

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

gauntlet

VOLUME 52 | ISSUE NO. 10 | AUGUST 11 | 2011



STEPPING UP

9 cousins walk 303 kilometres in 4 days to raise awareness for drought crisis in Somalia, pg. 3

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The Cover

Photo and design by Aly Gulamhusein

Extreme Somali hunger and corruption

Last weekend, Al-Shabaab, an extremist Islamic group from southern Somalia, withdrew its forces from the capital city of Mogadishu. While this development is crucial to the endeavours of the country's Transitional Federal Government and international aid workers alike, it is too soon for Somalia to declare complete victory over the violent religious faction.

Al-Shabaab continues to maintain tight control over the economy of southern Somalia. It is estimated Al-Shabaab's income is between US \$70 million and \$100 million, comprised of tax revenues and extortion in the region.

Furthermore, due to the often corrupt nature of the TFG itself, many of Somalia's wealthy often prefer to invest and engage in commerce with Al-Shabaab. This is despite the fact that the TFG has been supported by millions of dollars in American economic aid. America's

investment in Somali "democratic" government has thus been to little avail as its branches and factions are corrupt and divided.

In light of the famine currently decimating the Horn of Africa, the TFG has been rendered totally unprepared to affect the positive change in well-being that the African nation's nine million residents so desperately need.

At this point, World Vision and other aid charity commercials have taught us that this is where NGOs and international non-profit organizations are to pad quietly onto the stage of world politics. North Americans and Europeans are encouraged to give generously to fund the basic needs of developing-world citizens whose systems of governance are in crisis.

And rightly so — because of such aid, from private sources and governments alike, the UN and the US Agency for International Development have been able to provide

temporary shelter and sustenance for the 100,000 Somalis who have flooded the capital in the past week.

The 2.2 million citizens in need in the centre and south of Somalia, where Al-Shabaab continues to have the most influence, are at a disadvantage, to say the least. An economy exists (at least in theory) to produce what people need and give it to the people who ask for it.

But as long as international aid workers fear venturing to the south for fear of aid diversion at best or violent retribution at worst, especially in a region where the economy is in the hands of a tyrannical few who intend to use any material resource available to advance their own political means, the economic system of distribution needed to effectively administer aid in a country stricken with famine fails to exist. Couple that with a government paralyzed by corruption and limited by its temporary nature, south-

ern Somalis will continue suffering.

International aid organizations need not enter quietly into the "performance" that is international politics. They can charge into the scene with a protagonist's assertion to drive governmental corruption offstage. But in order for international aid to be able to even take a step towards mitigating the effects of famine in Somalia, opposition to the alleviation of hunger, whether it be in the likeness of people or infrastructure, needs to be eradicated — or at least managed.

If the political actors with which NGOs share the stage continue to remain hidden in shadows of corruption and inefficiency, the swift departure of an extremist group or two means nothing. Al-Shabaab's exit may have signaled the end of a scene, but the successful alleviation of poverty in Somalia is what will conclude the performance.

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Youth raise funds to end Somalia's famine

Nine Somali-Canadian cousins walk from Calgary to Edmonton

Amy Badry
News Editor

On August 4, nine cousins, aged 18 to 27, gathered on the outskirts of Calgary for their collective walk to Edmonton — 303 km. The walk was part of their fundraising initiative, “Step up for Somalia.”

“My sister and I were watching what was happening back home in Somalia and we knew that we couldn’t just sit there and not do anything,” said Khadija Abdi.

Somalia is currently experiencing its worst drought in 60 years and famine is widespread.

“What is important to remember is that no matter where you are from you are a human being and everyone is entitled to water, food and compassion,” said Madina Abdi.

Filomena Abdi, mother to Madina and Khadija and aunt to the rest, said she is proud of the youth.

“It has all come full circle now. In 1993 my husband and I brought 17 family members over from Somalia with the help of the Canadian government and generous donations from Calgarians,” she said. “Now they are doing fundraising for Somalia. They are good role models to future generations.”

The cousins arrived in Edmonton Sunday afternoon, each walking between 40 and 50 km a day.

The group encountered heat and rain, as well as mosquitoes during their trip.

“It was pretty smooth but the third day was a bit harder,” said Moleed Osman, a business student at the U of C. “There was rain for four hours and our van ran over a porcupine. It was just like everything was going against



Aly Gulamhusein/the Gauntlet

Somali-Canadian youth sing K’naan’s Waving Flag as they prepare for their fundraising walk. The nine cousins who completed the walk Sunday are Simona Siad, Moleed Osman, Madina Abdi, Nasra Siad, Filsan Abdi, Asha Siad, Khadija Abdi, Fartoon Siad, and Yasmin Siad.

us that day.”

