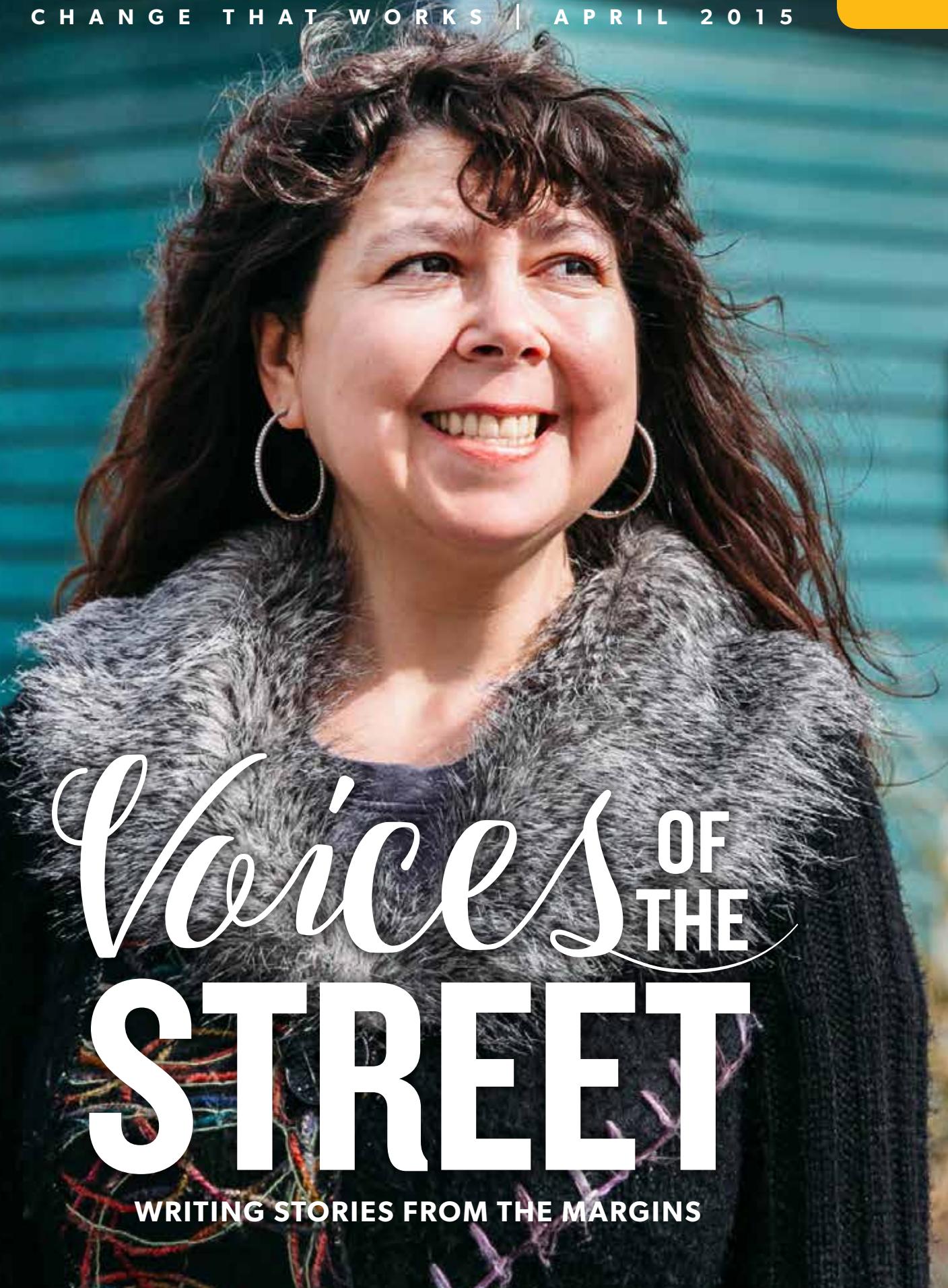




MEGAPHONE

CHANGE THAT WORKS | APRIL 2015

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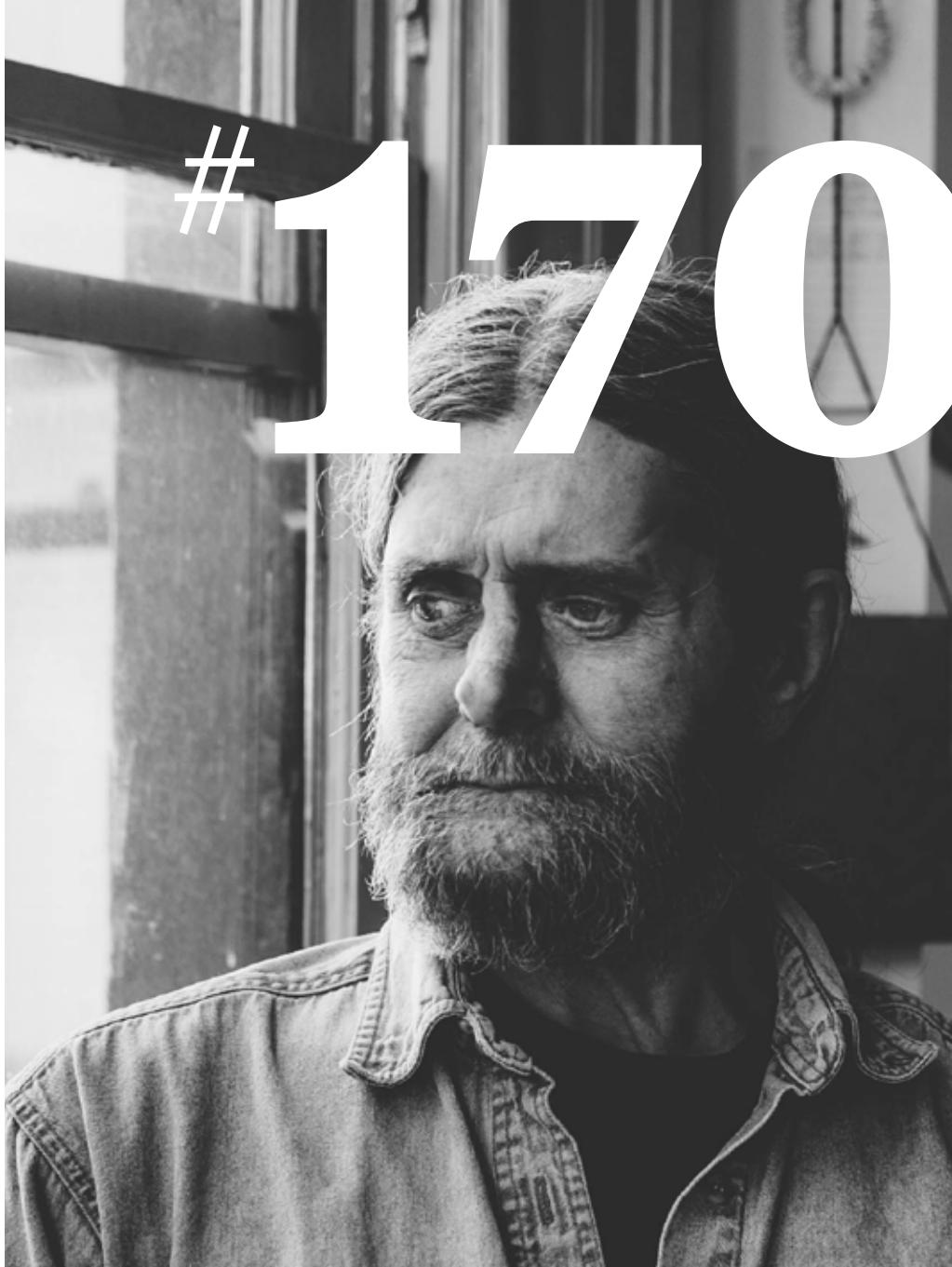
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Our goal is to provide a voice
and an economic opportunity to
homeless and low-income people
while building grassroots support
to end poverty.

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The minimum wage is going up in B.C., but is it enough to lift people out of poverty? News editor Katie Hyslop looks into recent changes to the minimum wage and income assistance supports. She also explores what new upmarket development in Chinatown means to the low-income seniors who have lived there for years.

Remembering Danny Maloney

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Danny sold Megaphone for years on the corner of 4th and Vine and became one of the most beloved, respected people in Kitsilano. Last month, he passed away. Danny's customers, fellow vendors, and Megaphone staff remember a kind, generous man who made unforgettable contributions to the street newspaper movement and to the lives of the many he met on the street.

On anti-heroes and imperfection

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When 25-year-old Raziel Reid won the Governor General's award for his first novel last year, he became the youngest author to receive the national distinction. His book inspired a petition for the Canada Council for the Arts to rescind the award—some felt the content was too salacious for its young adult audience. Emi Sasagawa unpacks the controversy and considers what's missing in young adult fiction: "a full-rounded, complicated" protagonist, according to Reid.

Voices of the Street

This year marks the fifth anniversary of Voices of the Street, a literary anthology Megaphone has published annually since 2011. The book, which hits the streets at the end of this month, features poetry and prose from Megaphone's community of inner-city residents who share writing with us all year. We spotlight three notable Voices of the Street authors who share their work, their life histories, and how creative self-expression has helped them through life's darkest moments.

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Thanks to the city's adoption of the progressive "housing first" model, street homelessness is nearly negligible in Medicine Hat, Alberta. We speak with Ted Clugston, the conservative mayor who's changed his mind about tackling homelessness—and who hopes other municipalities will, too.

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Carson Ting left a fast-paced life in advertising to spraypaint buildings for a living. Today, he's one of Vancouver's rising muralists to watch. Jesi Carson catches up on the unlikely rebel who took a gamble on his own artistic potential and struck gold.

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B.C.'s capital city is the first Canadian municipality to introduce a youth poet laureate program designed to engage young people with the written word. Victoria's three youth poet laureates share their talents and wisdom with Jamila Douhaibi.

Cover Photography

By Jackie Dives

About the photo

For Loralee Ave Maria Judge, writing has been a powerful, empowering means to make sense of her experiences. She is one of 31 published authors in Voices of the Street, Megaphone's fifth annual literary anthology. The book launches at the end of April, with a special reading event May 7. Read more about her and fellow Voices writers like Fred Miller, pictured here, on page 16.



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**Jackie Dives**

Photographer

Jackie is a self-taught documentary and portrait photographer living in Vancouver, BC. For four years, she photographed women giving birth to bring attention to a misunderstood topic. She is a two-time prize winner at the annual 12x12 Film Photo Competition, and the 2011 recipient of a two-week artist residency scholarship with the Metchosin International School of Art. Her work has been featured by The Tyee, the Huffington Post, Vice, Sad Mag, the birth journal Squat, the Daily Mail, My Modern Metropolis, the Medical Observer, Feature Shoot, Beautiful/Decay, and Disney. Current projects include a photo essay exploring women's body hair and a series documenting her brother's recovery from a heroin addiction. She is working as the principal photographer for Megaphone's Voices of the Street.

**Emi Sasagawa**

Writer

After more than a decade living in Latin America, Europe and Asia, Emi moved to Vancouver to begin a Masters in Journalism at UBC. Her interests lie in social movements and indigenous rights (particularly territorial repossession claims in Brazil, where she is from). She started writing short features for Megaphone in 2014. In addition to age-appropriate interests, Emi is also passionate about 3x2 Lego bricks, classic anime series, and medieval knight figurines.

