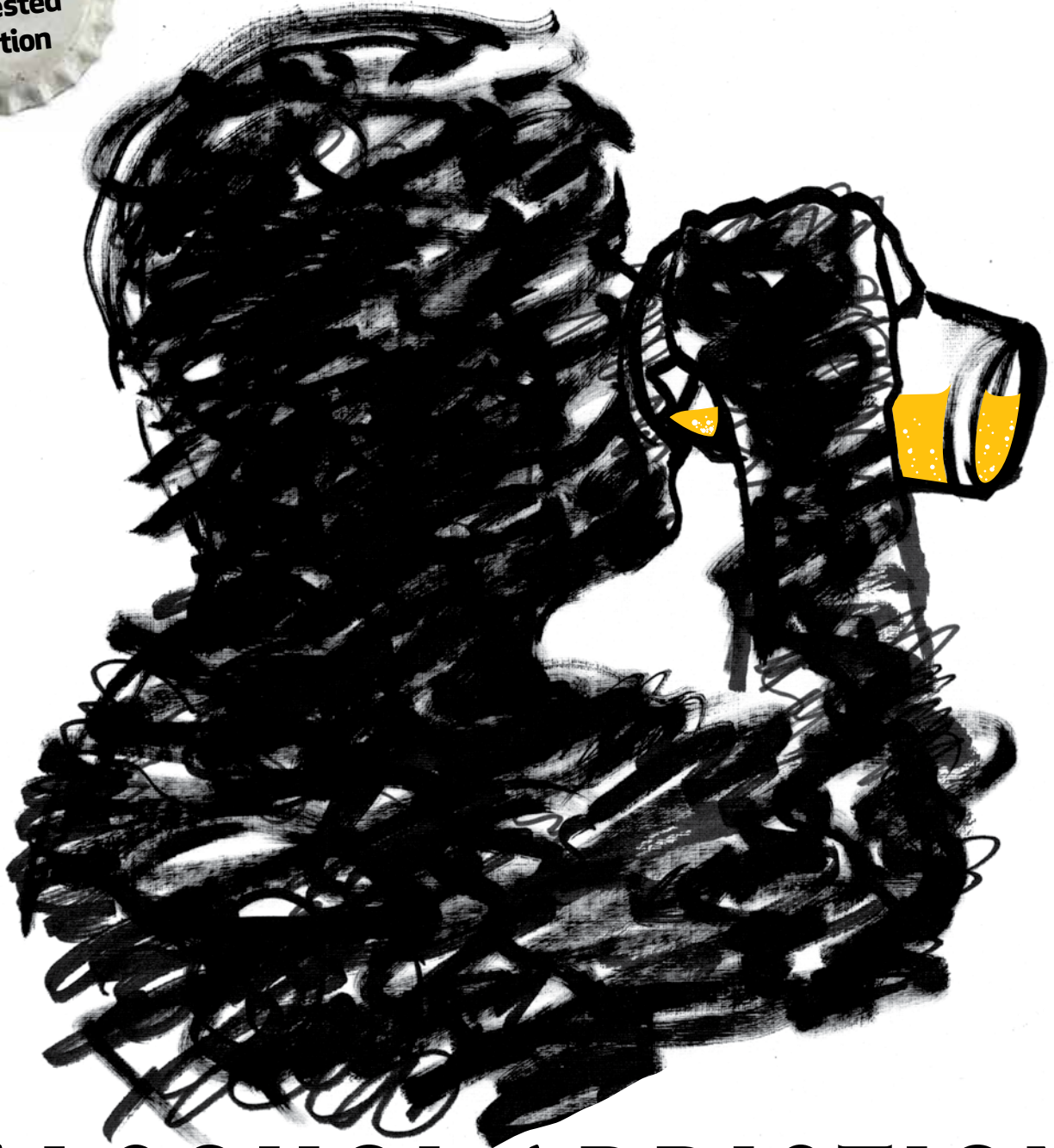


ISSUE 98 | FEBRUARY 24, 2012

◀) MEGAPHONE

VANCOUVER'S STREET PAPER



ALCOHOL ADDICTION

ILLCIT DRINKERS FIND HELP

ABOUT

Megaphone is a magazine sold on the streets of Vancouver by homeless and low-income vendors. Vendors buy the paper for 75 cents an issue and sell the paper to customers for a suggested donation of \$2. All money from the transaction goes into the pocket of the vendor.

OUR MISSION

Megaphone’s goal is to provide a voice and economic opportunities to homeless and low-income people while building grassroots support to end poverty.

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY WILL BROWN

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If you are homeless or low-income, you can become a Megaphone vendor. Each issue costs 75 cents. New vendors get their first 10 copies for free.

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100 per cent of the purchase goes directly to the street vendor.

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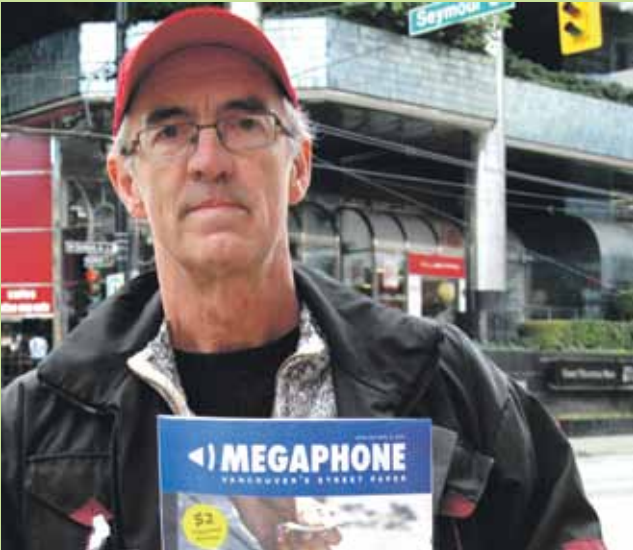
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Meetings for new vendors take place Tuesdays, and Thursdays at 1pm at the Megaphone office located at 121 Heatley Ave.

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SOUNDOFF

Readers' Letters



REINFORCING STEREOTYPES

Re: Megaphone Issue #96, "Addicted City: How Vancouver's War on Drugs Began"

It's too bad the cover is so misleading. Pot is not the issue, but the text 'Addicted City' is attached to the photo [of a man covered in cannabis buds]. This reinforces the conservative perspective that pot is the 'gateway drug'.

