

Crafting solo: 'You're paying for the soul of the builder'

Calgary Herald

Thu May 5 2005

Page: N1 / FRONT

Section: Neighbours

Byline: Natasha Botha

Source: For Neighbours

Constructing handmade acoustic guitars is not only Judy Threet's passion, but it is also her way of creating art. The Calgarian has been making masterpieces for more than 15 years and says that honing handmade instruments is just as much about soul as it is sound.

"The difference between a handmade instrument and a factory-made instrument is the same as the difference between an original painting and a print," says Threet, whose work is in such high demand that she has a closed three-year waiting list. "When buying handmade, you're paying for the soul of the builder."

Although Threet's love for music developed around the age of six with the help of her ukulele-playing grandmother, it wasn't until she oversaw the crafting of her own guitar by Michael Heiden in 1987 that she became interested in the craft herself.

"When Michael was building my guitar, I would show up at his shop and take pictures," says Threet, who makes about eight guitars a year. "I became so interested that I asked him to apprentice me and, much to my everlasting amazement, he said yes."

Threet hasn't looked back since. Having opened her own shop in 1991, Threet spends six days a week dedicated to her passion.

It's a dedication understood fully by Al Gough, owner of W.A. Violins Ltd. Gough has been constructing handmade violins for more than 20 years and takes a bit of a different stance when asked if it's his passion.

"I'm 72 . . . gimme a break," says Gough with a laugh.

"Passion is a thing of the past for me, but I do love it and I have a lot of fun doing it."

Gough constructed his first violin at the tender age of six using an orange crate, resin from a pine tree and hair from a horse's tail.

"Being the independent little cuss that I was, I decided I had to have my own violin," says Gough, as he sits in his somewhat cluttered shop on 16th Avenue.

"I have no idea how I knew to do any of it, but I did and I used it."

When asked why handmade instruments are so special, Gough says it's because one person has control of the entire process.

"One person picks out every single piece of wood and every outline and curve is decided by him. His individuality will show up in the piece like a signature and there are no shortcuts."

Gough says creating violins is something he does only for himself and that he has never numbered his instruments in an effort to track how many he's made.

"When I make a violin, it's to please me," says Gough. "Because it pleases me and I'm picky, it pleases other people, too."

When asked if he has any favourite created pieces, it's a bit of a surprise to hear a firm no.

"I never have any favourites. The one I'm working on at any given time is always my favourite. That's how it becomes what it is."

Illustration:

- Colour Photo: Grant Black, Calgary Herald / Guitar-maker Judy Threet sands the finish on one of her hand-crafted instruments.

Edition: Final

Story Type: News

Length: 498 words

Idnumber: 200505050026

Genocide still haunts Armenian woman: Community marks 90-year-old tragedy

Edmonton Journal

Mon Apr 25 2005

Page: A6

Section: News

Byline: Natasha Botha

Source: CanWest News Service

CALGARY -- Now almost 86 years old, Armen Shimoon is still haunted by horrifying tales of her family's torture during the Armenian genocide.

As a child, instead of hearing bedtime stories before going to sleep she learned about the cruelties endured by her relatives. Even old age can't erase those memories.

"I forget a lot of things," says Shimoon, who now lives in Calgary. "I can have something in my hand and not know where I put it, but this story never goes. It plays like a movie in front of my eyes. It is engraved in me."

The Armenian genocide was committed between 1915 and 1923. An estimated 1.5 million people were murdered or starved.

Sunday marked 90 years since the killing campaign began. On April 24, 1915, the Turkish government signalled its intentions by the arrest of more than 200 Armenian community leaders. Many were executed.

Canada and other countries acknowledge the genocide but Turkey still refuses to do so.

"We want the Turkish government to recognize that these were not standard war victims," says Shimoon's daughter, Anoush Newman.

"We demand an acknowledgement and an apology for these acts from the perpetrators. To deny the genocide is a final insult to us and we refuse to remain silent."