**Jenn McDermid**

Writer

Jenn has been working and volunteering in the Downtown Eastside since graduating from UBC in 2011. She has been a volunteer with Megaphone for over a year, and is currently writing the author biographies that will appear in Voices of the Street. Her involvement with Megaphone stems from a strong interest in issues pertaining to social justice and community building and a general enthusiasm for the organization. Outside of Megaphone, Jenn is a graduate student at SFU and runs the Downtown Eastside Women's Art Collective.

**Jackie Wong**

Editor

As Megaphone's editor, Jackie works with writers, designers, and photographers to produce the magazine. She coordinates Megaphone's creative writing workshop program and works with vendors and community members to publish their writing. She's currently working to produce the forthcoming edition of Voices of the Street, Megaphone's literary anthology. Outside of Megaphone, Jackie teaches creative writing at UBC, is helping edit a cookbook about the cuisine of Haida Gwaii, and is jurying the 2015 DOXA documentary festival. She enjoys reading fiction, running, and cooking in tiny kitchens.

Megaphone is published every month by Street Corner Media Foundation.

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❶ Fred Miller displays a thank-you gift he received from elementary school students in Richmond, whom he visited to share his experiences with homelessness. Publishing his work in Megaphone, he says, has been an empowering experience that has compelled him to become more active in his community. Photo: Jackie Dives.

Voices of the Street

At the end of April, Megaphone will release our annual Voices of the Street literary issue. We're always incredibly proud of this special edition. It's an exclusive collection of stories and poems written by vendors and members of our inner-city community writing workshops over the past year.

Along with showcasing some exceptional literary talent, the pieces in Voices of the Street give us insight into how social and economic issues intersect to unnecessarily marginalize people in Vancouver and Victoria. The stories help us better understand our neighbours living with addiction, mental health concerns, and in poverty. The writing also suggests what community-driven solutions are possible to meaningfully address challenging social issues.

While Megaphone vendors will still sell Voices of the Street to their customers for \$5, this year's edition (our fifth!) will have a few tweaks. A new designer is giving the project a fresh look. To fit in more content, this year's edition will feature more pages. And we're going to feature portraits and profiles of the authors, so readers can learn more about the intrepid writers and poets in their community.

I love being a part of Voices of the Street. It's an absolute joy to hold the final product in my hands—a beautifully designed, bound book that features such powerful, personal stories. But the best part of this project is that it gives a platform to people whose voices have been silenced in our community. For those who have been ignored, knowing that others are reading their story in Megaphone can change their lives.

Megaphone first met Fred Miller (featured on page 16) through our writing workshop at Onsite, the residential treatment centre above the Insite supervised injection facility in Vancouver. Once homeless, he's Fred is now in stable housing. Having a creative outlet through Megaphone was a significant part of his transformation.

"The Onsite writing workshop helped me so much in taking a hold of life and trying to make a change. It's been one of those steadfast things to get me there," says Fred. "Writing has impacted my life tremendously. I believe it now when someone says you're a good guy. Before I wouldn't accept it. People are finally getting the real Fred Miller. And I like me."

Getting published in Megaphone helps writers feel validated and gives them a chance to talk about challenging life experiences, including poverty, mental illness, addiction, and the extraordinary resilience that can come from living through life's darkest moments. This is how we create social change. ▶



Sean Condon
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To push past the poverty line, more change is required

By Katie Hyslop

It's almost impossible to support oneself, nevermind a partner and family, on a minimum-wage job that pays \$10.25 an hour.

But in the Capital Regional District (CRD) on southern Vancouver Island, scraping by with very little is something many families face, whether they're making minimum wage, on income assistance, or working jobs that barely crack the living wage. Thirty-five per cent of all two-parent, two-child families don't make the region's family living wage of \$18.90 an hour. And nearly 50,000 people—that's 13 per cent of the 360,000 people living in the region—earn below the poverty line.

Poverty among the working poor is widespread on Vancouver Island. "But it's even worse for people on income assistance, also known as welfare," says Rupert Downing, executive director of Victoria's Community Social Planning Council. Despite the fact that the cost of living has gone up over the past eight years, income assistance rates haven't increased since 2007. "There has to be a phased increase in the income assistance rates and the disability assistance rates," he says.

Last month, the B.C. government announced small changes to the province's minimum wage and to income assistance for families.

Starting in September, the province will index minimum wage to B.C.'s Consumer Price Index and make it retroactive to 2012. That means minimum wage will go up to \$10.45 an hour. Serving wages will increase to \$9.20 an hour.

For families on income assistance, there's a \$200 increase on earning exemptions. That means families receiving income assistance can now earn up to \$400 in addition to their government payments. If they have a child with a disability, families can earn up to \$500.

As well, the new Single Parent Employment Initiative covers tuition and books for a 12-month training program for an in-demand job, in addition to transportation and full-childcare costs for single parents on income or disability assistance.

Those funding announcements arrived on the heels of a February announcement that the provincial government would stop clawing back child support from parents on income or disability assistance.

But those changes are too small and are not indexed to pull people out of poverty, says Downing. Besides, he says, they were bound to happen eventually.

"At some point, somebody would have made a complaint to the Supreme Court about those regulations," he says. "And the B.C. government realized they would have to deal with that situation to avoid a really high cost in legal fees."

Downing would like to see both B.C.'s minimum wage and income assistance rates doing more to lift people above the poverty line. Another Cascadian city has done it, he says: Seattle city council voted to increase the citywide minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2018.

And there are systemic issues that the new minimum-wage and income-assistance changes fail to address. Downing notes that 45 per cent—nearly half—of all Canadians who live below Statistic's Canada's low-income cut-off rate are actually employed full-time.

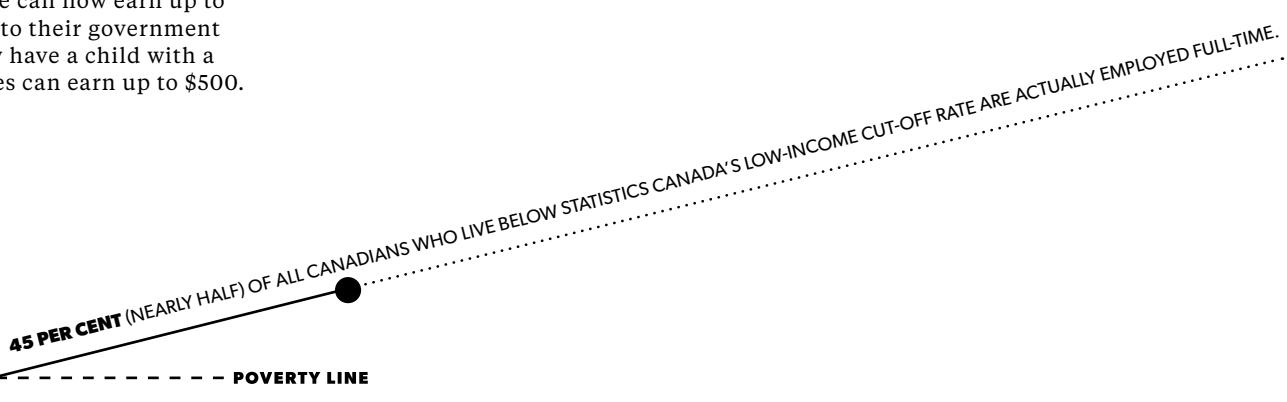
For people without jobs, "there is no way for people earning [B.C.'s] level of income [assistance] to be able to acquire the assets" necessary to find employment, says Downing. That includes accessing transit, job training, or business capital.

Government estimates more than 10,600 families are eligible for the earnings exemption increases announced last month. Yet Stephen Portman, interim executive director of Together Against Poverty Society in Victoria, says less than eight per cent of people on income assistance make additional money.

"And if they do, it's rarely to the maximum level," he said. "Most people are on income assistance because their number-one challenge is earning money."

Portman wants B.C. income and disability assistance rates significantly increased, then tied to the Consumer Price Index. But in order to solve poverty for people earning an income, he believes we need a national poverty line that no one should be able to slip beneath without the federal government topping up their income.

The alternative is what Portman sees as an increasingly unhelpful government system. "People living in poverty no longer see the ministry of social development as a place where you go for help," he says. "It's a place that protects the public purse and makes you feel inferior for needing supports." □



Housing advocates decry Chinatown's Yaletown turn

By Katie Hyslop

“Located at the corner of Main and Keefer Street in historic Chinatown, a new community emerges that juxtaposes the honest traditional architecture of the past with remarkable modern design of today.” So says the photo caption accompanying an architectural illustration of the Keefer Block development on its promotional website helmed by Solterra Development Corporation.

While the Keefer Block is located in Chinatown’s historic heart, it’s clear that new occupants of the commercial-residential condo tower won’t be from around there. The Seymour Street presentation centre for the new condo tower is notably located on the cusp of upscale Yaletown.

Ongoing change in Chinatown is concerning to people like King-mong Chan, who remembers visiting his grandmother in Vancouver’s Chinatown as a child. Now in his mid-20s, Chan is working in his grandmother’s old neighbourhood as a community organizer with the Carnegie Community Action Project.

He has been organizing Chinatown residents to challenge developments in the neighbourhood for over a year. If Chinatown isn’t protected, he says an important cultural resource and bridge between generations could be lost.

“If [Chinatown] changes to the new Yaletown, then the youth will have less and less connection to Chinatown,” he says. “It might cause lost opportunities for other people to connect back with a Chinatown that is current, organic, and living, and not just a tourist or historical place.”

Last month, Chan and several allies presented Mayor Gregor Robertson with a 1,200-signature petition. The petition supported a temporary halt on new Chinatown market developments until residents had a chance to review them. It also called for specialized zoning in Chinatown that required 50 per cent low-income units in future market developments. But the mayor refused to comply.

“[Mayor Robertson told] us that they were going to make sure that all the developments that get approved are



• The Keefer Block development is one of the newest additions to Vancouver’s rapidly-upscaling Chinatown. While its arrival will bring new affluent residents and shoppers to the area, the slow retreat of housing affordable to the neighbourhood’s low-income seniors continues. Photo: Solterra Development Corporation website.

Chinatown Economic Revitalization Strategy. “And when he says that he actually means only design.” To Chan, the mayor cares more about how the neighbourhood looks than who can afford to live there.

Chinese clan association buildings are a rare bastion of affordable housing, Chan adds—seniors living in them pay less than \$500 a month. “If something happens to them and they’re no longer inhabitable, then [seniors] are going to have to move out of the area,” he says. “They’re not going to be able to afford the new units, definitely, and there’s pretty much no social housing for them.” The slow retreat of low-income housing stock for seniors, Chan says, is something the mayor “doesn’t want to deal with.”

Melissa Fong spent much of her childhood in Chinatown during the 1980s and ‘90s visiting her father’s family clinic where the Keefer Block stands now.

Today she’s researching Chinatown redevelopment strategies and their implementation across North America as part of a PhD thesis from the University of Toronto. She’s also the president of the board of directors of Centre A, the Vancouver International Centre for Contemporary Asian Art.

“It is unfortunate that the need for social housing is being downplayed,” she says, “because much of Chinatown, and the history of Chinatown, is working-class.”

Fong also notes that community resistance to Chinatown development doesn’t paint a full picture of the neighbourhood. “Some of the older generation would never support

Chinatown residents are also operating from a history of oppression. “When some people were fighting for height increases and re-zoning, that was a response to the disinvestment that happened for so many years,” she explains. “They saw this [new development potential] as potential for reinvestment.”

The situation in Vancouver’s Chinatown isn’t unique to this city. Other Chinatowns across North America have started to disappear, Fong adds.

