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# CALGARY Street TALK

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MARCH 2006 VOL. 10 NO. 3

SPARE CHANGE NEWSPAPER



Photo by PAUL DROHAN

## Facing homelessness

**Those two words can be taken in a variety of ways.**

The teachers in this picture – Derek Rakowski and Michelle Speight – aren't facing homelessness literally. They are facing homelessness in the sense of it. They have developed a learning experience which includes the Internet to help students learn about this complicated social issue. *Their story starts on Page 5.*

## 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 February was #21 **Jim M.** Congratulations! In second place was vendor #316 **Terry F.** and #01 **Pete S.** was in third place.

## Vendor Incentive Program

Vendors #406 **Ron M.** and #466 **Phil J.** are the recipients of the Vendor Incentive Program for January and will receive a \$25 food gift certificate.

We are dependent on supporters to donate to our Vendor Incentive Program. We would like to award a \$25 food gift certificates to one vendor each month to reward initiative or improved sales or to acknowledge participation in the *Calgary Street Talk* Program.

This program is made possible through the generosity of two anonymous donations.

**VENDOR BIRTHDAYS in March:**  
#5 Harley H. - March 5; #273 Ray R. March 25

# Vendor survived a troubled youth



Shane Friday  
... Calgary Street Talk vendor

*"Homeless not just for a need of a room of bricks - But homeless because of rejection."*

~ Mother Teresa

By SHANE FRIDAY

*(Editor's note: Shane Friday chose to write about himself in the third person. He is a Calgary Street Talk vendor.)*

Shane Robert Quinn Friday was born on August 1, 1974 in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan. Shane did not have a good life growing up because, as he put it "I was always being put down and didn't know why."

Shane's home life wasn't much better because his step-father was an alcoholic and would "turn the house into a war zone without warning." This coupled with the fact that Shane has Cerebral Palsy and a learning disability, which no one knew about at the time, didn't help him either. His mother and stepfather separated in 1980 and then divorced in 1986. Shane and his family then moved to Chilliwack, British Columbia, because his mother said

it would be a good change. It was for her, but not for Shane.

At this time Shane took a "nose dive" and didn't come back up for air until 1993. In 1986-1987 Shane went from bad to worse and was so out of control that he was admitted, first to the hospital's children's ward, but because of five escapes in four days, he was committed to the psych ward of the Chilliwack General Hospital and put in the Pink Room. The Pink Room is a room about eight feet by 12 and painted pink. The only things in the Pink Room are a mattress and a blanket, no toilet and no sink. After this they didn't know what else to do with him and it was decided that he should again be put in foster care.

Well, he did NOT want to do that because in 1980 he had been put into foster care and he did not like it (He lived with a German family on a farm in Rosenhof, about 12 miles southwest of Swift Current, Saskatchewan). So he was taken from the hospital and put into a foster home, which only lasted half a day if that.

It was then decided to cave in to what he wanted because he had caused so much trouble. What he wanted was to be allowed to stay at home, alone, while his mother was out of the city. It was great! Shane won against social services, but as he would soon find out, nobody won. Nobody won because Shane was on his own, alone, when he couldn't look after himself.

In 1987 Shane's Mother met a man and in early 1988 they all moved to Portage La Prairie, Manitoba as the man was in the Military. At this time Shane started to get into trouble with the law.

In February of 1988, two weeks after they moved, Shane stole his stepfather's car. Shane was caught and given two years probation. Most people would have learned from that experience, but not Shane.

In fact, four days after he was released  
■ see ...TROUBLED YOUTH on page 15

## 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 Wolf Leg** 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
- #42: Peter W.**
- #60: Caroline M.** 8th Ave. & 1st Street SW
- #68: Rob Champion**  
Plaza Theatre, Kensington
- #130: Vince Montano**  
Globe and Uptown Theatres
- #147: Jon Cummer** 8th Ave. & 4th St. SW
- #187: Bruce S.**  
(underpass) 8 St. & 9 Ave. underpass PM  
4 St. & 9 Ave. underpass AM
- #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.
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9th Avenue & 1st Street SW
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- #397: Lois O.** 6th Ave. & 4th Street SW
- #398: Glen O.** 5th Ave. & 3rd Street SW
- #400: Robert H.**
- #406: Ron M.** 7th Ave. & 10th Street SW
- #420: Kris C.**
- #431: Bill M.** 8th Ave. & 7th Street SW
- #442: Steven G.** 7th Ave. & 8th St. SW
- #466: Phil J.** Safeway at Northgate Mall NE
- #476: Michael H.**
- #480: Lori H.** 7 Ave. & 4 St. SW
- #493 James Falconer**  
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### NOTICE OF HEARING FOR PERMANENT GUARDIANSHIP & CUSTODY ORDER APPLICATION TO:

## Susan MacKey & Joseph Garet

Take notice that on the **31st day of March, 2006** at 10:00 a.m., at Calgary Family Court, Room 201, 620 - 7 Avenue S.W., Calgary, Alberta, a hearing will take place. A Director, under the Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act will make an application for permanent guardianship and custody order of your child born on **August 5, 2001**. You are requested to be present at the hearing. Also be advised that the presiding Judge may make and order abbreviating the amount of time scheduled for the trial or make a final order in your absence. You have the right to be represented by legal counsel. An Order will granted if no guardian is present. You have the right to appeal the Order within 30 days from the date the Order is made. Heard on an expedited basis.

# CALGARY Street TALK

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**Mike Abhar, Jon Bateman, Gridiron Rathole Drilling Ltd., Rob Champion, Shane Friday, Tom Heinen, Kathy Houston, Ramona Johnston, Run Murdock, Stonebridge Capital Corporation, Pete S.**

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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.

## Worth noting . . .

I wanted to express my appreciation and let you know how impressed I am with one of your vendors.

I came to Calgary for an appointment on Feb. 3. It was my first time in the city and I had no idea how to get back to the Greyhound Station until I met one of your vendors, Ron Murdock, at the 10th Street C-Train Station. He was friendly and offered a genuine smile -- and directions -- when I needed them the most.

I want to thank him for his. Also, thanks for some great reading material on the way home!

Keep it up! ■

Vivian Giang, External Relations, Grant MacEwan College

# Working women pause for the cause

By **ERICA WELSH**  
For Calgary Street Talk

Every year on March 8, millions of people around the world celebrate International Women's Day. They come together to celebrate women's victories in the battle for women's liberation. March 8th is recognized the world over as a day of protest, solidarity, and a celebration of women's struggles.

The history of International Women's Day began when young women textile workers in New York City went on strike to fight for economic security, and a better quality of life. Women stood up in 1857 and again in 1908 to demand equal rights for women. Hundreds of women, many of them immigrants, stood bravely against brutal police reaction to demand fair wages, decent working conditions and the right to vote.

Every year, on International Women's Day, people recognize the day to demonstrate their intention to keep fighting for daycare, employment at decent wages, the freedom to choose our sexuality, abortion rights, fair working conditions, and an end to violence against women.

There are many reasons for women to continue fighting. Women make up 70% of the world's poor and more than 60 per cent (600 million) of the world's illiterate. Women's work makes up two thirds of the world's work and receives one tenth of the world's income. In some countries, because of poverty and prejudice, females are so undervalued that they are selectively aborted, killed, or deliberately undernourished.

One in seven Canadian women lives in poverty. In Calgary today, one the biggest issues facing women is poverty in a land of plenty. Statistics Canada, using a relative measure called the Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO), estimates that there were over 160,000 Calgarians who were poor in 2003, roughly 17 per cent of the population. Of those 43,000 were children, 20 per cent of all children in Calgary.

Alberta is the richest province in Canada. It is hard to believe that women and children are living in poverty. People living in poverty are made to feel terribly ashamed in Alberta. Many women wonder why they are struggling in such a rich province full of such wealth. Yet, women struggle between choosing to pay their rent, pay bills, pay transportation costs, buy groceries, buy necessary medical supplies, and doing laundry.

Many Calgary women do not have the money for many things other Calgarians take

for granted -- like, buying birthday presents, visiting relatives, going on holidays, or living in adequate housing. It is not uncommon for a woman to lose a job because a family responsibility has interfered with a low wage earner's work schedule. When living in poverty -- any emergency -- a sick child -- domestic violence -- a vehicle breakdown -- a personal illness -- is impossible to deal with without throwing every part of the women's lives into chaos.

