and other disenfranchised groups.

"The myth of homeless people wanting to be on the street is just that - a myth," said Dr. Helen Gardiner.

Gardiner holds a doctorate in applied psychology and has worked with the University of Calgary, the Calgary Health Region, the Government of Alberta and others, with the goal of addressing community need with relevant academic research. She currently heads H. Gardiner and Associates, Inc. for this purpose.

Of David Finn's situation, Gardiner said, "His background is typical of individuals who are homeless."

The length of time Finn has been homeless, his past struggles with drug addiction and his sleeping outside - leading potentially to increased stress levels, depression, physical danger as well as social isolation - all work against him, Gardiner said.

There is however, an upside to Finn's situation, Gardiner observed. His age, educational level, the fact that he is not currently using drugs and his motivation level, all bode well for him, she said.

Having a parent die early, moving often - which prevents establishing meaningful ties and consistent schooling - disabilities, poverty, drugs and alcohol are all factors that can increase the risk of a person falling into homelessness, Gardiner said.

David Finn has been homeless for around seven years.

He was born in Toronto. His father left when he was five. His mother raised him, his two brothers and a sister, on her own.

Finn graduated from high school and as a young man worked mostly as a general labourer, often in factories.

His brother introduced him to cocaine when Finn was 21. He was addicted by 25 and although he continued to work and function, Finn attributes this as his first step towards homelessness.

At 30, Finn said he cleaned himself up. "I had a job, a girlfriend and a home and I was clean for 22 months."

Finn started using again and had progressed to crack cocaine. His girlfriend left him when he was 34.

Believing that a change of environment might help, he got on a bus headed to Vancouver but made it only as far as Calgary. It was May 23, 2001. He quickly ran out of money and within a week, spent his first night in a homeless shelter.

Finn had just experienced a pivotal shift in both his life's direction and his belief in himself. He fell off the economic ladder.

Finn got along with his siblings, but over the years they had gone their separate ways. He said his pride prevented

him from asking for their help.

"I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, I panicked. I had no money in my pocket, no place to go, I'm in a strange city and I don't know anyone," he said.

Researcher Helen Gardiner has spent a large portion of her academic career studying and reporting on homelessness. She was the principal investigator in the 2002 Calgary Homeless Study; a 190 page report summarizing the findings was published in October of that year.

One element of the investigation involved conducting over 300 hour-long interviews with homeless persons. One of the goals was to understand why some people were able to leave homelessness while others were not.

"It was a very successful community effort and the information from the report is still being used today, for example, in the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness," Gardiner said.

The 2002 Calgary study became the template for the 2003/2004 Edmonton Homelessness Study, with Gardiner as the principal investigator for a second time.

Gardiner concluded from her research, that some obstacles have hindered progress with the existing approaches used to combat homelessness.

She often heard from participants in the study that "the services set up to help the homeless are just employment creation programs for the middle class."

Gardiner recognizes the hard work and dedication of the workers in the agencies that serve the homeless population, yet despite their best efforts the 'system' can

■ see... ROAD on page 15



The Confetti Sweeper

How the world's poor pay for the West's excesses

By Timothy Wild

A couple of years ago my daughter was set to perform in her elementary school's annual and highly anticipated lip-syncing competition. (By the way, I need to state that this is not her current school). She had appeared in the event the year previously, and she and her friend had brought the house down with their rendition of "Tomorrow", from the musical *Annie*, replete with mops, scrubbing pails, mournful expressions and kerchiefs. There wasn't a dry eye in the auditorium.

My daughter was planning to participate in the subsequent competition with her previous year's partner and another girl in their class. However, unbeknownst to her, the other two had decided to appear as a duo as opposed to a trio, and had been holding secret practice sessions without my child. Eventually, through the brutal directness of the playground grapevine, my daughter found out that she had been ousted from the group and was, understandably, very upset.

She confronted the other two and indicated that she still wanted to be in the group. They responded that they didn't want her to appear with them on stage but, perhaps to assuage their guilt, said she could sweep up the confetti they would be using in their act. After all, they would be too busy with the applause and accolades to deal with the dross, and it wouldn't be fair to leave a mess for the following act. My daughter agonized over this "option" for some time. She wanted to participate and belong in a meaningful fashion, not to simply clean up after other people's fun. She wanted to be involved, but didn't want to only be a confetti sweeper. This was a tough decision for an eight year old.

Unfortunately, this elementary school tale also reflects the power dynamics of social relations of production in the larg-

er world. There is a tendency to use power to help us do whatever we want, secure our own ends and then leave it to "others" to clean up our mess. Indeed, much of our lifestyle is based on the fact that the price we pay for our consumption does not reflect the true cost it has on both the planet and our fellow humans. As noted in the words of the Scottish pop band Belle and Sebastian, we expect someone else to pay the full price for our cheap flight life.

This can be seen particularly in the environmental impact that our insatiable appetite for profit and accumulation is having on both future generations and on the people who are living in the so-called developing nations. A recent issue of *Child View*, the magazine of World Vision Canada, indicated that according to the United Nations environmental factors now account for a larger proportion of refugees than political factors. Additionally, as noted in the

same issue, "the United Nations' Development Program reports that 98 per cent of the 262 million people hit by disasters from 2000 to 2004 came from impoverished countries".

The argument that global warming will continue to present us with monumental challenges seems to be irrefutable. Scientists predict that temperatures could rise by as much as 5 degrees Celsius over the next twenty years resulting in unpredictable and often deadly weather patterns. And we are already seeing the effects of global warming in famines, floods and droughts. If we are to combat this, we need to act now to reduce our patterns of consumption and production; technological innovation, toothless protocols and recycling can only help us so much.

However, we in the western world - particularly in North America - seem loathe making changes, and many of us are actually advocating for an increase in our environmental footprint to meet our

short-term energy and, by extension, lifestyle needs. Furthermore, any suggestion of the application of environmentally sustainable policy instruments such as a carbon tax, aid funding targets for industrialized countries or emissions caps are widely dismissed as "not practical" or "economic suicide." This may be because we still don't really see the impact of our economic and environmental choices on our daily lives.

And, as we continue on this reckless course, we have the audacity to implore others to reduce their impact on Mother Earth. We express outrage, or at least cocktail party disquiet, about the introduction of a new, affordable car for the mass market in India and the rapid economic development of China. Unquestionably, this massive growth of automobile use and industrial activity in China, India and other emerging economies will cause problems. However, if we are truly concerned about the environmental impact the expansion of the fruits of western consumerism beyond the west will have, we need to offer real alternatives to people that aspire to normative western standards of living. As a start, we in post-industrial capitalist nations need to pay the full price of our lifestyles, and not expect others to pick up after us. Otherwise, it is merely the continuation of colonial exploitation, albeit through multinationals and advertising as opposed to nation-states and warships.

Nobody deserves to be relegated to the status of cleaning up after the selfish indulgence, egotism and excesses of others - not my daughter, not the socially and economically marginalized, not the residents of developing nations and not our future generations. Thankfully my daughter stood up for herself, and said that she didn't want to be the confetti sweeper. And I hope others do the same. What we need on this planet is less profit and more international solidarity. ■



Dion's Green ANTI-POVERTY Plan

By Carol Goar

This article originally appeared in the Toronto Star on June 25, 2008.

When Stéphane Dion announced last November that a Liberal government would cut poverty by 30 per cent – and child poverty by 50 per cent – within five years, his political opponents scoffed.

Where would he find the billions of dollars he needed to deliver on his commitment?

Now we know the answer – or at least a large part of the answer.

Dion's proposed carbon tax, unveiled last week, would allow him to launch the most aggressive anti-poverty program in 40 years.

His "green shift" would transfer wealth from rich to poor; from the oil patch to the rest of the country; and from the coffers of big business to the pockets of low-income Canadians.

Roughly \$9 billion of the \$15.3 billion Dion expects to collect annually in carbon tax revenues would be returned to Canadians earning less than \$40,000 a year. He would use both income tax cuts and benefits targeted at children, low wage earners, rural residents and individuals with disabilities.