“It’s important Vancouver’s Chinatown is recognized for its distinction as a place that was and is known as a place to find work or start a business for a diverse group of racialized and marginalized people,” she says. ▶

Vendor Memorial

Danny Maloney, 1952-2015

Remembering a beloved Megaphone vendor

Stories compiled by Megaphone staff

Longtime Megaphone vendor Danny Maloney passed away from lung disease last month. Since that time, Megaphone's office and social media channels have been flooded with messages from friends, customers, and family members grieving the loss of a man whose dedication to the street newspaper movement and to the neighbourhood where he sold papers is unforgettable.

Danny sold the magazine for more than two decades, starting with Spare Change in the early '90s and sticking with the paper through its many changes. He also sold Hope in Shadows calendars. When the street paper relaunched as Megaphone in 2008, Danny was a strong veteran presence who helped give it a new life.

Selling the paper had a profound impact on Danny. When he started, he struggled with addiction, poverty, and mental illness. The paper changed his life.

"I really had no outlet until I started working as a vendor," he said. "It gave me the chance to interact and socialize with people and to turn my life around."

He had a lasting impact on his many customers in Kitsilano. He was warm and kind to everyone he met, connecting with people outside the Whole Foods Market on 4th and Vine. He remembered dozens of people by name, looking out for them as much as they looked out for him.

Originally from Toronto, Danny flourished as a vendor in Vancouver after many hard years early in life. He was fuelled by the compassion and love he received from his customers in Kitsilano.

Megaphone and his customers gave Danny something he never had before—a community and a sense of purpose. Working as a vendor was a huge boost to his self-esteem. The work allowed him to finally see himself as something he always was: valuable.

Danny was incredibly generous. He gave away anything extra he had to those in greater need. And despite his barriers, he was always there for others when they needed him.

He will be remembered for his sweetness and his big smile. He will be deeply missed. ▶



Customer Stories

"His gentle kindness gave me a blessing even in passing on so many days, and I will miss his kind, shy and humble smile. I am grateful to have shared the time we had, and the long hug, and the opportunity to thank you, on our last time crossing paths. The world was a better place because of you, and I'll do my best to carry some of your spirit with me."

-Suzanne Jolly

"Very blessed to have had the privilege of knowing Danny, and will keep him forever in my heart. Thanks to everyone at Megaphone for sharing love and encouragement with, and for, this wonderful man. Rest In Peace Danny Maloney. Xo."

-Bif Naked

"He brightened up that street corner in ways I didn't even realize until his absence. Thank you for bringing him to our neighbourhood, and for continuing to provide jobs for low-income people. Megaphone is such a simple gesture that achieves so much. Thanks."

-Brit Bachmann

• A vendor profile about Danny from the 1990s, when he sold Spare Change, a street newspaper that preceded Megaphone.



Vendor Memories

PATRICK Y.

"I live at 7th and Fir. I try to do as much walking as possible. I was at 4th and Vine one evening. I was walking on the south side of 4th. Danny usually sells on the north side, but he was across the street helping a woman in a wheelchair getting across. No one else would help this woman—she had an electric wheelchair, her power was running out, and the streets were slippery. He was out there seven days a week, 10, 12 hours a day. A lot of people respected him."

Patrick Y. sells Megaphone in Kerrisdale at W. 41st and Yew Street and East Boulevard and W. 42nd.

RICHARD MORRIS

"Danny was selling Megaphone for as long as I've been here. He'd ask me where I was gonna be and he'd bring the papers to me. If I said I'd be on First and Commercial, he'd bring the paper to me. If I would be at Broadway and Maple, he'd bring the paper to me. He was a nice guy. He was a top salesman. I tell you what, you go to 4th and Vine and look at that wall. They got flowers there for him. They let people write and leave notes, stick it to the windows...They got pencils there. People obviously liked him. He was there for 20 years. He was part of the community. People say he knew all of them by name, always got a smile on his face."

Richard sells Megaphone at Broadway and Carnarvon.

RAY SOUCY

"He was always friendly. He always helped out our paper. He got along well with everyone and sold a lot. He had a huge following in Kitsilano. People really cared about him."

Ray sells Megaphone at Burrard and Hastings.

Customers have placed flowers, notes, and memories in front of Danny's former vending spot in Kitsilano at 4th and Vine. Photo courtesy of former Megaphone editor Amy Juschka.



BOB DENNIS

"I first met Danny in 1994 at the old Spare Change office in the 200 block of East Pender Street. He was getting the reputation of a top seller. Danny came to work for Street Corner before it became Megaphone. He used to be the circulation manager. He was good to his vendors, forming friendships with most. In the summer of 2004, I was in the hospital. Danny was up to see me several times. He was well thought of when he also worked as a counsellor for the Mental Patients Association (now the MPA Society) from 1999 to 2007, where he made friends. People will remember his smile, wit, kindness, and friendliness. Rest in peace, Danny. We miss you."

Bob sells Megaphone at 19th and Cambie in front of Choices Market. ▶

A memorial celebrating Danny's life will take place at the Kitsilano Community Centre (2690 Larch St.) on **Tuesday, April 7, 12-1pm**.

The perfectly imperfect anti-hero

Raziel Reid writes between the lines

By Emi Sasagawa

What's the cost of freedom? To Jude Rothesay, the fictional character at the heart of the 2014 novel *When Everything Feels Like the Movies*, the cost is his very life.

For years, Jude's story existed only as a file on 25-year-old Vancouver author Raziel Reid's computer desktop. "He wouldn't have been happy with that," Reid says, smiling, of his larger-than-life protagonist.

Reid created Jude four years ago when he started writing this, his first novel. Jude is unapologetically gay and desperate to be famous. He's bullied and ostracized by his classmates. "Jude is an emblem of the isolation faced by young people," Reid explains.

Reid was moved to bring Jude to life after Larry Forbes King was murdered in 2008, when Reid himself was 18. King, then a 15-year-old boy living in California, was killed by a classmate after King asked him to be his Valentine. "[Larry] had so many star qualities. He was brave, bold and in your face," he says. "I wanted to create a narrator like him, who is a star."

Vancouver's Arsenal Pulp Press published *When Everything Feels Like the Movies* last year. It won the 2014 Governor General's (GG) Award for Children's Literature for books targeting people between 12 and 18 years old. Reid, then 24, was the youngest-ever author to receive this honour. The book was also selected for 2015's Canada Reads, the annual "battle of the books" competition held by the CBC.

Despite the honours, the novel's provocative language and content was met with criticism. The controversy that ensued brought the question of freedom to the fore: freedom of choice, freedom of speech, freedom to read, and freedom of the press.

The attack

After Reid received the award, National Post columnist Barbara Kay denounced his novel as an inappropriate choice for the GG given "Jude's sexual yearnings, masturbating, fantasizing... and voyeurism"—which, according to her, constituted the bulk of the narrative.

The novel's language, in particular, came under attack. In her column, Kay

• *When Everything Feels Like the Movies* was selected for inclusion in the 2015 edition of Canada Reads, CBC's annual "battle of the books" competition.

referred to incendiary passages like "I asked the doctor if he could suck out some fat when he took the fetus," and "I have to make the Hemsworth brothers as wet as they make me." Kay treated those quotes in a manner that suggested they summed up the content of the entire book.

Kay accused Jude of being a liar, a thief, a sex-teaser of strange men, a stalker, a masochist, and a narcissist. In doing so, she reduced Jude to his most outrageous and shocking characteristics—just like his classmates had done for years.

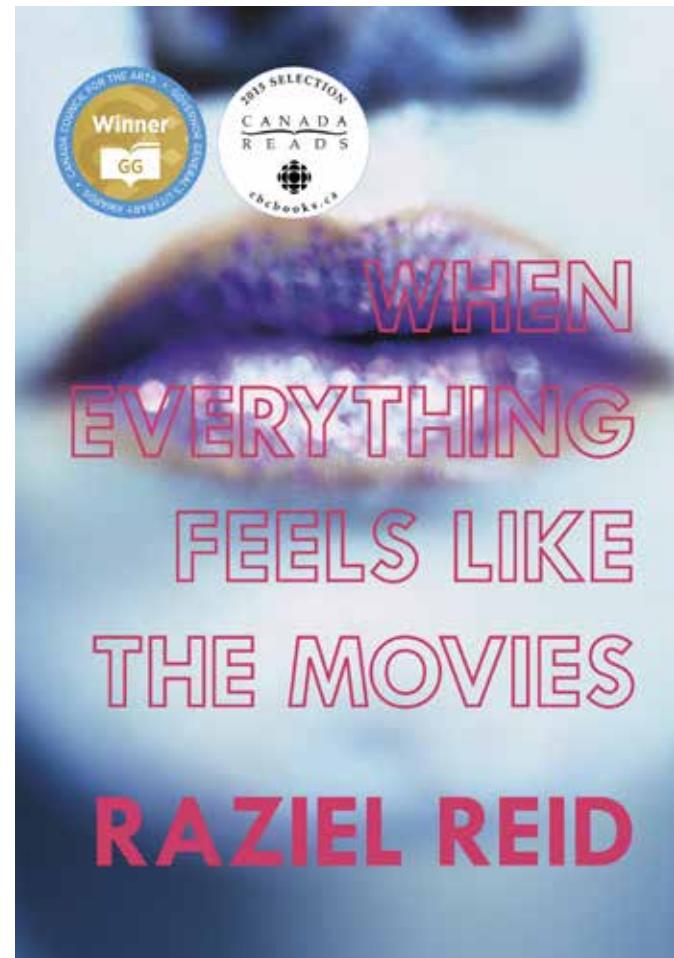
In concluding her column, Kay wrote, "The message I draw—and think young people will too—is that the "authentic" narcissism of queer/transgender identity exempts one from the obligation to mature."

Kay's column prompted an online petition to the Canada Council for the Arts to have Reid's award rescinded because his novel "is not what we as parents, grandparents, educators and fellow authors consider good literature for teens." Many fellow young-adult writers signed it.

Despite the backlash, the Canada Council for the Arts, the organization responsible for awarding the GG, stood by its choice.

The response

Reid believes his book shows a side of life that has never been represented in young adult fiction. In his mind, he's depicting a culture as it is. "It's extreme because it's told from Jude's point of view," Reid says. "As a narrator, Jude is hyperbolic, dramatic, over-the-top and not the most dependable."



Jude lives in a world where attention is mistaken for love and affection—a world where the worst thing that can happen to someone is to be forgotten or obliterated. Exaggeration and shock are merely the tactics he uses to stay in the spotlight for as often and as long as possible.

"Every now and then I felt like Norma Desmond because the spotlight would fade, and I would be forgotten," says Jude. "That's when I would wear the most makeup, or throw myself to the floor in the middle of the hallway like I had just tumbled out of a limousine after snorting an eight ball."

Shortly after Kay's petition to rescind the award began, UBC Creative Writing department chair and novelist Steven Galloway fired back with an open letter shaming fellow writers for their response to Reid's book.

"You may not agree with the content of his book, but if you don't value free speech and think that transgendered youth have a place in literature, and if you don't understand that your viewpoint is not absolute and privileged above other voices, then you don't deserve to call yourself a writer... I am ashamed of you, and ashamed to share a profession with you," Galloway wrote.

Reid's book touches upon important under-reported social issues beyond sex. The author says he wrote the novel to break down barriers—between elders and young people, queer and straight communities—and not just to provoke and shock gratuitously.

“A lot of people think that because Canada is a progressive country that legalized same-sex marriage in 2005, all the work is done and we can sit back and equality is a given. We are a polite country, so we don’t show our discrimination. It’s done in more subtle ways.”

