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# CALGARY Street TALK

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MAY 2008 VOL. 12 NO. 5

A SPARE CHANGE NEWSPAPER

*Possible Future* - Phil van Bruchem

## BIG hearts • Great ARTS

The Downtown Community Initiative - Art From the Street Coverage pages 5, 7-10, 16.

Photo by Heath Simpson



## 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

April's top sales leaders resulted in a tie for first between #4 **Mike Abhar** and #381 **Wade Ackerman**, second place was taken by #442 **Steve Gale**, followed by #68 **Rob Champion**.

## Vendor Incentive Program

#383 **Gordon Eddy** is fulfilling his hopes and dreams.

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 MAY 2008

#316 **Terry Flamond** - May 8

#442 **Steve Gale** - May 9

# Dudley Did Right

CST was saddened to learn from former vendor Mike Hershey that his little dog, Dudley, has died. Dudley was Mike's constant companion, and a joy to his customers. We offer Mike our sincere condolences in this time of loss.

Mike was a well known *Street Talk* vendor, who left Calgary for Langdon in an effort to cope with the high cost of rent in the city. We regret that his current update could not consist of happier news, but wish him well in his new home. ■



Michael Hershey and Dudley.



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# 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 Gorman**  
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 Ave. & 14th St. SW

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

**#442: Steve Gale**  
Banker's Hall

**#509: Barbara Randle**  
Kensington Safeway

**#515 - John Beck**

**#519 - Ed Legault**

**#520 - Shane Taylor**

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MAY 2008 VOL. 12 NO. 5  
A SPARE CHANGE NEWSPAPER

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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.

## Shorty Short-changed

Readers of CST March 2008 will recognize the name of Shorty Bergeron. We apologize for getting his given name wrong in the final paragraph of the article on p 8: it should be Murray, not Maurice. We'd like to make amends by reiterating Shorty's desire to connect with other artists, who can help each other. Artists who are interested in such collaborations may contact him via the information adjacent. ■



*An increasing global demand in grains, especially wheat and canola, has sent food prices soaring. Cattle farmers in Alberta struggle to operate with the high cost of feed and consumers at the grocery store ultimately face the problem at the check out. For many families, it will make the task of acquiring food in Calgary's pricey market even harder. A recent article by Gwynne Dyer analyzes the new global struggle to bring food to the hungry.*

## The Coming Food Catastrophe

By Gwynne Dyer

"This is the new face of hunger," said Josetta Sheeran, director of the World Food Programme, launching an appeal for an extra \$500 million so it could continue supplying food aid to 73 million hungry people this year. "People are simply being priced out of food markets....We have never before had a situation where aggressive rises in food prices keep pricing our operations out of our reach."

The WFP decided on a public appeal in March because the price of the food it buys to feed some of the world's poorest people had risen by 55 percent since last June. By the time it actually launched the appeal, prices had risen a further 20 percent, so now it needs \$700 million to bridge the gap between last year's budget and this year's prices.

In Thailand, farmers are sleeping in their fields after reports that thieves are stealing the rice, now worth \$600 a tonne, straight out of the fields. Four people have died in Egypt in clashes over subsidised flour that was being sold for profit on the black market. There have been food riots in Morocco, Senegal and Cameroon.

Last year it became clear that the era of cheap food was over: food costs world-wide rose by 23 percent between 2006 and 2007. This year, what is becoming clear is the impact of this change on ordinary people's lives.

For consumers in Japan, France or the United States, the relentless price rises for food are an unwelcome extra pressure on an already stretched household budget. For less fortunate people in other places, they can mean less protein in the diet, or choosing between feeding the kids breakfast and paying their school fees, or even, in the poorest communities, starvation. And the crisis is only getting started.

It is the perfect storm: everything is going wrong at once. To begin with, the world's population has continued to grow while its food production has not. For the fifty years between 1945 and 1995, as the world's population more than doubled, grain production kept pace - but then it stalled. In six of the past seven years, the human race has consumed more grain than it grew. World grain reserves last year were only 57 days, down from 180 days a decade ago.

To make matters worse, demand for food is growing faster than population. As incomes rise in China, India and other countries with fast-growing economies, consumers include more and more meat in their diet: the average Chinese citizen now eats 50 kilos (110 lbs) of meat a year, up from 20 kilos (44 lbs) in the mid-1980s. Producing meat consumes enormous quantities of grain.

Then there is global warming, which is probably already cutting into food production. Many people in Australia, formerly the world's second-largest wheat exporter, suspect that climate change is the real reason for the prolonged drought that is destroying the country's ability to export food.

But the worst damage is being done by the rage for "bio-fuels" that supposedly reduce carbon dioxide emissions and fight climate change. (But they don't, really - at least, not in their present form.) Thirty percent of this year's US grain harvest will go straight to an ethanol distillery, and the European Union is aiming to provide 10 percent of the fuel used for transport from bio-fuels by 2010. A huge amount of the world's farmland is being diverted to feed cars, not people.

Worse yet, rainforest is being cleared, especially in Brazil and Indonesia, to grow more bio-fuels. A recent study in the US journal "Science" calculated that destroying natural ecosystems to grow corn or sugar cane for ethanol, or oil palms or soybeans for biodiesel, releases between 17 and 420 times more carbon dioxide than is saved annually by burning the bio-fuel grown on that land instead of fossil fuel. It's all justified in the name of fighting climate change, but the numbers just don't add up.

"It would obviously be insane if we had a policy to try and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the use of bio-fuels that's actually leading to an increase in greenhouse gases," said Professor Robert Watson, former chief scientific adviser to the World Bank and now filling the same role at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in London. But that is the policy, both in Europe and in the United States.

This is the one element in the "perfect storm" that is completely under human control. Governments can simply stop creating artificial demand for the current generation of bio-fuels (and often directly subsidising them). That land goes back to growing food instead, and prices fall. Climate change is a real threat, but we don't have to have this crisis now.

"If...more and more land (is) diverted for industrial bio-fuels to keep cars running, we have two years before a food catastrophe breaks out world-wide," said Vandana Shiva, director of the India-based Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy, in an interview last week. "It'll be twenty years before climate catastrophe breaks out, but the false solutions to climate change are creating catastrophes that will be much more rapid than the climate change itself." ■

I'm hearing a lot more in the news these days about people in situations of homelessness or other vulnerability being physically or sexually abused, beaten up or otherwise mistreated. In the more publicized cases, people are ambushed or attacked while sleeping and the footage of their assaults is found on the Internet or on people's cell phones, as some sort of trophy for what amounts to nothing more than a cowardly, loathsome and unfathomable act.

Not everyone can fully understand what it's like to be exploited or abused over a characteristic or situation that is deemed by others to be a disadvantage. For many people these disadvantages have nothing to do with a choice they made, nor can they be blamed for putting themselves at risk. Sometimes people are mistreated simply because the opportunity exists. People with disabilities are particularly at risk to the threat of violence by those who can wield social, economic or physical power over them. For this group particularly, but also for all of us, the threat of violence is always present and can't be ignored.

I learned this lesson in a juvenile but very potent way when I was 18 years old. I was attacked by a young pre-teen for no other reason than he thought it might be funny to try and take advantage of a person's disability. I wasn't hurt but the experience taught me that someone could try to target me for violence based on the nature of my disability. I was at church of all places, sitting outside in the sun after a particularly long and boring service when a boy I knew who attended the same church ran up beside me and stole my crutches.