Simon Garber

From our Facebook fan page,
Facebook.com/MegaphoneMagazine

Please send your letters, opinions, rants and raves to 'Soundoff', Megaphone Magazine, #611, 142-757 W Hastings, Vancouver BC, V6C 1A1 or 'soundoff@megaphonemagazine.com'.

◀ MEGAPHONE

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER MEGAPHONE 098

In Our Backyard — News that a second homeless man was found dead in North Vancouver in less than a month should remind us that homelessness is not just a crisis in Vancouver—it is a tragedy affecting the whole region. As rising rents push more people onto the streets, Vancouver's suburban cities need to come to grips with what's happening in their communities and start doing more to end homelessness.

Over the past decade, the number of homeless people living in Vancouver's suburbs more than doubled from 451 in 2002 to 1,018 in 2011. Yet most of the attention (and resources) around homelessness continues to be centred on the city. It's easy to see why: the Downtown Eastside is bustling, easily sensationalized and right beside our downtown core. Suburbia's homeless are often hidden in parks and forests.

While I always find it encouraging that Vancouver spends as much time talking about homelessness as it does (most Canadian cities simply prefer to pretend it doesn't exist), it's time we broaden the discussion.

Traditionally, the typical suburban homeless person was local; they were from the community and were struggling with alcoholism and/or poverty. However, in recent years social workers have noticed a growing number of refugees from the Downtown Eastside, like the 61-year-old man



recently found dead in North Vancouver (see page 6). With that comes a whole new set of addiction and mental health problems, but suburban cities have been slow to respond.

Burnaby's myopic mayor, Derrick Corrigan, has refused to open a permanent shelter, insisting that housing is a provincial responsibility. While Vancouver's low-barrier, emergency shelters have at least helped hundreds of people get inside over the past three years, Corrigan's stubbornness has meant that Burnaby's 70-plus homeless people have no way to get off the streets.

While cities other than Vancouver are beginning to come to terms with homelessness, they've still got a long way to go. It was only after heated public debate that Coquitlam approved its first permanent shelter, but that won't be ready until spring 2014. (A current application to open a temporary overnight shelter until then is drawing more misplaced opposition from the community.)

North Vancouver does have a 45-bed

shelter, but no detox or treatment beds. Those who want to get clean have to leave the city. And only Vancouver and North Vancouver have shelters that practice harm reduction, accepting people who have been using drugs and alcohol. Shelters in other cities simply turn them away.

We know that if we're going to help someone get sober and into housing, services need to be easily accessible. If people are turned away or forced to leave their community when they ask for help, they'll often give up.

It is encouraging that many suburban cities have started homelessness task forces in recent years. Even acknowledging that there is a problem is a big leap for some communities. But as homelessness spreads out across Metro Vancouver, we need to build up the services across the region or we will see more lost lives in our backyards.

Dr. Dean C. Powers, Psy. D.
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By **Sean Condon**
Executive Director—Megaphone
Photo by **Murray Siple**

MEGA-NEWS



A homeless man sleeps on the street. Photo by Jon Catbagan.

City puts millions into social housing

The City of Vancouver has set aside \$67 million for affordable housing initiatives in what Vision Vancouver says “is the most we’ve ever put into a housing budget in the history of Vancouver.”

The city’s new 2012-2014 Capital Plan Budget sets aside \$6.9 million this year for previously announced housing projects, renovation and maintenance of current affordable housing units, and the purchasing of property for new projects. Another \$42 million will be put aside in a contingency fund should opportunities arise for working with the federal or pro-

vincial government on housing.

“We’ve discovered that [housing is] so expensive that no one single level of government can do it alone, so the best way to do it is partnership. We’re taking a leadership role with this by saying ‘we’re actually buying the land, what do you got?’” says Vision Councillor Kerry Jang.

Housing activists in the Downtown Eastside say it’s not enough money, however, to build the 5,000 unites of affordable housing they argue are needed in that neighbourhood alone.

“I haven’t heard of them doing any property buying yet, and we’re very

nervous,” says Wendy Pedersen of the Carnegie Community Action Project. “They haven’t bought one piece of property in the last three years in the Downtown Eastside.”

Deaths highlight need for North Shore social housing

Two men on the North Shore are suspected to have died because of homelessness.

On January 3, 53-year-old Doug Lalonde died when the shipping container he was sleeping in caught fire in the District of North Vancouver. On February 2, an unidentified 61-year-old man was found dead, lying outside on a bed of cardboard in the City of North Vancouver. Neither liked to stay in the area’s only shelter, the 45-bed North Shore Housing Centre and Shelter, run by the Lookout Emergency Aid Society.

Although the shelter has space for only a fraction of the 117 homeless people counted in the 2011 Metro Vancouver Homelessness Count—outreach workers estimate the actual number is at least double—North Shore Homelessness Task Force Chair Sandra Edelman says social housing is more important than another shelter.

“Basically having supported housing, different types of housing for certain people so that they feel comfortable living in a certain environment,” Edelman says, adding that all social housing in the area is full.

“We struggle more in terms of getting onto the potential [provincial government] agenda in terms of additional affordable housing.”

Stories by **Katie Hyslop**

VENDOR PROFILE

Ron McBride captures the city he calls home



I used to have a large array of camera equipment. That was a long time ago. I had a huge photo bank of pictures when I used to live on a 42’ sailboat. When the boat sank I lost all my camera equipment, photos—everything I owned. I never financially recovered from that.

“When I recently won a prize at the Hope in Shadows calendar contest I used the \$500 winning prize money to buy a digital camera. I always knew I had a gift with taking photos, and as soon as I had a camera again, I was back at it.

“It’s been really cool to be able to take photos again—it’s one of my passions. I really enjoy photography, getting outside and taking photographs of different objects around town, whether it’s a buildings, nature or people.

“Most of my photos are in the West End, where I live. It’s a beautiful neighbourhood and there’s so much to photograph down there.

“I got involved with *Megaphone* when I was in a rough spot and saw the sign outside the office as I walked by. I was in pretty dire straights. It’s been a really great job and I enjoy it a lot.

“I like selling *Megaphone* because I get to interact with people and make a sale. It’s a small thing, but it’s nice having somebody come and buy something from you that’s high value. It feels good.

“I was born and raised in Vancouver. I like Vancouver’s beauty, it just never ends—the mountains, the ocean. But the city’s pollution affects me and makes it hard for me to breathe. Sometimes I have to wear a mask when I’m standing outside for long periods of time selling *Megaphone* to help protect me.