Raziel Reid

• If his protagonist Jude could see the ruckus he’s creating, he’d say “‘Haters are makers’ — every time you hate me, I sell more books,” says author Raziel Reid. Photo: Tallulah Photography.



Much of the criticism, he says, stems from what he calls “polite prejudice.” “A lot of people think that because Canada is a progressive country that legalized same-sex marriage in 2005, all the work is done and we can sit back and equality is a given,” he says. “We are a polite country, so we don’t show our discrimination. It’s done in more subtle ways.”

Reid and Galloway came together at a Freedom to Read Week event at Simon Fraser University in late February. They talked about censorship, freedom, the responsibility of writers to stand up when people start telling them what they can and cannot write about, and what does or doesn’t deserve an award.

“Revoking an award due to moral offence is censorship,” Galloway told the audience. “No child has ever been corrupted by a book.”

The UBC professor accused Canadian writers of being gutless for not speaking out in support of Reid’s work. “I am stunned that in 2015 we need to have a Freedom to Read Week in Canada,” he said.

The surface level

In a piece published by *The Walrus*, Reid explained that Kay’s criticism reinforced his motivation for writing the novel in the first place. He wrote it with the intention “to educate people and open their eyes to a world and a character they may have not understood before.”

Even the book title, *When Everything Feels Like the Movies*, alludes to the emotional disengagement made possible by living out so many parts of our lives onscreen. “I wanted to zoom in on something I think is happening with Generation Y, which is this detachment to sex, violence and drugs because they’re constantly being bombarded with it growing up, on their phone, their computer or the TV,” he says. “They are so desensitized.”

Buoyed by a social media-addled culture

that creates instant drama, teenagers understand that Facebook likes and Twitter retweets equal attention and can create a firestorm. “I swear, she was only happy if there was something nasty written about her behind a hashtag,” Jude says of his best friend Angela.

Jude is about more than his high heels, his crude language, or his provocative behaviour. Ultimately, he is a kid who needs and deserves to be loved. But it’s hard to realize this when you can’t see past his super-glam, salty-tongued exterior.

And this is where Barbara Kay’s understanding falls short. By over-focusing on the obvious—Jude’s overt sexuality, his sassy mouth, his take-no-prisoners approach to life and love—Reid’s detractors are missing the point.

“They’re so hung up on the gay sex and the language that they can’t see anything else,” Reid says. “There are so many layers that are being missed because people are so fucking surface level.” When critics can’t see Jude past his sexual identity, they are mirroring the behaviour of his oppressors in the book.

Early in the novel, Jude says, “I never wanted to be home. It made me mental. But I never wanted to be anywhere, really. That was the problem; everywhere was the same. I was the same, no matter where I went.”

Jude is as fantastical as he is a compulsive fantasizer. He’s constantly trying to escape from his reality: his abusive stepfather, his absent mother, his unforgiving peers and the small-town mentality that works constantly to oppress and erase him.

His biting wit creates a brash and prickly surface representation. To see Jude’s softer side, however, all you have to do is read between the lines.

The missing truth

If you know the story of Larry Fobes King, you know how Reid’s novel ends. It’s difficult to accept that Jude, a

lively, witty kid, is murdered. You hope he will be preserved, that things will get better and he will finally obtain the fame he always sought in L.A.

But the truth is, fame and fortune are not the reality for most teens like Jude. A real boy died seven years ago. So when Reid sat down to write the book, he wanted a narrator that could stand firmly through all the attacks. And, potentially, live on in the minds of readers as a reminder of what blinded prejudice can do to us as society and individuals.

“Although Jude is victimized throughout the book and faces violence and intolerance because of who he is, he is consistently brave and he truly believes he is a superior being,” says Reid. “What really makes this an uplifting story is that Jude doesn’t kill himself. He would never kill himself. He’s someone who really gave zero fucks up until the end.”

When I asked Reid what’s missing in young-adult fiction, his answer is simple: Truth. Vulnerability. A book that offers no excuses. That’s exactly what he delivered with *When Everything Feels Like the Movies*.

Reid suggests there’s a trend, particularly in LGBT fiction, that suggests gay characters need to be saintlike. “We want to keep them intact and perfect,” he says, “to show that we’re not homophobic.”

But Reid wants teens to be free to express who they are, without fear of what might happen to them.

“Jude isn’t a saint. He’s imperfect, he’s nihilistic, he’s narcissistic, he’s vulgar. There are a lot of negative traits that I don’t sugarcoat. But there’s also another side to him. He’s a full-rounded, complicated person as we all are,” says Reid.

“That is what needs to be represented in literature because that’s what kids are. They need to understand that it’s okay to be fully rounded and fully fucked up.” ▶

“We have over 100,000 pancakes built!”

DAN GROSSO, WOODWARD'S PANCAKE CAPTAIN

Story and photo by David P. Ball



Five years ago this month, four simple words launched Dan Grosso onto a new path.

“I'll make the pancakes,” he told a staffperson in the newly completed Woodward's redevelopment in 2010. The program they created, nicknamed the Three Amigos because of its volunteer chefs, serves fellow residents of the supportive housing project hot brunch every Sunday.

The 73-year-old former trucker and Alberta oilfield worker is no newcomer to the craft of cooking, however. Over decades, Grosso has volunteered at The Dugout soup kitchen on Powell Street, served the masses from a Calgary Stampede chuckwagon, and was cook for his oil rig work camp.

He invited Megaphone to drop in on the weekly pancake breakfast and get a (literal) taste of a program entirely run by Woodward's residents. Nearly 80 people lined up for flapjacks that were, as he promised, delicious and fluffy. Grosso's secret to perfect pancakes? Applesauce—and a modified power drill.

Megaphone: You use a hand drill to blend your pancake batter?!

Dan Grosso: “Yeah, that's all I use. I got just an ordinary drill, but on the other end it's one of those plastic paint mixers I use. This was my own idea to use this mixer. Actually it works really well for the

project because it mixes the stuff up rather well—it's also putting air into them. You'll find out they're fairly light pancakes.”

MP: Tell me about the cooking program here at Woodward's.

DG: “It'll be five years ago in April that we started this program. It was started by one of the home care workers. She was sitting in her office one day looking off into space and I said, 'What are you doing?' She said, 'I'm thinking about starting up a cooking project to make pancakes in here. I said, 'That sounds like a good deal, except for one thing: I'll make the pancakes.'

“She ran it for the first months, then had other obligations. So I took the program over and have been running it ever since. To date, we have over 100,000 pancakes built. Last year alone, we did 8,100. That's a lot of food we're turning out!”

MP: Why did you get involved in it?

DG: “When I moved into this building, I was lost and needed something to do ... I was talking to (late Councillor Jim Green) one day after we had gotten started with the pancakes here. He said, 'You know, if you're going to do something, do it the way you were intended to do it.' So that's what I'm doing — if you're going to do a job, you're going to do it well or you're not going to do it at all. That's been my attitude all through my life.”

MP: What do you love about cooking?

DG: “I've always enjoyed cooking. I guess it's the ability to turn out things. I enjoy working with food and I enjoy experimenting with it. “When I moved in here, I went back to cooking again. It was something I've done ever since I was a kid. I'm having a lot of fun doing it. With the breakfasts, every one of these breakfasts has been an improvement, and I've been improving on the quality of my stuff ever since ...There's an old adage, if you don't keep at it you're going to lose what you gained.”

“Now I have a purpose to live again.” ▶

David P. Ball reports on affordable housing for the Tyee Solutions Society, where he recently wrote about the Three Amigos pancake program, the Woodward's Redevelopment, and the legacy of social housing in Vancouver.

Women Transforming Cities blaze new trails in social change

Story and photo by Julia Kochuk

On International Women's Day 2015, Lily Canan Reynolds and Christine Nguyen gathered at the pink granite Marker of Change memorial in Vancouver's Thorton Park. It was designed by women's group ROSE, commemorates the Montreal Massacre of 1989. The marker sends a message that violence against women will not be tolerated. The memorial was a fitting place for me to meet the two Women Transforming Cities (WTC) volunteers.

WTC is a Vancouver-based organization founded in May 2012 to educate the public and policy makers on issues affecting women and girls in the city.

"Women and girls work for cities, but cities don't necessarily work for women and girls," Canan Reynolds says. "We can actually design a better city by bringing women and girls into the forefront, into leadership positions, by starting conversations, by looking into research, and by really pressuring people to prioritize [women's issues.]"

To reach the people of Vancouver, WTC partners with five key groups: women's organizations, unions, elected officials, urbanists, and academics. Through these partnerships, WTC hosts campaigns, conferences, events, and monthly cafes to discuss their findings and develop initiatives.

One successful initiative was the 2014 Hot Pink Paper Campaign, which put forth a policy document ensuring women's issues were on the ballot during the municipal elections last fall.

The Hot Pink Paper Campaign challenged candidates to commit to a civic action plan addressing 11 key issues: intersectionality, aboriginal initiatives, the environment, supporting immigrant women, tackling violence against women, working with affordable housing issues, transit, child care, wages and work, electoral reform, and youth.

"We demanded [candidates] commit to implementing the changes for each of the 11 issues," Canan Reynolds says. "Some parties endorsed the whole paper...and other parties only committed to a couple of things, but every party responded... now that we've had a little time to rest, we are going to be looking at how we come back to the people who are now sitting

in these positions and make sure they follow through on their commitments."

Part of their follow-through is ensuring policy-makers use an "intersectional approach" in their current and future decision making process.

"Intersectionality is looking at individuals and groups with a prism of understanding that everyone carries with them different identities, all those different identities carry with them different societal power, disempowerment, or oppression," Canan Reynolds says.

"There's no cookie-cutter meaning of equality," adds Nguyen. "There's a unique experience for you and all your identity is going to impact your experience."

WTC is calling for members of city council to use an intersectional lens with the current transit referendum, stating the current system doesn't adequately account for many women, including the elderly, mothers with strollers, women working late nights, and women who can't afford the bus.

The group poses three demands to the city to better meet women's needs: safe and affordable transit, increased off-peak hours, and to make Vancouver



❶ Lily Canan Reynolds (left) and Christine Nguyen (right) volunteer with Women Transforming Cities, a grassroots group working to ensure policy-makers take an intersectional approach to decision making processes.

a free transit zone after dark.

"It's about really listening and really reflecting on who is in our communities...and planning for that," says Canan Reynolds.

"One of the most important things is to make sure you're actually listening to [those you're supporting] and letting them take the lead," said Nguyen.

WTC is listening to women and girls, providing platforms where their voices can be heard, and where those voices can develop into concrete changes—transforming Vancouver for the better, and for all.

"It's a no-brainer that a city that's better for women is better for everyone," Canan Reynolds says. □

What I've learned from a long health struggle

By Mick Goodhart

I hadn't been feeling well for a long time. And like many people, I didn't know I had Hep C. It's not been easy for me to find out about my condition and, worse, to get treatment. I wanted very much to get the problem solved before it got too bad. But I unfortunately learned that my liver had to have deteriorated to a certain state before I was able to receive medication subsidies from MSP. I have a low income and can't afford the cost of treatment by myself. Now that I'm in a more stable spot, I wish to share my experiences with people who might be in the same boat. I wish to inform those seeking the best treatment available to cure this deadly disease.

My first contact with a hepatitis specialist came 16 months before I started treatment. He requested blood work and sent me home with several mimeographed sheets describing how to prepare for the "Hep C" treatment. These included crude drawings depicting money in your wallet, food in your fridge, and a telephone close by to reach out for support while dealing with the side effects of the medication.

