

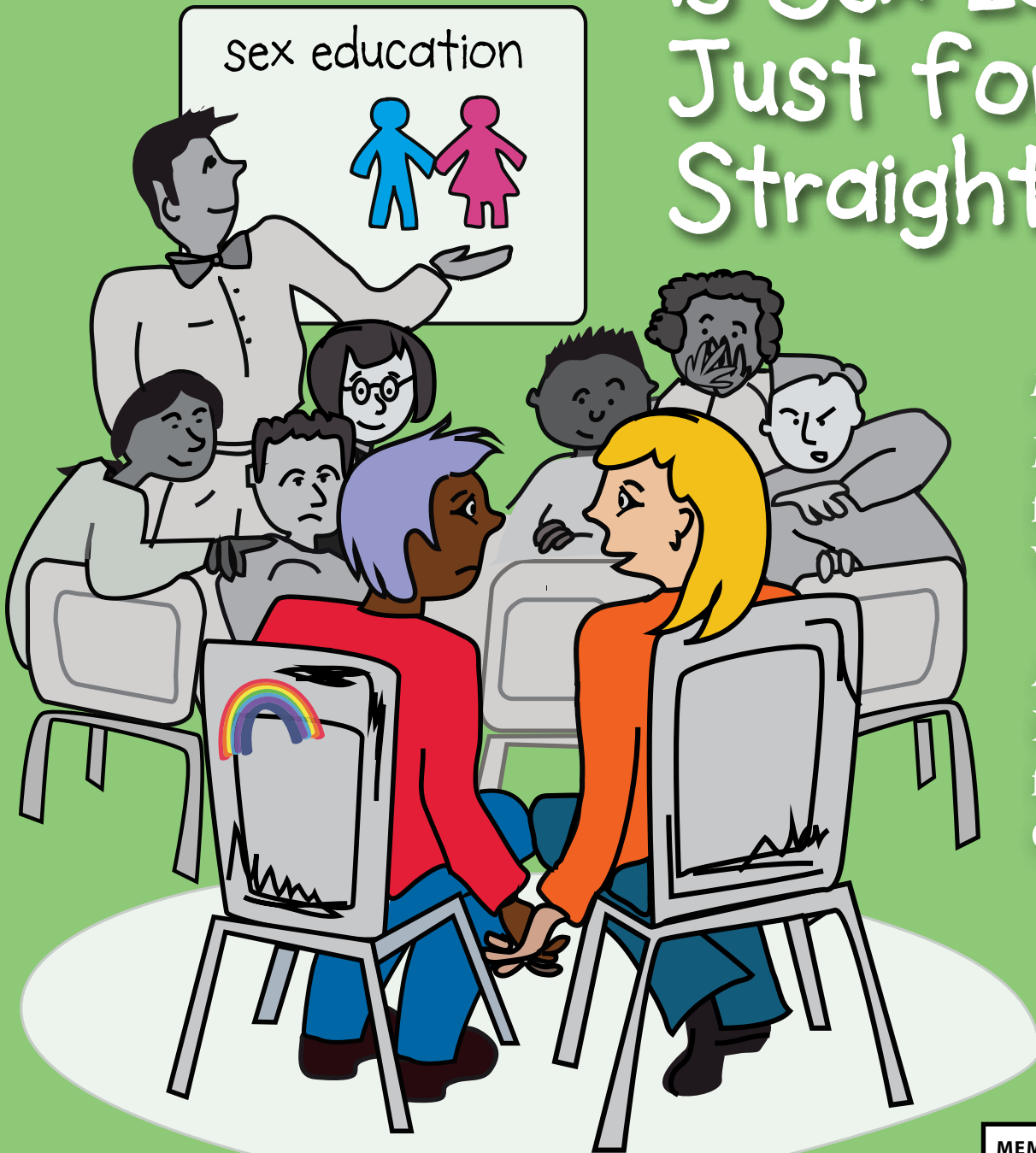


The Dominion

news from the grassroots

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Is Sex-Ed Just for Straight Kids?



Plus:

Missing Justice
for Murdered
Women

An Indigenous
Family's Fight
for Health
Care

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Troops in Libya and Afghanistan, the People Take Wall Street, KI Refuses Mining

In **Libya**, NATO announced a three month extension of its bombing campaign. Canada will continue to participate in the mission after what the *Globe and Mail* called a “symbolic debate” in the House of Commons. Six hundred Canadian troops have been deployed as part of the NATO mission in Libya, which has cost Canadian taxpayers at least \$60 million thus far.

A bomb exploded outside of a US military base in **Afghanistan**, killing five Afghans and wounding 77 American soldiers. “The Afghans have an endless stamina for a long war... Through a country-wide uprising, the Afghans will send the Americans to the dustbin of history like they sent other empires of the past,” read a statement released after the bombing and attributed to the Taliban. The following week, it was revealed that Canadian troops actively defended a NATO compound in Kabul after another attack killed 16 Afghans. Six hundred military trainers and 1,300 Canadian troops are serving in Afghanistan.

Stephen Harper told the CBC that his government plans to bring back parts of the **Anti-Terrorism Act** that expired in 2007. The anti-terror law increased police powers, giving them a right to hold people captive for up to 72 hours under “preventative detentions” and to make arrests without warrants.

In addition, Harper's government re-tabled Human Smuggling Bill C-4, which proposes 12 month mandatory detention for asylum seekers and other regressive measures against **migrants and refugees**. The reintroduction of the bill “is despite previous Bill C-49 being rejected by all opposition parties and hundreds of community, legal, health, human rights, and migrant justice groups,” according to No One Is Illegal Vancouver.

The Conservatives also announced plans to advance legislation to make it more difficult to “ban,

limit or otherwise disrespect the **Canadian flag**,” according to a report in the *Toronto Star*.

US border police indicated that they would consider building fences along sections of the **US-Canada border** to deal with “trouble spots where passage of cross-border violators is difficult to control.”

A federal judge in **Alabama** upheld provisions that make the state's legislation against immigrants the most regressive in the United States. In Alabama, it is now a state crime to be an undocumented migrant, and schools are required to collect information on the immigration status of students.

Thousands of people occupied Wall Street in **New York City** and in other cities across the United States. “On September 17, 2011, people from all across the United States of America and the world came to protest the blatant injustices of our times perpetuated by the economic and political elites,” reads the New York General Assembly's draft Principles of Solidarity. At least 80 people were arrested for participating in the action, and many others, including journalists, faced indiscriminate police violence. On Saturday, October 1, 700 people were arrested on Brooklyn Bridge, though some organizers accused the police of drawing them onto the road in order to be able to arrest them. Calls for similar occupation actions in various Canadian cities were issued, with a national day of action planned for October 15.

Three people were killed and more than 1,000 wounded as demonstrators stormed the Israeli embassy in **Cairo**, Egypt. Demonstrators continued to gather in Tahrir Square to try to maintain the revolution's momentum and to protest the military-led post-Mubarak transition.

Israeli Foreign Minister and notorious racist **Avigdor Lieberman** visited Canada, proclaiming,

“Canada is our best, most reliable friend in the world.” Protesters mobilized to send a message that Lieberman was not welcome in Vancouver. “People in Canada have the right to know that Avigdor Lieberman is a racist, far-right-wing Israeli minister who should not be welcome in Canada—it is Lieberman's government who makes peace impossible,” said Khaled Barakat, a Palestinian community activist in Vancouver.

In northern Ontario, members of the **Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI)** nation called on the provincial government to force God's Lake Resources out of their territory. “Ontario has failed in its duty to recognize our rights to express our spirituality and protect our sacred sites and burials under international, Canadian and KI law,” said Chief Donny Morris in a press release. “Premier McGuinty must intervene immediately to right this wrong or he will be personally responsible.”

Hundreds of people converged on **Parliament Hill** for a protest against the the Conservative government's climate policies, the expansion of the tar sands, and TransCanada's Keystone XL pipeline, the construction of which Prime Minister Harper described as a “no-brainer.” Two hundred people crossed over a police fence and most were detained and given trespassing tickets. The Conservative government and oil companies have been mounting a global promotions strategy to beat-back escalating pressure from the environmental movement.

In **Guatemala**, former army general Otto Pérez Molina won the first round of presidential elections. The vote will go to a second round on November 6.

The government of Evo Morales in **Bolivia** drew criticism following police violence against Indigenous people protesting highway expansion in Bolivia. “I do not agree with the intervention



Indigenous women and their supporters marched in Vancouver as part of a National Day of Action for missing and murdered women in Vancouver's downtown east side (DTES) and across Canada. *Isaac Oommen, Vancouver Media Co-op*

“The struggle for justice doesn’t end with me. I’m in good spirits and I’m prayerful and at peace. But I will not stop fighting until I’ve taken my last breath.”

—Troy Davis in a statement before he was murdered by the State of Georgia.

in the march and I cannot justify the measure when other alternatives existed,” wrote Defense Minister Cecilia Chacon in a letter of resignation following the police crackdown, which left many wounded.

Thirty five bodies were dumped near a hotel in the **Mexican port city of Veracruz**, sparking outrage about the country's increasingly violent war. “It’s lamentable about the assassination of 35 people, but

it’s more so that these people had chosen to dedicate themselves to extortion, kidnapping and murder,” wrote the Governor of Veracruz State on his Twitter feed, continuing the state strategy of blaming the victims of violence for their own demise.

Six thousand **prisoners in California** resumed a hunger strike against the inhumane conditions in the state’s prisons.

In the state of **Georgia**, Troy Anthony Davis was murdered by the state as thousands gathered outside the prison to protest his execution.

Foreign Affairs Minister **John Baird** spent tax-payer dollars on gold-embossed business cards that also left out the word “Canada,” which is against government rules. “Why is he giving taxpayers the gold finger?” asked Liberal MP Scott Brison.

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Showdown in Peru



Shantala Robinson

Indigenous communities kick out Canadian mining company

by Benjamin Dangl

BURLINGTON, VT—Earlier this spring, an anti-mining Indigenous movement in Peru successfully ousted a Canadian mining company from their territory.

“In spite of government repression, if the people decide to bring the fight to the bitter end, it is possible to resist the pressure of mining and oil companies,” Peruvian activist and journalist Yasser Gómez told *The Dominion*.

The David and Goliath scenario of this anti-mining uprising highlights the vast economic inequality that has beset Peru. The country’s economy has been booming for the past decade, with a seven per cent growth expected this year—one of the highest growth rates internationally. Sixty-five per cent of the country’s export income comes from the mining industry, and investors are

expected to spend over \$40 billion in the next 10 years on mining operations.

Yet this growth has not benefited a large percentage of the population. The poverty rate in

“We do not ask for money, we ask for respect for our rights, our property and territory.”

—Walter Advuri, president, *Front for the Defense of Natural Resources in Southern Puno*

Peru is just over 31 per cent; in the countryside, two in three people live under the poverty line. Today, more than 200 communities across Peru are organized against mining.

