



## I AM CANADIAN...

**Harvey Cohen**

Keifer Sutherland declared at a recent rally, "I am not a Calgarian, I am not an Albertan, I am a Canadian". I too would like to make the same declaration. "I too am not a Calgarian, I too am not an Albertan, and I too am a Canadian."

According to a recent survey in Macleans Magazine, we Canadians see ourselves as a caring people; a just people, and we strive for harmony and goodness.

Albertans and Calgarians, on the other hand, have more pecuniary interests. In Alberta it is expressed as the "Alberta Advantage": a determination to make us loved by the rich. "Alberta Advantage" is never used to describe a social value or an inner feeling; it is the provincial motto designed to let the corporate world know that we care so little about our own well-being that we are available to be exploited.

In the last issue of *The Thorn*, Clint Dunford, Alberta Labour minister, explained how corporations could avoid a first union contract as part of the Alberta Advantage. Steve West, the economic development minister, vetoed the environment minister's proposal to keep provincial parks pristine. The Alberta Advantage encourages corporations to mine, log and develop in what caring Canadians say should be protected parks.

Our propensity to be exploited extends to medicare. As part of the Alberta Advantage, Klein and his Cabinet repeatedly makes bold statements about Klein's inability

to listen to the people. They can protest all they want, he says; it will not do one bit of good. With great pride he points to the Oldman River Dam protests and proclaims "there were huge protests there - remember the Ian Tyson gathering? - and we put that one through". A few years later the Oldman flooded more than ever before causing millions in damage, grief and destruction. Klein does not really show contempt for the people just to anger them. Klein's public contempt for Albertans is a signal to the corporate world that he will subvert the will of the people in order to give corporations an Alberta Advantage over Albertans.

The effects of the Alberta Advantage are clear. Why Ralph would adopt such a stupid provincial policy is much less obvious. You have to know Ralph on a personal level to realize why he is doing what he is doing. One would think that a man known for media savvy would not make such a guffaw as to call his constituents "wing nuts." One might surmise that a premier who can look out the legislature window and see grannies and businessmen and students and housewives and farmers - all decent folk - and call them leftists, pinkos, commies, unionists, etc., is not all there.

I received an email recently from a media confrere of the Premier, a former Herald maven, editor of an influential coastal tabloid and a Montreal deskier for the Canadian Press news service. He explains perfectly the problem with our premier:

"I knew Ralph well when he was a drunken reporter and he had no politics." ➤

## This issue's contributors

Jerald Blackstock is a picture framer and artist.

Linda Kitchin (aka mandolinda) is a musician and music teacher.

Patrick MacIntyre is the bar manager at the Henry VIII pub in Calgary.

Harvey Cohen operates a computer sales and consulting business.

Deb Cameron is a compulsive shopper and bag lady.

Brian Dyson is a media artist. He works as a freelance photographer and designer.

Daniela Lindner is a student of herbology.



Members of the editorial collective celebrate the launch of issue #1 of *The Thorn* with a pint (or two) at the King Henry VIII pub on Stephen Avenue. Thanks to Henry for the great finger food.

The theme of this issue is dedicated to Health Care and Alberta's controversial Bill 11. Articles include some interesting insights into the 'Alberta Advantage' in the article "I am Canadian". "Lies, Lies and Damned Lies" is a political exchange in Alberta's House of Commons based on the Shrybman Report which took a closer look at what effect privatization of Health Care has on NAFTA. "A Comedy of Errors" highlights four points about HRG's (Health Resource Group) mistaken belief that it could be easy to make money on the backs of the frail and sick, and to underestimate the resilience of an Innercity neighbourhood in its fight to preserve a thriving community. An excerpt of an American hospital bill and the letter of a physician to her MLA round off our main theme for this issue.

An article on the United States' revival of the

Strategic Defense Initiative, SDI, for the 21st century is featured in the Politics section. In the Economics section the "Alberta Disadvantage" looks at why there are so many persistent labour strikes in a province that is booming economically. In Media, the article "Volksfest" asks why the Calgary Folkfest puts "profits before principle" by accepting the Calgary Herald as a major sponsor. A contribution by the Animal Rights Group feels that "Calgary (is): A City in Conflict" with its treatment of urban wildlife.

Last but not least our call goes out for contributions to the next issue of *The Thorn*, and we encourage you to drop by on the second Wednesday of every month at Henry VIII Pub Downtown, or on the last Thursday of every month at the Bridgeland Riverside Community Association's pub for the "Artists' Pub Night" if

you would like to discuss your ideas with members of the editorial board. **The Thorn** is privately financed, and we always welcome financial contributions and advertising. Rates are available upon request. *DL*

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## Letters

Hi, I would like to congratulate you on the premiere issue of *The Thorn*. I found it very informative and wonderfully thought-provoking. We really need alternative viewpoints in this city, not just the usual ho-hum mainstream media with their superficial coverage of the important issues of the day and in-depth "analysis" of the latest fire/ car cash, etc. Thank you so much! I really appreciated the information on the Calgary Herald strike- it's almost unbelievable that the presence of labour unions and gains they have made is such a non-issue with the Klein government. Keep up the great work!

Sincerely,

Louise Whitton

(a Herald Boycotter, by the way)

... In BC we are kept in the dark about this (*the threat to the Health Care System*). All the major newspapers in the province—two in Vancouver, one in Victoria and one in Prince George, plus many of the smaller dailies and weeklies are controlled by Conrad Black and his minions. All we hear about Alberta is Ralph Klein is wonderful, Stockwell Day is wonderful, the Alberta economy is wonderful, and they have such a good government and we have such as bad one, as soon as we get rid of the NDP we too will have a great government like Alberta. We never hear a word about this stuff, this destruction of the health care system in Alberta.

Sid Tafler

Victoria, BC

**CORRECTION:** In the previous issue the toilet illustration was wrongly attributed to Jerald Blackstock. The image actually came from Andy Bartnek's fridge.

## SUBMIT!

*The Thorn* welcomes your submissions and letters. Send articles, graphics or photos to *The Thorn*,

1111 Memorial Drive N.W.,

Calgary, AB., T2N 3E4,

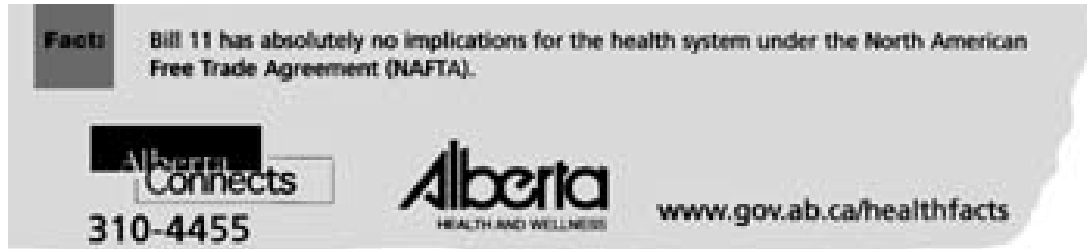
or e-mail us at [the.thorn@home.com](mailto:the.thorn@home.com).

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# Lies, Lies and Damned Lies

Robin Felicity Hanson and Harvey Cohen



This excerpt from Hansard quotes the Alberta Tories arguing that based on the findings of a leading legal research paper, Bill 11 has no implications under NAFTA. The THORN obtained a copy of the quoted research paper directly from the author, and discovered its findings to be quite different from what was represented by the government in the Legislature.

## From Alberta Hansard Mon. March 13, 2000 1:30 pm

**DR. PANNU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has lost the trust of Albertans when it comes to its private, for-profit hospitals scheme. A 42-page legal opinion released earlier today on the NAFTA implications of Bill 11 strikes another blow to the credibility of this government. Canada's medical system is being threatened by this government's reckless scheme to privatize health care. My questions are to the Premier. Why does the government keep claiming that Bill 11 is NAFTA-proof when the just-published legal opinion by a well-known trade expert as well as studies released by economists, doctors, and other public interest groups over the last few weeks indicate that the NAFTA exposure will be the most serious threat posed if this Bill 11 is passed by this government?

**MR. KLEIN:** . . . We have our own NAFTA experts, including officials who were involved in the original NAFTA discussions, and I can tell you that there is nothing in Bill 11 that exposes us under NAFTA. I will have the Hon. Minister of International and Inter-governmental Relations explain further.

**MRS. McCLELLAN:** Mr. Shrybman is the executive director of the Vancouver-based West Coast Environmental Law association, and he has done a number of papers on environmental law and international agreements. I have a copy of this document as well. Obviously it was released this morning, so I have had a first look at it. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing in this document that suggests that there is any danger to us under NAFTA in Bill 11. In fact, the carve-out, which is discussed in here, was negotiated by the government of Canada, and it does protect the health and social services sector. I tabled in this House about 10 days ago an actual copy of the carve-out.

