

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

gauntlet

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“The Greatest Show on Earth”

entertainment, page 6

Emergency Medical Services *are* essential, silly!

City paramedics went on and off strike this week as a result of frustrated negotiations with city hall, prompting an emergency plan that might have made the ambulances less than legal.

While both parties came to an agreement on most points, a rift remains on the issue of salary increases. The Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3421 argues paramedics should receive comparative wages and wage increases with other city services, while the city doesn't want to increase taxes.

In this time skyrocketing costs of living, unions are stirring themselves into action and, for the most part, they're in the right. At the same time, though, stressing the system in an unnecessarily dangerous—possibly even deadly—way is absolutely unacceptable.

It's really quite simple: with fewer vehicles available to safely transport casualties to medical centres, there is a higher likelihood of complications arising in a patient's condition as a result of improper and delayed care.

CUPE 3421 president Bruce Robb commented this week that in order for the city's ambulances to qualify legally, they would have to be operated by at least one paramedic. Knowing this, the union still wound

up striking and knowingly put lives at risk over a pay agreement.

There is plenty of room in the circle of blame, though, and the union isn't necessarily in the center of it.

While many emergency workers are classified under essential services by the Public Service Labour Relations Act, paramedics are not. Because of constant demand, essential services are not permitted to strike outright. Imagine what would happen if the Calgary Police Service could suddenly decide to go on strike for a week.

There is no excuse for EMS *not* to be considered an essential service. The legislation to raise our medical emergency workers to the same level of responsibility police and border security professionals should have been implemented years ago. Many other health care professionals are classified as essential as well, so it seems a stretch the people who provide them with patients should be left out. They are an important part of the system and their absence is illogical.

According to the CUPE website, EMS responds to roughly 25 per cent of all emergency calls. With over 400 paramedics off the job, one quarter of all emergency calls are left for someone else to deal with. In today's human resources market, even with the city's plan to



Illustration by Gina Freeman

have EMTs continue work, it's hard to believe the replacement workers would be able to cover the demand. This leaves the rest of the work up to the other "essential" emergency services, namely police (who already deal with most 911 calls) and fire. The essential services, therefore, are already taking on the workload, making the paramedics' exclusion from this classification even more absurd.

The move to make EMS essential, though it would strip the union of its right to strike, would likely improve workers' treatment anyway. Workers under essential ser-

vices agreements are paid fairly well (certainly better than paramedics are now, as the CUPE is quick to point out) and offer job security. The city would no longer have to scramble to set up illegal ambulances, either.

Both sides in this dispute are very much to blame for the current and ugly state of affairs. Hopefully when everything's sorted, though, neither party will have to deal with the blame of a death resulting from negatively affected emergency medical service.

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Golden Spatula

Stephanie Mamayson, for a mad-awesome review.
Honorable mention to John McDonald for ordering pizza before everyone was starving and Dale Miller's zombie.

Furor Arma Ministrat

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Dr. Seuss in the Park is a University of Calgary Students' Union Volunteer Services program that promotes literacy for children in the Calgary community.

Kids take over campus!

Calgary and area gifted kids participate in challenging summer camp

Katy Anderson
 News Editor

The University of Calgary hosted a meeting of some of the brightest minds around Calgary last week. It wasn't a professional or research convention, it was a summer camp for gifted kids grades two through nine.

The U of C's Centre for Gifted Education held its 19th annual SUCCESS Summer Camp July 9–20. The centre is the only one of its kind in Canada and has a mandate for research, professional development, parental support, community service and instructional programs. The camp is meant to challenge its participants and promote belonging by bringing bright kids into contact with each other.

In Alberta gifted kids are identified as special needs students because of the unique challenges they face. If their talents are not properly nurtured they risk drop-out rates between 10–15 per cent. Once they get turned off of applying themselves they refuse to do things and they don't develop the skills that are necessary according to centre director Micheal Pyryte.

Gifted students are most commonly identified by IQ scores because they are the most measurable, but Pyryte said that giftedness can come in a wide range of talents including general intellectual ability, creative thinking, social skills, or musical, artistic or kinesthetic ability.

To prevent gifted children from going through school without the needed support Pyryte suggested schools implement group IQ tests.

"Right now at the [Calgary Board of Education] the only students that are identified as gifted are those who are tested by a psychologist and make a qualifying score," he said. "Many of the kids that are identified



Katy Anderson/the Gauntlet

This kid is smarter than you are. Yep. You're going nowhere.

as gifted are identified because their parents have had the resources to pay for the psychological testing which could range from \$1,000–1,500."

Although the U of C's SUCCESS camp charges a fee of \$350, fees are subsidized for students who can't afford it.