On June 5, left-leaning presidential candidate Ollanta Humala defeated right winger Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of ex-president and human rights violator Alberto Fujimori. Humala, who won

resounding support in the poor countryside, promised to redistribute wealth by increasing taxes on the lucrative mining industry.

But another political force, from the grassroots, may end up

area, due to the industry’s impact on the environment.

According to Bear Creek, at the time of the protests the company had already invested some \$25 million in the mine. Company Director Andrew Swarthout said the mining would not impact Lake Titicaca (a massive fresh-water lake shared by Bolivia and Peru) and would create approximately 1,000 jobs. But local residents were not convinced.

Walter Advuri is the president of the Front for the Defense of Natural Resources in Southern Puno, and a leading organizer in protests against Bear Creek and mining in general in the area.

“It is as though we, the Aymaras, do not have any politicians or representatives in the congress,” Advuri told a reporter from the Peruvian newspaper *La Republica*. He critiqued outgoing president Alan Garcia, who he

being a powerful force of change under Humala.

In May and June of this year, hundreds of local residents in Puno organized road blockades, strikes and protests to demand that the government rescind a concession to the Vancouver-based Bear Creek Mining Corporation. Activists also called for an end to future mining concessions in their

says governed only for those who have money. “We do not ask for money, we ask for respect for our rights, our property and territory,” said Aduviri.

“The president [Alan Garcia] has sold off our territory without consulting us,” Paolo Castro, a farmer who joined the protests against Bear Creek told Al Jazeera. Farmer Alejandro Tucuhami agreed, telling the news outlet, “We know that in European countries, for example, mining contaminates a lot, so that’s why they want to send the mines to underdeveloped countries.”

Indigenous campesinos on the Bolivian side of the border began road blockades in solidarity with the Peruvian activists. Overall, the blockades put a standstill to inter-country traffic, stopping hundreds of trucks, local passengers and tourists.

On June 24, following seven weeks of strikes, protests, road blockades and bloody police

mining and hydroelectric projects.

Jennifer Moore, the Latin America Program Coordinator of MiningWatch Canada, told *The Dominion* that Garcia’s decision to annul the concession “is an important indicator of the strength of local organizing that we have been seeing for awhile in Peru.” Moore said Garcia has been “extraordinarily bent on handing out mining concessions without consulting with local communities first.”

In response to Garcia’s decision, Bear Creek has applied for a constitutional injunction against the Peruvian government. Swarthout contends that the cancellation of the concession is unconstitutional and in violation of foreign investment laws. Moore noted that it is plausible that Bear Creek could use the Canada-Peru Free Trade Agreement, signed in 2009, to challenge the loss of their concession.

The wave of strikes and conflicts that have swept across

“The president [Alan Garcia] has sold off our territory without consulting us.”

—Paolo Castro, farmer

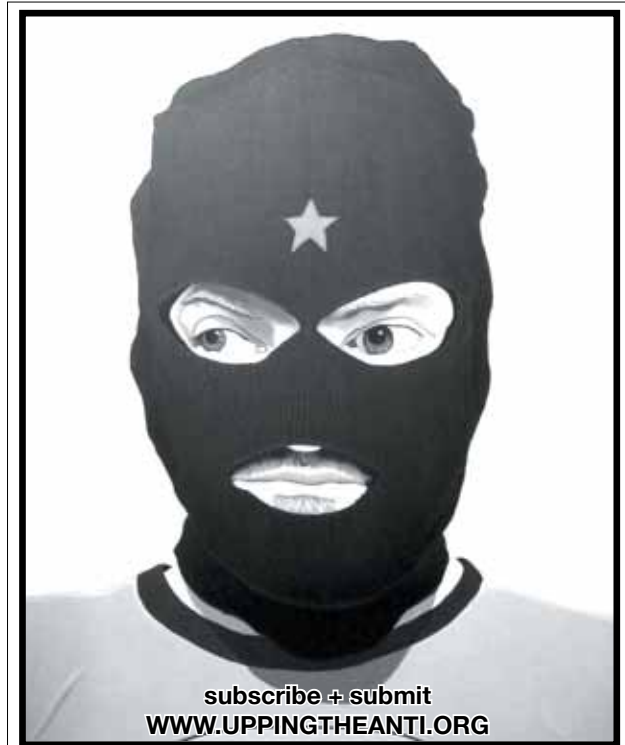
repression of activists, then-President Garcia broke with Peruvian political tradition and heeded the demands of the protesters by cancelling the Bear Creek contract, and putting a three-year hold on future mining deals for the region. In addition, recently inaugurated Ollanta Humala has pledged to move forward on legislation that will make community input necessary before mining operations anywhere in the country can proceed.

Just hours after Garcia overturned Bear Creek’s concession, a conflict erupted at the airport in Juliaca, north of Puno. There, activists protesting other mining operations and a hydroelectric plant occupied the airport only to be attacked by police, who shot and killed five of them. Major English media outlets inaccurately reported that Garcia’s decision against Bear Creek was linked to the massacre at the airport, when in fact the airport protest was linked to separate proposed

Peru in recent months, along with the election of Humala, are likely to have a long-standing impact on the regulation and taxation of the multinational extractive industry in Peru. On August 23, at the time of this writing, the Peruvian congress signed into law a bill that requires mining and oil companies to consult with Indigenous communities before constructing extractive projects. Humala now has to sign the bill into law for it to go into effect.

The people’s victory in Puno against Bear Creek may set the stage for a new struggle in the country that will test the political will of Humala, and challenge social movements to pressure from below.

Ben Dangl is the editor of UpsideDownWorld.org, a website on activism and politics in Latin America. He is the author of the book, Dancing with Dynamite: Social Movements and States in Latin America.



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TRANSitioning Spaces

Organizations slowly becoming more trans inclusive

by Shay Enxuga

HALIFAX—In July, Halifax had its first ever Dyke and Trans March, celebrating the identities of queer women and trans people and challenging continued oppressions, particularly gendered oppression.

A similar march occurred last year; first called a Dyke March, then a Dyke and Trans March, the name was finally changed back to a Dyke March a week before the event. The flip-flop in names points to a larger trend in Nova Scotia: many organizations are moving to become trans-inclusive, but are struggling to figure out what that means.

Rebecca Rose, one of the organizers of both the Dyke March and Dyke and Trans March describes how the march evolved to be more trans-inclusive. Last year's march was originally "for women-loving-women," explained Rose, "[but] a lot of folks understandably had some concerns because that definition is quite narrow and doesn't encompass a lot of people in our community." Organizers changed the name to the Dyke and Trans March, but some members of the trans community felt that the "T" was simply being tacked on without adequate representation from trans people.

This year, more members from the trans community helped to organize the march and the process was longer—including five meetings to settle on a name—making the event more trans-inclusive.

"I think that the work that went into the dialogue and the discussions were well worth it," said Rose. It is important, she explains, "[because] people are complex and issues dealing with identity are complex. These things can be messy and uncomfortable and can take a long time and should take a long time because if not, you're probably not doing it right."

Being a trans-inclusive space requires more than just adding "trans-" to the name and assuming



Many organizations in Nova Scotia are moving to become trans-inclusive, but are struggling to figure out what that means.

Miles Howe

that everything will be fine, said Ellen Taylor, the New Campaigns Coordinator at the Dalhousie Women's Centre. Trans-inclusivity requires training and centering your mission and services to meet the needs of a diverse community.

The Dalhousie Women's Centre is undergoing the long and sometimes uncomfortable process of becoming a trans-inclusive space. Taylor notes that part of that process is recognizing who the centre has been excluding: "The Dalhousie Women's Centre has been in the past primarily a women's space, primarily a white space, probably a middle class space and starting to think about how those things emerge through the services we provide or the events we hold as the centre...that is sending a message that [the centre] is primarily a women's space and then we are just allowing other genders to be here," she said.

So, what is trans-inclusivity? What does that look like? What does it mean in terms of institutional structures? These are questions the facilitating team for the Tatamagouche Social Justice Youth Camp (SJYC) were tackling this past summer.

In the past, sleeping arrangements at the SJYC have been sex-segregated into male and

female dorms. Sex-segregated dorms are problematic, said Andy, one of the co-ordinators of the camp, "because it puts people on the spot and requires people to 'out' themselves. It can be a really horrible experience."

"This year we decided to do it differently," they* continued, "and a big piece of that is around queer and trans stuff, and trying to make the space a safer, more accessible space for queer and trans people."

The team has been given the go-ahead from the Tatamagouche Centre to implement non-gendered sleeping arrangements this year. Participants will be given the opportunity to self-identify their own gender and to choose whom they want to room with.

"It's pioneering in non-gendered sleeping arrangements for Nova Scotia," Andy said. "I think it's something other organizations, groups, or people should be encouraged to adopt or use."

This is a great opportunity for structural change on a community level, says Andy, which is something you don't hear about very often.

"As a trans person, as a queer person, it's really important to me personally to address those things on a grassroots level where I feel like it can actually make a differ-

ence," they said. "It's a really political decision that SJYC has decided to do...I don't know if we all realize that it's a political thing."

*This article uses the singular, gender-neutral pronoun "they." This is used interchangeably with the pronoun "he" because not all identities can be easily expressed in a two gender, two pronoun binary system. Andy requested that both of these pronouns be used in the article.

Shay Enxuga organizes with queer and trans communities in Halifax. He was one of the organizers for the Dyke and Trans March, sits on the board at the Dalhousie Women's Centre, and is a facilitator with the Tatamagouche Social Justice Youth Camp.

This article was produced by the Halifax Media Co-op.



For more grassroots coverage of Halifax check out halifax.mediacoop.ca

Spin Cycles for Social Change

Montreal laundromat co-op hopes to build a stronger neighbourhood

by Joanne Penhale

MONTREAL—A dryer whirs, and a young mother folds her family's laundry. Another woman enters with two school-aged kids, who stand by as she loads the washing machine. Anyone passing by might assume it's just a clean, bright laundromat in a poor Montreal neighbourhood. But for Mohammad Hassan, it's bursting with potential for social change.

The Jobra Solidarity Co-operative is a laundromat with an anti-poverty mission in the north end of Park Extension, an enclaved Montreal neighbourhood of 1.6 square kilometres with 33,000 residents, mainly immigrants.

A poster on one wall reads: "Co-operative members learn from each other, innovate together, and by increasing their control over their livelihoods, build up the sense of dignity that the experience of poverty destroys." Beside that hang enlarged photos of microcredit workshops held there last spring, along with photocopies of local press coverage, information on how to become a member, and a mock-up of a big \$1,000 cheque awarded to Hassan, Jobra's main founder, for being a community organizer who "walks the talk."

Hassan and a handful of other volunteers, despite numerous and ongoing challenges, have opened this social enterprise where members become owners, and profits (yet to be seen) will be turned back into resources to serve the local community. Hassan said a laundromat was chosen as a space for Jobra's anti-poverty work because laundromats can run without a manager present, they are recession-proof since people won't easily give up clean clothes, and they generally have a 75 per cent rate of return.