Women do not decide to be poor. Most women living in poverty in Calgary work for wages -- either part-time or full-time. There are many factors which contribute to a life in poverty. Two of these systemic factors include unfair wages and inadequate levels of social assistance.

More than 34,000 women over the age of 25 in Calgary are working for less than \$10 an hour. Minimum and low wage jobs, more often than not, provide a low quality of work for employees. Employees earn low wages, receive no benefits, and often work part-time hours which makes them ineligible for sick leave and vacation pay. An individual earning low wages may not have access to child care. A Living Wage is needed in Calgary. According to the Living Wage Coalition, \$10/hr is a starting point for a single person working full time to earn a Living Wage.

Currently, a Calgarian single mother with two children on social assistance earns approximately \$1440.98. This amount is meant to cover all of their expenses including rent, utilities, school supplies, food and other necessities. Income Support levels have not increased in many years and do not provide enough money for families to live on.

Some people who do not live in poverty may not think that it is important to work towards stopping poverty. People need to realize that everyone is impacted by the effects of poverty through the tax system. Poverty and social exclusion have been proven to increase the risks of disability, illness, crime, addiction, social isolation and poor health. As a society -- we are saving money in the long term by preventing poverty rather than dealing with the symptoms of poverty. ■

*(Erica Welsh is the Peer Program Coordinator at the Women's Centre of Calgary in Bridgeland. Call 264-1155 for information about the centre.)*

**M**edical experts will tell you that the defining years for any human being are often in the first five years of life when a child learns all the basics of living and begins to make sense of the world through their own individual experience. These early years shape our deepest perceptions of ourselves, of others and of the world in general. These first few years in a child's life are probably the single largest influence in how their future will be shaped and will determine to a large extent how they relate to the rest of society. Mind you, this is not to say that people who experience troubled childhoods or who experience trauma at an early age can't re-learn important things later in life, it's just likely a little more difficult to undo old perceptions and habits.

**F**or me, I can clearly remember the day when my own perceptions changed in a very positive way and I learned some of the confidence that I would need later in life. The world changed for me on a paved street in front of our house in the middle of a small town when my older brother took on the role of chief negotiator and asked a group of neighborhood kids if he and his little brother could play street hockey with them. I was about five years old and had spent a number of days watching them playing hockey on the street below as I looked out the window from our living room. Just a year earlier, my obsession with the game of hockey had begun after I had attended my first Flames game, a 4-4 tie between the Calgary Flames and the Toronto Maple Leafs at the Stampede Corral.

**I**wanted nothing more than to play hockey, eat hockey, sleep hockey and dream hockey in everything that I did and my brother knew it. He was four years older than me and more interested in figuring out how things worked, studying encyclopedias while in the bathroom, taming animals and learning other new things than he was in playing sports. Yet, it always was disturbing to my brother, probably more than it was to me at the time, that I was physically disabled and not considered able to play games in the same way as the other kids.

**I**think my brother took it a little bit personally. To him, I was born with something that seemed so cruel, unfair and so random. He couldn't really make sense of it, but it didn't bother me quite as much because I had never lived any differently. Nonetheless, my brother was very intent on



# From Where I Stand

By JON BATEMAN  
For Calgary Street Talk

making sure that I wasn't excluded from anything, which certainly doesn't mean he always treated me like a saint... we fought bitterly as kids for many years, (most siblings do) but he did have a sense of fairness and a desire to make sure that I could enjoy and experience all that I was able.

**W**hat he didn't realize was how important that day would be in shaping my perceptions of how I could participate in the world. I remember looking out that window at the kids playing below and thinking that I really would love to play with them but I wasn't sure if the game would be the same if I were to play in it. I was starting to realize I was different and even though the reality of how differently many people would perceive me hadn't really sunk in yet, I knew that sometimes people didn't accept me. But when my brother, a guy who didn't even really like hockey that much, went out and made sure that both he and I were considered "regulars" on the local street hockey team, he not only changed the perceptions of those that played in the game he also helped me to change the way I viewed myself.

**F**rom that day onward, we played street hockey nearly every other day. I played every position, ran up and down the street, got hit in pretty much every part of my body with an often frozen tennis ball, and had some of the best times of my childhood. Even today, I still see members of that street hockey group around Calgary and every one of them remembers playing in the neighborhood with me. While I'm sure it's an obvious memory to them that I played street hockey using crutches and often scored deflection goals by whacking the ball off my crutch or any other body part I could fling in front of the ball, I think it's probably a stronger memory for them that we were a big group of kids that just went out and had fun.

**M**y brother and I were very different as kids and still have many different interests from each other as adults, but he found a way for us to play together and that made all the difference in how I looked at the world. I wasn't afraid anymore that people wouldn't accept me. I later learned that some would and some wouldn't but it was in making the effort to get involved and to not let things stand in my way that I learned one of the many lessons in life that I would need to stand on my own. ■

# Touched by Homelessness

## Teacher's personal experience leads to learning opportunity

By PAUL DROHAN  
Calgary Street Talk

How has homelessness touched you?  
How does it touch us all?

People from all over the world will soon be sharing their experiences and views about those profound questions. Some have started (See Page 6 for three stories.)

This is happening because a Calgary elementary school teacher was touched by homelessness. She shared that revealing and poignant experience with fellow teachers. They came up with an Internet project that won't likely solve the tragedy of homelessness but it will surely shed some light on the subject and maybe light the fire of determination and concern within young people. Determination coupled with concern can lead to action.

The web site is titled The BIG pictures as seen by little people, The many faces of the homeless. Its address is <http://projects.cbe.ab.ca/ict/2learn/mmspeight/homeless/>.

The project started in January and ends in June. Teachers and students from Calgary and various schools from around North America are about to embark in an exciting "Telecollaborative" journey to examine the complicated issue of homelessness.

Teachers and students are being invited to take part in sharing in online discussions, sharing resources and knowledge about the issue of homelessness in their particular community and to connect with "experts" in order to design and implement social activism projects or activities.

This is all happening because Michelle Speight, an innovative learning specialist with the Calgary Board of Education learned late last year that her long lost uncle is homeless and has AIDS. She talked first with her associate Derek Rakowski, another learning specialist. As innovative learning specialists they don't work directly with children in a classroom. "Our job is to get teachers excited about learning project and help them feel supported in their efforts," Speight said.

There is a strong focus on global citizenship and what it means to be a global citizen at both the local and provincial level in Alberta, Speight said

The Calgary Board of Education has about 30 learning specialists and each board in the province has a number of

learning specialists depending on the size of each board. Three teachers have been seconded full-time in Edmonton to run this provincial group of "big thinkers" in education and teaching. One role for the teachers is to be "big thinkers." They meet once a year.

About the same time as the yearly meeting, Speight had got a call about her uncle Mike. Her family hadn't seen him for about 10 years. It turns out he had been homeless in Vancouver for last 10 years.

He was in hospital with AIDS. Most of her family went out to see him. When she got to talk to her uncle she wanted to know how he had become homeless.

"You always wonder how. He was such a nice guy. He is just the nicest guy. He's funny. People love him. He is one of those people you meet and people just want to hang out with them."

Her aunt and Speight wondered how he became homeless. "Your family loves you. Why would you take these choices?" they asked. "He said he couldn't read. None of us knew that. He can not read a word." The uncle quit school as soon as he could and gone into construction. Eventually he lost four fingers on right hand. "It was his working hand so the one skill he had he lost. He went into series of bouts of depression and the next thing you knew he found himself in that situation."

About this time Speight was at the annual teacher's meeting and talked to associates about her uncle's situation.

"I couldn't believe that I didn't see this happening to my uncle. He lived his whole life that way ... not being able to read and nobody knew.

"I think everybody is so close to being in his situation. Something could happen. Everybody has the potential to becoming homeless. We really just started talking about it."

She started to think this was only one story about homelessness. "Imagine the story of students who live in Toronto where homeless is becoming a big issue. Their stories would be different than the story of my uncle. Then look at the stories of children living in Africa, who have become homeless because of totally different circumstances. The AIDS epidemic has created a tremendous amount of homelessness," she said.

The project "to find the voices" ... the circumstances" of homelessness was



Michelle Speight was moved to help create a project to help students learn about homelessness when she learned her uncle was homeless. She is looking at a picture of him.

born. "I think people often make assumptions that we understand why people got to be homeless but we don't ... and we don't even take the time to ask people and that is a problem in itself."

