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Making the point in Pt Grey



ABOVE: Housing activists with the mock SRO (single room occupancy) hotel room they carried to the Pt Grey construction site of a \$31-million "single-family home." LEFT: Creepy the Cockroach takes High Tea.

photos: Tami Starlight (l) and murray bush

by Vancouver Media Co-op

PT GREY - Housing advocates from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside headed West recently. More than 40 activists took their call for social housing to the site of a \$31-million "single family house" being built for a family of four in wealthy West Pt Grey.

The action was organized by Raise the Rates, a coalition of 25 community groups, and focused on inequality. The protesters called on the owner of the property to support raising welfare rates, increasing the minimum wage, building more social housing and cutting tax breaks to the rich. Figures from Raise the Rates point out that of 24 Canadian Cities, Vancouver has the fastest growing income gap between rich and poor. For more info visit www.raisetherates.org

The rainy day invasion included high tea with medal-winning characters from the Poverty Olympics - Itchy the Bedbug, Chewy the Rat and Creepy the Cockroach.

Victoria police raid community bookstore

from Camas Educational Bookstore release

VICTORIA - Victoria Police raided Camas Books on Quadra Street Nov. 5.

Four volunteers at the store were detained while police searched the premises, seizing two computers, a Camas Educational Society annual report and Shaw and Telus account bills. The police came armed with a warrant to search and seize computer equipment and documents.

The Camas Educational Society is a not-for-profit registered society that functions collectively to operate the volunteer-run Camas Books and Info.

Camas Books first opened its doors in September 2007, with the intention of providing a voice for social justice perspectives, and helping to foster a spirit of solidarity with other such struggles taking place globally. The Camas Collective has a mandate to keep the store and space as accessible and inclusive as possible in order to provide free access to internet and print information that follows our mission statement, akin to a library.

The camas collective has received no information from police about any incident that the search and seizure may be pertaining to, or what lead police to the book store.

For more information on Camas Books or the Camas Educational Society go to: www.camas.ca

Call for justice for First Nations deaths in police custody

By Sandra Cuffe

Two days before the continuation of a public inquiry into the death of an indigenous man while in police custody, two dozen people attended a lively demonstration organized by the Indigenous Action Movement on Nov. 1.

With drums in hand, the rally to honour Frank Paul, a Mi'kmaq First Nations man, and all indigenous men and women who have died in police custody in British Columbia gathered at the intersection of Granville and West Georgia in downtown Vancouver.

The evening of Dec. 5, 1998, Frank Paul was arrested for public intoxication and taken to the Vancouver Police Department detention facility on Main Street. He was later dragged out of the cell and left in an alley in East Vancouver, where his body was found hours later. An autopsy determined hypothermia to be the cause of death.

"To my knowledge, no police officer in our entire history [of B.C.] has ever been prosecuted [for the death of a First Nations person in custody]," denounced Cameron Ward, one of the lawyers involved in the Davies Commission Inquiry into the Death of Frank Paul.

In terms of the VPD officers involved in Frank Paul's detention and death, one officer was suspended for one day for neglect of duty and a second officer two days for discreditable conduct.

After years of opposition to a public hearing under the Police Act by the Police Complaints Commissioner, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General announced a public inquiry into Frank Paul's death in February 2007.

EVENTS

Wednesday, Nov. 17 7:30pm
Endgame

An Evening with Derrick Jensen (Free)
McLaughlin Auditorium
University of Victoria

Saturday, Nov. 20 5:30pm
2010 Vancouver Transgender Day

Carnegie Community Centre 401 Main St.
and Room 1800 SFU 515 W. Hastings

Sunday, Nov. 21 1:30pm
Weekly Noise Demo

Release Detained Tamil Refugees
7900 Fraser Park Dr, Burnaby shuttles from
Edmonds Skytrain at 12:45pm

Tuesday, Dec. 7 6-10pm
Bella Coola farm flood fundraiser

Britannia - Family Education Centre
\$10 entry, Silent Auction, food

URGENT CALLOUT

There is an urgent need for defence-related funds for jailed Indigenous political prisoner Ryan Rainville.

You can mail cheques to: No One Is Illegal-Toronto, 90C Beverley Street, Toronto, M5T 1Y1. Be sure to indicate "Ryan Rainville".

MONSTER LIBERAL HALLOWE'EN BALL

Admission by Donation

Hide behind this mask
Scare seniors!
Scare kids!
Scare Everyone!

Woodward's Benefit

for the Woodward's Legal Defense Fund
WISE Club 1880 Adanac St. at Victoria
Doors: 7:30pm **Wed. Oct. 30**

Featuring:
Solidarity Notes Choir * The Cunning Stunts
Po' Girl * Flying Folk Army
Please bring food or toiletries for the squat

PRIZES FOR SCARIEST MLA & GORDON CAMPBELL MASKS

It's So Easy...
1. Cut along dotted line
2. Cut out eye holes
3. Poke hole in each ear
4. Attach a string from ear to ear
5. Tie one on and act like a thug

Nine years of deceit: See BC Premier Gordon Campbell's legacy of protest in posters at vancouver.mediacoop.ca ABOVE: a 2002 anti-Campbell, anti-BC Liberal poster produced during WoodSquat. poster: murray bush - flux

Live-in caregivers still at risk

Changes to gov't program 'won't stop the exploitation'

by Esther Hsieh

VANCOUVER - Jocelyn Vergabera's high cheekbones swell as her lips pull back in a disarming smile. She's preparing coffee for some of her regulars as they chat to her in Arabic, one of the five languages she's picked up throughout her life.

Vergabera says her job at Tim Hortons is a big improvement from the years she spent working as a live-in caregiver in Shaughnessy. But while the twinkle in her eye is a sign of her vitality and friendliness, it also masks the torment of a long road to a better life – one which is far from over.

Vergabera hasn't seen her children in seven years, except via webcam, and she is worried that she won't recognize them.

"I want to touch them, I want to hug them, I want to make up all that time that I haven't given them. I have looked after other children; I have kissed and hugged other people's children but not my own. I have become mentally and physically old; the stress of separation is torturing me," she said.

Vergabera's situation is common for Filipino women coming to Canada under the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP). The LCP issues a temporary work visa valid for up to four years. In 2005, Filipino women accounted for 95.6% of live-in caregivers in Canada. In 2006, 21,489 workers held a work permit under LCP.

The way Canada's LCP appears on paper appeals to Filipino migrant workers: it provides for defined working hours (eight hours per day), a good salary (minimum wage), and most importantly, the opportunity to become a landed immigrant after completing two years of work.

But the reality for many of the Filipino women who enter under the LCP includes hours of unpaid overtime, living in constant fear of their employer, and facing years of separation from their own family while they wait for their immigration papers to be processed.

The federal government underwent a review of the LCP in 2008-2009 and made some changes.

As of April 2010, the time participants have to complete 24 months of full-time work increased to four years from three and participants can use overtime hours to complete the program.

As well, employers are now required to include things like working hours and wage in their employee contract. They are responsible for paying for processing fees and airfare to Canada.

In April 2011, the government will implement a more rigorous assessment of an employer's genuine job offer as well as introduce a two-year ban for abusive employers.

But advocates at the Philippine Women Centre say these changes will not stop the exploitation and are calling on the federal government to scrap the LCP all together, saying it's a blemish on Canada's human rights record that promotes a cycle of poverty for Filipino migrant workers.

The live-in requirement is one of the conditions of the program that really makes these women vulnerable to exploitation, says Charlene Sayo, executive director of the Philippine Women Centre of B.C.

Read the complete story on the caregiver program at: vancouver.mediacoop.ca

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