

CALGARY Street TALK

SEPTEMBER 2006 VOL. 10 NO. 9 SPARE CHANGE NEWSPAPER

SOLD BY
DONATION

Thank You
Your vendor
pays 60 cents
per copy.

Vendor's smile pays off



Calgary Street Talk photo
by PAUL DROHAN

Calgary Street Talk vendor Bob Bland earns praise from customer.

By PAUL DROHAN
Editor, Calgary Street Talk

Day in and day out Bob Bland is smiling on the outside even though he might be hurting on the inside. Bland has been selling Calgary Street Talk for almost seven years at Bow Valley Square at 6th Ave SW and 2nd ST.

"It is part of the sales thing . . . if

you smile and look friendly, you are probably going to do better than if you scowl," Bland said.

He was responding to praise from Jake, who stopped to chat with Bob one day in early August. Jake recently left a voicemail praising Bob. "It was actually the highlight of my day to have a chat with him," Jake said in his message.

He was impressed with Bob's "great pride and enthusiasm" for the paper.

"He had quite a sparkle to him and not withstanding how approachable he appeared, the world seemed to be rushing around past him and nobody was paying much attention," Jake said.

Jake said he learned that the

paper is Bob's sole source of income. "The fact that he can afford to pay his own rent and cover some things that most of us would think are relatively simple and straight forward . . . clearly are a challenge for some people and Street Talk seems to be doing a great job of helping them . . . I just wanted to

■ see VENDOR APPRECIATES on page 2

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

Top sales for August was #21 **Jim M.** Congratulations! In second place was vendor #02 **Bob B.** and #07 **Andie W.L.** was in third place.

Vendor Incentive Program

Vendor #02 **Bob B.** is the recipient of the Vendor Incentive Program for August and will receive a \$25 food gift certificate.

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

This program is made possible through the generosity of an anonymous donation from a Calgary family.

Vendor appreciates customer's praise



Calgary Street Talk photo by PAUL DROHAN
Bob Bland sells Calgary Street Talk at Bow Valley Square.

■ continued from page 1
pass that on.”

Bob really appreciated the fact that Jake stopped to talk and then called Street Talk to praise him.

Some days are better than others but he tries to put on a happy face each day, Bob said.

“I do try out there. There are some days that are hard . . . Some days after two hours when you realize you have only earned about three dollars, it gets a little bit hard to keep your smiling face on and sometimes you are close to losing it but I try not to,” he said with a chuckle.

He works to present a good image. “I try to have clean clothes, be presentable and smile at people . . . I am sure a lot of people don’t realize how close to the edge that I am. With what I make I can pay my own rent buy my own food but that is about it. . . there is nothing left over for after that and each week it is a struggle that I have to do that . . . 52

weeks a year.”

Life is becoming more of a struggle, he said. In the last year his rent has gone from \$370 a month to \$580 with the latest increase.

“The sad thing is that it still seems to be among cheapest rents in Calgary. . . And my sales haven’t gone up to that extent.”

Passersby like Jake encourage him, he said. He doesn’t see a “friendly face” every day but two or three times a week people stop to chat, he said.

He recalled an office worker’s comment a month or so ago. She congratulated him for always having a smile on his face and being so pleasant, he said.

“On the inside, some days I get quite preoccupied with being able to pay my rent. One time last summer I managed to pay my rent and had 11 cents left over . . . sometimes I have to stay out and work to 9 or 10 at night.” ■

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.)

#5: Harley H. 6th Ave. & 1st Street SW

#7: Andie W.L. Kensington

#8: Leonard V.
Safeway, 12th Avenue & 8th Street SW

#9: Dennis Fryklund Kensington

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

#21: Jim M. Bankers Hall

#60: Caroline M. 8th Ave. & 1st Street SW

#68: Rob Champion
Plaza Theatre, Kensington

#130: Vince Montana
Globe and Uptown Theatres

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

#190: Shane F. 7th Ave. & 1st St. SW

#242: Eugene M.
7th Avenue & 4th Street SW

#251: Ed G. 5th Ave. & 4th St. SW

#253: Darrell S.

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

#303: Joan Brooks 7 Ave. & 3 St.

#316: Terry Flamond
7th Avenue & 2nd Street SW

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

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

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

#398: Glen O. 5th Ave. & 3rd Street SW

#406: Ron M. 7th Ave. & 10th Street SW

#431: Bill M. 8th Ave. & 7th Street SW

#442: Steven G. 7th Ave. & 8th St. SW

#466: Phil J. Safeway at Northgate Mall NE

#469: Lenard C.

#476: Michael & Dudley
7th Ave. & 1 St. SW

#480: Lori H. 7 Ave. & 4 St. SW

#506: Shelley C.

CALGARY Street TALK

SEPTEMBER 2006 VOL. 10 NO. 9
A SPARE CHANGE NEWSPAPER

Publisher: **Tim Stock-Bateman**

Editor: **Paul Drohan**

Distribution: **Susan Phillips**

Design & Layout: **Unicorn Graphics, Airdrie**

The following contributed in some way to this issue:
Mike Abhar, Jon Bateman, Amey Carrier, Rob Champion, City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services, Kathy Houston, Ramona Johnston, Ron Murdock, Ruther Ramsden-Wood, Gillian Steward, Stonebridge Capital Corporation, Pete S., Stonebridge Capital Corporation, Thomas Walkom

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@cupshealthcentre.com

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.

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.

Worth Noting...

Some people have it tough. Who and how tough, you ask? First there is the increasing number of homeless people in Calgary who might be able to find a job in the booming economy but not a place of their own. (See Pages 5 and 6). Then there are those who depend on society for an income. It's a tough go for them anywhere in this country but particularly in Alberta which ranked last for welfare payments in a report by the National Council on Welfare. (See Pages 7 and 12.) Some Tories could have a tough time themselves in the race to replace Ralph. (See Page 10). ■

OTHER VOICES :

Downside of \$ billions in philanthropy

Without taking social and political realities into account, the Gates Foundation patronage of even the most powerful medications cannot meet the goal of reducing global inequities, writes Anne-Emanuelle Birn

This summer, Warren Buffett has received near-universal praise for his \$31 billion donation to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The foundation has likewise enjoyed wide acclaim for its global health and educational programs, with Buffett's gift the highest tribute of all.

Americans tend to be self-congratulatory philanthropists. After all, "scientific" philanthropy was invented by a pair of American magnates a century ago — Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller Sr. — who also focused on education and health.

In spite of the country's stingy foreign aid policy — at 0.22 per cent of its gross national income, U.S. overseas development assistance trails that of almost every other industrialized nation, according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development — Americans like to think of themselves as the most generous of peoples. The largesse of the world's top two billionaires helps Americans feel proud of the country's record, if not through official foreign aid, at least through private donations.

So what could possibly be wrong with Gates-Buffett philanthropy, aimed at improving global well-being? Five issues should give pause to the all-around backslapping:
Decision-making by a select few.

Unlike governments, which are subject to public scrutiny, philanthropies are accountable only to their self-selected boards. In the case of the Gates Foundation, decision-making is in the hands of a few executives and, ultimately, subject to approval only by the Gates family troika: Bill and Melinda Gates and Bill Gates Sr., the foundation's co-chairs.
Tax-free spending.

Some would argue that Buffett and Gates ought to be free to disburse their fortunes as they wish. But we must remember that every philanthropic dollar is untaxed and thus subsidized by taxpayers without the quid pro quo of public accountability.
Philanthropy cannot replace government responsibility for global well-being.

Although the Buffett donation will likely double annual Gates foundation spending to \$3 billion U.S., with some 60 per cent going to global health, this amount does not substitute for what should be the U.S.'s peacetime foreign assistance responsibility. In 1969, Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson called for developed countries to commit 0.7

per cent of GDP to official development assistance, a target the U.S. has never been near reaching, with or without philanthropic participation.

Agenda-setting from above.

The Gates foundation typically operates through challenge grants, whereby it partially finances projects — for example, drugs and vaccines to control diarrhea — and other philanthropies, international organizations, developing country governments, and bilateral agencies follow the lead. Not only does this give tremendous agenda-setting power to the Gates foundation, it means locally defined needs — clean water and sanitation to control diarrhea — are given short shrift. The doubled size of the Gates foundation will give it an even greater role in determining global health priorities.

Narrowly conceived technical solutions.

Gates made his fortune in the technology arena, and the Gates foundation similarly favours technical approaches. What's the problem?

The Gates foundation aims to "help reduce inequities" in the U.S. and globally but ignores the fundamental inequities that exist within and between countries: inequities of power and wealth. Ultimately, vaccine development or connecting schools to the Internet in the absence of better living and working conditions or democratic decision-making remain technological quick fixes, yielding no permanent or broadly shared improvements in human well-being.