What the Shrybman Report actually said:

### Legal Opinion Concerning the Privatization of Insured Health Care Services and NAFTA In summary:

Many of the difficulties presented by Alberta's proposed privatization initiatives would not arise had Canada negotiated a broad exclusion for health care under NAFTA. Less satisfactory, but still far more effective than the status quo, would have been a broad and unqualified reservation from all Chapter 11 and 12 obligations which was expressed in clear and unambiguous language. As it stands the piece-meal approach adopted by the federal government has created enormous uncertainty about the viability of our health care system given the constraints imposed by the obligations Canada has undertaken in NAFTA and the World Trade Organization.

In our view the capacity of the government to defend public health care from the corrosive influence of these international obligations will be substantially undermined if it does not move quickly to prevent the ever increasing participation of the private sector in delivering insured health care services. Should it accept Alberta's plans as being permissible within the federal framework, it will have significantly weakened its ability to protect public health care from the challenges that all too readily can arise under NAFTA's enforcement regime. This in turn would have significant repercussions for all of Canada and undermine the capacity of provincial governments to maintain the essentially public, and not-for-profit character of their own health care systems. ➤

*The full 42-page Shrybman Report is available from the Thorn. We can e-mail it to you for free, or supply a hard copy for processing and mailing costs. Contact us at [the.thorn@home.com](mailto:the.thorn@home.com).*

### Time for Tubby's comeuppance!

If you have web access go to [www.entartistes.ca/scrutin.html](http://www.entartistes.ca/scrutin.html) - the Quebec pie-throwing group - and cast your vote for pieface.

Of the hundreds of targets you can vote for, Baron Black is ahead of the pack with more than 600 votes. His closest rivals are Charest and Chretien with under 200 each.

Time to send the man over the top we say!

### PAGE 3 SCRATCH & SNIFF

**WARNING! PARTICIPATION COULD CAUSE  
NAUSEA AND VOMITTING**

Our current flavour of the month is Babs. Babs tends to fall for verbose men with Napolean complexes, but then, as she says, "I'll swallow anything."

# HEALTHCARE

## Feeling Better Now?

This is a facsimile of an actual bill sent to a medical patient in West Virginia. Hospitalization was necessary following a car accident.

THIS IS AN INITIAL BILL FOR YOUR HOSPITAL CHARGES. PLEASE KEEP IT FOR YOUR RECORDS. YOUR PHYSICIAN(S) WILL BILL YOU SEPARATELY.

INPATIENT SERVICES,		
ROOM-BOARD-PVT	(13 DAYS)	6,266.00
ICU-MEDICAL	(34 DAYS)	58,208.00
ICU-TRAMA	(23 DAYS)	39,376.00
PHARMACY		39,043.89
MED-SUR SUPPLIES		21,149.52
STERILE SUPPLY		20,001.25
LABORATORY		45,110.00
LAB-CHEMISTRY		4,756.00
LAB-BACT-MICRO		496.00
DX X-RAY		6,445.00
DX X-RAY-ARTER		1,147.00
DX X-RAY-CHEST		13,923.00
CT SCAN-HEAD		917.00
CT SCAN-BODY		5,875.00
OR SERVICES		4,745.00
ANESTHESIA		872.00
BLOOD-STOR-PROC		2,378.50
BLOOD-ADMIN		192.00
ULTRASOUND		510.00
RESPIRATORY SVC		45,781.00
PHYSICAL THERP		1,513.00
PHYS THERP-EVAL		255.00
OT-TREATMENT		6,036.00
OCCUP THER-EVAL		139.00
SPEECH PATHOL		630.00
EMERG ROOM		3,377.00
PULMONARY FUNC		122.00
CARDIOLOGY		1,100.00
CLINIC		519.00
MED-SUR SUPP-INCINT RAD		1,622.00
RECOVERY ROOM		68.00
EKG-ECG		284.00
PERI VASCUL LAB		532.00
CURRENT ACCOUNT BALANCE		333,389.16
EXPECTED INSURANCE PAYMENT(S)	332,999.16	330,1
DUE FROM PATIENT		390.00

PATIENT NAME	ACCOUNT NUMBER	MEDICAL REC. NO.

# Can the Feds do Anything?

Harvey Cohen

**VI. DISTRIBUTION OF LEGISLATIVE POWERS**  
**Powers of the Parliament**  
 91. It shall be lawful for the Queen, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate and House of Commons, to make laws for the Peace, Order, and good Government of Canada

Section 91 of the Constitution of Canada gives the federal Government the mandate to annul stupid and destructive laws of the provinces. Bill 11, to privatize Health Care in Alberta, is exactly such an act of idiocy. It is roughly analogous to the notwithstanding clause that the provinces can use when they do not want the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to apply to those they consider inferior human beings.

Health Care is what Canada is all about. It is the major entitlement that Canadians have that distinguishes us from our monster to the south. It is what makes us a civil people as opposed to a powerful warmongering people. Health care is what gives meaning to the section 7 of the Charter of Rights and freedoms.

**Legal Rights**  
**LIFE, LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON.**  
 7. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof

Dead people have no rights liberty and security. Make no mistake about it, Alberta's Wellness policy has as its purpose the elimination of poor people. It is complementary to other provincial legislation and practices aimed at getting the poor out of the province. Making the life of the poor miserable by charging for school supplies, charging for camping that used to be paid for by tax money, means tests for relief from fees, bus tickets out of the province, de-insuring medical procedures such as eye exams, wart removal (which might be cancerous).

Two friends of mine who were not well off needlessly died because the provincial government refused to meet their medical needs. One died on the waiting list for heart surgery and the other died of heart failure right in the hospital after receiving medication that the hospital staff knew had as a side effect, heart failure. The hospital simply chose not to allocate a scarce and overworked nurse resources to attend to him. Both would have lived had the conservative government decided that they should have. A rich person would have hired a personal nurse to oversee in the hospital. Knowing the likelihood of death as my friend did, a rich person would have gone to the USA for heart surgery and would have paid out of pocket the difference between the cost of the lifesaving surgery and what Medicare would have paid. ➡

## Read My Lips...

Ralph Klein has been out and about promoting Bill 11 and his intention to privatize certain medical procedures. Last month he was on CHED radio in Edmonton. One of the advertisers was the Magnetic Resonance Centre of Edmonton. Here's how the ad. went: It's open house today at the Magnetic

Resonance Centre of Edmonton. I guess a touch of irony that the Premier's on today. We are just talking about the fact that, for instance, in the province of Ontario, if you want to get an MRI done, it has to be done in a hospital and the waiting lists are absolutely horrendous. "We here have a waiting list in Alberta but, of course, the Magnetic Resonance Centre of

Edmonton gives you the option, if you don't want to wait in the public queue, you have this available. It's another advantage of being Albertan. "Find out more today and come down and visit the clinic; find out how the tchnology works, what the technology is all about. Starting Monday, it scans at \$499." ➡

## A Doctor Writes to Her MLA

Dear Mr. Cao,

I am a family physician and a resident of Calgary Fort who has worked for sixteen years in Calgary. I strongly oppose the substance and the intent of Bill 11 and urge you as a conscientious legislator who has the best interests of the people at heart to call for its immediate withdrawal.

The economics of the marketplace do not apply to the health care system. The sick person is not a disinterested consumer, impartially investigating the merits of a particular car, and spending his money to foster quality and efficiency. The sick person is almost always frightened, weary, and anxious. He may be in pain. His ability to think and solve problems may be blunted. His judgment may be impaired. He needs to be able to access a system where he knows he can trust his caregivers, where all the elements of the system are easily available, and where the providers of care are not routinely exhausted and demoralized. The weak element of the system ought to be the sick person.

I know that within the last seven years, the system has been starved into real inefficiency. Waiting lists for non-urgent referrals are longer than they have ever been, emergency wards (with two downtown hospitals closed) are grossly overcrowded and understaffed, and beds for psychiatric and extended care patients are nearly impossible to obtain. People are sicker

## HEALTHCARE

when I first see them; I have to spend more and more time arranging adequate care, if I myself cannot provide it, and more and more time persuading people not to give up on the system altogether. It is now routine in Calgary to send a first-time mother home from hospital with a baby she doesn't know how to feed; or to send a post-operative patient home with a wound he cannot care for without home care arrangements being made. Both of these cases come from my own practice. I once found myself saying to a patient, "This is Alberta. We don't do first-class medicine here anymore."