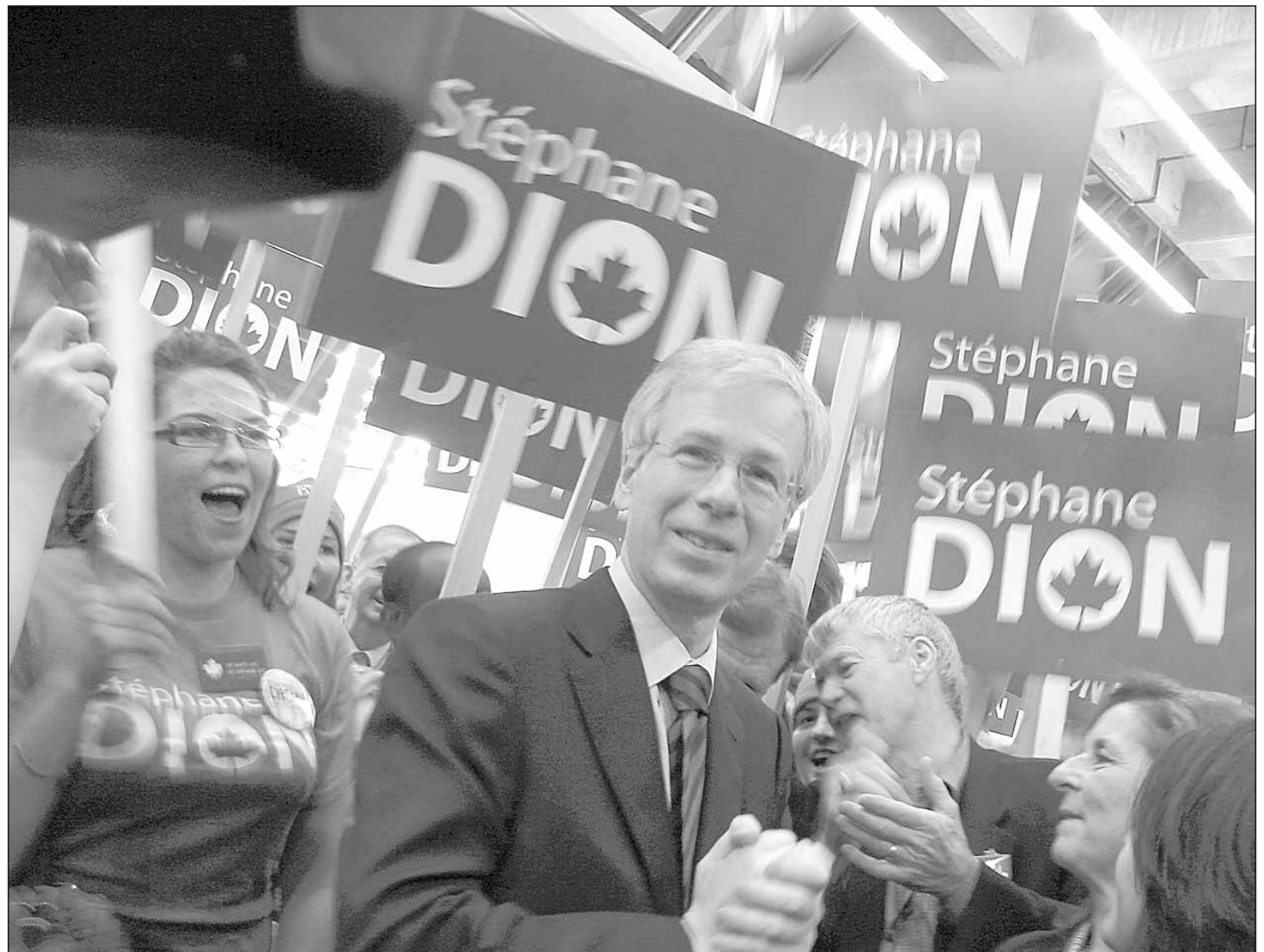
It would be unthinkable, under the current tax system, to redistribute a sum of this magnitude. The Liberals are gambling that, under a pollution-based tax system, it would be politically feasible to take from the "haves" and give to the "have-nots."

It is too early to say whether this strategy will work.

Voters need time to figure out whether they'd lose or gain in a low-carbon economy and decide whether the threat of climate change warrants a wholesale reconfiguration of the tax system.

In the meantime, it is possible to evaluate the poverty-reduction aspects of the Liberal blueprint.

They won't carry Dion all the way to his goal of cutting the number of Canadians living below the poverty line by 30 per cent. Last week's tax changes will have to be supplemented with investments in affordable housing, child care, public transit, job training and aboriginal development.



Liberal leader Stéphane Dion's proposal for a carbon tax has been hailed as a powerful solution by some and criticized as political grandstanding by others.

But it does look as if his fiscal framework will accommodate the three objectives he set last fall:

He said he would expand and improve the Canada Child Tax Benefit. Last week, he backed that up with a pledge to introduce a \$350 universal child tax benefit, paid for with \$2.9 billion of carbon tax revenues.

He said he would increase support for low-income seniors. Last week, he fleshed that out with a proposal to raise the Guaranteed Income Supplement, which is targeted at pensioners with no savings, by \$600 a year over the course of a Liberal mandate. Cost: \$800 million in carbon tax proceeds.

And he said he would make work pay more than welfare. Last week, he out-

lined his party's plan to enrich the Conservative government's Working Income Tax Benefit and replace its regressive employment tax credit with a \$1,850 refund targeted at those earning less than \$50,000. Cost: \$765 million covered by the carbon tax.

When Dion made his original commitment, it was obvious he would need more than these initiatives to reach his target.

Now he has added a fourth policy thrust. He will cut the lowest personal tax rate (paid on the first \$37,885 of taxable income) to 13.5 per cent from 15 per cent at a cost of \$4.2 billion.

To broaden his plan's appeal, he will also reduce the two middle-income tax rates by 1 percentage point apiece. This will cost \$2.5 billion. (The highest tax

rate will remain at 29 per cent.)

There is no guarantee that every low-income household would come out ahead. Under Dion's plan, a family renting a poorly insulated apartment, heated with oil, in a province that depends on fossil fuels for electricity, could end up paying a hefty carbon tax.

But on balance, his "green shift" would help the poor at the expense of affluent consumers and heavy polluters, particularly companies extracting oil from the tar sands of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The Liberal leader promised seven months ago to "embark on a war on poverty never seen before in Canada's history."

People thought he was exaggerating. It turns out that he meant it. ■

Do You Know

former

By Ken Price

Even a vacuum cleaner can have profound meaning. For one photographer, vacuuming was her favourite activity. It meant she was a 'regular' person.

The photographer was a

woman who had

exited the sex trade. In her photo, the red vacuum cleaner stood timidly in the corner of a room next to the closet door, as though it had shyly crept out of the closet by itself. The photograph was accompanied with text comparing 'fitting back into society' with coming home from war.

"I have heard about people coming back home after fighting wars and how they struggle to fit into normal life again after all of the things that have happened," a sign under the photo read. "I feel like that. I experienced the awful things that human beings can do to one another and to themselves."

A vacuum cleaner, then, can mean solace or refuge. It can represent a way of identifying with other people, when once she felt alone and targeted.

It was one of 25 photos, drawn from a pool of 400, making up

the Do You Know What I Mean? exhibit of photography by five former sex trade workers.

One of the photographers, who wants to remain anonymous for safety reasons, said she wasn't prepared for what was in store when she first started with the project.

"I thought I'd just take some pictures and I'd be good to go. I remember thinking, I have the opportunity to create something beautiful out of something tragic," she said. It proved to be a difficult, emotional journey. She left the project several times.

"Instead of quitting, I just plugged through," she said. "This is the end result. These photos are the truth."

The "brainchild" of Gayla Rogers, Dean of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary, the photography project was meant to be research to better inform social workers and health care professionals. The project was put together in collaboration with AIDS Calgary Awareness Association's Shift Program and the United Way.

