



## Battling PTSD

Local couple works together to fight PTSD

Page A3

**NEWS:** Cyclists question safety of bus lane /A5

**SPORTS:** Royals make it a sweep on weekend /A12

**COMMUNITY:** Workshop helps with care giving /A13

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# VICTORIA NEWS

Black Press Wednesday, January 21, 2015

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## Shelter, meal providers see huge demand

CoolAid and Our Place seeing more demand than ever before for warm meals and beds

Kevin Laird  
Victoria News

Demand for a hot meal and warm shelter at Greater Victoria social service agencies has increased dramatically this winter.

In December, Our Place served more than 62,000 meals, bringing its total for 2014 to more than 526,884 meals. For comparison, in 2013, Our Place served 343,464 meals.

### Inside

#### Our View:

Everyone wishes poverty didn't exist, but there is something all of us can do to help.

Page A6

#### \$15 wage:

Victoria residents mobilize in hopes of convincing the provincial government to increase the minimum wage.

Page A7

Victoria CoolAid Society executive director Kathy Stinson said her organization has also seen increases of people looking for help.

Individuals seeking shelter increased from 1,600 people in 2013 to more than 1,700 this year.

Stinson, who also chairs the Downtown Service Provider Table, an organization of social service agencies, said "services generally are being over-subscribed."

Grant McKenzie, director of communications for Our Place, said his organization is breaking records almost daily for people

looking for a hot meal. On Thursday, Our Place served more than 400 people at breakfast, an increase of more than 100 people from 2013.

#### PLEASE SEE:

Affordability 'major issue,' Page A4



Photo by Frances Litman

## Stepping into nature

Nathaneal Laranjeiras, left, Jordan Taylor and Nila McLachlan, Rockheights Middle School students, discover nature in nearby Highrock Park in Esquimalt. Kids at Rockheights stepped out of the classroom and into nature as part of a collaborative environmental project. Now, that project has been made into a book. For the story, please turn to page A8.

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Don Denton/Victoria News

## Webbed takeoff

Still hanging on by a web a seagull takes flight from the top of an anchor pole at the Fleming Beach boat launch in Esquimalt.

## Nominations open for business awards

Nominations are now open for Greater Victoria Business Awards.

The annual event, held by the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, celebrates the success of businesses in the region.

"This is an exciting time of year, when businesses get nominated and we can see great local examples of businesses that are succeeding in our community," said Bruce Carter, CEO of the chamber.

The awards recognize all types of businesses as well as individuals and include categories from business leadership and innova-



Bruce Carter

recipients include community leaders Keith Dagg and Bob Skene.

The awards gala is a sell-out event every year. This year's awards gala will be held in May with tickets going on sale in April.

To nominate a business, please go online to [victoriachamber.ca](http://victoriachamber.ca).

[editor@vicnews.com](mailto:editor@vicnews.com)

tion to young entrepreneur and sustainable business practices.

In addition, the lifetime achievement award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the business community over the last 35 years. Recent

### Let us know

Have a newsworthy item for the Victoria News? If it involves a community event or other endeavour in Victoria or Esquimalt, send it along for consideration. Email it to [editor@vicnews.com](mailto:editor@vicnews.com).

## Affordability 'major issue' for needy in Greater Victoria

Continued from Page A1

"We certainly weren't expecting the increase to be as significant as it has been. We were expecting there to be some increase just because there's more programs and services being offered now, but we certainly weren't expecting to see the amount of jump that we witnessed," McKenzie said.

"It definitely caught us by surprise."

Both Stinson and Don Evans, executive director of Our Place, agree that affordability in Victoria is a major issue.

The price for rental housing continues to climb. In April 2014, the average rent for a private

apartment was \$904, up from \$894 in 2013.

"Things are becoming less and less affordable. People aren't seeing their wages increasing or income assistance rates going up. When this happens there is going to be more demand and more need," Stinson said.

She added more seniors are also accessing services, more than ever before.

"It shows just how essential every donation is," adds Evans.

"We rely on the generosity of the community, and any amount, large or small, helps us serve the needs of Greater Victoria's impoverished citizens."

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# VIEWPOINT

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## VICTORIANEWS

### OUR VIEW

## Poverty knocking at the door

The news isn't good on the street.

