

# Reminiscing about nine years of *Street Feat*

by Judy Deal  
Vendor and  
Editorial Contributor

The time is flying by quicker than we think. It seems like it was just yesterday that I had gotten involved with *Street Feat Voice of the Poor*. I first started in a really unusual situation in which I had to interact and try to convince people that by buying our paper that it really did make a difference, either in terms of enhancing consciousness about the various crises and problems of the poor, and/or also as a small yet meaningful community economic development effort on the part of the poor, to make a few bucks while trying to build a humble yet real deal economic success. Wow! But as well, the purchase of a paper from me means it does make a real deal difference to me as a human being! Especially after I had written something entertaining, yet also because it is really hard at times with my struggles to assert the truth. Essentially all the above ideas are why I sell the paper.

My work with the paper is for the reasons of helping the organization of *Street Feat* but also to help myself, as a person who exists in a society of impoverished people, and yet at the same time I detect an unHoly amount of rampant greed. No matter how you write about it or observe it. Well, need I say anymore? Really? What kind of answer do you come up with, when addressing the inherent questions in my assertions?

Every time there is a truthful answer to my queries, the answer seems to be swayed or twisted up with an epidemic that I witness on a daily basis! Greed! I'm not sure but the response is always greed, simply greed. Everywhere, anywhere that someone who believes he or she has enough power to get anything and even things that are not necessities. We are all the same. To an extent. In terms of needs. Yet it does depend on a given person's given value system and moral compass, or does it depend on how many "behinds" a given person kisses, is that what it's all about? Shame! Is this how you go through life getting what you need and/or want? The Greed factor?!?!?

Why can't we understand that what we do and what we say to others does make a large difference in people's lives? You see, we all want what we all identify as important in our lives, to make our living, to make it complete, but what is this obsession I see all around me, the obsession with power and greed? Which none of us need. This is such a bad idea, yet it seems that so many of us have all bought into it. Unfortunately we can't go back it time, on solid ground when things felt more secure and thus, safer with one's self (at least until the next *Street Feat* issue is in hand, such as it is).

Today it seems that there is a lot more poverty, more greed, more discarded and dismissed lives

everywhere, without a second thought. And all this is blamed on everything and everybody and it should be blamed on those who can truly make a difference because of the power and authority they possess. That is blame it on the power structure!

Whatever individual responsibility, well, we can't expect each and every person to make every important decision regarding life, because it is done each and every day anyway for us whether we like it or not. But getting back to my life and poverty, let's see, I'm on a fixed income because I have taken sick, especially hard hitting me in my youth years, it's called crones syndrome, a very painful digestive and bowel disorder, compli-cated with colitis, to make things worse, ouch! I know I had a very serious and painful bout of crones and colitis because I hardly remember the passing of time, but I do recall beginning at *Street Feat* and taking papers to solicit sales from people on the street, which meant that I was starting to return to the human race, that is get a least a little sense of stability and sanity in my life with all the suffering from crones and colitis, and adjusting to these awful, and long term chronic illnesses . . .

Beginning to sell the paper, it was terrifying! There I was standing, like the four sisters of 1930's Lughnasa, Ireland, after their home was headed for closure and the village caved, with the closing of the only employer, a factory, the four of five sisters wound up as shadows on the streets of London, trying to eek out a living, finally dying alone . . . Was this to be my fate? Winding up as a shadow on the streets of Halifax, scraping together a meagre living, dying alone? Terrifying!

At the same time I tried to put my best sales face on and deliver my best sales blurb to the general public, trying to look pleasant, and all, with my newspaper

badge around my neck, identifying me as one of the official vendors. I found this experience, of paper sales challenging, but also sometimes a tough act to pull off. Yet I found the world is full of all kinds of people, the grim, the giddy and the glad, so much so the whole deal turned out to be mostly an educational one for me. "A few trips and some poetry" for all you John O'Hara fans out there. So many different reactions to the newspaper, and to me . . . so many different cultures on the streets of Halifax. So many different religions, peoples, etc. Overwhelming at times!