Speight and her associate Rakowski thought communications technology offered the opportunity to get a perspective on homelessness in Calgary and elsewhere.

But the sharing of views isn't limited to Calgary students or Calgary. "We can get a local perspective but what about the perspective of another city? Also what about the perspective of if you gave people a venue to share their story where even homeless people or people who have been homeless could share their story or have homelessness in their lives ... how else could you get all those perspectives. The technology is so critical to this project," Speight said.

So after some discussion about a website some emails were sent out soliciting participation.

People were invited to share stories

and photos - "really simple stuff," Speight said.

Around Christmas about 400 emails were sent which generated about 60 responses. Speight was encouraged since a lot of the emails went to strangers. "What is interesting is that we are now getting responses from people we didn't send emails to. Obviously they have been passed on." Some international schools have expressed interest.

The response has largely been from teachers. "Because teachers work so collaboratively we have lots of teachers' voices. Now we need the kids," Speight said.

A safe Internet environment has been created so that with a password and username kids can start to communicate on the issue. People whose work involved the homeless will be online experts to guide conversations or answer questions. So far a variety of people from Calgary, Toronto, Kitchener and Winnipeg have said they will participate.

■ see ...STUDENTS USE WEB on page 7

# The **BIG** Picture as Seen by **LITTLE** People

THE MANY FACES OF POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS



**"EVERY YEAR WE CONTRIBUTE IN SOME WAY AT CHRISTMAS TIME.** This past Christmas we helped with an organization called "Inn from the cold". This is right in Calgary, Alberta. We are from Calgary but live overseas. We travel back to Calgary for the holiday season and for summers. We were happy to see how appreciative the people were at the 'shelter'. They were there over Christmas eve night and Christmas morning. There were about 10 children and 15 adults. What concerns me is the parental guidance these children may or may not be getting. Are the children learning that they don't have to live like this when they get older? Is their current homeless lifestyle being modeled as a norm? I wonder about this after a comment was made by one of the dads. He saw that his son had received a donated Christmas gift: a shirt from the popular "bum" clothing line. He said, "Hey look, my son already has a custom shirt!" Calgary is a rich city, and still has its share of homeless people. Some choose to remain this way. I wonder if the young homeless are taught that they **HAVE** a choice." ■

~ *Netherlands, January 27, 2005*

## What can you do?



**"WE HAVE MANY HOMELESS PEOPLE IN OUR CITY.** From time to time I have helped to support the homeless by giving them spare change and even by making bag lunches. But I never thought that the issue of being homeless would touch our family the way that it has. We recently discovered that our uncle who has been missing for some time, was found on the streets of Vancouver. He turned up in a hospital dying of AIDS. Luckily my family was tracked down with the help of a homeless shelter in Vancouver. What we didn't realize was that our uncle had been homeless for almost 10 years. We couldn't help but ask why. Why would such an amazing man, so full of energy and good humor end up living on the streets? What we discovered is that the issue of homelessness can touch anyone's family. Our uncle has had a series of misfortunes that have resulted in this life. To our surprise, our uncle can not read. This is a secret he has kept his entire life and from everyone he knew. Keeping a job has therefore been very difficult for him. When he got a job as a carpenter, he lost his fingers in a tragic accident. What would you do in these circumstances? My uncle's inability to keep a regular well-paying job and lack of education has led to a very unpredictable life." What I realize now is that every homeless person has a story behind that face. They have or had families and they have been or are loved. We must take care of our fellow citizens even if they do not have the strength left to take care of themselves. It is our responsibility as human beings even if we never know their story." ■

~ *Calgary, Alberta, Canada, January 20, 2006*

## Sharing stories

Students and teachers from Calgary and around the world are about to embark on an "exciting Telecollaborative journey" as they examine the complicated issue of homeless, said Michelle Speight, a learning specialist with the Calgary Board of Education. She and Derek Rakowski, another learning specialist, are inviting students, those who are homeless, those who work with the homeless, in particular, to share their experiences and ideas. Other contributions are also welcome and might be published in a section on the Homeless Project website.

As part of the Calgary Board of Education Homeless Project students will examine questions and issues. Anyone will be able to contribute their views and experiences for possible publication on the Homeless Project website. The questions and issues that students will study include the following:

- Belonging in the 21st Century Society: What circumstances shape how we belong?
- What does it mean to have a home? What importance does a home have on living beings?
- Responsible Citizenship: What is our responsibility as citizens to help our fellow human beings?
- Are resiliency and homelessness connected?
- What are the circumstances that surround the many faces of homelessness? ■

## **"EVEN SMALL TOWNS HAVE HOMELESSNESS.**

A man was sleeping in our post office box room to keep warm at night. The town decided that they would lock the doors to the room from midnight on in the hopes that the man would move on. He moved across the street and started sleeping in the ATM room to stay warm. So the town decided to lock that door too. Others in town decided to talk to the man and help him. Only then did he move on and into an empty shed that one of our citizens let him stay in for free.

I'm ashamed to say I never heard the man's name and don't know if he is still in town, but I am proud of the people in my community that reached out and helped him instead of just ignoring his situation and hoping he would move on. An empty shed, indeed. Something so little can mean so much to someone in need." ■

~ *British Columbia, Canada, January 30, 2005*

# Students will use web in homeless project

■ continued from page 5

In early March some students will visit CUPS Community Health Centre, the Mustard Seed Street Ministry and the Calgary Drop-In Centre and then share their experiences with other students in person and on the web.

"The students will come from very diverse socio economic areas of the city and Speight expects it will "be really interesting" to get the different the perspectives.

There will be a variety of learning opportunities, she said. Students will spend most of a day about solutions not just the problem, she said. "What is it that I can do as a kid? I can't solve it all but what can I do? We are really excited about it because we think that once these kids are together as a group they can use that online environment to then start ... their discussions will be very different after a day together ... they can start to shape and talk about solutions and potentially we can create some social activism projects that they will actually start to bring back to their schools because these four kids are acting as ambassadors and when they go back to their school they are going to be bringing back the information to the rest of their classmates in support of their teacher. We don't know what is going to happen but I think the power is in the kids and the action that they will take. This will be an opportunity to be together to talk about a real issue. It will become even more interesting if we have kids from other parts of the world," she said.

When asked what a project about homelessness has to do with the 3Rs and why a global focus is important, Rakowski said.

"One of the big pushes with teachers and their students is allowing students to take on what we call real world type of work where it is not just factual and the same old style of learning that we did.

"It is pushing kids to take on a problem that even we didn't and don't have an answer to where students can actually get in the muck a little bit and try to work around some of these issues and play with them and work toward how could we work toward solving them. Maybe we can't ever fully get there. Maybe we will come up with something brilliant. Maybe we will just get flustered for a while. But letting them go with that and saying this is the real way that things go once you get outside schools and to realize there isn't always a perfect mathematical answer to fit the model."

Students will do a lot of writing and a lot of discussion. "So not only are they learning some of those basics about how



**Derek Rakowski, a learning specialist helped to create learning a project about homelessness**

to write they will be doing a variety of writing. There is going to be persuasive writing, a lot of questioning and a lot of deeper thinking.

"So it is pushing them to go beyond what they might just get through a small group discussion or answering questions based on what their teacher tells them. This pushes the kids to take on some of those issues and go beyond just coming up with the so called right answer," Rakowski said.

Speight added that there is a context to what the students are doing. "It is meaningful reading and writing.

"There are many learning connections. Even if you are talking about mathematics, what are the connections to understanding the issue of homelessness in the world when you consider the numbers and the grandness of it?

"There are so many more meaningful connections to it. We have to be more global citizens. When I grew up it was okay to live in your own little world. You read books and might watch TV and that might help my connection to the outside world. But the fact is that technology allows my connectivity to the world to be at my fingertips. I can go on the Internet and talk to somebody from Japan in five minutes. We can not ignore global citizenship any longer. It has to be a big part of education.

