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Street Newspapers Association (NASNA).

**Mission Statement:**

To provide a voice for the poor and needy,  
to educate and develop a critical conscience,  
to develop a community based solution  
to poverty and to generate income  
for those in need.

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**A note to our readers:** Street Feat is a monthly paper. It is sold by the homeless and unemployed and supporters throughout Halifax Regional Municipality and beyond. The paper is not a charity, it is a social and economic enterprise which generates income from both sales and advertising, as well as from special projects. Vendors pay seventy five cents per copy and sell them for a dollar and fifty cents, keeping the difference. Subscriptions are also available from the office at \$20 per year.

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## Invisible Disabilities

**By Wayne MacNaughton**

I sat in St Patrick's Church the other day, waiting for the beginning of yet another memorial service for a man gone too soon, in this case Jay Euloth. I remember Gus Pendleton saying at one breakfast several years ago, as he announced an upcoming memorial, how he was getting tired of burying people younger than he was. I'm not going to write today about Jay or the service; others that knew him better should do that. However, as I was waiting, I looked around and I could see, even with my very limited vision, the beauty of the craftsmanship that went into the construction of St. Pat's, over a century ago. But the beauty is on the interior of the building. The exterior is plain red brick, no fancy buttresses and gargoyles, just plain and simple. It seems the

builders understood that for the church as well as for its parishioners, it's what inside that counts.

In a completely different vein, someone I know admonished me the other day because I had passed him on the street, and not said hello. He saw the white cane I use, but somehow it didn't register what it means. My disability is in itself invisible. Because I get by and can still see (more or less) where I'm going, for some people I should be able to see everything else. The fact is that while I know that I'm passing someone, I don't see who it is, because I need to focus on where I'm going. I'm like many others with disabilities that are vision or hearing related, or mental health challenges. We get taken for granted.

Another point to ponder: A couple of months back, there was a flurry of articles and

letters in the daily papers about squeegee kids, especially those who work at the willow tree corner. The articles and letters were full of superficial, judgemental comments about young people whom none of the writers knew. I wrote a letter myself, commenting how upset I was that people think it is OK to sit in judgement on those who are forced to the margins of our society, but no one else seemed to support that point.

You may ask where I'm going with all these random, seemingly unrelated anecdotes, although some of you have probably figured it out.

We need to all work harder, much harder at understanding our fellow human beings, and maybe walk a mile in their shoes. We are all entitled to our opinions, but need to admit that it is wrong to judge others, especially

those that we don't know. Many of us lead very difficult lives, and we do the best we can to cope. What helps is when someone tries to understand what we are dealing with, and shows it. We need to put an end to the sport of "kicking someone when they're down"

I don't believe in censorship, but all of these "survival of the fittest" style reality shows certainly don't help in creating a more compassionate world. Neither do so-called Christian TV shows that condemn "sinners" in an almost hateful manner rather than preaching love and tolerance.

Our society's ever-worsening lack of empathy and compassion, it seems to me, is maybe the biggest *invisible disability of all, and the one most threatening to humanity's future.*

I pray that I'm exaggerating in this rant, but fear that I may be right on the money. Please give it some thought, for all our sakes.

One person and one encounter at a time, we can change this for the better.

## Anniversary Thoughts

**by Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton, Managing Editor**

We have completed nine years of life and still are the only publication, east of Montreal, that is solely dedicated to bringing issues of poverty to the forefront of society.

This life marker has been reached because of the tremendous support of our vendors and volunteers, our readers, advertisers and donors.

Our path is a difficult one, and only your continuous support can help make us reach the future birthdays we could have.

Please consider advertising, purchasing a subscription, donating, volunteering. Thanks, friends, keep in touch.