Shimoon, who was born during the genocide, says there are many tragic stories buried in her family's past.

Her father, who was drafted into the Turkish army, witnessed Armenian children being put into a schoolhouse built of wooden logs.

The doors were locked and the building was set on fire. He said the Turkish soldiers joked about the children as they burned alive.

Shimoon's grandmother committed suicide by throwing herself into a river so she would not witness the humiliation and torture of her daughters.

Because of these stories, Shimoon, Newman and other Armenians are determined to commemorate not only the genocide but the triumphs of the Armenian people. A memorial service Sunday at St. Edmond's Church in Bowness did just that.

"My family and several thousand other families are a testament to the Armenian spirit," says Newman.

"The purpose was to eliminate the Armenian nation from the face of the Earth. They did not succeed."

Edition: Final

Story Type: News

Length: 358 words

Idnumber: 200504250101

'Everyone should be included'

Calgary Herald

Thu Apr 21 2005

Page: N3

Section: Neighbours

Byline: Natasha Botha

Source: For Neighbours

Darryl Sutter, a man most famous for Stanley Cup playoffs and hard-hitting offensive moves, is lending his voice to a different cause.

Along with his wife Wanda, the head coach of the Calgary Flames is speaking as an ambassador for the Everyone Belongs campaign.

The campaign, an initiative of the Development Disabilities Resource Centre of Calgary, seeks to change negative opinions, attitudes and behaviours towards individuals deemed "different."

This cause is close to the Sutters' hearts as their 12-year-old son, Chris, has Down syndrome.

"Your life changes forever when you have a child with a disability," Sutter says.

"Our life is about what we can do for him now, and that goes for the rest of our life. We try to pick causes like this one because they are ones we can best represent."

A television commercial featuring Sutter, Calgary's "Man of the Year," was screened at a recent press conference for the Everyone Belongs campaign, which will focus on inclusive education and will encourage educators to include children with disabilities into mainstream classrooms.

"It is our fundamental belief that everyone in our community should be included," says Keith Seel, president of the board of directors for the resource centre.

"There shouldn't be barriers and, though it won't happen overnight, through sustained effort and ongoing work, we will achieve real change."

The resource centre's executive director, Patty Morris, calls the Everyone Belongs campaign an excellent way to showcase success stories already happening within the community.

"It's a great way for us to begin to tell these stories that are making our communities better," Morris says. "So much happens when everyone is encouraged to participate in our schools, in our communities and in our workplaces."

Sutter agrees saying that most people don't realize that disabled individuals have needs and desires just like everyone else.

"What you have to remember is that disabled people have goals and aspirations, too," the coach says. "They need the opportunity to achieve them just like everyone else."

The Development Disabilities Resource Centre serves approximately 850 people who have developmental disabilities and their families. Each year, approximately 10,000 individuals come forward to learn more about inclusion and how they can implement it in their communities.

Seel believes this is a positive sign that change is on its way.

"Each one of us has a small part to play in all of this," Seel says. "If you like, you can even play a big part and join us in our efforts. What it comes down to is each of us doing something to effect change."

Illustration:

- Colour Photo: Grant Black, Calgary Herald / Calgary Flames coach and general manager Darryl Sutter signs an Everyone Belongs T-shirt for Brian Omara.

Edition: Final

Story Type: News

Length: 425 words

Idnumber: 200504210045

Group serves more than meals

Calgary Herald

Thu May 5 2005

Page: N11

Section: Neighbours

Byline: Natasha Botha and Abdul Rafih

Source: For Neighbours

Hattie Boothman remembers well her son sitting in the backseat of her Volkswagen Beetle feeling carsick after spending the afternoon delivering meals for Meals on Wheels.

The dedicated volunteer has been with Calgary Meals on Wheels since the organization made its first delivery in 1965, and she simply wouldn't have it any other way.

"It's good to give to the community," says Boothman, who helps deliver meals every Wednesday.