While the info is accurate, it skims the surface and failed to address the many questions I had. I was anxious to commence treatment. Instead, every two months

this doctor kept sending me home with a requisition for more blood work and telling me I was still not ready to begin. I reasoned the sooner I started, the sooner I would finish it. Regardless, the specialist kept insisting the timing was wrong.

I finally took the initiative and saw another doctor. He changed my life in a positive way. He linked me up with the Thursday Urban Hepatitis C Support Group. Now I would like to do the same for hesitant Hep C victims and those with friends and family in need of treatment.

The decision I made put my trust in this group of facilitators, other patients, and members. Most importantly, the wonderful medical staff saved my life. I hope this article will have the same impact on others.

Until just recently, the virulence of Hep C and the number of fatalities it has caused were grossly underestimated. Before the mid-eighties, blood donations were not checked for this disease. Around this time the medical profession realized HIV was also being transmitted via transfusions.

I know of three individuals who passed away due to Hep C. Once the symptoms manifested the disease wreaked havoc on their bodies and they died soon after.

Apparently, if one's level of deterioration of the liver is serious, the government, (M.S.P.) will sponsor the cost of medications which are currently approximately \$1,000 weekly for the duration of the treatment. Thank the stars we live in Canada!

Once accepted to the program, the treatment commences at different times for each individual, usually anywhere from three weeks on. Every Thursday afternoon the group meets for a bounteous spread of sandwich makings, fresh fruit, juice, coffee and teas. What then takes place is the weekly check-in. This is when members waiting for treatment, those receiving medication and the alumni who have completed the program talk about their week previous, any problems concerning side effects from meds, frustrations or any notable reactions to their particular circumstance.

Then, one at a time, the nurse will call patients individually to receive their weekly medications. At this time the doctor will come in and talk to the patient. He will ask how things are going, if there are any problems or major concerns. This part of the visit is the most reassuring as many questions are inevitable.

I think I've covered the important information about this group treatment and only hope that it reaches people who need it. For more information, I'd highly recommend contacting Deanna Mackenzie, at Vancouver Coastal Health, who has been a huge support to me.

I realize that a lot of people don't know where to turn when they are diagnosed with Hep C; I certainly didn't. I hope this information is helpful to some of you. ▶

Mick is a former Megaphone vendor who sold in front of Meinhardt at 14th and Granville. He's since taken time off to take care of his health.

Poverty Free BC Speaker Series on Impacts and Solutions presents

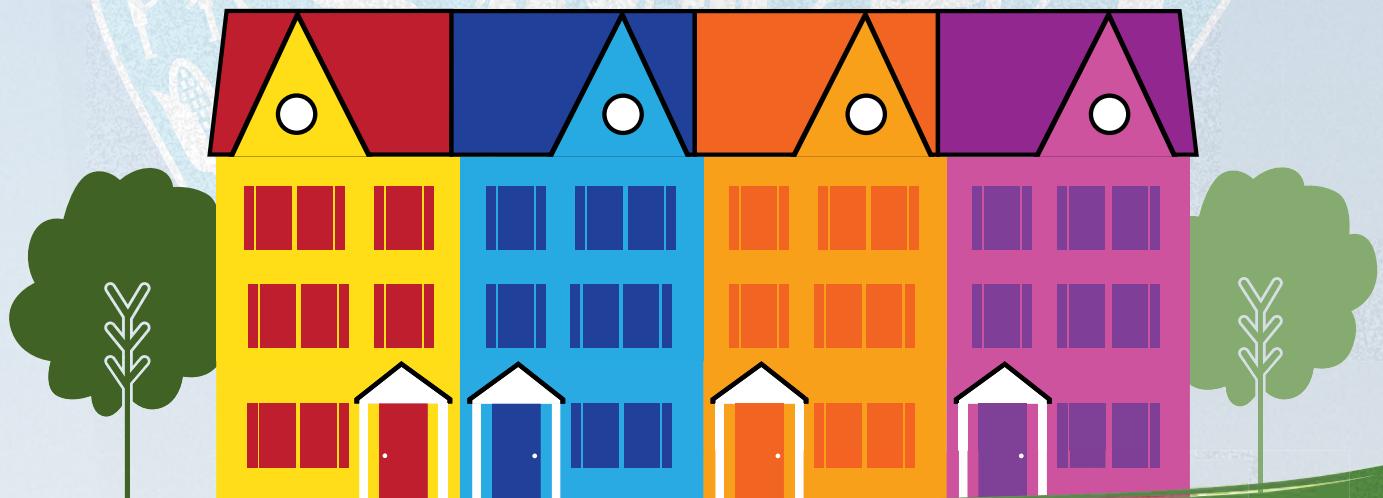
The Mayor Who Ended Homelessness

April 28, 2015
Abbotsford, BC

University of the Fraser Valley
Theatre Room B101
(33844 King Road)
6:30-8:30 PM

April 29, 2015
Vancouver, BC

Vancouver General Hospital
Paetzold Lecture Theatre
Room 1891
(899 W 12th Avenue)
6:30-8:30 PM



Ted Clugston – Mayor of Medicine Hat, Alberta

Once opposed to the Housing First model to help his city's homeless population, Medicine Hat Mayor Ted Clugston is now a convert. Come and hear how this Alberta city is on the verge of ending homelessness.

FREE! Space limited, reserve at bcpovertyreduction.ca/tedclugston



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Through self-expression, empowerment

Celebrating five years of Voices of the Street

Stories by Jenn McDermid and Jackie Wong
Photos by Jackie Dives



Fred Miller

Megaphone has been publishing Voices of the Street, its annual anthology of work from its creative writing workshops, for five years. Since we started our first weekly creative writing workshop at the Onsite treatment facility in 2009, Megaphone now holds weekly workshops at the Gathering Place community centre, the Drug Users Resource Centre, and Onsite, plus seasonal, five-week community journalism courses at SFU Woodward's. The writing from those sessions are powerful firsthand accounts of what it is to live through abuse, mental illness, addiction, and poverty. The authors find brightness, hope, and resilience in unlikely places.

Voices of the Street launches each year with a special reading by Voices authors, including the people whose work and profiles appear on these pages.

Megaphone vendors will start selling the anthology in April, and will continue through the summer. The books, selling for \$5, work to accomplish what Megaphone aims to do in its weekly writing workshops and in its vendor program: to amplify marginalized voices, to empower people through creative self-expression, and to build support to end poverty.

Please join us for the Voices of the Street launch and reading Thursday, May 7 from 7-9pm at the SFU Woodward's World Arts Centre (149 West Hastings, Vancouver) and support vendors in your neighbourhood by purchasing the book.

Meanwhile on these pages, three notable Voices of the Street authors share their experiences with writing. ▶

-Jackie Wong

"My writing has been self-empowering and a huge part of my recovery," Fred Miller proudly explains. "It's been an avenue of letting go of my past in the purest form."

Miller, a longtime resident of the Downtown Eastside, has struggled for many years to overcome his addictions and stay clean. Despite facing many obstacles, he attributes his unrelenting positivity to writing. "My writing has really shaped who I am today. I've become a more compassionate, kind-hearted person."

Miller began writing while in detox at Onsite, the site of Megaphone's original writing workshop.

Since leaving Onsite nearly five years ago, Miller credits the skills he learned while participating in these workshops as being instrumental to his continued sobriety. "In a way, I have retrained myself through my writing. It is a way of processing these negative events that happen, and helps me deal with things. I've become a healthier person. I feel it, and everyone feels it."

He stresses that the recognition and validation that programs like the Megaphone writing workshop offer to its participants can be invaluable to people moving through hardship. "It helped me so much in taking a hold of life and trying to make a change," Miller says. "They made me feel like what I had to say was worth listening to...a lot of people miss out on things and they fall through the cracks when all it could have taken was someone to put their hand out in some way."

Fred is reminded of the accomplishments he has made in recent years and how far he has come.

"Writing has impacted my life tremendously," he says. "I believe it now when someone says you're a good guy. Before I wouldn't accept it. People are finally getting the real Fred Miller. And I like me."

-Jenn McDermid

Syringes

By Fred Miller

They are everywhere I walk.
Everywhere I live.

Bus stops, park benches,
window sills, in garbage cans.

They are dangerous.
Containing small amounts of blood
that can do large damage
to a person's life
if they are poked.

Long plastic tubes, with a lethal
metal point at the end with the plunger.

Syringes have brought
death to many people.
For others, they deliver life
saving medications,
or extract body fluids to save lives.

They have a more sinister use, as well—
a vehicle for drugs people
use to get high.

Sometimes these drugs cause total bliss,
sometimes they take people's lives.

They can be packed with lighter fluid
to use as a miniature flame thrower.

I've used these plastic
tubes, these syringes
to administer lethal doses of
life threatening drugs.

Syringes have taken, and given
life.



Being Clean

By Fred Miller

Being clean isn't as good as
people might believe. It
reminds me of the soldier who comes
back from over seas. They bond
with other soldiers and then come
home to just be alone. That's the
fear I face everyday. That I'll go from
having people all around me everyday, and
fellowship, to getting clean. After I clean up
I go back to my old neighbourhood. I have
no friends because all my old friends are still
using. So I find myself all alone looking
out my window—no friends
and nowhere to go.



Jim Ryder

"My writing is reflective of my own experiences. Everything I write is based on something I have gone through," explains Jim Ryder. He has wanted to be a writer since the age of four, but he became serious about pursuing his passion for writing after a near fatal experience. Eight years ago, a bout of pneumonia followed by a series of health complications left Ryder in a coma.

"I was in really rough physical shape and mental shape after coming out of the coma," he says. "Finding writing was kind of a godsend. If I didn't get involved with Megaphone and start getting my work out there, I don't know where I would be."

Ryder's poetry is a dark, often darkly humourous body of work that draws from his love of rap music and comedy.

"The Downtown Eastside is a major theme in my writing. My work is meant to reveal stuff about the community," he says. "The V6A postal code is world infamous, and I have been treated differently as a resident. I want to write so that someone who is unfamiliar with the Downtown Eastside will listen and understand what it is like."

Since he started writing in 2008, Ryder has been published several times in Megaphone, Voices of the Street, and Geist magazine. He has also published several chapbooks, the most recent of which is 2014's *Cynet*, made possible by a Downtown Eastside Small Arts Grant. He credits writing and the literary community as being hugely impactful in his recovery. "I'm not exaggerating or using hyperbole—it's really changed my life."

"Being published in Megaphone gave me an opportunity. It made me feel like I have something important to say and that it's worth listening to," he says. "A lot of people in the community have never had anyone interested in their opinion. When someone gives you the opportunity to share your story down here, it's totally validating."

-Jenn McDermid

Raggedy Man

By Jim Ryder

The first thing you'll learn
on this side of the tracks,
is that you're walled in
by a wall of backs.

The backs of the friends
who you've helped many times,
the backs of the police,
who consider you a crime.

The backs of employers, the backs of clergy,
the backs of respectable men,
where-ever you turn there's backs
and backs and backs yet again.

It's as effective as posts
and bricks like Berlin,
it does its job well
it keeps us all in.

It starts with a subtlety,
averted glances, and more,
soon, you're as welcome
as a wolf at the door.

Any excuse will do,
dress code works fine,
once your neighbourhood is known,
you're wasting everyone's time.

So, you're out in the streets
and have to move on,
they're taking no shit,
you're known as a con.

They step right in front of you
and present, you, their backs,
brick after brick
without blemish or crack.

Enjoy the metaphor,
words, read in verse,
imagine the real thing:
Life's bitterest curse.