Victoria's less fortunate are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet, even to find a warm bed to crawl into on a cold winter's night.

Social service agencies throughout the community are seeing greater demand for their services from Our Place, where demand for meals and shelter have never been greater, to Victoria CoolAid Society.

Despite the obvious, the biggest consequence with this problem is that more and more people appear to be falling through society's cracks. We can blame how expensive it is to live in the city, lack of education or mental health issues, but the problem still remains people need help.

We should all be thankful that non-profit social agencies step forward, but they need our help, too. And not just to provide a meal and a bed.

Most social services agencies provide transformative programs to break the cycle of poverty. These are programs that have impact on lives, providing counselling, goal setting, even vocational training.

But they can't do it without you.

They need donations both in the form of cash and goods, so they can expand their professional staff and volunteer base.

Everyone wishes poverty didn't exist, but it does. In order to change the scourge of poverty, we need to support and encourage those who have made it their mission to help where they can.

We will never end poverty, but we can certainly ease the plight of those who suffer through it, and work to get away from it.



**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OIL AND THE CANADIAN DOLLAR EXPLAINED:**

## What do you think?

The News welcomes your comments.

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# Hippy science is easy, and wrong

Did you do a "cleanse" to start the year? A diet or supplements to, you know, "detox" your body?



**Tom Fletcher**  
B.C. Views

Please, if you did, I don't want the details. I'm here to discuss the underlying assumptions of this fad. TV presenter Dr. Oz is a promoter of various schemes, soup diets

and the like, but there are many books and consumer products being flogged.

"Supplements, tea, homeopathy, coffee enemas, ear candles and foot baths promise you a detoxified body," writes Ontario pharmacist Scott Gavura, who treats cancer patients with medicine's most potent drugs.

Frustrated by the pharmacy industry's willingness to cash in on fake cures for

nonexistent conditions, Gavura began contributing to ScienceBasedMedicine.org, where you can search "detox" to find his takedown of this notion.

He traces the roots of purification rituals in religious and medical history, such as when patients were bled with leeches.

Actual "detox" is administered in hospital for those with dangerous levels of drugs, alcohol or other poisons. Credible physicians abandoned theories of "auto-intoxication" in the 19th century.

"Today's version of auto-intoxication argues that some combination of food additives, salt, meat, fluoride, prescription drugs, smog, vaccine ingredients, GMOs and perhaps last night's bottle of wine are causing a buildup of 'toxins' in the body," Gavura writes. "And don't forget gluten. Gluten is the new evil and therefore, is now a toxin."

Gluten-free products now occupy whole sections of grocery stores, not far from the pricey "organic" produce that may or

may not be tested for pesticides.

Living in the Lower Mainland 20 years ago, I noticed people lugging big plastic jugs to the grocery store to fill with water. Metro Vancouver is a rainforest, with some of the best tap water in the world, so I wondered what they were trying to avoid.

Discreet inquiries yielded similar answers. Aside from the odd superstition about chlorine or fluoride, they had no idea at all. They didn't know about the Coquitlam reservoir, or ozonation, or what they were buying, which was essentially municipal water run through a filter. They had been convinced to pay \$2 for water in plastic bottles, and this somehow led to the conclusion that their tap water is only fit for washing clothes and driveways.

Vaccinations? Don't get me started.

It's no wonder people constantly fall for enviro-scares like toxins from the Alberta oil sands that are actually concentrated in cities where all that fuel is burned, or the threat

of genetically modified canola oil, or smart meters. The media are frequently part of the problem, lacking scientific literacy and preferring conflict over common sense.

Take Vancouver (please). The mayor rose to fame with a company that sold overpriced imported tropical fruit juice in single-serving plastic bottles. Calling it "Happy Planet," he convinced a new generation of urban rubes that they're doing something for the environment. Plus, there are "no chemicals" in it, to cite the central myth of hippy science.

At the risk of giving you too much information, I did a cleanse last year. It was for a screening colonoscopy, one of many that have taxed the B.C. health-care system since a new test was added to the standard medical checkup.

Try that one if you're over 50.

•••

*Tom Fletcher is legislature reporter and columnist for Black Press.*

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