Pyryte believes all students learn at different rates and an education system that provided opportunities for the individual interests of each child to be met and challenged would benefit all students, not just the gifted.

"The education system's typical curriculum is judged in minutes of how you should teach something as opposed to what you should know," he said. "So [it has] some policies that

go against the best interest of children."

A high school teacher who took his masters in gifted education was leading a session for the program. He requested to remain unnamed but, like Pyryte, advocated for the benefits of testing for all students.

"Ideally we would be able to provide testing for any and every child in order to be able to help him or her to his or her best advantage," he said. "Our problem is we don't have such resources and it's very expensive. There [are] a great many students who fall through the system. Ideally we would be able to provide for everyone as a potential basketball player a basketball team and et ceteras."

The instructor advocated for an educational

model where kids are separated according to their ability instead of their age. His ideal curriculum would be differentiated enough to accommodate a person at a grade three math level and a grade 12 English level.

There is contention about how much intellectual ability can be attributed to genetics and how much can be attributed to environment. Pyryte believes it is about 50 per cent of each. Two parenting habits he advocated to develop a child's "giftedness" were promoting in them a wide range of vocabulary at an early age and taking children to places like museums.

Cecile Todesco has two daughters aged 11 and 12 in this year's SUCCESS program. Although unsure if her daughters' giftedness should be attributed to "nature or nurture" she said possible factors were she had never done drugs, had always provided them with lots of opportunities and bought mainly educational toys as they were growing up.

Todesco's youngest daughter Hayley is in the gifted program at Hillhurst School and SUCCESS is the second summer educational program she's attended this year, compared to the five she participated in last year. Hayley said she was attending this camp so she had something to do.

"I still don't know what I want to be when I grow up and it's really annoying when adults go up to you and they're like, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' and you don't know and they're like 'Awww, that sucks,'" said Hayley.

Hayley does know she wants to see a solar or lunar eclipse, read a "whole bunch of stuff" and that she definitely does not want to be a mathematician.

"[The camp was] really fun," she said. "I learned a lot. I didn't know what came first in history so I figured a whole lot of that stuff out. And I made a few friends along the way."

Development threatens Bow River

Sara Hanson
 News Assistant

Alberta is often recognized for its booming oil and gas industry, but prides for the most important natural resource of all will have to wait.

According to the government of Alberta's 2006–07 *Measuring Up Report*, released Thu., Jun. 28, only two of Alberta's six river systems were rated "good" to "excellent" on the province's river quality index for the 2005–06 year. Although the Old Man, Bow, Red Deer and North Saskatchewan river systems did not meet the target water quality levels, Alberta Environmental spokesperson Cara Van Marck explained it is common for the quality of river water to be low following periods of heavy rainfall, such as those which triggered flooding throughout the province in 2005. She noted higher water levels from the heavy rainfall cause increased runoff of debris into river water.

"These results are not surprising or alarming," said Van Marck. "This is not anything



courtesy David Swann

Swann wants the Bow clean.

to be concerned about."

Liberal environmental critic David Swann agreed that excess rainfall is a factor contributing to water quality, but stressed other man-made factors need to be examined. Among these factors, Swann noted development projects, specifically in the Calgary area, as a major contributor to the Bow River's decreasing water quality.

"The degradation of our water

supply is only going to increase," said Swann. "[Water quality levels] now are the writing on the wall for the future."

In the government's recent report, the Bow River rated "fair," said Bow River Basin Council executive director Mark Bennett, who explained the quality of the Bow's water this year is a significant change from past years. Although Bennett recognized heavy rainfall as a contributing factor, he also noted the effects of the rainstorms may not have been as significant two to three hundred years ago, prior to the heavy development which now lines the Bow River's banks.

"The government has cited the rainstorms of 2005 as a factor, but it's only one," said Bennett. "Any development that has led to a change from natural conditions could have had some impact."

In addition to keeping development projects away from river banks, Swann stressed runoff from oil and gas companies located near Alberta's watersheds needs to be closely monitored.

"We have to review these kinds

of decisions to make water our priority, rather than oil and gas," he said. "People know their life-blood is water, not oil and gas."

While Van Marck did not state any specific initiatives the government is taking to protect Alberta's river systems from the oil and gas industry, she noted Water for Life—the Alberta government's strategy for sustainable water initiatives—is currently being updated and will address how industry impacts the environment. Van Marck also noted all Albertans are currently able to provide feedback on the strategy's website.

"A lot of Albertans have some really fantastic ideas so it's really important they get their two cents in," she said.

Swaan also encouraged Albertans to share their water concerns with their MLA, or directly with the premier, as he believes the Water for Life Program would benefit from citizen's involvement.

"[The strategy] has been going for four years now, but it does not seem to be working," he said.