Loralee Ave Maria Judge

The tremors started when she was 10 years old, about three months after her father left and around the time when her mother's drinking started to spiral out of control. In her short story published in Voices of the Street this year, Loralee Ave Maria Judge traces the roots of a physical ailment that continues to remind her of what she's endured.

As a teenager, she was in what she describes as an emotionally incestuous relationship. Later, she weathered the storms of addiction, debilitating depression, and terrifying mania before she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

Through it all, she wrote. Writing, she says, is an empowering means of working through trauma and realizing her own resilience.

"Sometimes writing is like getting rid of a poison that no other form of expression—healthy or unhealthy—can do," she says. "Writing, for me, is kind of like drawing the poison out. The very last word of every piece I write is like a celebration. Even if it's a piece that's very emotional and very troublesome."

In October 2012, Judge was living at the Salvation Army's Belkin House in downtown Vancouver when she spotted a poster for Megaphone's Community Journalism 101 writing workshop. She joined the class that fall.

"I didn't finish it because I was dealing with my mental health issues. Then I went to Strathcona [Mental Health Team] and started on medication," she says. That era marked a turning point in her healing. She moved to Grace Mansion, a transitional supportive housing facility also operated by the Salvation Army, the following spring.

Once at Grace, she re-joined Community Journalism 101. Life gained fresh momentum. Judge and her Community Journalism 101 classmates went on to take classes at UBC through the Humanities 101 program. And she now works as an English as a Second Language teacher. She also received a bursary to take classes at Vancouver Community College.

Now stably housed, happily employed, and in a loving relationship, Judge is proud to say she's doing well. The past four years in the Downtown Eastside have been transformative.

"I consider the Downtown Eastside my neighbourhood," she says. "People who judge this place don't realize just how powerful we are."

—Jackie Wong



Rivers of Conflict

By Loralee Ave Maria Judge

You want to play,
But only the game you choose.
You ask me how I spell my name,
Then add an extra letter.
You brag about Ottawa boulevards,
Then leave me trembling in a Vancouver alley.
You reach out your hand to touch me,
But I only feel one cold finger.

You sing me operas,
In a language I don't understand.
You dance with me,
Spin me around, I'm dizzy, Sick
with feeling, you say you love me,
But you're looking at someone
else walking by.

You beg me to stay,
But don't offer me a key.
You ask me what I want to hear,
Then I never hear you say it.
You say that life is important,
Then say it's okay to leave it.
You call me a Lady,
But I feel more like
Your secret Whore.

You said good-bye,
But forgot about hello...
And I forgive you.

In Medicine Hat, homelessness is (almost) over

How a conservative mayor changed his mind on Housing First

By Jackie Wong

According to its mayor, Medicine Hat is “a hardworking oil, gas, and agricultural community where you go to work. You don’t look for handouts.” The southwestern Alberta municipality, with its population of about 61,000, is 16 times smaller the Calgary. Old-west values run deep. “We consider ourselves independent. You work hard. I was raised by that motto,” says Ted Clugston, Medicine Hat’s 46-year-old mayor. “So if you want a place to live, you pull yourself up by the bootstraps. You go get a job.”

Clugston’s father, uncles, and brothers are family physicians. “They all worked very, very hard to get where they are,” he says. He learned early that success had much to do with self-sufficiency. Clugston found it hard to loosen his grip on that notion when he became a Medicine Hat city councillor in 2007, serving two terms before he was voted mayor in 2013.

The self-described fiscal conservative’s views on what a life’s work should yield have changed during his years at City Hall. But they used to more closely reflect the values of his neighbours and his peers on city council.

Clugston famously rebuffed a provincial proposal that the City of Medicine Hat adopt a “housing first” model in 2009, a progressive model for housing that gives homeless people lodgings before working to treat intersecting mental health, addiction, and employment concerns.

“Housing first” upends conventional wisdom that one must be sober, mentally well, and gainfully employed before landing a place to live—such thinking has kept many people entrenched in a life of chronic homelessness.

“I used to say things like, ‘I don’t have granite countertops. Why should they? I’ve gotta go to work. Why don’t they? I’m having a hard time keeping a roof over my head and I’m working, so why should they get one for free?’” Clugston says. But, as he describes it, “the people here locally were persistent with me.” They changed his mind. And Medicine Hat, alongside seven small Alberta communities, adopted

the “housing first” model in 2009.

Six years later, 875 homeless people in Medicine Hat have landed secure lodgings in supportive or subsidized housing. Two hundred-eighty of those people were children.

Today, Medicine Hat is on the verge of ending homelessness. The municipality embarked on its first homeless count in 2014, when it counted just five individuals sleeping rough on the street. The same count found 30 people staying in one of the city’s three emergency shelters and 29 staying in a second-stage (short-term, rent-geared-to-income) shelter.

By comparison Vancouver, eight times the size of Medicine Hat, counted 536 people sleeping rough in 2014. The same count enumerated 2,777 homeless people in the Metro Vancouver region.

“This city is a wealthy city,” Medicine Hat’s mayor admits. “We have advantages over other municipalities.” But working seriously to tackle homelessness elsewhere can be done, he maintains.

“I’m hoping what we’re saying to other municipalities is that you can do it too.”

A 10-day solution

If a mental health crisis, a relationship breakup, or job loss lands you on the streets in Vancouver or Victoria, it’s a well-documented, painful fact that the road back in to stable housing can take months or even years. Earlier this year, Megaphone reporter Yvonne Robertson wrote about a woman who stayed in a Downtown Eastside homeless shelter for five years before she secured a spot in supportive housing. She’s just one of the thousands of people on BC Housing’s famously glacial wait list.

It’s a different story in Medicine Hat. Clugston explains how “housing first” works: if a person becomes homeless in that community, “within 10 days, we will have some sort of permanent residence for you,” he says. “That doesn’t mean an emergency shelter. That means someplace to live within 10 days.”

Medicine Hat’s Community Housing Society, a multi-disciplinary social

services agency, assesses people for subsidized housing based on their needs.

People benefitting from “housing first” lodgings also receive treatment for mental health and addictions, plus access to employment resources and income assistance. Depending on individual circumstances, “housing first” residents may pay subsidized rents, or rents geared to their income.

“It’s different for everybody,” Clugston says, “from those who have no income to those who have a fair bit of income but have three or four children.”

“A symptom of mental health is losing your home”

Despite the successes he’s seen, Clugston is still hard-pressed to bring the Medicine Hat community on board with its own new housing program.

“I’m disappointed in our local print media,” he says. “Our local newspaper just doesn’t talk about it. There’s been more interest outside of our borders in this story than there has been inside... so some of our citizens are learning about Medicine Hat because they’ve been listening to CBC or reading the *Huffington Post* and *Globe and Mail*.”

The local citizenry, he says, is slow to change. After all, people want to hold onto what they’ve worked hard to earn in what Clugston describes as “the most conservative province in the country.”

He hopes, though, that even fiscally conservative taxpayers will turn around if “they start to recognize we can start to save money by using the “housing first” program versus just leaving people out on the street.”

Clugston also wishes to raise awareness of the connections between homelessness and mental health.

“If you get cancer, you don’t lose your home because your friends and family supports you. They hold fundraisers for you. Lasagna shows up at your front doorstep. People worry about you. But when you have a mental health issue, even your own family will often turn their back on you,” he says. “A symptom



“I used to say things like, ‘I don’t have granite countertops. Why should they? I’ve gotta go to work. Why don’t they? I’m having a hard time keeping a roof over my head and I’m working, so why should they get one for free?”

Ted Clugston

of mental health is losing your home.”

To lose one’s home due to mental health crisis is more noticeable in Medicine Hat than it is in Vancouver, Clugston notes.

“Everybody knows everybody,” he says. “We’re big enough that we have the resources, but we’re small enough that we still know each other. We only have one food bank, we only have one mental health [team], we only have one housing association.”

In Medicine Hat, it’s impossible for people to fall through the cracks anonymously. Clugston admits that his city is unique in its size and considerable means; after all, the city owns its own oil and gas companies.

And while there’s no silver bullet for ending homelessness—mental illness and personal crisis will always happen, Clugston notes—moving forward to address what can look like an intractable social problem may be more doable, and more scalable, than it may first seem.

Studies have already sounded alarms

about the widespread isolation, loneliness, and disengagement felt among Vancouver citizens. Considering what success Medicine Hat has seen in having its social service agencies band together to take care of the city’s most vulnerable, Vancouver’s trademark aloofness may have more wide-ranging impacts than the fact that it’s difficult to make friends in this city.

“It’s so big and so complex and so confusing,” Clugston says of Vancouver.

“It’s hard,” he says, “where people can just disappear into the background of a bigger city.” ▶

Medicine Hat mayor Ted Clugston will be the keynote speaker for the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition’s event on ending homelessness in Abbotsford on April 28th at the University of the Fraser Valley and in Vancouver on April 29th at Vancouver General Hospital’s Patzehold Pavilion. For more information, visit PovertyReduction.ca/speakerseries.

❶ Mayor Ted Clugston, centre, rides in the 2014 Annual Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede Parade. He’s pictured here riding with Caysh and Cyton Corsie, grandchildren of one of Clugston’s staff. For the record, he tells us, he only wears a cowboy hat once a year. Photo courtesy of the City of Medicine Hat.

All the epsom salt a body can stand

Dispatches from the Cordova Street Float House

By Dylan Gyles

At Float House on Cordova Street in Vancouver, you float in a tank filled with two hundred gallons of warm water and nine hundred pounds of Epsom salt. A session costs \$75 and lasts an hour and a half.

The Float House website suggests that on float day floaters should eat light, stay hydrated, avoid smoking and drinking coffee; men should avoid shaving within six hours before the float and women should avoid shaving within twelve hours before the float; and all floaters should use the bathroom before floating. The website also says to expend pent-up energy. So I rode my bike to the spa.

A guy in a stretchy purple shirt sat at the front desk, eating crackers and almond butter.

—You're Dylan, right? First float, right? Would you mind taking off your shoes?

He slid an iPad and a pair of large headphones across the desk. The video on the iPad showed a slender man with long hair climbing in and out of the tank. A calm female voice narrated the video. The man with the long hair demonstrated how to float with your arms around your head and then how to float with your arms at your sides. “Don't try to make anything happen,” the calm voice said, and the long-haired man closed his eyes and continued to float with his arms by his sides. Then the voice said that any anxiety or claustrophobia can be pacified by wedging a pool noodle in the tank door to keep it open. The long-haired man wedged a blue pool noodle between the door and the tank.

When the video ended, mellow music was playing in the lobby. The attendant in the stretchy purple shirt scraped out the last of the almond butter from the jar.

You'll be in tank 3 today, he said.

He placed a laminated sheet of paper on the desk. It was a waiver stating in vague legalese that drowning in the tank was impossible due to the buoyancy of the water, but if the impossible happened, Float House was released from liability. The attendant handed me a red dry-erase marker. I signed the form. He photographed the form. Then he wiped away my signature with an eraser brush.

A middle-aged man in loose-fitting jeans and a faded black T-shirt emerged from

the hallway, fresh from his float, hair still wet and slicked back. He looked a little tired, as if he had just finished a day at the pool. The receptionist waved him over.

—How'd it go?

—Good, said the man.

—A lot different than the first time, huh?

—Yes, much different, said the man. He was trying to slip on his sneakers without using his hands.