“Still, every time I wake up in the morning and it’s a beautiful clear sky and I can see the mountains, I find it breathtaking.”

Ron sells Megaphone and Hope in Shadows at the corner of Georgia and Burrard. You can find him online at RonMcBride.com.



THIS FORTNIGHT IN VANCOUVER HISTORY

By **Chuck Davis**
VancouverHistory.ca

24 FEBRUARY 1911

Bill Miner, the “Grey Fox” who had pulled off Canada’s first train robbery near Silverdale in the Fraser Valley in 1907, was captured in Georgia today and sent to the state pen. He would die there two years later.

1 MARCH 1982

Groundbreaking started on the construction of the original SkyTrain line.

3 MARCH 1892

Charles Woodward opened his first store, selling dry goods, near Main and Hastings in Vancouver.

4 MARCH 1910

At Rogers Pass a CPR rotary snowplow and hundreds of workers were clearing snow and debris from an avalanche when a second avalanche swept down from above, killing 62.

Vendor Voices

A History of Drinking

My father's grandfather had a bad drinking problem. Often away at sea as a captain, he would often drink on the job but by all accounts was able to steer the ships across the English Channel to France.

While my great grandfather Daniel was away at sea, his sister would look after the brood: my Grandpa Bob, his brothers Daniel and Jack, and his sisters Louise and Addy. Daniel's wife had died when Bob was three years old.

When Daniel returned home to Liverpool, the nightmare for the children would begin. He would embark on a drinking binge, scaring his kids and knocking the boys around in a terrifying manner.

When he was finally old enough to leave, Bob and all his siblings left home.

Grandpa Bob went to work and live on a farm, possessed only with youth and a Grade 3 education. He would work on farms for many years in England, and later trained to cook in a restaurant.

When the First World War began, Bob was a cook in the English Army. After witnessing the battles and mixing with soldiers who turned to the bottle after being so close to the fighting and

losing their friends, Bob himself turned to the bottle.

After the war, Bob continued to work as a cook. He loved socializing and women, not to mention knocking back the drinks. He moved to Repina, Saskatchewan. At one place where he boarded the landlady locked the doors on him; she didn't want a drunk coming home late at night, after boozing with the boys. Nevertheless, Bob found a way in, climbing a tree and crawling in through the open kitchen window was open.

Bob finally settled down after meeting Nellie in 1924. Nellie was a schoolteacher living with her mother. Nellie quickly set him straight, she coming from parents who were very strict with her and her sister Eva.

Bob and Nellie were engaged a year later. A week before the wedding though, Bob went drinking with the boys and showed up for a date drunk. Nellie told him to go home and sober up. A day later she warned him not to drink again or the wedding would be called off. Through 30 years of marriage, Bob rarely took a drink.

Others in the family didn't fare so well. Bob's sister Louise's four sons all went to fight for Canada during the

Second World War. All four came back from fighting in the battlefields, but three of them brought back drinking problems of their own.

Nellie's sister Eva's two sons also fought in the war. Harold, the oldest, loved to drink when he was off-duty with his fellow coworkers. Harold and I became close in 1984 after his wife died. I would go over to his place and we'd knock back some drinks together.

After the war, Harold's younger brother, Frank, attended UBC Law, boozing it up with his classmates n weekends. Frank was a good father and husband, but continued to drink heavily after graduating. He passed away in 1996 after 55 years of drinking.

When Grandpa Bob passed away, Frank and my Dad prepared for the services. Before they left our house, they pulled a mickey out of their suit jackets and had a snort. That really scared me. They stayed out all that night.

Alcohol has flowed with my relatives, from the beginning through to the end.

*Bob sells Megaphone at Choices Market—
19th and Cambie*

Photo by **Aviva West**

NEW RADICALS

They say radical, we say rational



We're not about to quit oil cold turkey. Does that mean we should continue with business as usual?

In Canada, "business as usual" means rapidly increasing oil sands exploitation and selling the bitumen as quickly as possible to anyone who wants it. It means continuing to import half the oil we use, mostly from the Middle East, while shipping oil extracted here to other countries. It means continued tax breaks and subsidies for fossil fuel companies while manufacturing and other value-added industries suffer because of our inflated petro dollar. It means low royalties and not putting away revenues for the future.

This could spell a bleak future: a failing economy as accessible oil starts to run out with few renewable energy sources to replace it; deteriorating health of citizens as water, air and land become more polluted; increased droughts, floods and water shortages as climate change increases.

But it doesn't have to be bleak. We could have a healthy and prosperous future. "Canada could be seen as a world leader on energy, human rights and global discourse. The solutions are not radical. They include such reasonable measures as slowing oil sands production, eliminating subsidies to an industry that hardly needs them, increasing royalties, setting up

a rainy day fund for the revenues and encouraging energy conservation and renewable energy development.

We could also learn to use fossil fuels more efficiently. For example, about 75 per cent of petroleum in North America is used for transportation. Automobiles waste 85 per cent of the energy from each litre of fuel burned. And the useful energy goes to moving a vehicle that typically weighs 10 to 20 times more than the passengers it carries. That translates to about one per cent efficiency to move passengers.

Part of the solution requires untangling the rhetoric. Consider what our prime minister recently said in China: "We will uphold our responsibility to put the interests of Canadians ahead of foreign money and influence that seek to obstruct development in Canada in favour of energy imported from other, less stable parts of the world."

How will selling most of our unrefined bitumen to China and the U.S. make us less reliant on "energy imported from other, less stable parts of the world"? And how are the interests of Canadians served by selling our industries and resources to countries with atrocious human rights records and rapidly increasing greenhouse gas emissions? How is it in the national interest to increase our own greenhouse gas emissions and pollution so that some of the world's most profitable companies can make even more money?

And why, when we know that global warming is serious and that oil will run out, are we hell-bent on using it up as quickly as possible? Author and environmentalist Bill McKibben suggests a disturbing reason why people in the fossil fuel industry and the governments they bankroll put profits ahead of the future of the planet and deny that climate change is a problem: the

value of these industries "is largely based on fossil-fuel reserves that won't be burned if we ever take global warming seriously."

As McKibben notes, "ExxonMobil, year after year, pulls in more money than any company in history. Chevron's not far behind. Everyone in the business is swimming in money." If they were to slow down production, or even admit that the future of humanity depends on leaving some of the resource in the ground, it would hurt their bottom lines.

