RIGHT TO FOOD ZINE

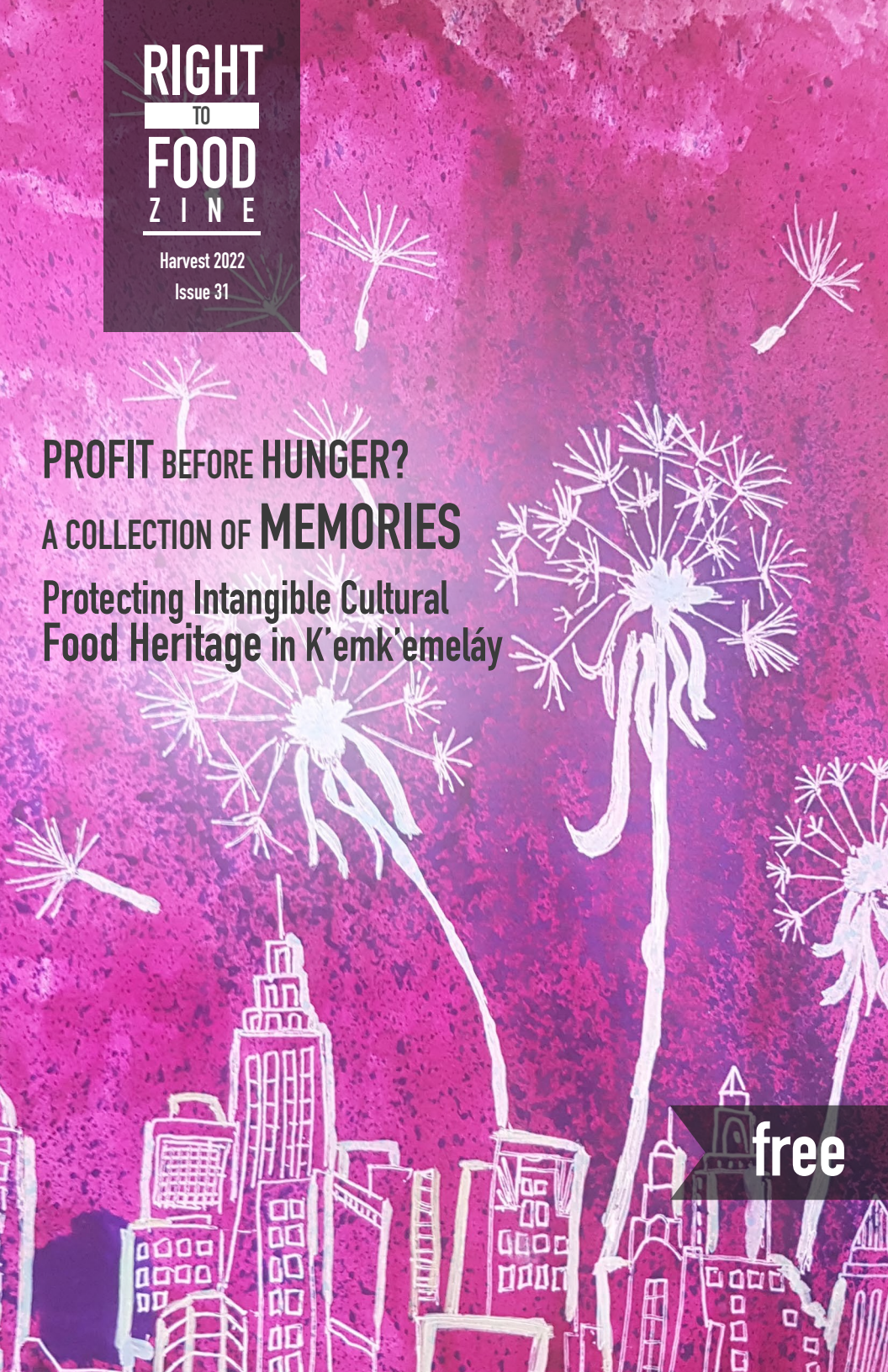
Harvest 2022

Issue 31

PROFIT BEFORE HUNGER?

A COLLECTION OF MEMORIES

Protecting Intangible Cultural Food Heritage in K'emk'emeláy



free

Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House
573 East Hastings St. Vancouver, BC V6A 1P9
Unceded Coast Salish Land & Waters

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the original authors and contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance of:

Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House

studio PRINT group

UBC THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Community Engagement

Cover art by Antonietta Gesualdi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROTECTING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL FOOD HERITAGE IN K'EMK'EMELÁY (VANCOUVER) 04
Ian Marcuse

PROFIT BEFORE HUNGER? 08
Sue Senger

YESTERDAY'S TEARS 10
Ashara Love

MY LIFE IN POLITICAL SERVICE 11
Ilona Ferenczi

I WAS ARRESTED FOR DREAMING WITH HUMMINGBIRDS & WILD SALMON 12
Donna Clark

A COLLECTION OF MEMORIES 14
Antonietta Gesualdi

SLEEPING BEAUTY 16
Jennifer Cooley

IN PRAISE OF PANTHER 18
Mildred Grace German

DON'T FEAR THE REAPER 20
Anushka Azadi

FREEDOM IS A WEED 22
Ashara Love

HAPPY SAMHAIN 23
Shannon Hecker

FOOD FOR THOUGHTS 24
Mildred Grace German

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS 25
Graham Cunningham

SUPPORTING CULTURAL FOOD ASSETS

PROTECTING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL FOOD HERITAGE IN K'EMK'EMELÁY (VANCOUVER)

BY IAN MARCUSE

Ian is a 2nd generation settler occupier of Jewish, English and Welch heritage. Born in so called Vancouver, he calls Commercial Drive home where he has lived for 33 years. Ian is deeply committed to community building and the decolonization process. Formerly coordinator of the Grandview Woodland Food Connection at Britannia Community Centre for 14 years, he is currently the coordinator of the Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Networks.

K'emk'emelay in the Squamish language, also known as Vancouver, is a city of wonderful diversity and the reason many of us love to live here. At the same time, growing inequities and unaffordability are driving people out of our city. Those who face income challenges, trapped in precarious work, youth, diasporic communities and equity-denied groups are especially impacted, struggling to survive, and forced to leave Vancouver for more affordable communities.

