

# BALAAACIAAWA!

Unceded Coast Salish Territory

NUMBER 33

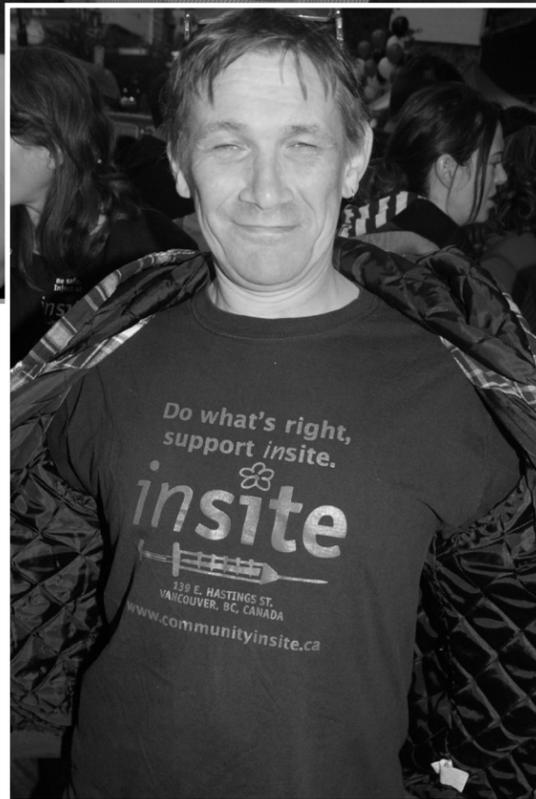
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VANCOUVER MEDIA CO-OP



photos: Murray Bush

## INSITE WINS!



**DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE** - The Supreme Court has unanimously ruled in favour of the Insite safe injection site. The decision came early on the morning of Sept. 30 from Ottawa that Insite is exempt from federal drug laws.

A crowd of more than 300 was on hand outside Insite to cheer the decision at about 7am local time. The ruling demands an immediate and open-ended exemption for Insite - blocking federal government attempts to shut the facility on 'war on drugs' grounds. Supporters say that although the decision is specific to Insite, this should help open the way for similar health facilities across the country.

The ruling is the third against the Harper government's ideological efforts to close the site despite overwhelming medical evidence supporting the health facility. The court's findings concluded that "Insite has been proven to save lives with no discernible negative impact on the public safety and health objectives of Canada."

## SFU Students Occupy Board Offices

**VMC**

**SFU** - A group of eight students from the United Responsible Students For Staff and Space (URSFSS) occupied the offices of the Simon Fraser Student Society board. Outside the office, the hallway was filled with student and campus supporters. Students organized the non-violent act of civil disobedience independently to show their dissent against the Board's decision to lock out its unionized workers, members of CUPE 3338.

After having put forth an unacceptable offer that would have introduced a two-tier wage structure, rolled back hard-fought benefits, and virtually eliminated job security, the Board resorted to

one of the most extreme anti-worker tactics - a lockout. The students maintained a peaceful occupation for 12 hours - one for each week the workers had been locked out.

The Women's Centre and Out On Campus, both necessary safe spaces at SFU for marginalized students, have been closed for the past three months due to the lockout.

"I am supporting this student occupation because my fellow queer, trans and women students need those services and spaces. Services like those are exactly why we need a student society," said undergraduate student Neem Maness.

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## Missing Women's Commission Flounders

by Angela Sterritt

**VANCOUVER** - Just weeks before the BC Missing Women's Commission of Inquiry is set to begin, concerns and questions continue to be raised by the groups representing Aboriginal, women's and sex-trade worker's groups. More are walking away from what appears to be a crumbling process.

"We are calling for a national inquiry," said Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada.

"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 provided standing 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. "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 Executive Director Kasari Govender said.

Eight of the groups granted standing withdrew after the BC government announced this summer that it can't 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 counsel, albeit for one lawyer for all 10 families.

[vancouver.mediacoop.ca](http://vancouver.mediacoop.ca) for the entire story

## Inquiry into RCMP Killing Falls Flat

by Zig Zag

NEW HAZELTON - An RCMP Emergency Response Team (ERT), accompanied by an officer from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), approached an isolated hunting cabin near the Kiscgagas reserve, north of New Hazelton in central BC back in September 2009.

