

Street News

December 2006

Free

"News" HITS THE STREET

By Editorial Staff
Street News

Start Me Up Niagara is pleased to release the first edition of *Street News*, a paper for and by people who live close to the street. It is a new outlet for information and a forum for the expression of creative ideas and opinions. *Street News* adds more voices to the community dialogue.

Start Me Up Niagara has operated a community weekend lunch program for four years. In January 2006, it relocated the program to a larger facility at First United Church at 95 Church Street. This location provided us with the space to relax and get to know the people who come for lunch.

One issue that arose again and again was in regard to news stories and reports about these

same people. Their opinions or voices were not represented in the stories that were published. They were featured, yet seldom heard. The idea to start a paper developed over lunch. Seventy of these people, given the opportunity to express themselves, wanted this paper to convey information about: food (64), shelter (54), clothing (58), and counseling (46). Others wanted to read success stories and poems, and do puzzles and brainteasers. Many wanted a chance to write stories and give opinions. The participants chose the name 'Street News' narrowly over 'Hard Times' and 'Street Sheet'.

This is the first issue of "Street News." Its theme is Christmas and it covers the topics suggested by those who answered the survey- information, stories, opinions, games. "Street Times"

will appear again in three months- better, stronger - but still by and for those who live close to the street.

The following individuals contributed to this paper:

David Eller, Carrie Veenstra, Chris Taylor, Elena Reyes, Eugene Price, Faye Sager Dyson, Jim Lozeron, Laura Dumas, Laura Simpson, M I D C, Maurice Prindiville, Mitch Smith, Pat Bartley, Paul Shtogryn, Scott Nelson, and Susan Venditti.

If you wish to join them to work on the second issue call Start me Up Niagara.

Thanks to Burtnik Printing for their donation to Street News.

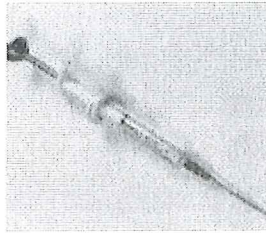
IN MEMORIAM

These people will be missed this Christmas.

They were supporters and friends.

Art Smith
Bill
Brian Marshall
Craig Cooper
David Diamond
Dwayne
Dwight Anger
Eire Carter-Hansen
Fred King

Jen
Larry Solomon
Lillian Winslow
Norm Seeburn
Roger Storey
Sarah
Scott Balloch
Tim Puddick



THE EDGE OF MY ADDICTION

By David Eller (aka cry)
Street News Staff

Here I stand at the edge of my addiction
Feeling so alone with no direction
I've lost it all, even my identity
Please, Lord, help me with my recovery
I ask you this day arrest my disease
Give me the strength I need, I beg you please
I admit I'm powerless without your loving grace
So hear my prayer Lord remember my face
I have come before you many times before
Dropped down to my knees, teardrops falling to
the floor
Be with my loved ones keep them safe while I
am gone
For now I go to try to fix what I have done
wrong
Help me accept that I may have lost the love of
my life
She may never come back, may never be my
wife
For now, I need to concentrate on me and me
alone
I know I can do this with the love and help you
have shown
Now I take my first clean step, I will not run and
hide
My goals will be achieved with your son Jesus
by my side.

DRUG VOICE

By E. Price
Street News Staff

In the black pit of hell is where I live
All I do is take and never give
With your soul in my hand, I will take you back
home
Where you will be empty and so alone
With no one who loves you
No one who cares. At first you believed me
when I said I'd be there
You know that what I said will remain true
I'll be the only one with you when this life is
through.

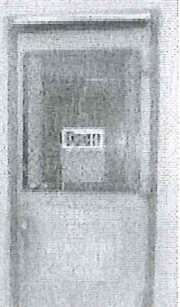
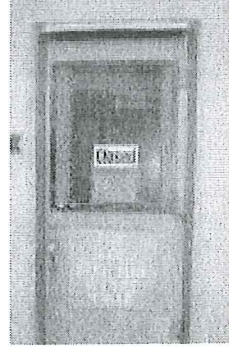


HOMELESS DAYS

By MIDC
Street News Staff

When I am cold
Where am I supposed to go?
The library is closed.
Where do I go?
I try the bus terminal.
Leave! No Loitering!
Just reading a book.
Tried the MTO building.
Leave! No loitering!
Just reading a book.
Tell me.
Where am I supposed to go?