I beg you to act with vision and compassion, in the best interests of the long-term health of the people of this province, and to do everything you can to get this bill withdrawn. If this bill is passed, Conservatives in this province fifty years hence will wince, appalled that their party could propose such a piece of legislation. If in years to come we arrange health care for ourselves on the American plan, and education on the American plan, and social service on the American plan, we will soon have an urban and rural underclass, poorly educated, in poor health, nearly unemployable, with no stake in the system. We will then soon have violence on the American plan, and will no doubt wonder how we got to that place.

Yours truly,

Christine Grabenstetter, M.D., C.C.F.P.



Health Care Rallye∞against Bill 11 at Calgary's Big Four Building on April 15, 2000.

Left: The Green Fools as the Harbingers of bad news

Above: The Raging Grannies in full swing.

## Top ten signs that Ralph Klein's Bill 11 might not be such a good idea...

10. Your annual breast exam is conducted at Hooters.
9. Directions to your Doctor's Office include: "Take a left when you enter the trailer park."
8. The tongue depressor tastes faintly of Fudgesicles.
7. The only proctologist in the plan is GUS from Roto-Rooter.
6. The only item listed under Preventive Care Coverage is: "An Apple a Day."
5. Your 'primary care physician' is wearing the pants you gave to Goodwill last month.
4. The patient is responsible for 200% of out-of-network charges.
3. The only expense covered 100% is embalming.
2. Before Bill 11 your Prozac didn't come in different colours with little "m's" on them.
1. You ask for Viagra – and you get a popsicle stick and duct tape.



“Who is that idiot Jim Dinning? And how did he get his job?” my daughter asked after attending a question and answer session with the then Minister Of Education at Western Canada High School. “He has a bad, condescending attitude”, she said.

Mr. Dinning, now in charge of doling out public hospital money, said that he would give some to private enterprise. He praised his boss, the premier, for allowing him to share his public money with the private sector.

The spouse of Tory MLA Jocelyn Bergener, along with Dave King (of Olympic fame) and Jim Saunders the well-connected former Executive Director of the CRHA (Calgary’s Hospital Board) initiated the Health Resource Group Private Hospital. They are receiving public money for their corporation and they want even more.

They operate out of the former Grace Hospital in Hillhurst. Problem is they do not operate in conformity with the zoning laws. The zoning for the old Grace Hospital site is very clear and the kind of private clinic that the HRG is running there is not permitted. The city gave them a development permit for that illegal use anyhow. Lodges (hotels) are not allowed where they are. The city gave them a Lodge (hotel) License anyhow. (CLINIC + LODGE = HOSPITAL). Would you deny a clinic permit and a Lodge license to such prominent people just because they do not conform to the zoning? Would you fire Phil Dack, Mark Sasgess and Jeff Fielding some of the city officials that give them permission to break the law?

City policy seems to be that if the proponents can be shown to have strong Tory monetary and spousal relationships, The City will similarly flout zoning regulations to accommodate them.

Edmonton City Council has passed a resolution opposing Bill 11 and private health care. The City of Calgary is helping private health care developers. The College Of Physician opposition to private hospitals is being circumvented. The Area Redevelopment Plan is also being ignored. Alderman Longstaff and Mayor Duerr are eerily silent on this.

One group that is not silent are the workers in the private health industry. They need community help in stopping this monster. They feel demoralized, cheated and lied to. They were led to believe that they were hired to meet the needs of the ill, the sick, and our seniors. The workers now realize that they were hired only to

<i>Source: Pan American Health Organization</i>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>USA</b>
<b>What we pay:</b>		
National health expenditure per capita	1899 \$US	3858 \$US
National health expenditure as a % of	9.8%	14.3%
<b>What we get:</b>		
Life expectancy	79	76.8
Maternal mortality per 1000 live births	5	8
Mortality under 5 years of age per 1000	6.9	8.9
Infant mortality per 1000	5.6	7
Hospital beds per 1000 population	47.8	5.2

ensure huge profits and to make the shareholders of the corporations they work for very, very rich men. For Private Health Care facility owners, Bill 11 is a means to make gads of money.

Nigel Patchett was the executive director of Health Choices, a sister corporation to the Health Resources Group and on paper HRG’s landlord. His vision was to meet senior citizen needs efficiently and compassionately. It was a vision that comes from a strong commitment to his Christian faith merged with an expertise garnered from years as an Information Technologist. He has a doctorate in the field. Nigel set up a coordination committee with the Hillhurst - Sunnyside Community. Community members praised his openness and fairness. They wanted to bend over backwards to help him realize his superb vision. He was like no other developer they had encountered.

Joy Mathews was equally respected in the community. She oversaw Agape Manor, a hospice that one community worker described as “the best place to die in Calgary”. Joy cared deeply about people. She worked for the Salvation Army for 18 years. It was a sad but respectful parting she had with the Sally Ann. Joy and Nigel had a shared dream of empathetic care.

No sooner was the ink dry on the legislature’s passage of Bill 11, than the directors of Health Choices ousted Joy and Nigel, the two leading advocates of compassionate private health care. Their vision was no longer the corporate vision. Is compassion no longer in the Health Choices corporate mandate? Private hospitals and compassionate care are mutually exclusive.

An analysis of the corporate structure of the Health Resources Group/Health Choices might

lead to a conclusion that rather than quality care, the bottom line is what private health care is all about. There are widespread published links to the American health care corporations: Columbia Health Care Inc.; Network Health Care Inc.; and Sun Healthcare Group of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Is Health Resources Group/Health Choices trying to garner as many government grants, contracts and favours as possible in order to sell them as a package or as a subsidiary to their American Corporate Associates?

## **A Comedy of Errors**

**Harvey Cohen**

There are various interest groups affecting the strategies of the Health Resources Group (HRG) /Healthchoices operating on the site of the former Grace Hospital: the private shareholders, the City of Calgary, the Community, and the present and future clients.

The interests of the City and the Community are simple: leave the zoning as it is and wait for proposals that are sensitive to the landscape, the community to the south, the colleges and Jubilee Auditorium to the north, and adjacent Riley Park.

The City Planning Department is pushing for a change in zoning. This is indicative of pressure applied by those who seek to manipulate land use for corporate profit at any public cost. Civil servants and politicians who surrender to this despicable philosophy of greed over public interest should be ousted. The community must be vigilant in order to stop this from ever happening.

The interests of the shareholders are less clear. They have obviously painted themselves into a corner. The Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community opposed the joint Planning Department and developers’ proposal for the

property. The defenders of public Medicare opposed the province's privatization of medical services. This must have resulted in HRG/Healthchoices sustaining considerable shortfalls. For political reasons, the Province cannot toss the lucrative contracts to HRG/Health Choices until after the next provincial election. These private health care operators must be hurting now and the short-term future looks devastating. Desperation seems to be taking hold and morale is low-very low-at the site.

When desperation sets in, stupid mistakes are made. Trying to ram through 20 storey high rises in a low-rise neighbourhood was mistake number one. There was so much opposition to this pig-headed plan that the ward alderman would not have had a snowball's chance in Hell of getting re-elected had this particular scenario been approved. The Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community delayed and delayed the process, ultimately forcing the developers to give up their hare-brained scheme. It must have cost the proponents of this particular plan a small fortune.

Mistake number two: so much bad will was created in the community that damage control was necessary. Healthchoices was spawned and spearheaded by some people who broke away from HRG. These were most remarkable folk: people who approached the community with a vision of integration of services; people who considered out loud a course of action to benefit the elderly and the ill. They cared. This is hardly the kind of leadership that brings enormous profits to the shareholders. They were fired.

How do you tell the ward alderman that you just fired the only people in your organization that the community trusted? Perhaps you dispatch a close personal friend of the ward alderman to try to bring her on side. Perhaps you feign regret. Perhaps you look for scapegoats and plant rumours of incompetence. Above all else, you reiterate what fine human beings are still in charge of this for-profit health care project, and that a glorious vision of compassionate care is still Goal Number One.

Mistake number three was the performance of Puja Ceremonies on the premises. Some Christians interpreted the ritual as Devil Worship and the patients in the rooms feared for their safety when they smelled "something burning". The Amma is a Buddha incarnated as a woman in a man's body who lives in India and has Canadian headquarters in Toronto. As recent disciples of the Amma, some associated with Healthchoices invoked the Puja Ceremony. Puja

often involves bathing the statue of the deity and burning incense to signify cleansing and thankfulness. Perhaps Puja will be a form of the Alternative Medicine to be practiced if the Research Centre for Alternative Medicine is successful in its desire to lease space at this private hospital.

Mistake number four was getting giddy with visions of bottomless profits. "Cut the losses and up the profits", I would demand of my advisors, if I were the one who had invested in HRG. How much was invested? There are so many rumours around its hard to tell. It sure is a mess. \$9 million is a figure bandied about. I think it's closer to \$13 million. These things just have a way of escalating. What's it worth now? Whatever gives the best tax advantage, of course. What about the ongoing expenses? Fire the deadwood.