Driving an unmarked DFO pickup, the team had been dispatched to arrest Rodney Shayne Jackson, 35 years of age and a member of the Gitksan nation. Jackson had failed to appear in court on charges several months earlier.

The camouflaged and heavily armed ERT did not arrest Jackson, however. Instead, they shot him in the back, allegedly believing he was armed with a rifle. Jackson later died in hospital.

Two years later, in September 2011, an inquest was held into the fatal shooting in a Terrace, BC, courtroom. According to the DFO officer who accompanied the ERT, Jackson was not carrying a rifle; he was carrying a garden rake.

A reconstruction technician, who reconstructs crime scenes and shootings, testified he was never told that Jackson was shot in the back. It was also revealed that the RCMP did not have an air ambulance on standby, despite the very high potential for shooting to occur due to the presence of the ERT. Nor did they have even a basic first aid kit.

After five days of testimony, a five-member jury ruled the shooting a homicide (one of five classifications of death used by the coroner's service and not a judgment, unlike a criminal case). They also made 13 recommendations. Among these were that the BC Ambulance Service should acquire four-wheel drive vehicles so they can access remote areas; that all RCMP vehicles be equipped with first aid kits, and; that an air ambulance be on standby for incidents that have a high potential for danger. The jury also recommended that an outside body be used to investigate police killings, and for RCMP liaison officers to provide regular reports to band councils.

Get the whole story at [vancouver.mediacoop.ca](http://vancouver.mediacoop.ca)

## Day of Action

by Isaac Oommen

A National Day of Action was held for missing and murdered Indigenous women in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) and across Canada.

The march began at Victory Square and wound through the DTES, ending with a final ceremony at Openheimer Park. Several stops along the way honoured murdered women such as Verna Simard, and also shamed entities like First United for not being accountable to those women who have been assaulted there.

## HILTON HOUSEKEEPERS WALK THE WALK

VMC

BURNABY - Motorists and pedestrians at Hilton Metrotown stopped to watch as 150 housekeepers and their allies protested the hotel's refusal to negotiate a fair contract.

The Hilton workers belong to Unite Here Local 40 and have been without a contract since June 2010. Cooks, bell hops and banquet servers protested outside the hotel as cars, vans and even a semi honked in solidarity. Many local unions and community members attended in solidarity.

One of the main issues is management's refusal to address staff getting hurt due to ever-



increasing workloads. At a recent meeting, the general manager blamed "aging".

Unite Here has called for people to refrain from making bookings with the Hilton Metrotown until a new contract is reached. For more information, visit [uniteherelocal40.org](http://uniteherelocal40.org)

## War Criminal's Welcome for Cheney



by Michael

VANCOUVER - Hundreds gathered outside the Vancouver Club to protest the visit of former US Vice President Dick Cheney.

The protestors came from anti-war, 9/11 conspiracy, legal observer and migrant justice groups, among others. It almost begs the question, who doesn't have a reason to protest Dick Cheney? People that can afford a \$500 ticket for his book tour, apparently.

Overall the protestors were serious in their opposition to Cheney's presence, forming a picket line around both the front and back entrances to prevent supporters from entering. The protestors were determined to illustrate Cheney's role in the Iraq War and in torture, and demand that

international law be upheld.

Even though hundreds were shouting for Cheney's arrest, the police seemed more interested in ensuring Cheney supporter's got their chance for an autographed book. The police extended a hand to Cheney's supporters as they attempted to cross the picket line. However, many who came to hear Cheney were not brave enough to go through a wall of so many peaceful protestors.

A reporter from *The Globe and Mail* was not deterred, pleading with protestors to let him through. "I'm a reporter, I'm a working guy. I belong to a union," he said. Protestors promptly reminded the reporter that, along with right-wing Conservative party organizer Leah Costello, *The Globe and Mail* was actually sponsoring the Cheney event and therefore they didn't trust his bias and so he couldn't cross the line.

The protest wrapped up approximately four hours after it began. There was one arrest. Unfortunately, it was not Dick Cheney.

Dick Cheney was flogging his memoirs of authorizing torture at the posh Vancouver Club. Those who wanted to rub shoulders with the US war criminal had to run a gauntlet of human rights advocates.



photos: Murray Bush