It has almost become cliché to say that most people are only a pay cheque away from being homeless themselves. Speight and Rakowski both talked about the potential or risk for anyone to become homeless. They were asked to expand on those positions which lead to this exchange:

Speight: "I don't think anybody can predict how they would react to losing their job unless they have actually done it. Most of us we have a regular pay cheque and I guess part of my response is to wonder how long it would take for me to be homeless if I didn't have a pay cheque. That is only something that you can guess. It is not until you are in the situation that you can fully understand what the impact is of not having a job. Some people might handle it very well. Others might uncover some mental illness ... for instance all of a sudden you discover you can't handle the stress. I don't think you really know until you are in it. Maybe it is not one pay cheque away."

Another teacher shared her reality with Speight recently. That teacher's spouse has not been able to find work for about 18 months. She said their savings are now gone and they are relying on her job. That teacher told Speight that if anything happened to her right now not only would they probably lose their home they could eventually face being homeless. "They might not be homeless right away but they would definitely have to sell their house and give up a lot of their things. She said I don't think my husband could handle this. It is about mental health, too. It doesn't matter whether you think you could handle something you don't know until you live it," Speight said.

Speight was moved by the teacher's frank sharing of her reality. "She really put herself out there within this project. She shared this story of herself. She was so candid. She said I don't think anybody even in this room can understand it until you live it," Speight said.

Speight was candid about her own reality.

"I am a single mother. My pay cheque is gone by the end of the month. What if? What circumstance would it take so that I would not make it until the end of the month? There are so many life circumstances that happen. What if my parents passed away and I had to pay for their funeral? There are things that you can't really control. My parents may not have life insurance or be in a good financial state, for example," she said.

"We have to all consider that it is easy to say that we have family and friends for support and it might take six months or a year for someone to really feel the pain. I don't think you can say that for everybody.

"Even though people think they have a really good support unit, it is not until you are in the situation that you fully understand how much support you real-

■ see ...HOMELESSNESS on page 15

# Direct action helps homeless

## Employees sell toques downtown

Photos and Story  
By PAUL DROHAN  
Calgary Street Talk

Again this year Direct Energy employees took to the street on Tuesday Feb. 7 to create awareness about homeless and raise money to raise money to help agencies who are working to find solutions to homelessness and help the homeless.

Three years ago Direct Energy picked Raising the Roof, based in Toronto, to be its national charity of choice, said Lisa Frizzell, director of communications for Direct Energy.

"Our employees embraced the cause of helping the homeless," Frizzell said.

For a minimum of \$10 people got a toque to show their commitment to preventing and eliminating homelessness, she said. The campaign was to run throughout February and results will be published in the April edition of Calgary Street Talk.

**Carrie-Ann Allen** and **Nolene Sarrelley** are two Direct Energy employees who got the campaign.

"There is a lot of homelessness not just within Calgary but Alberta in general. I feel that Direct is helping because . . . homeless is a huge problem that we should try to solve.

She spent the noon hour that Tuesday outside Bankers Hall selling toques and talking to passers-by about homelessness.

Allen doesn't think people realize how many people are homeless "To be honest I hadn't really thought about homelessness before I got involved through Direct Energy."

Nolene Sarrelley said that generally there was a "quite positive" reaction and some people donated rather than buying a toque.

"It is important to give back to the community and certainly in a city like Calgary the plight of the homeless is a worthy cause. I feel quite blessed in my life that I am not homeless. I do have a job and sufficient income to support myself but I realize that not everybody is in that circumstance."

When she was told that some people say the homeless should do more to help themselves she replied: "I do believe that individuals do have a responsibility to help themselves but I also feel that there is a community responsibility because not everybody is in a position to help themselves."

These are comments from some of the people who bought toques:

**Gerald Bouvier** bought two toques "to help people a bit" and said he will give them to his daughters. "I think there is a lot of misconception with homeless people. Once they get on the street it is very difficult to get off."

**Todd Greiner** said that it is everybody's responsibility to support efforts to help the homeless. When told that some people think the homeless should do more to help themselves he said: "I don't think a lot of the homeless are in positions where that is an option . . . so those who are capable should be reaching out to help."

**Shari Klaiber** saw newspaper story while she was at Alberta Children's Hospital with her son and came downtown to buy a toque. She doesn't think most people are homeless because they want to be. "I am sure there are some that are homeless because they just don't want to work but I am not sure it is that big a percentage."

**Bryndis Whitson** walked from 12th Ave and 11th St to Banker's Hall "just to get a toque." She said everyone should try to help. "The general public should help homeless because we are all part of society. We should all be looking out for all members of society regardless of who they are or their role in society. I think to an extent homeless try to help themselves but there is only so much that they can do and they need that assistance from society to actually help them get past that certain stage. Once they are passed that stage they will be giving back to society." ■

'I feel quite blessed in my life that I am not homeless. I do have a job and sufficient income . . . but I realize that not everybody is in that circumstance.'

~ Nolene Sarrelle, a Direct Energy employee



Maximum Shaw (in the middle) helps Robb Price (left) make a



Volunteer selling toques faces pedestrians on Stephen Avenue





toque sale to Alex Dolappchiev at Bankers Hall.



e Mall.

# Who's sheltered?

**Small-town churchgoers startled, then moved to action when priest presents himself as homeless man**

By TOM HEINEN

Father William Myrick got more than he bargained for one Sunday when he disguised himself as a homeless man and begged for coins at his own church in a small Wisconsin community where middle-class morality rarely bumps into haunting specters of poverty.

Friends and parishioners at Christ Episcopal Church in Delavan mostly avoided him as he sprawled unrecognized along one side of the front steps and reached through the wrought-iron railing with a coffee-stained donation cup as people came for the 9 a.m. service.

Most walked silently past. Some detoured to a side entrance.

A few contributed to his nearly \$23 take for two Sunday services, including a woman who gave \$10. Half a dozen invited him in from the cold. No one asked if he was ill.

That out-of-vestment experience on a chilly, misty November morning unsettled Myrick so much that he rallied religious leaders to create an ecumenical emergency shelter system in Walworth County that rotates among eight area churches on a weekly basis.

It augments Twin Oaks, the lone permanent shelter in Walworth County, seven miles west of Delavan. A 90-day transitional housing facility, it averages nine or more families or single people on its waiting list, said John Hembrook, its manager.

And the congregation – doubly surprised when the homeless beggar went in procession behind the deacon and sat in the priest's chair near the altar – got a dramatic lesson that continued long after the mostly bald Myrick took off his baseball cap and fake hair.

"When we walked up the steps, I thought it was a dummy there, and then it moved and I jumped," said Jody Stickney, 56, of Elkhorn. "My husband went right over and put money into the cup, but we did not ask him into the church.

"I'm not sure if my reaction was because he



**Father William Myrick**  
... surprises congregation

scared me because he was a real person, or if I was pulling away from him because he was dirty and bedraggled. That's an issue I have to deal with myself."

## Creating awareness

That's a special issue for Stickney, community services program manager for Community Action Inc. of Rock and Walworth Counties. Her duties include raising \$160,000 in private donations and grants to fund Twin Oaks, which the agency runs in a county where poverty can be less obvious than in Milwaukee, about an hour's drive away. She visits Twin Oaks at least once a week and also fills in for vacationing staff there. However, the homeless who come to Twin Oaks differ from Myrick's portrayal of someone unbathed, living and begging on the streets, Stickney said. Many had been living doubled-up or tripled-up with friends or relatives in overcrowded apartments or houses and left because of eviction, financial difficulties or personal safety issues. Some have lived temporarily in campgrounds. Many are single parents. Many work at low-paying, entry-level jobs. Some are disabled or retired and on fixed incomes.

Stickney and her husband, Larry, were greeters at the first and largest service that morning. They saw the reactions of parishioners at a church where panhandlers never appear.

■ see ... SHELTERED on page 16

**I know when I was on the steps out there, I was getting angry seeing my friends pass me by. I realized it wouldn't take much and I could get in that same situation, and I couldn't count on those people anymore.**

*~ Father William Myrick, Christ Episcopal Church*

## Herald helps CUPS families

The Calgary Herald created quite a few smiles at CUPS Community Health Centre in early February with a cheque for \$81,193.68 from the 2005 Calgary Herald Christmas Fund.

The smiles were on the faces of the families in the CUPS Family Resource Centre which will use the money to finance a variety of programs for the families.

Throughout December the Herald featured stories about 12 community service agencies supplemented by appeals from various personalities and leaders in the community and asked its readers to contribute to its Christmas Fund.