And so we have politicians and industry shills using bogus talking points to discredit or silence those who are calling for sanity for the sake of our future. They falsely accuse us of wanting to shut down all industry and call us hypocrites because we are unable to completely disengage from the fossil fuel economy and infrastructure that humans have created.

All we're saying is let's step back and think of a sensible way to go about this. And by "we", I mean most of us. I mean you and me. I mean the people our governments are supposed to represent. They can say we're radical if it makes them sleep better at night, but we prefer the term "rational".

By **David Suzuki** with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation Editorial and Communications Specialist **Ian Hanington**.

I am from

I am from 2 wars fought and won,
A coal miner’s son 7 siblings and
Many loved ones.

I am from grandfather’s handcrafted bob-sleds
And duck decoys made just right

That sit on the lake
Beautiful and bright.

I am from Dad’s fishing trips and fun family days,
Spent on the summer beach.

I am from mom’s homemade apple pie, bread,
cinnamon rolls and fresh clothes hung on the
clothes line.

I am from midnight and 2 brothers.
We would go to the woods and cut down

that special tree. Snowed in days like the
storm hurricane winds.

I am from a dad that would sometimes hunt like
his 4 brothers, with rabbit stew and wild

game, black cod and sometimes
lobster dinner.

I am from many fond memories of loved ones
deep in the heart and soul of a poor
coal miner’s son.

Many battles fought and won.

These things dear to heart,
I’ll keep until my dying day
That no one can take away.



By Dan DeCoste
*Dan DeCoste is a participant
in Megaphone’s writing program.
He sells Megaphone at the corner
of Pender and Granville,*

Photo by Allan England

CAN’T FIND A VENDOR?

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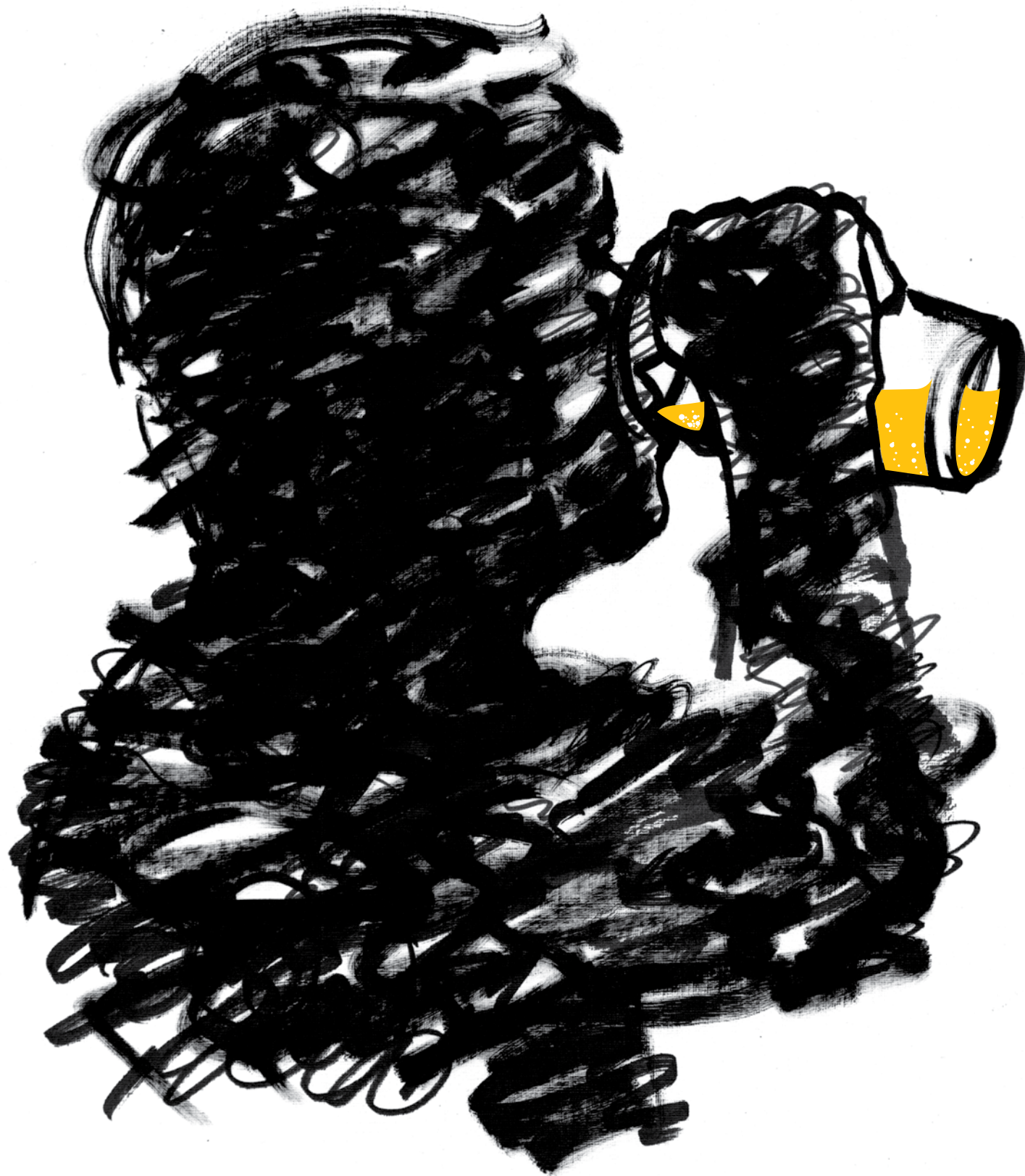
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ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION ON THE MAP

AT LONG LAST,
ILLICIT DRINKERS
BECOME PART OF
THE CONVERSATION

In the final part of our series exploring drugs, policy and harm reduction, Jackie Wong looks at how Vancouver has begun to experiment with harm reduction for alcohol addictions.

Thirteen years ago, John Skulsh was sitting in the Balmoral Hotel pub by himself, drinking a beer. A social guy with a sweet disposition and a goofy sense of humour, Skulsh was looking for company. “I had nobody to drink with,” he says of that time. “Then, he walks in.”

Rob Morgan walked through the doors and sat down next to Skulsh.

That day in the pub, the two traded stories about their hometowns in northwestern B.C., which they quickly discovered were only a short distance from each other. “We hit it off just like that,” Skulsh recalls, smiling.