I was used to curious kids wanting to use my crutches, so I didn't think too much of it until this boy began to taunt and hit me with them. He playfully jumped around on his healthy legs, taunting me with small-minded scorns about the nature of my disability while hitting me repeatedly. I'm not sure where anyone was at the time, but nobody stopped him, and all the while I kept thinking about how he could possibly find this fun. I wondered how this kid could not be sickened by himself and his own behavior, but most of all I was angered and humiliated by the fact that this twit thought he could do this to me.

Fortunately, my attacker didn't fully realize I can walk unassisted for short distances and he also didn't understand that walking everyday on crutches for the majority of your life makes for some pretty strong arms. After enduring more than enough floggings to my own body, I lunged out and tackled my young attacker right on the front lawn of the church. I pinned him to the ground with my arms, grasped him around the neck and thought about all the different ways I could throttle someone who had done something



# From Where I Stand

By JON BATEMAN  
For Calgary Street Talk

so cruel and pre-meditated at such a young age.

I let him squirm for a few minutes as I considered my options. At the end of the day, he was just a kid, I was on the front lawn of a church, and the only thing he really hurt was my sense of security. So I told him off in the worst way I knew how and simply let him go. To this day I still wonder if a beating would have been a better idea, but for a minute or two it seemed like I had gotten my point across. My youthful attacker wiped some tears from his eyes and stepped away from me and went for my crutches, which were now splayed across the lawn. But, he then failed that particular opportunity to be a better person and snatched up my crutches again, taking off running down the street.

Minutes passed and I realized he wasn't coming back. I got up and staggered my way back into the church where my best friend was seated on the couch. Seeing my face was enough and without a word he went out in search of my crutches. He found them flung into an empty field by my attacker, who apparently needed to get home for Sunday dinner. All was restored - the boy was punished (pretty severely too) and I was unharmed but I knew then that I needed to take steps to ensure my safety, as I went out into the world to begin my independent life.

As a result of this experience, I've taken steps to protect my safety. I'm fortunate to be armed with knowledge of self-defense and a couple of metal crutches that can be used to protect me. I'm also physically strong enough from years of walking on my arms to be a considerable physical force myself.

Still, as a person with a disability, should I have to live with the threat that at any moment, those who wish to assault or rob me could be sizing me up? Should anyone have to live with that?

Why does it seem that the most vulnerable are targets for those committing malicious and cowardly crimes? In the last few years Western culture began to take a desensitized, detached, and voyeuristic position toward seeing and even creating the misfortunes of others. Instead of seeking to support those who are vulnerable, there seems to be an attitude of blame toward them. There is an increasing attitude in the world these days that it's 'every person for themselves' and we're getting away from what makes people happier and more successful. As a society, we will always be better off when we look out for each other and grow together with all our diversity. A society is judged by how it treats its most vulnerable members and I fear that in this area we're starting to fail miserably. ■



# Waiting Room

BY MARINA GIACOMINI

... Director of Housing and Supports for CUPS Community Health Centre

The other day, as I was stuck in traffic in a freak spring snowstorm, I found myself waxing philosophic. It started with my frustration over waiting, and then in typical philosopher style I began a little word, thought, belief system association around "waiting".

I considered the lobby at CUPS, where I work, and where many people wait. We at CUPS often refer to, or think about, our lobby as a waiting room. It is a place for individuals who have had an appointment in our medical clinic, who want to see a Housing Advocate, or who need a referral for something. It has also become a place

of anonymous actions, regarding the free-loading "bums and scums" who were showing up in Calgary?

What about number 4? How often do we see someone who might be homeless and quickly look away rather than say "hello", or kindly acknowledge them through eye contact or a smile?

I think that as people of privilege, living free of oppression in one of the wealthiest cities in North America, that we are called most loudly by numbers 2, 5, and 6.

One of my mentors often says, "To those whom much is given, much is expected." Are there more ways that we

***"One of my mentors often says, 'To those who much is given, much is expected.'"***

can slow down and help our friends in need to catch up? In places like Calgary, where the gap between the rich and poor has grown so significantly in so short a time, there is huge reason to be concerned. If you remain unconvinced, consider the less affluent countries you may have vacationed in like Mexico, The Dominican Republic, and others. When I've been to those places it was very apparent that there were those who had and those who had not. Is that what we want for our community too?

For a society to be healthy it must be diverse and there must be a range of opportunities for each of its members to benefit from, to contribute to, and to participate in fully. Are we "ready or available" to help others in "service" to a higher purpose and a better standard of living for all of us?

- The encarta® dictionary online describes waiting as:
1. do nothing expecting something to happen
  2. stop so somebody can catch up
  3. be hoping for something
  4. be delayed or ignored for now
  5. be ready or available
  6. be waiter (server)

Finally, number 3 could be that held breath of the people who are so in need in Calgary. Though many of them may have not considered the idea of "hope" for a long time, I believe that their very resilience, in continuing to survive a life where they are so often subjected to violence, hunger, fear, disdain, and apathy, speaks to a hope in the human spirit. A hope that something can happen that will lift us out of ignorance, out of isolation, and towards a truer and better community. ■

Interesting...in my experience, each one of these adequately sums up the feelings I've had, being immersed in the issues of deep poverty and homelessness, and our city's sensibility in response. Consider number 1. How many times have you heard people say that those experiencing homelessness just want a hand out while they sit around all day like "bums". Indeed, wasn't there a politician around not too long ago who made a infamous remark, and followed up with infa-

# Finding Nemo on Foot

By ANDREA AND PETER TOMBROWSKI For Calgary Street Talk

Everyone in our family enjoys watching movies. So we rent DVDs regularly from our neighbourhood video store.

The video store closest to our south-east Calgary apartment is Rogers Video. It is a five-minute walk to get there, and less than a one-kilometer round trip. We always make the trip walking because our family doesn't own a vehicle.

One day, a tenant in our building confessed her guilt to us about her using a car to go rent a movie. She professed that she was "too lazy" to walk the two blocks. Frankly, I think it takes more energy to use a vehicle than to walk for that short distance.

Consider the following: for our remorseful neighbour to rent a DVD, she has to walk to her car, start it (perhaps warm it up in winter), negotiate a tricky intersection, park at the video store, and go inside. To return home, she will need to exit the small parking lot, turn at a major intersection, park her car, and walk to her apartment. Depending upon the weather and time of day, the trip will probably take her anywhere between three to ten minutes each way.

My trip starts with dressing properly; depending upon the weather, this may take a few minutes. Once outside my apartment building, I will walk down the street for two minutes, activate a pedes-

trian walk light (which gives me the right-of-way across four lanes of traffic), then walk another three minutes to the store. Yes, like my car-bound friend, I will also need to pay attention to my surroundings. However, weather and time of day rarely detract from my otherwise simple walk, no matter how cold it is or how much traffic there is.

My family's car-free life has made us appreciate Gortex, Supplex nylon, and Type II sunhats. However, if someone wants to make a move towards less vehicle-dependency, then picking up your DVD on foot is a decent start. No fancy backpacks, approach shoes, or moisture-wicking clothing are necessary. Video stores are a familiar site in most neighborhoods. I am guessing that, for many of them, a person could walk to their neighborhood store in less than fifteen minutes.