The walk for them was representative of the walk many Somalis take to refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia to flee famine and violence.

“We motivated each other a lot,” said Osman. “We reminded ourselves that people who are going through this are doing it without running shoes. They are doing it without water. They are doing it without a safety van checking up on them. They are doing it having kids on their back. They are doing it with not knowing what direction they are going. They are doing it without knowing if there will be food for them when they

get to the refugee camps. They are doing it with a lot more insecurities.”

The group was greeted in Edmonton by other Somali youth.

“We reminded ourselves that people who are going through this . . . are doing it with a lot more insecurities.”

– Moleed Osman,

“It was really cool because it was the first time Somali youth from Calgary and youth from Edmonton collaborated like this,” said Osman.

Since the walk finished, the cousins have been contacted by other Somali youth across the nation and even in the United Kingdom about what they can do in

their communities.

“We really motivated a lot of Somalis in other cities,” said Osman. “It is causing people to

see SOMALIA, page 5

Fast Facts about Somalia

Population: 9,359,000

Capital: Mogadishu

Area: 637,657 square kilometres

Languages: Somali, Arabic, Italian, English

Life Expectancy: 46 years

GDP per Capita: US\$600

Literacy Per Cent: 38

Geography: Somalia lies in the eastern-most part of Africa. It is bordered by Djibouti, Kenya, Yemen, Ethiopia, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.

Topography: The land is flat in the south and mountainous in the north.

Weather: Hot year-round with periodic monsoon winds and irregular rainfall.

Politics: Mohamed Siad Barre was the military dictator and president of Somalia from 1969 to 1991. In 1991 civil war ended the dictatorship and Somalia has been without a national government since that time.

Health: Somalia has one of the lowest HIV rates in Africa. In 2007 it was estimated at 0.5 per cent of the nation’s adult population.

Famine: Famine is defined as more than 30 per cent of children suffering from acute malnutrition and two adults or four children must be dying of hunger each day for every group of 10,000 people. Two regions are declared to be in a famine state.

Source: Wikipedia, National Geographic

What fundraising methods are most effective?



“Bake sales are really good. Any fun events like the dodgeball tournament or cabarets.”
– Harleen Dhah, fifth-year economics



“Something that appeals to everyone. Basically anything with food involved.”
– Manjot Sandhu, third-year accounting



“Large parties with bands attract people. A lot of people come to parties, not a head-shaving.”
– Dan Crittenden, third-year communications



“It’s more personal one-on-one, like with canvassing. It’s harder to say no.”
– Dan Clarke, third-year biological science



Fair trade products on campus

Ten Thousand Villages partners with Chaplain Centre to sell fair trade

Aly Gulamhusain/The Gauntlet

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Navjot Jassar
Gauntlet News

On November 29 and 30 fair trade products made by artisans from around the world will be sold in MacHall.

“Due to the success we had last year, we will be coming back for two days instead of just one,” said Ten Thousand Villages co-manager Jason Fehr.

Ten Thousand Villages works with poor and disadvantaged artisans who would otherwise be

unemployed or underemployed. The store, with 49 locations across Canada, places consistent orders to create a reliable source of income for these producers.

“We will not ditch an artisan, but we work with them long-term, so the products continue to get better,” said Fehr.

The organization works with the artisans so they can create pieces that will sell in North America, but reflect their local culture. A selling price is mutually agreed on.

“It is a positive event trying to

raise awareness,” said Students’ Union president Dylan Jones. “We felt that allowing a fair trade market was an opportunity for students to engage in conscious purchasing.”

The SU sponsored this event after an application was submitted by the Multi-Faith Chaplains’ Centre, which will receive 10 per cent of the sales. The centre partnered with Ten Thousand Villages to put on the event. Both groups aim to expose undergraduate students to social justice issues and the benefits of informed consumer decisions.

This is the second year the event will run.

According to Oxfam — an international aid and development organization — trade rules often favour rich nations.

“Rich countries and powerful corporations have captured a disproportionate share of the benefits of trade, leaving developing countries and poor people worse off,” said its website.

According to Oxfam, countries need to change the way they trade.

“We do fair trade because artisans are in such desperate situations, they take whatever they can,” said Fehr. “We pay them a fair wage so they can take their children to school.”

He also said it is not just about the money. “In many cases, these traditions would be lost if they weren’t supported; [paying fair wages] helps build people up. We try to give them a respectable life with dignity.”