The renewal plan marks the end

of the first three-year time frame within the ten-year implementation of the strategy.

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U of C prof to teach at Oprah's school for girls

Medha Subramani
Gauntlet News

Oprah-crazy university-goers can now be excited about a new link between the media mogul's social work and the University of Calgary.

After watching a TV special on the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in March, U of C dance professor Shirley Murray wrote a letter to Oprah. She's now packing her bags to lead some creative dance workshops with the Academy's girls, who mainly came from impoverished backgrounds.

"After 40 years in the profession, you think you've peaked," said Murray. "Then an opportunity comes along like this and you think, 'Holy mackarel! I'm just starting again!'"

Murray's four decades at the U of C has been filled with numerous accolades including teaching excellence awards from the City of Calgary, the faculty of kinesiology, the Students' Union and a nomination for the president's teaching excellence award. On top of founding Dance and Child International, Murray also held the prestigious title of head choreographer for the opening ceremonies in the 1988 Olympic games.

"She's one of the faculty members that I consistently hear only positive reports about and when we meet with alumni the same thing happens," said faculty of kinesiology dean Wayne Giles. "She's a very impressive person and we're very pleased to have her make this trip on behalf

us and the University of Calgary."

Murray's passion and focus are based on a method of movement analysis called the Laban method, which is quite pedestrian, not requiring much technical knowledge. She said she plans on utilizing this "developmental" method in South Africa, as it helps foster many positive and healthy patterns.

"It allows people to produce little productions in dance that they never thought they were capable of," she said. "[It helps foster] self confidence, a bit more self knowledge, trust in respectful social interaction because you're working cooperatively with people to make something happen, and it helps in developing problem solving."

Murray stressed that her contribution will help in the Academy pursue its goal, which is to produce a significant female presence in all aspects of the South African culture, such as the arts, business and professions. However, she does admit she may face little hesitation at first.

"I'm anticipating perhaps a shyness or a bit of a fear because they're not sure what I'm going to do or what I'm going to ask of them since they haven't worked in a creative environment before," she said. "I'm anticipating light bulbs going off."

Both Murray and Giles also anticipate that the trip will not only increase cultural awareness, but may open up possibilities for teaching practicum opportunities and student exchanges between the U of C and local universities in South Africa.



Daniel Pagan/the Gauntlet

Murray will head to South Africa in September to teach dance.

"To me, the main way in which the university and our faculty will benefit is having her as a positive ambassador," said Giles. "I would be very surprised if we're not contacted by people from the places she visits with further questions and with similar opportunities for significant international involvement for our students."

Giles asserted that Murray would be a great spokesperson for the U of C, due to her remarkable knowledge, positive outlook, and pride in what the university has to offer.

In addition to her boss, Murray also had rave reviews from the other side of her desk.

"One thing that I really want to get across is what a passionate soul she is," said second-

year education student Jackie Luff.

Luft also emphasized Murray's extreme motivation, constant approachability and helpfulness, as well as her passion and hard work.

Second-year education student Stephanie Mathieson, felt that Murray's effective teaching style would make a positive impact on the girls of the academy.

"She has an ability to empower many of the people that she teaches," said Mathieson. "She does this by not only identifying their strengths and abilities, but helps the students to own their positive attributes. She leads by example and believes in her students."

Cartoonist showcased at Nickel Arts Museum

Katy Anderson
News Editor

The University of Calgary's Nickel Arts Museum's new exhibit isn't a

well-known renaissance painter or even a collection of ancient artifacts, it's a showcase of the life and work of cartoonist Everett Soop.

The Soop exhibit runs from

Jul. 6 to Sep. 29. Soop was a political cartoonist, a journalist and helped found the Kainai News, an aboriginal newspaper in southern Alberta and one of the first in Canada.

"I think cartoonists are artists and they reflect society in the same way that art does," said Native Centre director Shawna Cunningham. "What's unique about Everett's work is it reflected not just society but it's got a historic aspect to it that reflected some of the important political issues facing aboriginal people in that time."

The Kainai News focused on a range of local issues within the reserve and around southern Alberta as well as looking at national issues such as the Indian Act, the Whitepaper and Bill C-31. Exhibit curator Heather Divine explained the Kainai News was not only a vehicle for communicating the truth to both native and non-native people but to provide a native perspective on issues.

"Up to the time of the 1960s anything that native people read about themselves was generally written by a non-native person who may or may not have understood their culture, their heritage or the indi-

vidual circumstances affecting any kind of event that took place at the reserve," said Divine. "People were getting stereotypic, inaccurate and negative impressions of aboriginal culture."