When I consider that I will be sitting down for the 90 to 120 minutes to watch my rented movie (and very possibly snacking during it), I find that a refreshing little walk beforehand serves me well. Not to mention the "two thumbs up" from the environment. ■

***(Andrea and Peter Tombrowski are writers and filmmakers. The Tombrowski family has lived without a vehicle in Calgary since 1998. For more information about their car-free life, please visit [www.urbancamping.ca](http://www.urbancamping.ca).)***



University of Calgary Nursing and Social Work students with the Downtown Community Initiative capped off their semester with Art from the Street - Making Connections. The exhibit showed at the Art Gallery of Calgary on April 25. The students have been assisting at the Salvation Army's Centre of Hope this semester, providing a number of services from craft making to addictions counseling. Philip van Bruchem and Gordo were two of the featured artists, whose work also appears in this issue of Street Talk. For more coverage of this event see pages 7-10. From left to right: Event organizers Jodie Edwards, Kimberly Kaiman, Ken Hatch, Lee Stevens.



# Vibrant COMMUNITIES Calgary

BY CONNIE JOHNSON

## Collaboration is a F E E L I N G

The usual image of leadership is of a charismatic person with a powerful vision, whom people rally around and support. Collaborative leadership turns that concept upside down. It focuses on bringing people together in constructive ways, to accomplish something that cannot be accomplished on one's own.

Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC) provides a space for diverse people and organizations to work together to reduce poverty in Calgary. There are dozens of people and organizations involved – including businesses, government, and people experiencing poverty. Our focus is on changing policies and attitudes that cause poverty or prevent people from exiting poverty.

Many people focus on the structures, processes or techniques of working together. These are important but I don't think they capture the most important part of collaboration.

I can only describe it as a feeling. You know it's true collaboration when people who have not found their voice - or have not had a chance to use that voice – are actively participating in the work and their contribution is respected and valued by everyone. It's true collaboration when people look beyond the 'labels' we often give each other and see

another human being. It's true collaboration when people from a variety of backgrounds work together on a common goal. True collaboration feels like hot chicken soup in the tummy on a cold Calgary day.

It was a cold Calgary day last February 6th when I attended The City's Community and Protective Services Standing Policy Committee meeting on the Fair Calgary Policy and the Single Entry Subsidy Project. Our Fair Fares Action Team presented to council members in support of administration's recommendation to proceed with a public consultation on developing and implementing a Single Entry Subsidy Program, using income as the basis for determining eligibility for a reduced user fee. Implementation of the policy could mean that low income transit passes are available to Calgarians with incomes lower than 100% LICO (low income cut off), instead of just 75% of LICO. This change would be significant for low-income Calgarians. The existing policy makes individuals earning less than \$15,902 (annually) eligible for the pass; at 100% LICO the cut off is \$21,202.

Collaboratives spend weeks, months, even years raising awareness to influence policy. We conduct Aldermanic vis-

its, hold forums, engage the media, and ultimately find ourselves in front of Council members who have the power to pass policy.

That cold February day at City Hall I felt it. As Bonnie and Colleen presented to the Standing Policy Committee, it warmed my heart to think that they had both been advocating for the low income transit pass for years; long before I came on board VCC as Interim Director. Colleen brought a friend with her; Lloyd. Lloyd had tried for two years to qualify for a low income transit pass but his income was slightly above the \$15,902 annual allowable income. City Administration provided council with a very thorough and convincing presentation. Dressed up in their suits, they made the complex policy easy to understand. City Council asked thoughtful questions – especially to Katie, a member of our action team. Katie surprised Council by saying how much she depends on Calgary Transit's low income pass as a person living with MS. I could see that our small but mighty VCC staff (Nicole, Jordan, and Minal) become emotionally moved and excited. David also attended the meeting to support us with his warm smile and flowing dreadlocks: such a variety of folks collaborating to

reduce poverty.

The recommendation to develop and implement a Single Entry Subsidy Program using income as the basis for determining eligibility for a reduced user fee was approved at the Standing Policy Committee level!!! All we had been working towards took a giant step forward.

As we shared a meal to celebrate, the feeling came over me again. I was so proud to be amongst these people. That hot chicken noodle soup feeling warmed me all over.

We all have a powerful and universal human need to 'belong' to something bigger than ourselves – such as a community without poverty – and VCC gave me a chance to experience that. This is my last article in Street Talk, as I retire and turn over the reins to Salima Stanley-Bhanji. If you would like to become involved with our collaborative please contact her by phone, 283-2122, or by email, salima@vibrantcalgary.com. ■

*Connie Johnson is the former Interim Director of Vibrant Communities Calgary, a local non-profit poverty-reduction organization. For more information about Vibrant Communities Calgary please visit [www.vibrantcalgary.com](http://www.vibrantcalgary.com).*

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# CALGARY HOMELESS FOUNDATION

## appoints New President & CEO

By Ken Price

The Calgary Homeless Foundation announced on April 15 the appointment of a new president and CEO. Tim Richter, former vice president of the CHF, will take the reins of the organization as they embark on the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.

Richter is replacing Wayne Stewart, who is retiring after serving the foundation since October 2006. Stewart provided leadership for the foundation during the creation of the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.

"If we all work together, we will end homelessness in Calgary and provide a safe, secure home for all," Stewart said in a media advisory.

The 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness has already been carried a long way by Richter, who served as its Project Manager after joining the CHF in 2007.

The plan focuses on developing infrastructure to prevent chronic homelessness. In the long term, the plan calls for the creation of 11,250 affordable homes over the next decade.

Previous to the CHF, Richter served as Director of Government Relations at TransAlta Corporation. ■



Tim Richter, new president and CEO of the Calgary Homeless Foundation, center, with Marina Giacomini, CUPS Director of Housing and Supports, left, and Käthe Lemon, ed. *Avenue* magazine, right, at the Rapid Exit Open House, February 2008.



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# Welcome to GORDO'S WORLD

Photos & story

By Herman Pontes

*I've known Gordo for the better part of three decades. For most of that time, his life looked pretty conventional to me. About five years ago, however, things began to go horribly wrong for him. I spoke with Gordo about his life, and his art. Below he tells his story.*

'I became homeless when my marriage broke up. For a while I was sleeping in my truck, in the parking lot of the meat packing plant where I worked. This was in January, and some nights the temperature got down to -30. Then one night the cops woke me up & told me I couldn't sleep there anymore. They recommended that I go to the all-night cafe. I couldn't sleep there, but at least I could get wired up to work again. Some nights I would stay at the Mustard Seed, but I couldn't always get in.'

'I found myself getting more and more anxious. After wandering the streets for two days, I called my brother and he took me to Foothills hospital. I stayed in their psych ward for three months.'

'I was released, but I didn't feel better. As my wife pressed me for a divorce and I was facing a huge debt load, I had trouble coping with my pain and anger. It seemed like everyone would be better off without me. Suicide looked like a

good solution—but a friend found me before it was too late.'

'I wound up in the psychiatric ward of the Lougheed Hospital for six months. The Art Therapy program there really helped me; sometimes it felt like it was doing more for me than anything else. I got into the habit of painting & drawing every week, and it's a habit I try to continue, though I'm a lot busier now than when I was in the Lougheed.'