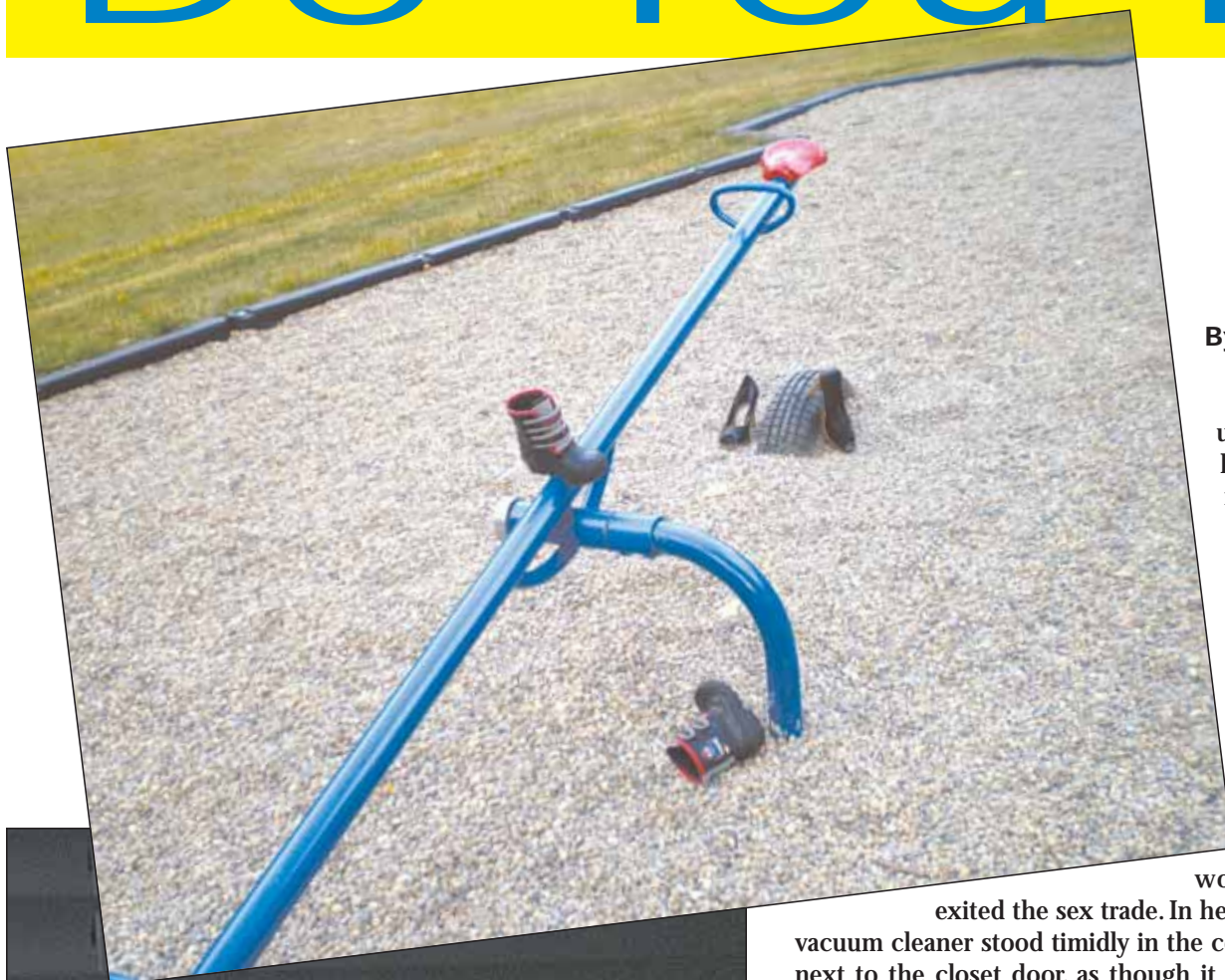
"One of the main goals is to train professionals in social work and health care," explained Roseline Carter, Program Coordinator at AIDS Calgary's Shift Program. "It's also meant to raise awareness and change consciousness about the sex trade."

Each photo in the exhibit scattered the meanings of everyday objects, leaving the audience with a slippery foothold on reality. So it's a curious paradox that the collection is titled Do You Know What I Mean?

The title came from conversations with the photographers as they discussed their transitions away from the sex trade. The

project kicked off in the summer of 2007 and the participants met twice a month for six months to collect photographs and share their stories.

"That phrase 'do you know what I mean,' came up a lot," said Deb Hurlock, who was



What I Mean?

Controversial photo exhibit by sex trade workers alters perceptions

at the debut representing both the University of Calgary's Faculty of Social Work and the United Way. "It became a bridging term as they explained their experiences."

The exhibit debuted at the Art Gallery of Calgary on June 6th. It was meant to be shown at City Hall the following week, but proved to be too controversial when it was taken down only a few hours after showing on its first day.

A series of photos depicting a Barbie doll torn apart, meant to represent a sense of feeling broken and unable to be remade whole again, was cited as the offending segment.

The City of Calgary is considering bringing the exhibit back, but first needs to rethink their strategy for showing, explained Carter. Some people at City Hall felt the exhibit was not appropriate for children who access the atrium where the collection was originally meant to be shown.

The photographer of the 'Barbie segment' said she "never intended for her photos to be viewed by 10 year olds," explained Carter. "She said she was more than willing to have her photos shown under a blanket."

They would be happy to have their exhibit return to City Hall, so long as no part of it is censored, said Carter. Having been taken down from City Hall won't mean the end of the exhibit, though. They have received a huge response from other galleries who are interested in showing it.

"It's had an unbelievable impact," said Carter. "It's really empowering to bring their unique experiences together and share them."

Near the photo of the vacuum cleaner was a photo of a drawer full of cosmetics. Toothpaste, lipstick, shampoo, nail polish and dozens more bottles and jars were haphazardly crammed together.

"I don't use them very much," the sign read. "Since leaving the sex trade I have gained 50 pounds and do not have much interest in doing my hair, nails, or make up. I just want to be invisible. I do not want any male attention. Any male attention just takes me back to those feelings of being for sale. It feels safer this way. It is the way I want things to be for now."

It is another example of how simple objects for some people carry great emotional weight for others.

For most people, internet IQ tests are a simple whimsy or just an example of annoying pop up ads. For one photographer, it represented a struggle to understand who she was and how she went down the path she did.

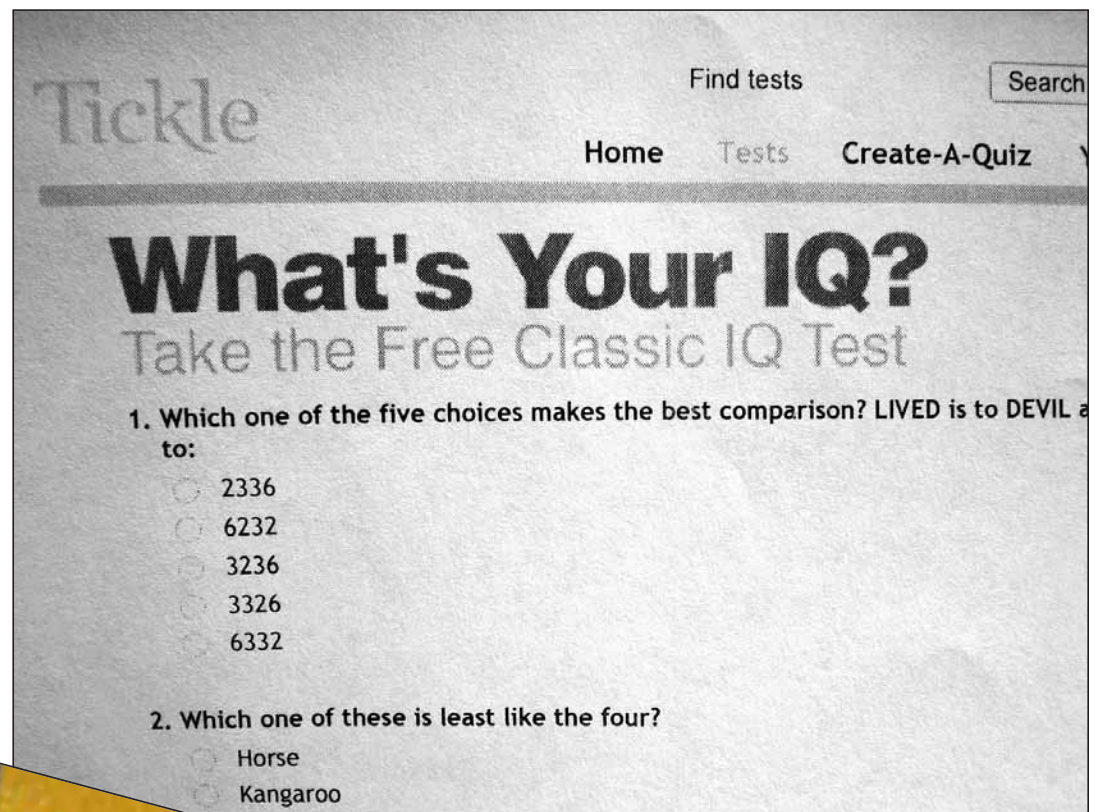
"It's not a matter of being smart enough - I didn't love myself," the sign read.