I tiptoed down the hall in my socks, avoiding small puddles on the floor, and opened the door to Tank Room 3. Tank Room 3 was lit with soft blue light. Perfectly folded towels were fanned out on a stool and a silver kidney-shaped dish containing a few sets of foam and silicone earplugs rested on top. A fresh white terrycloth bathrobe and a large ornate mirror hung on the wall. A maze of pipework ran in and out of the far end of the tank. The tank was the size of a luxury bathtub and made of high-gloss white plastic with chrome grab bars. It looked like a coffin for astronauts.

I hung up my clothes and showered, lathering with the soap labelled “pre-float.” I began to dry off, out of habit, and then stopped. I inserted the earplugs in my ears. Then I climbed into the tank on my knees and ducked my head while I pulled the hatch shut above me.

Absolute darkness. The water lapped against the walls; I could sense the limits of the tank. The air tasted sour.

Floating was effortless, but staying in the centre of the tank was difficult. Any movement generated small waves, pushing my body into the wall. I pushed off and knocked myself into the opposite side. In the video, the long-haired man had centred himself by spreading his limbs against the sides of the tank and then retracting them. It was a tricky manoeuvre, but when I got the hang of it, the water became calm.

I was drifting in an endless ocean, with some sense of motion but not of direction. It was like sinking while remaining still. I waited to hit bottom, but the impact never came.

Sounds echoed in the tank, long droning hums and light trickling taps. Whether my eyes were open or closed, I saw deep blues and pulsing green flashes, shadows passing over shadows.

Concentrating was like trying to flex a muscle I no longer had. Every thought spilled into another.

A bead of colour appeared in the vast blackness. I stared into it and it began to grow. When it grew large and close enough, I recognized it as my uncle's room at our family cottage. Dark green shag carpet stained by cigarette smoke and sand from the beach. A brown bed, sagging heavily on the edge with a sleep apnea mask hung from the headboard. The shelves were filled with science fiction books and the VHS tapes—each with two or three movies on it—that we often watched together. One of them was *Altered States*, a movie about a scientist who experiments with hallucinogenic drugs in a sensory deprivation tank and emerges as a devolved primordial monster.

Faint music began bubbling up through the water. It didn't seem like an hour and half had passed, maybe less or maybe more. I climbed out of the tank just as the long-haired man had demonstrated, both hands firmly gripping the chrome bars. The room seemed darker than before. I showered, this time with the soap labelled “post-float.” I could not tell if it was any different than the pre-float soap.

The receptionist in the purple shirt waved me over.

—So how'd it go?

—Good, I said.

—Was it what you were expecting?

—No, I said.

—It never is, he said.

The empty almond butter jar sat on his desk.

It was raining lightly outside. I felt like I had just awakened from deep sleep. I could feel the rain on my skin, the sound of it on the pavement. I noticed everything. ▶

This piece was originally published in Geist, a Canadian literary magazine headquartered in Vancouver. Dylan Gyles is Geist's circulation manager. He is a part-time barista and writer of short fiction and creative non-fiction.

"I was drifting in an endless ocean, with some sense of motion but not of direction. It was like sinking while remaining still. I waited to hit bottom, but the impact never came."

Meet Chairman Ting, unlikely rebel with a cause

Story Jesi Carson
Photo by Theunis Snyman

Chairman Ting Industries is a Vancouver-based creative studio founded by Carson Ting and his wife Denise Cheung. A city boy from downtown Toronto, Ting has called Vancouver home for nearly eight years and is now a venerable force in the local art community. He occupies a studio space at 1000 Parker Street, where he spray paints the likes of giant "Funny Bunny" rabbits and 30' monsters on the walls.

Considering that Ting is now best known for his prolific mural work painted across the city, it's not immediately evident that his creative career started out in a very different setting. After graduating from the Ontario College of Art and Design in 1999, Ting pursued a fast-paced career as an art director in Toronto advertising agencies, working with high-level clients and, to the eyes of some, "living the dream." That life, he would realize later, left little time for his personal art practice.

"I always did art as an outlet while I was working, and as I got more commissions I considered making the jump but was never quite sure of myself or if I could pay my bills," Ting explains. "I wanted to quit but I wasn't sure I was ready."

This "leap of faith" was solidified after he moved to Vancouver. In 2008, he launched Chairman Ting Industries as a part-time endeavour while working full-time at an ad agency. Four years later, he decided to focus on his artwork full-time. The city inspired him. There are key differences, he says, between working life in Vancouver and Toronto. In Vancouver, a more relaxed approach to standard office hours translates into more time for personal art practice. And the city itself fosters entrepreneurial spirit.

Today, Ting focuses much of his working

life on public installations of his mural work. He also produces smaller pieces to be displayed in indoor spaces. His commissions range from high schools to retail stores to civic structures, including Canada Place.

Ting's playful, cartoonish style has also gotten him noticed by social change advocates. *Stick Boy Opera*, a 2014 production by the Vancouver Opera, is based on the autobiographical story of local spoken word artist Shane Koyczan, who shares his experience of being brutally bullied as a young man.

The performance was intended to bring to light the "monsters" that grow within victims and culminate in bullying, a vicious cycle. Ting and three other Vancouver street artists were approached to participate in a mural-based anti-bullying campaign leading up to the opera opening. Their task: depict their own inner monsters as large-scale art installations on Vancouver streets.

Ting's personal monster is titled "Internal Battle" and graces an exterior wall outside his studio at 1000 Parker. "I was bullied growing up, so I know how it feels," says Ting. "Plus I got to paint a giant monster on a wall. What's not to like about that?"

These days, Ting's reputation as a graffiti artist precedes him. Last year he was invited to speak to the theme "Rebel" at Creative Mornings Vancouver, a breakfast lecture series for the creative community. However, he's still wrestling with his street art associations. "I'm labelled as 'the graffiti guy,'" Ting says. "But I'm not! I don't consider myself a rebel."

Even to artists like Ting, who make a living spray painting walls, the word "graffiti" seems to hold a certain stigma. "I don't tag walls or anything," Ting says, acknowledging that graffiti is sometimes

negatively associated with a gang-related history of marking territory. However, as the success of Chairman Ting Industries demonstrates, it seems that graffiti as a style has been embraced by the general public.

Graffiti has become more visible through artists like Banksy, whose powerful political messages have garnered international interest and have been immortalized in many published books on art and activism. Osgemeos, the Brazilian twin brothers responsible for the vibrant mural on Granville Island's concrete silos as part of the Vancouver Biennale, further demonstrate the widespread acceptance of graffiti as a public art form.

While Ting doesn't think of himself as a "rebel," the label may be more accurate than he thinks. His artistic practice has a quietly subversive, positive social impact. And the very act of working as an artist takes guts.

Ting's advice to other artists also speaks to his quiet rebelliousness. "I find even for myself if you think about something too much, it will never happen," Ting says. "Think less, do more!" ▶



❶ Carson Ting stands outside his Vancouver studio at 1000 Park St., where his mural part of *Stick Boy Opera*'s anti-bullying campaign is installed.

Young voices, strong words

Meet Victoria's youth poet laureates

Story and photos by Jamila Douhaibi

Twenty-year-old Zoe Duhaime has been performing spoken word poetry in Victoria since she was in her teens. This year, she was named Victoria's third-ever youth poet laureate. It's a unique distinction; Victoria became Canada's first municipality to nominate a youth poet laureate in 2013.

Of her role as Victoria's 2015 youth poet laureate, it's a "magnifier," Duhaime says. The poet laureate program provides "incentive for creative work for Victoria youth." To her, poetry is about connection, communication, and being heard.

Of the "moment when someone recognizes themselves in a piece of poetry," she says, "I've never been around such a raw moment as that."

Like previous youth poet laureates, Duhaime will hold the title for a year, during which time she'll work on projects to engage young people with poetry.

Victoria's spoken word scene lacks accessibility to Francophone youth, says Duhaime, who speaks both French and English. She will explore how to bridge those gaps this year in her role as the youth poet laureate. She also intends to host a session for young poets to perform their work and have it professionally recorded.

For now, she's at work on a poetry blog for youth that she will launch this month. She intends for it to be a collaborative space for people to share their writing.

Sharing poetry with an audience, Duhaime says, is empowering. "I have never known a fire like spoken word for getting youth passionate and heard," she says.



• Zoe Duhaime is Victoria's 2015 poet laureate. To her, poetry is about community, connection, and being heard.

Victoria, city of poets

When Duhaime was growing up, her grandfather insisted that she become familiar with classic poets. She carried an early interest in poetry with her to high school, where she performed in Reynolds Secondary School's spoken word team that went to the provincials.

Current Victoria city councillor Jeremy Loveday led poetry workshops at Reynolds when Duhaime was a student there. Loveday, a poet, played a pivotal role in fostering Duhaime's interest in the local spoken word scene. He's been a mentor to many young people over the years. He ran spoken word workshops for youth through Tongues of Fire, a local poetry collective, and has worked to amplify young voices through his time as a city councillor by founding the Victorious Voices Youth Arts Festival.

Loveday also brought his passion for poetry to city council chambers. In 2013, Loveday solicited support for the youth poet laureate project through former Victoria youth council coordinator Klaune Buser-Rivet and Lisa Helps, then a city councillor and now the newly elected mayor.

Establishing a youth poet laureate in Victoria was a "really good incentive for youth," recalls Aysia Law, the inaugural youth poet laureate for 2013. To her, it marked a powerful opportunity for young people to "take initiative and leadership in their own community and what they'd like to see in the world of art."

Law, now 24, has recently completed a bachelor's degree in creative writing. She runs a weekly writing group in Victoria called Queer Quills, a group for queer, trans, and allied youth.

Untitled

By Zoe Duhaime

there are small houses of myself that are burning
I don't feel safe or still
but I feel the work and let it live in me.
I feel the grief and let it die in me.

A lifeline, an expression of freedom

Poetry—visceral, freewheeling, playful and powerful—is a form of writing that holds the potential to express truths about ourselves that cut close to the bone.

Law has been performing her poetry since 2010. She still remembers the date she attended her first poetry slam on April 20, 2009, when she was in her late teens. The next day, she visited her father in the hospital. “You could do that,” her father said. He passed away just 10 days later from colon cancer after a seven-year battle.

His words were a driving force for Law to become a spoken word artist.

Poetry has been similarly transformative for 21-year-old Morgan Purvis, who followed Law and preceded Duhaime as Victoria’s 2014 youth poet laureate. For Purvis, the motivation to write is simply “the need to live” and, in her words, to keep herself sane.

It wasn’t until her year as the youth poet laureate that Purvis really started trusting her work. Previous to that year, Purvis didn’t take herself seriously as a poet, she says, but saw herself more as a “schlup who went to poetry slams sometimes.”

She can now proudly state that she is a professional performance artist and professional arts educator. Those two things, in her words, “never would have happened” without the support and resources she received.

Purvis is now in her second year of studying business at Camosun College while continuing to run free youth workshops through Victoria’s Public Library.

Woman Unwound

By Morgan Purvis

My identity is strung out across a
glittering web of people
I am a thread to the glisten. Strong,
but inherently unglamorous

I will bear the load

I will shudder and then wave in the breeze
a quiet gust will come
And slowly I will tear and wisp away

And the morning will still come and
exhale a cool steamy breath.

Once I am scattered and gone, the
leaves and stones will still glisten

Dew sparkling web at first light is the
wrong sort of grand ... Perfect beauty!

it is the smallest unit.

The water and the air and every thing else it fastens to
You windy shoulder people

You blow and you bend 'til I break and am gone.

Next morning's web will do the same
And she will end the same as me.

Holding until broken, dew after dew.



❶ Morgan Purvis, 21, was Victoria’s youth poet laureate for 2014. It wasn’t until she received the distinction that she started to take herself seriously as a poet. Before then, she saw herself as a “schlup who went to poetry slams sometimes.” Now, she can proudly state that she’s a professional performance artist and professional arts educator.