'When I was discharged from the Lougheed, I went to the Salvation Army's Centre of Hope. I stayed there for almost four months. It was a good way to make the transition to normal life. They gave me a good clean room & help in looking for jobs. Eventually a friend invited me to move into a mobile home & split the rent with him.'

'Things did get better. I got better. Family & friends encouraged me & supported me. Medication & counselling helped, but making art really let me get at who I am. Sometimes I paint on spare pieces of board that friends give me; other times I use canvas. I use all kinds of media: charcoal, acrylic, water colours, varnish ...'

'Now I work doing home renovation, and I live with my son Phil. He used to walk from school to the Lougheed to visit me every day. I love that boy.' ■



Gordo, right, with his son Phil. Gordo's art was exhibited in a photo slide show, *Art from the Street: Making Connections*, at the Art Gallery of Calgary, on April 25.

SEE PAGE 8 FOR A SELECTION OF HIS WORK.

# Welcome to GORDO's WORLD



BEATLES

See story on page 7



'JIMI HENDRIX: I painted him because my son Phil asked me to.'



FLOWERS



'CATHOLICISM: elements of my religious upbringing. A lot of people ask me if the man looking at the viewer is Elvis. Actually I modelled him on Robert Gordon, but he doesn't look very much like him, so I've stopped telling people that.'



MYSTICISM



GORDO & FAMILY



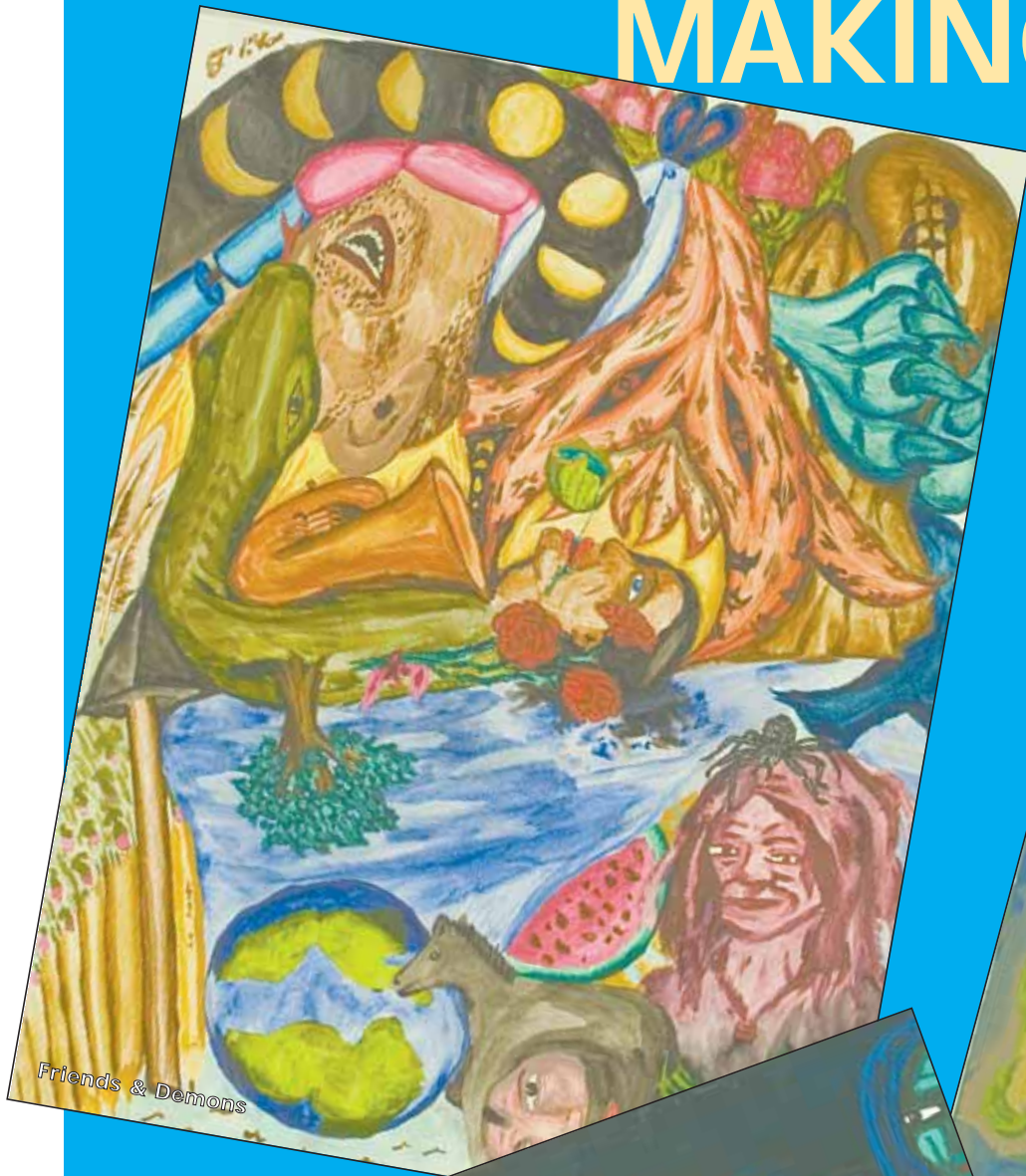
FOREST



HARPO

'I drew the design for this tattoo. It's my grandma & my son Phil. Veronique really liked it & she did a great job with it, really took her time. It got pretty infected at one point, but it came out well. My grandmother & Phil never met; I drew them together from different photos.'