OPENINGS AND CLOSINGS DOWNTOWN

 <p style="text-align: center;">NIAGARA HEALTH SERVICES, GENERAL HOSPITAL</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Open 24 hours/day, every day</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CHEQUE ISSUE DATES</p> <table> <tr> <td>ODSP</td><td>DEC. 20, JAN. 31</td></tr> <tr> <td>OW</td><td>DEC. 28, JAN. 31</td></tr> <tr> <td>CPP</td><td>DEC. 20, JAN. 31</td></tr> <tr> <td>OAS</td><td>DEC. 20, JAN. 29</td></tr> <tr> <td>EI</td><td>Regular Dates</td></tr> </table>	ODSP	DEC. 20, JAN. 31	OW	DEC. 28, JAN. 31	CPP	DEC. 20, JAN. 31	OAS	DEC. 20, JAN. 29	EI	Regular Dates								
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<p style="text-align: center;">MEDICAL/ WALK INS</p> <p>Ontario Street Walk-in Clinic - Open Dec. 25, 26, Jan. 1</p> <p>Pelham Rd Walk-in Clinic - Closed Dec. 25, 26, Jan. 1</p> <p>Vine Street Walk-in Clinic - Closed Dec. 25, 26, Jan. 1</p> <p>Segue Clinic - Closed Dec 23 to Jan. 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">TRANSIT</p> <p>NO CITY BUSES - Dec. 25 and Jan. 1</p> <p>Sunday/Holiday Service - Dec. 26</p> <p>Sunday/Holiday Service on New Year's Eve until 2:00 AM</p>																		
<p style="text-align: center;">ADDITIONAL CLOSINGS</p> <table> <tr> <td>Friday, Dec. 22</td><td>Ontario Works</td></tr> <tr> <td>Sunday, Dec. 24</td><td>Public Library</td></tr> <tr> <td>Wednesday, Dec. 27</td><td>City Hall, Service Canada,</td></tr> <tr> <td>Wednesday, Dec. 27</td><td>Ozanam</td></tr> <tr> <td>Friday, Dec. 29</td><td>Ontario Works</td></tr> <tr> <td>Sunday, Dec. 31</td><td>Public Library</td></tr> </table>	Friday, Dec. 22	Ontario Works	Sunday, Dec. 24	Public Library	Wednesday, Dec. 27	City Hall, Service Canada,	Wednesday, Dec. 27	Ozanam	Friday, Dec. 29	Ontario Works	Sunday, Dec. 31	Public Library	<p style="text-align: center;">DONUT SHOPS</p> <table> <tr> <td>Donut Diner, Welland Ave</td><td>24 hours / 7 days/wk</td></tr> <tr> <td>Tim Horton's, King Street –</td><td>Closed Dec. 24, 25, 26, 31 and Jan. 1</td></tr> <tr> <td>Tim Horton's, Welland Ave –</td><td>Closed Dec. 25, Jan. 1</td></tr> </table>	Donut Diner, Welland Ave	24 hours / 7 days/wk	Tim Horton's, King Street –	Closed Dec. 24, 25, 26, 31 and Jan. 1	Tim Horton's, Welland Ave –	Closed Dec. 25, Jan. 1
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ADDICTION: DISEASE OR NOT DISEASE?

By Dave E (aka cry)
Street News Staff

I have a hard time calling my addiction a disease (even though I use the word in my poetry)! Why? Because I feel a disease is an affliction of the body or mind which is hereditary or passed on from person to person, like a STD for example. When I put the blame of my addiction into saying "I have a disease" then I am freeing myself of blame instead of dealing with it head on. You may say "but I have an addictive personality"- Who doesn't? Saying you have an addictive personality also passes the blame instead of dealing with it. For example, people wait in line for their favourite roller coaster for two hours only for that five-minute rush of euphoria. Then what happens? They get back in line. Everyone on this planet has an "addictive personality" whether it's roller coasters, video games, eating, drinking, drugging, sex or swinging in a playground. These are all things we love to do and so when we do them we feel a sense of euphoria. This happiness and laughter builds up those wonderful endorphins in our brains. In the end, we do what makes us feel good.