"We commend the Herald on their campaign which raised just under \$1 million," said Carlene Donnelly, executive director of CUPS. "It's not just the money. Their stories about our families create an awareness . . . we need to make sure our community understands that in a province that is so privileged the community must give back to help those in need," Donnelly said. Calgary has a tradition of being a caring community and Donnelly hopes that continues into the future. "I am not sure our younger generation and some of our leaders understand that tradition," she said.

"The Herald stories really delivered a key message in explaining the circumstances of families living in poverty and in making that case really demonstrated community leadership. We are also very grateful to the Herald's readers for their very generous response to the Herald campaign." ■



## A mess Harper could easily fix

*Carol Goar is a Toronto Star columnist who writes regularly about social issues.*

By CAROL GOAR

She, of all people, should have been prepared, Ann Evans says.

For eight years she worked as an employment counsellor, coaching clients on how to find work, helping them manage the financial and emotional stress of joblessness, listening to their heartbreaking stories.

But when she was laid off last fall, she learned two lessons that no placement worker could teach. One was how debilitating unemployment is. The other was

how threadbare Canada's safety nets are.

"I'm out of work, living on \$413 a week. There is no additional support for the medication that I have to take every day. I have a very modest two-bedroom bungalow in Scarborough that I am trying desperately to hang on to. I'm not sure that I will be able to."

Evans has no dependents. She'd be beside herself if she did.

She was hired in September 2004 by Job Skills, a non-profit agency in York Region funded by the federal government. Her position, co-ordinator of employment programs and services, fit perfectly with her qualifications and experience.

No one informed her at the time that she was filling in for an employee who was on maternity leave. When her contract came up for renewal in April 2005, she learned the truth. She was slated to

leave in December.

The news came as a complete shock. But as a contract worker, Evans had no legal recourse.

With a raft of programs to manage, a nine-member staff to supervise and a job-finding club to run, she had no time to send out resumés or go to interviews. As her termination date approached, her health deteriorated. The depression she'd fought for years flared up. Her doctor increased her medication and told her to take early leave. Reluctantly, she did.

The first thing Evans discovered was that even if a person stops working for medical reasons, there is a two-week waiting period for EI benefits.

It took an additional five weeks for her claim to be processed. She didn't have much of a financial cushion because she'd only earned \$38,000 a year as an employment counsellor. At one point,

she had to ask her parents for help.

"That's very humiliating at 40 years of age."

Since losing her job, she's done everything she taught others to do. She has applied for every opening posted on the Internet, sent her resumé to non-profit organizations, colleges and universities, followed up on tips from friends and acquaintances, explored training opportunities and looked into a career change.

But it is harder than Evans ever imagined. She has trouble scraping together money to get to interviews after paying the mortgage, insurance, hydro, gas, utilities and taxes. She can't afford to pay 25 per cent of the cost of the training, which the government requires. If she needed daycare, she'd be sunk.

She managed to find 11 days' work at

■ see ...HARPER on page 15

The cost of publishing this column was covered by Jamie Crysdale of Gridiron Rathole Drilling. While Crysdale had no influence in the content of the column he believes that the views expressed will contribute to a better understanding of social issues and contribute to a constructive discussion of them.



Gridiron is a fast-growing corporation supporting the oil and gas industry. The company provides rathole drilling and conductor setting services throughout British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Established in 2002, Gridiron's head office is located at 235 10601 Southport Road SW.

Gridiron's vision of success is based on expert performance, quality workmanship, professional service, pro-active safety standards, superior business acumen and operational efficiency through the use of well-equipped, modern rigs.

# Most people are decent folk

I've been selling street newspapers across Western Canada for about 10 years. It's given me a chance to see how people react and feel about poverty issues.

Some people, I'm sure would like to see poverty kept under the rug so that it's out of sight, out of mind. These are the people who keep walking by me day after day with the thousand-mile stare – they do not even acknowledge that I exist. But on the other hand I've met some decent people that I've stayed in contact with. Their input has provided some fresh perspectives.

My first experience selling and writing for street newspapers was in Vancouver. Mike McCarthy was running the show though his ego and his marketing skills were atrocious. He assigned vendors every half block along Robson Street while other parts of Vancouver were devoid of vendors. People were complaining about seeing so many vendors selling the same product in a small area. It was like having a Starbucks or McDonalds situated on every corner. People will just tune it out.

So we, the vendors, approached McCarthy and Bob Ogiltrie, the distributor of the paper, to voice our concerns. Our concerns fell upon deaf ears as they figured there were so many people walking along Robson Street that every vendor should have done well. They even brought up an idea that vendors would have to sign a contract on where and when they could sell. This killed off any remaining initiative that vendors had and eventually the paper folded, from what I understand, as vendors left and not enough new ones replaced them.

I sold Our Voice, the Edmonton-based street newspaper, for one winter in the Alberta capital. An advantage there is that vendors can sell in the underground LRT stations under Jasper Avenue. It's great on the days when it's -30 degrees. I sold Our Voice in Saskatoon off and on for six years and was responsible for the Saskatoon content in the paper. My spot was on 11th and Broadway in the Nutana area, a section of Saskatoon much similar to 17th Avenue here in Calgary. I got to know several people while street vending there and have stayed in contact with them.

I've sold Calgary Street Talk off and on for two years. I like how Street Talk has set up vendor locations so that no vendor sells within two blocks of where another vendor sells and we honor it. This way a steady clientele can be built up without cutting into another vendor's territory. Plus Street Talk, for the most part, keeps its stories in

the human interest realm and keeps out of the politics and social policy. Every contributor is open to express their own viewpoint on the subject material they are writing on. I like to ask people if they like to see something covered in Street Talk, please say so. I feel that papers of any kind should be as reader friendly as possible as it is the buyers that keep the paper going. Street Talk is more of an optimistic paper in that the editorial staff feels that there are solutions to the problems faced by people who are poor or living on the streets. Everyone, no matter where they are on the economic scale, does have worth and value as a human being. There is no good point or reason to ignore the poor or stick our heads in the sand. The poor will not be going away if we just sweep things under the carpet. There are solutions and there is hope, we just have to keep plugging along.

Like any other job, selling street newspapers has its ups and downs. The weather can throw anything our way, sometimes by the hour.

Some people can be difficult at times but these incidents are rare and are no reason for a vendor to develop a negative attitude. People who walk by are under no obligation to buy if they are not inclined to do so. They may be in a hurry to get somewhere

and the vendor can't tell where a person has just been or is going.

It just may involve an unpleasant situation. Others may walk by because they're not familiar with the product, not have any cash or just have a debit or credit card or may not like the content involved.

Since vendors are the front-line workers, we're the ones who give the public their first impression of what the street newspaper is all about. It doesn't take much to explain what the product is all about as a person has a right to know what they're buying.

One advantage of being a street vendor is being able to set one's own hours. Some of the people and conversations I've been involved with are classics.

Most of the people have treated me pretty good. It builds good feelings when a vendor is polite and asks how someone's day is going. When sales are slow a vendor can philosophize on life or just plain day-dream. ■



**RON MURDOCK...**  
reporting from the streets



**KATHY HOUSTON ...**  
the story teller

## Unexpected reward for passing test

The sun was cool, but warm for this time of year. I stepped out onto the patio and took a deep breath. Suddenly there was a racket coming from around the side of the house. The noise frightened me at first, but I soon mustered the courage to check it out.

Slowly I peeped around the corner of the house. There was an ice-cream cart covered in strings of pots and pans. Behind the cart was a fat little man in a green and blue outfit rummaging through a couple of big brown bags that were attached to the ice-cream cart.

He kept banging the pots and pans each time his elbow hit them. "Excuse me," I said pleasantly. The little man looked up and stared at me for a second and then muttered something and went back to what he was doing.

"Would you like a drink of hot chocolate?" I asked loudly. He nodded, yes, so I went back into the house and soon had a large cup of streaming hot chocolate ready. Hurrying outside, I thought that it had become very quiet. Around the corner, there was nothing; no sign of anything except a piece of paper. I walked over to it and on further inspection, I realized that it was a \$50 bill with a note attached to it with a paper clip.

"Thanks. You passed the test," it said. ■





Calgary Street Talk Photo by Paul Drohan

Ron Murdock sells Calgary Street Talk on 7th Ave at 10th St. SW by a number of newspaper vending boxes.