Another photographer took pictures of her sons

boots in a park next to her high heels.

"I remember thinking, 'I'll go into escorting because if I go into escorting I'll be able to afford my rent, then I'll be able to afford [my son's] boots, I'll be able to afford school, and I can afford to, you know, party once in a while. You gotta remember, I was 19 right?"

"Like the promises, all the promises that I made that little boy. Everything, every moment that I had was laced with good intentions when I got into prostitution. Absolutely 100% for him." ■



47 MILES OF BARBED WIRE

The Life and Music of Bo Diddley

By Herman Pontes

McComb, Mississippi, is about a 20-minute drive up Interstate 55 from the Louisiana border. For a town its size it has produced a disproportionate number of successful musical artists, among them: Britney Spears, Brandy, blues pioneer King Solomon Hill, and Otha Ellas Bates, later known to the world as Bo Diddley.

McComb has had its share of ups and downs. More than 13,000 people lived in McComb in 2000; more than 4000 of them lived below the poverty line. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, one of the leading organizations of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, chose it as the site of its first voter registration project. The initiative met with violence, and more than 100 McComb high school students were arrested in 1961 for protesting the murder and expulsion of SNCC activists.

By that time, Otha Bates had changed his name twice and moved to the other end of the country. His adoptive mother, by then widowed, had followed the example of tens of thousands of African Americans in the Depression era: by road, rail or bus, they departed the hardships of the southern

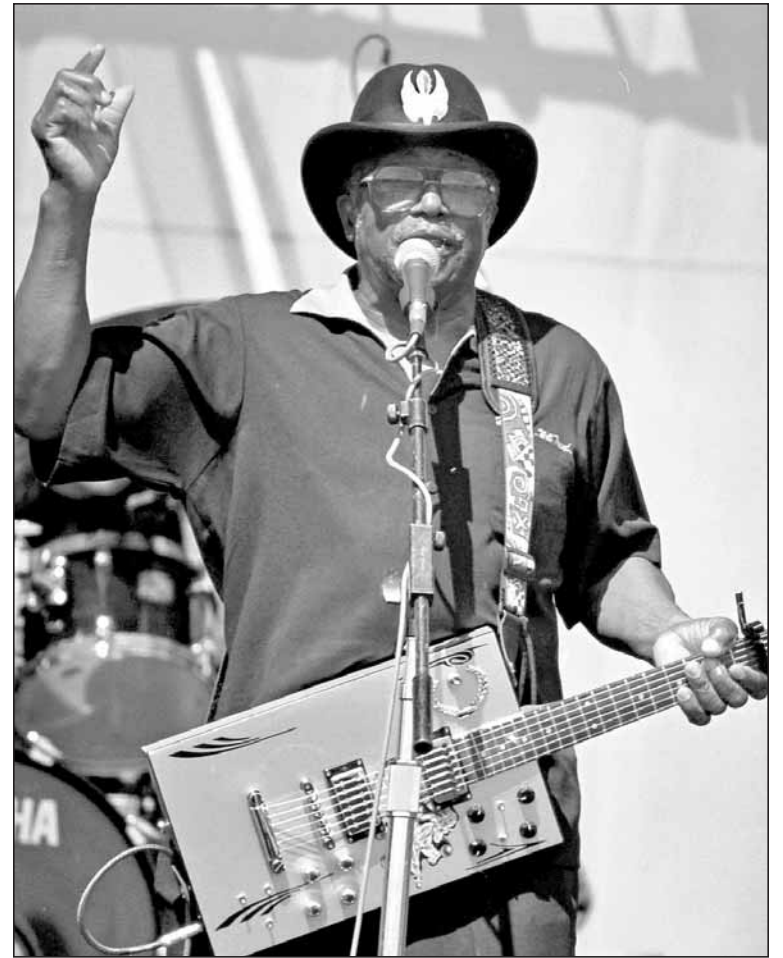
Mississippi valley for the industrial jobs offered in the cities of the North. The Rhythm 'n Blues scenes of Chicago and Detroit owed their now-legendary explosion to this exodus.

Ellas was the only child of both his father and mother, though he had several half-siblings. Soon after his birth he was given to his mother's cousin, Gussie McDaniel, to raise. By the time his new family became citizens of Chicago, Ellas went by the surname McDaniel too. His formal musical education began with the violin; he received lessons at Ebenezer Baptist Church. As he listened to John Lee Hooker and Gene Autry, though, he conceived a desire for the guitar, and eventually his sister bought him an acoustic. His strong bowing hand was well-suited to the propulsive strumming that became his signature, but his fingers were too thick, he claimed, to manage most of the chord changes required by conventional guitar tuning. Ellas came up with a solution: he developed an open-tuning system, which allowed him to change chords by running one of his broad fingers up and down the fretboard.

While clearly a resourceful and creative musician, music was not Ellas' first career ambition. He dropped out of vocational high school in the hope of becoming a profession-

al boxer; when the boxing stalled, he worked a variety of industrial jobs, included meat packing and salvage yards. His access to spare parts allowed him to create his own electric guitars, with tremolo and distortion effects that announced the arrival of rock 'n roll. In his off-hours, he played in the street with other musicians. The world has changed in the subsequent half-century: street musicians today are as likely to

■ see... BO on page 15



Making a Move of My Own

BY MARINA GIACOMINI

In June I left my job at CUPS to join the Calgary Homeless Foundation, the organization responsible for implementing the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. I am their new Vice President, Re-Housing – responsible for leading Strategy 2 of the 10 Year Plan (see www.endinghomelessness.ca). So far I am really enjoying this new position and I wanted to share with you a little more about what this move has meant to me.

For the past year or more, I have dedicated much of my time to supporting the development of this plan. Specifically, I was anxious to ensure that families made it onto the agenda! When we talk about homelessness, and issues related to homelessness, families, children, and youth are often the forgotten ones. It makes some sense, as these make up most of the “hidden” homeless population – couching at someone else's place, staying in motels anytime a paycheck arrives, and oftentimes sleeping in the basement of a church or community centre. What we don't see we don't think about, and for me it is so important that we think about the hidden homeless. Working with the Calgary Homeless Foundation allows me the opportunity not only to make sure the agencies serving those experiencing homelessness continue to be

part of the plan, but also helps me to carry on bringing the voices of children and families to our attention.

If you have ever changed jobs you may have a good idea of what I've been going through in this latest transition in my life. If you are able to understand this, then I think you can understand what change, even positive change, can be like for someone who has experienced homelessness and deep poverty in their life, when they are offered a new place to live:

First – Excitement! A chance to do something different, maybe even a chance to re-create myself in some way... to start over.

Next – Doubt and Fear. Am I really good enough for this opportunity? I'm kind of comfortable here, maybe I should wait. What if I mess it up? What if I'm not ready?

And – Sadness/Grief. I will miss my friends and the people I care about. This is sort of my identity. Will I be losing a piece of myself.

Finally? Hope. I think this could be ok. This really is the chance I've been looking for. This could be the next step I've wanted in my life.

I think for people who have experienced homelessness for a long time, or many times in their life, the last one might be the most difficult. Imagine how lonely it could feel to leave a world you've known, even if you realize it hasn't served you well. Not to know if there will be anyone to support you in your new life. That's where the beauty of the 10 Year Plan's Housing First philosophy emerges in my opinion. People are housed out of homelessness but they are not left alone to figure it out by themselves. Support and services are there for them as much or as little as they need it.