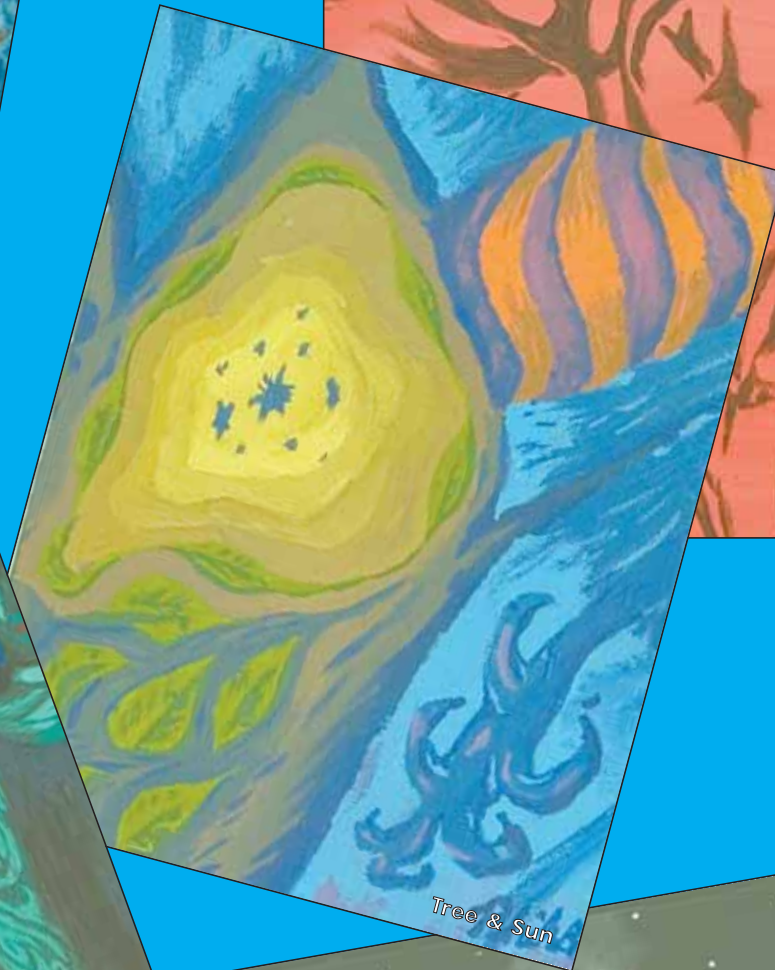
# Philip van Bruchem MAKING CONNECTIONS



Friends & Demons



More Pretty Girls



Tree & Sun



Different Coloured People



Someone's Ghost



Dancing

See story on  
page 10

Photos by  
Heath Simpson

# Philip van Bruchem MAKING CONNECTIONS



Philip van Bruchem, a CUPS client, was featured in *Art from the Street: Making Connections*, at the Art Gallery of Calgary, on April 25. Phil says: 'I am a part of everything and a part of nature like everyone else. I am a part of all people, which is different from the distant past, but better than not being connected to any people. I am learning to fearlessly love everything that is. There are many things that I don't understand but I am always thankful to be alive.'

*See page 9 and our front cover for selections from his work.*

## Rapid Exit Creates Solutions

Rapid Exit helps families exit homelessness quickly, by moving them into a more stabilized housing environment.

Housing Locators seek out landlords who are willing to participate. They also visit rental accommodations to ensure they are suitable.

The Housing Locators act as mediators between the landlord and the tenants. They also provide the family with basic needs to ensure the transition from homelessness is a smooth one.

For more information, phone 717-0922  
or email [cups.housingfamilies@shaw.ca](mailto:cups.housingfamilies@shaw.ca)



Pat Morhart, right, of BMO 7th Avenue presents a cheque to Robert Perry, CUPS Director of Operations, representing a quarterly donation from BMO employees. CUPS thanks Pat and her dedicated staff for their generosity.



**FRIDAY, MAY 23**  
**7:30-9:30 a.m.**  
**Hyatt Regency Calgary**

**Meet the 2008 Stampeders,**  
including

**John Hufnagel, Head Coach & GM**  
**Jeff Pilon, CUPS Player Representative**

**Witness the change that the work  
of CUPS has made in the lives of  
so many Calgarians.**

**Tickets \$65**  
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Administration Office**  
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**Hosted by Apache Canada Ltd.**

# Living Wage

and

# The City of Calgary

*The debate at the City of Calgary continues regarding the Living Wage initiative. On Monday, April 28, city council met and voted 8-7 to approve further research into policy options. The completed report is due in January 2009. The article below suggests a number of reasons to support the initiative.*

By Jordan Hamilton

Changes to the status quo often divide people. Albertans, however, share a history of coming together in support of the common good. When the status quo isn't good enough, collectively, we make positive change happen.

Sixty years ago, for example, Canadians faced many obstacles accessing affordable health care. Seeing its population face difficulties, Saskatchewan responded by implementing near universal health coverage – the first province in Canada to do so. Alberta was the second.

In 1948, despite many financial concerns, Alberta created Medical Services (Alberta) Incorporated to provide pre-paid health services. Shortly thereafter, the program was extended to include over 90 per cent of Albertans. Eighteen years later, the Government of Canada introduced the Medical Care Act, providing universal health coverage to all Canadians. Together with Saskatchewan, Albertans led the charge for the provision of universal health care.

Without the strong showing of support by Saskatchewan and Alberta, the government of Canada may never have demonstrated the extraordinary strength it took to provide free health coverage to all Canadians.

Times have changed since the mid-1900s, and Calgarians are faced with a new challenge. The rising cost of living in Alberta is taking its toll on hardworking Calgarians. Those not earning a Living Wage cannot afford to meet their basic needs, maintain a safe, decent standard of living in their community, and

save for future needs and goals. Paying a Living Wage is one important way to reduce poverty in our community. And Calgarians are rising up en masse, showing their support for hardworking low-income Calgarians.

More than 800 Calgarians from various sectors, including citizens from business, non-profit, civic, academic, artistic and many other organizations, graded 12 key issues as part of the Calgary Foundations Vital Signs project in 2007: 71 per cent of graders indicated that supporting a Living Wage is the area in most need of attention.

Over 1,000 Calgarians identified and documented 12 priority actions and policies they believe will significantly improve the lives of all Calgarians as part of Sustainable Calgary's Citizens' Agenda. One priority action is to "Ensure all Calgarians — wage earners, the disabled, seniors — receive the equivalent of a Living Wage".

More recently, over 60 per cent of the respondents to *Calgary Sun* and *Calgary Herald* surveys reported that The City should adopt a Living Wage policy that keeps City staff out of poverty.

Employers who understand the link between low wages, poverty and employee motivation see themselves as part of the solution. According to Dave Gregory, for example, the President and CEO, First Calgary Savings, "Happy, healthy employees, lead to vibrant workplaces and strong communities. For us, a Living Wage isn't a luxury; it's a necessity."

Martin Kippenberger, a German conceptual artist, famously said, "Nobody helps anybody." I disagree. I have witnessed Calgarians confronted with an overwhelming challenge, and rise in solidarity, helping friends, family, and all those in need. Under the banner of Living Wage, people have created multi-sectoral collaborations, weaving together skills, knowledge, resources and efforts, moving beyond promoting quick fixes to thinking comprehensively, striving to

address the root causes. Martin has obviously not visited Calgary.

I recently witnessed Calgarians rise up to help people living in poverty on April 9th, 2008. They voiced their support for a Living Wage at The City's Standing Policy Committee for Finance and Corporate Services. On that day, The City's Standing Policy Committee was presented with Administration recommendations to "develop a Living Wage Policy to be applied to City staff and City service suppliers". The Committee's responsibility was to make recommendations to the broader group of Council.

The supporting materials presented to the Standing Policy Committee revealed that in August 2007 there were 682 City employees who were earning less than a Living Wage. It was estimated that the cost to The City to bring these employees up to a Living Wage rate would be \$203,256.

It was also explained at the Standing Policy Committee meeting that the economic costs of Living Wage policies are often offset by important benefits. Living Wage policies result in increased labour productivity, while at the same time "level the playing field", ensuring that employers that pay higher wages, and thus produce better quality service, are not disadvantaged in the competitive bidding process. Ultimately, this ensures that The City is receiving the highest quality of service. The application of Living Wage policies also tends to have important benefits to the local economy, since low-income workers tend to spend more of their earnings locally.

Janet Keeping from the Sheldon Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership, Bob McInnis from Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids, Noel Keough from Sustainable Calgary, Gerald Wheatley from the Arusha centre, Brian Hoffart from the United Way of Calgary and Area, Aldermen Joe Ceci, Druh Farrell, John Mar, Brian Pincott, Bob Hawkesworth and other community

leaders passionately and poetically expressed at the Standing Policy Committee meeting that hard work should be rewarded with adequate pay and benefits – people who work full time deserve an income sufficient to meet their basic needs.