A growing concern is the loss of what is termed 'intangible cultural food heritage'. In 2021 a new City of Vancouver development sign was posted at 5163-5187 Joyce Street for a 32-storey luxury condo tower where Sari-Sari, Kumare Express, Pampanga's Cuisine, Plato Filipino, Joyce Jiaozi & Kay Market are all currently located, and which will all be displaced by this development. These five beloved Filipinx and one Chinese food businesses represent the very best of Vancouver but are increasingly under the threat of closure due to mounting pressure from redevelopment and gentrification across the city. (At the time of this writing, City staff have discussed these concerns with the project applicant and will be requesting that they consider making provisions for those displaced businesses to return to the site following redevelopment).

Such spaces also termed 'cultural food assets' that maintain and share culture through food may include small family businesses such as green grocers and cultural restaurants. These businesses provide community members with access to important cultural food items, ranging from produce, herbal medicines, traditional goods and ethnic meals. They also function as vital community spaces, providing community members with access to culturally appropriate resources and supports, including job opportunities.

The term 'intangible cultural heritage' as defined by UNESCO, "includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices,

> HOW DO WE SEE THE ROLE THAT COLONIALISM HAS PLAYED AND CONTINUES TO PLAY IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOOD —

festival events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts". Vancouver's ethnic restaurants and markets are such examples with food traditions considered vital aspects of cultural identity and survival, especially in the increasingly corporatized and whitewashed cities that we are living in.

The Joyce Street displacements are just one example of intangible heritage loss that is also seen throughout Vancouver. Chinatown is also facing such dire threats associated with rising land costs and gentrification. Anyone who has visited Chinatown recently will see the obvious impacts of many closed businesses and neglect. Organizations such as the hua foundation work to build community in that neighbourhood through racial equity and civic engagement. A large focus of their work has been highlighting the importance of the Chinese food community and its vulnerabilities in the face of increasing development and loss of culture.

As Christina Lee of the hua foundation says: "food is a huge part of building an equitable city specifically as it relates to our identities....There is a growing discussion on the ways that culture and knowledge in general are inherently tied and passed along through food and our relationships with it....To take it one step further, how do we see the role that colonialism has played and continues to play in our relationships with food. For many people growing up in a settler colonial

context or for whatever other reasons of having been displaced from their cultural homelands, our ability to live with dignity and agency and to be unapologetically ourselves is so viscerally tied to our experiences with food whether within our communities or as we share our food and ourselves across communities. Food is often the first connection that we have to our culture as well as the first steps into cultures that are new to us. Food threads together our relationships to people, to places and for people like myself, even to language".

In response to our imagining of Chinatown cultural heritage in the past tense, as a historical past, Christina reminds us that "the reality is that Chinatown continues to offer cultural food assets, goods and services to people who still rely on them today...How do we move beyond the past tense imagining of ethno-cultural communities towards an image of continuity and sustainability for living heritage and culture". These concerns are felt amongst many other Vancouver cultural communities, who wish to see thriving communities.

> **"FOOD IS OFTEN THE FIRST CONNECTION THAT WE HAVE TO OUR CULTURE AS WELL AS THE FIRST STEPS INTO CULTURES THAT ARE NEW TO US.**

The Joyce Street displacements sparked major organizing and new community connections to advocate for the continuation of food and culture in their neighbourhoods. Currently, there are no existing policies that protect these cultural food assets. The Joyce Street Action Network, Collingwood Renfrew Food Justice, and Sliced Mango Collective actively advocated for such policy which resulted in the March 2022, Placekeeping: Protecting and Supporting Cultural Food Assets and Other Forms of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Vancouver, which passed with unanimous support from the rest of City Council. But much more work still needs to be done.

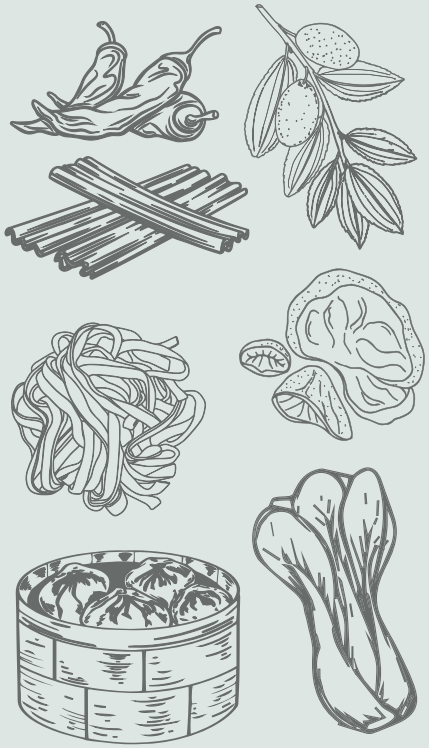
More recently, the hua foundation, Punjabi Market Regeneration Collective, Chinatown Legacy Stewardship Group, and the Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Networks along with the above groups joined forces in a municipal election campaign to bring this issue forward in the latest municipal election. 64 food organizations and businesses along with over 200 individuals signed an open letter pressing for protection of intangible food heritage in Vancouver and a survey was sent to all candidates to gain insight on their stance on the issue and invite them to consider policy responses that would protect and support these food assets in our communities.

We have found that through our election efforts the more right leaning candidates and parties were less likely to respond to requests. However, we were surprised and happy to see that the language of cultural

food assets and intangible cultural heritage were broadly understood by respondents to this survey which marks a positive shift in how our potential elected officials understand diverse food needs throughout the city.

Our next step is to publish some of this data publicly through social media channels. We are in the process of developing how we will roll out those details but please keep an eye on @joycestnetwork on Instagram for follow up! Over the winter we will work to set up meetings with new councillors and food planners at the City of Vancouver to discuss the results from this survey and follow up on the 2022 Food Assets and Intangible Cultural Heritage motion.

Protection of these cultural food assets is key to building a more equitable city. While the City of Vancouver professes that we are a city for all and with many plans and strategies in the works that support this, there is still a need for policy and commitment with teeth to support the many values that intangible food assets provide Vancouver along with genuine equity for all.



Profit Before Hunger?

Corporate Control of the Food Supply Doesn't Serve Hungry People

By Sue Senger

When you walk into most grocery stores, the set up is very similar. The real food is located along the outer walls of the store. This includes the fresh fruits and vegetables, the dairy, the meat department and the bakery or deli section. This outer ring is where you can find foods with minimal packaging that you have to take home and turn into meals.