Divine believed that Soop used humor to point out social ills and to suggest things needed to be changed. From the time of his youth Soop lived with muscular dystrophy. As his disease progressed Soop focused less on journalism and became more of an activist in the aboriginal disabilities community and was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal posthumously in 2001.

"Everett Soop cannot be understood unless you understood his community, his family and also his disability," said Divine. "A lot of his cartoons and a lot of the anger that comes out in his satire is also in response to his struggles with his disability and being a native person with a disability."

See **CARTOONIST**, page 5

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Homeless shelter announced for winter

Shelter will house 460 people in the S.E.

Chris Tait
Editor-In-Chief

The City of Calgary and the Mustard Seed teamed up and announced a new shelter project to be built in the Foothills industrial park Tue., Jul. 17.

The shelter, which will be located in a warehouse at 7025 44th St. S.E., was approved for renovations to prepare for the upcoming winter, when the weather can prove deadly for the city's homeless.

Last year, the empty 16th Ave. Brick building was converted into a temporary emergency shelter, accommodating 300 during particularly cold parts of the winter season. With that location demolished for road widening, a new shelter was needed to address the needs of a growing number of homeless Calgarians. The new shelter was designed for 460 and the plans aim at including a kitchen and recreational services.

"It's better," said Alderman Druh Ferrel about the new location. "I've got four homeless shelters in my ward, permanent ones. The Brick was the fifth. It was a little close to the core, but it functioned very well."

The Mustard Seed's report recommended the city pay for the transit fares to transport prospective clients to the shelter because of its separation from the core, where much of homeless population is situated.

While transportation to the site may initially be problematic for homeless found in the downtown core, both experts and aldermen agree that the shelter's separation is generally beneficial. Dr. Jeannette Waegamakers Schiff from the



John McDonald/the Gauntlet

This warehouse will replace the Brick on 16th as an emergency homeless shelter this winter.

University of Calgary's department of social work believed many cases in the U.S. have served as a warning against segregated low-income communities and approved of the shelter as a short-term solution.

"I think it's an extremely important idea that the city spread out its services to homeless people to other areas of the city," she said. "To draw all of the homeless into a very small area of the downtown core does not serve the homeless well, nor does it serve the rest of the city well."

The area in which the shelter will be located is mostly zoned for light industrial development, making it possible for some at the shelter to

find nearby work. Alderman Joe Ceci explained this was one reason for the choice of location, despite initial safety-related concerns from the companies in the area.

"Someone has done a survey and found that there's probably a third of potential users of this shelter that will work in the area surrounding the shelter," he said. "The mayor said 'You know, I drove around and there were a lot of help wanted signs,' so he felt confident the area would be a good location for introducing a shelter."

The shelter will be open for six months in the winter season, from November to April.

Cartoonist, cont'd from page 4

Cunningham believes the Kainai News was instrumental in the history of Aboriginal journalism in Canada and still sets the standard for today's Aboriginal media. Cunningham is happy to see many small newspapers popping up regionally but would like to see an aboriginal paper go national.

"[Kainai News] presented some very community-based reading material," she said. "Everett

was very controversial in that he was very honest in a satirical way about aboriginal governance. He challenged the whole concept of journalism, aboriginal people and challenged the status quo. He was highly creative and his comics received national recognition."

Soop is the only Aboriginal artist whose work is shown in the Canadian Caricature Museum.



Daniel Pagan/the Gauntlet

In addition to being a cartoonist and a journalist, Soop was an activist for Aboriginals with disabilities. Soop was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy as a teen.

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A MOVIE TO A-D'OH-RE



courtesy 20th Century Fox

The Simpsons Movie film preview

Ryan Pike
Entertainment Editor

On December 17, 1989, an animated short from *the Tracey Ullman Show* debuted as a half-hour animated sitcom following three seasons as a recurring feature on the program. Featuring the adventures of dim-witted nuclear technician Homer Simpson, his wife Marge and their children Bart, Lisa and Maggie, *the Simpsons* became a huge hit. Nearly two decades later, the world's favourite animated family is primed to make the leap to the big screen Fri., Jul. 27. To prepare you, the reader, for the release of *the Simpsons Movie*, we have compiled a list of the best Simpsons episodes of all-time.

10 "Burns Verkaufen der Kraftwerk" written by Jon Vitti Dec. 5, 1991

A bored Mr. Burns sells the power plant to German investors, then scrambles to buy it back when he discovers that nobody fears him anymore. The episode features one of the three-or-four dozen times Homer gets fired from his job (only to get it back by the end of the episode), Mr. Burns' less-than-stellar business acumen and joke upon joke at the expense of Germany. Above all else, though, the episode is remembered for Homer's "Land of Chocolate" fantasy sequence.

Homer: "Oh, I'm sorry. We were talking about chocolate?"