## *Buy from a vendor, not a vending box:*

Calgary Street Talk vendor Ron Murdock regularly stands by a group of newspaper vending boxes on 7th Ave at 10th St SW. With apologies to David Letterman he offers nine reasons to buy a paper from him

- 1) Calgary Street Talk vendors have more personality and are just as colourful as any newspaper vending box. You can buy Calgary Street Talk from a real, live person who will talk to you as opposed to getting a paper from an impersonal paper box that just stands there and takes your money.
- 2) There's no set price for an issue of Street Talk, a customer pays whatever they wish
- 3) Calgary Street Talk is GST free.
- 4) Connections are made between vendors and regular customers, building a larger sense of community. Try socializing with a newspaper vending box and the men in white coats are apt to take you away.
- 5) Many of the articles are written by low income people Street Talk is the only paper regularly offering their perspective
- 6) There is no political soap opera, meaningless statistics, social policy or political correctness in Calgary Street Talk.
- 7) Every sale helps vendor buy a few extra or essential items that they need.
- 8) Calgary Street Talk has articles that feature people and organizations that give others a hand up in life not a hand out.
- 9) Every sale helps a vendor pay the rent and feed themselves. Sales are the only income for some of us and supplement the meagre income of others. ■

Compiled by MIKE  
ABHAR, Vendor #4

## **ALOHA** 2000-year-old wisdom passes the test of time

*(Taken from The Pleasure Prescription: To Love, To Work, To Play Life in the Balance by Paul Pearsall.)*

Native Hawaiians believed that a joyful and healthy life is based on following our "seventh sense" or aloha, the instinctive drive to do that is pleasurable and healthful. "Alo" means to share and "ha" means breath, so aloha literally means to give and share the breath of life,

The five key ingredients of aloha include:

**AHONU:** patience, to be practiced with perseverance. You will learn how tolerance and equanimity strengthen immunity and lead to happiness.

**LOKAHI:** unity, to be expressed harmoniously. You will learn how an intimate and connected life promotes a healthier and happier heart.

**OLU'OLU:** agreeableness, to be expressed pleasantly. You will learn that the single greatest barrier to health, happiness, and longevity is expressing anger and hostility.

**HA'AHA'A:** humbleness, to be expressed modestly. You will learn how selflessness translates directly to physical and mental hardiness, and how it results in healing joy that spreads to everyone around you.

**AKAHAI:** gentleness, to be expressed tenderly. You will learn that giving and sharing result in powerful "highs" without emotional crashes, and how they help protect you and others. ■

## **Aloha to everyone.**

MOODS, EMIN



# VIBRANT Communities Calgary

BY RAMONA JOHNSTON

## Low-income Calgarians add their 2¢ worth

If you were asked to provide input on how to sustain Calgary as a caring, healthy, vibrant community, what would you say?

As the city experiences unprecedented growth and prosperity, for many, traditional terms such as job growth, housing

starts and new road construction immediately come to mind. For Calgarians living on low incomes, an informed, understanding community, more collaboration, and the opportunity for all citizens to fully participate in our society are the

keys to moving our city towards a sustainable future.

As part of the Citizen's Agenda Project, the Sustainable Calgary Society, in partnership with Vibrant Communities Calgary, invited Calgarians living on low incomes to take part in a forum to help better understand the long term health and vitality of our city and its citizens. In a lively, productive and enlightening session, participants shared opinions and ideas about what they believe would make Calgary a better place to live.

Affordable housing dominated much of the discussion. Concerns included the availability of affordable housing, setup costs and deposits for damages and utilities, maintenance and insurance costs, the lack of funding and long wait times.

"Even if you can find an affordable place to live, the accumulation of costs just to get in - damage deposit, utility

deposits and other set up costs - makes it difficult," said one participant.

All agreed that somebody needs to step up and take responsibility to ensure there is adequate housing available for all Calgarians.

"We need to see an affordable housing plan in place," added another participant. "This plan must include choices on location, condo communities for single occupants and housing with special needs in mind.

"And it needs to be public housing, not just referrals to a 'slum lord'."

It was also suggested that payment plans or other more manageable deposit agreements might be introduced to ease the high number of expenses associated with moving in.

Transportation was also raised as a key issue. Even with the introduction in January of a half-price transit pass for low-income transit users, several felt they were restricted by the application process. Many were not even aware of the pass, and consequently, would also like to see more emphasis on communicating special services to those who qualify. (Editor's note: The low-income transit pass information form which appears on the Calgary Transit web site appears on this page.)

"Being able to get around lets me give back to the community," said one member of the group. "Access to work, volunteering, education and training; I get to spend more time with family, I feel like I'm contributing to making the community better."

Limited transit service to low-income communities, few, if any, routes to job sites in industrial parks and other employment areas, the absence of a nighttime service for those working late shifts, and limited resources to accommodate for disabilities and other special needs all generated active dialogue as well.

"This lack of service really limits the opportunities for people living on low income," said one participant.

For several in the group, one of the more frustrating things is the compounding negative impact many of these interconnected issues have on one another; for instance, the relationship between jobs, wages, skills training and education.

"There are lots of good positions I'm qualified for," remarked one participant. "But, you need a special certification that I can't afford to complete because I'm stuck in a low wage position that doesn't provide advancement, training or the ability to afford transportation to the classes."

Although the forum was a great opportunity for the group to voice its many frustrations, it also provided the chance to discuss solutions to the problems. A

■ see **LOW-INCOME** on page 15

## Low-Income Monthly Transit Pass

### Am I Eligible?

#### • Before Tax Family Income cannot exceed:

(Based on 2004 or 2005 Federal Tax Notice of Assessment)

<b>1 person</b>	\$15,253	<b>5 persons</b>	\$32,147
<b>2 persons</b>	\$18,989	<b>6 persons</b>	\$36,256
<b>3 persons</b>	\$23,345	<b>7+ persons</b>	\$40,366
<b>4 persons</b>	\$28,343		

- Must be a resident of Calgary for a minimum of 12 months
- Must be 18 years of age or older

### How Do I Apply?

#### Application Forms Available At:

- Online - [www.calgarytransit.com](http://www.calgarytransit.com)
- Calgary Housing Company - 1701 Centre St NW
- Transit Customer Service Centre - 224 7th Ave SW
- City Hall Cashiers
- Village Square and Southland Leisure Centres

**Completed Application Form Must Be Presented In Person By Applicant, Legal Guardian or Trustee to:**

**Calgary Housing Company**  
1701 Centre St NW

#### Application Form Must Be Accompanied With:

- Photo ID
- 2004 or 2005 Federal Tax Notice of Assessment or AISH Health Benefits Stub with "x" Classification

Notification of Low-Income Monthly Transit Pass approval or denial will be mailed.

### What Is The Cost For A Pass?

- \$35 per month
- Eligibility is valid for a one year period.



For further information:

**Visit: [www.calgarytransit.com](http://www.calgarytransit.com) Call: 262-1000**



# ROB'S CORNER

By ROB CHAMPION,  
Vendor #68

**DID YOU KNOW . . .** that Karaoke was invented by the Japanese? That was a surprise to me. Kar - a - o - ke (Pronounced karee okee) is a music entertainment system providing prerecorded accompaniment to popular songs that an amateur performer sings live, usually by following the words on a video screen. But, then you probably already knew that but did you know that the Japanese Karaoke comes from two words? Kara means void or empty and oke means orchestra. Reportedly it is a very popular pastime but I've never tried it and am not likely to do so any time soon.

## FROM OUR SPORTS

**DEPARTMENT . . .** To make it to the playoffs in the so-called new NHL you have to be better than just okay. You have to go out and play a full sixty minutes of hockey each and every night - which will be a challenge for our Calgary Flames who play 25 games in 49 days in the post Olympic lead up to the playoffs. Teams will have to work together and go all out because I don't think money necessar-

ily buys a championship any longer. The Flames proved that in the last playoffs.

## ROB'S SAY OF THE DAY . . .

Some times talking to a friend can be more helpful than going to a shrink or a lawyer.