These days, Skulsh and Morgan are almost inseparable. They both live in the Washington Hotel supportive housing facility, they share a similar group of friends and they still drink together. But their beverage of choice has changed since the Balmoral days. “We got short of money,” Skulsh explains, simply. “So he introduced me to the cheap stuff.”

It’s now been eight years since Skulsh started to routinely drink diluted Listerine. At \$7 a bottle these days, it’s much easier to come up with money to buy mouthwash over beer or wine.

“Not in my wildest dreams did I ever think I’d ever



Rob Morgan co-founded the Eastside Illicit Drinkers Group for Education

consume that substance,” Skulsh says. “There are days I say no, and there are days that I don’t know how to get out of it.”

He has mixed feelings about his habit, but Skulsh maintains there’s “no way” he’s going to detox, treatment or Alcoholics Anonymous. “It’s not in my vocabulary,” he says. To engage in such programs would require him to cut himself off from the people he knows best. “I feel like I’m going to miss out on stuff. Miss out on good times, miss out on friends.” The potential loss of a community that means so much to him in exchange for the questionable effectiveness of an abstinence-based recovery program would be too great a risk to take.

Skulsh is one of many people who drink illicit, also known as non-beverage alcohol, but for whom there are few social or health supports available. It’s only been in the last seven months that Skulsh has started to connect with a community facing similar addiction issues.

While numerous support groups have previously existed for crack and heroin users, illicit drinkers have been largely left out of public health conversations around harm reduction and marginalized populations until recently.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF ABUSE

On three Monday mornings a month, Skulsh, along with other members of the seven-month-old Eastside Illicit Drinkers Group for Education (EIDGE), gather in the East Hastings Street headquarters of the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU) to connect with each other and hear from guest speakers about how to improve their health and safety while drinking.

The goals of the group are relatively simple: to educate members on how to improve their own health and provide an open discussion forum for people who drink non-beverage alcohol.

Consuming mouthwash, hand sanitizer or rubbing alcohol comes with its own set of health concerns different from those of beverage alcohol drinkers. Illicit alcohol is both more potent and less expensive than beverage alcohol—a \$3, 500mL bottle of rubbing alcohol is the equivalent of 30 beverage alcohol drinks. Regular consumption of non-beverage alcohol puts illicit drinkers at risk of blindness, liver failure, seizures, gastro-intestinal disorders, pneumonia and repeated physical injury related to falls.

“THEY AREN’T GETTING HARM REDUCTION THAT OTHER GROUPS ARE GETTING.”

Non-beverage alcohol addiction is an intersecting outcome of poverty and longstanding addiction. Illicit drinkers form a marginalized subset of the already-marginalized population of people who are homeless, vulnerably housed or have a history of other illicit drug addiction.

It’s a well-documented fact that alcoholism affects a large percentage of the homeless population. The Canadian Medical Association Journal shows alcoholism has been reported to affect 53 to 73 per cent of homeless adults, with a high frequency of people who drink more than 20 drinks a day.

But there’s been relatively little movement on improving health outcomes and reducing harms for alcoholics using the harm reduction framework that has proven effective with illicit drug users. As such, the formation of a user-run group like EIDGE has been long overdue, according to Skulsh’s friend and group co-founder Morgan.

“There were a lot of people out there who were missing the boat,” Morgan says of people embroiled in non-beverage alcohol addiction. “They aren’t getting harm reduction that other groups are getting, like drug users or heroin users.”

STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH ADDICTION

EIDGE started in August 2011 with a small research grant from the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) to investigate what harms illicit drinkers perceive from their drinking and to learn what could be done to minimize those harms. That funding kicked in after the BC-Yukon Association of Drug War Survivors conducted a provincial

needs assessment supported by the BCCDC.

Results of the needs assessment, which gathered information from 17 B.C. communities, were published in May 2011. The assessment identified the need to more strongly connect with illicit drinkers, and direct more support towards user-run organizations. EIDGE aims to accomplish both goals. Starting in February, the Vancouver Foundation financially supports the group with a \$51,980 grant that will help it explore alcohol harm reduction options across B.C.

“What we’re doing is teaching members how to live a healthier lifestyle while they’re drinking,” says Morgan. “That might include just having a soup in the morning or seeing a doctor. We’re really trying to stress our members to start seeing doctors, which they’re not.”

Illicit drinkers are routinely refused health services because of their addiction, and Morgan and

EIDGE members are trying to address that in their group. “They smell of alcohol and they’re refused services from the health centres around here,” Morgan says. In northern B.C. communities, some homeless shelters have policies that bar people from the shelter for a week if they arrive visibly intoxicated. “That’s out in the cold. That’s really bad.”

Like most of the members of EIDGE and the illicit drinkers identified in the initial BC-Yukon Association of Drug War Survivors needs assessment, Morgan is an aboriginal man with a history of addiction. Now 48, he started drinking at age 11, and started drinking non-beverage alcohol in the 1990s.

“I think it stems from Residential School and foster care,” he says of disproportionately aboriginal representation among illicit drinkers. “I’m second generation Residential School. That means my uncle and my mother and my aunts went to Residential School.”

Morgan has personally experienced discrimination for his illicit alcohol addiction. “People just give you that look,” he says. “How can you do that? How can you drink that stuff?”

For Morgan, the answer is simple. “Because it’s cheap. You get more bang for your buck than you do for regular beer. It just helps you forget your past, you know. People are running from their pasts and that’s what they’re drinking this for. ‘Cause it forgets. Everybody wakes up with their demons. They’re staring at their face. And they reach out for that drink just to hide it.”

TREATMENT FILLS A NEED

Stigmas attached to illicit drinkers have deterred Morgan from seeking help from mainstream groups like Alcoholics Anonymous. “I tried AA in the past and went to all types of AA meetings, whether they were Native, non-Native or two-spirited [mized gender],” he says. “I could not seem to fit in because I was not an official alcoholic by what I had chosen to drink. Even in AA they still have that ‘I would never drink that’ attitude, so I always felt unworthy and like an outsider.”

Morgan doesn’t think that Alcoholics Anonymous would support a group like EIDGE, but EIDGE is hoping to expand its presence in the Downtown Eastside community by eventually opening an Insite-style safe drinking lounge. A location and program details have yet to be determined.