During the last 6 months of 2007, 70,300 hardworking Calgarians earned less than a Living Wage, the majority of these are women, many of whom are single parents. These hard working Calgarians do not want a handout; they are simply asking for a hand-up. A Living Wage provides people with this support. It rewards all those hardworking people who are trying to help themselves.

Despite the many benefits of Alberta's current economic boom, full-time work at minimum wage does not permit an escape from poverty.

The net monthly income (after deductions and taxes) for a single-income family of three working full time at Alberta's minimum wage is approximately \$1,290.00. After paying the average monthly costs for housing, food, utilities, transportation and health care, the family will fall over \$600 short every month on just providing the basic necessities. This does not account for other living expenses such as child care, clothing, household furnishings, medical prescriptions, hygiene products, insurance and recreation – many of which could also be considered necessities.

Heather Douglas, the President & CEO of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, wrote that "great cities look after everyone's welfare." Calgarians agree – we deserve a Living Wage. ■

**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](http://www.vibrantcalgary.com).**



# Stelmach, Gramsci and Wilson

By TIM WILD For Calgary Street Talk

As the mercurial Brian Wilson noted,

***“When some loud braggart tries to put me down and says his school is great, I tell him right away, “Now what’s the matter buddy, ain’t you heard of my school? It’s number one in the state!”***

With those immortal words, the Beach Boys launched into their classic “Be True to Your School,” a song that just oozes spirit. And, apparently, the Beach Boys aren’t the only ones interested in spirit, and its impact on community and belonging. Premier Ed Stelmach also wants us show some spirit and be true to our province!

In his post-election cabinet making, the Premier was faced with the task of creating a cabinet that reflected the various interest groups within his newly enlarged caucus, as well as balancing regional and demographic considerations. As a result, a number of Calgary Tory MLAs found themselves as members of Cabinet, Chairs of Cabinet Policy Committees or Parliamentary Assistants, including the newly elected MLA for Calgary-North West, Lindsay Blackett, as Minister of Culture and Community Spirit.

“Community spirit” is an interesting concept, particularly when it has the policy sanction of government. But what does it actually mean? The government gave us some idea in its official policy – The Spirit of Alberta. One of the primary planks in the Ministry’s mandate is to “promote and support culture in Alberta by working with partners.” This seems to be a positive step in developing culture in this province and focusing on our common values as Albertans. However,

an interesting part of the policy is outlined in the government’s policy document. One of the goals of the policy is to “encourage greater private charitable giving to non-profit organizations”.

My view is that this encouragement will result in initiatives that will take away government supports, and leave the resolution of social issues to depend on whether enough community spirit can actually be generated in a particular place to respond to those issues. Ultimately, my fear is that rather than providing financial supports that will allow communities to respond appropriately to social dislocation, will simply occupy a cheerleading role, awarding prizes to Albertans who show the necessary “spirit.” It might create the social and political idea that communities – if they so choose – have the necessary skills and capacities to overcome all obstacles...if only they have the requisite Alberta spirit! This is a dangerous idea, and will have an impact on action and policy development.

For example, one of the areas of responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Community Spirit is the Human Rights and Citizenship Commission. Despite some foot-dragging on the part of the provincial government, there is a legal (and much needed) measure of security afforded by Human Rights legislation in Alberta. However, if the con-

cept of human rights is subsequently developed within a discretionary “spirit” framework, then it is not always a guarantee that the necessary extension of rights will be accepted in that same...spirit. Important social rights of citizenship will be made conditional.

The idea, creation and presentation of “rah rah” team spirit has always been of interest to me. I remember that even though I didn’t play on the football team, the entire student body had to gather in the school gym, be introduced to the players and their place in the team hierarchy, respond to the stirring exhortations of the cheerleaders with a few predictable refrains, and cheer the lads on for the season. I don’t think it particularly mattered how well the team actually did during the subsequent games; it was more about the creation and collective manifestation of spirit and visceral pride in our school. The subjective experience of the group seemed to be placed over obvious and objective realities – just so long as we all toed the same line, things would be fine within our little duchy. And, perhaps, like the Beach Boys song, it was another example of the power of “spirit” over facts, or as Samuel Johnson wryly noted in relation to remarriage, the “triumph of hope over experience”.

In many ways, spirit did, and does help in the creation of a collectivity. At some level, it is a necessary ingredient in the formulation of a society. For many it can help in the negotiation of the social-self, and help with transactions of modern life. But spirit also has its potentially chauvinistic underside, and can also lead to the creation of unthinking and unquestioned norms of belief, action and belonging. If you don’t have “spirit” or the requisite amount of deemed allegiance to a particular institution (be it a school or, say, a province), and object to what is going on or see things from a different critical angle, then it suddenly becomes your problem for raising a

point against prevailing and accepted views. Spirit can also manifest itself in a “buck up” mentality – and, once again, problems with the norm become your problem, and not due to structural inequities in our society. It can put the onus on the person to enjoy subjectively and fit in, objective reality to the contrary. Just show a bit of spirit, and the \$402 per month you receive on welfare will see you through.

However, spirit has to be grounded in reality, and should not be used as a means to mask and exacerbate inequities and injustices in our society. Sometimes things aren’t that good for everyone, regardless of putting on a brave face or trying to fit in.

The Italian political theorist, Antonio Gramsci, noted that even though the state has the power of coercion at its disposal, it is more likely to attempt to rule by consent by creating a certain picture of how things should be in society. Consent can be achieved by the creation and promulgation of ideas and common sense. Constructions of spirit fit in this regard, and it can serve to provide the boundaries of “common sense”.

My biggest concern is that “spirit” contains the idea that hope will triumph over experience. But no matter how much “spirit” marginalized Albertans show in terms of volunteering, boosterism or broader community involvement, there is still the need for concrete resources and services. Sure, some measure of spirit is essential to a society, but I think the Tories are naively optimistic if they think it will actually lead to justice and inclusion. We need more than “spirit” for communities to grow – we need legislative foundations, social policy, and financial support. ■

*(Tim Wild is a social worker who is interested in the relationship between public policy and social justice. His column appears each month.)*

# ROB'S CORNER

By ROB CHAMPION, Vendor #68

## THINGS TO PONDER (so much in life)

There is so much in life that we take for granted, such as our friends. We often take for granted things that are so important to us, such as family. Also, things like money are often taken for granted. In the end, it causes hardships, break-up of friendships and families.

## WORDS ON THE STREET

### THEY ARE PEOPLE TOO.

(something to think about.)

They are there but sometimes seem invisible. Their numbers seem to be increasing daily. They are people without a home. They are visible during the day, and sometimes at night, but, at some point, they become invisible. They are never really far from our minds. They do what they can to survive. They are survivors.

They find whatever shelter they can. I personally know some of them. They are good people for the most part. I've become friends with them. I don't judge them or criticize them. I don't feel sorry for them. It does make me think, though, why we have people without a home in such a rich country.

### DREAM A DREAM. IT'S OKAY.

It's okay to dream. It sometimes gives you hope.

It's great to have good and caring friends.

They help keep you afloat.

It's good to have goals, short-term and long-term. It helps to give you purpose and hope for the future.