Without taking social and political realities into account, Gates foundation patronage of even the most powerful medications cannot meet the goal of reducing inequities.

A philanthropic opportunity: integrating technical and social approaches.

The Buffett donation presents an ideal opportunity for the Gates foundation to multiply the effectiveness of its grants and democratize global health agenda-setting.

Historical experience shows that sustained global health progress has taken place in settings where technological tools have been integrated with redistribution of political power. In settings as diverse as early 20th century North America and 1950s-1970s Sri Lanka and Costa Rica — where maternal and child health-care measures were coupled with fair wage movements, universal education, equal rights for marginalized groups, progressive taxation, nutritional and housing protection, public health, democratic political movements, and extensive social safety nets — life expectancy went from 40 years to more than 65 years in the span of a few decades.

Medical care was but one element in this
■ see *DOWNSIDE...* on page 15

A World Cup tournament organized for homeless soccer players played annually around the world is about the last thing on earth that I expected to see on the television news as I sat eating my dinner. I mean, you'd think someone that was homeless would have a whole lot more to worry about than kicking a ball around a soccer pitch. The very fact that they don't have a home to reside in is challenging enough, let alone dealing with the other complicated issues that typically surround homelessness. I was skeptical at first but as I looked into it further my skepticism faded and an appreciation for a truly creative idea took its place.

Home or no home, over 500 players representing 48 countries will converge on Cape Town, South Africa from September 23 to September 30, 2006 to compete for the fourth annual title of top homeless soccer team in the world. If that isn't the most unique distinction in all of sport, it certainly ranks right up there in the top ten. Read more about the tournament, the players and the teams competing on the web at www.streetsoccer.org

To be eligible to play in the tournament an individual must be at least 16 years old and can be either male or female. They also must currently be in drug or alcohol rehabilitation or else must have experienced homelessness at some point in the last year. Athletes also qualify if they earn their main income working as vendors for street newspapers. (Anyone care to see the Calgary StreetTalk Strikers at next year's event?)

It wasn't until I thought about what sport has meant to me in my own life that I started to catch on to the worthiness and creativity of this idea. I remember what it was like for me to discover the sport of sledge hockey at 21 years old. For so many years, I had always believed that playing hockey on real ice was never going to be something I'd experience. But, when I got the opportunity there was nothing that could have made me happier and looking back I can see what playing the game for the last eight years has done for me both physically and emotionally. It truly has helped shape me into a more physically active, healthier and more aware person.

When I'm playing sledge hockey, my physical disability, my work stress and any other assorted adversities in life take a back seat. I go out on the ice for two to three hours of nothing but pure bliss. In fact, it's one of the happiest things I can think of that I get to do on a weekly basis for about eight months of the year. Through it, I have developed leadership skills, event planning skills and team building skills that I probably wouldn't have been able to develop otherwise. I've made friendships that will last my entire lifetime and I've been able to make a mark on the club and the people that are involved in the sport within the province.

So, when you think about it in those terms. A worldwide soccer tournament for people who are homeless could really meaningful impact on the life of someone who has reached rock



From Where I Stand

By JON BATEMAN
For Calgary Street Talk

bottom and is looking for a way to rebuild. Sport is a tremendous way to build confidence while fostering a sense of achievement and purpose into a person's character when they truly are committed to excelling at the sport they love.

The results, although not earth shattering, are in the statistics. According to their website, of the athletes that participated in last year's 2005 Homeless World Cup:

- 77% of players involved in the 2005 Homeless World Cup have changed their lives forever in some way or another from what they were previously doing.
- 38% of players have regular employment
- 40% of players have improved their housing situation
- 12 players from the 2005 Homeless World Cup now actually make a living partly from playing soccer

Perhaps the best endorsement's come from the player's themselves. Here is how one player describes how finding football (soccer) and participating in the tournament helped his personal life:

"Football gives me strength and if it wasn't for that I don't know what I would have done. It gives you something to look forward to, to strive for. Hostels are draining; you are in with people you don't know and who have all sorts of problems - it's a terrible life. The Homeless World Cup highlights the fact that we aren't all alcoholics who want to be homeless. A lot of homeless people want a chance to get on with life and if it takes football to get that into the average person's brain you have to support it 100 per cent." - Lee Jones, Assistant Manager, Welsh Dragons.

Having a passion for something is often the biggest motivator to greater success. For some, soccer is a way to turn their life around. For others, it's a strong healthy relationship that helps them find the answers they need, and for some people it's simply finding a career or even a hobby where they can focus their energies and do something positive. I've been fortunate in that two of my passions have helped me to be successful both personally and professionally. Sledge hockey helps me find my "inner jock" and let's me participate as an athlete in a game I love while my writing both in this column and in other arenas has given me opportunities and experiences beyond my expectation.

It's in that spirit, that I would like to ask readers for their feedback about my column. I'd love to be enlightened by different perspectives and hear your comments or ideas for future articles or even just your general impressions. All comments are welcome! I hear from StreetTalk readers as I go about my life and I'm always thankful for their positive messages. Every bit of knowledge I can get from readers like you will hopefully help me to make this column even better in the issues ahead. Please take a minute or two and email your comments to fromwhereistand@shaw.ca Thank you to everyone who supports Calgary Street Talk. ■

3,436 are HOMELESS

Where are you sleeping tonight?

By RUTH RAMSDEN-WOOD
(For Calgary Street Talk)

The City of Calgary's 2006 Count of Homeless Persons tells us that 3,436 people are homeless in Calgary, a 32 per cent increase from the last count just two years ago.

As we, from the comfort of our homes, read the latest statistics, let's think about why this is happening; what this says about our city; and most importantly, what we can do about it.

Calgarians are proud of our values. We are hard working, caring people who donate record amounts of money to charity and are famous for our big smiles and huge hearts. Our hospitality is illustrated by the generous spirit of volunteerism that trumps every other urban centre in Canada.

No one could foresee the speed at which Calgary and Alberta's economy would heat up and the resulting influx of workers. That's a result of global forces.

Calgary needs people to work not only in the oil patch, but in childcare, retail, hospitality and transportation, traditionally low paying jobs. But when they get here, with families and even jobs, they find there is literally no place at the inn. About 50 per cent of homeless Calgarians are working. They don't earn enough money to pay rent and they have even less chance of being able to afford a home in Calgary's over-heated housing market.

The pressure on Inn From the Cold, one of Calgary's emergency shelters for families, tells the story behind the city's homeless statistics. Last year the agency, which houses and feeds families in church basements, served from seven to 10 families on any given night. As you read this, 17 families are depending on Inn From the Cold for emergency shelter. Tonight, tomorrow night; and for weeks and months of nights after that. Think about it. Kids, babies, living in church basements, for months at a time. **We can do better.**

Families are waiting up to six months to find housing they can afford to move into. The availability of market rental homes and suites is hovering just above one per cent. No one is building new low-cost rental units. None are even planned. Meanwhile rents are increasing with demand and the escalating cost of land. **Whose problem is homelessness?**

People leaving downtown to drive to



Calgary Street Talk Photo by PAUL DROHAN

Ruth Ramsden-Wood speaks to media about homelessness.

the suburbs may feel they've left the urban issue of homelessness behind them as they pass Heritage Drive. But we can't leave this behind. It's part of who we are. The problem belongs to all of us.

And lest those with homes become overly complacent, already homeless people, some with children, are too frightened to live on the streets of downtown, so they are finding refuge in the parks, parking lots and streets of the suburbs. Hard hats in hand, they shave using their rear view mirror before they head off to construction jobs to build houses they can't afford to live in.

What can we do?

Because of your support, in 2005 United Way provided \$3.6 million to help our partner agencies that work in affordable housing and homelessness prevention.

Of that, we examined investments of \$2.2 million to determine the impact we

made on the lives of people who were at risk of eviction or homeless. We saved 1,984 individuals and families from being evicted; provided support to 781 low-income individuals and families so they could move into affordable long-term housing. Of these, 160 were able to rent homes spending a maximum of 30 per cent of their income; 11 families were able to buy their own homes. That \$2.2 million investment saved the system \$16 million.

That's a start. But we can do more. We need to do more. Calgarians pride themselves on taking action. It's time for us to turn this around.

Yesterday, United Way announced that it is investing \$1 million in addition to existing \$3.6 million committed for 2006 to support social agencies who work to prevent and end homelessness. But we don't build low-cost housing. Who will? We need builders to build low-cost hous-

ing. We need funders to pay for low-cost housing. But it's going to take more than just money.

We can give incentives to builders – like a break on the GST – to build low-cost housing. We – all three levels of government, business, social agencies and the community – can create a collective action plan to end homelessness.

There are many plans and good intentions. But our plans weren't designed for this unexpected growth and development. United Way is calling for a summit with all stakeholders to collectively create one workable, coordinated long-term plan to build more low-cost housing in Calgary and put an end to homelessness.