Arts Feature

A radical power shift

Purvis sees the “extraordinary power of story [in] poetry to break down prejudice and create capacity for empathy.” Holding a space for youth, both through the youth poet laureate program and through spoken word performance, gives people a voice.

There's a “radical power shift,” Purvis says, where youth have an opportunity for their thoughts and feelings to be taken seriously.

If you can just get people into a room, she says, and “shut them up for three minutes so a young person can tell them about their life, it builds empathy in an incredible way.”

Victoria's current youth poet laureate Duhaime, now wrapping up a semester at the University of Victoria taking women's studies and religious studies, is also at work on an upcoming performance. On April 9, she'll headline the Tongues of Fire spoken word show at Lacey-Lou Tapas Lounge (1320 Broad St.).

Duhaime will be performing poetry along with music. She is looking forward to singing and having room to perform longer pieces of work without the judgement or time constraints of usual poetry slams.

Something magic happens during spoken word shows where everyone settles into their seats, Duhaime says. “There are just some things that people are waiting to hear,” she says. “Poetry is a venue for that.” ▶



❶ Aysia Law was Victoria's inaugural youth poet laureate in 2013. Now 24, she's since finished a bachelor's degree in creative writing and runs a weekly writing workshop for queer, trans, and allied youth.

It's said that silverfish disintegrate when squished.

By Aysia Law

They whisk
soundlessly
in the stretching shadows,
shuffle-legs scurrying
to the gaps
under the baseboards,
fleeing
the dreaded
bedside lamp.

But I
am not a smusher,
a masher,
or a crusher.

(I am a pacifist.)

So when I see one slip
from dresser
to lamp cord
to mattress

I reach

not for a shoe,

a swatter,
or a broom
but a shot glass
and a business card.
(Escort service
with a smile)

I watch it dart

around gin drops
and jigger lines

antennae stabbing at fingers
through clear walls

until I lug the sliding door
open

and evict it
over the railing
flailing

as it flies

back

into the shelter of night.

What's on

Mac Demarco

**Friday, April 24 // The Vogue Theatre
(918 Granville Street) // Tickets \$25 // Vancouver**

Macbriare Samuel Lanyon DeMarco's second studio album, *Salad Days*, was the slacker rock that soundtracked summer 2014. After spending his early years as a musician making ends meet by working on road paving crews and participating in medical experiments, the 25-year-old from Duncan, B.C. has since received the critical blessing of both Pitchfork and Exclaim magazine and is now one of Canada's most-talked-about new indie rock musicians. DeMarco's Vancouver visit features a performance by special guests Dinner.



Sign Painters film screening // Tuesday, April 14 // 7-10pm // Victoria Events Centre (1415 Broad Street) // \$12 general admission / \$8 students // Victoria

The Graphic Designers of Canada Vancouver Island Chapter invite members of the Island's graphic design community to join them in the first Victoria screening of *Sign Painters*, a 2014 documentary about the declining art of hand-painting signs. The screening, featuring a cash bar with local beer and pizza, plus support from local second-generation sign painter Chris Dobell, follows the members'-only annual general meeting of the Graphic Designers of Canada, which takes place 5-7pm.

Roughing it in the bush revisited // Wednesday, April 15, 7:30pm // Artspeak Gallery (233 Carrall Street) // free // Vancouver

Big industry and sprawling construction continues to push Vancouver into nature. But what happens when the wilderness creeps back in, reclaiming the crack in a sidewalk or the corner of an abandoned lot? Five Vancouver poets explore the ever-evolving representation of urban and rural spaces in Canadian Art. The night, hosted by Daniel Zomparelli, founding editor of Poetry is Dead and the founder of Megaphone's creative writing workshop program (see story page 16), features readings by Jordan Abel, ryan fitzpatrick, W.H. New, Daphne Marlatt, and Evelyn Lau.

Kathryn Calder with guests // Thursday, April 16 // Doors 9pm, show 9:30pm // The Copper Owl (1900 Douglas Street) // \$12 advance/\$15 at the door // Victoria

The Fifty Fifty Arts Collective joins forces with the Copper Owl to present a special evening with the New Pornographer's Kathryn Calder and friends Scars, Scarves, and Leisure Suit. Bonus points to those of you who arrive at the show wearing scarves covered with scarves over a leisure suit.

Frog Eyes, Hello Blue Roses // Friday, April 17 // Doors 9pm, show 9:30pm // The Copper Owl (1900 Douglas Street) // \$15 advance/\$20 at the door // Victoria

The Fifty Fifty Arts Collective is on fire this month! The night after Kathryn Calder's performance, enigmatic Frog Eyes frontman Corey Mercer returns to his hometown for a performance with his wife and bandmate, Melanie Campbell, and their friends. Mercer, also known for his work with Vancouver's Blackout Beach (an electronic outfit that released a studio album at Megaphone's 2011 holiday fundraiser) and Swan Lake, has also produced albums by Hello Blue Roses. That band, fronted by Vancouver visual artist Sydney Hermant and Destroyer's Dan Bejar (also of the New Pornographers), round out an evening of performances that prove we're connected in more ways than we think.

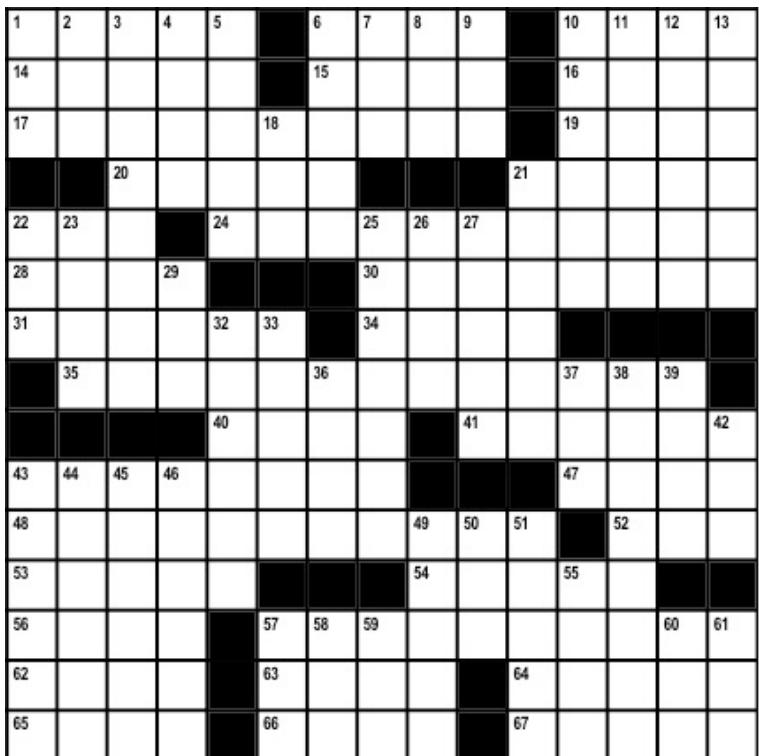
Stationary: A Recession-Era Musical // Tuesday, April 21 to Saturday, May 2, 8pm, with some 2pm matinees // Historic Theatre at the Cultch (1895 Venables Street) // Tickets from \$19 // Vancouver

Vancouver's Delinquent Theatre presents an indie-rock musical about a group of young advertising agency staffers working to make sense of the many disappointments of their post-recession lives. "The idea for Stationary was born the summer we graduated from university," says playwright, actor and artistic producer Christine Quintana. "Stationary isn't just a think-piece about hopeless millennials. It asks the question, 'what happens now?'"

DOXA Documentary Film Festival // Thursday, April 30 to Sunday, May 10 // Showtimes and venues vary // Vancouver

Vancouver's annual festival of documentary film screens the best of its 2015 submissions over 11 days and several theatre venues across the city. The curated, juried festival features public screenings, panel discussions, public forums, and educational programs. Megaphone editor Jackie Wong sits on the jury this year for the 2015 Short Documentary Award. See DoxaFestival.ca for details.

Crossword



Puzzle by New York Times contributor Patrick "Mac" McIntyre, courtesy of Real Change, Seattle's Street Newspaper.

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ACROSS

1 Katmandu's land
6 St. Louis gridders
10 Kwik-E-____ (Apu's "The
Simpsons" milieu)
14 Skylit lobbies
15 "The Time Machine" race
16 Tobacco mouthful
17 Seven-time Best Director
nominee with a fretful nebbish
shтик
19 Lymph____
20 "I'm outta here!" (2 wds.)
21 Spooky
22 Drivel
24 Best Actor winner for his
portrayal of Professor Henry
Higgins
28 Skedaddled
30 Scent-free
31 Eye bank donation
34 Tiny battery
35 Apt description of some Pixar
characters found in the answers
17-, 24-, 43-, and 57-Across (3 wds.)
40 Meeting: Abbr.

41 "America's Got ___" (NBC reality show that featured Sharon Osborne as a judge)	32 College application parts
43 Clapping	33 Gobbled (2 wds.)
47 "Moby Dick" captain	36 Greek peak
48 Eight-time Grammy winner who has also been nominated for 2 Oscars and a Tony	37 Pie ___ mode
52 Clean air grp.	38 Practice for a performance
53 Inventor Howe	39 Ginger cookie
54 "___ far, far better thing": Dickens (3 wds.)	42 As yet unscheduled: Abbr.
56 Dis	43 "___ Fideles"
57 Apollo 11 astronaut	44 Castor's brother in Roman mythology
62 Sandwich fish	45 Yielding
63 Sen. McCain's state	46 Andean animals
64 Rodeo rope	49 In a ___ (extremely flustered)
65 Office phone nos.: Abbr.	50 Taxonomic suffix
66 ___-free shop	51 Nabisco wafer
67 Hoopster Olajuwon, in college	55 Mt. Rushmore's St.
	57 Mischievous
	58 Its cap. is Montevideo
	59 High school breakout
	60 Expert finish
	61 ___ de guerre

SOLUTION FROM THE MARCH ISSUE



GIVE WRITERS A VOICE

HELP MEGAPHONE RAISE \$15,500 BY MAY 31

MEGAPHONE GIVES PEOPLE A VOICE AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE.

In each issue of the magazine, we publish marginalized writers from Vancouver and Victoria. Getting published in Megaphone validates writers' voices and gives them a platform to share challenging life experiences like poverty, mental illness, or addiction. Through sharing these stories, we create social change.

This spring, Megaphone needs to raise \$15,500 to publish these stories and run our community writing workshops.

By making a tax-deductible donation, you can help Megaphone ensure that often-silenced voices are heard across our cities.



"Being published in Megaphone made me feel like I have something important to say and that it's worth listening to."

— Jim Ryder, Megaphone contributor

YOUR DONATION WILL HELP

- 1 Give marginalized writers a voice by publishing their work.
- 2 Facilitate discussions about poverty, addiction and mental health in your community.
- 3 Fund Megaphone's community writing workshops in the Downtown Eastside.

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Please take a moment to fill out the donation form below or visit MegaphoneMagazine.com.



Megaphone's goal is to provide a voice and an economic opportunity for homeless and low-income people while building grassroots support to end poverty.

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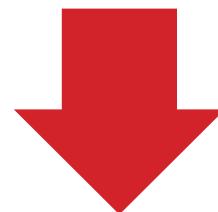
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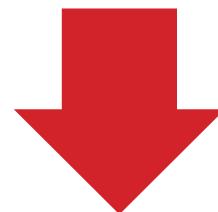
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