Today I am going to take my blame head-on and realize that I am normal. I am the same as everyone else. The one difference between me and other people is that I am an addict. I have become abusive to myself and harmful to those around me and to those I love. I chose to hide

behind closed doors and get high or get drunk in public and act as a clown (which I do well). I do this so I never have to deal with the root of my problems and because obviously it feels good to be high or drunk. My depression stemmed from a problematic childhood, failed relationships, and an overall feeling of failure in life. "Wow that feels great. I have just admitted my shortcomings." What a release of extra baggage that I have been carrying.

When we take blame head-on instead of putting it in words like "I have a disease" or "I have an addictive personality", we deal with it. Admitting our shortcomings to ourselves, to God and to another human being is the fourth step in AA, NA, and CA. Once you have done this, you can move on to finding the root of your problems.

Perhaps when we understand why we feel the way we did or do, we can overcome our self-destructive ways. Whether we drank because it felt good or we wanted to escape. We hid behind closed doors hitting the crack pipe, or shot heroin or coke in our veins. This self-destructive behavior started somewhere and when recognized where, we can find the end of it as well. Yes the end, it is possible. By dealing with why we used and whom we wanted to blame for our abuse, we can overcome the addiction.

My biggest step in recovery is forgiving those who hurt me. I did this by asking God in prayer to forgive them. When you cannot face those people head-on to forgive them, then I suggest you ask God to do so. When you do, you will feel that weight lifted from your shoulders. We do this

when we say the Lord's prayer, however I never knew it.

Another step for me in recovery is understanding that I am not stronger than my environment. What this means is that if you hang out in a bar you probably will start to drink and if you hang out in a crack house you are going to smoke crack. Stay away from people, places, or things that are going to trigger you into using again.

Your thoughts, ideas and views are welcome.

Please feel free to email me at davideller2001@yahoo.ca.

Good luck to all, take it one day at a time.



TRUTH PLEASE

By MIDC
Street News Staff

I have lived on both sides and really did not know until I got on the street that we need to wake up the people. I worked for over half

my life but my employer left for a better climate for capitalist gains and shareholders. But who really wins in the end? Mass unemployment. No decent paying jobs. Part time work becomes the norm.

Governments lied about free trade. Promises of high tech jobs

never materialized. Remember the phrase, 'if we can't compete we had better get out of business'. Well how does that answer from our own government apply when a man and woman have lost their jobs and standard of living?

People need to hear the truth.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE DOCTORS GONE?

By Paul M Shtogryn
Street News Staff

During the city election campaign only one candidate that I know of was seeking new recruitments for doctors in the city. I just lost my family doctor of 31 years and was very fortunate to get a new doctor in five minutes. Others have not had the same luck.

Last June there was a walk-in clinic on James Street for people downtown without a family doctor. It closed simply because not enough doctors could be found to work there. But I could bet you dollars to doughnuts that four out of every five homeless persons in this city do not have a family doctor. There is not even a street nurse. Where do they go? Recently a survey was taken and it found that there are five million Canadians that don't have a family doctor. What chance do

Members of the homeless population have to get one?

There is not an adolescent facility in the Niagara region and our youth must travel to Chedoke in Hamilton to get service. You can imagine that if what happened at Shaw College in Montreal, or Tabor Alberta or Columbine was to happen here they would be caught with their pants down because they don't have enough frontline mental health counselors to treat these kids and that would be the first thing that they would need. They would have to import mental health workers from Burlington, Oakville and maybe even Mississauga in order to treat these kids who would be traumatized.

I know that Peter Kormos has wanted an adolescent center in Niagara after three teenagers committed suicide in Welland and there was no facility in the Niagara region. But politicians think that if Hamilton has an adolescent center Niagara is automatically covered. Since

when has Hamilton been part of this community?