### TRY TO MAKE CENTS! IT'S A NO-WIN!

You try and try to conserve energy. You do all you can but, in the end, you find out your power bill has gone up, even after you find out your power company is making a substantial profit. It's almost like you're chasing an imaginary tail. In the end, I guess we're helping the environment.

### NO BIGGIES IN MY LIFE

There are no big mountains to climb.  
There are no big plans to contemplate.  
There are no big dreams to dream.  
There are no big trips in the cards.  
There is no big car to buy.  
There are only good friends, good times and a few laughs along the way.

### A SAD TIME. NEVER REALLY READY!

When you lose a friend, whether by death or lack of contact, it's always a sad moment at first.

In the end, though, you've always got the memories. That, in itself, is a way to remember people you haven't seen for a long time and still think of them as friends.

■ see... ROB'S CORNER on page 14

# Food for thought!



**RON MURDOCK...**  
From the politically incorrect side

Did you hear about the next two exorcist movies to hit the big screen? The first one involves a woman who got behind in her exorcist payments, so she got repossessed. The second one features a man who got behind in his bank payments, so he got everything he owned possessed by a collection agency...

I read that the tallest hospital in the world is Guy's Hospital in London, England. It's 468 feet high and consists of 34 floors. If this hospital were in Canada, how much of it would be closed due to lack of health care funding?...Since one will be "dead" longer than one will be alive, make the most of the life you have here. You just don't know what will happen once you pass over...

I've wondered about lawsuits for some time now. A Campbell River, B.C. man had an Out Of Body Experience - he says - after being accidentally overdosed with a painkiller called Ketamine. This was while recovering from back surgery at Vancouver General Hospital. He claimed to have seen God at the time but still sued for \$63,000 in damages. He got it. It would be interesting to find out if God got a cut out of it...

One grocery store in Dawson Creek, B.C. used to throw expired food into its open dumpster. As a result, a lot of us used to raid it on a regular basis. But one time I saw one fellow right in it, wearing hip waders, scrounging around for what he could find. His vehicle was parked nearby with his wife and children in it. I wondered what unspoken thoughts the kids has of their Dad getting food out of the dumpster in full view of other people...

Just what information is the military and government not telling us in the name of national security? Along the same lines, I've wondered for a long time just what knowledge the Vatican and NASA have that they don't make public... How many times is war being waged for purposes other than the declared ones by military authorities?...How much tension can be reduced when we stop controlling every moment and just go with the flow of life?...Can a government or city worker be found at 4:35 p.m., especially on a Friday?... ■

*(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.)*

# MIKE'S WISDOM

## JOY

Compiled by MIKE ABHAR, Vendor #4

Joy is the touchstone of the spiritual life. It is the emotion behind all other emotions. It is what lies at the core of us after we have cleared away the debris of our past conditioning and programming. Joy, therefore, is our natural state.

There are many ways to experience joy. Laughter brings about a lightness of the heart, as does playing with young children. Joy is linked to the creative process, as demonstrated by the joy that artists feel when they give birth to their creations. Can you imagine how much joy was expressed when the universe was created?

With the tests and challenges that compose this earth school, let us not forget the joy—the joy of being alive and experiencing the wonder and beauty of the universe. Surely this is reason to celebrate!

The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, yet within its reach, is joy. There is radiance and glory in the darkness could we but see, and to see we have only to look.

I beseech you to look. *-Fra Giovanni*

If life gave us at one time everything we wanted, such as wealth, power and friends, we would sooner or later become tired of them; but there is one thing that can never become stale to us; joy itself.

*-Paramahansa Yogananda*

What you call "salvation" belongs to the time before death.

If you make love with the divine now, in the next life you will have the face of satisfied desire.

*-Kabir*

And I have the firm belief in this now, not only in terms of my own experience but in know about the experience of others, that when you follow your bliss, doors will open where you would not have thought there were going to be doors and where there wouldn't be a door for anybody else.

*-Joseph Campbell*

With thanks to the CUPS staff who helped in selection. ■

# In Memoriam: ANDREW STIMSON

CUPS Community Health Centre lost part of its sense of humor and artistic flair in the month of April. Andrew Stimson was a fixture in the CUPS building. His roar was sometimes loud and shocking but it always made people laugh. Andrew was a very talented artist, whose work is proudly displayed in almost every office of the CUPS 7th Ave. building.

Andrew loved drawing and explaining what his art represented. He amazed people with how quickly he could produce a drawing, and how detailed it would be. Andrew will be always be remembered for his love of people, and how he counseled-or at least offered his counseling services-to everyone who walked through the door. ■

-- Kevin Brown

ANDREW'S ART  
is featured on page 16



Long-time friend of CUPS, Andrew Stimson, passed away in April. See more art on page 16.

## ROB'S CORNER

■ continued from page 13

### ROB'S FIRST SAY OF THE DAY:

Pushing the envelope can sometimes lead to disaster.

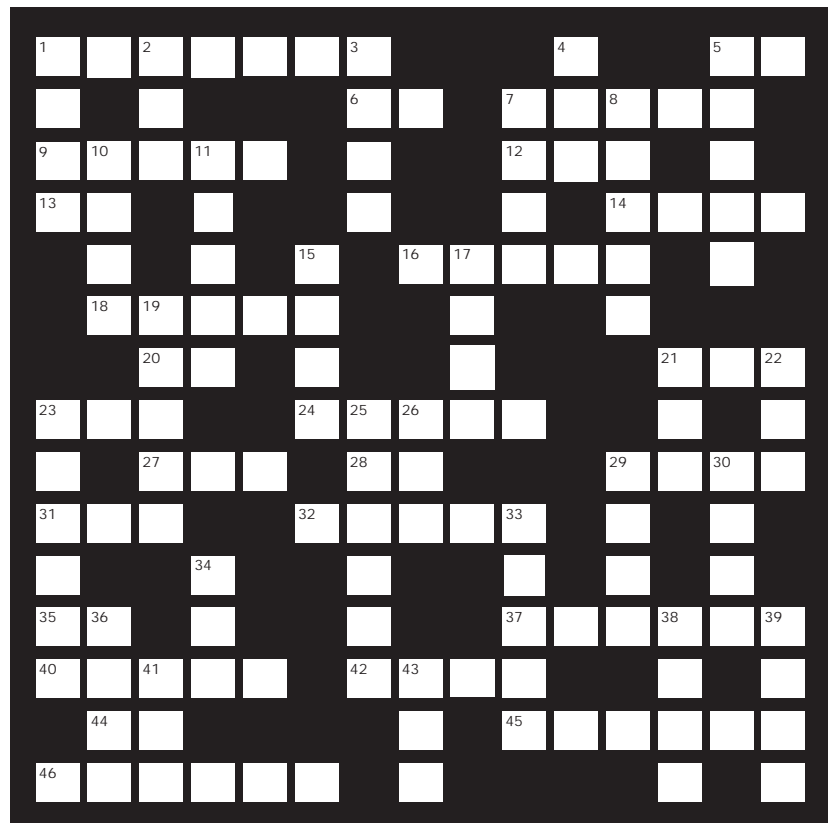
### ROB'S SECOND SAY OF THE DAY:

Be careful what you wish for because, somewhere down the road, it could change your life forever.