"People who stay at home, especially women, can have a place to come to and meet people, they can have a chance to talk to each other, share their ideas, and chal-

lenges of daily life," said Hassan, describing his vision for Jobra. "They can explore their ambitions."

Jobra will eventually offer entrepreneurial training and micro-loans, says Hassan, to help people escape cycles of poverty.

Hassan first came to Park Extension in 1983 as a refugee from Bangladesh. Though he rarely refers to his own story, Hassan knows first-hand the difficulties of poverty, finding work, living in cramped housing, trying to integrate, and raising a family in those circumstances. He hasn't lived in Park Extension since 1989, but since 2004 he has been committed to anti-poverty organizing in the neighbourhood.

"It's an emotional attachment for me," Hassan said. "When I came to Canada, I had big hopes and dreams."

"This is one of the richest countries in the world," he said, noting Park Extension is the second poorest neighbourhood in Canada. "Why does it have to be like this?"

Since opening in March 2010, the co-operative has just been breaking even. Its programming has been scarce, and locals have yet to access any micro-loans.

"It's in a holding pattern. Nothing is working," Hassan said. "We don't have staff, that's the main challenge."

"Co-operative members [can] build up the sense of dignity that the experience of poverty destroys."

—Poster in the Jobra Solidarity Co-op

Hassan has struggled since 2005 to establish the co-operative. He and others researched, lobbied various local politicians, wrote proposals and attended meetings. They had trouble finding a space and convincing funding bodies that their project was feasible. Once they found a space, getting proper zoning was a barrier. Jobra was eventually awarded start-up



While the Jobra laundromat in Montreal's Park Extension neighbourhood is facing growing pains, founder Mohammad Hassan believes it's bursting with potential for social change.

Joanne Penhale

money through various local economic development funds. Altogether, it was awarded more than \$140,000 to establish the space.

With the structure and physical location now in place, Hassan said, the challenge now is clear:

for kids.

The semi-basement space also has a back room of about 300 square feet, for which Jobra is seeking proper municipal zoning. People would be able to meet more regularly, notes Hassan, if there was a regular co-ordinator to manage the space.

A few groups have tried to use it as meeting space. Last summer, a local resident was using it to help kids fix their bikes—it became a popular with kids, but was unsustainable. A group of seniors and a religious group have also asked to use the meeting room, but were turned down.

"We don't have the capacity right now," Hassan said, adding there is an urgent need for meeting space in the north end of Park Extension.

Joanne Penhale is a Montreal-based freelance reporter, features-writer, community organizer, and urban gardener.

"We need to build the place. We need more publicity. We need more community support."

Situated about one kilometre away from the social services concentrated at the south end of Park Extension, the laundromat has high-quality washers and dryers, and two folding tables. On a shelf sit dozens of flyers for social services, and nearby, a chalkboard

Missing Women's Commission Flounders

Women, Indigenous groups looking elsewhere for answers to murder, disappearance of Aboriginal women

by Angela Sterritt

VANCOUVER—Just weeks before the BC Missing Women Commission of Inquiry began, concerns and questions continued to be raised by the groups representing Aboriginal, women's and sex-trade workers groups. More are walking away from what appears to be a crumbling process.

"We are calling for a national inquiry," says Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC). "This is a human rights violation: we are being denied the basic right to participate in a decision-making process that affects us," she said. NWAC pulled out of the commission when it was announced that none of the organizations granted standing—participation—at the inquiry would be afforded legal representation.

"Canada is supposed to be leading the way for upholding rights—we should be able to access at least one of these rights, and be able to represent ourselves," Lavell said in a telephone interview. "There are over 600 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and as Aboriginal women, we know the best way to address this—what works for us and what doesn't."

The commission was called on September 27, 2010, to investigate police handling of the murders committed by serial killer Robert Pickton. Just a month before the commission was set to begin, many observers watched in disbelief as the inquiry appeared to fall apart.

"On the tenth [of August], we pulled out because we felt like the commission had reached a point where it no longer represented a meaningful exercise," West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) Executive

Director Kasari Govender told *The Dominion*. West Coast LEAF is a non-profit group that was granted standing at the commission with coalition partner Ending Violence Association of BC. "With its denial to fund legal counsel to Aboriginal and community groups we feel it greatly compromises the inquiry and many groups are feeling pushed out," she said.

Eight of the groups granted standing at the commission withdrew from the proceedings after

"The police, the justice department, the courts, the media and the public refuse to acknowledge how the most vulnerable members of our society are being exposed to gruesome levels of violence."

—Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, President,
Native Women's Association of Canada

the BC government announced this summer that it cannot afford to pay the legal fees for groups participating in the Pickton inquest. The relatives of the serial killer's victims, however, will be provided funding for legal counsel, albeit for one lawyer for all 10 families.

This is one of many issues that led some people to question whether the commission will get to the bottom of a serious question: why and how did a serial killer manage to operate freely without fear of repercussions for over a decade?

The Missing Women Investigation Review, issued by the Vancouver Police Department in August 2010, established that police inaction over the colossal number of reports of missing women from Vancouver's Down-

town East Side (DTES) warranted a rigorous investigation. It details eight key findings among the reasons for the failed investigation, including management, leadership, jurisdiction and lack of resources, training and analysis.

The review emphasizes that the VPD "did not cause the failure of the investigation into Pickton because the RCMP had responsibility for that investigation." According to the review, the RCMP abandoned the investiga-

were mentally ill—were disappearing," Crey told *The Dominion*.

According to Crey, a police liaison provided the logic behind the mystery: the women were simply part of a transient population—one day in Calgary, the next in Victoria, on a bus to Vancouver the following. Regardless of the theory, inside the cop shop an officer was also raising suspicions about a serial killer.

One of the few PhD-educated police in the force, Kim Rossmo, also a criminologist, produced a sophisticated geographic profiling formula to predict where a serial criminal lives. However, in a paradoxical move, adding to the long list of setbacks, at the same time Rossmo brought forward his concerns about a potential serial killer at work, he was pushed from the force. While he wasn't officially released because of the Pickton case, resentment over Rossmo's quick rise through the ranks led to resentment among higher-ups, according to a former police colleague, and likely was a reason for his warnings being ignored.

The evidence was clear, but few seemed to take the disappearances of the women, many of whom were Aboriginal, seriously.

"It's not just about the police; it's a systemic issue, with racism and sex-discrimination at the forefront," Lavell told *The Dominion*. "It's about the refusal of the police, the justice department, the courts, the media and the public to acknowledge how the most vulnerable members of our society—impoverished Aboriginal women—are being abused and exposed to gruesome levels of violence," she said.

When Pickton was finally arrested, the monster jigsaw puzzle came together and the picture seemed complete—except for one piece.

tion over which they asserted authority in 1999.

The cracks that spurred the lapsed investigation, however, appeared much earlier.

In 1990, residents of Vancouver's DTES alerted Ernie Crey to the disappearances of women from the neighbourhood. At the time, Crey was the acting-president of the United Native Nations, then located at 108 Blood Alley in the DTES. Crey was the first high-profile Aboriginal leader to speak out when women began vanishing, and he became a strong voice for victims' families after his sister—Dawn Crey—disappeared in November 2000.

"Folks were coming up and saying that women who live in the neighbourhood—women in the sex trade, women who were dependent on drugs, and women who

“We already had...demanded a full inquiry into how police undertook the investigation,” Ernie Crey remembers. “At that point it was our idea to ensure the inquiry’s scope was broad—not just focusing on the police inaction, but to look at other issues,” he said.

The judicial inquiry will delve into Robert Pickton’s horrific crimes: the murders of 33 women in five years, all coming from the DTES. It will also press on why, in 1998, the attorney general’s office stayed attempted-murder charges against him. Pickton bragged to an undercover cell-mate of killing 49 women.

Dawn Crey was one of the 30 women whose DNA was found at the killer’s pig farm. Pickton was not convicted for her murder, nor for the killing of 20 others whose DNA was also found at the slaughter warehouse. The decision to stay the 20 remaining

murder charges after Pickton was convicted on six counts of murder in 2007 came from Attorney General Wally Oppal. He claimed there was little to gain since Pickton was already serving the maximum sentence under Canadian jurisprudence. The former judge also stated publicly during his tenure as Attorney General that he saw no need for an inquiry.

In a surprising—and criticized—turn of events, Oppal (who was unseated in the 2009 provincial election) was eventually appointed to spearhead the examination of how 66 women disappeared from a small area without police taking heed.

“Some people objected [to Oppal’s appointment],” said Crey. “I didn’t initially, yet when I observed so much opposition from community and

families, well I didn’t strenuously oppose; but if Oppal’s appointment carried so much suspicion and doubts then the only smart thing that could happen is if he decided to step down.”

Oppal has since changed his tune, jumping the proverbial fence and leaving some people questioning his impartiality—this time on the side of the women.

“It would be the height of unfairness to require unrepresented individuals to cross-examine police who are represented by highly qualified counsel,” Oppal wrote in an eight-page letter to then-Attorney General Barry Penner, dated June 27. In it, he urged Penner to fund the groups representing the issues and needs of the missing and murdered women.

The provincial and federal governments are providing funding for the one

lawyer for the Attorney General of BC, three lawyers for the Department of Justice Canada (RCMP), nine lawyers for the commission counsel, two lawyers for the Vancouver Police Department, one lawyer for Rossmo (former VPD), two lawyers for the Criminal Justice Branch (prosecutors), and one lawyer for the Vancouver Police Union—19 legal representatives in total for the justice system representatives.

One lawyer is provided to represent a fraction of the families of the missing and murdered women represented at the commission; no funding will be made available to the Aboriginal, sex-trade and women’s groups—many of which knew the women intimately.

“We were caught off guard and insulted when we were informed that there could be only one independent counsel to ask questions on behalf of all the families. To us it appears discriminatory and it boils down to the fact that racism and sexism continue to lead the



investigation,” said Lavell.

David Eby of the BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) is troubled by the lack of parity he sees at the commission.

“The government’s decision means some of the best lawyers in Vancouver will be working on a limitless retainer to destroy the credibility of Aboriginal women, sex trade workers and other vulnerable witnesses if they dare criticize the police, and these witnesses won’t have their own lawyers to defend them,” said Eby in a telephone conversation with *The Dominion*. “It’s outrageous.”

On August 18, Barry Penner announced his resignation as Attorney General. Prior to his departure, he gave a statement to *The Dominion* in an email exchange.

“These continue to be challenging economic times, and there are limits to how many millions of taxpayer dollars we can provide to lawyers representing advocacy groups. Funding lawyers for all the participants would add an additional 12 legal teams, effectively tripling the number of taxpayer funded lawyers at the inquiry,”

Penner wrote.

On September 20, Pivot Legal Society also pulled out of the inquiry, the ninth group to do so.