What can possibly be going through these investors' minds right now? Maybe they're thinking, "Perhaps we got into this over our heads and its time to get out. What's the most profitable course of action, bankruptcy or to flip? Let's do both. If it's possible to attribute all the expenses to a portion of the project then we can do a section 85. The rest of the property can be flipped and the money pocketed.

"Jeez, it's hard making money from the administration of medical services to the frail, sick and elderly."

## Who Took the Care out of Healthcare?

### Daniela Lindner

Health Care in Alberta has been in dire straits for much longer than Bill 11's ill fated rounds in the provincial legislature. Ten years of butchering the provincial Health Care budget, in favour of eliminating the deficit, has forced our Health Care providers to strike two essential, Health Care providing expressions from their vocabulary: Consideration and Compassion. Three instances that illustrate this sad fact:

### The Neighbour

This past winter, when we had to endure the last bout of icy streets which the City neglected to clean, my neighbour, a lady in her early sixties, slipped, fell and broke her right arm. Her husband, after giving the City an earful, took his wife to the hospital where she received a cast. She had to wear it for six weeks which severely impeded her active life style as a hobby musician

and gardener. Upon having her cast removed she was talking with the attending physician about when she could resume her activities. To her surprise she received a phone call a day later from the same physician telling her that he had made an appointment for her with a bone specialist to start physiotherapy. The physician told my neighbour that normally they would not go to the trouble of consulting a bone specialist in cases involving seniors, because seniors are not very active. The City, by the way, came within the hour, after the enraged phone call and thoroughly cleaned the street.

### The Friend

My friend suffers from a type of cancer that attacks the immune system. He has been dealing with this condition over several years and has had chemo and other treatment. Recently he was scheduled to try a new kind of radiation treatment that, though it would attack the cancer, might also have a severe effect on his overall constitution. My friend psyched himself up for this treatment over several weeks. Finally the day came and he went in, early in the morning. He spent about 5 hours in hospital while they were preparing the machine and the patient for the treatment. Around lunch time they were finally ready to put him in the machine, when they discovered that he was too tall. He was sent home with the promise that they would adjust the machine for the next appointment which was to take place a couple of days hence. He was understandably upset because he had prepared himself for this new method and had expected anything but being sent home without treatment. Two days later he showed up again at the hospital and the staff went through the routine again. After "only" a couple of hours they decided that they would not do the treatment at all. My friend blew his top and told the hospital in no uncertain terms what he thought of this whole ordeal. He says the worst of it all was the psychological pressure he was under, anticipating any outcome but the one where nothing happens at all.

### The Partner

A couple of years ago my partner took a very bad fall down some stairs. He ended up at the bottom of the stairs with his back having punched a hole in the drywall. Initially he had no feeling in his hands and arms, so I called the ambulance. The

(continued on page 11, see *Care*)

# The Alberta Disadvantage

Jim Stanford

My home province is once again playing host to one of those knock-em-down, drag-em-out confrontations that give industrial relations a bad name: the strike by journalists and print technicians at the Calgary Herald.

For some reason, Alberta seems to experience a disproportionate share of these classic labour battles, despite its status as Canada's least-unionized, most business-friendly province. The Herald strike follows in the tradition of similar conflicts, such as the long Gainers meatpacking strike in the 1980s, or the illegal walkout by Calgary hospital workers earlier this decade. Perhaps counter-intuitively, the anti-labour stance of employment law and economic policy in Alberta may actually contribute to the outbreak of fights like this one.

Alberta's economy is far and away the richest in Canada, measured by GDP per person (see table). Yet wages in Alberta, strangely, are lower than the national average. The economic pie is bigger, but workers receive a smaller slice of that pie. Indeed, as measured by labour's share of GDP, only workers in Newfoundland and Saskatchewan fare worse than those in Alberta. Consequently, workers in the province have fared only adequately, even as the provincial economy boomed.

A hostile legal and regulatory climate explains much of the disjuncture between provincial macroeconomic success and the ho-hum economic condition of Alberta's workforce.

The Alberta Disadvantage			
	Alberta	Canadian Average	Alberta as Share of Canadian Average
Productivity (GDP per Person)	\$36,076	\$29,564	+22 percent
Wages and Salaries as Share of GDP	50.0%	52.7%	-5 percent
Average Hourly Wages	\$14.97	\$15.12	-1 percent

Source: Author's calculations from Statistics Canada, Provincial Economic Accounts (Catalogue 13-213) and Employment, Earnings and Hours (Catalogue 72-002); 1998 data.

Rules regarding union organizing, certification, strikes, and picketing are the toughest in Canada. This is at least as important as the much-vaunted "free enterprise" culture of the province in explaining the low level of unionization. Canada's lowest provincial minimum wage (just \$5 per hour) also helps keep wages from getting out of hand.

In this context, economic progress for working people will not descend upon their heads like manna from the free-market heavens. Workers will get what they demand and what they fight for. All of which brings us to the Herald strike.

It's no accident that this bitter strike is occurring in Alberta. The issues being confronted by the strikers will rear their heads across the country, as the Southam chain is restructured and

reoriented. Indeed, if the strikers lose, the employees of newspapers elsewhere in Canada can expect to face demands for the elimination of seniority protection and other concessions. Calgary is a great place for Southam's management to test-drive its new policies.

In this sense, then, Alberta's anti-union institutions clearly promote the sorts of bitter conflicts that they are purportedly designed to prevent. A tilted playing field does not stop workers from fighting for their rights; it only makes those struggles more difficult and violent than they need to be. The determination of the Herald strikers is simply more evidence of that historical finding.

*Jim Stanford is an economist with the Canadian Auto Workers, and author of Paper Boom (published by James Lorimer & Co.).*

## Cards, any one?

by Deb Cameron

One thing I used to gripe about was customer service, mostly the lack of it. Now all I want to be is a customer, and an anonymous one at that.

Why is it when I enter a store everyone wants to be my friend? People treat me like a long-lost pal, greeting me with mind-numbing enthusiasm, constantly at my elbow wanting to know if I'm "finding everything OK". Frequently I wonder if they think I'm a shoplifter.

Not long ago, I was besieged by the clipboard people, insisting (demanding) that I sign up for a "shopping card". They all but claimed I wouldn't be allowed to make purchases unless I had a card. Corporate campaign or not, I do not give my name, address, date of birth, or SIN number to just any one (nor am I obligated to). I kept refusing - they kept insisting. The last time I was



### CHARGE IT AND SAVE!

at a check out, the cashier waved my receipt at me and let me know I could have saved \$2.19 if I'd had THE CARD - and customer service would be more than happy to help me. I left.

I already have seven cards: library, health care, Blue Cross, driver's licence, ATM, Master Card, and the key card identifier for my office.

Do I need Safeway, Telus, Air Miles, Shoppers,

Co-Op, Costco, Super S, Canadian Tire, Club Z, Esso, Shell, BlockBuster, Regal, etc., etc.? I know one or two stores initiated the card system to give customers added value and discounts; others wanted to do away with cumbersome paper coupons, and the rest (not to be left out) just had to have one.

So, do I really require all these cards? Do stores value me as a customer because I purchase stuff, or am I a marketing tool? Is the information on what, where, and when I buy more important? Is a one-card identifier the answer?

What I would really like is a pleasant, knowledgeable clerk close by in case I need help, and somewhere to pay for my purchases. Holding up a line because I am searching for the right card is not something I want to do, nor is it necessary that every one in that line (and the cashier) knows my name.



**Der Herald und das VolkFest** Martin Morrow

At the Edmonton Folk Festival a couple of summers ago, an incredulous Billy Bragg told the audience that he'd just overheard a woman complaining about the "not very nice" cover art for his album *Mermaid Avenue*—a vintage photo of folk crusader Woody Guthrie, his guitar emblazoned with the words "This Machine Kills Fascists."

"Come on, people," Bragg chided. "Have we forgotten our roots?"

Well, the Calgary Folk Music Festival certainly has. Putting profit before principle, the festival—after a bout of soul-searching—has decided to continue its editorial and marketing relationship with the *Calgary Herald*, despite the fact that the paper is embroiled in a bitter strike/lockout with some 200 of its employees. There's no question that Bragg, whose songs include *There is Power in a Union*, and Guthrie, the Depression-era voice of the working man, would be disgusted. But we live in an age when everything is a slave to commerce, when even Bob Dylan's prophetic *The Times They Are A-Changin'* can be turned into a cute little banking jingle, so it comes as no surprise that the festival should abandon its leftist roots and knuckle under to big business. No, those of us on strike aren't surprised, but we are disappointed. Not just with the folk festival, but with most of the arts groups in Calgary, who have expressed solidarity and sympathy with the strikers in private but continue to talk to, and advertise with, the *Herald*.