The rest of the store is focused on selling you pre-made foods. Aisle after aisle of boxes and bags and cans all meant to convince you that cooking for yourself is a terrible chore to be avoided at all cost, and hey, here's some very costly alternatives meant to save you all that time and trouble.

When you step back for a moment and take a good look at a grocery store, the primary purpose is not to sell you nutritious food at all. It's to sell you the highly processed, pre-made facsimiles of food that generate massive profits for the food-controlling corporations.

Because who is sugar-sweetened cereal good for? Who needs to buy a bag of noodles with sauce in a packet that is so overloaded with salt and sugar as to be a heart-attack in waiting? How did we get here?

Study after study has shown the damaging effects of ultra-processed on our mental and physical well-being. From cancer-causing additives and preservatives, to the health-destroying effects of excess salt and sugar, many of the middle aisle foods that are bagged, boxed, canned, frozen and pre-made fall into the ultra-processed and nutritionally suspect category.

In the meantime, there are hungry people everywhere. As food prices continue to skyrocket, there will be more and more hungry people in our cities and towns. And yet grocery stores remain packed to the bursting point of foods that do not solve the problem of hunger. They remain packed with over-priced and over-processed foods designed to generate massive wealth for corporate shareholders.

Profit before hunger.

The center of most grocery stores is a nutritional desert. Farmers are going broke because they cannot survive on the pittance they get paid for real food, while the food industry continues to grow and profit at mind-blowing levels.

Take a look at these numbers. In 2020, the top 4 food corporations by revenue were:

Nestle at $63.8 billion
Sysco Corporation at $60.1 billion
JSB at $51.7 billion
George Weston at $50.1 billion
(source:www.foodprocessing-technology.com/features/top-ten-food-companies-in-2020/)

That's billions of dollars being made while contributing to the worst health crisis the planet has ever seen. Because the food you eat directly affects your health and well-being, the probability that you will become ill, diseased or suffer from mental challenges. It's also BILLIONS of dollars being made while people around the world starve.

Corporate control of our food supply means that the food you have access to is determined by someone else. And as we watch our food prices skyrocket, it is to maintain these billion dollar profits. The food sector profits declined 2.9% in 2020 down to a whopping $3,503.3 billion. (source: www.gobankingrates.com/money/business/10-food-beverage-companies-making-most-money/)

The rich continue to get richer and more people are going to go hungry.

Now let's start to re-imagine this scene.

Imagine how much food could be grown if we simply eliminated the worst of the junk food and ultra-processed food on the grocery store shelves. That is, instead of using the agricultural land required to create that crap, the land was used to produce nutritious staple foods to feed people.

It is a numbingly simple solution, that will never happen in a corporate-controlled food system. There just isn't enough profit in it. But if we truly want to feed people and end hunger, **we need new models for our food system**. Or perhaps, what we actually need old models that worked well in our past. Things like food like food cooperatives, farmers markets, and organizations that generate local food supplies.

It also means that we have to stop shopping those middle aisle convenience foods and focus on creating demand for nutritious whole foods that generate health and wellness. Teaching food, nutrition, home economics, and cooking in schools, growing food at every school and university, and going back to having humans in the kitchen preparing real meals in real time are all achievable components of re-imagining our food systems.

And perhaps most important of all, it means we need to start growing food in every place that food grows (which is everywhere!). Changing our building codes to ensure adequate window light, garden space, and green building designs that incorporate growing food plants on the building itself are all feasible changes that can help to rapidly shift the local supply of food.

The solutions to ending hunger can be locally based.

Thanks to modern technology, it is easier than ever to find local sources of food that are contributing to a re-organization of the food system.

There are two apps in particular I want to draw your attention to because they can contribute to the localization of the food supply and to ending hunger.

The first is ***Feed it Forward*** – created by Executive Chef Jagger Gordon of Toront, ON and the second is the Food Co-op Finder - created by Jon Steinman of Nelson, BC (author of Grocery Story: The Promise of Food Co-ops in the Age of Grocery Giants).

Feed it Forward is a free apps for your phone that enables everyone to share to food. Whether that is a meal which is too large for you to eat it all up, extra fruit off your tree or surplus from your garden, Feed it Forward connects people who have food with people who need food. You can download the apps from the Apps Store or visit the website: www.feeditforward.ca for more details.

Food Co-op Finder works with your phone to alert you to the nearest community-owned food store, complete with the ability to navigate you there. That means whether you are travelling or at home in the US or Canada, you will know where the community-owned stores are. This let's you make better choices regarding your food spending. Community-owned grocery stores keep the decisions about food access, costs and contributors at the local level. Download the apps from the Apps Store or Google Play. Learn more at: https://grocerystory.coop/food-co-op-directory

Both of these apps work better when everyone is using and contributing to their processes and functions. If there is no one using them near you, then be the change and get people started sharing food with Feed it Forward and shopping at community-owned stores with the Food Co-op Finder apps!

Profits should not be coming before solving the problem of hungry people in our communities. We can create the change ourselves, but re-imagining food systems that support healthy and thriving people first and foremost.

Want to learn more about creating food abundance and growing your own food? Join me at Food Abundance Revolution www.foodabundance.ca . My mission is to inspire people to grow food everywhere, and in such abundance, that they simply have to give some of it away. I believe together we can create a world in which no one goes hungry.

Yesterday's Tears

Lost in yesterday's tears
Drowning in tomorrow's dreams
Healing swiftly from
Sharp wounds,
More slowly from scrapes and bruises,
We wander with some purpose
Through mud and muck
That we made for ourselves
To learn, to craft
A beautiful vessel, to hold
The essence of hope.

Pulling up weeds,
Kicking rocks from our path, we sweat freely,
Digging deeper and deeper
To locate the treasure
We seek without maps.

No one told us how
To do this.
We got all the wrong
Advice,
And yet, here we are,
Planting our garden,
Hoping for rain
And freedom from pests,
Laying out the pattern
Told us by the wise ones
Long ago.

Rescuing dewdrops
From inside yesterday's tears,
Mulching the detritus
Into tomorrow's dreams,
Healing swiftly from
Sharp wounds we cover with salve,
More patiently now recovering
From labor's well-earned bruises,
We wander with fierce purpose
Through thick mud
And rich muck
That we made for ourselves,
To learn, to craft,
To plow a beautiful field
Filled soon with fulfilling, glorious yield,
Continuing now to hold tight
To the bright essence of hope.