Calgary is a world leader in wealth creation. Let's be a world leader in ending homelessness. ■

(Ruth Ramsden-Wood is President and CEO United Way Calgary and Area.)

HOMELESS count 'scary'



Alderman Bob Hawkesworth announces the homeless count at city hall press conference.

Calgary's homeless population is mushrooming at a "scary rate" according to a count done on May 10 which showed 3,436 people homeless that night.

"They're very scary numbers," said Diana Segboer, executive director of Inn from the Cold, which helps find temporary shelter for homeless families. "It's a good indication that we're fast approaching a situation where we're going to be in a crisis," said Segboer.

The count is a 32 per cent increase compared to the last one done two years ago. Homeless counts are done every two years and started in 1992. The number of homeless has increased each time the counts are done.

The following is taken from a summary of the city's census of the absolutely homeless:

- The count included homeless persons who stay in emergency and transitional facilities, homeless persons who are served by non-shelter service agencies such as hospital emergency departments, police, transit, and emergency social services, and homeless persons who are living "on the streets" on the night of the count.
- On the night of the count 82 percent (2,823) of homeless persons enumerated were staying in facilities, 5 percent (184) were counted by service agencies, and 12 percent (429) were staying on the streets. Of those in facilities, 49 percent were staying in emergency beds and 51 percent were staying in transitional beds.
- More male than female homeless persons were counted. Males accounted for over three-quarters of those counted (78 percent).
- Most of those enumerated were aged 25 to 44 with 46 percent of all homeless persons counted observed to be in this age group.
- Most homeless persons enumerated were Caucasian – about two thirds of those counted. However, Aboriginal persons were disproportionately represented among the homeless population compared to Calgary's population overall. Of the 3,436 homeless persons enumerated, 68 percent were Caucasian, 17 percent were Aboriginal, and 9 percent were members of a visible minority group (the remaining 6 percent could not be assessed by population group).
- A total of 145 homeless families were enumerated on the night of the count (families are defined as a couple, a couple with one or more children, or a lone adult with one or more children), with 83 percent of these staying in facilities, 1 percent counted by service agencies, and 16 percent counted on the streets.
- Over two-thirds of the 51 facilities surveyed indicated that they were operating at or over capacity on the night of the count. ■

(This report is based on a press release from the City of Calgary and news coverage.)

Governments 'meaner': report

(The following is a news release from the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WELFARE)

The National Council of Welfare's report paints a dismal picture, and one that is getting worse. When adjusted for inflation, many 2005 welfare incomes were lower than they were in 1986, according to the report, Welfare Incomes 2005.

Most welfare incomes peaked in 1994 or earlier. Some of the losses between the peak year and 2005 are staggering, with one-third of households losing \$3,000 or more.

Five provinces—Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia—recorded the lowest levels of welfare incomes between 2000 and 2005.

In Alberta, the income in real dollars of a single person on welfare has decreased by almost 50 percent since 1986. Since 1992 in Ontario, the welfare income of a lone parent with one child has

decreased by almost \$6,600 and a couple with two children has lost just over \$8,700.

In 2005, the income of a single employable person on welfare in New Brunswick amounted to \$3,427 just 19 percent of the poverty line. Lone parent families in Alberta, Canada's richest province, received just \$12,326—only 48 percent of the poverty line. All welfare incomes continued to remain far below the poverty line in 2005. With few exceptions, the day-to-day lives of over 1.7 million Canadians receiving welfare—5 percent of the population—only became more difficult. Half a million of those on social assistance are children.

In July 2006, the National Council of Welfare recommended that the federal government work to develop a national, comprehensive anti-poverty strategy. The findings in Welfare Incomes 2005 argue compellingly that Canada needs to embark on this process immediately, said Council Chairperson John Murphy. He calls the present situation "shameful and morally unsustainable in a rich country" but also notes, "The generally favourable economic climate at the federal level, and in most provinces, presents a real opportunity for governments to take concerted action to end this kind of deprivation."

In the fall of 2006, the National Council of Welfare intends to seek the views of Canadians on what a national, comprehensive anti-poverty strategy could look like, Murphy said. "The council believes the re-examination of the place and purpose of welfare in our current income security system would be an essential element."

The council wants the federal government to revamp its national poverty strategy to do more than its recent one per cent cut in the GST and its \$1,200 yearly child-care payments.

Murphy called those Conservative measures a "band-aid approach" to poverty.

"Governments have become meaner," Murphy said. "The people of Canada have put the recipients of welfare behind closed doors."

The council said about 4.9 million Canadians lived in poverty in 2003, the last year for which national numbers are available.

And it's not just the disabled and unemployed who are struggling in the midst of an economic boom, Murphy said. Many people continue to languish in low-income brackets, adding to the ranks of the working poor.

The problem is particularly tough in oil-rich Alberta, where a booming economy is pushing apartment rental costs and housing prices out of the reach of many Albertans, he said.

"We've got to get the minimum wage up because lots of people are still below the poverty line," Murphy said.

After the report was released Mike Cardinal, Alberta's minister responsible for the welfare system, said he won't rule out more help for those who need it most.

"For those people that cannot work, I agree we should be doing possibly more and I will look at that as a minister," he said in Edmonton.

But for those who are able to land work, he said, Alberta's booming job market is taking all comers.

New Democrat child and youth critic Olivia Chow called the report's findings a "national disgrace."

The Toronto MP said the Conservative government needs to introduce measures to help families lift themselves from below the poverty line.

"Cuts to child-care programs, as well as cuts to employment insurance retraining initiatives, made it harder for families to break the cycle of poverty," Chow said in a release.

Lisa Murray, spokeswoman for federal Human Resources Minister Diane Finley, said alleviating poverty requires more than just child-care spaces.

She said the government's moves to cut 655,000 low-income Canadians from income-tax rolls and create 25,000 day-care spaces are among new programs being implemented to tackle poverty.

The council said nearly 1.7 million people needed welfare last year, which included 500,000 children.

Although nearly 2.1 million people needed welfare in 2000, Murphy said it's unlikely Canada's strong economy lifted hundreds of thousands out of low-income brackets.

Instead, he fears more people are living on the streets rather than filling out increasingly rigorous welfare applications.

"People have obviously found other ways to live," Murphy said. "I can't tell you what those ways are but our streets are full of panhandlers in the big cities."

The National Council of Welfare is a citizens' advisory group to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development on matters of concern to low-income people in Canada.

Copies of the report and highlights are available from www.ncwcnbes.net ■

Highlights

All welfare incomes were **BELOW TWO-THIRDS OF THE POVERTY LINE** except for one. These highlights were taken from a table showing the adequacy of 2005 welfare incomes. The National Council of Welfare used the Statistics Canada's before-tax low-income cutoff as the poverty line.

The income of a single employable person **DID NOT REACH HALF THE POVERTY LINE** in any province.

Welfare incomes as a percentage of the poverty line were the **LOWEST** for:

- **A SINGLE EMPLOYABLE IN NEW BRUNSWICK, at 19%;**
- ***A SINGLE PERSON WITH A DISABILITY IN ALBERTA at 38%, followed by MANITOBA at 41%;**
- **A LONE PARENT WITH ONE CHILD IN ALBERTA, at 48%;**
- **A COUPLE WITH TWO CHILDREN IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, at 48%.**

*Most single persons with a disability in Alberta receive assistance through the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped program, which provides higher benefits than welfare.

In 2005, NEARLY HALF A MILLION of the 1.7 million people on welfare were CHILDREN

Their wo

Eighteen children graduated from the CUPS One World Child Development Centre and three grateful parents offered to help both their children and the centre. The children, who were in separate school systems this fall, will be able to continue their education.

For the second year in a row and for the first time, children will be able to continue their education. The Calgary Foundation is managing the program, which is invested and eventually fund post-secondary education.

The parents include Tracy Oliver and Jason O'Hara.

Tracy Oliver said:

"When we first moved to Calgary, I was pregnant with my third child. I was in a shelter and the help of a One World family support worker was a blessing of Humanity."

"I work as a school bus driver but I am hoping to and hopefully get a job in the oil and gas industry."

"I want to thank One World and the staff for their help."

"I want to thank One World and the staff for their help."

"I want to thank One World and the staff for their help."

"I want to thank One World and the staff for their help."

"I want to thank One World and the staff for their help."

Jason O'Hara said:

"They have a wide variety of programs and activities as well. It was actually my wife who gets things done but as things get more involved and seen all over the world."

"If they think your child have learning disabilities they address those problems head on. One help... they basically just support the child."

"If they think your child have learning disabilities they address those problems head on. One help... they basically just support the child."

Kassie Leonard said:

"One World is heaven sent. It helps during hard times. You realize that you are missing the school. In the future, I would like to come back here. My daughter, who is in school. She loves the students. She loves the staff."