EIDGE started its first meetings in the same month that PHS Community Services Society launched its own Managed Alcohol Program (MAP) in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health and University of Victoria researchers. The program, which operates out of PHS’ Station Street supportive housing facility near Main Street SkyTrain Station, is Vancouver’s first in a long-term, permanent residential setting. A smaller, less formalized managed alcohol program has run out of PHS’ Pennsylvania Hotel since 2009.

PHS’s MAP program serves eight of Station Street’s 80 residents. The program costs approximately \$350 per person per month. PHS staff approach the program like any other form of substitution therapy, such as methadone treatment for heroin users.

Every hour for 12 hours a day, PHS nursing staff members administer measured single servings of beer, wine or vodka to MAP participants who have a history of illicit alcohol misuse.

“It was very clear that they needed a program that worked for them. They were failing at abstinence-based programs,” says Station Street projects manager Clare Hacksel, who helped develop the MAP at PHS. “They were failing at sobriety, with long histories of drinking—on average, 20 to 30 years for most of our participants. And so it just seemed like the time was right.”

Since a large part of drinking is its social elements, MAP was developed with the community in mind, and the hourly dispensing sessions at Station Street allow people to remain with their peers while having access to health and social supports.

FIGHTING MISCONCEPTIONS

The program has raised the ire of some critics in the media, who interpret MAP as a misguided dispensary for “free booze,” not a step on the road to addiction recovery.

There is a raft of popular misconception surrounding alcohol addiction that doesn’t tend to exist for other drugs, Hacksel says. “People understand other addictions as out of

people’s control,” she explains. “But with alcohol, people—even affluent people—tend to think, ‘Why can’t they just get it together? I know a high-functioning alcoholic. I drink wine every day.’ They don’t get that it’s not the same thing. And that people really struggle with it.”

Despite its relative newness and some accompanying skepticism in Vancouver, managed alcohol programs have thrived elsewhere in Canada for years. The PHS managed alcohol program is modeled after a similar program in Ottawa, Ontario. There, the Shepherds of Good Hope hostel ran a robustly evaluated managed alcohol program for 18 months starting in 2001, on the heels of a pioneering program at Toronto’s Seaton House. The Toronto program began in 1996 in response to a coroner’s inquest into the freezing deaths of three people who were homeless and in the throes of alcohol addiction.

Hacksel emphasizes what many critics forget: that poverty and chronic homelessness are central to the experiences of illicit drinkers. Treatment or detox doesn’t often work for people in poverty because traditional treatment programs don’t address housing needs or social supports for clients after they finish the programs.

“It’s pretty quick to go back [to drinking] if that [housing] situation hasn’t changed. Wrapped up in this program is trying to address homelessness,” she says.

“Getting to the point where you’re drinking rubbing alcohol or Listerine—you didn’t just pick it up one day. It’s a pattern, and reversing that pattern is very difficult. There’s so much more involved in drinking it than simply wanting to have a drink.”

Story and photos by **Jackie Wong**



Rob Morgan (left) and John Skulsh, members of Eastside Illicit Drinkers Group for Education

“EVERYBODY WAKES
UP WITH THEIR
DEMONS ... AND THEY
REACH OUT FOR
THAT DRINK JUST
TO HIDE IT.”

CYCLE OF ABUSE

The negative impacts of addiction and pornography

Canada is a wonderful country with many great social programs. It is regarded by many people around the world as the number one place to live. Our country is known well for its social safety net, yet there is one thing that seems to cause a lot of trouble for some of its citizens. The exploitation of people through their addictions is still allowed in Canadian society.

In our country people can still legally make money by providing others with addictive material. Pornography, for one, is a powerful addiction that can affect the viewer's sexuality to an extent that serious harm occurs. Though the destruction can last a lifetime, little is being done to address the problem. The exploitation of women and other subjects of pornography is well-documented; this column examines how pornography abuses the viewer's sexuality through an endless state of addictive exploitation. By far the largest audience of pornography is men.

People are conditioned by what their society teaches them, though what they learn as acceptable behavior may not be very good for their overall psychological health. As young men reach puberty some are being initiated into the age of cybersex, a place where fantasies can become their reality and their sexuality is only accessible by computer screen. The norms and values they learn from porn cannot be used in mainstream society because such open and casual sexual behavior between complete strangers is neither healthy nor acceptable. This can give young men very confusing notions about their sexuality. If they only need to click onto a pornographic website to have their desires fulfilled, they may never learn the importance of having normal intimacy or even how to achieve it. A computer screen can never replace the actual presence of another person, nor can it show love and attention the way it is found in a healthy relationship.

You may have heard of the saying, "If you play with fire, you're going to get burned". Sex within a relationship is like a warm fire contained safely in a fireplace. Porn addiction, however, is that fire escaping and wildly burning the house down. It can ruin a person's ability to develop relationships, to understand intimacy or even to build family values. Young men who view porn stand the risk of developing extremely faulty, sometimes dangerous, notions around sex and relationships with women. To the young, immature man, this can become overwhelming for years to come.

A study in March of 2002 at the University of Calgary by Dr. Claudio Violato found that viewing pornography is harmful to the viewer and society. Using pornographic material leads to several psychological, behavioral and social problems. The authors of the study concluded that exposure to pornographic material puts viewers at increased

risk for developing sexual deviant tendencies, committing sexual offences and experiencing difficulties in human relationships. It leads one to wonder if the organized distribution of pornography is actually a plot to do that very thing, to undermine the family values and weaken the social fabric within our society.

Despite these troubling outcomes, we rarely hear how men can become victims of sex abuse at the hands of other men who produce pornographic material. Maybe the reason not much is ever heard about this addiction is because young men who feel shame or embarrassment choose never to speak about it in public. Despite the silence, the consumption of pornography is abundant.

Worldwide, the pornography industry is worth \$58 billion a year. In the United States alone it is a \$13 billion a year industry. That is more than the gross domestic product of many small countries. With so much money to be made who can advocate for the health of the American and Canadian family structure? Certainly not the producer who is benefiting financially, nor the addicts, who are hopelessly locked into a state of addiction, exploitation and abuse. So who will advocate on their behalf? Will our governments see the rationale for adjusting the industry?

Without firsthand experience, it is difficult for the average Canadian citizen to understand what the addict is going through and even harder to empathize. Addictions are still seen in some avenues of society as criminal behavior, but it is becoming understood in medical fields that there are health conditions in need of new approaches to treatment.