- Ashara Love

my life in political service

...by Ilona Ferenczi

I started working for my local MP
Liberal — downtown eastside

she interviewed me
gave me a volunteer job

setting up tables
for meetings

one night
she locked me in

by mistake
I'm sure

still,
everyone else

went to the party
at Save-On Foods

how was I supposed to know
where the Save-On was?

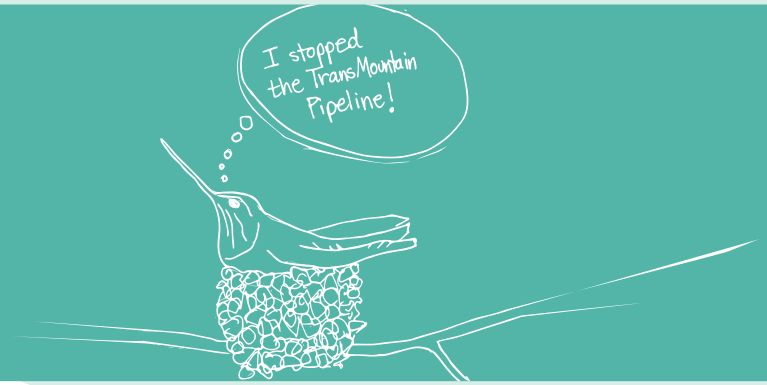
I went out the back door
with the garbage

then I went
home

so much for my life
in politics

I Was Arrested For Dreaming With Hummingbirds & Wild Salmon

BY Donna Clark



I was in court yesterday for the final sentencing after having been arrested with 17 others at an Extinction Rebellion YVR (Vancouver airport) action in October 2021, almost a year ago. Judge Bonnie Craig gave me a conditional discharge (If I don't reoffend within one year I will not have a criminal record), 30 community service hours, 12-months probation and a $100 fine. I was sentenced with 2 others.

My community in this process are pleased the judge spent so much time considering the climate crisis context for our actions.

This consideration is new. It's a win.

It was also a win that Judge Craig did not accept the Crown Prosecutor Ellen Leno's submission that I be given a criminal charge, and be required to pay $2000 fine.

The whole process was frustrating, beautiful and enlightening. Dealing with rough RCMP, many days in court, long conversations about what to do, soliciting and gathering reference letters, threat of criminalization and incarceration, and money spent. And I have much intersectional privilege. The friendships & community built made it all possible, and at times, even fun!

It's my first sentencing. In 2014, I was arrested on "Burnaby Mountain '' at the Kinder Morgan drillsite (now called the Trans Mountain Expansion Pipeline -TMX). And, I have one outstanding case for a blockade at Ada'itsx/Creek that may be heard in Nanaimo court in December.

My biggest hope is that those around me can be inspired to do whatever it takes to make structural change happen.

No sacrifice is too great for life on the planet and future generations.

First and foremost, I am upholding my sacred obligation to protect the lands and waters of the peoples whose lands and waters I was born and continue to live, the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleilwaututh.

Also, yesterday, Wet'suwet'en Sleydo (Molly Wickham) spoke in "Victoria." I listened to livestream when I got home from court:

"There's lots of hard things about this work but it is beautiful and fun work sometimes too. What are we willing to sacrifice for our human and nonhuman future? Who are the warriors you look up to? Who are you going to call on when you want to give up? Call out their names?

As well as soliciting the audience of supporters, allies and accomplices to call out the names, she answered the question for herself. She had gone to the Wedzin Kwa (river) recently. The answer came to her:

"A salmon spawned out… She had fought her whole life just to feed us … in reciprocal relationship to the lands and waters… swam 1000s of miles, against impossible odds, days trying to swim up waterfalls and rapids…. Most of us would have given up! Battered and bruised but finally achieving success…so generous of salmon…. Our ancestors were like this."

The climate crisis is here. Millions of humans have already been deeply impacted. There's a mass extinction of nonhumans. Our drinking water is being affected, food… Our governments continue to uplift the oil and gas industries with tax dollars and laws at the expense of life on the planet.

That we are living in times of both ecocide and genocide is indesputable. The genocide is apparent in the ongoing destruction of unceded traditional Indigenous lands and waters. It's apparent in the disproportionate incarceration of Indigenous, 50+% of incarcerated. 53.8% of children in care are Indigenous. The increasing poor compared to the increasing rich. Housing and food costs! Increasing forced migration. And on.

Like the story of the hummingbird, I will do all I can no matter how small I am. I will never give up.

Vandana Shiva puts it another way: "There's the 1% billionaire class and the disposable humanity. Our planet is an interconnected, beautiful, living planet which they pretend is a dead planet to exploit and plunder.

The Earth is rising. The young are rising. The women are rising. The workers are rising. The unemployed are rising. And all we need is to see the commonality rather than north and south, black, white, Muslim, Hindu. All of these - and men, women - are constructed divisions of one humanity."

Hasta la Victoria Siempre!

All my relations.

A COLLECTION OF MEMORIES

By Antonietta Gesualdi

I've always lived in the suburbs, always just a quick transit ride to the downtown core but I have been lucky to witness rural food traditions and home food production techniques first hand, traditions and techniques that are quickly disappearing in today's fast food and ready-made meals, skip the dishes world.

Techniques that most youth today will not witness within their own households like I did.

Here are a few memories...

The lamb...

Pa would go back to Italy every other summer to visit grandma and grandpa (nonno and nonna). When I was younger I'd go along too. Ma was only allowed back once, when I was too small to be looked after by Pa. Though my father could have paid for them to have a phone and fridge, his parents somehow viewed it as unnecessary, and relied on the utilities from the neighbour at the edge of their cobblestone street. One of the main purposes of the trip was to stock them up with provisions, like meat. They were rather advanced in age and were having trouble doing all the food labour like they used to. One of the highlights of the trip was procuring and butchering the sheep to supply them meat for a long while. Pa always took me to the sheep herder, where I would hang around the little lambs, petting their soft white fur as they crowded against me. We made the trek back home with one of them following behind me on a lead.