German: "That was ten minutes ago!"

9 "Homer at the Bat" John Swartzwelder Feb. 20, 1992

Mr. Burns makes a million-dollar bet with a rival power plant over a softball game and—after discovering most of his suggestions have been dead for decades—assigns Smithers to hire "good, living players" to work at the power plant and play on the team as ringers. The show has done gratuitous guest casting before, but never have so many big names made fun of themselves in such a great way. The show-closing "Talkin' Softball" song is also quite spectacular.

"I get \$50,000 to play one game?"
"That's right Mr. Canseco."

"Well, it's a pay cut, but what the hey. It sounds like fun."

—Smithers recruits Jose Canseco

8 "Marge vs. the Monorail" Conan O'Brien Jan. 14, 1993

Mr. Burns gets fined \$3,000,000 by the town for dumping nuclear waste and the town is swindled into investing the money in a monorail (despite Lisa's protests that the town's too small for one). Homer gets the job as the train's conductor, prompting a worried Marge to investigate the venture. One of two writing credits for late night magnate Conan O'Brien, this episode features a fantastic musical number extolling the virtues of the monorail and great voice acting by the late Phil Hartman. Plus, *Star Trek's* Leonard Nimoy shows up for the monorail's dedication ceremony.

"...and let me say, 'May the force be with you!'"

"Do you even know who I am?"

"I think I do. Weren't you one of the Little Rascals?"

—Mayor Quimby and Leonard Nimoy dedicate the monorail

7 "You Only Move Twice" John Swartzwelder Nov. 3, 1996

Homer gets a job with Hank Scorpio's Globex Corporation and moves the family to Cypress Creek. Homer turns out to actually be great at his job, although the rest of the family is miserable and Homer's new boss (voiced by Albert Brooks) turns out to be a super-villain hellbent on taking over the east coast. The result is a glorious 22-minute parody of the Bond films and a brief glimpse at what Homer's life would be like if he were at all competent.

"For the first time in my life, I'm actually good at my job. My team is way ahead of the weather machine and germ warfare divisions."

—Homer describes his job

6 "Homer Goes to College" Conan O'Brien Oct. 14, 1993

After failing a routine inspection, Homer is forced by Mr. Burns to enroll in Springfield University to avoid losing his job. Once there, Homer befriends some nerds and feuds with

the university's fun-loving dean. The entire episode parodies college comedies like *Animal House* and showcases just how unqualified Homer is to be a nuclear safety inspector. The highlights include Homer hitting a man with his car as a prank, Homer sharing a case of malt liquor with a pig and Scratchy finally getting even with Itchy.

Homer: "Actually, I've been working on a plan. During the exam, I'll hide under some coats and hope that somehow everything will work out."

Nerd: "Or, with our help, you can cram like you've never crammed before."

Homer: "Whatever. Either way is good."

5 "Who Shot Mr. Burns (Parts 1 & 2)" Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein May 21 and Sept. 17, 1995

When Springfield Elementary strikes oil and Mr. Burns drills it out from underneath them, the entire town is gunning for him. Soon after, Burns is shot in town square after blocking out the sun and everyone is a suspect. Arguably the peak of *the Simpsons'* popularity, the two-part cap-off to Season 6 spoofs the popular *Dallas* "Who shot J.R.?" mystery. The mystery itself kept fans guessing all summer and the show actually produced several alternate endings to ensure nobody leaked the identity of the real shooter.

"People, take it easy. We're all upset about Mr. Burns' plan to, uh, block out our sun. It is time for decisive action. I have here a polite but firm letter to Mr. Burns' underlings, who with some cajoling, will pass it along to him or at least give him the gist of it."

—Mayor Quimby addressing the town

4 "I Love Lisa" Frank Mula Feb. 11, 1993

Lisa feels bad for lonely Ralph Wiggum on Valentine's Day and gives him a valentine out of pity. Unfortunately, this causes him to fall in love with her. When her subtle hints to Ralph that she's not interested fall on deaf ears, Lisa must take drastic action. This was one of the first episodes to expand on the supporting cast, giving Ralph Wiggum a chance to shine on a large stage and opening up a whole field of characters for the writers to centre episodes around in the years following.

Homer: "I've heard 'em all. I like you as a friend.' 'I think we should see other people.' 'I don't speak English...'"

Lisa: "I get the idea."

Homer: "I'm married to the sea.' 'I don't wanna kill you, but I will...'"

—Homer explains rejection to Lisa

3 "Bart Sells His Soul" Greg Daniels Oct. 8, 1995

Bart sells his soul to Milhouse for five dollars, then discovers his dog doesn't recognize him, automatic doors don't open for him and that he can't laugh anymore. Desperate to get his soul back, Bart discovers that Milhouse sold his soul to the comic book store for *Alf* pogs. The humour is a bit dated (pogs), but Bart's frantic search for his soul is surprisingly touching. In the B-plot, Moe changes his bar into a family restaurant, only to discover that he hates children.