“There are limits to how many millions of taxpayer dollars we can provide to lawyers representing advocacy groups.”

—Barry Penner, former BC attorney general

On his blog, Eby wrote, “In the big picture, setting aside the petty fault-finding exercise, this commission is supposed to be about restoring the faith of BC’s Indigenous populations who live on- and off-reserve, restoring

the faith of BC’s marginalized populations including those with addictions and those who are homeless or otherwise on the fringes, and restoring the faith

of the population at large that might be on the edge, that if you go missing the police will look for you as aggressively as they look for anybody else.”

According to NWAC, a national inquiry can effectively

examine the violence against Aboriginal women and girls, with full participation of Aboriginal women, including those groups whose expertise and knowledge can assist its deliberations. “If a national inquiry is not feasible, then we will have to take it to the next level—an international human rights case,” said NWAC president Lavell.

“In cases that involve the ongoing genocide of our people, it’s so crucial. I can’t wait another one or two years to watch more women go—this summer alone, 30 women have been reported as missing or murdered,” she said.

“As Aboriginal women we have the role for leading the next generation, every woman and every girl is our future as Native people and this is why the impact is so critical.”


The commission hearings began in Vancouver on October 11.

Angela Sterritt is a writer, visual artist and broadcast and television journalist based out of Vancouver. She is a proud member of the Gitksan Nation.

“Some of the best lawyers in Vancouver will be working on a limitless retainer to destroy the credibility of Aboriginal women, sex trade workers and other vulnerable witnesses if they dare criticize the police.”

—David Eby, BC Civil Liberties Association

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Free software project provides encrypted protection

by **Boskote**

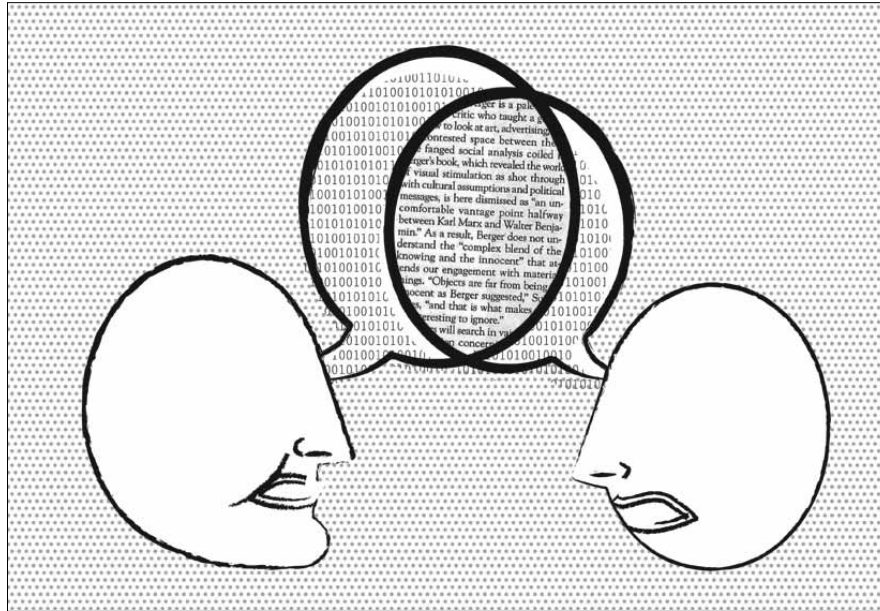
MONTREAL—Increasing awareness of state surveillance following the 2010 Olympics and the G20 summit last year has prompted greater scrutiny of the lack of privacy offered by most telephone and online communications.

Historically, there haven't been many easily accessible options to reliably provide secure voice communications. That situation changed dramatically in June of this year when a free software project called Jitsi was released, allowing the average computer user to reliably encrypt voice and video communications over the internet. In addition to the software, Jitsi has also released a service called `jit.si` that allows anyone to create free accounts using Jingle, an open internet communications protocol that is also used for Google Talk.

This combination of software and service provides a secure, accessible alternative to Skype, a corporation that has a history of collaborating with state surveillance. They have worked with the government of China to create a version of their software that tracks certain keywords that are sent in instant messages through the Skype network.

Skype advertises their calls as encrypted. But the security of their system can't be verified because it is proprietary, which means they won't publicly reveal how it works. This is not likely to change soon. In May of this year Skype was acquired by Microsoft, a company which is known for selling proprietary software with poor security, such as the Windows operating system.

As a free software project, the source code for Jitsi is available for anyone to examine and modify.



Shira Ronn

This is especially important for programs that are providing security, because it allows for public review of the software to help find any flaws that may compromise the intended security features. Jitsi uses a standard real-time communication encryption system called

The combination of the Jitsi software and the `jit.si` service provides a secure, accessible alternative to Skype for online communication.

ZRTP, which was first released in 2006 and has since been peer-reviewed by at least eight different cryptography research teams. This system is very easy to use. A call is made to someone else using the same system. Once the connection is established, a four-character code will appear on both ends of the conversation. If the people talking confirm that these two codes match, it indicates that there is no one listening in on the call.

Despite the strengths of ZRTP, there are always limita-

tions to the security, whether for Jitsi or any other communications software. For example, there is a special kind of malware that can record a conversation directly from the audio input and output of a computer.

While Jitsi runs on Win-

dows, Mac, and Linux, it is much easier for malware to infect a Windows operating system than the other two. Of course, if there is a listening device planted inside or near the computer that is being used, or if the person on the other end is not trustworthy, the security of the conversation is compromised no matter what operating system is being used.

Encryption of the content of a conversation is also limited because it will still be clear that a conversation has occurred, and

under most circumstance it wouldn't be difficult to figure out who was on either end of the call. This information can be useful from a surveillance perspective for mapping social networks.

Currently, the US government already does this kind of traffic analysis for all of the phone calls that are made in the United States. Fortunately, it is possible to evade this kind of tracking by using anonymity software such as Tor, which can send your network traffic to a global network of computers in order to make it much more difficult to track your location and identity. It is possible to route Jitsi traffic through Tor, allowing for communication that is both anonymous and secure.

Currently Jitsi is only designed to work on computers, but a version for Android phones is under development. However, there are already secure communications options available for Android phones. A company called Whisper Systems has developed two apps for Android. One, called RedPhone, makes calls through a smart phone's data plan and encrypts them using ZRTP. The other is called TextSecure, and it encrypts text messages.

If smart phone and data plans become more affordable, these Android apps will become important tools for secure mobile phone communication. In the meantime, many people have access to computers, and Jitsi now provides a good way of using them to communicate securely.

Boskote does research and workshop facilitation on secure communication with ATS (Anarchistes pour des technologies solidaires/Anarchist Tech Support).

Sex Ed's Straight Edge

Queering sexual education can save lives

by Kelly Rose Pflug-Back

TORONTO—High school can be a hostile place. Bullying often runs rampant and unchecked, and for many young people verbal and physical harassment are an unbearable yet inescapable daily reality.

Growing up queer in a small town, I learned these things at a young age. Part of me always knew that I had romantic feelings for girls as well as boys, but because I had never seen a representation of same-gendered relationships I assumed that the idea was just another tragically unfeasible product of my imagination, like planting gumball trees from last year's Halloween candy or visiting Jupiter.

As my teenage years approached and the people around me began to experiment with their first romantic relationships, I found myself plagued by an increasing number of questions. The answers were to be found nowhere—not at home, not among my peers, and certainly not at school.

Six years have passed since I left high school, but it seems the environment has changed little for younger generations. To this day, the first place many queer and trans youth experience homophobia and/or transphobia is in school.

"It's the little things, like always wanting to be the dad when you're playing house," said a participant in Rainbow Youth, a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, intersex, queer and questioning (LGBTTIQQ) group composed of students from public high schools in the Peterborough, Ontario area. "Other kids pick up on the fact that you're different, even at a very young age."

"The only idea I had of what it meant to be a lesbian came from negative stereotypes at school and in the media," another Rainbow Youth member explained. "So for the longest time, I was sure that there was no way I was queer."

Though learning about reproductive sex and associated health risks is a component of public education in most Canadian schools, the matter of whether there is discussion of anything other than non-heterosexual intercourse is still left to the discretion of teachers.

"It's all well and good to tell teachers to talk about queer and trans sex," said Jamila Ghaddar, a sex education advocate with The Well LGBTTIQQ community centre in Hamilton, Ontario. "But who's going to support those teachers when they face backlash from angry parents? They know what the reaction will be, and they won't touch this issue with a ten-foot pole."

The social and human impacts of teaching gender binaries and privileging heterosexual relations in schools are severe. According to the Gay and Lesbian Educators of British Columbia, nearly 40 per cent of gay and lesbian youth report dramatically low

self esteem. The 2003 Centre for Suicide Prevention Alert reported that Canadian youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or questioning their sexuality are 3.4 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers.

Trans Pulse, a grassroots research organization in Ontario, has found nearly three-quarters of transgender, two-spirited and gender-queer people in the province have seriously considered suicide, and 43 per cent have made a suicide attempt; those under the age of 24 were almost three times as likely to have attempted suicide in the past year than those 25 and older.

Many teens leave home or are kicked out because of their sexuality, and a disproportionate percentage of street-involved youth in Canada are queer and transgender. Although many cities including Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria, Montreal and Winnipeg now have queer- and trans-inclusive sexual health clinics that are technically

accessible to youth, expecting queer and trans students to take it upon themselves to venture outside of the school environment in order to learn about sex is not realistic, especially for youth who fear persecution if their sexuality is discovered by peers or family members.

Even when parents are supportive or tolerant of their child's sexual orientation or gender identity, it is still rare for them to seek out information on LGBTTIQQ sexual health, according to students who were interviewed. Neglected in the home and the classroom alike, LGBTTIQQ youngsters may be more likely to seek sexual education from "non-official" sources, such as the internet, pornography or other adult media—most of which is not designed to educate a youth audience, encourage safe sex and consent or foster healthy body image.

When it comes to the sex-ed curriculum, the omission



All images: Sam Bradd

of LGBTTIQQ issues poses a public health risk by leaving queer and transgender students in the dark about Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and other sexual health issues.

“We have disproportionate rates of Human Papilloma Virus [HPV] among women who have sex with women, precisely because there is zero information on what safe lesbian sex means,” said Ghaddar, whose volunteer efforts to bring queer- and transgender-inclusive sex ed into Ontario classrooms have been received by students, parents and faculty with reactions ranging from vehement opposition to tearful thanks.

For LGBTTIQQ students, sexual education programs as we know them often serve as nothing more than reminders of their own social status: while they must sit through discussions of straight sex that may be irrelevant to their own lives, straight students are free from having to hear about queer sex, accepting that they share the school environment with queer students or confronting the privileges that they possess as heterosexuals.

Heterosexual faculty members who may be open to the idea of inclusive sex education are generally not qualified to teach LGBTTIQQ sexual health, and queer teachers face the very real prospect of losing their jobs for so much as privately disclosing their orientation, let alone openly discussing sexuality in the classroom.