The lamb stayed in the back of the house, in this sort of barn-like stall for about 24 hours, where we basically starved it. I was allowed to give it water though, since it was still just a little lamb. We starved it so that its intestines would be clear at the time of slaughter. During that brief time, I would hang around the outside of the barn barrier, befriending it, talking to it. I knew the lambs fate, and as such I was calm about the short term nature of the friendship. In fact I have a photo of me petting the lamb while Pa makes the first slit against its throat. However, after that, I was quickly ushered outside thankfully and never witnessed the actual butchering...I would however, refuse to eat meat from the lamb that I called my friend. At every meal, if meat was served, I would ask, is this my friend? If so, I refused to eat it. Once, nonna tricked me. And I did eat the lamb that was my friend...I'll never forget the injustice of that, the hurt...I remember it to this day...

The scary old lady

Across the cobblestoned way from my grandparents lived a wizened, one armed old widow. No one talked about the accident that caused her to lose her arm many years ago. It simply was not talked about. This woman was incredibly strong and self reliant. Though she was friendly it was understood that you kept your distance from her, albeit respectfully. There was one task though that the widow could simply not manage on her own, threshing the wheat. Back then I didn't understand the nature of the task, to separate the loosening grain from the straw for the wind to blow away. Back then, it seemed like a game, nestled between two adults as they coordinated the flailing of the tarp to launch the grains into the air... head tilted back to gaze at the blue sky and see the grain rain down....a rare game that the adults played....

The garden in the suburbs

Though Pa and Ma no longer farmed for their food once they came to Montreal, we always had a huge garden... fresh lettuces like chicory and romaine, tomatoes, pole beans, cucumbers, strawberries, peppers, chard. Every meal in the summer started with fresh salad. Ma literally picked the salad 30 minutes before we ate it. Though we had lots of tomatoes, there wasn't enough for a yearly supply of tomato sauce, so we'd go out and pick bushel after bushel tomatoes to can them for a yearly supply of space. Enough tomatoes to cover the whole garage floor. Then the downstairs became a canning factory, sterilizing jars, cooking down of tomatoes and straining. One year Pa invested in a pressure cooker.... but something went horribly wrong and cooked tomatoes covered the ceiling and walls... no one was hurt but the pressure cooker was never used again. Unfortunately the mess was Ma's to clean up, even though she hadn't wanted to use the pressure cooker because she didn't understand how it worked.... why not just do it the way we'd always done it she rationalized.... she still was left to clean the mess from Pa's experiment though

City kid's first (and last) encounter with raw milk

So while we were in Italy a well meaning relative decides to bring the city kid a treat... warm, raw unpasteurized milk (may have been goat or cow, that part of the memory is fuzzy), so fresh it is still warm from the animal itself... back home warm milk was often a home remedy for my frequent stomach upsets. I loathed the skin that formed at the top...So a small glass of this fresh warm unpasteurized milk was poured for me. It had a pungent odor that immediately out me off. I said no, thank you, I don't want it. Refusing this good food was considered rude to refuse a gift of fresh food so my dad cajoled me saying it is so good for you, they brought it over just for you... the whole village would learn if my rudeness if I did not drink the milk Pa pressed on. There's only so much pressure a little kid can handle so I broke down and drank it down. It was warm and had an unpleasant and unfamiliar texture....Only to vomit it up without warning about ten minutes later, while the relative was still there. I remember his smirk when he said city kid really doesn't know any better. I remember thinking, I told you I didn't like it. Injustice again!

The fresh water spring and the fig tree

My grandparents farmed a plot that was a donkey ride away from their home. On the way was this gushing spring of water, like a fountain, the water was so good, so cold, so fresh...we'd fill various jars and bottles of it to and from the plot. Never had water like that since. One day it was time to harvest the figs. Everyone climbed into the trees and came down with figs for me to eat. I ate so many figs...I dozed off in the shade of the fig tree, safe and seated. Best nap I've ever had in my life. Pa always packed some figs to take back to Montreal. He packed them in the shoe box (you always buy a pair of shoes when you go to Italy)...By the time we got back to montreal the figs absorbed the odor of fresh leather from the shoes...I never did see the point of taking back the figs when they no longer tasted like figs by the journey's end...

Sleeping Beauty

by Jennifer Cooley

Well folks it's that time again, are you ready; for earlier sunsets, longer nights and cooler weather? Because like it or not, Fall is upon us and that all too familiar winter and hibernation season looms just ahead! So, I thought for this article I would focus on something we all need that is very important to us and how this time of year is a great time to start building the new habit and pattern we need for better sleep! Our health depends on it, good sleep helps us feel happier and less stressed, it helps to improve our memories and quality of health and change or reduce our problems in of itself all together as well. So I've written this to help us all easily transition and slumber into fall and winter and get an early start on building new and better habits as we head toward the end of this 2022 year and into the New 2023 year ahead! Let's put these past few Covid years of Craziness behind us in a healthy and productive way together! So here we go…

How to sleep better

01 Set up your sleeping area: so that your technology is either in another room or some distance away from where you sleep, so get out of the habit of plugging your tech into the plugs closest to you when you sleep!

02 As you get closer to bed remember to STOP using your tech while you are in and or all over your bed as you`re getting ready to hunker down for the night.

03 Try to keep your bedroom dark and cool, use thick blinds or curtains & bring the temperature in your room down to about 18 degrees. Our bodies sleep much better in cooler temperatures than in too much heat!

Set up a routine

01 Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, your body will do better if allowed to use its own internal 24 hour clock and sleep memory abilities to set itself the routine it naturally knows your body needs.

02 Create a relaxing bedtime routine that you can get into and enjoy!

Build healthy habits

01 Exercise regularly, (even if it's just light yoga and stretches early in the morning or in the evening before bed) a little goes a long way, helps keep your muscles & joints out of pain and less stiff.

02 Go outside during daylight hours, even just a brisk walk around the block and some deep breaths of fresh air during midday will make a world of difference. And of course this is the best reason to be outside with our fur babies as often as we can find the time to do it. They will also thank us for it later when they come crawling into our beds and snuggle up to us for a good night's sleep right there alongside us! What better way to fall into dreamland then with smiles on our faces and their happy warmth against us?

03 Do not drink excessively and most certainly do not do it too close to your regular bedtime schedule. (Keep those special occasions to exactly that Special Occasions) and you will see a world of difference!

DO:

Use sleep masks and ear plugs

Drink a cup of warm milk

Read a book or listen to relaxing nature sounds or meditation apps or peaceful music.