"If you like good food, good fun and a whole lot of crazy crap on the walls, then come on down to Uncle Moe's Family Feedbag."

—Moe's sales pitch

2 "\$pringfield (or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Legalized Gambling)" Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein; Dec 16, 1993

To bail out the town's struggling economy, Springfield legalizes gambling and Mr. Burns promptly opens a casino. Homer becomes a blackjack dealer, Marge develops a gambling problem, Mr. Burns slowly turns into Howard Hughes and Bart opens his own casino in his treehouse.

"Things just aren't as happy as they used to be down here at the unemployment office. Joblessness is no longer just for philosophy majors. Useful people are starting to feel the pinch."

—Kent Brockman, reporting on Springfield's dismal economy

1 "Last Exit to Springfield" Mark Kirkland Mar. 11, 1993

When Homer discovers that the new union deal doesn't include a dental plan, he leads the power plant workers in a strike to avoid paying for Lisa's braces. The result is Homer negotiating with Mr. Burns, followed by a drug-induced fantasy sequence and an episode that *Entertainment Weekly* named the show's best ever.

"Lisa needs braces!" "Dental plan!" "Lisa needs braces!" "Dental plan!"

—Homer's train of thought

VanGaalén has his eyes on the Prize

Calgary artist nominated for prestigious Polaris Music Prize

Chad VanGaalén
music interview

Sara Hanson
News Assistant

Sometimes, the qualities we dislike most about ourselves also happen to be the qualities that everyone else loves us for. This strange human phenomenon holds true for local musician and songwriter Chad VanGaalén, who has been recording his unique pop sounds in his bedroom for over a decade.

In 2005, VanGaalén was signed by Sub-Pop Records from the United States, which released his second album *Skelliconnection*. That album was recently nominated for the Polaris Music Prize—an award established in 2006 to honour

the best full-length Canadian album based solely on creative quality—and while VanGaalén is honoured, he is ironically fairly unimpressed with the album that attracted the prestigious nomination.

“Everyone works differently and I just kind of shot myself in the foot as far as how I work,” says VanGaalén. “I don’t necessarily think *Infiniheart* is the best album in the world either, but what made it work and stand out was the fact that it was totally naïve and I wasn’t doing it for any other reason than to see if I could do it. *Skelliconnection* was more like, ‘I’m on Sub-Pop and they’re going to show this to the rest of the world now.’ I was just trying to get over feeling insane about having stuff criticized. Being an artist who is hyper-critical of other stuff, it was coming off of me onto the record in a bad way, so it was kind of like

nervous energy but it wasn’t necessarily positive.”

While VanGaalén may have had higher expectations for his Sub-Pop debut, local fans obviously enjoy what *Skelliconnection* has to offer, as they flocked to VanGaalén’s Sled Island performance. VanGaalén says he enjoyed bringing his one-man band to Grace United Church, where the altar-turned-stage allowed him to create a storybook setting complete with a homemade elephant, as well as giant red and white cones spun by a couple of old record players. Overall, VanGaalén is impressed with the exposure Sled Island provided for Calgary’s up-and-coming artists, such as Jane Vain and the Dark Matter, who opened for Cat Power.

“Everyone gets down on Calgary, but when it comes down to it, it doesn’t really matter where you are

and that festival kind of proved it,” says VanGaalén. “We are a city and we can do whatever we want. It’s just up to the people to embrace it instead of dissing it. But, everybody loves to hate it too—it’s like the evil step-dad or something. It’s a weird city, but every city is weird.”

Whether he is playing around with homemade synthesizers and drum machines, experimenting with orchestral music or working on a new psychedelic animation, VanGaalén seems quite content with his life in Calgary. Just a year after *Skelliconnection* was released he has already finished two new albums, but this time around, he is taking his time to perfect them before fans get to hear what has been going on inside his head. VanGaalén’s future discography will likely include more instrumental, symphonic pieces, as well

as synthetic beats mastered by his homemade machines. He is also eagerly anticipating a new addition to his personal life, as his girlfriend is pregnant with a baby girl.

“The baby will give me an excuse to have somebody to show off to,” exclaims VanGaalén. “I just want her to take over the world with positive energy. I’ve been painting a lot of rainbows lately for her room. I just want to fill it up with colours so she can trip out all the time.”

Rainbows and newborns—these sound like the perfect ingredients to add to VanGaalén’s growing pastiche of imaginative noises and heartfelt lyrics that make his music a well-deserved Polaris Music Prize nominee.