"Volunteering has given me the opportunity to meet a lot of people, and it's such a great service."

Meals on Wheels provides nutritional screening as well as home delivery of hot and cold meals to senior citizens, people going through rehabilitation and people with long-term physical or mental health concerns.

"This program is a vital service that helps meet the needs of Calgarians living in vulnerable situations by providing nutritious meals," says Sylvia Bush, volunteer co-ordinator with Meals on Wheels.

Service began on Nov. 16, 1965, with meals delivered to eight clients. In 2004, Calgary Meals on Wheels delivered 313,500 meals to approximately 1,900 clients. Today, the organization offers a variety of services, including a bagged lunch program for the working homeless, a school lunch program in high risk schools and a Chinese meal delivery program.

"It's important to remember that Meals on Wheels is about so much more than just meals," says Ruth Ramsden-Wood, president of United Way of Calgary and Area, which has invested in Meals on Wheels for more than 20 years.

"While providing nutritious meals and improving health, the program enables seniors to stay in their homes, and helps the working homeless to save money for a damage deposit or first month's rent to secure housing."

All of this is possible thanks to the efforts of 100 volunteers who help prepare and deliver meals. Even with many dedicated volunteers like Hattie, more are always welcome.

"We always have a need for volunteers to drive their own vehicles or to become couriers," says Bush.

"I really encourage other people to volunteer," says Boothman. "I always look forward to Wednesdays and I plan on helping for as long as I can drive."

Meals on Wheels will celebrate its 40th anniversary with Meals on Wheels Awareness Week from May 22 to 28, and a gala fundraiser on May 6. To buy tickets or for information about volunteering, call 243-2834.

This series of articles highlights programs that benefit from the United Way, in a collaboration between the United Way of Calgary and Area, SAIT and Neighbours

Illustration:

- Colour Photo: Natasha Botha, For Neighbours / Hattie Boothman, left, has been delivering Meals on Wheels for 40 years.

Edition: Final

Story Type: News

Length: 404 words

Idnumber: 200505050003

Alberta is No. 1 pot at end of rainbow: Once again province lures record numbers of migrants

Calgary Herald

Mon Apr 18 2005

Page: A3

Section: News

Byline: Geoffrey Scotton and Natasha Botha

Source: Calgary Herald

Dwayne Zaba and his family understand why so many Canadians view Alberta as the proverbial land of milk and honey.

Like tens of thousands of Canadians in recent years, Dwayne and his wife Kirsten Cook-Zaba brought their family to Alberta searching for not only economic opportunity, but also a better quality of life. And they found it. In spades.

The Zabas are part of a surge of mobile Canadians who increasingly choose Alberta as their destination, helping to lift this province to the number one spot for interprovincial migration yet again in 2004, according to new research by the Montreal-based Association for Canadian Studies.

Analysis by the association's executive director Jack Jedwab shows that last year a net 11,600 people settled here after moving from other Canadian provinces, far ahead of runner-up British Columbia.

The 11,600 newcomers in 2004 surpassed the net gain in 2003, when a net 10,487 Canadians chose to make Alberta home, but were fewer than the stampede of nearly 18,000 newcomers who arrived in Alberta in 2002.

The lure of Alberta is nothing new.

Alberta was Canada's top destination for interprovincial migrants between 1996 and 2001, gaining nearly 120,000 newcomers over the half decade. And Jedwab is certain the province will repeat the feat in the period between 2001 and 2006.

"Alberta is on track to repeat its winning performance. You're seeing the trend continue as the Alberta economy stays strong," Jedwab said, referring to the province's nation-leading economic performance in 2004 and 2005.

With a growth rate forecast to hit 3.7 per cent in 2005 and 2006 and unemployment at a 24-year low of 3.5 per cent, Alberta is enjoying boom times, but Zaba believes the province's attractions go far beyond its healthy economy.

"The bottom line is that the reason why we moved here is for the quality of life," he says, noting a move from Toronto also helped moderate Kirsten's environmentally induced asthma and provided a better atmosphere to raise the couple's two children.