Poor economies cannot use import tariffs and their industries cannot compete with cheap imports.

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coordinator Edna Einsiedel said that the positives of fair trade outweigh the negatives.

"If you took away the fair trade component, you're reliant on what's in the market, and some consumers want to buy based on other values, not just attributes of the product itself, for example, how animals are treated, and the non-use of child labour. These are all decisions that have little to do with the actual product itself."

Often fair trade product prices can be much higher. Ten Thousand Villages tries to avoid this by lowering costs.

"From an economic point of view, Ten Thousand Villages tries to maximize producer surplus. We also employ a lot of volunteers to cut down costs," said Fehr.

Jones believes it is up to students to stand up for what they think is right.

"When I started school here five years ago, there was very little fair trade, composting and recycling. Because of people consistently raising the issue, something was done about it. For example, the Styrofoam issue. Next year MacHall will be free of Styrofoam. We need to continue pushing for a better system. Talk

to the people that can make the change. That's how change gets done."

Ten Thousand Villages is a non-profit organization run by the Mennonite Central Committee. It was started by American Edna Ruth Byler in 1946.

According to the Ten Thousand Villages website, Byler initially brought embroidery home to sell to friends after visiting volunteers in Puerto Rico who were teaching sewing classes to women in poverty. Her endeavour became so popular she began to sell Haitian woodenware and cross-stitch needle work from Palestinian refugees as well.

Ten Thousand Villages is one of the founding members of the World Fair Trade Organization. October 1 will be the organization's 65th anniversary.

The organization also does a number of off-site sales in order to promote itself to the community, and would like to continue coming to the university campus in the future.

Ten Thousand Villages goods come from 35 countries in the developing world. The company works with more than 60,000 individuals, 70 per cent of whom are women.

Somalia, continued from page 3



Illustration by Morgan Shandro

actually step up and do a walk in their city or town."

The cousins said social media increased awareness about Step up for Somalia and connected them with others across the nation.

For Osman, the walk really pushed home the point that women in the Somali community can

make a big difference.

"My three girl cousins are the ones who came up with this idea and instead of saying 'they're crazy,' I followed along," he said. "They really inspired me. They are leaders."

The cousins planned and executed the walk all within a two-week time period.

"We did our Facebook page, our Twitter, our online blog, all in one night. We knew this is something we had to do really quickly because what is happening back home is very severe," said Khadija Abdi.

Osman said people were surprised at how successful they were at raising funds and awareness in such a short period of time.

"What really helped was that we all knew each others' strengths and weaknesses and worked off that," said Osman. "My cousin is trying to be a journalist so she sent every news station a press release and that is how they got on board with us. My other cousin has a degree in communications and I took in my business and administration skills."

As of press time Step Up for Somalia has raised \$24,730, \$14,730 more than their original goal. All donations are going to Oxfam Canada. The Canadian government also announced they plan to match each donation dollar.

To donate go to walkforsomalia.tumblr.com.
Donations will be accepted until August 31.

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An international student experiences the Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth

Joydeep Mukherjee

Gauntlet Entertainment

As almost every Albertan knows, the Calgary Stampede is a ten-day event featuring rodeo shows, art exhibitions, parades, agricultural shows and live concerts. The Stampede is almost a hundred years old and is a major tourist attraction from all over the world. Therefore, it came as no wonder that Stampede was the first thing I heard about Calgary when I decided to join the university as a graduate student last fall.

Opinions about Stampede from those who have already experienced it, however, were mixed. Some were plain ecstatic, telling me that the festival does full justice to its tagline as “the Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth.” Others were less thrilled, although they said it was definitely worth one visit. Nonetheless, I bought tickets for some of the Stampede shows along with a few friends from the university. It would be fair to say that none of us had any idea what all this was about. Ignorant as we were, we were still excited. The only concern was the notorious Calgary weather, which had almost ruined the festival last year.

Being a foreigner to this part of the world, I had no prior experience of witnessing any kind of Western event. Sure, I have grown up on a healthy dose of Alistair MacLean adventure novels. Also, I am a huge sucker for Western movies. The words “rodeo” and “cowboy” conjure up images of Clint

Eastwood lookalikes in my mind, complete with cowboy hats, slinging guns, rugged jeans and lassos. The Calgary Stampede, famous for being one of the biggest Western festivals, was a good — if not the best — opportunity to get a glimpse of that. That’s where the major attraction was for me — to experience Western culture firsthand. I had little interest in the Stampede breakfasts or theme parties before and after the event, or even in the parade which was attended by some of my friends in order to get a glimpse of the royal couple, the official guests this year.