Yes, I know, the arts can't survive without an audience and the *Herald's* circulation, though faltering, is still larger than that of any other publication in the city. And yes, the arts are so poorly funded in Canada (and consequently, so poorly publicized), that any scrap of media attention is a blessing. But the irony is that the *Herald's* biggest arts advocates, writers such as myself, Ken McGoogan, Nancy Tousley, Alison Mayes, are out walking the picket line while the scabs parachuted in to replace us are, at best, novice writers who have little knowledge of the city's arts community and its history and—judging from some of what I've read—little knowledge of the arts themselves. The *Herald's* coverage of the local entertainment scene, which a decade ago was admirably thorough and largely informed, has become spotty and, worse, superficial.

Why are arts groups currying favour with the scab *Herald* when they get so little in return? The paper didn't even deign to review *One Yellow Rabbit's* latest work, *The History of Wild Theatre*, despite the fact that this is a company of national and international status (the play was a co-production with Edinburgh's esteemed *Traverse Theatre*). For the first time in memory, Calgary theatre lovers had to turn to the *Toronto Globe and Mail* to find a *One Yellow Rabbit* review. And yet there in the play's program and projected on the theatre's back wall were the words "Calgary Herald"—in dutiful acknowledgement of the paper's sponsorship.

As I write, the *Herald* has given the folk festival a front-of-section splash in the Entertainment pages, but on closer inspection the display consists mostly of an overlarge photo of Mary Chapin Carpenter and smaller photos of Bruce Cockburn and Blue Rodeo. The lame little story accompanying

the pictures spends most of its few column inches telling us that the organizers are hoping it won't rain. And, despite the headline's claim of a "stellar lineup," it turns out this year's program consists primarily of musicians who've played the festival and Calgary many times before. This is arts coverage in the *Herald* right now. Is it worth selling your principles for?

The arts community can say it is faithful to those of us on strike, but at the same time it keeps sleeping with the enemy. Why would a company like Alberta Theatre Projects want to maintain a relationship with a newspaper whose editorial page editor, Peter Stockland, has referred to artists as "sneering gargoyles?" (At an ATP-led panel discussion on community standards in 1996.) What does an ambitious young theatre troupe like *Ground Zero* have to gain in seeking ink from an Entertainment section that chooses wire copy about Hollywood movies and TV over local stories nine times out of 10?

This is not to say that some individuals haven't taken a stand. Visual-art dealers Trepanier Baer and actor Douglas MacLeod are among those who've refused to talk to the *Herald's* scab reporters. Playwright Sharon Pollock and folksinger James Keelaghan have attended union rallies and walked our picket line. Authors from Margaret Atwood to Alberto Manguel have spoken out on our behalf. But the arts organizations, run by controversy-shy boards of directors, continue to bow to the *Herald's* powerful media influence.

We strikers, in contrast, are powerless, struggling to get out our message with leaflets and lawn signs. We've given up our positions of influence, our salaries and perks, in order to fight for our ideals as journalists. We're the underdogs, the Davids in a David-and-Goliath

battle, the ones that the arts have traditionally championed. Instead, Calgary's arts groups are timidly skirting the battlefield like Falstaff, hoping not to get hurt.

So, when it comes right down to it, all that earnest talk about questioning the status quo, all those rousing songs about fighting for the oppressed turn out to be so much hot air. Again, I'm not really surprised. Just sad.

(Martin Morrow is the *Herald's* theatre critic and currently on strike.)



**Paint It Black:**

**Canada's Citizen Kane vs. The Union**  
**Dan MacLeod (from the Media Channel)**  
 (Conrad) Black is an upper-class kid who got thrown out of the elite Upper Canada College for copying and selling exam questions. He flunked out of equally elite Osgoode Hall law school a few years later. His dad was an entrepreneur who rubbed shoulders with Canada's rich and famous and later left his son a business empire

# Wanted: a cure for the Common Cold War

Darcy Sheridan

POLITICS

It looks like the 1980's are back with a vengeance. Conspicuous consumption is everywhere; fur, cellphones, SUV's and palm pilots proliferate, just like ghetto blasters and sports cars did in the decadent decade. Cocaine is again in vogue among the moneyed and stupid. Donald Trump is, well, still Donald Trump. Dot-coms have replaced junk bonds as the house of cards which generates all this free-flowing wealth.

A direct result of a buoyant economy is a spendthrift government. And in the case of the USA, a trigger-happy spendthrift bunch they are. Once again, the spectre of an American "strategic defense initiative" has arisen. Remember SDI – commonly referred to as Star Wars? (Oh yes, the fictional Star Wars, as in Hollywood movies, is also back.) This insane plan was the pet project of the great cold war monger, U.S. President Ronald Reagan. It was heavily promoted by the unchecked powers in the Pentagon and their evil allies, the military products contractors. Together, these enemies of humanity go by the name of "military industrial complex."

The US government is now promoting the 21<sup>st</sup> century version of SDI – the National Missile Defence (NMD) program. They claim they need to protect the people from "international rogue terrorists." The former Cold War enemy, the Soviets, are no fun anymore. They don't exist as a superpower, and furthermore have agreed to play by the rules and ratify disarmament treaties. So a new target is needed. Let's see, how about the Asians? Whether its Libya, Iraq, Korea, or lesser undeclared enemies of the American state, the full force of US military firepower is not enough to quell these troublemakers. Instead, a misguided system of guided weapons (that don't work) intended to destroy incoming missiles is needed.

Have we not been here before? Were all the marches, the protests, the letter-writing campaigns, and eventually the disarmament treaties for naught? We were told the Cold War was over; that SDI was dead; that "a thousand points of light" would lead to a "kinder, gentler" US nation. (Wars in the Gulf and Kosovo notwithstanding.)

Okay, perhaps nobody really believed that crap about kinder and gentler. In fact, the US achieved all-out victory in the Cold War. They saw the Soviets disarm vast numbers of nuclear weapons and become a non-power. The US is now the unquestioned superpower of the world. So why start the Cold War again – and more importantly, why drag Canada into it?

Canada is being asked to "step up" for North American protection. All those years of playing host to the Distant Early Warning (DEW) set a precedent. Canada is now a preferred location for the deployment of new systems which will monitor and warn us about incoming assaults, and (this is key) launch anti-missiles.

I had the bizarre experience two months ago to be at a Virginia hotel where an American military industry trade show was going on. The lobby group for military contractors, National Defence Industry Association (NDIA) was hosting one of more than a dozen shows planned for this year. The title of the conference? "Weapons of Mass Destruction." The picture proves it. Some of the topics of the conference, which were conveniently displayed on the hotel room TV, included:

- biological weapons
- spy reconnaissance
- what's new with missiles.

Upcoming conferences will focus on topics like:

- guns and ammo



- live fire test and evaluation
  - ballistics and the Annual Bomb and Warhead Technical Symposium.
- Police forces are welcome at the Small Arms annual conference. Check out their website for more details, at [www.ndia.org](http://www.ndia.org).

Even more frightening: members of the Canadian military were circulating at the conference. What possible interest could our Armed Forces have in weapons of mass destruction? Plenty it seems, given the demands on Canada to take part in SDI, the Sequel.

Let's not be smug here. Canada has its own version of the military-industrial complex. Partners include the Canadian Aerospace Industry Association, the Canadian Defence Industries Association, the Canadian military and boosters in the federal government such as Industry Canada and Trade Team Canada. In fact, Canada has the fourth largest aerospace and defence industry in the world (after USA, Britain and France).

One very successful recent initiative of the powerful industry lobby groups was the effort to have subsidies restored to military contractors which were lost as a result of a World Trade Organization (WTO) ruling against Canada. In 1999 the WTO held that Canada's Technology Partnerships Canada program, which injects money into the aerospace and defence industry, was an unfair trade practice. The Canadian government, at the behest of industry lobbyists, initiated a new program which would be "WTO-proof": a \$30 million annual subsidy program for weapons corporations to develop new weapons.

These subsidies are untouchable by WTO because Article XXI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) provides an exemption from GATT for military expenditures. The WTO has declared that sovereign governments are permitted to execute anti-competitive programs (e.g. subsidies) for military purposes, but not for social, educational, environmental or other legitimate and honourable governmental concerns.

