

Atlantic Canada's First Street Newspaper
 Street Feat's mailing address:
 PO Box 20031
 RPO Spry, Halifax, NS B3R 2K9
 Canada

Phone: 902-453-5510 / FAX: 902-453-5519
 E-mail address: street.feet@ns.sympatico.ca
 Home Page: <http://www.streetfeat.ns.ca>
 ICQ#s: 154864316 (MAC) 28698940 (PC)

Canada Postal Rate Agreement #40025896

Member of the North American
 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.

Publisher:

Hope Community Enterprises

Managing Director:

Michael Burke

Managing Editor:

Juan Carlos Canales-Leyton

Design and Layout:

Fénix Consultants

Editorial Contributors:

Judy D., Rodney Graham, Bill Krampe, Halifax
 Coalition Against Poverty (HCAP), Hal Hatfield,
 National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH), Kendall
 Worth

Volunteers:

Joey Bayers, Bill Krampe

Contributing Photographers:

Joey Bayers, JC Canales-Leyton

Contributing illustrator:

Sheila Smith

Sales Representatives:

Bill Krampe, Kendall Worth

Distribution (Volunteers):

Joseph Bayers, Milton Bursej,
 JC Canales-Leyton Peter McGuigan (MA)

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.

The publisher does not assume any responsibility for the contents of any advertisement or published article and all representation or warranties made in such advertisements are those of the advertisers and not of the publisher. The publisher reserves the right to refuse, edit or cancel any ad at its discretion.

Any specific opinions or views expressed in articles by professionals, contracted freelance writers and contributors, are not necessarily the opinions and views of the publisher.

Battling Bumfights in the U.S.

by Sarah Fontaine, NCH Intern, reproduced from NCH News (Aug. 2007), National Coalition for the Homeless www.nationalhomeless.org

Beginning in 2001 and continuing through August of 2006, a series of seven videos depicting homeless individuals being coerced into doing inhumane and degrading acts were produced and sold by four young men. Ryan McPherson, Zachary Bubeck, Daniel J. Tanner, and Michael Slyman continue to refuse to admit there is anything wrong with their DVD series, Bum Fights, which demonstrates a blatant disregard for the rights and common humanity of homeless people.

For those of you who have never viewed these DVDs, they can be described as revolting and barbarous. In some of the more graphic scenes, one can see a homeless man drinking urine he has been told is beer, a homeless man tearing his own tooth out with pliers, a homeless man breaking another homeless man's ankle, and two homeless people having sex against a dumpster.

These DVDs have been strongly linked to the recent surge in beatings and even killings of homeless people in the United States and in Canada. The DVD collection is banned in many European countries, including the United Kingdom.

What is perhaps the most appalling aspect of the situation is the fact that major U.S. retailers, including Tower Records, Borders Books, Best Buy, Amazon.com, Trans World Entertainment (through warehouse.com), Virgin Mega stores, Yahoo Shopping and Circuit City continue to sell the DVD collections. In the past, when pressured by NCH and our supporters, some companies, like Amazon.com, Borders, and Best Buy, have ceased selling the collection, only to resume the sales a few months later. After NCH's most recent campaign, Circuit City and Amazon.com have removed the DVDs from their websites.

Why does our society so disdain the homeless population that we allow their exploitation to be specifically marketed to our youth? If this were any other group of people being targeted and misrepresented, be it black, white, Latino, Asian, women, men, young people, or gay people, these DVDs would not be sold and their creators would be in jail. Can you imagine a DVD series entitled "Fag Fights" depicting drunk homosexuals fighting, drinking, doing drugs, and being victimized and targeted because of their sexual orientation? Such discrimination and exploitation would be considered illegal. Every man or woman who considered themselves an advocate for gay rights or at all concerned about equality would be up in arms about the DVDs, and rightfully so.

And so we arrive back at the same question, why is there so little public outcry over the homeless exploitation manufactured by the Bum Fights DVDs? I have heard people cite reasons such as free speech; to that I would ask where do free speech and

moral regard collide? Other companies place the onus on the consumer, reminding customers that simply because the retailers choose to carry the DVD collection does not force customers to buy it. They also note that there are many other DVDs and books other customers find objectionable, and they cannot make everyone happy.

We, the consumers and advocates, must not be afraid to ask why these corporations choose to support films in which homeless men and women are harmed and exploited. We must remind the CEOs that through the sale of these DVDs, their companies are sending the message that they support the degradation of the homeless population.

I would ask you, our loyal reader and supporter, to consider or reconsider your stance on the Bum Fights issue. Below, we have listed the companies that continue to sell these DVDs, along with the names and addresses of their CEOs. We have succeeded in stopping the sales before. Unless these companies know that people are concerned about their retail policies, they will not change. If people who care do not continue advocating for our friends in the homeless community, who will?


| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Borders Books | Towers Records |
| George Jones, CEO | Joe D'Amico, CEO |
| 100 Phoenix Drive | 2500 Del Monte St. |
| Ann Arbor, MI 48108 | West Sacramento, CA 95691 |

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Best Buy | Yahoo! Inc. |
| Brad Anderson | Terry Semel |
| P.O. Box 9312 | 701 First Avenue |
| Minneapolis, MN 55440 | Sunnyvale, CA 94089 |

Trans World Entertainment
 Bob Higgins
 38 Corporate Circle
 Albany, NY 12203

Sarah Fontaine is a rising senior at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA and is majoring in Sociology.

IN THE LAST 8 YEARS, OVER 500 HOMELESS MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN HAVE BEEN ATTACKED. 183 HAVE DIED.



Riley White, 45, Galveston, TX. Photo courtesy of The Galveston County Daily News.

- Victims range from 4 months to 84 years old.
- 68% of the perpetrators were ages 13-19.

WHAT CAN WE DO? We need to educate lawmakers, advocates, and the general public on the problem of violence against homeless persons. Your support will help the National Coalition for the Homeless take a stand against violence!

Please become a member of NCH by sending in your tax-deductible contribution today!

NCH National Coalition for the Homeless
 2201 P Street, NW
 Washington, DC 20037-1033
 Ph. 202.462.4822
 E. info@nationalhomeless.org
 www.nationalhomeless.org