In some ways, my move to the Calgary Homeless Foundation has been a bit like a Housing First experience for me! Someone saw the potential in me to be involved in ending homelessness in an even bigger way. I was given a new place to “live,” and on my first day (and every day since) I have been approached by so many people who want to help me create success and support what I am doing. It is a great team to be a part of.

That said, I do miss my “peeps” (volunteers, vendors, individuals and families) from CUPS. It has not been so easy to get my hands on the latest Street Talk editions, no visitors stop by my office to tell me about their new job, their kids, how their life is going, or to tell me a joke or sing to me. My **hope** however, lies in the belief that I am continuing to work to make a difference in my life, and the lives of my friends and people I care about. That helps me know that this is a good “move” for me. ■

Is wealthiness next to Godliness?

Many attitudes toward work and wealth are old misconceptions

By Trevor Baxter

Poverty and homelessness in Canada, one of the richest nations in the world, spur the question, "what happened?" Are people poor and homeless because they were born into it, or is it because of drug or alcohol addictions, or perhaps it is the result of a poor work ethic? These may be some of the reasons, but they are not the root cause of the problem. Conceivably, the major reason why people are poor and homeless is a lack of empathy.

Many people do not know the complexities of homelessness and poverty; instead they understand these occurrences in simplistic terms, i.e., get a job and then you will not be poor and homeless. This simplistic 21st Century understanding of the causes of homelessness has its roots in historical/socio-cultural underpinnings.

The concept of the "hard work ethic" grew out of the Protestant Reformation, which took place during the 16th Century in Germany. The Protestant Reformation commenced when Martin Luther, in 1517, nailed his 95 Theses to the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, as a protest against the corrupt Roman Catholic Church. At the time, Luther was a devout Catholic monk and he felt that it was his duty to call for reform. By protesting against the Roman Catholic Church, Martin Luther put himself in harm's way. Numerous reformers before him were burnt at the stake.

Ideologies on poverty and work ethic evolved from this movement, and have been carried through to the modern day. How these ideas have evolved is important for our discussion on homelessness and poverty.

Prior to the 16th Century most people were born into a 'caste' system - meaning that movement up or down the economic, political or social ladder was difficult. If your dad was a dirt farmer then you would be a dirt farmer; or if your dad was a tailor then you would be a tailor. One basically stayed in one's class.

The Roman Catholic Church, by Luther's day, had become a major player

"Sociologist Max Weber did not understand what the Protestant Reformation was about. The Protestant 'work ethic' was about salvation, not gaining capital."



Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the Castle Church door in 1517. His papers criticized the Catholic Church and led to the Protestant Reformation.

on an economic, social, religious, and political scale. The Papacy began to reinforce the legitimacy of its power and control in Europe. Humanists in the thirteenth and fourteenth century recognized a need for reform within the Church, as they reflected on issues as diverse as drunkenness, exploitation of excommunication and the sale of indulgences. The debate on these issues climaxed in the sixteenth century and became the inspiration for the writings and teachings of reformers such as Martin Luther.

Luther and his 95 Theses led to lay peo-

ple reading the Bible in their own language, for the first time since antiquity. Education and the spread of knowledge, with the help of the recently invented printing press, helped the proletariat over time to rise from the lower class into the middle and upper classes.

Max Weber, a Marxist sociologist, explained in his book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, how the rise of the Middle Class took place. Because Weber did not fully understand what the Protestant Reformation was about, he attached modern ideals to this Middle Age movement.

"People worked hard to avoid sinning, which is where we get the proverb, 'Idle hands makes the devil's work.'"

The Protestant "Work Ethic" was about salvation, not gaining capital. Despite Weber's misunderstandings, modern society for the most part has accepted his linkage of spiritual reform and material gain - it became accepted as common sense.

Gaining capital, however, was a byproduct of the movement. People worked hard to avoid sin and sinning, which is where the proverb "Idle hands makes the devil's work" comes from. By allowing the laity to read the Bible for themselves, they connected directly to God's word and salvation, thereby circumventing the Papacy and the social controls of the bourgeois class. As they say, knowledge is power. Thus, the barriers between knowledge, power and the right to become educated were broken down.

An interesting counterexample of the linkage between moral reform & private wealth is the Anabaptist movement. A branch of the Protestant Reformation, it can be seen as an attempt to implement a new "pure" church that better reflected the communal philosophy and practices of early Christianity, as well as God's teachings found in the Old and New Testament. I believe that the Anabaptists were successful in their pursuit of a communal based church. Out of this Protestant Reformation Movement sprung new ideologies around salvation, what it means to be a good Christian, and what type of community best suits a Christian. Changes in response to such questions in turn allowed for mobility of the laity, gave rise to more educated masses, and allowed for the formation of a new mercantile class, signaling the decay of the old caste system.

To bring this discussion back around to its opening: is there a correlation between hard work and wealth? In terms of the newly reformed Christianity of Luther, work and wealth had nothing to do with one another. However, over time and with the help of Weber, people lost sight of the connection between hard work and avoiding sin. The accumulation of wealth was incidental in this equation. ■



Vibrant COMMUNITIES Calgary

BY JORDAN HAMILTON

If Life Imitates Art.... We Need a Prosperity Monument

Some people may consider Calgary to be a suburban backwater, culturally devoid of glitz and glamour. However, two public art installations destined for Calgary are raising the cultural profile of our city.

In early June 2008, developer John Torode revealed artist Micah Lexier's "Half K" as the winner of the Arriva Public Art Competition. Lexier's proposed sculpture, composed of 500 metres of 12-inch metal pipe and conceived as "a giant scribble", will dance over and around the historic Bungalow School building in Victoria Park. When completed and installed, the sculpture will marry contemporary design with the extraordinary history of Victoria Park in a brilliant and exciting display.

It was also announced in June 2008 that Dennis Oppenheim's "Device to Root out Evil", a glass, steel and aluminum sculpture of an upside-down church, will be removed from its former location in Vancouver and loaned on a long term basis to The Glenbow Museum. Oppenheim's sculpture caught my eye during a recent visit to Vancouver and it was the subject of much conversation for the remainder of my trip. It is a captivating piece that forces the viewer to re-examine preconceived spatial and theological notions.

Lexier and Oppenheim's sculptures will greatly advance Calgary's public art collection. They are both eye-catching, original and thought provoking, but will they inspire us?

Irish playwright, novelist, poet and author of short stories, Oscar Wilde once said that "Life imitates art far more than art imitates life." If Oscar is correct, should our public art reflect our goals and aspirations as a city? Project Ploughshares Calgary seems to think so.

Project Ploughshares is leading the development of Calgary's Peace Pole. In their own words, "The common primary functional purpose of all peace poles is the promotion of the goal of lasting world peace, as stated succinctly in the inscribed peace message [on the pole,] 'May Peace Prevail on Earth.'" Calgary's Peace Pole will inspire us to work towards world peace.

If Oscar Wilde and Project Ploughshares Calgary are correct, if art can affect what is happening in our lives, then, in addition to a Peace Pole, we need a Prosperity Monument, promoting the concept of an inclusive and prosperous Calgary, free of poverty.

Now is the time to celebrate Calgary's economic successes and to aim higher, acknowledging that we are the driving engine of Canada's economy and that

we can do better.

According to Calgary Economic Development, Calgary has the largest concentration of entrepreneurs, the highest personal income, and the highest percentage of post-secondary educated citizens in Canada. In 2007, we were also blessed with having the highest labour force participation rate in Canada. Despite having achieved these socioeconomic wonders, during the last six-months of 2007, 70,300 hard-working Calgarians earned less than a Living Wage of \$12 per hour. These hard working Calgarians include women, many of whom are single mothers. Despite their best efforts to provide for themselves and their families, they are struggling to make ends meet.

We can do better. We can create a city that abounds in opportunity, where all residents can sleep peacefully, comforted by the knowledge that they can afford both food and shelter. The development of a Prosperity Monument can serve as a tangible vision of a just and equitable economy, uniting Calgarians, inspiring us to work towards a common goal.