As a case in point, last year Vancouver high school music instructor Lisa Reimer was banned from returning to work after her female partner gave birth. Months later, student teacher Seth Stambaugh of Portland was banned from the Oregon School District, as well as from the graduate school he attended, for telling a

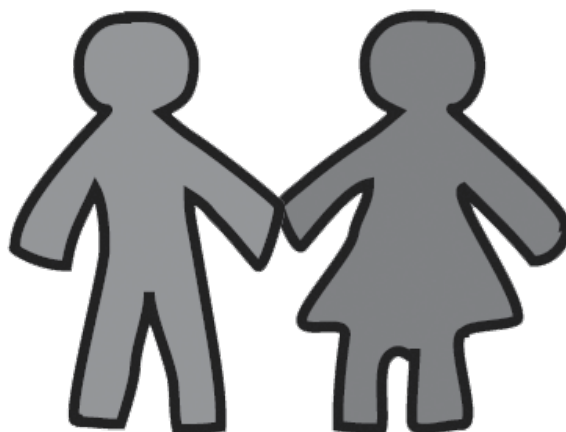


fourth grader that he was gay.

Firing gay teachers sends LGBTTIQQ faculty and students alike a strong message: there is no place for queer issues and identities in schools, not in curriculum nor in conversations in the staff room during lunch break.

Efforts to make schools more hospitable for LGBTTIQQ students have come in a variety of forms over the years, Gay Straight Alliances being the best known.

Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) are student-run organizations that provide sexual



health education, advocacy work, lobbying power and a stigma-free environment for queer students. These grassroots groups provide care and support to the queer and transgender student body where it is needed most. GSAs began popping up across North America in the late 1990s, and have since spread to Mexico and the United Kingdom. Mygsa.ca, an online directory of Canadian GSAs, lists over 150 GSAs operating across the country in both urban and rural areas.

But under the jurisdiction of Catholic school boards, GSAs can be especially tenuous. Matt Moorehead, a former student at St. Mary's Catholic High School in Kitchener, Ontario, was asked not to re-register for class after trying to set up a “queer and supporters” group. “Going to a Catholic school every day we are told God loves us, as long as we don't date or love other people,” said Moorehead.

Members of Rainbow Youth have also reported being ignored

or met with hostility by teachers and staff members when trying to set up or maintain queer and trans student services, including GSAs, in public and Catholic schools alike.

“The faculty has to change before the climate changes,” said one Rainbow Youth participant, asserting that teachers and board members also take part in the marginalization of LGBTTIQQ students. As those who hold the most official influence within the school environment, teachers and other staff may need to take an



regular guest lecturers and workshop co-ordinators are part of the LGBTTIQQ community and other marginal groups. Contact is primarily open to students who have dropped out or had trouble at more traditional schools.

Since students who experience homophobic and transphobic harassment are much likelier to miss classes or drop out according to the 2005 Canadian National Student Climate Survey, the availability of a second chance in an environment free of stigma could mean the difference between academic success or failure for many LGBTTIQQ students.

“Some students may still be reluctant to ask questions in front of the whole class, but the important thing is that when they do, we have all the information,” explained one teacher at Contact, who requested anonymity. Another staff member, who teaches parenting skills to students who have children, initiates discussions in the classroom on how to use inclusive language when talking about sexuality and romantic relationships from the perspective of a parent.

Homophobia and transphobia, both in schools and in society at large, are deeply entrenched issues that will not vanish overnight. While there is no way of knowing yet how this will shape the lives of the next generation of queer and transgender students to pass through Canada's schools, both LGBTTIQQ-positive teachers and student activists alike are taking a positive stance in what is, for so many of Canada's youth, a life-or-death-situation.

Kelly Pflug-Back writes poetry, science-fiction, horror, and articles on social justice issues. She is one of over 20 defendants still awaiting trial for G20-related charges.

overtly pro-LGBTTIQQ stance in order to set an example before the student body will change significantly.

“There is a lot of policy management and development work to be done here,” said Ghaddar. “We go to every school and give teachers access to a full panorama of sex-ed material. We aim to help them appreciate the nuance, the endless diversity of sexuality. The curriculum really has to get away from these narrow definitions of gay and straight, male and female; when we're talking about sex and body parts, it's not okay to use gendered language.”

Contact Inner City, an alternative public high school in downtown Toronto, is one of the few educational establishments in Canada that acknowledges the entire spectrum of sexual identities in their curriculum.

Contact has made it policy for teachers to use inclusive language when discussing anything pertaining to sexuality and gender identity. Many of the school's

It's a Matter of Jordan's Principle

Native child left behind by Canadian health system



Jeremy Beadle Meawasige, a First Nations child with complex disabilities, loves music and his evening drives around Pictou County, Nova Scotia. He has been cared for by his mother his whole life. Since her stroke, which left her physically unable to look after her son, neither the provincial nor the federal government will agree to fund Jeremy's care at home.

Moira Peters

by **Moira Peters**

PICTOU LANDING, NS—Maurina Beadle doesn't sleep at night. She naps. While her son Jeremy sleeps on a bed attached to her own, Beadle has trained herself to be constantly alert.

"After 16 years, your body gets used to it," she says.

Jeremy Beadle Meawasige, known as Kicking Bear in his hometown of Pictou Landing First Nation in Nova Scotia, has been diagnosed with hydrocephalus, cerebral palsy, spinal curvature and autism. He needs to be fed, changed and dressed. He can't walk by himself. He frequently visits the hospital and has undergone numerous operations.

Beadle was always the sole caregiver for the 16-year-old. Their lives changed dramatically last May, when she suffered a double stroke that left her incontinent, in a wheelchair and unable to use her hands. "Doctors said I would never walk again," says Beadle.

"Maurina never had any help," says Philippa Pictou, Health Director for Pictou Landing First Nation, who has known the family for years. She said that after Beadle's stroke, "she worked really hard to regain capacity with writing exercises—hours and hours. She was determined to walk again."

Maurina Beadle walks with a cane and opts for the lighter plates in the cupboard to serve dinner. Her strong features and wit more than compensate for her modest stature.

She now accepts day workers into her home to help with house-keeping and caring for her son, although she says this was difficult for her at first.

"Maurina is committed to caring for Jeremy," says Pictou, but when the stroke made it impossible for Beadle to do so by herself, the health director began the process of accessing an \$11 million federal fund for First Nations children with complex disabilities.

The fund was initiated by

Health Canada in response to Jordan's Principle, a "child-first" policy designed to ensure First Nations children do not suffer delays or disruptions in essential health services if the funding source for their care becomes unclear.

Pictou's inquiry was stymied first at the federal level, which is responsible for First Nations health care. Then it was stymied by the province, which controls most of, arguably the best, and certainly the most readily available health services.

In spite of Pictou and Beadle's diligence, it took five months for any level of government to offer Jeremy health services. Jeremy's case is just one more added to the astounding statistics that show how the most vulnerable people in Canada—First Nations children—have the greatest difficulty receiving the health care they need.

A year-and-a-half later, Jeremy's future care remains unsettled, and the family has decided to take the federal government to court.

"Through all this," says Beadle, as she lifts her right ankle on top of her left knee and lights a cigarette, "I think about the things that nobody saw, the years of seeing him puke, seeing him take off his diaper and play with his..." She trails off. "And I had to put him in a tub with a little water so he could play around—not too much water—while I cleaned up."

Jeremy sits on the couch, ankle crossed over his opposite knee, balancing his toy piano across his lap, trumpeting his lips to the machine's rendition of "Besame Mucho." A t-shirt holds his arms loosely against his chest—to prevent him from hitting himself—and his long fingers press the toy's buttons. His smile grows wide when George Billington, his evening caretaker, asks whether he wants to go for a cruise. "Socks 'n' shoes on," says Jeremy. "Seatbelt on for safety."

"When I was trained by FNIH [First Nations and Inuit Health], we were given workshops and attended meetings about Jordan's Principle and what it meant," says Pictou, who was also trained in the child-first policy while she

worked for Health Canada. "It didn't occur to me that when we ran into a situation that fell under Jordan's Principle that [the funding] would be so hard to access."

Jordan's Principle is named in honour of Jordan River Anderson of Norway House Cree Nation, who spent all his life in hospital while the province of Manitoba and the government of Canada argued over who was responsible for funding the child's care at home. Jordan died at the age of four, having never lived at home.

"To access Jordan's Principle, we had to prove what kind of care Jeremy would get if he were off-reserve," says Pictou. An assessment was required, one that would identify the normative—standard—level of health services any non-status Nova Scotian child would receive.

In the meantime, while Beadle was recovering in hospital, Pictou Landing Band Council hired home-care workers to take care of Jeremy, "without knowing whether we were doing the right thing, whether the workers were able to provide Jeremy what he needed," says Pictou.

Five months after Beadle's stroke, Pictou Landing received approval from the office of Maureen MacDonald, Health Minister of Nova Scotia, for Continuing Care to assess Jeremy's needs. Continuing Care—the provincial service that performs home assessments—uses sophisticated computerized programs and trained staff whose services could weigh Jeremy's needs against available provincial programs. However, Nova Scotia Continuing Care's policy does not allow staff to work on reserves—First Nations health care is supposed to be covered by the federal Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AAND). However, no equivalent assessment program exists for First Nations in Nova Scotia.

"The Minister's office made it clear that the approval was for one instance only, and that no other services would be provided," says Pictou.

According to a report by an ad-hoc coalition of Aboriginal and social justice organizations, First Nations children receive two-and-



Maurina Beadle is taking the government of Canada to court over the disparity between health care services available to her son Jeremy, and those available to Nova Scotian children off-reserve.

Moirra Peters

a-half times fewer resources than non-status Canadian children. Although AAND (previously Indian and Northern Affairs Canada—INAC) has committed to mirror provincial health care programs for people living on reserves, the relative geographic isolation of reserves across the country means resources for people living on reserve are distributed over greater distances, making specialized services particularly difficult to access.

After months of conferences with the Pictou Landing community health nurse, INAC, Health Canada, Jeremy's school, the tribal council, Band lawyers and the Band council, the provincial and federal governments decided that the funding to be offered to Jeremy for respite (at-home) services would be \$2,200 per month—the standard respite cap in Nova Scotia. If Jeremy's care cost more than that—which it does—he would have to be moved to an institution.

According to Nova Scotia's

Department of Community Services, no institution in Nova Scotia can meet Jeremy's round-the-clock needs.

Situations such as Jeremy's are not uncommon, and they are compounded by disputes between governments over who is responsible for paying for health care for status-Indian children. Research in the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada 2005 Wen:de Report indicates that these bureaucratic conflicts are common, with 393 cases in 12 sample First Nations in 2005.