Take a warm shower or bath before bed.

And last but not least, sleep on a comfortable bed!

DON'T:

Work out to heavy before bedtime

drink caffeine, (soda, coffee, milk chocolate) after 7:30 or 8 pm

think about your worries

and lastly DO NOT EAT TOO MUCH before going to sleep!

Essentially if we just follow these Do's and Don't`s we are certain to see better times, better living and better sleep ahead! So take care of yourself and allow more opportunity for better rest so that we can all be the Sleeping Beauties we deserve to be!

I would love to hear back from folks on how their efforts are going and any suggestions you`d like to add to this story or others you think would make a good connecting fit to this one! TY!

In Praise of Panther

My East Van Black Femme Cat

by Mildred Grace German

There are many superstitions and religious doctrines pertaining to black cats as bad luck. Such beliefs have been going on for hundreds and thousands of years, and as terrifying as it sounds, black cats have faced scrutiny as they are seen as incredibly unlucky.

Despite the black cat being seen as an extremely unlucky omen, there are those who welcome black cats as a sign of good luck to come. Historically, in ancient times, cats were animals to be highly adored. In Ancient Egypt the cat was worshipped as a sacred animal. With the many remnants still standing here in our present days, numerous statues and structures in Ancient Egypt were inspired by the cat, including the world-famous Sphinx- a mythical creature with the head of a human, the body of a lion, and the wings of a falcon. Many ancient coffins and burial sites were also found with the remains of cats. Animals were believed to serve as companions and protectors in the journey in the afterlife.

Even the Romans also held the cat in high regard and introduced cats as domestic pets throughout Europe. Cats have been deterring rats and pests, which brought plagues, mass starvation, and diseases. But as Catholicism spread throughout Europe- witches and wise women, and those who contradict the Catholic faith (including its dictating men leaders, and its genocidal systems) were persecuted, and black cats were not spared in the Catholic Church's conquests to domination.

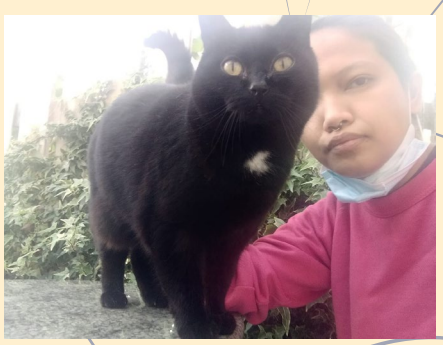
The concepts of white supremacy and superiority have affected tremendously how society perceives the black color. Anti-black, anti-brown, anti-indigeneous, and generally anti-people of color beliefs deemed anyone who (and anything that) is not white unworthy and sinful. To such ignorant notions and corrupt nationalist actions caused massive genocides and colonization of lands and indigenous populations all over the world, marking historical chaos and moral tragedies still reflected to date.

Animals, such as the black cat, also fall victim to these terrifying white supremacy, and god-complex superiority. Systematized actions of purifications have been purported not only by the Catholic Church, but also by governments through medical, cultural, and social means. Although the Bible states in Genesis 1:31, "And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good", white supremacists think otherwise.

Food for thought: it is rather sound and wise to blame capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy than innocent black cats for all the unluckiness and disappointments in this world!

BLACK PANTHER GERMAN: THE APPLE OF MY EYE

The cat who loves me is my adorable, loving, and fierce black cat. Her name is Black Panther German (Panther for short), born and raised in East Vancouver about 13 years ago. While living in a basement then, my old landlords had a mother cat who had litters and Panther was one of them. They were giving away the kittens, and while I was choosing which one, this tiny ball of love with a tiny white spot on the neck, gave me love bites. I knew then she was the one.
Panther was a very adorable kitten growing up.



As Panther grew and grew, the white spot on her neck turned more into a heart shape. It is one of the loveliest things I've ever seen! This white spot on her neck that makes her shiny all-black fur look like a tuxedo. (My cat indeed always looks very sharp.)

Panther is a femme cat; she has her graces and tempers. She loves to groom herself. She loves catnip, that's for sure. She also can be a picky eater - which is a good thing - as she is an outdoor cat and I worry about what she puts in her mouth whenever she is outside.

Panther is a very sweet, and thoughtful cat. To our great surprise, she brings us presents in forms of dead mice or birds- lying stiff on our front porch. I can see these gifts make Panther sits proud. I understand it is not easy to be a hunter and I see the patience my cat has whenever she tries to catch a bug, or other crawlies in the yard. At many times, she can stay in one spot for a long period of time. Many times too, she roams around. She hides in the bushes too.

I am impressed that despite the busy streets of East Vancouver, Panther has never crossed the street. That would be horrifying! The fences and bushes around make Panther stay as she truly loves her territory. When other cats come by, I can hear the cats and their commotions. I want to believe she has some suitors who love to visit and see her. Yes, my cat Panther is very territorial. At many times, Panther will be in her throne, rather alone - stretching, grooming, and napping - with no worries in the world.

LOVING OUR AGING PETS

Time flies and it is inevitable. At many times, I cannot believe how much Panther has grown. From a tiny litter, to a mischievous kitten, to a tough East Van femme cat that she is now, Panther has grown and is now older.

I have noticed how her mobility has changed. She is now very careful with her jumps. Before, she could leap like she could fly. Oh, that reminds me of the time when Panther got stuck on top of our old apartment's roof as a kitten. She was meowing loudly, crying for us to rescue her. She could climb up, but she couldn't come down- a skill she had not fully mastered yet as a kitten then. My roommate rescued her thankfully.

Panther, as she grows old, becomes more and more cuddly! She loves to be petted. She loves to be brushed. She loves to be held. But at times she does not like to share space! She can hoard the bed, the couch, and the chair without sharing. Yet, she looks so comfy and relaxed, while laying down or asleep- so who has the heart to move the cat in peaceful moments?

CATS AND THE ART OF LIFE

Cats as pets do not disappoint. They are sweet, tender, and cute. Having a pet is a wonderful opportunity not to be taken for granted. Cats are beings who have their own great individual personalities and preferences.

Cats too are believed to choose their owners or humans. The independent personalities of cats also means their independent skills and mentalities. As cats are very intuitive, they choose their owners by intuition.