"They have so many support workers who do without them."

"My daughter gets a lot of one-on-one time with her teacher. She has a child psychologist who also helps her. She has friends, who she looks forward to seeing every day."

"We live off in Ogden so she doesn't see everybody all the time. She looks forward to each and every day just because of all the different things they do here. They have field trips. They have wonderful crafts. They explore. They play. They imagine... everything."

"My daughter counts down the days until she can go back to school. 'She wants to go to school Monday so I have to wait for more sleeps.'" She is looking forward to summer holidays so she can spend time with me. Knowing that she is coming back is going to be a transition for her," Leonard concluded.

The CUPS One World Child Development Centre is an early intervention education program.

The CUPS One World Child Development Centre is an early intervention education program.

The CUPS One World Child Development Centre is an early intervention education program.

The CUPS One World Child Development Centre is an early intervention education program.

The CUPS One World Child Development Centre is an early intervention education program.

The CUPS One World Child Development Centre is an early intervention education program.

The CUPS One World Child Development Centre is an early intervention education program.

The CUPS One World Child Development Centre is an early intervention education program.

The CUPS One World Child Development Centre is an early intervention education program.

The CUPS One World Child Development Centre is an early intervention education program.



Dat converts his graduation certificate to a telescope.



Tracy Oliver praised One World program and its staff.



Jason O'Hara and his son Lorenzo.

■ see BETTER...

World looks better

from the One World Child Development Centre last June
 their views of this CUPS program and how it has
 their entire family. The children are entering the public
 school.

An anonymous donor has ensured that each of these chil-
 dren receive education after they graduate from high school. The
 donor's second gift of \$100,000 which will be
 used for secondary scholarships for eligible children.
 Donors, Jason O'Hara and Kassie Leonard.

...ry we lived in a trailer park. I was unemployed and
 ...ble to get a Calgary Housing project home with the
 ...rt worker. Now I have a home through Habitat for

...ut I am going to go on to post secondary education
 ...and gas industry or be a registered nurse.

...CUPS and everything they have done for Felicia and

...since she has come to One World due to the help she
 ...s speech and language pathologist, psychologist and
 ...helped Felicia grow a lot. Felicia I hope can be suc-
 ...cessful. I have friends and a support group
 ...just grateful to be part of One World family. I have a
 ...plan to come to One World in September. I am looking for-
 ...ward for him also."

...programs and give a lot of personal one-on-one instruc-
 ...tion. She's idea to bring the kids here. She is more the person
 ...who has progressed over the last few years I have kind
 ...of the benefits of the kids coming here.
 ...learning disabilities or some kind of learning problem
 ...and the programs they offer tutorials or one-on-
 ...one help problems."

...helps single moms on a low income get past a lot of
 ...things. My son, who graduated previ-
 ...ously, he wanted to go back to kindergarten just to
 ...because he has just graduated, loves every day. She loves the
 ...buses. She loves everything about it.
 ...workers out there that I don't know what I am going to

...one-on-one time
 ...psycholo-
 ...gists of
 ...seeing

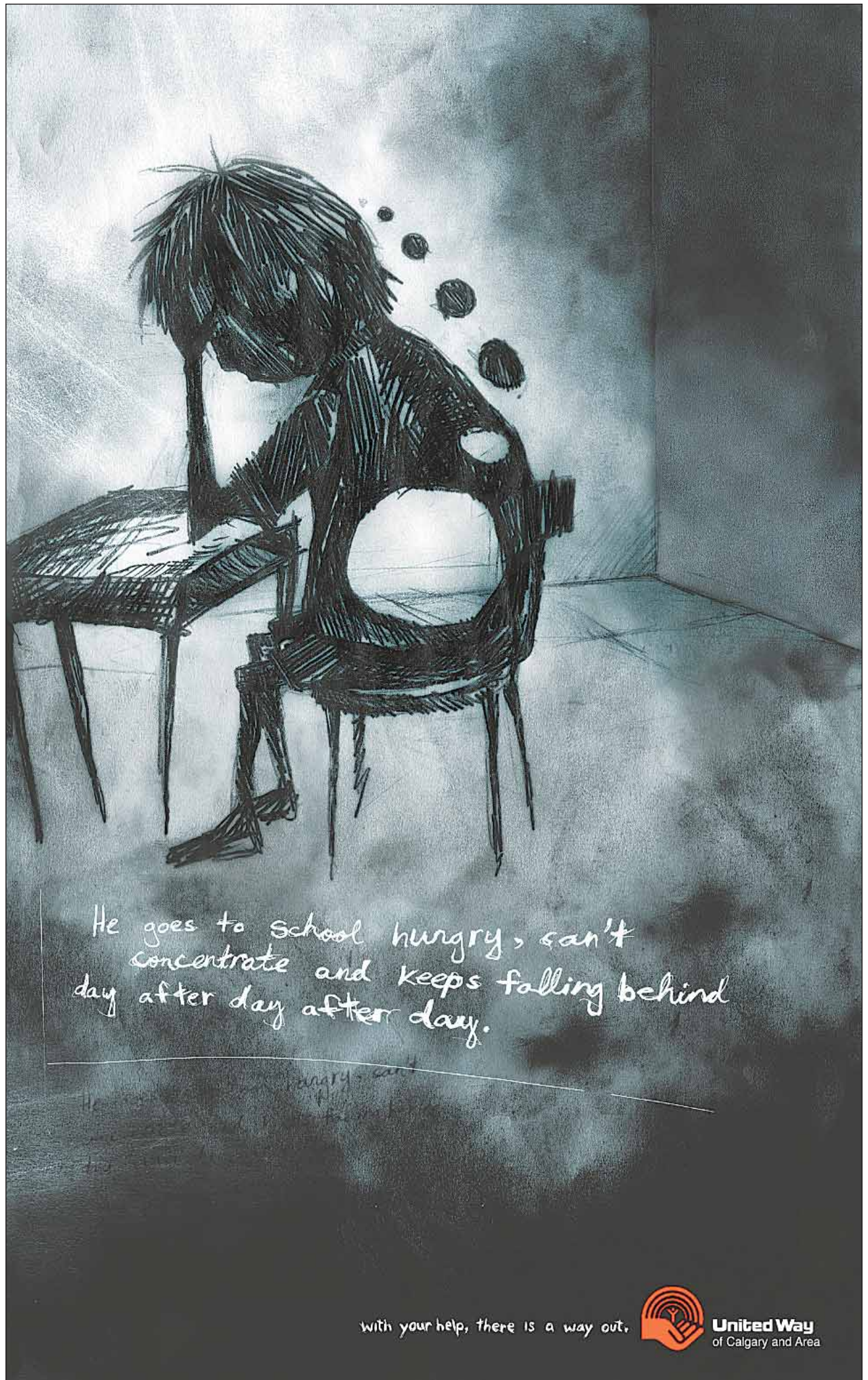
...asn't get to
 ...books for-
 ...because of
 ...re. They go
 ...do won-
 ...pretend.

...days until
 ...ill say,
 ...to go back
 ...it two
 ...ard to the
 ...d more
 ...won't be
 ...tition for

...velopment
 ...ucation



...on page 15 Kassie Leonard and Clorissa.



Racing against Ralph's record

By GILLIAN STEWARD

Now that there are eight candidates in the race to replace Ralph Klein as Tory leader one wonders how long it will be before the knives come out. So far the contest has been quite cordial. But at some point the eager eight are going to have to distinguish themselves from each other. And since they were all, at one time or another, part of the Klein government, they are also going to have to figure out how to publicly disassociate themselves from some of Ralph's more disastrous legacies; health care privatization, utility deregulation, the oil sands non-royalties, and the democratic deficit come immediately to mind.

And then there is Ralph himself, the great leader who seemed to be able to say and do whatever he wanted with nary a word of criticism from his docile cabinet or MLAs. Did any of them stand up for the people he insulted at the homeless shelter in Edmonton a few years ago? Or for the AISH recipients Klein insulted during the last election campaign? Or for the young Legislature page who was the target of Klein's wrath earlier this year? No. Loyalty to Klein or fear of being booted from the inner circle superseded any ethical concerns. Courage was in short supply.

There is a lot of talk among these can-

didates about a new vision of Alberta.

The alleged front runner – Jim Dinning – calls it “the Alberta we are ready for.” Vagueness is a virtue when you are trying to attract as many people as possible into your tent. Former minister of advanced education, Dave Hancock, has adopted the slogan “Alberta unleashed.” Does that mean he sees the province as some sort of dog? Would that be a pit bull or a cocker spaniel? Or did he just feel like a lap dog himself while he was in cabinet?

But what about the old vision, the one that Ralph Klein imposed on us? Alberta as a rich province, full of mean spirited people who don't give a damn about anyone but themselves. Alberta as a province full of bullies who kick people when they are down. Alberta as a province where big business calls the shots, wrecks the environment and sells off our resources as quickly as possible.