"[J]urisdictional disputes continue to have significant impacts on the lived experiences of First Nations children—particularly those with special needs. Although both the federal and provincial governments embrace the principle that the safety and well being of the child is a paramount consideration, in practice jurisdictional disputes often supersede the interests of children," according to the report.

Jordan's Principle was sup-

posed to fill this gap in health services. The bill states, “The obligation to meet the needs of the child first always supersedes government interests to establish jurisdictional dispute processes.” Although Jordan’s Principle passed unanimously in the House of Commons in 2007 as Private Members Bill 296, it has never been implemented in full, either by the federal government or the provinces and territories.

In 2008, a bill for the implementation of Jordan’s Principle never made it through the Manitoba Legislature.

“When the bill comes to be paid,” said Manitoba Premier Gary Doer, concerned for the cost to the provincial tax-payer, “the federal government goes to the bathroom.”

When asked how Nova Scotia sees the province’s role in providing health care services to children such as Jeremy who fall between jurisdictional cracks, the office of Maureen MacDonald responded, “[W]e support the child-first concept behind Jordan’s Principle and recognize the importance of governments working together to ensure that all children, including First Nations children, receive the supports and services they need here in Nova Scotia.” While it may support the child-first concept, the province has never implemented Jordan’s Principle, which would require services to be provided without delay.

The response from the Nova Scotia health minister’s office goes on: “Fundamentally, we provide the best care we can in circumstances like this and there are negotiations about funds that sometimes follow.”

“There’s a complete lack of access across the country to Jordan’s Principle,” says Pictou. “This is a gatekeeper practice. The feds can say there are no jurisdictional issues and therefore the need for [Jordan’s Principle] doesn’t exist.”

Pictou believes political conveniences encourage the institutionalization of First Nations children.

“It’s a win-win situation for governments,” she says. “Evergreen [Home for Special Care] is the only institution for under-18

children [with complex disabilities] in Nova Scotia. It only has 20 beds, currently four vacancies. If an off-reserve child is taking up a bed, the province pays. If a First Nations child is in a bed, the federal government pays.”

“He won’t get no love in an institution.”

—Maurina Beadle

In other words, the province benefits financially—to the tune of \$350 per day—when status-Indian children are kept in care facilities. AAND, under pressure to deliver health care equal to provincial programs, benefits because it is seen to be providing good services.

According to Pictou, if he is moved out of his community, Jeremy will lose his culture, Indigenous language and, most significantly, his mother’s involvement in his life. “It would be a huge loss for Jeremy. I can’t imagine it. The idea is inhumane.”

The \$350 per day cost at Evergreen is double what it would cost to keep Jeremy at home.

“It would make a lot of sense to have a small-options home in Pictou Landing,” says Pictou. “Three to four beds, 24-hour staff. It would create more economic viability in the community.”

Pictou Landing First Nation is a community in pain. The reserve is sandwiched between Boat Harbour and Pictou Harbour, a stunning coastline where doctors and lawyers used to own summer cottages. But in 1965 Scott Maritimes built a pulp mill in Pictou Harbour and began dumping effluent in Boat Harbour via a long underground pipe. For 46 years, pulp waste has been gushing into Boat Harbour at the rate of 50,000 gallons per day. Sulfurous smog lies over the harbour, the beach and the bluffs. Residents of Pictou Landing say there have been no natural deaths in the community in the past four decades. There is no doubt that the reserve could use more health resources.

Plus, for Pictou, the sensible alternative to the expense and emotional pain of moving Jeremy

out of his home is to move the services, not the child.

“I’ve worked in public health and in housing. I’ve fought for low-income families to get special needs funding,” says Pictou. “I really don’t think this happens

off-reserve.”

She began researching other options.

Pictou’s research revealed a bureaucratic gap between respite paid by the province to non-status children, and the at-home care available to on-reserve children through AAND. Nova Scotia offers a support program for persons with disabilities, designed to “maintain the integrity of families,” including enabling people with disabilities to live at home and preventing the need for them to be moved out of their homes, according to the 2006 provincial policy document.

For Pictou, the interesting part of the policy is a section titled, “Exceptional Circumstances for Funding over \$2,200.”

The document outlines six criteria to be evaluated for approval of long-term funding above the \$2,200 respite cap, and four criteria for additional short-term respite.

“Maurina and Jeremy fulfill every single one,” says Pictou, as she scrolls through the lists and reads them aloud.

When Pictou raised this, AAND said its commitment to status-Indians does not include exceptional circumstances such as those identified by the provincial program.

In March 2011, a few days after AAND refused Beadle’s application for extra funding, a Nova Scotian family in a similar situation filed for a judicial review of the \$2,200 respite cap. They won. The judge ruled that the cap was an administrative policy designed to save money, and that it contradicted the Social Assistance Act. Nova Scotia Community

Services was required to pay for the care necessary to keep Brian Boudreau, a 34-year-old with autism, at home.

The Pictou Landing Band Council and Maurina Beadle have brought the matter to court, challenging AAND, Health Canada and the Government of Canada on its decision to deny the Beadles additional at-home support.

Theirs is the first court challenge to use Jordan’s Principle. In their notice of application, Band lawyers call the federal decision “contrary to provincial statutes and policies, Jordan’s Principle and the right to equality under section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.” Section 15 of the Charter says that every Canadian has the right to “equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race.”

Pictou and Beadle were cross-examined by the Crown in Halifax on October 6. Pictou expects to be in court until January or February 2012.

“What irks me is I know what we could access if [Jeremy] were off-reserve, and it seems that roadblocks are put in place deliberately,” says Pictou. “The same philosophies that drove the establishment of residential schools—that governments can raise children better than First Nations can—are behind the policies that trickle down today.”

The smog rolls over Beadle’s back porch. “No matter how long you live here, you never get used to it,” she says. It’s unclear whether she is talking about the pulp mill’s discharge, or something broader, deeper. An outsider can’t help wondering why the people in Pictou Landing don’t simply up and leave.

“When reporters ask me what I’ll do if Jeremy is moved to an institution, I tell them, ‘Over my dead body,’” says Beadle. She watches Melanie Thomas, Jeremy’s day-time care worker, spoon-feed Jeremy his lunch.

“He won’t get no love in an institution.”

Moir Peters lives and bikes in Halifax.

Pink Crude

Tar sands backers accused of using queer rights to mask environmental disaster

by Jesse Grass

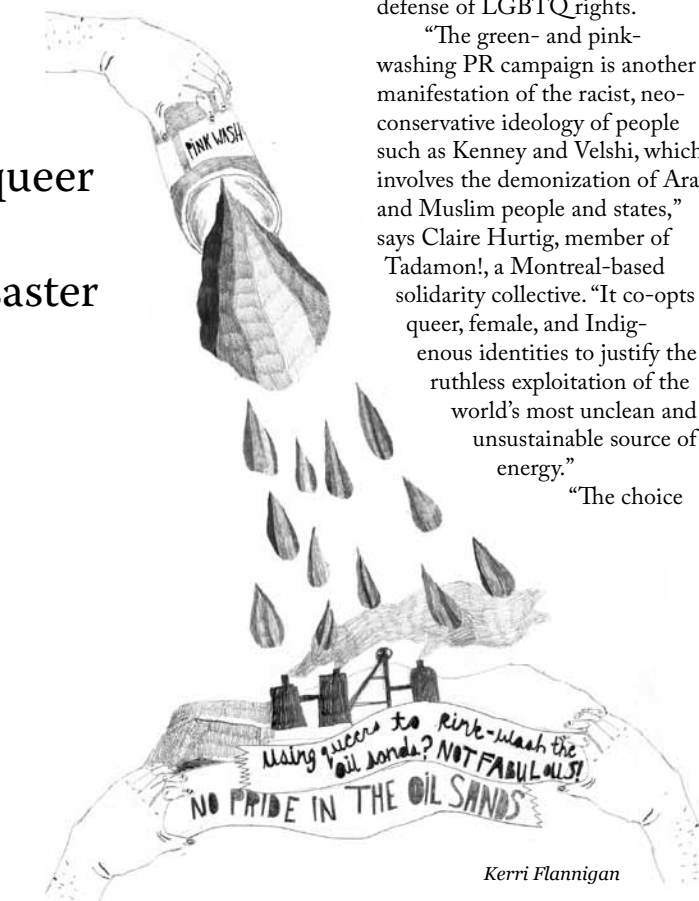
MONTREAL—As the negative environmental and health impacts of the Alberta tar sands grow, defenders of the huge oil extraction project continue to try to green-wash the endeavour by leaning on arguments that make it appear more environmentally friendly. Recently, industry-backers have added “pink-washing” — brandishing queer rights to promote Alberta’s oil as an ethical choice.

This past September, former Conservative government aide Alykhan Velshi launched a media blitz to build on right-wing pundit Ezra Levant’s push to re-brand the tar sands as “Ethical Oil.” The centrepiece of Velshi’s campaign is a series of seven ads, presenting two images each: on the left, a frightening scene from a state in which conflict oil is produced; on the right, a polished image of a happy white Canadian worker or pristine landscape.

“[Canadians] have a choice to make: Ethical Oil from Canada... and other liberal democracies, or Conflict Oil from politically oppressive...regimes,” explains Velshi in a blog entry on The Huffington Post.

One of the ads focuses on the treatment of gays in Canada and abroad. This ad also features two images side-by-side. On the left, a scene in which two presumably gay men, faces covered, are in the process of being hanged. The caption reads, “Conflict Oil: Persecution.” On the right, an image of two people holding hands, both donning rainbow bracelets accompanied by the caption, “Ethical Oil: Pride.”

That Velshi would cite gay pride in his campaign against



foreign oil may seem peculiar to some: as a former spokesperson for Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney, Velshi has defended Kenney and his colleagues’ actions against LGBTQ communities. Examples from the past five years include attempting to repeal same-sex marriage, removing LGBT presence from a citizenship guide for new Canadians and appointing an opponent of same-sex marriage to the Immigration and Refugee Board.

Over the past year, queer people in Toronto successfully rallied against the Harper government’s attempted deportation of Alvaro Orozco, an undocumented filmmaker who received significant media attention in 2007 when his refugee claim was denied because “he didn’t look gay enough.” Conservatives also overwhelmingly voted against a federal bill which proponents argue would have helped to protect transgendered citizens against discrimination.

With this in mind, many are suspicious of Velshi’s sudden

defense of LGBTQ rights.

“The green- and pink-washing PR campaign is another manifestation of the racist, neo-conservative ideology of people such as Kenney and Velshi, which involves the demonization of Arab and Muslim people and states,” says Claire Hurtig, member of Tadamon!, a Montreal-based solidarity collective. “It co-opts queer, female, and Indigenous identities to justify the ruthless exploitation of the world’s most unclean and unsustainable source of energy.”

“The choice

that exists is between ethical oil from Canada and conflict oil from politically oppressive countries,” according to EthicalOil.org. But the reality of many queer people in Canada under the Tory regime has been anything but glamorous. While mainstream gay rights lobbyists won the right to marry, those who do not fit into state-sanctioned regulations of assimilationist gay respectability remain out in the cold.