I envision our Prosperity Monument as a mosaic of coloured glass, stone and other materials, representing the diver-

sity of our community and the strong connections between us. It will serve as a catalyst, bringing people together under the shadow of its umbrella, continuing the dialogue on what is possible, how to achieve it, and calling us to action. I envision Calgary's Prosperity Monument with a multiform design - in Antoni Gaudi's artistic style - representing the concept that no single solution will end poverty; we must work across disciplines, both collaboratively and competitively.

Many Calgarians have become apathetic to the concept of poverty reduction; some people say it is not possible. I believe that we can free our city of poverty, making it a great city for all residents, not simply a select few. If life truly imitates art, our Prosperity Monument will herald the social change necessary to achieve our aims - to create a prosperous city for all. Eliminating poverty is a monumental task. We need a prosperity monument. ■

Jordan Hamilton is the Research and Policy Analyst at Vibrant Communities Calgary, a local non-profit poverty-reduction organization. For more information about Vibrant Communities Calgary please visit www.vibrantcalgary.com.

If you drink, that's your business.

If you want to STOP, that's ours.

CALL ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS 777-1212
Office: #2, 4015 - 1st St. S. E., Calgary

Where's My Dad?

I am a childcare worker and mother of 3, so I find myself constantly surrounded by many carefree trusting children, who want plain and simple answers to their complicated often loaded inquiries.

My question this month comes from an 8 year old young man. He asked me why his dad isn't around? His father has paid child support every month for the past 8 years. He has missed his son grow up by choice. His father made it clear to his mother that he did not want any children as he had a son from a previous relationship. She chose to have the baby and raise him on her own.

This little guy can not understand all the technicalities of his situation. Any advice to him needs to be age appropriate. I told him that his dad isn't able to be with him right now but I'm sure he thinks about him all the time. "Where ever your father is, he loves you very much. If he could see how big and strong you have grown to be, he would be very proud of you."

The boy looked into my eyes and said, "OK", and ran back to join his friends playing 'grounders' on the playground.

Just between you and me, I have a hard time respecting some mothers who badmouth fathers who are no longer around to their young children. Regardless of what he is (or was) like. Kids don't always need to know the details until they're older, if even then. ■

Do you have a question for me? I believe every person, big or small, young or old, sick or healthy, homeless or housed, deserves to be treated with dignity and respect at all times. I am not a social worker or a psychologist. I just want to give you honest answers to your questions.

**Please mail me at:
"2 Cents with Tasha"
CUPS Community Health Centre,
128 7th ave S.E.
Alberta T2G 0H4**

**Or you may e-mail me at:
asktasha@hotmail.com**

All letters will become property of CUPS and may published in part or in whole within this column.

**ANY QUESTION, ANY TOPIC.
I want to hear from you.
I WANT TO HEAR YOUR 2 CENTS!**

ROB'S CORNER

What do you think?

Should there be more statutory holidays in Canada? Should there be a Terry Fox Day? After all, he is one of our more celebrated Canadians.

Rob's Other Say of the Day:

Sometimes it's hard to be positive when people seem to be so negative. Sometimes it's hard to be over-weight when living in such a weight conscious world.

Words-on-the-street:

I've been selling the Calgary Street Talk newspaper, now in Kensington by the Plaza Theatre, proudly for eleven years. I've met a lot of people, made a lot of friends. It's a challenge each day because you never know what you are going to face.

By ROB CHAMPION, Vendor #68

Rob's Safety Tip of the Day:

Whether you're riding a bike, roller blading, jogging, or walking, please share the pathway. Be aware of others. Politely warn them that you are approaching. Lastly, don't speed - you may end up with a ticket.

Rob's Green Tip of the Day:

All coffee shops should encourage people to use reusable coffee cups by offering a small discount of, say, 20 to 25 cents. In the end there would be less waste and a cleaner planet, and a healthier environment. In the end, our cities and towns would be cleaner and much nicer.

(Breathless Expectations)

Your very first date with someone you've only known for a short while. Your very first (or new) vehicle. Your very first kiss with that special someone. Your very first trip across Canada or abroad. Those butterflies in your stomach seem to be growing with each passing day.

■ see... MORE ROB on page 14

SPEAKING FRANKLY

about Mental Illness

By Victor Hornbacher

Victor Hornbacher is a presenter on the stigmas surrounding mental illness

So you walk down the hall in your workplace, school, or library. You spot an advertisement for a seminar on the topic of mental illness. What goes through your mind? Total disinterest? Revulsion? Ironically, they might be asking you for money to attend. Are you making plans to go? Not likely.

Many people feel the mentally ill are not producers of economic wealth in any nation, be it democratic, communist or dictatorial. They are recipients of food, clothing, and shelter, not suppliers of it.

Do we get excited by the prospect of a tour through a psychiatric ward? What would you expect to see? Remember that Hollywood pretty well disseminates what we take as fact, whether true or not. The media takes this blatant stereotyping a step further.

Does anyone really care about how much of what we believe is true? In fact, the mentally ill are often timid, peacable, and easily directed and controlled. The few do act out violently, and resist all effort to control them. These same people settle down with medication and therapy. The mentally ill are more likely to be the victims of violence, rather than perpetrators of it. The patients in psychiatric units are usually watching TV, sleeping board games, cards, socially interacting, or phoning friends, and relatives. No one is screaming threats to staff or fellow patients, upending dinner trays, dancing nude down the hallway (although these events do happen on rare occasions. Remember this: God made every man, woman, and child that ever lived or ever will live. God made the mentally ill too (but He doesn't want them to stay that way).

Hold on. Does this mean we are somehow obligated to be our brother's keeper? Even if our brother is tough to love? How often does the plight of the mentally ill flicker through our minds?

Wealth is relative. Some want everything. Our Western democracies have done very well materially in the last couple of centuries. Unfortunately, along with this unprecedented explosion of technology and its ripple effects; we have lost sight of why we are here.

Do we really love others? We need to be courageous enough to reach out to people in need. Sure, it isn't fashionable to rub elbows with the mentally ill, but we must commit to a reconciliation between those stigmatized and the stigmatizers.

There are people with mental illnesses in every strata of North American society. That includes politicians, actors, lawyers, sports heroes, and bus drivers. It is kept quiet because of the stigma involved. There must be a reconciliation between the well and the ill.

To be admitted to a hospital on the basis of mental health issues, one must display a great degree of danger toward one's self or others. The media focuses on the dramatic and bizarre. It is true that someone experiencing a psychotic episode is probably behaving in a dramatic and bizarre manner! The injustice is that the media almost never focuses on how much the patient improves with therapy and medications.

Incidentally, driving under the influence of alcohol presents a far greater threat to others than mental illness ever will. In Calgary, about two thirds of those living on the street have a mental illness of one kind or another. Many of them have no support whatsoever from a psychiatrist or medication plan. Many new, more effective medications are being developed at a phenomenal rate, but those who need them most are not getting them. And those getting them are often not taking them. Some make great progress and decide to stop taking them because they start to feel 'well.'

Some think the solution is to throw money at the problem. Do we need bigger hospital with more doctors and nurses? Educate the public more? In the mid 60s, a novel approach was tried. Many larger centralized hospitals were closed with the hope that patients could be assimilated into much smaller urban society. The result? Many more who lived on the street were mentally ill. They have become the 'untouchables' of our society.

Remember that most of our images and attitudes toward mental illness stem from their depictions in movies, TV, magazines, and the press. People do not choose to be sick. When a person has cancer, we say they have cancer. When someone has schizophrenia, we say they are schizophrenic. The person has become the illness. Perceptions have conspired to slam shut the door leading to recovery. Would you hire someone with a history of mental illness? Would you invite them to spend Christmas Eve with your family? Would you let them babysit your children?

Mental illness touches every strata of our society. Those afflicted are the lepers of the 21st century. Who will step up to the plate and do something to right this social injustice? One in a hundred of our population is waiting. ■

Spirit of Christmas should be

all year round



RON MURDOCK... From the politically incorrect side

"Nobody made a greater mistake than they who did nothing because they could do only a little." - Edmund Burke.

A better idea for Christmas is to have to the spirit of it go 12/365 and not just for a three week period starting at the 1st of December and ending sometime on the 25th.

Giving needs to come from the heart, something that will create long term memories for the giver and givee. While it is important to give, one must learn to receive well also. Once one

learns how to do this, they will learn graciousness and humility. This goes beyond the obligation exchanges of gifts between people.