I admire that cats are the boss of themselves. They nap as they want, wake up and go on their days and their own worlds with grace. They seem very busy at times. And at many times too, they can sleep flat with snoring sounds.

I often wonder, "What does the cat really have to worry about in this life?" With a loving home and sufficient supplies of catnip, boxes, and needs, a cat does not worry about paying the bills, working to make a living, going to school, or even about grocery shopping. They too have someone to scoop and clean their poop litters as royal and majestic cats can be.

But despite all the luxury a cat should have, not all cats have the same privileged fate. There are many hurt cats out there- abandoned, abused, and in some unfortunate cases, killed. Animal abuse remains rampant, but many true animal lovers fight back.

I also learned from my cat to live life to the fullest- especially in expressing tender love and affection. A cat will not hesitate to show their love when they are in love. Even in their own universes, at the end of the day, I know cats think of their humans and come home to them. And their melodic meows and purrs always assure that they are home sweet home.

Don't Fear the Reaper

by Anushka Azadi

Death attends the garden. Despite everything, we are still human. **Fall is a lonely but loving season.** At the end of our first year of planting, we watched the frost advance towards us from the Eastern valley. Seven moons and a belly full, the season that exalted this brown skin, opened the waters to our bodies and welcomed us into ourselves (and everything else) as best it could, was leaving, and there was nothing we could do but gather the green tomatoes into the barn, fish the river for winter and add another layer of clothing to keep the cold from rippling across our skin.

It's the same every year, we are coming to an end again. Still, we are human, our eyes are wet with longing. Please, another week for the flowers and bees, another afternoon warm enough for swimming, another morning for bare feet to meet the ground without freezing. But the garden is spent and the ground is exhausted, our hands are cut and our feet are calloused, our bodies are sun loved and ready for rest. It is natural. **Death arrives just like this, sweet and gentle, like sleep does, to dress a dream of hills in fire's colors and adorn your dark hair with crowns of love and leaving.** In death, everything resembles itself so completely, the dying trees are dizzy with their own beauty.

The garden asks, how does it feel to hold your whole heart in your own hands? To witness death? It is easier when it is natural, we answer, these days, they'll kill you for a dollar. And death becomes a demon that hides in plain sight, worshipped in fear by the religious type and bought and sold regularly on a 24 hour market. Death spreads in the wrong season, takes too many women and children, makes weapons out of men and leaves a long trail of no one deserved this. In the garden, **when death visits, our hands are never empty, the season carries on in seeds, the root cellar is full of squash, carrots are sweeter after the first frost.** Rose hips wrinkle and are ready for gathering. The basement smells like wood. We get our first deer. We hold warm memories and what we still have close and she blankets us with snow. Quiet is the season of surrender.

There are many paths that lead us back to the land and to the water we are and always have been, death is one of them and life is the other. We will survive many deaths before our last one. As the light fades and the rains gather, with your hands full of seeds, we hope you have practiced dying so that you may live fearlessly. You are human, everything you love will leave and you will still love and when it's your turn, everything will resemble itself so completely, you'll be dizzy with your own beauty.

Happy Samhain!

BY SHANNON HECKER

Samhain (pronounced /ˈsɑːwɪn/ sah-win or /ˈsaʊ.ɪn/ sow-in[1] Irish pronunciation: [sˠaunʲ]) is a Gaelic festival marking the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter or the "darker half" of the year. Traditionally, Samhain is celebrated from sunset on 31 October to sunset on 1 November, which is about halfway between the autumn equinox and the winter solstice. It is one of the four Gaelic seasonal festivals, along with Imbolc, Beltane and Lughnasadh

Because this is a liminal time, the time between death and rebirth - it is also the time that the spirit world is closest to the living. During Samhain in ancient times there would be huge bonfires across the countryside to celebrate the dead, there would be feasts to celebrate the end of summer and the beginning of the Celtic New Year.

A way to celebrate Samhain is to make an altar for any loved ones who have died in the last year and also to make offering of food for the ancestors as this is when they come to visit. The tradition of carving pumpkins originally was done to ward off evil or unwanted spirits, but they used Turnips rather than the pumpkins you see today. The idea of darning a costume was also part of this belief in Samhain representing a thin veil between the two worlds and was for protection during giving offerings in case of malevolent spirits.

With the coming of Christianity in the 800s AD, the early Church in England tried to Christianize the old Celtic festivals. Pope Boniface IV designated the 1st of November as "All Saints Day," honoring saints and martyrs. He also decreed October 31 as "All Hallows Eve", that eventually became Hallow'een.

Scholars today widely accept that the Pope was attempting to replace the earlier Celtic pagan festival with a church-sanctioned holiday. As this Christian holiday spread, the name evolved as well. Also called All-hallows Eve or All-hallowmas (from Middle English Alholowmesse meaning All Saints' Day). 200 years later, in 1000 AD, the church made November 2 All Souls' Day, a day to honor the dead. It is celebrated similarly to Samhain, with big bonfires, parades, and dressing up in costumes as saints, angels, and devils. Together, the three celebrations, the eve of All Saints', All Saints', and All Souls' day, are called Hallowmas.

I'm proud to have Celtic roots on my mom's mothers side, and both of my paternal grandparents have Celtic roots as well. There are many similarities of the oppression suffered by the Celtic peoples at the hands of the Romans, later continued by the British; to the ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples around the world by various colonizers.

Celtic peoples have been assimilated over the last two thousand years and for many of us this distant past has faded from our memories as we have lost our mother tongues and diaspora spread across the world.

There is a lot we can learn from our Indigenous brothers and sisters around the world who still have a sacred connection with the earth. We can still go back to our roots to honour our ancestors to honour ourselves in the present and future.

Follow the cycles of the earth and the stars and moon. Let the spirits guide you ♥

We must remember we belong to the earth and not the other way around.

samhain 2004., edited by James MacKillop. 1st ed. Oxford University Press.

Freedom is a Weed

Ashara Love

Hardy survivor
That it is,
Freedom is a weed
That grows
Up through broken pavement
And cement,
Out the cracks
Of prison cells
And up through
The long tunnels
Of despair
And solitude.

Freedom is a hardy
Invasive
Outlier survivor
That can never be
Eradicated
Eliminated
Oxidized
Poisoned
Strangled
Crucified
Trapped
Fumigated
Irrigated
Irradiated
Terminated or
Destroyed.