## Calgary: A City in Conflict

Michael Alvarez-Toye

Calgary is a city at a crossroads, undecided as to which path it should venture down. Whether to the right with all its economic growth potential and the trappings that entails, or to the left with respect and sensitivity towards our natural heritage and the strength of community spirit still prevalent in pockets throughout the city. When I moved out here in 1977, Calgary was known as the city everyone loved to hate. It was a big city with a small town feel, where the standard joke was that the difference between Calgary and yogurt was that yogurt had a more active culture.

Calgary has become more tolerant in recent years, allowing people with alternative views and lifestyles to settle here and add texture and flavour to the social fabric. It isn't perfect by any means, but it is far better than even 10 years ago. Calgarians are learning to enjoy the different kinds of atmospheres offered both inside the city and outside. There seems to be a greater appreciation for the natural vistas surrounding us; seeing the mountains as more than just a place to ski, for example.

It is ironic then, that Calgary and its residents tend to compartmentalize nature, yet make allowances for and even embrace naturally occurring ecosystems when they fall within certain boundaries, such as Fish Creek Park. There, nature is accepted, with all its variety of animal and plant species to be enjoyed and appreciated. Unbeknownst to most, however, is the secret annihilation that takes place every year of a number of Calgary's urban wildlife species, including beavers and gophers - more accurately known as Richardson's Ground Squirrels. Given the fact that Calgary claims to be a clean, green city - a gateway to its wild, natural backyard, the carnage taking place within city limits is hypocritical and entirely unacceptable.

Calgary has the potential to be a model city for sensitive ecological and environmental management. There is a long way to go, though, given the city's treatment of urban wildlife. Someone within the city bureaucracy bought into the myth that the only way to control the beaver problem in Calgary is to trap and remove them, live or dead. A few years ago they were able to relocate a number of them until neighbouring districts started complaining of their own numbers. From then on the decision was made to trap and kill the nuisance-termed beavers.

Why? After all, beavers are quite intelligent, and adaptable to their surroundings. Of particular importance though, is the role they play in maintaining a thriving and healthy ecosystem, in this case the Bow and Elbow River systems. These river ecosystems NEED the beavers. Killing them off either selectively or in masses does nothing but harm the environments we claim we are trying to protect. On top of that, every time a beaver family is killed off it creates a vacuum within the system, resulting in new, unfamiliar beavers replacing them, and exposing them to the same fate: death.

A far better way to deal with beavers is to protect those currently living along the river systems while also protecting those river components we want safe from the beavers, such as trees and shrubbery. Beaver-proofing trees and certain parcels of land is much more effective than yearly killing forays, and far safer too.

As for the threat of flooding due to beaver dams, the reality is far less a concern than the perception. There are ways to deal with dams without having to resort to slaughter. Culverts and ditches can be made beaver-

For a complete list of aerospace and defence corporations which have received federal handouts (both before and after the WTO ruling), check out Industry Canada's website at [strategis.ic.gc.ca](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca) - look for the Technology Partnerships Canada program.

Decisions made in the 1980's are now haunting us. The major legacy of that decade in Canadian politics was free trade with the U.S., followed by more free trade (NAFTA) in the early 1990's. These free trading obligations are part of the worldwide free trade movement, administered by the WTO and encapsulated in the now-ominous phrase, "globalization."

American military contractors are now pushing for the removal of restrictions on the export of their wares to foreign countries. In April's National Defense magazine (a publication I picked up at that Mass Destruction conference), NDIA's president, Larry Skibbie, whines about how U.S. government regulations from the 1980's, which control the exportation of military hardware and weaponry, are "archaic". These regulations infringe on the ability of the industry to make sales abroad and thereby cash in on "globalization" (there's that word again).

Canadian aerospace and defence manufacturers are also going global. According to Industry Canada, this sector exports about 80% of its production abroad. The U.S. is a major destination; others include Botswana, Thailand, Turkey, Egypt, South Korea, and Singapore. Furthermore, 20% of Canada's production is sold to military markets. Military forces around the world can benefit from Canadian subsidies to industries which produce weapons and machinery of war. Maybe we do need NMD to be protected from "rogue states" - who may have purchased military hardware from Canada!

The lesson here is that vigilance is required of all persons of conscience to ensure that the world is not pushed to the brink of mutual assured annihilation again. If you thought the cold war was over, think again. There is a real threat that a new arms race will evolve from the NMD program. The time is now to start monitoring the activities of the Canadian government and industry. We must prevent our dubious leaders from putting us in a position where once again we are the puppets of militaristic imperialists to the south, or dupes of military regimes around the world.



(*Care*, continued from page 11)

emergency staff put him on a flat wooden board. After the initial numbness of the fall, his hands became super sensitive to any kind of touch. One could not even blow on them without him screaming in agony. He and I figured out that he must have pinched a nerve in his back during the fall. Although the nerve in his back was pinched, the sensation of pain he felt was in his hands and nowhere else. The nurses were laughing at him because they thought he was a whimp. They had never heard of an injury being in one location and the sensation of pain in another.

My partner spent two and a half days on the wooden board and was released as soon as an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging Scan) showed that his back was okay. The doctors offered him drugs, which he declined. They never phoned to see how he was doing or offered any other kind of help such as physiotherapy.

These stories are but a few of the horrendous consequences that have been happening due to cutbacks. The provincial government can finally pride itself as of June of this year by announcing that there may be a 5 Billion (!) dollar surplus. Let us hope that some of this bounty goes towards our beleaguered Health Care system, and Compassion and Consideration may once again become part of our Health Care providers' vocabulary.

proof through the installation of grates in the openings of passages and tunnels. The fact that there is someone with a gun permit wandering the shores of the Bow, occasionally dispatching his firearm in an attempt to kill a beaver in the water scares me, and many others too. I have read of people being witness to bullets ricocheting off flat water surfaces, of beavers not being killed instantly, of pets being trapped accidentally in traps intended for urban wildlife, etc. All because of the ignorant savages dictating the fates of these creatures, and others.

I went for a walk downtown with my son. We crossed the Bow River at the Edmonton Trail overpass. On the other side we happened upon a scene that brought chills to us both. There were a few Richardson's Ground Squirrels running and cavorting on the grassy knoll, mere feet from a sign warning people of the Gopher poisoning program in effect along there. The creatures were merrily playing away, completely oblivious to the fate awaiting them when they once again returned to their tunnels. My son and I were both upset. I phoned the city department in charge of this and talked to someone there, trying to find out as much as I could about the program, the poisons being used and the effects they have on the animals. She was unable to help me, but she transferred me to the person most able to answer all of my questions and concerns. I never did get a response, not on my first call, or any thereafter.

The city uses two methods to attack the "Gopher problem": by gassing them and with poisons. Gassing is more expensive, but poisoning is more painful. Guess which method is most often used? From my understanding the poisons used to kill the gophers is highly painful, and very cruel. Chlorophacinone, commonly sold as Rozol, is an anti-coagulant - a blood-thinning agent. Animals that ingest this compound inevitably die from internal bleeding - a horrible fate for anyone. The Rozol pellets are added to grain and injected into the tunnels dug by gophers, deep enough to minimize the possibility of other, non-target animals eating the toxin. Then the waiting game starts, which is where my son and I came into the picture, watching the gophers playing on the knoll, with no inkling of their fate. Weeks of silence followed the poisonings. One day I happened upon a dried out remnant of life - an emaciated gopher body lying on the grass. I was angered at this, since I knew that it was only a matter of time before we would start to see a new crop of gophers inhabiting the recently liberated knoll. Sure enough, merely 6 weeks after the initial poisonings took place gophers were on the same grassy hills, playing and chasing one another as their forefathers had done before them.

Was this carnage necessary? Not at all, even if you believe that artificial-looking grass and greenery is of more importance than the real world surrounding you. This is cruelty inflicted upon the other creatures that share this land. Some claim that scavenger birds will not die from eating dead ground squirrels and/or treated grain; however accidents do happen and other, non-target animals do succumb to these toxins. It is important to

recognize that this is not a viable, environmentally safe, humane solution.

Acceptance and tolerance of others is the first step in dealing with what we like to label "pests." The next step is to decide just what tolerance we do have, and whether there is impact on our health and well-being. Is the risk of environmental degradation worth the inconvenience of Ground Squirrel tunnels and holes? Are people not responsible for watching where they walk or run? Steps can be taken to minimize the number of said holes, either by creating underground barriers against the ground squirrels, or planting and caring for foliage in such a way as to inhibit the presence of ground squirrels.

Calgary is sterilizing and toxifying itself to death, as evidenced by these two examples of urban wildlife "management." There are other examples: shooting pigeons in the early morning hours downtown, trapping squirrels, spraying of pesticides, etc. Rather than learning that we should acclimatize ourselves to the world we live in, we are being taught to expect a perfect world, free of all the tiny inconveniences it threatens us with. If that is how we are learning to view the world, then perhaps it is time to compartmentalize ourselves, and to closet ourselves away, rather than to do so to others.