All of the candidates for the Tory leadership, and our next Premier if only for a few months, participated in the creation of that vision either actively or through negligence. Although he had some doubts at first, Jim Dinning drew up those early budgets which saw health care, education and social services cut by as much as 30 per cent when he knew the province's population was growing.

Dinning was also one of the architects of the hastily prepared utility deregulation.

Before he was named Minister of Advanced Education, Dave Hancock was Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and prior to that he was Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs. He's been sitting beside Ralph Klein for a long time and yet we are now supposed to believe that it's a new day, a time for Alberta to be “unleashed.” Where was he in the old days? And where was Lyle Oberg? He was also sitting within earshot of Ralph Klein, helping him along with the vision thing. As was Mark Norris who for a brief time was Minister of Economic Development. Ditto for the most recent entrant, Victor Doerksen, Minister of Innovation and Science until just last week.

At least MLA Ted Morton, one of the ultra-right candidates, makes it clear he intends to follow along in Ralph's footsteps. He wants even more privatization of health care and education, lower corporate taxes and a ban on same-sex marriage. Sounds like Alberta will be a great place to live if Ted gets his way. MLA Ed Stelmach seems to have garnered a loyal following in the north of province for his down-to-earth style. Calgary MLA Alana DeLong is the mystery candidate and like most Calgary Tory MLAs rarely seen or heard.

To this point all the candidates have been well-mannered and polite. But now that Ralph has announced his departure date it likely won't be long before the knives come out. The candidates will start slicing away at each other, revealing secrets about each other. And, no doubt, some of them will see a need to knock Ralph off his pedestal. This would be politically expedient since it's clear that Ralph has been more of a burden to the party in the last few years than a boon.

Who would have anticipated even a few months ago, for example, that there would have been such a public uproar when some MLAs suggested naming the new Alberta Children's Hospital after Ralph and Colleen Klein? But letters from the outraged poured into The Herald.

The Klein legacy is seen by many people as a dubious one. And yet if they are going to outrun it, the candidates will have to come clean about Ralph's record. After all, anyone who buys a party membership can vote. This means disaffected Tories, part-time Tories and non-Tories. The tide of public opinion has already turned against Ralph. It's only a matter of time before the leadership candidates begin to pile in on him too. Should be quite a sight. ■

(Gillian Steward is publisher of Alberta Views Magazine)



Homeless Awareness Calgary

PRE HOMELESS AWARENESS WEEK EVENTS:

Monday September 11th, 2006 • Community Presentation

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm • Carpenters Hall • 301 - 10 Street N.W.

In Partnership with Liberal MLA David Swann, Homeless Awareness Calgary Committee is hosting a free interactive education presentation at Carpenter's Hall. Come out and test your knowledge with our Poverty Quiz, view our video, and learn what you can do to help create change in our great city!

Tuesday September 12th, 2006

• Calgary Housing Action Initiative (CHAI) Meeting

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm • Knox United Church • 506 - 4 Street S.W.

CHAI brings together individuals affected by the housing crisis, other allies in the community, organizations, support agencies, political groups, politicians, and anyone else who can help in trying to make positive change to bring an end to this crisis and ensure adequate housing for all in this city. Interested in helping create change? Check out CHAI's website for more information: <http://housingaction.ca>

Wednesday September 13th, 2006

• The Calgary “Youth, Health and the Street” Study Community Roundtables

9:00 am – 2:00 pm • The Kahanoff Centre • Suite 200, 1202 Centre Street S.E.

Results from 355 surveys and 40 interviews with street-involved youth are now available. Please join us at a community roundtable to help interpret results and begin the planning process to develop and enhance existing services. Lunch Provided.

Space is limited!!! -to register or for more information: call 508-2500 or email: streetyouth@aidscalgary.org.

Thursday September 14th, 2006

• Dream Centre Radio-Thon “Extreme Dream Extreme Drive” & Exhibition Hall

Exhibition Hall: 11:00 am - 9:00 pm • 4510 MacLeod Trail S.W.

Radio-Thon (Shine FM 88.9) 6:00 am - 9:00 pm

Tune into Shine FM (88.9) to listen to interviews and testimonies from residents at the Calgary Dream Centre as they present their annual Radio-Thon. Drop-by their Exhibition Hall and learn more about issues surrounding homelessness, enjoy a barbecue for the volunteers and attendees, the Alex Bus, a climbing wall and skateboard park.

• Community Presentation

7:30 pm – 9:00 pm • Alberta NDP Southern Office • 321,3132 26 Street N.E.

In Partnership with the Alberta NDP, Homeless Awareness Calgary Committee is hosting a free interactive

education presentation. Come out and test your knowledge with our Poverty Quiz, view our video, and learn what you can do to help create change in our great city!

Thursday September 14th & Friday September 15th, 2006

• Kerby Centre 10th Annual Fall Expo and Open House

9:00 am – 4:00 pm • Kerby Centre • 1133 – 7th Avenue S.W.

A diversity of seniors' services are on display every year at this entertaining and information-packed event. The variety of businesses and agencies covers the complete range of services for seniors including government benefits, funeral planning, health and leisure activities, housing options, financial services and much, much more.

Friday, September 15th, 2006 • “Just Desserts”

7:00 pm • Indo Canadian Hall • 826 Edmonton Trail N.E.

Susan Scott author of the forthcoming book on Women and Poverty titled “All Our Sisters” will discuss her new book on the impact of Poverty on women (also author of No Fixed Address).

For tickets please contact Susan at sscott@albertandp.ca.

This is a fundraiser for the Olga Blondheim Fund that helps low income female political candidates.

HOMELESS AWARENESS WEEK EVENTS:

Sunday September 17th, 2006

• Homeless Awareness Calgary Community Launch & Family Fun in the Park Day

11:30 am – 3:00 pm • Riley Park • 800 12 St N.W.

Join fellow Calgarians in a free BBQ, to learn more about homelessness in our city, enjoy speakers, games for the kids and a resource fair. For more information, please contact Bonnie at 205-6628

Wednesday September 20th, 2006 • Finding Our Way Home

11:30 am – 1:30 pm • Olympic Plaz • 228 8th Ave S.E.

Come and join the Aboriginal community in celebrating our commitment to bring our families home.

Enjoy contemporary and traditional entertainment along with a BBQ open to all.

Friday September 22nd, 2006 • Street Survivor

7:00 am – 10:00 pm • Location to be announced

Ever wondered about the challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness on a day-to-day basis? Come out and experience it for yourself and then let someone that has or is experiencing homelessness give you a night tour of downtown Calgary. You must register before hand for this event. For more information, please contact Bonnie at 205-6628. ■



Vibrant COMMUNITIES Calgary

BY RAMONA JOHNSTON

Conservative leadership hopefuls comment on affordable housing and homelessness

This fall, the most anticipated election race in 14 years will begin in Alberta. Ralph Klein is stepping down and a handful of contenders will campaign for the Conservative leadership position.

With this in mind, Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC) offered all Conservative leadership candidates the opportunity to comment on three poverty-related issues, including possible policy solutions to help address these issues. Results will be published in the September, October and November editions of Calgary Street Talk, with each month highlighting a different question.

In coordination with Homeless Awareness Week – running September 17 through to September 24 – this month’s question focuses on the growing problem of homelessness and the lack of affordable housing.

Approximately one in four Calgarians spends more than 30 per cent of their income on housing and the recent City of Calgary 2006 Biennial Count of Homeless Persons revealed there are over 3,400 homeless in Calgary, a 32 per cent increase since the last count in 2004.

We asked candidates, if elected, what are their plans to address the need for affordable housing and homelessness in Alberta.

The following is what hopefuls had to say. Dr. Lyle Oberg and Dr. Ted Morton had not responded by the deadline.

Alana DeLong

“There are many who are homeless as a result of mental illness. They need community based treatment and specialized care delivered along with compassion from us all.

“Another large segment of the homeless are addicted to drugs and alcohol. Addiction treatment centers based upon scientifically evaluated methods should be available to all those trapped in addiction.

“Regarding affordable housing, the

most important move that we need to take is to release the new Alberta Secondary Suite Safety Regulations and encourage municipalities to make good use of them.

“Owner occupied homes with safe and legal “Granny Suites” spread throughout our cities will help young families afford their own homes, and will provide the affordable rental housing that was available previously to past generations.

“Any affordable housing paid for by the Alberta Government should be accessible housing for the disabled and for seniors.”

Jim Dinning

“Thirty-four-hundred-plus homeless Calgarians—including 145 homeless families—is a problem that must not be ignored. For those in poverty—or even on the cusp of poverty—the struggle to improve their situation gets more difficult as costs—for almost everything, including housing—rise out of sight.