Yet it seems that for the candidates in the last municipal election these issues hardly hit the radar screen. The most vulnerable of our citizens and the mentally ill are affected by this and are ignored. One of these days some of these homeless people are going to get frostbite on his or her toes and nobody will help simply because they have no doctor and there is no street nurse for them. New polls indicate that health care is still the number one issue for Canadians followed by the environment and Afghanistan.

More family doctors are getting up in age and will retire. No new ones are coming along to replace them. It doesn't seem that people who ran for office in this city were up to the times. They forgot about the homeless, many of who suffer from mental health issues. The election is over but we have to keep these issues in mind and continue to go back to the elected officials until they understand and take action.

THE GIFT OF LOVE

By Carrie Veenstra
Street News Staff

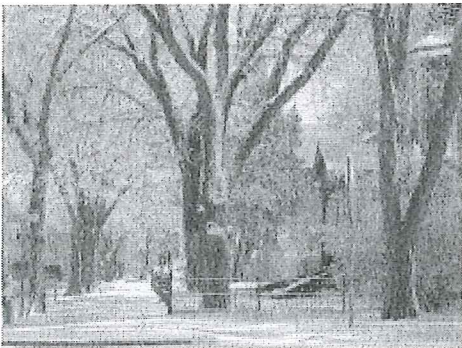
I have recently been asked to write about a Christmas memory that showed the true meaning of this festive season. When I look around to see what the meaning of Christmas in this day of age, all I see are kids that think store bought gifts are the best. But to me the real gift of this very giving season is love to your family and fellow mankind no matter what they are in their life at that time. You see, I grew up in a family with six sisters and two parents. Money was hard to come by and was spent on the household stuff and to keep a roof over our heads. But we still bought gifts from a store, and they were ok. But the best gifts were the ones that were

made from the heart and a lot of hard work.

When I was about ten years old, I came across a very special Christmas gift that my father had been working on for awhile. I always seemed to find the gifts, and knew who was getting what. But this gift couldn't be hidden. I came across a homemade dollhouse with working lamps and a shingled roof. But I was caught in the process. So I had to keep it a secret from my younger sister, Michelle. And that was very hard for me to do. But when it came to open that gift with my sister, the look on her face was one of awe. Now that is the meaning of Christmas, when a parent has put all the time and love to create a gift for a child, it is true love and the true spirit of this season. To this day, the

grandchildren still use that very same dollhouse, except the lights are no longer working, and it still holds the love that my dad put into making for us something very special from his heart.

That same lesson can be repeated this very Christmas. We have to help our fellow man/womankind: to make it better for them. We have to show kindness and compassion towards them; they are in need of it. It may be giving them spare change for food, or even a coffee to keep themselves warm, but it is that action that makes them feel better, knowing that someone still cares about them. Christmas is a time to share and give to those who need more than you do. So help out someone, and maybe it will brighten his or her day.



CHRISTMAS WRAPPING

By Elena Reyes
Street News Staff

My granddaughter asked if there is a different way of wrapping her presents so that she can't tell what they are. Of course, you have to realize that she snoops to find them, then she shakes, feels, and anything else she can think of, to try and figure out what it is. Under these circumstances, I'm going to have to rely on our once Christmas ritual way of wrapping.

During my teenage years, some poor, unsuspecting soul would have his or her turn at unwrapping a specially wrapped gift from an unknown giver. There were only two rules for opening this gift: 1. you can't get any help from anyone else, and, 2. you could only use your hands, no assistive devices of any kind. With this in mind, how long do you think it will take my granddaughter to unwrap her gifts, when we use such wrapping materials as: newspaper, different size boxes, plastic bags, packing tape, duct tape, electrical tape, string, chicken wire, candle wax. I think the only thing that was not used was cement. With all this in mind, wish her luck, I think she's going to need it.



A MEMORABLE CHRISTMAS

By Susan Venditti
Street News Staff

1998 was a memorable Christmas – the year I began to believe in miracles.