Calgary is a city that abuts nature; it is in our best interest to embrace it, instead of seeking out ways to distance ourselves from it. The beauty of the world is to be admired and respected; it isn't our right to damage it, or to purge it from our existence. Those who insist on destruction and annihilation should be encouraged to leave our fair city; by-laws that protect and enhance our natural attributes should take care of those "pests" in short order. By doing so we could set an example to the world, proving that urban life need not be the enemy to the environment, and that humans can be part of the environmental equation.

Michael Alvarez-Toye is a spokesperson for the Calgary Animal Rights Coalition.



## The Market Speaks

One of the largest super market chains in the United Kingdom, (Sainbury's), will no longer carry foods with genetically modified ingredients, reports World Watch (Nov./Dec./1999). The move is part of a "sea change" that has occurred in Europe in the past year, led primarily by public reaction against the possible ecological and health effects of "Frankenfoods".

**Bodytalk: The lymphatic system and allergies** Daniela Lindner

Canadian summers are on the whole rather short and for some people the warm season is not even considered pleasant. These people have hayfever aka allergies.

What are allergies really? How do they come about? Is there a cure?

In order to explain allergies I will start by explaining how the lymphatic system works and why it is useful to the body when it comes to defending itself against outside invaders.

The lymphatic system is an important part of our body, because it, together with all the other parts such as the blood circulatory system, bones and inner organs, helps the body to maintain the all important state called homeostasis. Homeostasis is the blissful state where each part works effectively and efficiently to maintain equilibrium and, consequently, optimum health.

The lymphatic system is similar to blood circulation in our bodies. Blood supplies the cells of the body with nutrients, and lymph in the lymphatic system “picks up” the garbage such as dead cells and fluid. The garbage is then either recycled or filtered out and eliminated from the body altogether. An important difference between blood and the lymphatic system is that the lymphatic system has no pump such as the heart to keep the lymph fluid going. When we flex our muscles in the body we actually help move the lymph on its journey.

The lymphatic system has “helper” cells which can be considered as soldiers. They provide the body with a line of defence against foreign invaders (antigens) that should be the envy of any military commander. Resistance is futile when, for example, an airborne invader enters the body via the nose.

This brings me to allergies. Essentially, allergies are such an airborne invader that has been identified by the body as an enemy. The body dutifully sends its soldiers, in this case histamines, to do battle in the trenches, or rather the nostrils and eyes. Histamines are tough fighters and are so vigilant that they cause the tissues in eyes and nose to swell because of water retention. The body fights the enemy until the enemy has been eliminated. - This, in short, is the physical explanation of an allergy.

The intriguing question, however, is why do they start, go on for years and then stop suddenly? The common answer (in western medicine) is that there is no answer. They just start and stop. Well, in my opinion there is a reason for it. If you think back to what I said about homeostasis, that blissful state of equilibrium, allergies can be looked at as a warning signal that homeostasis is not being maintained. The body in general, and the lymphatic system in particular, deal with all kinds of foreign invaders on a daily basis. In addition to this, the body also deals with emotional stresses of all kinds. In a perfect world we would adhere to the perfect diet and proper physical exercise, and always get enough sleep. In that scenario we could probably cope with a lot of physical and emotional stresses without receiving warning signals such as allergies. As we all know, most of us are not that perfect. We eat junk food, spend hours sitting at work or in front of the TV and deal with issues such as work and relationship related stresses. The body will send warning signals when it is reaching its limit. Signs may include constipation, low tolerance to colds, or allergies. In case of allergies the body may switch suddenly from allergies to some other warning signal, or it may be the case that the stresses on the body have lessened.

It is always important to look at the body in its entirety, whether healthy or ill. All parts are interdependent. Just keep in mind that a healthy body

which functions properly will not use warning signals such as allergies to get your attention. It will hum along content in its blissful state of - homeostasis.

Some tips to help you along the road to recovery are:

- Invigorate your blood circulation and lymph flow by dry brushing your skin. When you use a body brush, brush your whole body with it using it against the grain, from hands and feet towards the centre of your body. This will encourage the lymphatic system in doing its job of ridding the body of dead cells and other garbage. You can also have fun using a trampoline and improving the lymph flow at the same time.
- Drink plenty of water. This is one of the best preventive medicines you can possibly take. The body needs water all the time. If you can drink 2 litres a day you are already on the road to recovery.
- Do a herbal detox program. Detoxification has the wonderful effect of cleansing the body (w)holistically of toxins and any other unwanted substances, thus reducing the likelihood of such unpleasant warning signals as allergies.



Thin edge of the wedge indeed! This poster against extra billing was produced in 1984, by a Calgary arts and social service group workshop. The fight to maintain the integrity of Medicare in the face of profiteers has a lengthy history in Alberta.



**Shot for the Day:  
Advice from the Bartender  
Patrick MacIntyre**

Bartender – your best scotch, please, water on the side. Age old story, Patrick – just where do I meet a nice guy? I'm finally ready to date again and have no idea if, in fact, there are any nice, unmarried men left out there. Oh, I've done the bar scene, the volunteer/committee/political thing... (no church please) and I guess that leave sports – or does it?

Intellect, a sense of humour, and meaningful employment are high on my list (good looks aren't important – well – no beer fat over the belt). DWSFNC, (divorced, white, single female, no children), I'm a bright, intelligent, redhead, average weight, average height (5'7").

So – you've heard it all - what do you advise? Are there any nice guys out there – they can't all be married or gay, can they?

Sandy

Dear DWSFNC,

I'm not a dating service, however I'm not unwise in the ways of the date. I've recently discovered a great new way of meeting members of the opposite gender.

First step: If you don't already have one handy, you borrow a friend's or a neighbour's child. The younger the better. Next step: Go to a popular park on a busy day. Done. They just flock to you. Then make up some story about how you lost your mate in a plane crash, or who passed away giving birth. If you can fake tears, do so.

Wait !! Oh Yeah !!! Sorry !! This only works for guys....

**SHOT FOR THE DAY:**

Bunnahabhain (boo-na-ha-vehn)

Straight up. Knock it back. In honour of Jack Angus. Thanks.

**Good Luck, Mr. Gorsky!**

Be careful of what you say, you might be changing the history of the world.

On July 20, 1969, as commander of the Apollo 11 Lunar Module, Neil Armstrong was the first person to set foot on the moon.

His first words after stepping on the moon, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind", were televised to Earth and heard by millions.

But just before he re-entered the lander, he made the enigmatic remark:

"Good luck, Mr. Gorsky."

Many people at NASA thought it was a casual remark concerning some rival Soviet Cosmonaut. However, upon checking, there was no Gorsky in either the Russian or American space programs.

Over the years many people questioned Armstrong as to what the "Good luck Mr. Gorsky" statement meant, but Armstrong always just smiled.

On July 5, 1995, in Tampa Bay, Florida, while answering questions following a speech, a reporter brought up the 26 year old question to Armstrong. This time he finally responded. Mr. Gorsky had died and so Neil Armstrong felt he could answer the question.

In 1938 when he was a kid in a small mid-west town, he was playing baseball with a friend in the backyard. His friend hit a fly ball, which landed in his neighbor's yard by the bedroom windows. His neighbors were Mr. and Mrs. Gorsky.

As he leaned down to pick up the ball, young Armstrong heard Mrs. Gorsky shouting at Mr. Gorsky. "Sex! You want sex?! You'll get sex when the kid next door walks on the moon!"

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# DIVERSIONS

## This Old House

by Ed Clarke

I've turned this key  
many times before  
String hanging  
Fumbling for sight  
In the quiet  
creeking  
Wee hours of the night

The grain stained lines  
Upon the scratched and polished pine  
Through this hip-height  
Hobble-handed  
Shoulder-beaten door  
A white warm stained stove  
A familiar hiss  
As the kettle boils  
Straight painted pipes  
A school room clock  
In this old house  
Where so many are not

Two years I've spent  
Turning in and out  
Up these fifteen steps  
To this room I rent  
Nudging this paint-chipped handle  
Of this unquiet door  
Three paces forward  
hands held up  
One twist of the bulb  
Walled within layers  
Of painted years  
A trap door concealing  
Childish fears  
Vein-like cracks  
Holding back these thoughts  
Of this old house  
Where so many are not

While the basement  
Holds some clues  
In the dust and must  
Of a spider's muse  
Broken boxes of belongings  
Bare wires criss-crossing  
While a great gas furnace  
Greets you  
Like something out of *Doctor Who*  
A lone brick pillar  
Holding most of this up  
I'm sure  
While outside  
Lilacs embrace you  
The aligning trees  
Hold roots with you  
As the blue-blotched roof  
And the moss along the eave trough  
Of this old house  
Where so many are not

## Going Down the Road Feeling Fine

Jerald Blackstock

Have you ever been driving along the open road, chatting with your family, and friends, and discover that, well, you had to use the facilities? Since as humans we all share that particular, ummm well, need, I'm sure you can relate. Apparently, there are folks who can't. They usually run businesses in small towns, it seems.