“One of my volunteer activities is with the Calgary United Way’s Sustained Poverty Reduction Initiative (SPRI). It’s a local initiative that takes community-based action to reduce poverty in Calgary.

“As a Conservative, I believe in supporting folks to achieve greater independence. At the United Way, we’re focused on efforts that will increase the amount of affordable housing; promote community economic development through micro development initiatives; focus on kids who are living in poverty; reduce policy and procedural barriers; and build public awareness and citizen engagement. The government should do the same thing as part of a comprehensive plan.

“Specifically on affordable housing, I’d reach out to the Calgary Homeless Foundation, the United Way and other agencies provincially. I’d work with them to build a plan, one that sees sustained, predictable, multi-year funding

from all three levels of government and engages the home builders in Alberta in building and operating affordable homes.”

Dave Hancock

“Alberta’s robust economy continues to draw people here in record numbers. Our unprecedented population growth has created a growing and vibrant province, but it is also putting a strain on virtually every aspect of our society. Of particular concern is the growing number of homeless people in Alberta. This is an important social issue we must address.

“The problem of homelessness is different from that of the past. What we already had to deal with in terms of persons with mental health or other personal barriers affecting their ability to obtain safe, affordable accommodation now includes the working poor.

“What is the solution? Our government needs to do a number of things. First, we must engage those working in this field to develop effective solutions for both the short and long term. Two areas I would focus on include income support and/or supplementary assistance to help individuals and their families overcome their financial barriers, as well as working with municipalities and developers to increase our province’s housing capacity so there is affordable housing available to meet the demand resulting from population growth.

“Secondly, we need to do more to ensure that assistance programs are not so rules based as to be ineffective. Programs must be flexible so we achieve the outcomes we seek as opposed to being costly to run and hard to access by those who need them most. The key is greater collaboration between the province, local municipalities and community organizations, together with appropriate resources and

outcome measures.”

Mark Norris:

“Under a Norris government, we would ensure proper funding for existing programs specific to low-income housing was budgeted for and paid out.

“Further, I want to increase the amount of money available to developers to create more affordable housing and make sure they adhere to the “market rate less 10%” rule.

“This problem is province wide and severely affects our ability to attract and retain badly needed workers.

“With regards to the homeless situation, I propose a “Premiers Council” be struck to review our current support levels and forward suggestions on how to improve our involvement.”

Ed Stelmach:

“There is a need for helping those in our communities that fall on hard times. There is also a need to provide affordable housing so that more people can find appropriate accommodation, and can afford to make other healthy choices.

“The rapid growth of our economy is fuelling property inflation that is felt everywhere and is causing acute social problems in many Alberta communities.

“The housing market is in a temporary imbalance and an immediate provision of affordable housing will help the supply of housing catch up with demand and reduce speculation in the housing market. It is critical that we find immediate shelter for people living in our communities without a home or a place to sleep.

“Government must also speed up provision of long term care and assisted living accommodation to help those seniors who are ready to move into these facilities. This may help to put more homes on the market.

“Over the long term, we need to work with municipalities, the private sector and not-for-profit organizations to develop a long term plan that meets the future needs of our communities.

It is so important that there are organizations like Vibrant Communities that are community-driven, local organizations that can best help identify and meet local needs.”

In October, VCC will ask candidates about their views on affordable transportation and November’s question will look at low wages and the working poor. ■

(Ramona Johnston is Manager of Vibrant Communities Calgary, a local non-profit poverty-reduction organization. For more information about or to participate in Homeless Awareness Week, please contact Bonnie Malach, Coordinator, Homeless Awareness Calgary, at (403) 205-6628 or blmalach@shaw.ca)

In rich Canada, welfare worsens

By THOMAS WALKOM
National Affairs Columnist
For The Toronto Star

Here in Canada, in one of the richest countries of the world, the very poorest are getting poorer. This is not the result of some external or unforeseen crisis. It is happening in the midst of a long-running economic boom and reflects the deliberate decisions of elected governments — presumably supported by the Canadian public at large — to purge the roughly 1.7 million people consigned to welfare from our collective consciousness.

It is shameful. It is pretty much criminal. And, as the National Council on Welfare, an advisory body to the federal government, warned in a report released August 24, it is remarkably short-sighted. In particular, it is short-sighted for those of us in the broader middle classes who assume — wrongly — that we could never end up on the dole.

It's a cruel world out there now. Successive governments have gutted or eliminated much of Canada's vaunted social safety net. For most workers, employment insurance doesn't exist. Increasingly, employers prefer part-time or contract workers who can be fired at will and who are owed neither benefits nor pensions.

If the economy falters and unemployment spikes — as it is almost sure to do again — there is not much between a comfortable middle-class life and welfare.

So just hope it doesn't happen to you. As the council points out, for the vast majority of those on welfare, things are bad and getting worse.

The figures are depressing and distressing. In Ontario, for example, the incomes of most welfare recipients, after adjustment for inflation, are lower now than they were 20 years ago.

And that's not just because of Mike Harris. True, the former Conservative premier gleefully slashed welfare rates. But his successor, Liberal Dalton McGuinty, has been equally, if more quietly, stingy.

In 1997, well after Harris made his cuts, a single mother with one child in Ontario received \$16,205. Last year, a sin-

terms than they did in 1989.

Even Saskatchewan's New Democrats have been cheese parers when it comes to welfare. In that province, the inflation-adjusted welfare income for a couple with two kids is \$4,125 less than it was in 1986.

On top of this, the federal govern-

reforms don't help the poor much at all.

No surprise here. Still it's worth noting, as the council does, that Harper's income-tax cuts benefit high-income earners most. His GST cut doesn't help the poor, who already had a sales-tax break. His new \$100 a month child-care benefit, the council says, may help more well-to-do parents who already have access to daycare but does little for people on welfare who can neither find nor afford care.

The net result is bleak: In spite of the myriad of government programs, the income of welfare recipients remains far below Statistics Canada's so-called low-income cutoff, a measure usually referred to as the poverty line.

In Ontario, a disabled person on welfare gets \$12,057 — or about 58 per cent of what StatsCan figures the average single person needs to live. Other kinds of welfare recipients get even less.

It is a grim business.

Still, it's not fair to blame just elected leaders like Harper, Harris or McGuinty. True, politicians didn't keep their bold promises to eliminate child poverty.

True too, many politicians either ignore welfare recipients or subtly (not so subtly in the case of Harris) demonize them as undeserving.

But in the end, politicians can't help but respond to the issues voters care about. And that stark political fact says something very unpleasant about us.

"Most Canadians would find it impossible to cope with the substantial income losses that welfare households have experienced," the council writes.

"Coping is even harder for those who are already at the bottom of the income scale, given their already meagre incomes. Yet there appears to be little concern . . .

"Have both governments and the Canadian public turned their backs on the poorest of the poor?" ■

***Recipients get less
than 20 years ago;
public is turning
blind eye to issue***

gle mother's benefit, after adjustment for inflation, was just \$14,451 — or about 11 per cent less.

It's probably worth noting that Newfoundland has a more generous welfare system than Ontario. A single mother with one child in that province gets \$16,181.

But Ontario is not the only piker. In Conservative Alberta, rates for a single person on welfare have dropped by \$4,800 — or roughly 50 per cent in inflation-adjusted terms — over the past 20 years. In British Columbia, now run by a nominally Liberal government, welfare recipients with disabilities get less in real

ment's much-heralded child benefit supplement, introduced by Jean Chrétien's Liberals in 1998, has done almost zilch for people on welfare.

That's partly because five provinces, including Ontario, claw all or part of the benefit back from families receiving social assistance.

And it's partly because the country's complicated welfare system is almost impossible to figure out for would-be beneficiaries — or anyone else. It has become, as the council says flatly, "incomprehensible to most people."

As for Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservatives, the council says their

Random Thoughts 2



Though this one is a bit dated but I wonder what Belinda Stronach thought of David Emerson crossing the floor just after the last federal election ... Are poor people more obsessed with material goods than a wealthy person? ..

.Where is the dividing line between having too much money and having too little? ... Where would the civil rights movement be if Martin Luther King and other like minded people kept their convictions to themselves? ... Have religious fundamentalists ever asked themselves what God thinks of their going ons? ... Faith or morality can't be legislated from outside sources but needs to be developed from within a person ... Though having a career or job that one enjoys is highly important, what matters more is having some principles that are life enhancing ... Learning is finding out what you already know ... Teaching is showing others that they know just as well as you do .. I'm not a big fan of socialism. I think they want to lock everything into a cabinet, keep the key to themselves as they think they know what is good for everyone ... The bond that links your true family isn't blood lines but a deeper one that shares respect and joy in each others life. Rarely do they live under the same roof ... What is the point of having the hockey season end two days before the longest day of the year? ... Four things to ask yourself. 1) Where were you born? 2) Where is your home? 3) Where are you going in your life? 4) What are you doing in this moment of your life? Think about these questions every so often and watch your answers change over a course of time ... Here is a sign of good mental health: Having an uncontrollable desire to be civil to people ... Ever notice how the extreme left and extreme right wings sound so much alike? As it's been said, the extreme right isn't always that and the extreme left just doesn't get it ... Ever notice how honourable words like fairness and diversity have been replaced by censorship and uniformity. We can thank the politically correct for this ... The only Marxist theology that ever made sense to me is the Groucho kind. ■

MIKE'S WISDOM

Compiled by MIKE ABHAR, Vendor #4

Resist the urge to criticize?