Some people argue that porn is harmless, but if young men become consumed by it and withdrawn from reality, then the opposite is true: it is harmful. Canada has constitutional rights protecting its citizens from sexual abuse but it remains to be seen when it is caused by pornography. Maybe things will change for the better if this first generation of the cybersexed male matures with age and asks for protection for others. I hope I have shed some light onto this dark topic.

By **Steven Kinnis**
Photo by **Semututhan**

Steven is a participant in Megaphone's vendor writing program and sells Megaphone





THE GASTOWN RIOT REVISITED

New book looks at the inspiration for a riot

Stan Douglas: Abbott & Cordova, 7 August 1971, was published in February by Arsenal Pulp Press. The collection of essays looks at the 50-by-30-foot translucent photo mural which now hangs in the atrium of the city’s Woodward’s complex, depicting a clash between police and protestors that defined Vancouver’s Gastown neighbourhood.

Visitors to the Woodward’s complex are greeted by an unexpected scene: a chaotic street battle, where police with batons drag defiant hippies into the back of a van, and officers on horseback corral crowds of longhaired men and women. Spectators to the event are huddled against storefront walls while rioters flee through the streets for safety. The scene is from a massive photo installation that hangs above the Woodward’s atrium. Spanning 50 by 30 feet, it is a depiction that is at once familiar yet foreign to Vancouverites—the type of imagery usually broadcast from foreign cities and far away conflicts. But for people of a certain generation, this image revives forgotten memories of Vancouver. The stores in the background, the uniforms of the police and the vintage of vehicles are all meant to remind one of a Vancouver from an earlier time.

Entitled “Abbott & Cordova, 7 August 1971,” the gigantic image by Vancouver artist Stan Douglas is a representation of a little known but crucial moment in Vancouver and the Downtown Eastside’s history. On that date, Vancouver police, in full riot gear, violently broke up a smoke-in, a peaceful marijuana protest, inciting mayhem and destruction on Gastown’s streets. This event was the climax to heightened tensions between local government, hippies squatting in empty industrial buildings throughout Gastown and the predominantly blue-collar families that had populated the neighbourhood for over a century. The riot, also known as the Battle of Maple Tree Square, ultimately led to the city zoning the area as strictly commercial. With this banning of residential use, the community’s social infrastructures slowly collapsed and, in a neighbourhood rife with disunity, economic and social class divisions emerged. Through his photo installation, Douglas is reviving a lost memory, highlighting a decisive shift in the use and policing of public space in Vancouver.

AT A NEW CULTURAL EPICENTRE FOR VANCOUVER

Although representing the past, Douglas’ image is very much concerned with the current status of the Downtown Eastside. When asked by *Megaphone* why he chose to reenact the events of 1971 for the Woodward’s atrium, Douglas drew a connection with the new development. “The riot was a critical juncture in the history of the Downtown Eastside,” he said. “It affected civic attitudes toward the neighbourhood that would eventually be manifest in zoning and policing policies. The Woodward’s complex is itself another juncture, but hopefully a more positive one.” Douglas’ image is an interesting and compelling addition to the iconic Woodward’s development. The installation is in the main public atrium of this cultural epicentre, which offers a mix of community space, university classrooms, galleries, shops, subsidized housing and private luxury condos. The provincial and municipal governments, as well as developers, have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in this development with the hope of creating a safe public space to ignite interest and capital investment in the middle of this problematic community.

RESEARCHED LIKE A HOLLYWOOD SET

Douglas was initially invited by Woodward’s architect Gregory Henriquez to propose a public artwork for a building in North Vancouver. Knowing Henriquez was working on the Woodward’s development, Douglas said that instead he would be more interested in proposing a project for Woodward’s. Together, they hashed out a number of ideas, eventually deciding on a depiction of the 1971 riot. After finalizing the idea, Douglas designed a scene to photograph based on historical research of the area. Like a Hollywood movie set, Douglas hired a film crew and had a replica façade of the Cordova and Abbott streets intersection (circa 1971) constructed on the Pacific National Exhibition grounds. He then employed actors to play riot police, hippies and bystanders. Nearly 40 years after the Gastown Riot, Woodward’s has grown out of a long public debate between governments, social activists and the community. Since the Woodward’s Department Store closed its doors in 1993, many organizations advocated for the site to be developed into social housing for the neighbourhood’s homeless. This dispute escalated in 2002, when activists and the homeless squatted in the building, before being evicted by police. The activists then held a tent city around the building that lasted for 90 days. Ultimately, the land was developed jointly with provincial, municipal and private interests, offering community space and a percentage of social housing. Emerging from this conflict, the Woodward’s building has now become the focus of gentrification within the community. Douglas’s installation of the riot image within the building gives presence to the community’s fraught and at times forgotten histories, as well as the municipal and provincial governments’ agenda to control the area’s image by whatever means.

CITY OF IMAGE MAKERS

Adding to the riot image’s relevance, Douglas’s use of Hollywood film production techniques speaks to an industry and mode of labour specific to Vancouver and the Downtown Eastside, confronting a major aspect of Vancouver’s contemporary persona as a city that never plays itself. Home to the third-largest film production industry in North America, Vancouver is constantly cast as playing other fictional and real cities. More specifically, the Downtown Eastside is in high demand for its gritty looking streets and brownstone buildings. This industry invades these public spaces, exploiting the city as a backdrop but never telling the story of its streets. In this case, Douglas is telling Vancouver’s story but within the construct of an immaculately built film set, oddly separated from the real streets. The Gastown image revives a history many may have forgotten and many more have no knowledge of. This is why Douglas says that “public art can be more than just large-scale decoration.” The image installed at Woodward’s has the potential to create conversation and dialogue about the new Downtown Eastside community. It has already happened through press coverage of the installation, which has focused on re-telling the riotous history it emerged from. Much like a billboard advertisement in scale, Douglas’ work stands as marker of the complexities and struggles in the area—past, present and future.

Story by **Shaun Dacey**

A version of this article originally appeared in Megaphone Issue #47.

Stan Douglas: Abbott & Cordova, 7 August 1971 by Stan Douglas (Arsenal Pulp Press) features contributions by Alexander Alberro, Nora M. Alter, Serge Guilbaut, Sven Lutticken and Jesse Proudfoot.

HOROSCOPES

by Poncho ‘Party’ Sanchez

ARIES (MARCH 21 – APRIL 19)

Aries, you are easily my least favourite sign in the Zodiac. Get a life.