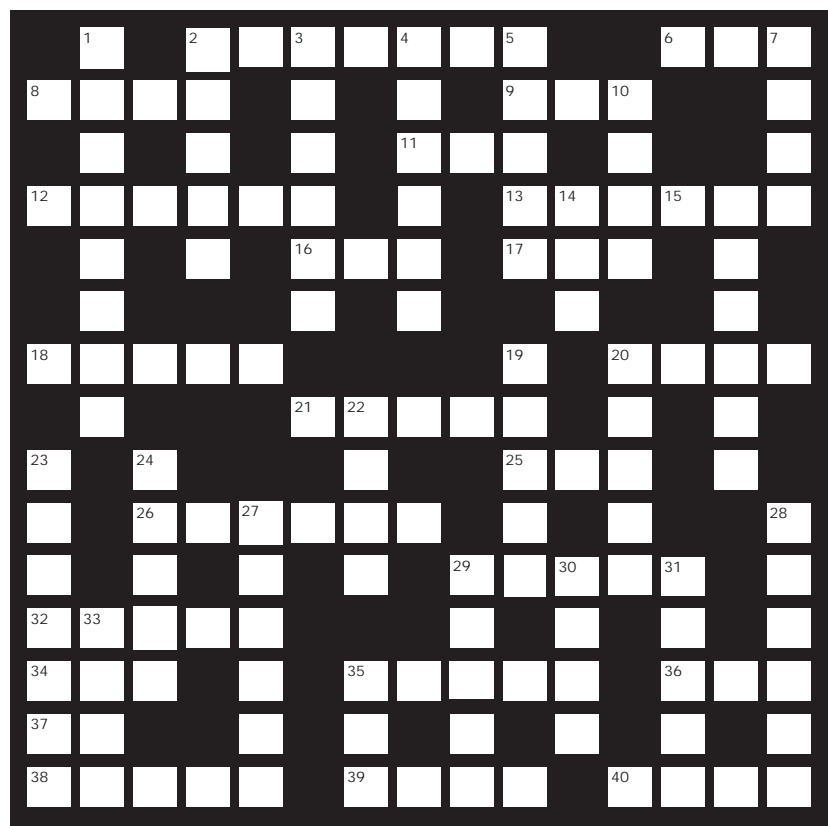
After being inundated with Christmas carols, ho-hos, merry merrys and so many ads saying we want your money, how many people are exhausted after all the excesses? No wonder the spirit of the season is lost in the crowd or others get numbed out by the situation. Probably Boxing Day became a holiday so people can catch their breath.

The poor will be with us no matter what time of the year it is. So generosity need not be confined to Christmas. But it need not mean in your face methods to get people to donate. Otherwise they will get burnt out from being asked to give. Nor does it mean giving money. It could be clothes, children's goods or even toiletries. Or at times the best gift one can give is time and attention.

When Boxing Day arrives it means shop now, only 364 shopping days until Christmas. But it also means that the season of giving hasn't ended. ■

(Murdock is a former Calgary resident and Calgary Street Talk vendor who now lives in Nelson, B.C. He can be reached at doc.ster@hotmail.com.)

PETE'S CROSSWORD



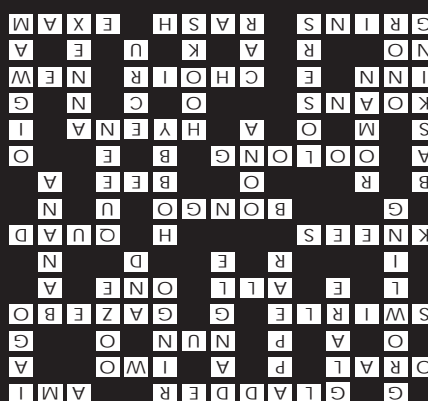
ACROSS

- 2. more pleased
- 6. singer winehouse
- 8. spoken
- 9. _____ Jima
- 11. cloistered woman
- 12. eddy about
- 13. detached veranda
- 16. not just some
- 17. leg joints
- 18. campus area
- 21. drum or antelope
- 25. busy bug
- 26. tea type
- 29. wild dog
- 32. Zen riddles
- 34. country lodge
- 35. singing group
- 36. not used
- 37. Bond's nemesis
- 38. small smiles
- 39. skin ailment
- 40. student's bane

DOWN

- 1. dog's warning
- 2. bright light
- 3. seem
- 4. hang loosely
- 5. an ex-Beatle
- 7. Othello villain
- 10. seep
- 14. also
- 15. monkey treat
- 19. leisure pastime
- 20. mama bee
- 22. wife of Charlie Chaplin
- 23. soaking up the rays
- 24. director Polanski
- 27. also rans
- 28. Indian dwelling
- 29. fish catchers
- 30. neutral shade
- 31. building wing
- 33. _____ about (circa.)
- 35. auto

SOLUTION below



PETE'S THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Life is like a dog sled team; if you aren't the lead dog, the scenery never changes.

MORE ROB

■ continued from page 13

include the Bay downtown where I pick up the odd deal. Also, my favourite shop would be the Dollar Store.

Rob's Relationship Tip of the Day

My best advice to someone in a new relationship – don't rush yourselves to the altar. Try living together for at least a year. It's the best way to find out if you are really ready for a long term relationship. It's legal in Canada to live commonlaw. That may be an alternative to marriage.

Rob's (Green) Say of the Day. The Last Word:

Instead of banning the plastic bag as some places in North America are doing, why not make them biodegradable? Banning the bag would have a negative effect on the poor as they are already struggling with the high cost of rent. ■

(Makes You Think)

Did you ever wonder?

What ever happened to those friends you once had? Those friends you don't keep in touch with anymore? Those friends who you thought you'd have forever – where did they go? Whatever happened to you? Friends come and go, and life goes on.

Rob's Stops and Shops

I work evenings in front of the Plaza Theatre. I take in the occasional movie, especially during a fund raiser for the Food Bank. Before anything else I do in the evenings I stop over at Higher Ground for my favourite cup of coffee, where the staff are great, and friendly. Occasionally, my afternoon stops

often be "a quagmire of insurmountable hurdles," she said.

Citing as examples, Gardiner said that in order to maintain contact with a social worker, a telephone that can receive calls is necessary. "To receive most government benefits, you need a permanent address," she added.

"Most organizations will not take people with active addictions, most addictions programs will not take people with mental health problems and most mental health programs will not take people with addictions," she explained.

"There was, and still is, no meaningful system to help people permanently out of homelessness or to catch them before they fall," the researcher said of her findings to date.

The municipal government is taking steps to address the challenge of homelessness. The first is to understand the scope and characteristics of the current situation; the second is to develop a plan to address it.

The City of Calgary has physically counted the homeless population every two years since 1992 and publishes the data in the Biennial Count of Homeless Persons reports. The most recent was May 10, 2006.

While the numbers are by the report's estimation "a snapshot of the size and characteristics of the homeless population on one night every two years ... the (report) cannot capture the true magnitude of homelessness in the city."

The numbers are underestimated because they fail to account for people who - on the day of the count - were "couch surfing" at a friend's, or sleeping in vehicles and abandoned buildings, the report stated.

The 1996 report counted 615 homeless persons, 30 of which were on the street. By 2006 there were 3,436 homeless including 429 living outside, increases of 459 and 1,330 per cent respectively. Calgary's population increased just over 29 per cent over the same period.

These figures are part of the extensive research that went into Calgary's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, released January of this year (available online at www.endinghomelessness.ca).

Five broad strategies form the foundation of the plan. Helping people to avoid homelessness and re-housing those that already are, are the first two.

Affordable housing and treatment options, an improved ability to count and understand the situation and ensuring an effective network of non-profit organizations exist to support those at risk, are the final three strategies.

Homeless researcher Gardiner said the new 10 year plan has potential.

Through the assembly of experts, community leaders and government agencies, "At last we have the right people at the right time with the right skills, abilities and connections to end homelessness in our city and we are all hoping that they are successful in their efforts," she said.

It is perhaps David Finn's time on the street and past experience with homeless agencies that prevent him from celebrating over the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness just yet, at least until he can see some tangible benefits that relate to his experience.