“The reality is that most queer people continue to be subjected to homophobia on a regular basis on both the institutional and interpersonal levels,” says Natalie Kouri-Towe of Queers Against Israeli Apartheid, an organization that works in solidarity with Palestinian people, and has been active in resisting “pink-washing.”

“It hides the way being gay can be just as dangerous in Canada as in any other place around the world, and that Canada is not free from homophobic violence.” Increasing government cuts to major social services that support queer people have had negative impacts, says

Kouri-Towe, pointing at sex education programs in high schools, HIV/AIDS and health programming, as well as support services for non-status and refugee people.

For Kouri-Towe, Canada’s use of pink-washing is hypocritical. “When Canada [is discussed] as a haven for gay refugees,” she explains, “what gets erased is the way Canadian immigration policies actually make it difficult for queer people to claim refugee status, and the types of racism and homophobia they face through the refugee claimant process.”

New statistics from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs and the National Transgender Discrimination Survey make clear that queer and trans- people of colour continue to disproportionately suffer violent hate crimes and murder. The Ontario-based Trans PULSE Project (transpulseproject.ca) recently revealed that trans- Ontarians attempt suicide at shockingly high rates.

Blood Services Canada still has restrictions regarding which queer bodies can donate blood. People with HIV/AIDS continue to be stigmatized and criminalized. Sterilization is required for trans- people to legally change their gender. High populations of trans- youth are homeless.

While several queer organizations are actively resisting the Israeli government’s use of pink-washing in Canada, few responses have moved beyond online commentary to Velshi’s campaign. But for all the media attention the Ethical Oil campaign has garnered, it’s not clear how effective it will be.

As Hurtig explains, “Israel’s pink-washing campaign has backfired completely. [Since] it has launched, queers have been organizing [across] Canada [to] denounce Israel’s pink-washing and have in fact used the ‘gay branding’ campaign to highlight both Israel’s hypocrisy and its apartheid system.”

“I am not aware of any extensive successes [of pink-washing] campaigns,” she says.

Jesse Grass is a genderqueer, working class fuck-up.

G20 Blogger Arrested

Police detain writer following post about 'infiltrators'

by **Tim Groves**

TORONTO—On August 25, 2011, independent journalist, blogger, and activist Dan Kellar was arrested for a blog post he made two days earlier in which he named and provided a photo of a man alleged to be an undercover police officer involved in infiltrating G20 protest groups.

The post on Kellar's blog peaceculture.org reported a sighting of the man in Toronto, and encouraged readers to "spit in his footsteps and scoff at his existence." It also identified a woman who is suspected of being an undercover police infiltrator in activist circles. Kellar put both names in quotes, suggesting that these were not their actual identities. The post was removed from the site as a condition of Kellar's release. Additionally, he must stay at least 500 metres away from the two identified individuals.

Kellar was pulled over and arrested by the Ontario Provin-

cial Police's (OPP) Anti-Rackets Branch while driving through his hometown of Kitchener, Ontario. According to a press release put out by the Community Solidarity Network (CSN), the same branch of the OPP was involved in arresting several people on G20 related charges, including six people from a group that Kellar was a member of called Anti-War at Laurier (AW@L).

According to the press release put out by the CSN, Kellar "was charged with two counts of unlawfully publishing materials that are likely to injure the reputation of an undercover officer in a way that is designed to insult the officer (also known as criminal defamation), and one count of counseling his blog followers to commit the indictable offence of assault which offence was not committed (also known as counsel to assault)."

A document released by the RCMP through Access to Information Act indicated that 12 officers were involved with infil-

trating activist groups ahead of the G20. Many activists are convinced they know the identities of some of these police officers. However, due in part to legal concerns, only the two mentioned by Kellar's post have been named in public venues.

Over a year ago these two people were previously accused of being police officers on the blog SnitchWire, which keeps a list of suspected police informants and undercover infiltrators. The authors of SnitchWire are anonymous and the site, which is hosted on Google's Blogger platform, continues to host content identifying the same infiltrators.

Emily Slofstra, a supporter of Kellar, told the Toronto Media Co-op that police infiltrators "ruin communities," adding there is "lots more stress, it is hard to know who you can trust and who you can not."

According to the CSN press release the lead officer in the arrest, OPP Detective-Sergeant John Vandenheuvel, "threatened to



Dan Kellar, right, is facing multiple charges following a blog post about an alleged undercover police officer.

Image courtesy Dan Kellar

track down and arrest anyone who reposted the message" that had been posted on Kellar's blog.

Tim Groves is an investigative journalist based in Toronto.

Venezuela vs. Canadian Gold

President Chavez squares off against Canadian mining companies, banks

by **Gwalgen Geordie Dent**

TORONTO—At the end of August, the Venezuelan government issued a decree nationalizing their gold mines. This comes after a series of nationalizations undertaken by the government in the last four years, which have included oil, steel, supermarket and glass manufacturing businesses and the entire cement industry.

The announcement by the government stated that the nationalizations were in relation to illegal mining in southern Bolivar province. However, the announcement could also be due to a number of companies having recently fought heavily with the

Chavez government, including Canadian ones.

There are dozens of junior Canadian mining and exploration companies in Venezuela. Two of the biggest foreign-owned gold companies are Canadian.

Toronto-based Crystallex owned the massive Las Cristinas mine, one of the largest gold deposits in South America. The company was to develop a large low-cost project in the Las Cristinas area next to a similarly sized project by US-based Gold Reserve Inc. Both are now instead suing the government for billions of dollars.

The only active foreign company mining in the region is

Canadian-Russian Rusoro Mining Corp. Because it operates joint projects with the government, it may not have been nationalized under Tuesday's decree. It has stated that it believes that Venezuela is only going after illegal mining in the Bolivar state. However, it too has been fighting the government.

Rusoro is owned by a powerful Russian family and Canadian Frank Giustra, and is headquartered in Vancouver. It is now allowed to export out of the country 50 per cent of what it produces (up from 30 per cent), but has been fighting the government to be able to export more.

Venezuela has recently taken a number of actions to shore up their gold reserves both domestically and internationally. Venezuela has the world's 15th largest gold reserves.

The country recently took the unprecedented step of starting

to repatriate almost two-thirds of their international gold reserves mostly from private companies in Britain and the US, and from Canada's Bank of Nova Scotia.

It is likely that Venezuela is concerned that its reserves could be seized in an economic crisis or if sanctions are levied against them.

Gwalgen Geordie Dent lives in Toronto.

This spread was produced by the Toronto Media Co-op



For more grassroots coverage out of Toronto check out toronto.mediacoop.ca

RIP Wendy Babcock

Organizer fought for rights of women, sex workers

by Tanya Gulliver

This piece was written on August 12, 2011, one day after the death of Wendy Babcock.

NEW ORLEANS, LA—While I don't always miss Toronto, there is nowhere I would rather be at this moment. My friend, Wendy Babcock, was found dead at her home yesterday—an apparent suicide. Wendy's loss hurts; all death does, but this is the second suicide in my circle in the past 13 months. My ex-wife Tricia killed herself last July. Suicide, post-Katrina, is New Orleans; most people I have met know at least one person who has taken their own life.

Wendy had, by all accounts, a horrible childhood. She was abused by her parents, lived in a group home, became a ward of Children's Aid Society, aged out of care, dropped out of high school, became a child sex trade worker. (Her client list included a very well-known Toronto politician, lawyers, doctors, police officers, and so on.) As a teen, she had a child who was taken away from her and whom she never stopped fighting for. Her friend and roommate Lien Pham was murdered in October 2003.

She also had an incredible life. She became an activist for the rights of sex workers. She won the first Public Health Champion award from the City of Toronto in 2008 for her activist work, including “co-initiating a partnership with the Toronto Police Services to ensure that sex workers can report incidents of assault without fear of persecution or prosecution, and being a member of the advisory group to the Special Victims Unit.”

She earned a diploma from George Brown College's program for counselling and advocacy for assaulted women and children. She worked at Street Health for a



Wendy Babcock was the first winner of the Toronto's Public Health Champion award in 2008, for her work supporting sex workers.

Courtesy wendybabcock.org

number of years as a harm reduction worker. She helped found numerous groups including the Bad Date Coalition, the Safer Stroll Project, Sherbourne Health Bus Sex Workers Stop, Regent Park Community Health Centre's Sex Worker Drop In, and self

She really was a bright light in the world. Someone who fought back against all the crap that was thrown her way and who seemed to be making progress against her demons.

defense training for sex workers.

Despite dropping out of high school at 16, in the fall of 2009 she started law school at Osgoode Hall, York University. Osgoode's building, and the building the Faculty of Environmental Studies is in, are right next door to each other. We often saw each other on campus during her first year. She would sometimes catch a ride downtown with me after school

so that I could take advantage of the HOV (high occupancy vehicle) lanes and she could save herself a long bus ride.

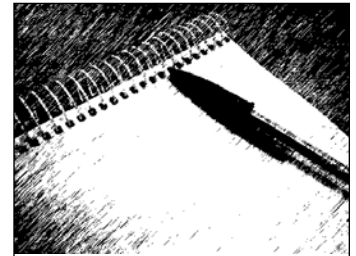
In November 2009, her friends threw her a fundraising party at Goodhandy's. I emceed the event, which brought together a host of sex-positive performances to help cover the \$18,000 she needed for school. The party didn't raise that much, but it did a great job at raising Wendy's spirits and publicizing her story.

I heard from Wendy recently, as did many others in our mutual circle. I was shocked to hear the news of her passing last night. I spent a lot of time crying yesterday and today, thinking about her. She really was a bright light in the world. Someone who fought back against all the crap that was thrown her way and who seemed to be making progress against her demons. I want to talk more about anxiety, depression and suicide—especially the way it manifests in New Orleans—but today I just want to

honour Wendy. I am grateful to have known her for the past six years or so.

RIP Wendy Babcock—you are loved and already missed. xoxo

Tanya Gulliver is a PhD student at York University's Faculty of Environmental Studies, an activist on homeless issues, and a freelance writer. This piece was originally published on Toronto2NOLA's Blog.



CP Sutcliffe

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The Dominion currently pays a flat rate of \$100 for accepted articles. Stories are 800 or 1,600 words. Deadline for pitches are the 1st of each month.



Despite threats of arrest by police, protesters dropped a banner at the proposed Pantages condos site. In the impoverished neighbourhood, developers are building condos at 11 times the rate of new social housing.

Homes Now!

Neighbours unite to confront housing crisis

Photos by Murray Bush

Text by Nat Gray and Murray Bush

VANCOUVER— The Fifth Annual Women's Housing March and Gentrifuckation Tour brought together 600 women and their allies who took to the streets of Vancouver, Coast Salish Territories, on September 17, 2011 to demand affordable social housing and an end to gentrification in the Downtown Eastside (DTES), the poorest off-reserve postal code in Canada.