That year Out of the Cold found it necessary to find an alternate location for Christmas Eve. Although there was never any doubt that Out of the Cold would open; the ‘where and how’ were problems to be solved. The telephones were busy. First, the Optimists agreed to provide the location, then Zehrs donated the dinners, Hertz promised a van to move mattresses and blankets, nurses at the General hospital organized shifts of volunteers with others from the community calling to help as well. So many called that I lost track of names and had to trust that everyone would come. (They did.) Soon all the plans were in place and Out of the Cold was ready to open December 24th.

On the Saturday before Christmas, as my husband I went over the plans, we talked about the amazing community response and wished for some money to buy extras for the guests. I explained to him that cash would be best because it would be so much easier and faster to not have to run around getting cheques signed when time was so short. We continued getting on with our day.

Within the half hour Marnie from the Bell phoned. She told me that the operators held a penny sale and it would be so much easier for them if they did not have to roll the money, bank it and cut a cheque. They were so busy at this time of year. She asked, “Would Out of the Cold take a donation in cash.”

It was a very special Christmas Eve. All the guests... All the miracles.

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EVENTS – NO COST

Date	Time	Organization	Address	Notes
Dec. 14	3PM-5 PM	Salvation Army	180 Queenston St	Pre-register Nov. 27-Dec. 8 - Dinner
Dec. 14	11AM	McFrugal's	353 St. Paul St	Free Turkey to first 100 people
Dec. 15	5PM	AIDS Niagara	111 Church Street	Members only Dinner
Dec. 25	12PM-5PM	Honest Lawyer	84 James Street	Dinner –all welcome, Register for child gift
Dec. 25	4PM-6PM	Joey's Only Seafood	318 Ontario Street	Dinner, Taxi from Booth Centre
Dec. 25	NOON	Detox	6-10 Adams St	Clients only Dinner
Dec. 25	4:30 PM	Y.W.C.A.	183 King Street	Clients only Dinner
Dec. 27	1PM-6PM	C.A.W.	124 Bunting Rd	Dinner – Continuous Buses from Booth Centre/Community Care

ONE WISH FOR CHRISTMAS

By Faye Sager Dyson
Street News Staff

The poverty stricken people and the homeless wish for one thing or another every day, but at Christmas all people wish for a little bit more. I asked some of the people who are struggling in St. Catharines to make a Christmas wish. The wishes varied from being rich, to peace on earth and goodwill to all, but the most repeated wish was to 'have a home'.

Our Christmas list for Santa: Please wrap these up for Christmas.

Ashley: to get married.
Roy & John: a Harley
Davidson.
Elaine: get my dogs back.
Amanda: to be with my
family.
Paul: a new wallet.
Robert: my boss to give
me a raise.
Terry: my front tooth and
my grandson to
be born.
Murray: to be re-united with
friends gone yonder.

Freddy: for my woman to know
how much I love her.
Mike: my son and me to have an
apartment.
Ricky: to get strength not to relapse
again.
Lucia: to have my parents back
together again.
Gerry: affordable accommodation.
Crystal: to have my son home again
with me.
Kal: to have a good woman by
my side.
Shawn: a car instead of a bike and
live in Toronto.

Ray: to be in the Bahamas.
Ashley: for my maternal family
to regain sobriety
Sue: to be with my children
Bill: to find my dream woman
and get married.
Kevin: no more world hunger.
Vicki: no more child poverty.
Judy: for children to be happy
always.
Faye: to hold onto my recovery
and for more people to
experience the freedom it
brings.
Vanessa: full bellies and homes
for all.

**Billy says it all when he wishes that everybody had his/her wish come true.
What a wonderful world that would be!**

Christmas Word Search

By
Chris Taylor

S	U	B	C	A	N	D	Y
L	S	B	A	L	L	E	K
E	N	E	L	F	T	E	D
D	O	L	L	S	E	R	K
T	W	L	G	T	R	E	E
O	W	N	I	A	X	A	I
Y	B	M	F	R	M	W	C
S	A	N	T	A	F	R	B

Ball	Elf	Snow
Bell	Gift	Star
Candy	Santa	Toys

Start Me Up Niagara

Working together...moving forward
Since 1999

Working with individuals whose
lives have been affected by mental illness,
addictions, unemployment and homelessness
to develop self sufficiency by providing
opportunities to earn income, improve
health and integrate into the community.

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