Finn asserts that he has been drug-free since 2005 but the thought of relapsing is always with him. "It's not holding me back, but something I have to deal with," he said. He is scheduled to attend a rehabilitation program in Lethbridge later this month, to assist

him in dealing with the fear of using again.

Reintegrating into 'normal' society is something Finn still has hope for, but it scares him. CUPS worker Adam Melnyk said he can empathize, "I can easily see, staying outside for as long as he has, it would not be easy to transition back to a normal lifestyle."

Finn described it as trying to fit a square into a circle. "How is this square box going to fit into that round hole?" he asked.

Late last year Finn's home at the time, was torn down by the property owners following warnings Finn failed to comply with.

He then found a space along the railroad tracks that was relatively discreet, where he lives today.

He understands that this location may be no more permanent than the last. There is a smoking deck right above where he sleeps. This often prevents him from returning home during the day.

"So far, no one has seen me, but everything comes to an end." ■

■ continued from page 10

collect a ticket from a by-law officer as a tip from a passer-by.

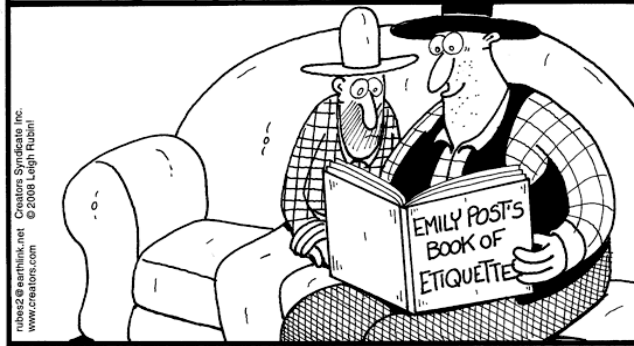
The origin of the Bo Diddley beat is obscure. The narratives are multi-tracked and competing, as are the etiologies of his stage name. You can entertain yourself for several evenings, reading the internet search results. Bo's assertion was that he first heard it in church in Chicago, and came up with the percussive guitar rhythm while trying to play 'I Got Spurs that Jingle Jangle Jingle.' It bears a striking resemblance to the Cuban *son clave*, which had percolated into the States via New Orleans' Mardi Gras sound. It could well have made its way north with the many southern blacks who migrated north, along with the McDaniels. In the last quarter century, the rhythm is probably most widely-heard in the guitar intro to George Michael's 'Faith,' sadly. But it is also reflected in Beenie Man's growl, 'Zigga ZOW, Zigga ZOW!' I prefer to think of the latter, since it returns Bo Diddley's creation to its Afro-Caribbean roots. However he came by it, there's no denying the power of the rhythm. When he electrified it and transmitted it through the popular media, he served notice that the future of popular music lay in the exploitation of rhythm rather than melody.

Many have mourned the death of Bo Diddley last month, and some of the many tributes have pointed out that among the rock 'n roll pioneers, the Sound of Bo is the most urban. He treated his guitar like a drum, sure, but he was also interested in skewing its sound every which way. He made it sound like a machine gun, a jet engine, a jack hammer, or trickling water. As I thought about his music, though, what particularly impressed me was the way he harnessed this urban industrial sound to some very traditional material. 'Bo Diddley' varied a children's lullaby: 'Bo Diddley bought his babe a diamond ring / If that diamond ring don't shine / He gonna take it to a private eye ...' 'Hey Bo Diddley' produces a variation of 'Old McDonald' in which women are the farm's primary livestock. The last laugh is on Bo, however, as his most prized possession slips away.

And then there is 'Who Do You Love'. The title puns on hoodoo, which for convenience's sake we may compare to voodoo. As popularly perceived, the term refers to practices in which certain objects are acted upon by an individual in order to influence the behaviour of others, often with respect to their love lives. The rituals may be connected to notions of death and rebirth: the snake, which sheds its skin and appears renewed, is a powerful symbol. Here is Bo Diddley's take: 'I walk 47 miles of barbed wire / I use a cobra-snake for a necktie / I got a brand new house on the roadside / Made from rattlesnake hide / I got a brand new chimney made on top / Made out of a human skull / Now come on take a walk with me, Arlene / And tell me, who do you love?' When's the last time you saw a snake skin on the ground? Anyone who could tally 47 miles of barbed wire had been for a long walk in the country; perhaps the barbed wire paralleled the Interstate, and pointed the way toward urban prosperity.

The balance between the urban and the rural in Bo's life began to tip in the 70s, as he struggled with his record label, and fewer people bought his recordings. He took a job as a deputy sheriff in New Mexico. He continued to perform live, since he needed the money. Eventually he returned from the Southwest to the South, and took up residence on a small farm in Florida. Life's return journey counseled warmth: his long-time label-mate and fellow Mississippian, Muddy Waters, also sang of going 'Deep Down in Florida' late in his career. McComb, though, would see the last public performance of his career. While suffering from heart ailments, he attended the dedication of his marker on the National Blues Trail. While listening to the live performances, he was offered the mike and participated in the celebration. Though he continued to resent what he regarded as the theft of his music, the endless recycling of his riffs in the recordings of other big-selling artists-'I should have two or three billion,' he told one reporter-he had a studio of his own, meaningful work in counseling youth, and several generations of his family gathered around him when his time came.

Bo Diddley's walk along the barbed wire is over; I hope it led him where he wanted to go. ■



The comic feature Rubes is sponsored by **STONEBRIDGE MERCHANT CAPITAL CORP.**



Labour of Love

PEACE BY PIECE

quilters' guild creates cozy contribution

Story and photos by Ken Price

It's impossible to be in a bad mood in a room full of quilts. It's just too darned cozy.

The staff at CUPS was delighted to receive 20 quilts from the Peace by Piece guild this month. The quilts were collected in the Education Room on the second floor of the CUPS building downtown and every time a staff member passed by they were invited in to admire the quilts, and bask in the comfort emanating from them.

"The quilts were absolutely beautiful," said Bonnie Bailey, Director of Parent Services at CUPS. "I appreciate the time and effort that has gone into each one. I have tried my hand in making quilts and I appreciate what goes into making them. I was moved by the thought that goes into even the choosing of fabric. Barbara said that they often choose flannel for the back to make them all the more cozy."

Bailey has recently launched a new program for new mothers and their babies. When originally asked if she could use any quilts, she was happy to receive them. They will be very much appreciated by the low-income mothers, she said.

Three women from the guild - Georgina Koshman, Lorraine Appleby, and Barbara Worden - visited CUPS to deliver the quilts. They talked to Bailey and together may have come up with some ideas for new programs at CUPS.

The women mentioned they had some members in their group who might like to volunteer with CUPS, so some sewing sessions might be created in the fall.

Also, the Peace by Piece representatives were interested in hearing about a quilt project Bailey saw while at a conference in Banff.

It was an International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder conference. There was a quilt there made by the Kids First organization from Regina made by a group of mothers. Every square on the quilt contained information learned by each mother about the prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. It proved to be a fascinating way to transmit information about FASD to anyone who stopped to admire the quilt.

Bailey said she would love to try something like that at CUPS.

"We are always looking for creative ways to help get the word out that FASD is entirely preventable," she said. "We always welcome new partners who want to work with us to help make things bet-



Lorraine Appleby (left) and Barbara Worden show off one of 20 quilts donated to CUPS. Every year Peace by Piece donates 60-100 quilts to various organizations around Calgary.

ter for those that come to CUPS."

Peace by Piece has been running since 2002. They have about 40 members who meet once a month in the Hope Lutheran church. At the meetings they collect their squares, discuss their projects, and take their projects home. The guild makes 60-100 quilts a year, both children's and adult sizes, and donates them to organizations that benefit the community. Along with CUPS, they have donated to Servant's Anonymous, the Senior Abuse Centre, and

the Colonel Belcher Seniors Residence, among others.

"When life all around you is challenging, I would think that there would be a great deal of comfort coming from being wrapped up in one of these quilts," said Bailey. "I would put homemade quilts and homemade soup into the same league of offering 'nurturing care' to the soul." ■



Carla John is one of the moms receiving a quilt. She has accessed CUPS services and has volunteered from time to time as a way of 'giving back.'