The march was followed by the DTES Block Party to Block Condos, which became a somber community gathering, in light of the suspicious death of a well-known Downtown Eastside resident, Verna Simard, the night before. Only days earlier, at a meeting organized by the DTES Neighbourhood Council, Verna Simard had said, "I want to come to meetings and get involved. I think we have to fight now to make things better."

Nat Gray will one day make the perfect cup of tea.

Murray Bush is a photographer in Vancouver.



Free home-made pizza and wraps were served to protesters on the front steps of restaurants that were denounced for their role in the gentrification of the neighbourhood.



The colourful day included heartfelt speeches, a puppet show, a chalk-in, live music, dancing, and street theatre.



Police couldn't stop members of the Carnegie Community Action Project from entering ten businesses to perform anti-gentrification theatre.



Above: The march stopped at the Regent Hotel, to pay tribute to Verna Simard, a 50-year-old Indigenous woman who fell to her death from a sixth floor of the hotel the night of September 16, 2011.



Left: Indigenous elders and drummers led the march.

This photo essay was produced by the Vancouver Media Co-op.



For more grassroots coverage out of Vancouver check out vancouver.mediacoop.ca

BACK TALK

Pulp non-fiction

As a woodlot owner near the Pictou mill, I agree that it is incredible the devastation the pulp industry does to the environment, waterways and the local economy (“Pulp Dreams” by Miles Howe, Issue 78: Sept/Oct 2011). Giving mills the right to timber on crown lands for a nominal fee destroys the value of private woodlots. Allowing vast clearcuts with no replanting is bad economy. Allowing millions of gallons of toxic waste into fishing areas is criminal. Spraying valuable hardwood with herbicides from the air is just a way of stripping local workers of the income from working in the forest. The town of Pictou is beautiful but smells like a toilet.

—Ian Murray

What other Canadians have to plan their daily activities depending on how bad the toxic fumes are in their community for that day? This toxic dumping site [Boat Harbour] sits in the middle of what was once a beautiful rural community. I guess giving millions to the mill makes for better publicity than does reporting the health care dollars that are spent on treating disease caused by pollution.

—Anonymous in Pictou County

Free money, free people

A four-year program operated in a small rural town under tightly controlled (and observed) conditions hardly seems like a solid foundation on which to roll out a larger program (“A Town Without Poverty?” by Vivian Belik, Issue 78: Sept/Oct 2011). I’d like to see a more detailed analysis of the alleged health care savings—I’d also want to see if the discontinuation of the program saw a quick return to pre-program levels.

—GameThug

Some would call [Mincome] a “hand-out,” but I would call it an investment: an investment in people, community and our future. This would be the biggest change, not only for Canada, but for humanity, should we implement such an idea as “Basic Income.” We can show the world what it truly means to be a free nation. Free to choose our life and career paths, free from monetary slavery, free from petty crime.

—AlexB

Rather than challenging the system, the GAI [Guaranteed Annual Income] fully accepts neoliberal capitalism with its attendant environmental destruction and misery for the majority of the Earth's population. And the article's much touted Senate committee was co-chaired by the nasty conservative apologist Hugh Segal and Liberal Art Eggleton—hardly a man to have the concerns of the poor forefront in his agenda. Among other attractive features of a GAI from [the perspective of] neoliberal economic engineers is that it removes the threat of a challenging public.

—Garson Hunter

No anonymity, no comment

Talk about biased reporting (“Picket Targets Israeli Shipping” by Canadian Boat to Gaza/Boycott Israeli Apartheid Campaign, Issue 78: Sept/Oct 2011)—this doesn't even have a name attached to it. It is so blatantly hostile and one-sided as to not even deserve comment.

—Anonymous

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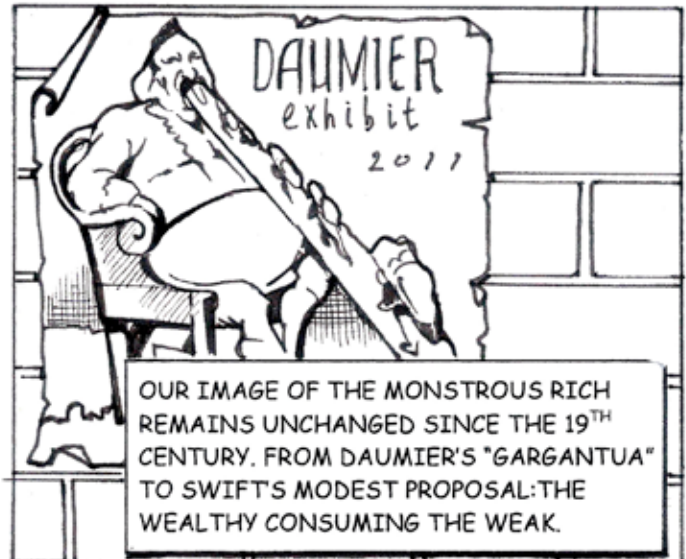
Arctic Ventures 2000, Iqaluit

Heather Meek



ANOTHER PIPELINE, ANOTHER OILSANDS PROJECT... POOR WESTERN CANADA, ALWAYS THE OBJECT OF SCORN.

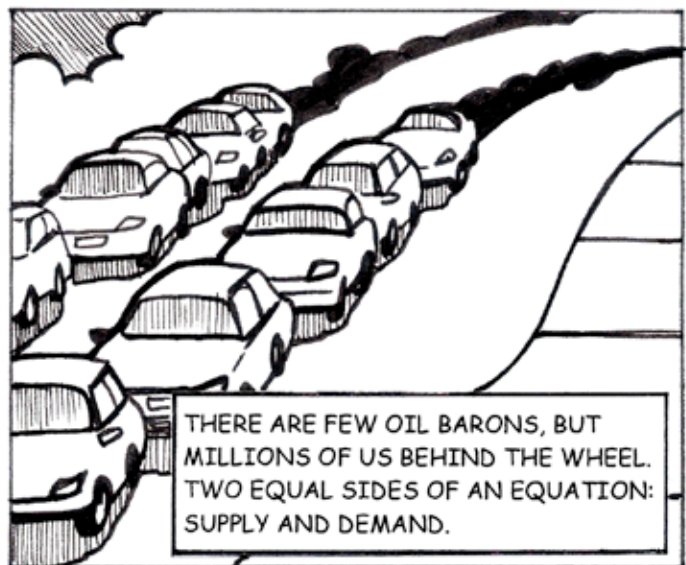
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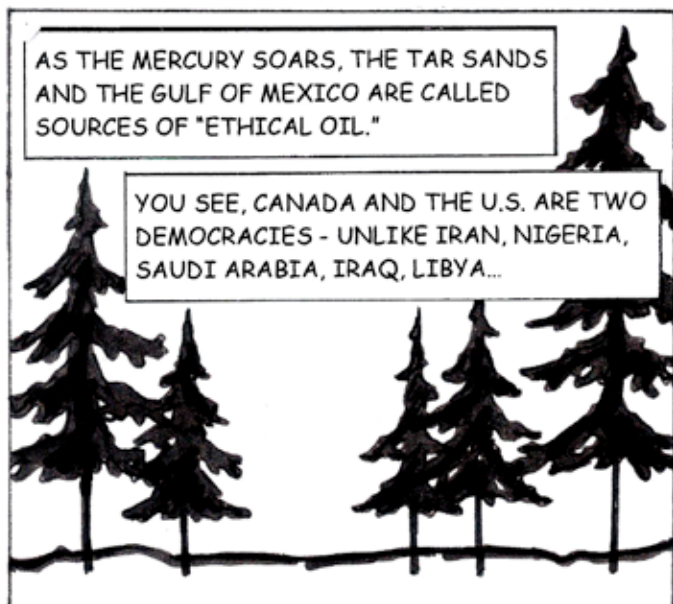
OUR IMAGE OF THE MONSTROUS RICH REMAINS UNCHANGED SINCE THE 19TH CENTURY. FROM DAUMIER'S "GARGANTUA" TO SWIFT'S MODEST PROPOSAL: THE WEALTHY CONSUMING THE WEAK.



THE TAR SANDS ARE A DIRTY AND EXPENSIVE ENTERPRISE THAT WOULDN'T BE SO LUCRATIVE IF THERE WEREN'T SO MUCH DEMAND, PUSHING PRICES SKY HIGH.

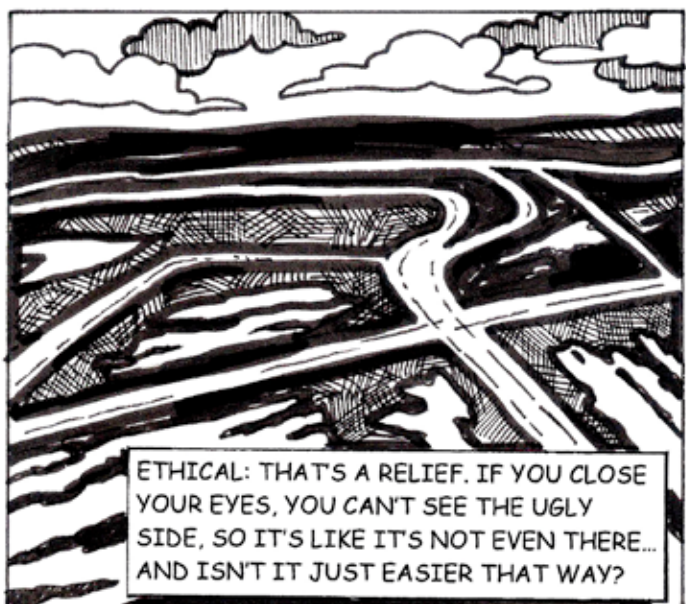


THERE ARE FEW OIL BARONS, BUT MILLIONS OF US BEHIND THE WHEEL. TWO EQUAL SIDES OF AN EQUATION: SUPPLY AND DEMAND.



AS THE MERCURY SOARS, THE TAR SANDS AND THE GULF OF MEXICO ARE CALLED SOURCES OF "ETHICAL OIL."

YOU SEE, CANADA AND THE U.S. ARE TWO DEMOCRACIES - UNLIKE IRAN, NIGERIA, SAUDI ARABIA, IRAQ, LIBYA...



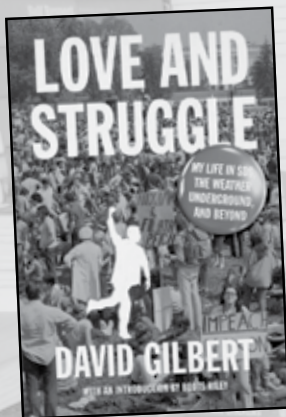
ETHICAL: THAT'S A RELIEF. IF YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES, YOU CAN'T SEE THE UGLY SIDE, SO IT'S LIKE IT'S NOT EVEN THERE... AND ISN'T IT JUST EASIER THAT WAY?

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