The Polaris Music Prize will be awarded Sep. 24 in Toronto. Also nominated are the Arcade Fire, the Besnard Lakes, the Dears, Julie Doiron, Feist, Junior Boys, Miracle Fortress, Joel Plaskett Emergency and Patrick Watson.

Learning tolerance from intolerance

Newest Adam Sandler flick mocks gay marriage while endorsing it

Chuck & Larry
film review

Stephanie Mamayson
Gauntlet Entertainment

The Cannes Film Festival has come and gone and golden Oscar has been put away until next spring. With the masses taking refuge in air conditioned cineplexes, summer movie mania is going full tilt. Films released during this season tend to weigh light on complex story lines and deep, compelling characters, instead going for visceral entertainment and obvious amusement. These expectations are fortunate since *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and*

Larry probably won’t be collecting awards any time soon.

Chuck Levine (Adam Sandler) and Larry Valentine (Kevin James) are two Brooklyn firefighters and best friends that would do anything for each other. Family man Larry is a widower having a hard time letting go and Chuck is Mr. February, a playboy enjoying the single life. When an unfortunate technicality prevents Larry from naming his children as his pension beneficiaries, he sees only one logical conclusion: domestic partnership. Since Chuck is indebted to Larry for saving his life, he has no choice but to agree. In Larry’s mind the plan seems simple enough, but when an over-eager and nosy investigator (Steve Buscemi) starts to poke around, the

couple is forced to improvise and take their well-intentioned charade to the next level.

Sandler’s usual posse reprises their accustomed roles as secondary characters, this time playing fellow firefighters who act as a Greek chorus, mirroring the ignorant and homophobic general population. Throw in a surly boss (Dan Aykroyd), an exaggerated ethnic stereotype (Rob Schneider) and a hot, leggy lawyer who bonds with the presumably-gay Chuck (Jessica Biel), and the comedic formula is complete. That likely equation makes for watered-down humor and expected chuckles.

While this movie tries to make some headway into creating a more understanding society, it does so using the very stereotypes

that foster prejudice and discord, falsely hoping that the end will justify the means. A bright spot is that Kevin James—much like his role in the recent Will Smith vehicle *Hitch*—manages to play another endearing chubby man who is only trying to take care of his kids in spite of bureaucratic red tape. It’s a shame that, like in *Hitch*, James is relegated to sidekick status while Sandler gets paid to grope Jessica Biel. Nevertheless, the recent resurgence of a more mature age in comedy may mean Sandler and Co.’s cheap “pull my finger” tricks have gone the way of the horse and carriage.

I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry may not have the big budget special effects of its other summer counterparts but its cheesy easy way of tying up all the loose ends into a “happily ever after” is as outlandish as wizards and robots. This film is wrought with the predictable gags and clichéd jokes one often anticipates from a Happy Madison production. Yet in its own backwards way, *Chuck and Larry* still manages to pull morals out of the story, preaching about tolerance and sticking together as the true mark of a family.

I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry is now playing in theatres.



courtesy Universal Pictures/Getty Images

Adam Sandler and Kevin James politely leer at Jessica Biel, who appreciates their restraint.

off the page

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TOP 20 for the week of JULY 23.07

- * Denotes Canadian Artist
** Denotes Local Artist
- HOWARD HELLO & GREENESS**
Howard Hello & Greeness (Sick Room)
 - CARBON DATING SERVICE***
Polyentendrii (Teargas)
 - WAX MANNEQUIN***
Orchard And Ire (Infinite Heat)
 - BOAT**
Let's Drag Our Feet! (Magic Marker)
 - BLACK COFFEE COWBOYS****
Hot Like Fire (Southern Dandy)
 - THEY SHOOT HORSES**
*DON'T THEY**
Pick Up Sticks (Kill Rock Stars)
 - SAID THE WHALE***
Taking Abaalonía (indie)
 - STARS***
Do You Trust Your Friends (Arts & Crafts)
 - DIRTY TRICKS***
Sauve Qui Peut (Blue Skies Turn Black)
 - HOLOSCENE***
Nothing Is The End Of Everything (Son)
 - LOVE AND MATHEMATICS***
Love And Mathematics (indie)
 - PIANO MAGIC**
Part Monster (Important)
 - SPOON**
Ga Ga Ga Ga Ga (Merge)
 - SHIT DISCO**
Kingdom Of Fear (Fierce Panda)
 - ARKS**
International (Highwheel)
 - MOONEY SUZUKI**
Have Mercy (Elixia)
 - ARCHITECTURE IN HELSINKI**
Heart Races (Polyvinyl)
 - A CHILD BUT IN LIFE**
Magic Bullets (Words On Music)
 - BLACK MOTH**
SUPER RAINBOW
Dandelion Gum (Graveface)
 - PARTS AND LABOR**
Mapmaker (Jagjaguwar/Brah)