Freedom is
Found everywhere
Inside
Our DNA
And can no more
Be exhumed
Or erased
Or silenced
Or stopped
Than the beating
Of our hearts.

There are more of us
Justice bearing
Anarchist embracing
Love valuing
Hardship enduring
Anti-authoritarian
Pro-peace
Freedom loving
Weeds than
You can ever kill.

Spray us with
Your noxious toxic
Soup of killing
Chemtrails,
Numb us with
Your mind controlling
Media,
Throw us into dark
Holes that you have dug
To uselessly enrich yourselves.
Leave us bereft of light
And still, we
Heliotropes
Poke our heads back
Through the dungeon walls
The prison bars
The sidewalk cracks
Because freedom
Is a weed,
Loveternal,
An energy supply
That never ever
Fades or dies.

This is a fight
You'll always lose.

Why won't you
Learn your lesson?

I see the sun
And yearn towards it
And there is
Nothing you can
Put in my way
To stop me.

I am a weed.
I grow.

FOOD FOR THOUGHTS

By Mildred Grace German

"With the strong build of the trees as they stand reaching for the sun, the wonders of their existence are beyond question. Priceless air, treasure taken for granted, the lungs of our planet, and the breath in our noses. Who are we without the trees? The trees are here for you and me.

The trees have long existed, as immemorial as can be. Their wooden trunks, do the trees feel the cold of the winter as we humans do? When they sway their branches in the air, do they dance in mellow, or afraid of the violent wind? Do they cry a tear when a leaf carelessly falls? Do they mourn their fellow trees dead, chopped to pieces, burnt by lightning or capitalism? Do they laugh when the squirrels tickle them inside?

Trees cannot move, but we can. But instead of building houses for shelters, we build walls, divisions, and war forts. Trees cannot speak, but they hum in the air, sing with the birds, and play melodies with the rain. Trees cannot bleed, but they are lifebloods, our lifelines, because without them, who are we?

No wonder I often wonder and ponder, where do trees find all their strength, and the will to survive and to carry on?"

Thank you to Faith Tang, certified recreation therapist (CTRS), who works at the REACH Community Health Centre (located at 1145 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC), for making me part of Photovoice, a new program as part of the REACH Community

Health Public Health programming which started earlier this year.

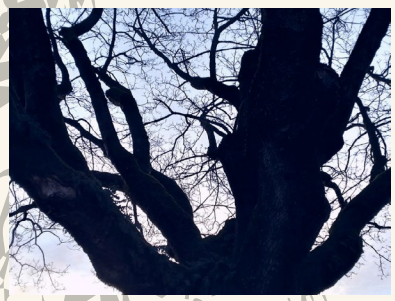
WHAT IS PHOTOVOICE?

PhotoVoice is a health and well-being program that utilizes therapeutic photography to raise awareness for social change, and to promote health education and the idea of critical consciousness. It aims to empower participants to share their stories and voices through photography. It often includes a discussion group in a safe space where participants can learn photography skills and discuss their reflections through words and visuals.

According to Wikipedia, Photovoice was developed in 1992 by Caroline C. Wang of the University of Michigan, and Mary Ann Burris, Program Officer for Women's Health at the Ford Foundation headquartered in Beijing, China. Its concept is strongly influenced by documentary photography, the concept of empowerment, feminist theory, and Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed and his idea of 'critical consciousness'.

Its qualitative method and flexible process can also be combined with grassroots social action; thus Photovoice is also commonly used in community development, international development, public health, and education.

Since Photovoice was first used to empower the silenced rural women in Yunnan Province, China, the method has been used in different settings and populations such as documenting the refugees' plights, the homelessness in America, the experiences of nurses and healthcare workers, and in treating brain injury survivors, amongst other therapeutic purposes as each photo documents reality.



Title: Silhouettes of Trees
Artist: Mildred Grace German
Medium: Photovoice

Letters from our readers

Hi Angelina & Mildred,

Your article in the zine perked my interest, as I have been relying on blackberries since I moved into the area in 1978.
Recently blackberries have become Himalayan Blackberries and have been named an invasive species in spite of the fact that I have been harvesting them for many of my 91 years alongside Indigenous people for many of those years.
I have found them to be nutritious and economic and have been aware that the Burlington Northern spur from the railyards to the waterfront have shown signs of spraying or trashing many times.
You seem to have some knowledge of chemicals which bolsters my belief that my days of picking blackberries are over.
Please tell me this is not so, I hope the 36 Litres stored for future breakfasts will see me through.

Best Wishes,

Graham Cunningham.

Interested in contributing your ideas, articles, poems, artwork, photography, social media skills or something else to Right to Food Zine?

As a community partner, we are deeply interested to hear from you and what you feel is important. Get in touch with us by emailing rtfzine@gmail.com or connect with us on Facebook or Instagram. We are our own media and completely volunteer-led.

MEET THE TEAM

Shannon Hecker
Editor & Writer
IG/tiktok:
Rivershannon.colleen
Www.rivershannoncolleen.com

Rémi Landry Yuan
Designer
IG: remiyuan

Ian Marcuese
Writer
www.vancouverfoodnetworks.com

Donna Clark
Writer
@donnaclarkbreathes

Ashara Love
creatrixconnexion@gmail.com
Root Cause Alchemy
CreatrixConnexion.com
Prismatic * Poetic * Portal

Anushka Azadi
Writer
ourtimeisfading@gmail.com

Mildred German
Writer & Illustrator
Assistant Editor

Jennifer Cooley
Writer
thewriterwon@gmail.com
https://vocal.media/authors/jennifer-cooley-48hfjk0yqk
FB: Kitchen Conversations

Antonietta Gesualdi
Writer

Sue Senger
Writer
http://www.foodabunce.ca/

Ilona Ferenczi
Writer

Graham Cunningham
Writer

Writer, Editor, Designer, Photographer, Social Media Superstar!
All Skills & Exp Welcome

Artwork by Rémi Landry Yuan

art by Mildred Grace German

Right to Food Zine's mission is to promote the human right to food that is healthy, nutritious, affordable, and presented with dignity.

Our voices reflect the diversity that is the Downtown Eastside (DTES). Our articles, research, and recipes speak to the DTES residents, social justice groups, and beyond. We inform our readers, while fostering the desire to know more and to become more engaged. As part of the DTES community, we strive to be a tool for community-building.

RIGHT TO FOOD ZINE