"This is our greatest opportunity to realize the best quality of life we can imagine."

Still, economists emphasize that it is dollars that are bringing Canadians from other provinces to Alberta, as well as boosting the level of immigration to the province from outside the country.

Certainly it's economic prospects that will bring dentist Peter Rendek and his wife Zuzana from Golden, British Columbia in July.

"Let's face it, it's booming here because of the opportunities, but I don't necessarily think it's just because of the gas and the oil," says Rendek, who just bought a practice in Calgary's southwest.

"From what I've seen, it's starting to be pretty diverse here. There are so many other things happening here, such as high-tech companies and art and design companies," he adds, noting competition to buy the dental practice was fierce.

The influx of newcomers feeds itself, analysts say, as it helps to spur household formation, grow the housing market, boost retail sales, elevate incomes and expand the economy, creating along the way a virtuous circle whereby robust economic growth begets robust economic growth.

"It keeps the ball rolling. Which is why the migration always comes in pretty long cycles; once you reach the status of attractive, you don't lose it quickly," says Mario Lefebvre, a senior economist with the Conference Board of Canada.

"Once you're attractive, you're attractive."

However beneficial it is, strong in-migration has its costs, experts and officials say, although they always emphasize they prefer it to the alternative. "At the end of the day, in-migration is a very positive thing; those people are going to fuel the economy. But the burden that it places on our system is significant," says Adam Legge, director of research and business information for Calgary Economic Development.

"A rapid, significant influx of population can create challenges. The largest one is that it's a significant burden on infrastructure. You have so much more demand for everything, from transit to roads to power to sewer systems."

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Interprovincial Migration Patterns

Alberta and B.C. were the only provinces to gain population from interprovincial migration in 2004:

B.C. 7,080

Alta. 11,600

Sask. -2,988

Man. -1,138

Ont. -7,916

Que. -2,336

N.B. -594

N.S. -954

P.E.I. -251

Nfld./Lab. -2,134

Booming Alberta has been the clear leader in overall interprovincial migration since 1996:

B.C. -19,920

Alta. 159,466

Sask. -38,819

Man. -24,580

Ont. 41,531

Que. -63,770

N.B. -10,460

N.S. -1,918

P.E.I. 462

Nfld./Lab. -36,207

Source: Statistics Canada Calgary Herald graphic

Illustration:

- Photo: Greg Fulmes, Calgary Herald / Dwayne Zaba and his wife, Kirsten Cook-Zaba, with their children, Jasmin, front, and Tristyn are enjoying Calgary and their Bragg Creek area home.

Edition: Final

Story Type: News

Note: This story features a factbox "Interprovincial migration patterns".
Length: 730 words
Idnumber: 200504180130

Blind Calgarian 'an inspiration'

Calgary Herald

Fri Apr 15 2005

Page: B12

Section: City & Region

Byline: Natasha Botha

Source: Calgary Herald

Jesse Pozzo doesn't know the meaning of the word "limitation."

The 22-year-old was born completely blind, but he hasn't let it affect his activities, attitude or passion for volunteering.

"Volunteering makes me feel good," says Pozzo, who has been volunteering with Canadian Blood Services since last September. "I want to help out the community."

He volunteers twice a week by doing everything from stuffing envelopes to data entry and says being blind hasn't stopped his need to help others. He believes people can do anything regardless of their disabilities.

"You just have to do it," says Pozzo, who is a student in the community access program at Columbia College. "You have to set your mind to it and not let anything get in the way. Everyone has their own challenges they have to face."

Pozzo's determined outlook has led him to pursue activities most people would consider impossible for him. Whether it's swimming, bike riding, skiing or even mountain climbing, he strives to show everyone that disabled people can still lead very full and active lives.

Marie Steski, Pozzo's community rehabilitation worker, says he is an inspiration to everyone.