As we entered the sprawling Stampede Park, an exhibition of First Nations culture caught our attention. Several brightly-decorated teepees were on display, and a native war dance performance was being held on-stage. My first impression of Stampede Park reminded me of a fair (or *mela*, as it is called) back in India, with food vendors, games and rides crowded together.

People were dressed for the occasion in cowboy hats and jeans and wide leather belts. The distinctive feature of the Stampede has got to be cowboy hats, with almost everybody wearing them in accordance with the Western theme. Not to be the ones left out, my friends and I quickly bought our hats and joined the crowd. The first show we watched was the chuckwagon race. Honestly speaking, after a few rounds of racing, we began to lose interest. Luckily there were enough friendly people in the audience to chat with;

one man even tried to get “the wave” going for a while.

The Grandstand Show blew all of us away — it was easily one of the best live shows we had ever seen. Performances included singing, dancing, standup comedy, acrobatics and a lot more. The spectacular fireworks deserve a special mention here; I hadn’t seen anything quite like it before. For those who missed this show, I would highly recommend watching it next year, even more so since it might be more spectacular in 2012 when Stampede celebrates its 100th anniversary. The Grandstand Show ended at 11:30 p.m., after which we spent some time hanging around the Stampede Park. I was amazed to see the bustling crowd at this hour; more astounding was the fact that streams of people were pouring in even at midnight, and the festivities showed no signs of slowing down. All the shops were open and were doing quite well. For those who complain about the lack of “action” in Calgary, this was a good time to prove them wrong. The carnival mood was in full swing, and it’s clear that the city takes on a party atmosphere during Stampede. This struck me as the most striking aspect of the Stampede — it’s amazing how the festival can infuse so much soul into the city.

We went again the next day to catch the rodeo show as well as to cover the rest of Stampede Park. In the beginning my friends and I were a little bit skeptical, particularly because the chuckwagon racing didn’t exactly

register an enormous excitement among us the day before. To our great relief, however, the rodeo show was far, far better. The participants were enthusiastic, the crowd was cheerful, and frankly, what else do you need to put on a good show? Honestly, I was not even aware of what terms like “barrel racing” and “steer wrestling” meant, but that didn’t get in the way of my enjoyment. Everything being properly explained, it did not take long for me to get into the spirit of the rodeo. This show lasted a little more than three hours, leaving all of us fully entertained in the end.

After the rodeo show, we decided to take a stroll inside the park to see the rest of what Stampede had to offer. First of all, we saw a very entertaining one-man band show and some stalls set up by the Canadian army to display uniforms and artillery. Then we checked into the BMO Museum, where amazing works of art were up for sale. We spent a considerable amount of time checking out paintings, wooden handicrafts, bronze statues and assorted artworks. This was a caveat for someone who actually planned on buying art, but these were extremely costly. Either that, or we were just poor graduate students.

As an outsider to North America and its culture, I have found that there can hardly be another show that captures the heart and spirit of the West as precisely as the Stampede does. If you are a new international student at the University of Calgary, this is an event that should not be missed.

Osheaga Music and Arts Festival

Gauntlet editor treks to Montreal for one of summer's last major outdoor events

Erin Schumlich
Sports Editor

Sweat drips down your forehead from the heat of 50,000 bodies all around, compressing you into a tight area where your hands can hardly move. An arm raises and a hairy armpit is shoved in your face, the sweat mixing with your own. In the heat of the night, you wait in anticipation.

The second headliner Eminem walks on stage, your body sways with others' in excitement. The soup of sweat is all worth it for that moment as you, and everyone around you, belts out every single word of "8 Mile."

Don't like Eminem? Well, even though I know you're lying, luckily music festivals offer something for everyone.

Unfortunately, there is such a short amount of time in Canada when major outdoor music events are possible — that is, without the threat of freezing to death after passing out from too much beer. With the remnants of the Montreal music festival Osheaga slowly fading away after the last weekend in July, the Canadian festival scene is coming to a close.

Joey Greco is one fiery Calgarian who, like me, made the pilgrimage to Montreal for the "best festival of the year."

"Is it already over?" Greco asked. "It was amazing. I would do it ten times over. After that, I would probably need to sleep."

Greco has been heavily involved in the festival scene this summer, trekking to big-name shindigs like Coachella, Sasquatch and, most recently, Osheaga.

Of the three, he claims Osheaga has the best food. Can anything beat French-Canadian poutine?

"It's not just about the music," Greco asserted. "It's about hanging out with friends and like-minded people and just having a good time."