This is taken from Don't Sweat the Small Stuff And It is All Small Stuff by Richard Carlson and published in 1997.

When we judge or criticize another person, it says nothing about that person; it merely says something about our own need to be critical.

If you attend a gathering and listen to all the criticism that is typically levied against others, and then go home and consider how much good all that criticism actually does to make our world a better place, you'll probably come up with the same answer that I do: Zero! It does no good. But that's not all. Being critical not only solves nothing; it contributes to the anger and distrust in our world. After all, none of us likes to be criticized. Our reaction to criticism is usually to become defensive and/or withdrawn. A person who feels attacked is likely to do one of two things: he will either retreat in fear or shame, or he will attack or lash out in anger. How many times have you criticized someone and had them respond by saying, "Thank you so much for pointing out my flaws. I really appreciate it"?

Criticism, like swearing, is actually nothing more than a bad habit. It's something we get used to doing; we're familiar with how it feels. It keeps us busy and gives us something to talk about.

If, however, you take a moment to observe how you actually feel immediately after you criticize someone, you'll notice that you will feel a little deflated and ashamed, almost like you're the one who has been attacked. The reason this is true is that when we criticize, it's a statement to the world and to ourselves, "I have a need to be critical." This isn't something we are usually proud to admit.

The solution is to catch yourself in the act of being critical. Notice how often you do it and how bad it makes you feel. What I like to do is turn it into a game. I still catch myself being critical, but as my need to criticize arises, I try, to remember to say to myself, "There I go again." Hopefully, more often than not, I can turn my criticism into tolerance and respect. ■

Hayride to happiness



KATHY HOUSTON ...
the story teller

The cold mist eats at the little boy's bones. It's been two days since the ragged child has eaten. He has no parents, no relatives. The boy has picked up some trinkets here and there hoping he can sell them for a bite to eat. So far, though, he hasn't made a cent.

As he wanders about, he comes to a hay wagon tilted forward and takes a quick scan of the area to make sure he hasn't any company. Slowly, he crawls up onto the wagon and burrows deep down into the hay; then he lies very still.

It is warm and so the boy snuggles up in a ball and soon falls fast asleep.

When the boy wakes, he is aware that the wagon is moving, jostling him about along a bumpy road. How is he going to escape when he can't even get to his hands and knees without being tossed about? He peers out and sees a farmhouse in the distance. They draw closer to it and the elderly man driving the wagon encourages his horse team onward.

Finally, the journey is over. The man hollers, "Whoa!" and jumps down, handing the reins to an older woman who smiling, says, "These days have been hard on both of us since Tommy went to his place in heaven, but somehow I know it will be all right." Tears trickle down her wrinkled face.

It was then that the little boy pokes up and tries to make his getaway, but he loses his balance and falls headlong into a big, sticky mud puddle. The couple turns and the man has the boy by the shoulders and out of the puddle in nothing flat.

"What have we here?" the man laughs as he draws the boy towards him wiping some of the mud off his face.

"It's a gift," laughs the woman. Then she asks, "Well, boy, do you have parents, or are you on your own?" Surprised the boy smiles weakly and tells them his story.

"Would you stay here and live with us?" the woman asks in sweet tones. "Don't make up your mind until we clean you up and feed you."

The boy ate like a horse and was as warm as warm could be in his new home. He even slept in his own bed in a room at the top of the stairs. The boy was grateful and helped these wonderful people with chores just like anyone else who belongs to a fine family.

I saw the boy not too long ago and he has now been with the elderly couple for five years and is the happiest person I have ever seen – besides his new parents. ■

Dear Amey

Dear Amey:

Can you tell me what the difference is between Ravens and Crow? They are both big black birds.

Carole

Dear Carole:

The Raven is the largest member of the Crow family according to the experts at this web site desertusa.com/mag99/oct/papr/raven.html. Check it out and have fun.

Dear Amey:

I was watching a special on TV and I think the narrator said Crocodiles could not swim in salt water. Can you tell me if this is true and why?

Shiyardia

Dear Shiyardia:

The alligator can occasionally be found in salt water. However, alligators lack the salt-extracting glands of crocodiles and are unable to survive in salt water for extended periods of time.

By AMEY CARRIER,
Calgary Street Talk

Maybe the show you were watching was comparing alligators to crocodiles. I don't know but all my research led me to believe you may have misheard the narrator. Check out this web site for more information on both Crocodiles and Alligators.

www.americazoo.com/index.htm

Dear Amey:

Can you tell me what an astringent is used for?

Tina

Dear Tina:

I did a quick check on the Web with Google and found this definition of an astringent: "Any substance or agent which causes tissue to contract or which inhibits secretion of fluids such as mucus or blood." ■

QUESTIONS SHOULD BE
EMAILED TO
askamey@shaw.ca

ROB'S CORNER

By ROB CHAMPION,
Vendor #68

WHO DOES IT HURT? As rents increase, gasoline prices rise and costs for other basic needs skyrocket, who is hurt the most? Who also suffers the most when governments raise tobacco or liquor taxes?

While bank fees increase there is little or no interest paid on saving accounts unless one can amass thousands of dollars as a minimum balance.

SMOKER'S LAMENT: Cough, cough, excuse me. I can't breathe. It started with office buildings, most public places and now on the hit list are bars, bingo halls, stadiums even those outdoors. What's next? Parks, public sidewalks and a complete ban on smoking including in your own house or apartment?

ROB'S FIRST SAY OF THE DAY: There is always a lesson to be learned. No one's perfect.

THINGS MOST PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO HEAR: Homelessness is growing in this country. There is a real lack of affordable housing.

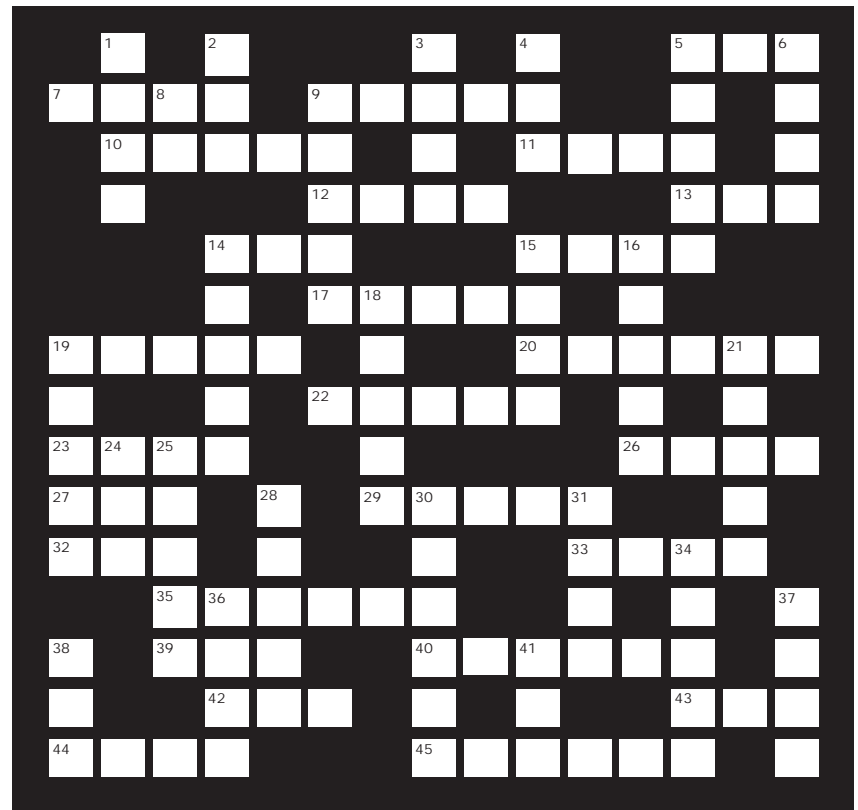
ROB'S TIP OF THE DAY: You can save on your coffee bill but turning off the burner and leaving some of that coffee for the next day. In my case the next two days.

ROMANCE TIP OF THE DAY: Buying out the store for that special someone doesn't always guarantee romance. Honesty and a good sense of humour will probably be better choices.