This tale of woe begins on the outskirts of Beiseker, Alberta. Beiseker is a fine little hamlet conveniently placed on the flat as flat can be prairie, north and east of Calgary. Trust me, there is not a bush nor tree within a hundred miles of the place - or so it seems, as one drives along feeling the urges dictated by an aging prostate. Although, my wife disagrees with me as to the prostate being the cause of the problem. Well, to each their own I always say. We didn't cover a lot of anatomy in art school.

My wife and I disagree on many things, such as the location of north, for example. I learned in anthropology class that folks raised in rural areas (as my wife was) develop at an early age a part of the brain which specializes in orienting in three-dimensional space. Hence, she always knows where north is. Folks such as myself, who have been raised in the windy canyons of the urban environment, are lucky if they can find their way to the nearest inconvenience store and home again. The orienting part of the brain was never completely hard wired. Therefore we rely upon tools, such as maps and things. My wife thinks that people who need a compass to find north should not be let out of the house.

It was during this discussion, on which way led to 'north', that I solved the problem in one swell foop. My new theory was based on the premise that the only reason we have north and south poles is because at some point, somebody decided that it should be so. And, as we all know, if you are standing at the north pole, all directions, from there, are south. Very tidy.

I was explaining this to our other passenger,

my brother, an ex-military sergeant major who was in charge of supply for 30 years. Supply sergeants like to know where things are. When I declared that Beiseker, Alberta was the new west pole, and all directions now lay east of us, he physically shook. "Why do you say things like that?" he said. "Well, it solves the argument as to which way is north", I said, as I looked at my wife who was rolling her eyes.

I was further refining my argument, declaring that there would be no east pole, because that was way too unpostmodernistic and symmetrical. It was at this point that I was overcome by bodily urges, and was forced to turn off the highway to search for relief in good old Beiseker, Alberta.

I'm not at all sure why; perhaps there was a sale at the sign company? - but every restaurant and business in Beiseker displays a prominent manifesto: NO PUBLIC WASHROOMS. It's as if they are expecting an influx of disease-ridden city folk to descend upon them in their urinating hordes. God forbid that one of these people might use the facilities in their place of business, and return the charitable act of kindness by actually buying something. Apparently the teachings of the Prairie Bible Institute in nearby Three Hills didn't make it to Beiseker. They probably headed off in the wrong direction, what with all those to choose from under the old system. (NW, NNW, etc., way too complicated.)

Finally, I asked at the restaurant, where one could find public facilities. I was told - well snarled at really - to head over to the public park. Much to my surprise, I actually found public washrooms. Locked. Of course.

It was with a self-satisfied smile that shortly after, I drove off into the sunset, after having taken direct social disobedient action on my uppermost thought, which was, naturally enough, "Piss on Beiseker". And which direction lay the sunset? Well, east of course, everyone knows that. Sheeeeeesh!

### CROSSWORD ANSWERS TO VOL. 1 #1

#### ACROSS

1 MASS DESTRUCTION; 8 THE VERY IDEA; 9 ENTAIL;  
10 IGNORANT; 11 TOE-TAPPER; 12 AMAZE; 15 PYLON;  
16 IMPACTION; 20 RETAINER; 22 LETS UP; 23 GLUE  
FACTORY; 24 BETWEEN THE LINES

#### DOWN

1 MEANEST; 2 SCHMALTZY; 3 ENVELOPE; 4 TERMITES;  
5 UNIONS; 6 THEIRS; 7 NO TITLE; 13 METATASI;  
14 RACLETTE; 15 PURTURB; 17 MORDANT; 18 NAPKINS;  
19 SNEEZE; 21 AGLOW

### CROSSWORD ANSWERS TO PUZZLE ON PAGE 16

19 OUTFIT; 20 AMOUR  
7 BEGGING TO DIFFER; 14 CASTRATED; 17 UNCLIES;  
4 WHISTLER'S MOTHER; 5 SPREAD OUT; 6 CHORAL;  
1 CATCH YOUR BREATH; 2 STATOR; 3 MESHY;  
22 MOTIFS; 23 STYE; 24 EXECUTIVES  
16 ABOUT TIME; 18 GOODS; 21 PENCHANT;  
12 MYRRH; 13 FLEDGLING; 15 RUSSIAN ROULETTE;  
8 BATTLESHIP; 9 HOES; 10 SCOTCH; 11 STERAGE;  
ACROSS



**For What It's Worth...**

It's always darkest before dawn. So, if you're going to steal the neighbour's newspaper, that's the time to do it.

Before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them, you're a mile away, and you have their shoes.

The quickest way to double your money is to fold it in half and put it back in your pocket.

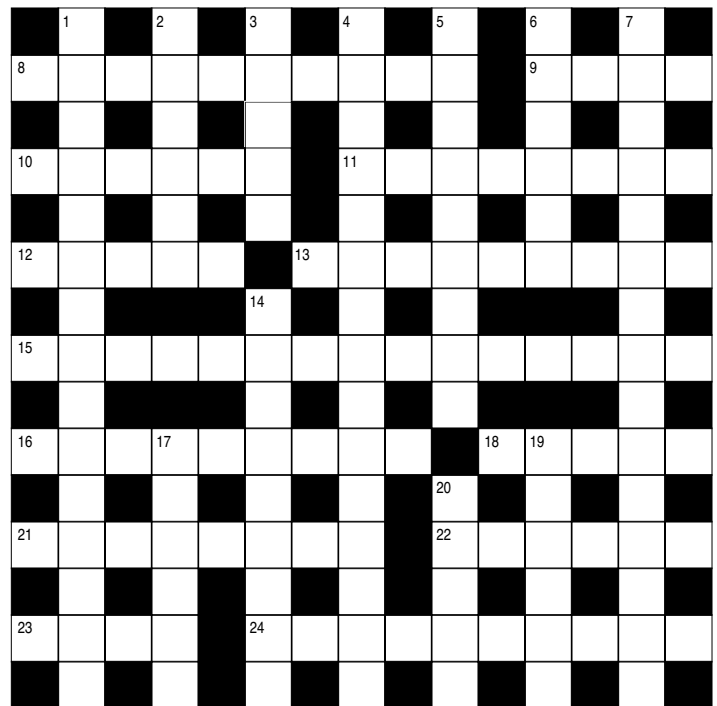
You can go anywhere you want if you look serious and carry a clipboard.

Never test the depth of the water with both feet.

Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.

It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.

Always try to make other people happy, even if you have to leave them alone to do it.



**ACROSS**

- 8 You might order BLT, shape it as required, but a submarine might be closer to what you really want. (10)
- 9 Cultivation tips (to help accessorize 18-9, we hear). (4)
- 10 Jus' a wee dram fer him, afore kirk. (6)
- 11 The cheapest passage available, for under four year olds! (8)
- 12 Harry comes around, after the millennium, losing a scent. (5)
- 13 The nester, being capable of flight, escaped a thousand dollars worth of cod. (9)
- 15 A toilet sure runs strangely, for a potentially fatal encounter. (7,8)
- 16 How to emit? It's long overdue! (5,4)
- 18 Deliver these to 9 and you'll be fit for a country stroll. (5)
- 21 A liking for the swine to sing, maybe a 6 down. (8)
- 22 French words, if contained, might provide such decorative examples of the language. (6)
- 23 Some nasty eyesore usually interfering with your point of view. (4)
- 24 Cutie has sex with five, and the initial Energy for more than one businessman! (10)

**DOWN**

- 1 What you do when caught by a sudden inspiration. (5,4,6)
- 2 About which something rotates about, after a penultimate loss. (6)
- 3 Could some shyness indicate a somewhat transparent situation? (5)
- 4 Worthless hermit rewrites a famous profile of artistic lineage. (9,6)
- 5 How drapes arrange, whether drawn or not, actually. (6,3)
- 6 This music might sound Country & Western, heard after church. (6)
- 7 Petitioning for change to think otherwise. (7,2,6)
- 14 A Saint was en-crated? What heresy did he commit to deserve this? (9)
- 17 Bob or Dutch, relatively speaking. (6)
- 19 For company, It sounds like I owe you tea and a foot up, somehow. (6)
- 20 Audibly a more ardent feeling. (5)

Answers to this and the previous puzzle can be found on page 14.