"When it comes to Jesse, when there's a will there's a way," says Steski, who helps Pozzo with his volunteering tasks. "If only we could all see things through Jesse's eyes. He's such an inspiration and he sets a great example for fellow students and the community."

The Canadian Blood Services agrees, saying that without volunteers such as Pozzo, organizations like theirs would not be able to function.

"He, along with other volunteers, adds a really personal element to the whole situation," says Doris Kaufmann, the communications specialist for the Canadian Blood Services. "We actually have quite a few disabled volunteers and they know what it's like to be sidelined because of a physical condition. It helps them connect with donors."

Pozzo has even decided to get more involved with volunteering by accepting a position with Volunteer Calgary. Starting April 27, the self-described computer wizard will be updating the website's weekly highlights. He hopes this will further encourage others to volunteer.

"Don't ever think you can't do anything just because you're disabled," says Pozzo. "You can do more than you realize."

Illustration:

- Colour Photo: Christina Inez Ryan, Calgary Herald / Being blind does not stop Jesse Pozzo, 22, from volunteering twice a week at Canadian Blood Services.

Edition: Final

Story Type: News

Note: Acts of Kindness: People - Volunteers - Good Deeds - Every Friday in the Herald

Length: 369 words

Idnumber: 200504150162

Aldermen at odds over \$10 land: Property valued at over \$121,968

Calgary Herald

Mon Apr 11 2005

Page: B2

Section: City & Region

Byline: Natasha Botha

Source: Calgary Herald

A war over the \$10 selling price of industrial city land valued at \$121,968 has erupted between city aldermen.

The selling price for the 0.22 hectare parcel, which has to be approved at today's city council meeting, was originally proposed by the city's land and asset strategy committee.

According to Ald. Ric McIver, the asking price is outrageous and he believes the land should be sold at market value. Although he was the only member who did not approve of the proposal, McIver said the move shows a lack of accountability to the citizens of Calgary.

"I could not believe I was the only one troubled enough by this to vote against it," said McIver, alderman for Ward 12. "I expect the taxpayers to be unhappy to see an asset of theirs being almost given away when it has a value equal to probably two or more year's wages of the average Calgarian."

The piece of land in the Forest Law industrial area was originally to be used for a road required by the developer's potential buyer. A road plan was created in March 2004 and a road and sidewalk were developed in anticipation of the sale.

The road right-of-way is no longer required and, according to Ward 9 Ald. Joe Ceci, the land was never owned by the city and selling it back to the developer at market value would be "highway robbery."

"The developer is going to pay to obtain a passage of a bylaw to close the lane, pay to consolidate the titles in that lot, pay to reimburse the city's advertising costs and the city's GST obligation," said Ceci.

"We can't turn around and sell something we were given for free back to the person who gave it to us in the first place."

Ceci says the city has suffered no financial loss in the transaction, but McIver insists the taxpayers deserve to see a profit.

"As a part of the subdivision process, everybody is required to dedicate land to the city, and it is common practice to sell it back to the person who dedicated it or at least give them first chance to buy it at market value," said McIver, who plans to ask council to list the land with the Calgary Real Estate Board.

"Any excuse they have to give away the taxpayers' money is not a good enough excuse."

John Carpay, the Alberta director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, said it's only fair the City of Calgary give the developer a chance to make amends and take back his land. He said taxpayers are not losing out.

"It would be unjust for the City of Calgary to profit at the expense of a private company, which has already accepted responsibility for what happened," said Carpay.

"I can't see what's wrong with the developer getting the land back for \$10, under these circumstances. The taxpayers haven't lost anything."

Illustration:

- Photo: Cory Bialecki, Calgary Herald / Alderman Ric McIver stands on a piece of property reportedly worth \$121,968 but being sold back to a developer by the city for \$10 after a road planned for it wasn't needed. McIver says taxpayers deserve more.
- Photo: Ald. Joe Ceci

Edition: Final

Story Type: News

Length: 478 words

Idnumber: 200504110094