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

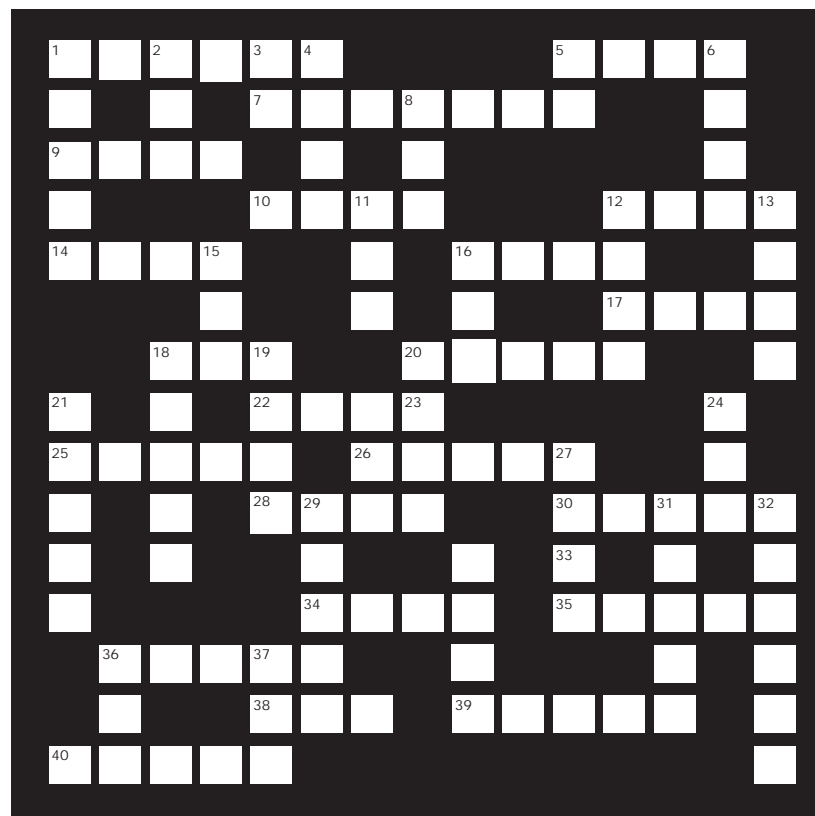
Be mindful of what you say and do today, because you never know when it could come back to haunt you somewhere down the road.

## THE FIRST AND LAST WORD OF THE DAY . . .

Are there any easy answers to how we can make our streets safer? What can society do?

- A. Hire more police officers?
- B. Give stiffer sentences?
- C. Rid our streets of panhandlers? Throw them in jail?
- D. Simply build more affordable housing?
- E. Make education more affordable?
- F. Do a better job when it comes down to solving the poverty problem?
- G. ust turn a blind eye? ■

# PETE'S SCRABBLE CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

1. Kitchen garments
5. Not a few
7. Not insite
9. After me
10. Not stereo
12. Tarzan's mate
14. None at all
16. \_\_\_\_\_ and endo
17. Computer image
18. Smoked salmon
20. Mama bee
22. Light brown
25. Rare gas
26. Cowboy movie
28. Very dry
30. Big band reeds
34. Jules \_\_\_\_\_
35. Let go
36. Kitchen herb
38. Goof up
39. Bread ingredient
40. Aria venue

## DOWN

1. Desi \_\_\_\_\_
2. Tyrannosaurus
3. Bond's nemesis
4. Large wrestler
5. Not you
6. Tall tale
8. Erie Canal
11. Cloistered one
12. Enlist
13. Vast ages
15. Lennon's love
16. Flightless bird
18. Hermit
19. Warrior princess
20. Campus area
21. Precise
23. Royal surname
24. Take to court
27. House top
29. Nomad
31. Not convert
32. Riding gear
33. Winter fluff
36. Waiter's reward
37. \_\_\_\_\_ culpa

## Solutions to January Crossword

```

P G GEYSER
LIABLE MA EE
H ONE ENTER
ALLOW CL ITT
S I R I E I
APE SLUICE L R
E E A ALDA
O COUGAR M ID
NYET O URBANE
S B NO
P B SOUR YOLKS
AGA EN OM N L
T REVOLVE SNEER
IAN E E E D
O SIN REST COT
    
```

## PETE'S THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

*We have just enough religion to make us hate one another, but not enough to make us love one another.*

- Jonathan Swift

If you drink,  
that's your business.

If you want to

**STOP,**  
that's ours.

**CALL ALCOHOLICS  
ANONYMOUS**

Office: #2, 4015 - 1st Street S. E. , Calgary

**777-1212**

## Low-Income

■ continued from page 13

common answer to many of the issues was improved understanding and support from the broader community. Some participants even went as far as to recommend that local policy makers need to actually experience living on a low income to truly understand what it would take to create a caring, sustainable community.

"City council members should work a month, or even a day, at minimum wage, in a wheelchair, in a low income neighbourhood, away from transit routes and work," suggested one participant. "Then they would get it."

Many also proposed that they, themselves, could have the power, or at least a better chance to change things, provided they had equal opportunity to access all the social, economic, cultural, health and educational resources and benefits many Calgarians take for granted.

"If we got a little help, to help ourselves, if we just had the capacity to get out there and promote a better understanding of the situation we are in, I think Calgarians would realize a great community is only possible if we can all contribute."

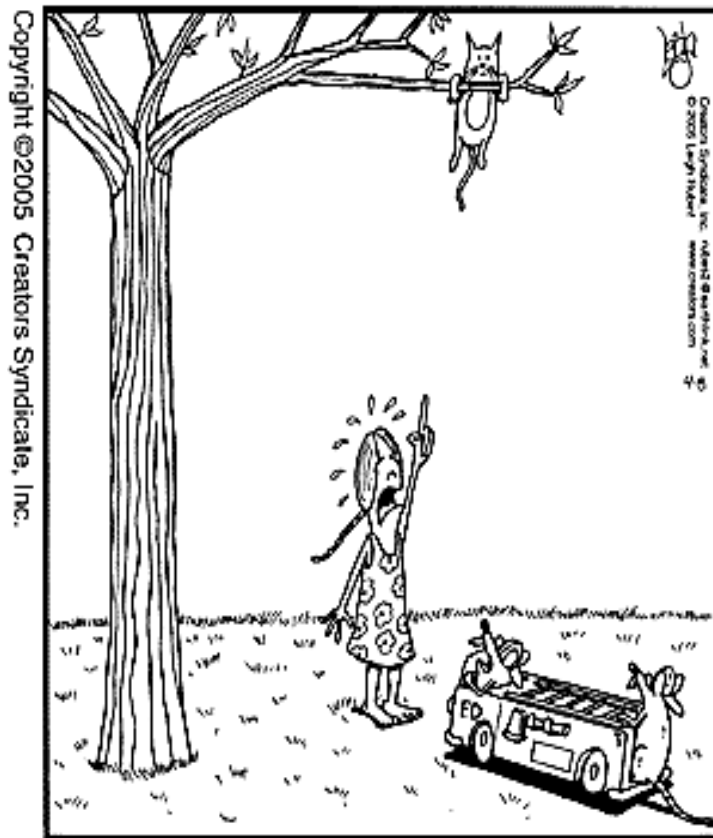
The Sustainable Calgary Society promotes, encourages and supports community level actions and initiatives that move Calgary towards a sustainable future. For more information on Sustainable Calgary and the Citizen's Agenda Project please visit [www.sustainablecalgary.ca](http://www.sustainablecalgary.ca) ■

*(Ramona Johnston is Manager of Vibrant Communities Calgary, a local non-profit poverty-reduction organization.)*