ROB'S SECOND SAY OF THE DAY: There is no shame in being humble. Also there are no easy answers to life's problems.

ROB'S LAST WORDS: The computer age is all the rage. Today we constantly hear about being on line, web pages and e-mail. In my day back in the 70s the only line we knew about was a telephone line or waling the line if a police officer pulled you over. And mail came in a stamped envelope and was hand delivered. ■

PETE'S SCRABBLE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

5. Trash contained
7. Noted potters
9. Old sailing ship
10. Small boat
11. Island of exile
12. Face feature
13. Menagerie
14. _____ Jima
15. Bee like
17. At no time
19. Wet snow
20. Not brats
22. Tree nymph
23. Old suit
26. Bank feature
27. Recede
29. On par with
32. Blame it on _____
33. Charged particles
35. Of horses
39. Total
40. "E" for _____
42. Tarzan's nanny
43. 2000 pounds
44. Arctic transport
45. Very fast

DOWN

1. Shoe insert
2. Very, very bad thing
3. Pulls back
4. King beater
5. Looney tunes
6. Emperor before galba
8. Ma's mate
9. Rare gas
14. Neon is this
15. Thin nail
16. Long stories
18. Uncanny
19. Jeweler's tool
21. Hay holders
24. Kimono sash
25. Band instruments
28. Miserable one
30. Mama bees
31. Fancy car
34. Wacko
36. Campus area
37. Expensive fur
38. City transit
41. Enemy

Solutions to July Crossword

Z O R B A B L U N T
O T Y N E R
R H I N O C O O N A M
R N R D P R O
O K E Q U A D U P O N
N U L E D O
O U I A O A
P T I R A N A K R O N
E S C E N T A L Y
N N M B O U T E
E N T E R Z E R O T T
R A I R A Z O R
G L T O
S L I C E C S Z O O S
D H U N S

PETE'S THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

**Never be
boastful;
someone may
pass who knew
you as a child.**

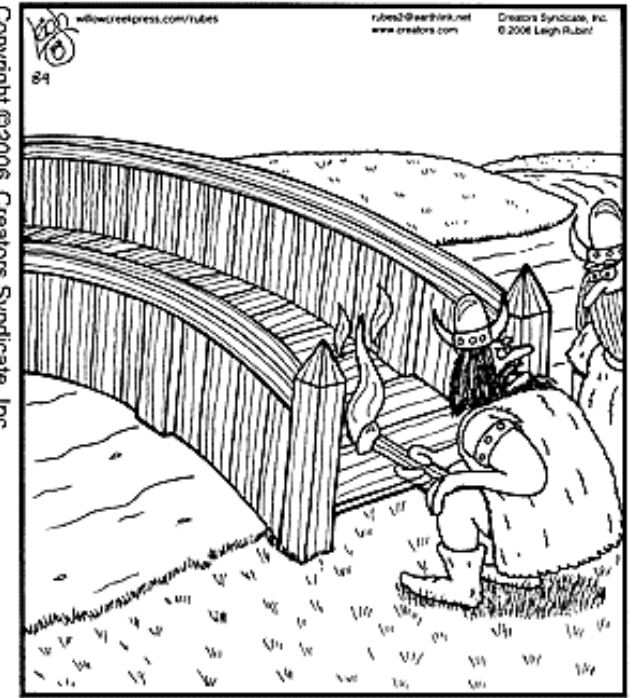
(Chinese proverb)



"For the last time, fellas ... This whole carpooling thing isn't going to work out unless we all hum the same @&%# tune!"



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



"What do you mean, you don't feel it's a good idea for us to 'burn any bridges'?! We're barbarians! That's what we do!"

Better

■ continued from page 9

centre that operates with the philosophy of providing a nurturing, caring, educational environment to help children and families reach their full potential. The holistic approach meets the needs of preschool, full day kindergarten, parent education, health care, and social services - all identified as key areas for action with at-risk children and families.

Services available to families participating in One World include:

- Preschool and kindergarten
- Parent education
- Drop-in child care
- Family support workers, crisis and long-term counselling
- Nutritional breakfast, lunch and snacks
- Health care services including visits from Pediatric residents, dentists and opticians
- Collaborative services such as psychology, speech and language pathology, occupational therapy and physiotherapy

For more information on the One World Child Development Centre, please call 264-2217. ■

Downside of philanthropy

■ continued from page 3

complex landscape of change.

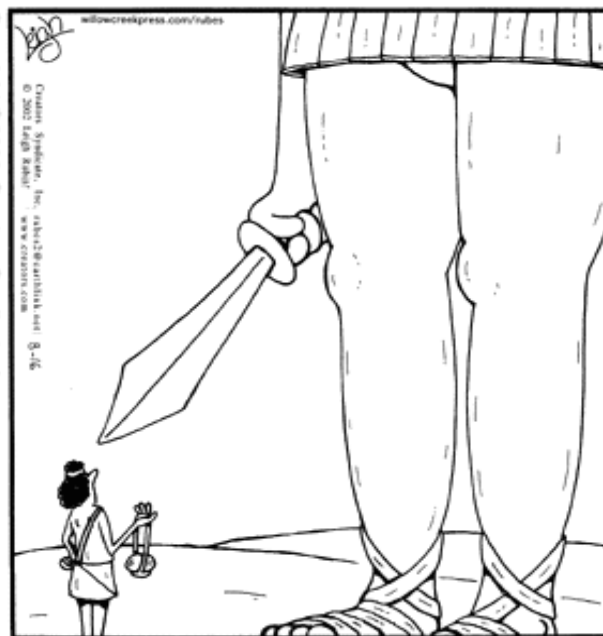
Seductive as they are, sophisticated health technologies are unable to change the living conditions of the half of humanity living on less than \$2 a day.

Even in industrialized countries, the skewed distribution of power and wealth means that the majority of the population faces preventable premature death. This is, in the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "Why we can't wait" for poverty and inequity to disappear on their own.

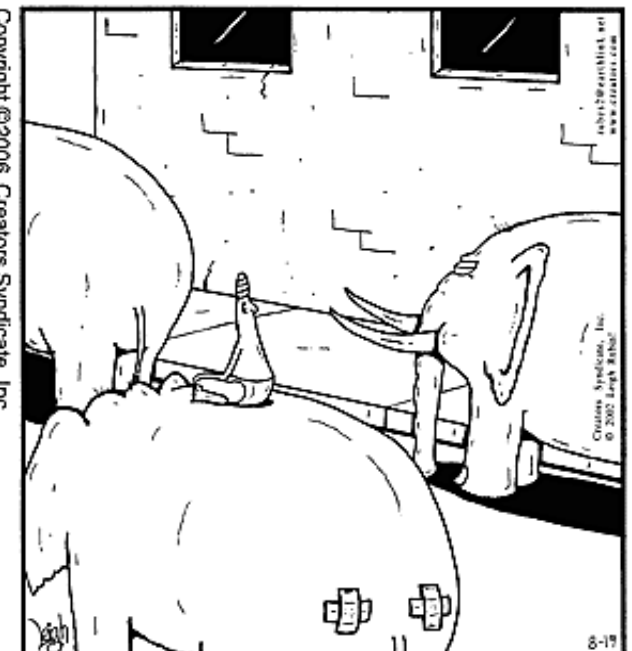
Celebrate Buffett's donation to the Gates foundation? Why not.

But let's make sure that philanthropy is accountable, democratic, and harnesses its technological know-how to social and political transformation that will truly improve global well-being. ■

(Anne-Emanuelle Birn is Canada Research Chair in International Health at the University of Toronto and the author of *Marriage of Convenience: Rockefeller International Health and Revolutionary Mexico.*)



Overcoming temptation, David opted against the obvious, unsportsmanlike cheap shot.



Despite years of practice, Raj had yet to master the fine art of parallel parking.



"This isn't mine. I ordered a large cheese with everything but the kitchen sink."



Calgary Street Talk Photos
by PAUL DROHAN

Carlene Donnelly, CUPS executive director, and Alex oversee work by Shannon and Angie on the preparation of ribbons for CUPS Christmas Wreaths which are a major fundraising project for the community health centre.



Nilus and Darryl found that the best point is to measure twice and cut once.

CUPS annual Christmas wreath campaign

Christmas is not all that far away for CUPS staff, clients and volunteers who work on the Christmas Wreath campaign.

Some of the participants in the CUPS Family Resource Centre spent a day recently cutting and preparing ribbons for the bows on the wreaths.

CUPS expects wreaths to sell out again this year. Wreaths will cost \$45 each. You can request to be put on the wreath database and those who register will be faxed information in October.

For more information call Margaret at 206-2078 or email cups.carlson@shaw.ca.

If you want to volunteer please call Tanya at 221-8786 for information about volunteer opportunities. ders have been supporting CUPS since 1992. ■