Whether good or bad, these diverse responses to me selling the paper, it was all in the mix of giddy and grumpy human emotion stew! Awesome! Anyway, my general feeling is of total gratitude to any and all who patronize the paper from whatever vendor is selling. Thank you! But one of my greatest enjoyments is to make people laugh. I think I'm reasonably good at this, and it fills me with a special warmth and glow to see the chuckles, guffaws and smiles all around, when I am successful in getting a mirthful reaction . . . whatever else it breaks the ice, a bit, and some of these really tense types that go by me, well, they can use a little humour, don't you think?

It's great to see the paper still in circulation, even though lately, I wonder. We at the paper are continually holding on by our fingernails, that is on a *good* day! I rejoice that my health is holding, that is, it's good enough for me to get out in the street or in the market and sell. This anniversary issue finds me as a warm body, so this is much to be happy and thankful about! Consider the alternat-ive?!?! (Six feet under?!?!?) Wow! I think the paper is my guardian angel in more ways than one!

The people I meet while selling is a special blessing. I meet so many different

people and I experience so many different communications--and *communings*. I sense so many different emotions to others and others to me, it's such a gas. This shows or teaches me why I love people so much because of the differences, and the similarities. We are all so different, yet we are all so much the same! I really do appreciate all those who patronize the paper, those who purchase the paper from me, because each sale does indeed help deal with my personal poverty at least a little.

Call me crazy, yet why wouldn't I be happy? Especially for the paper to be around for another year of educating people about homelessness and housing for the poor and about poverty in general. For real. Another year. For real. How do I know that this is real? I know this because I am Judy Deal and I am the real deal!

*Street Feat* gets the true grit stories about poverty out there into the public's consciousness, stories that many in society would not have known about or vicariously experience, meaning, experience the felt pain and powerlessness of being poor through the eyes, ears, mind and body of an impoverished vendor and/or writer in the pages of the paper. Or another whose story is being told through the pages of the paper. That is *felt experience*. *Vicariously felt experience*. Do you understand what I am trying to say?

Come on, take a look around. Some of us do not get the choice, that is, the choice of feeling solid ground beneath our feet, others say poverty is forever drowning without dying, a most horrific feeling. Others call it slow motion death! It's a scary feeling, so scary it gives me goose bumps. And it is reminiscent of those sisters from Ireland. That feeling of winding up as a mere shadow on the streets of Halifax, eeking out a living, dying alone! Horrible! Terrifying! We all want to

live the life of dignified human beings, respectful members of the human race. Yet the paper sustains and supports me to an extent. I am so very glad that the paper exists and is still around. And so, I come to the last page of foolscap scrap paper, because I am getting tired and it's time to begin closing, dear reader . . . I am tiring and not getting any younger! And I hope not only because I have to put up with all the Hoopla! of youth, God Bless the young people, that is all the Hoopla! that youth seem to have to go through, and some of the rites of youth passage seem so scary indeed!

Well, it's time to go. I am getting hungry and I am blessed to be able to buy food to eat at my home, a place I still call home, although it is not always peaches and cream. But before I go, I must once again say my many, many, many heartfelt "thank yous" to all my dear friends and supporters, each who have purchased a paper from me, if you each only knew how much these meagre sales have helped and sustained me, and, as well, for all the other vendors, how each sale also helps and sustains the rest of the vendors. And many, many, many heartfelt "thank yous" to each and every one of you out there who advertise in the pages of the paper, you have helped all of us at the *Street Feat* family so very much. Please spread the word. Please continue to help us out.

Tell all your friends, and any contacts or associates or friends in business anywhere, please spread the word to advertise in our paper. Thank you. The paper and our successful efforts at vending keep us in motion, for those of us, most especially in need for real. It's the real deal. For real.

Love to all, Bye for now, from Judy, straight from my heart to your heart--Thanks a lot! We all need help in one way or another, let's try to help each other, and I hope to see you soon out there, all the best.

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