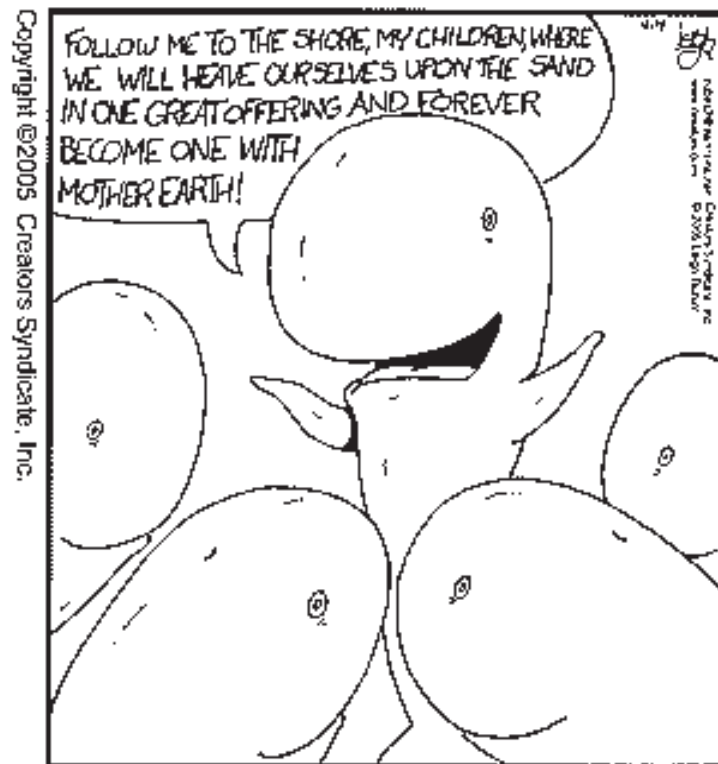
## Vendor's troubled youth

■ continued from page 2

from the Manitoba Youth Centre, Shane stole his stepfather's car again. Shane was again taken to MYC and put into a cottage called "Knights". The MYC had nine cottages: Knights, Taurus, Phoenix, Partners, OC (open custody) Five, OC Four, SC (secure custody) Three, OC 2 and Nightingales. Shane became Homeless because of a combination of things. He was born one-month premature and has Cerebral Palsy and a learning disability. Shane's vendor number is 190. He sells on 7th Avenue and 1st Street, SW and his hours are Monday-Friday between 9:30am and 11:00am then from 3:00pm to 7:00pm. He also sells on 6th Avenue between MacLeod, Tr. and 1st Street, SE near St. Francis Roman Catholic Church between 11:30am and 1 p.m. ■



"Well, this certainly poses a bit of an ethical dilemma, eh, Frank?"



The frightening truth behind mass beachings: whale cults.

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

## Harper...

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the University of Toronto, preparing engineering students for job interviews. She reported it to Human Resources Canada and had her earnings deducted from her EI cheque before she'd even been paid.

In the past four months, Evans has had plenty of time to think about what is wrong with Canada's EI program.

- The biggest problem is that benefit levels have been frozen for 10 years. The maximum weekly payment of \$413 was set by long-retired employment minister Lloyd Axworthy three governments ago when he overhauled the system. The cost of living has gone up by 20.2 per cent since then.

There's no need for stinginess. The government has collected \$48 billion more in EI premiums than it has paid out in

benefits over the past decade.

- The second problem — which doesn't apply to Evans — is that the majority of Canadians who lose their jobs (78 per cent in Toronto) don't qualify for EI benefits. They either haven't accumulated enough hours of paid employment or they work in uninsured sectors of the economy.

At a time when casual and contract work is the norm for millions, the EI system offers them no protection.

- The third problem is that job training — trumpeted by Ottawa as the solution to unemployment — is spotty and underfunded. Availability fluctuates with the budgetary cycle. People are pushed into programs for which they are totally unsuited. If their benefits run out midway through a course, they're on their own. "That, plus the 25 per cent upfront cost is a pretty strong deterrent," Evans says.

## Student homelessness project

■ continued from page 7

ly have or might need. Depending on how long you are in need, your circumstances can change. How long can your sister help you? How long can your parents keep you in their house? There are things we don't know until you live it," Speight said.

Rakowski added: "Not only is there losing a pay cheque or job but there is that one bad day that can change your life, too. There is book called Fly Away Home which is about a father and daughter who live at the airport. His wife suddenly passed away. They spent all their savings

on health care and what not and suddenly she died. Emotionally he had a tough time dealing with it. They lost their place. He ended up living at the airport.

"It was such a special book because it took someone that we might classify as a normal person who had a decent job and was providing and showed what can happen so suddenly. I think of what would happen if my wife passed away and I had to take care of my daughter," Rakowski said.

Speight said: "We all guess about how we would deal with things but until you are in the situation. I think of myself as a

very resilient person. I have had things happen to me where I look back and think wow I really handled that well but what is the one thing that is going to put me over the edge? I don't know. What is that one thing that is going to put anybody over the edge?"

Evans wonders, who can?

Cleaning up this mess would be a relatively simple task. Employment insurance falls entirely within federal jurisdiction, unlike most social programs. There is money in the fund. The deficiencies are glaringly obvious. And there is no question that Canada needs skilled workers.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper wouldn't face resistance from any of the opposition parties. He'd have the support of business. He might even make friends in some unlikely places. ■

*(Carol Goar is a Toronto Star columnist who writes regularly about social issues. This column was published Feb. 15 in the Star.)*

Rakowski added: "Many of us do have our supports, our families. We know that there people out there who are behind us and would support us if all of a sudden we lost our jobs or some other tragedy struck. I also know there are so many people who just don't have that level of support that I know we do. ■

# Who's sheltered?

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"The effect of it was probably one of the most profound things I've ever seen," she added. "There will always be a memory of that day.

"Your attitude about another human being was thrown in your face. It certainly created an awareness. In fact, I think it should be repeated at churches everywhere. It's enlightening to know yourself, how you really react to those situations."

Myrick, 58, began his deception innocently.

A few parishioners dress up as their favorite saints as a teaching tool for the church's celebration of All Saints Day on the Sunday after the Nov. 1 feast day. Myrick figured that he'd go as Lazarus, the poor man in Christ's parable who longed for scraps of food at the gate of a feasting rich man. Myrick retrieved a backpack from the church trash and stuffed it to overflowing with McDonald's bags. He cut the fingers off work gloves. He bought old clothes at a Goodwill store and sewed fake hair from a Halloween mask inside the rim of a baseball hat so it would curl onto his ears. And he wrapped himself in an Army blanket.

Keeping his head down, he watched parishioners from the corners of his eyes and refrained from speaking so his voice wouldn't give him away. He figured people would recognize him quickly anyway.

They didn't. And the living parable played out beyond Myrick's plan.

## Fears all around

Myrick praises his 160 parishioners as being exceptionally generous.

They donate their own money and they have long endorsed a policy of having the church tithed 10 per cent of the donations and investment earnings it receives to help struggling churches and needy people. That tallies about \$25,000 annually and includes \$5,400 to sponsor one of the 12 rooms at Twin Oaks.

A large majority of the parishioners are



Father Myrick teaches child about her church.

retirees, he said. Many are – or were – blue-collar workers.

Myrick is convinced that many of them ignored him out of fear – the force, he says, that makes parishes self-centered, divides denominations, fuels wars and prevents clergy and bishops from boldly leading their people to a more hopeful, dynamic faith.

Fear was a factor for him, too, as he lay on the church steps and thought about the narrow dividing line between self-sufficiency and homelessness.

"I know when I was on the steps out there I was getting angry seeing my friends pass me by," Myrick said. "I am not a wealthy person. I realized it wouldn't take much and I could get in that same situation, and I couldn't count on those people anymore. And that was frightening." Last year, Myrick became part of a renewed effort to fill the gaps in emergency housing, public transportation and other needs of the homeless in Walworth County under a Continuum of Care Committee organized by Community Action. The issue of whether an agency or churches would take on the burden of starting and funding another shelter remained unresolved until Myrick was galvanized by his impersonation experience.

He sent letters to some 70 area churches, held two meetings and pushed for immediate action as December started out colder than normal.

## Others help

Pastor Robert Bardin of The Chapel on the Hill near Lake Geneva responded so quickly he did not yet have his elders' approval and was prepared to open his house to the homeless if they did not back him up. Six other churches agreed to rotate as shelter sites – Baptist, Lutheran, Reformed, Roman Catholic, United Church of Christ, Methodist – with donations or other help from a few additional churches.

Myrick's church was one of the first to sign up. His congregation donated \$500 and lined up volunteers to cook and to provide overnight staffing at their site. Some parishioners said that would have happened anyway. But Myrick's impersonation may have increased the desire to do more than give money.

"Being in a small town like this, we don't run into things like that," said Patty Hammett, 80, a parishioner who plans to offer to wash shelter bedding. "We're so sheltered living in Delavan that something like this was really good for us." ■

*(This article was first published in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on February 5. It is published in Calgary Street Talk as part of the ecumenical endeavours of Christ Episcopal Church of Delavan, Wisconsin and with the assistance of Deb Weber and Roberta Karstetter, members of the church's staff.)*



Father William Myrick posed as a homeless man and gave his congregation a lot to think about.

Your attitude about another human being was thrown in your face. It certainly created an awareness.

~ Jody Stickney, a church member

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