Osheaga was not just a good time for music lovers, but for music makers as well. The three-day-long festival in Parc Jean-Drapeau, a small island in Montreal, has seen its popularity skyrocket since it started five years ago. This year's attendance was a record 81,233 people, and this climbing number shows no sign of slowing down. This figure is far from unimpressive, especially for a festival that features many lesser-known bands.

Due to logistical issues, the schedule failed to advertise in advance one of the festival's best rising talents. Experimental indie-soul electronica duo Freedom or Death was added to a second day of the schedule at the last minute, and I was lucky to find the smallest stage at Osheaga on the Sunday afternoon. The stage, hidden among a bundle of trees, hosted a trio of musicians that enchanted the audience for a thirty-minute set.

Vocalist Sway and DJ Fernandez used to be prominent fixtures on

the professional side of the music industry until they both quit their cushy jobs to pursue their own musical fantasies. Thus, Freedom or Death was born, and with just four years under their belt, they have become a name to watch out for.

"We write music the way we want to hear it, not [according to] what other people say we should do," Fernandez says of their new seven-song EP, *Ego*, that came out in April.

"Art is always in conflict with business. Artists are trying to make a living and they have to think about business, but business doesn't always think about the best things for art. Working in the industry is kind of the lens showing how things are done. We were discouraged by the means that we used to promote music versus focusing on the art.

"If [this] doesn't work, at least we swung the bat at trying to make our own art form."

With big plans for the future, including a road trip across Canada,

Freedom or Death live by the mantra their name implies.

"The whole 'freedom-or-death' thing, it's much bigger than the music thing. It's more of a conversation starter for how people live their life. Deal with the choices you want to make or don't even try it."

The sixth edition of Osheaga provided unequivocal fun for those lucky enough to find themselves there. The only glimpse of unwanted chaos was caught at the end of the night when the fun times ended and thousands of festivalgoers waited for the single train off the island. However, this was a small price to pay to see the incredible performances of bands like Beirut, the Rural Alberta Advantage, Ratatat and Mother Mother.

Until next year, Osheaga Music and Arts Festival I can't wait to kick off my shoes again and spend another three days in music heaven.

Catch Freedom or Death online at freedomordeathmusic.com or live at That Empty Space and Broken City on September 16.



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- 2 **SMOOVE + TURRELL** *Eccentric Audio* (Jalapeno)
- 3 **MATTHEW SHIPP/WILLIAM PARKER/BEANS HPRIZM** *Knives From Heaven* (Thirsty Ear)
- 4 **RELIC*** *Not For Nothing* (Gammadelta)
- 5 **DJ COSM**** *Time And Space* (Makebelieve)

SPOTLIGHT ON CALGARY



The Barley Hecats

They call themselves countryspeedfolk... which is great! They have guitar, banjo and harmonica and it turns out some pretty rockin' country tunage.
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Barley-Hecats/137984506211884>

LIVE BANDS ON-AIR

THE POLY SHORES: Fri Aug 12—11 am
FOLK THIEF: Thurs Aug 25—10:15 am
MERCURY AUDIO: Fri Aug 26—11:30 am
MARC ROSS: Mon Sept 5—10:30 am
GORGON HORDE: Sat Sept 10—2 pm

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

All Ages FREE at Olympic Plaza
SAT. AUG. 13 - 7 pm to 10 pm
ERIN ROSS ▶ THE BITTERWEED DRAW
THE DYEING MERCHANTS ▶ GRETCHEN
SAT. AUG. 27 - 7 pm to 10 pm
MERCURY AUDIO ▶ THE SHRAPNELLES
THE PSYCHIC ALLIANCE ▶ FAUX FUR

RADTASTIC!

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BLUES FEST 2011 REVISITED



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1. **RAY MANZAREK** of the Doors closed his Thursday set with "Riders on the Storm." The real storm was to come the following night.
2. **BLACKIE AND THE RODEO KINGS** said they were uncomfortably hot in their custom suits.
3. **BLUES LAGOON** Friday night's thunderstorm created a wading pool in front of the stage.
4. **RAINBOW BRIDGE** A welcoming arc frames the stage following Friday's storm.
5. **ROY ROGERS** teamed up with Manzarek, adding some hot double-necked guitar licks.
6. **JW-JONES** and his band rocked an appreciative crowd with their signature sound.
7. **THE TWISTERS'** bass player sweated it out during an impressive acoustic double bass solo.
8. **SMILING JACK SMITH** waves to the crowd before launching into his bluesy "Zombie Love."
9. **THE NATIONAL DEBONAIREs** closed the Blues Festival with a seasoned new vocalist.

photos and design by Ken Clarke