TAURUS (APRIL 20 – MAY 20)

There’s a guy in my neighbourhood who drives around in a new Ford Taurus. He reminds me a lot of you. Not because he drives a Taurus, but because he’s a jerk.

GEMINI (MAY 21 – JUNE 20)

You had a great run at the Republican nomination, Newt ... er, Gemini. I’m with you: why shouldn’t we colonize the moon? I wonder, though, if I’d have to change my astrological maps for the lunar-born.

CANCER (JUNE 21 – JULY 22)

Family matters are important this month, Cancer. Meaning it’s time to let that family out of your basement. I don’t care if it puts the lotion in the basket.

LEO (JULY 23 – AUG 22)

Building relationships is paramount for you right now, Leo. Maybe that’s because you finally realized that spending Valentine’s alone again isn’t a sign of your independence, but a sign of how unbearable you are.

VIRGO (AUG 23 – SEPT 22)

Remember that Super Bowl commercial where Matthew Broderick resurrected Ferris Bueller to shill for Honda? You are like Matthew Broderick: shameless. Now go hit on that guy at the bar, and refuse to accept his repeated rejections.

LIBRA (SEPT 23 – OCT 22)

Your life is so dull, Libra, that not even Vic Toews cares what you’ve been doing. #TellVicNothing.

SCORPIO (OCT 23 – NOV 21)

Last night I dreamt that you finally achieved happiness, Scorpio. Then I woke up and remembered that you are doomed to a life of existential angst and bitterness.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 – DEC 21)

You’re feeling quite neighbourly of late, Sagittarius. That doesn’t make it okay for you to lurk in the bushes outside your neighbour’s window, though.

CAPRICORN (DEC 22 – JAN 19)

Like everyone else, you’re completely caught up in Linsanity, Capricorn. But you need to stop sending Jeremy Lin Twitpics of your privates. Not even Instagram can make that look pretty.

AQUARIUS (JAN 20 – FEB 18)

You’re very interested in pursuing a relationship, Aquarius. But I don’t think that Tumblr about Ryan Gosling’s abs is going to get you any closer to a date with him.

PISCES (FEB 19 – MAR 20)

Your Super Bowl party was a real stinker, Pisces. Maybe you shouldn’t have spiked the bean dip with ex-lax.

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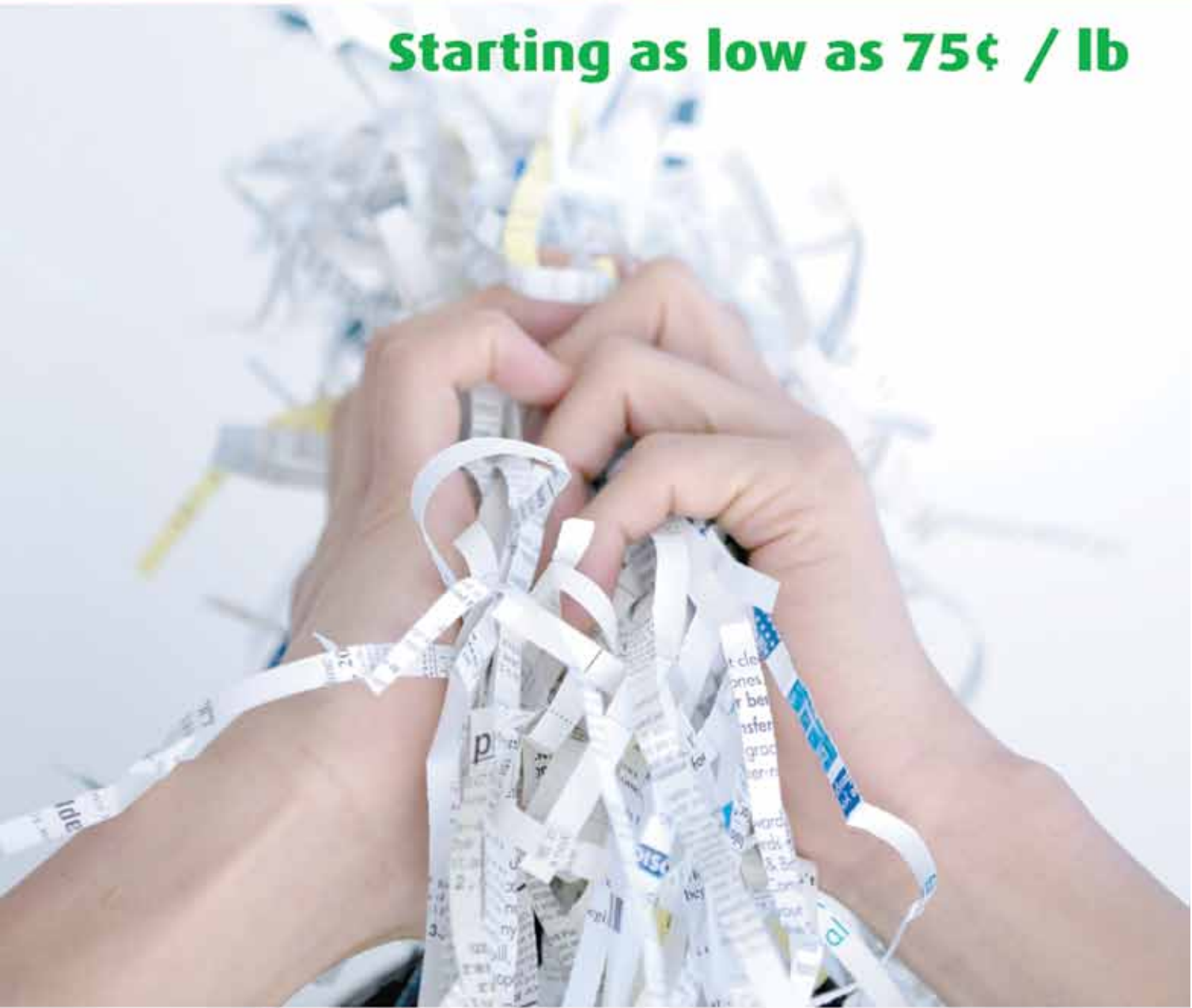
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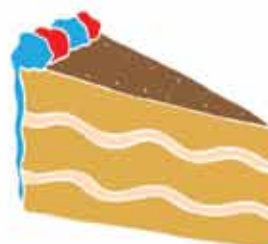
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