METAL

- KING DIAMOND**
Give Me Your Soul Please (Metal Blade)
- NAPALM DEATH**
Punishment In Captials (Armoury)
- JOB FOR A COWBOY**
Genesis (Metal Blade)
- GRAVEWORM**
Collateral Defoot (Nuclear Blast)
- ANGELCORPSE**
Of Lucifer And Lightning (The End)

EXPERIMENTAL

- TOBIAS LILJA**
Time Is On My Side (NSMD)
- VARIOUS***
New Folk: Saskatoon And Osaka (Non Capable)
- DAVID TORN**
Presenz (ECM)
- BiG A little a gAame** (Gigantic)
- COLLEEN**
Les Ondes Silencieuses (Leaf)

MYKE'S PICKS

- OWBOW**
The Narcotic Story
- CARIBOU**
Melody Day
- PROEM**
A Permanent Solution
- VARIOUS**
Required Listening 2
- EAMON McGRATH**
All Eyes Fixed On The Boy With The Black Guitar

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Four days of sun, fun and folk

Calgary's annual summer tradition celebrates 28 years

CalgaryFolkMusic festival preview

Ryan Pike
Entertainment Editor

It seems so long ago that the Calgary Folk Club partnered with the Alberta government to present what was then called the Traveling Folk Festival and Goodtime Medicine Show to commemorate the province's 75th birthday. That festival quickly became an annual event and 27 installments later, the Calgary Folk Music Festival stands as one of Calgary's cultural landmarks.

Every summer, Prince's Island Park is transformed into a musical paradise for four days. The transformation isn't magical, however, but rather a result of hundreds of tireless hours poured in by organizers before the first guitar is strummed. For the past decade, the Herculean task of constructing the event from scratch has belonged to festival artistic director Kerry Clarke.

"It probably takes about seven to eight months to program the festival," says Clarke. "It takes from September to June, with the heavy booking done in January and February. We have just under 100 separate shows happening in just under 36 hours over the weekend."

After choosing a festival focus, Clarke looks at bringing in compelling headline acts as well as unique fare from Alberta and the rest of the musical world. This year's installment features musicians from eight Canadian provinces and seven countries—including acts from as far as Tuva and Afghanistan.



Dale Miller/the Gauntlet

A good time is had by all at the Calgary Folk Music Festival.

"Eight of the 65-plus artists are from around Calgary, but [more are] also from throughout Alberta," says Clarke. "At least half of the line-up is Canadian. About 30 per cent of the remainder are typically from the United States and the rest are from throughout the world. Basically, we're looking for a real mix of artists from a whole bunch of different genres."

The challenge for festival organizers is building upon past successes without falling into the trap of becoming repetitive. Constantly refocusing the festival on different aspects of folk music each year is Clarke's way of keeping things fresh, yet familiar.

"We don't want every year to be

the same," says Clarke. "This year we have a focus on old-time music and New Orleans. One year we had a French program, another year we looked at spoken word. We look at what audiences liked and didn't like and adjust."

After nearly three decades, the Calgary Folk Music Festival has gained notoriety not only throughout Canada, but also around the world. All four-day festival passes were sold out well in advance of the first performance, with a few daily passes left at press time. While Clarke and the rest of the organizers appreciate the attention, they don't feel any added pressure.

"We're not really pressured, but I suppose we're always trying to one-

up ourselves," says Clarke. "We're trying to be better every year. We're keeping an eye on musical trends because we want to be relevant. I like to say we're music of the past, the present and the future."

This year's festival continues this tradition, promising four days of musical revelry featuring such diverse acts as Chumbawumba, City and Colour, Don McLean, Neko Case, Final Fantasy and Great Big Sea. The only danger of Folk Festival disappointment comes from the weather, so audiences are advised to dress for anything.

The 28th annual Calgary Folk Music Festival takes place July 26-29 at Prince's Island Park. Check out calgaryfolkfest.com for full daily schedules. Don't forget to bring a tarp.

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Arts & Entertainment - News - Sports

This week on Full Frontal...

For news, Randy takes a look at how Calgarians celebrated Canada Day, Katya investigates Mount Royal College's degree-granting possibilities, and Susan explores mounting energy crisis concerns. In arts, Taylor corners a member of the British monarchy, Alex talks to Lou Pride about Jazz, and Katya interviews the first female Muslim chaplain to ever work in a Canadian university. Last but not least, Justin talks to Olympic hopeful Jessica Zelinka about the 2008 games, and Taylor tells us why you should wear your helmet while biking.

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