### SPRING & SUMMER TIP OF THE DAY:

These upcoming seasons, take the time to enjoy this city's many beauties, such as its many parks, the urban forest that is not far from your front door. The many gardens you may witness as you are driving around town. Take the time to enjoy all the scenery along the Bow and the Elbow Rivers. ■

## PETE'S CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- 1) Aides
- 5) Not she
- 6) Not out
- 7) A Yokum
- 9) Onset
- 12) Pub fare
- 13) Ma's mate
- 14) A chaplin
- 16) Mama bee
- 20) Not on
- 21) Very bad thing
- 23) Not working
- 24) Sponsorship
- 27) 2,000,000 pounds
- 28) Mrs. Barker
- 29) Hairless
- 31) \_\_\_\_\_ Angelas
- 32) Phrat garb
- 35) Bond's nemesis
- 37) Apt
- 40) Florida gridder
- 42) Puts on
- 44) \_\_\_ and Fro
- 45) Type of travel
- 46) Fake

### DOWN

- 1) Door fastener
- 2) Mauna \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Missile housing
- 4) Guy's mate
- 5) Laughing dog
- 7) Ashen
- 8) Unskilled workers
- 10) Boat cover
- 11) Director Polanski
- 15) Director \_\_\_\_\_ Ephron
- 17) Unsightly fruit
- 19) Upper spaces
- 21) Hot pool
- 22) Sleepyland
- 23) Tea type
- 25) Overacted
- 26) Practical joke
- 29) Tree protector
- 30) Short pause
- 33) Hot sauce
- 34) Aussie jumper
- 36) Horse morsels
- 38) Poet pound
- 39) Egg section
- 41) Lower digit
- 43) Thole filler

### SOLUTION below



### PETE'S THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

*If you come  
to a fork in  
the road,  
take it.*

Yogi Berra

# VIEW

## From The Street

**Andie, vendor #7, has been for several years a popular & successful ambassador for CST. Readers may find articles by and about Andie in back issues, available online at [http://www.cupshealthcentre.com/streettalk\\_arch.htm](http://www.cupshealthcentre.com/streettalk_arch.htm). She participated in the public consultations of the Calgary Committee to End Homelessness, which culminated in the release of the 10-year Plan in Jan. 2008. We congratulate Andie, as in April she celebrated 21 years of sobriety.**

Since the Calgary Committee to End Homelessness began hosting its public consultations, "Andie" has been a regular attendee. She is formerly homeless and has recovered from a long struggle with alcohol abuse. Born into the Siksika Nation, Andie spent 13 years in and out of temporary housing, on and off the streets, frequenting the bar scene and drinking heavily. Her lifestyle exposed her to a great deal of abuse by men she met in bars and on the street. "I was beaten, scratched, held at knife point, pulled, dragged, slapped, punched, kicked and held down against my will," Andie recalls.

From 1983 to 1987, Andie rented an apartment on the edge of Victoria Park. Although she was housed, she considers herself a street person at that time, as she still lived a high-risk lifestyle and spent much of her time in bars. "Those were the worst years of my drinking. It was like living in a black vial." It was on April 27th, 1987, that Andie decided something had to change. "I got so sick of the beatings, of the exploitation; of the feelings...there was so much I had to deal with. I had so much anger, hate and hurt.

Finally, one day I realized I was going to die. My health and well-being was declining. I was having more blackouts and alcohol sickness. I was in and out of hospitals 4 to 5 times per week. Nobody could help me, not even the social workers at the Holy Cross or General Hospitals."

In and out of a number of different treatment centres, Andie eventually found help through one-on-one and group therapy sessions. She has been sober ever since. "It has taken years just to recover. I was very mistrusting, afraid of people. As I continued to recover and grow, I've learned to forgive."

Andie now lives in the downtown core and sells *Calgary Street Talk*. Through her participation in the public consultations on homelessness, Andie has been able to offer her perspective of living on the streets and share her opinions on what it will take for the 10 Year Plan to be successful. "The native component needs to be included. It needs to cover housing specifically for First Nations," she says. "We have different needs, our relationships are different. I'd also like to see secondary suites legalized, make sure they are safe and up to code. I'd hate to move into a place that isn't safe."

The concept of Housing First resonates strongly for Andie. "My dream is to open an apartment building to house chronic, hard to serve natives. I'd offer them wet and dry areas, find them help for issues like FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) and mental illness, and restore these people to life. But first, get my people off the street. They are sometimes found on the street in deplorable, horrendous, conditions." ■

- excerpted & adapted from the *Calgary Committee to End Homelessness newsletter, Volume 1, Issue 2, September 2007, p. 9*



**William Tell and son prepare for the legendary event.**



**Godzilla versus the bureaucracy**

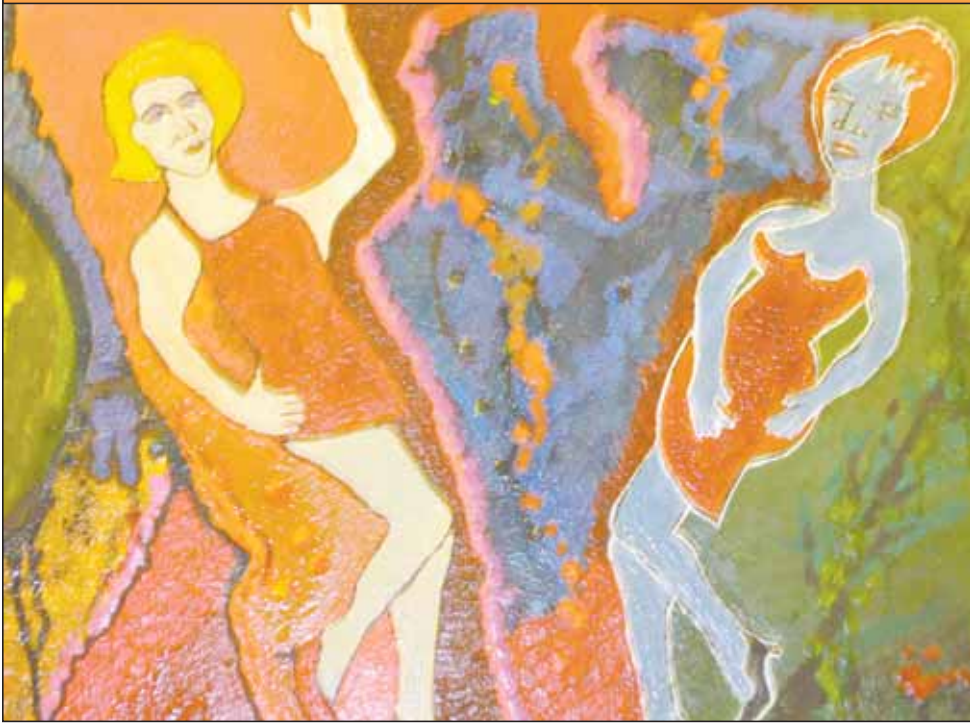
The comic feature Rubes is sponsored by **STONEBRIDGE MERCHANT CAPITAL CORP.**

**RUBES®**

**By Leigh Rubin**



**Dancers - by Gordo**



**Magic Bracelet - by Phil van Bruchem**

Photo by Heath Simpson



**Morning Sun - by Andrew Stimson**

Photo by Kevin Brown