

PEOPLE

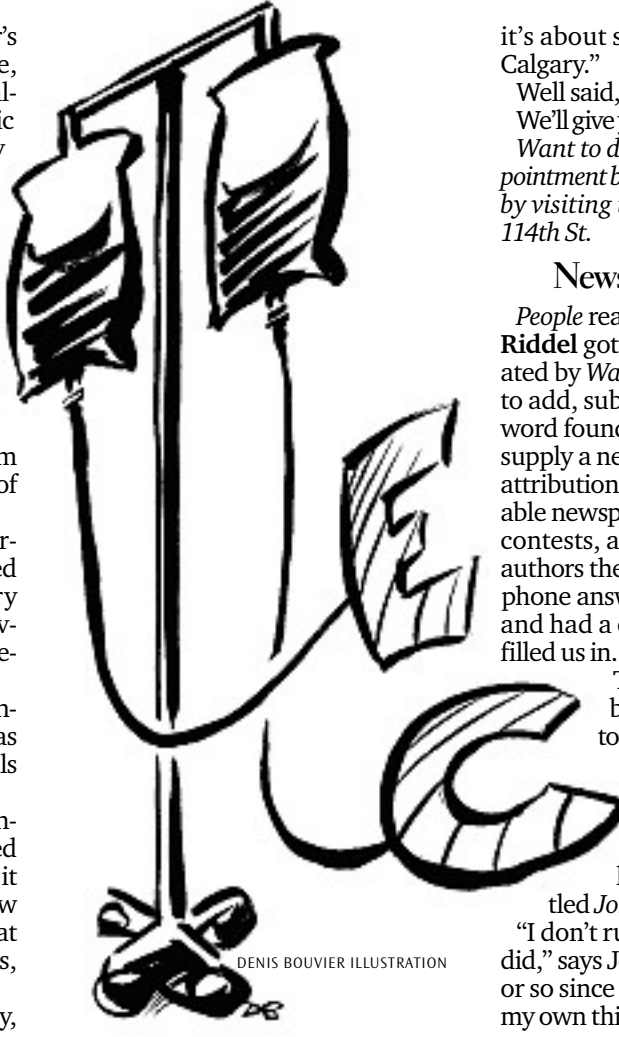
Jamie Hall



Blood feud

OK people, it's time to kick a little Calgary butt. But, be warned, blood will be spilled. Lots of it. In fact, if all goes according to plan — and there's no reason it shouldn't — more of it will be ours than theirs. After all, donating blood is the goal of the Canadian Blood Services' annual Sirens for Life Blood Donor Challenge, which pits city against city in a blood battle extraordinary to see who can collect the most units by Jan. 31. The cities' police, fire and EMS departments will be leading the charge, but everyone — insert picture of Uncle Sam and his pointing finger here — is invited to roll up his or her sleeve to donate.

Some of you may remember last year's epic battle. It went down to the wire, when in the final weekend of the challenge Edmontonians braved sub-Arctic temperatures to wipe out a Calgary lead, thereby snatching the title from the evil ne'er-do-wells in Cowtown. Need we tell you how important this year's challenge is, what with it being the third annual event, and with the two cities tied at one win apiece? We didn't think so. Andrew Laycock makes no bones about it — he's out for blood. "To be honest," he says, "I don't just want to beat them, I want to crush them and make it clear that we are the City of Champions, for a myriad of reasons." As Edmonton's Canadian Blood Services spokesman, Andrew has revelled in the pouting silence of his Calgary counterparts since last year's win, having previously endured months of ceaseless taunting. Now, with the challenge once again underway, the trash talk from Calgary has begun anew, our bloodthirsty arch rivals already braying of certain victory. "Of course," says Andrew, "the big winners are the people in hospital who need the blood that will be collected. And it is also a great way for people to show how much they appreciate the job that is done by Edmonton's firefighters, police officers and EMS personnel. "So it isn't just about beating Calgary,



DENIS BOUVIER ILLUSTRATION

it's about saving lives ... and beating Calgary." Well said, Andrew. We'll give you an update in a week or so. Want to donate? You can make an appointment by calling 1-888-2-DONATE or by visiting the Edmonton Centre, 8249 114th St. News from Washington People reader and Net-surfer Heather Riddell got a kick out of the words created by Washington Post readers asked to add, subtract or change a letter in a word found in the dictionary and then supply a new definition. If the Internet attribution is to be believed, the venerable newspaper runs a lot of such word contests, and it made us wonder who authors them. We got through the telephone answering maze that is the Post and had a chat with John Kelly, who filled us in. The quirky contests were the brainchild of Bob Levy, he told us, who for years penned a popular column for the Post. When he retired last spring, John filled the void, and now writes a daily column in that space entitled John Kelly's Washington. "I don't run a lot of contests, like Bob did," says John. "I've done maybe three or so since I started. I wanted to create my own thing."

Still, says John, the word contests were hugely popular among readers. It's easy to see why, after reading the list Heather sent our way. Take a look at it and see what you think. Have you got a word — or words — of your own you'd care to contribute? C'mon, don't be shy. If you do, and we use them, you could win one of two fleece-lined Journal vests to keep you warm. BOZONE: The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. CASHTRATION: The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period. SARCHASM: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it. INOCULATE: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late. HIPATITIS: Terminal coolness. OSTEOPOROSIS: A degenerate disease. KARMAGEDDON: It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's, like, a serious bumper. DOPELER EFFECT: The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly. BEELZEBUB: Satan in the form of a mosquito that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out. CATERPALLOR: The colour you turn after finding half a grub in the fruit you're eating.

Contact Jamie via phone, 429-5256; fax, 429-5500; e-mail, jhall@thejournal.canwest.com; or mail, PO Box 2421, Edmonton, Alta., T5J 2S6.

Aid agencies can't use crisis to train Good Samaritans

SIMONS Continued from B1

The Red Cross and Medecins Sans Frontieres say they've been overwhelmed with hundreds of phone calls from doctors, nurses and other people who want to go to Asia to help. But neither agency is taking on new aid workers now, not in the middle of a major crisis. It's an understandable position. And one Singh sympathizes with. "I know these groups can't be babysitting guys who want to do freelance work," he says. "And I know it's not as easy as saying 'I want to go and help.' "But these countries are asking for doctors. There has to be some way that circumvents bureaucracy to quickly help people in extreme situations." Third World medicine isn't new to Singh. Although he lives and works in Edmonton and has a successful private practice, he travels regularly, about every 18 months, to his family's home in Bihar, in northeast India, where he works in a medical centre and hospital established by his family. Singh figured his medical experience, and his fluent Hindi, would be useful somewhere. So he got on the phone again, this time to friends from his years in medical school. With-

in a couple of days, he had contacted four physicians, all with ER or trauma experience, all willing to go to the tsunami zone to help out. Among the doctors Singh spoke with was his friend Ashan Fernando, a family practitioner in St. Albert. Fernando was born in Sri Lanka and still has many aunts, uncles and cousins there. No one in his family was killed or injured, even though the tsunami struck the town where they live. Fernando, like Singh, felt a strong pull to go home to help. But he, too, didn't want to arrive without a plan. "My gut tells me I want to go right now. But I'm trying to be patient. There's going to be work required there for a long time to come." Right now, Fernando is working phones and sending e-mails, rounding up medical supplies, calling family contacts in Sri Lanka and aid agencies here, trying to find some group or hospital with which he, Singh, and their colleagues can work. "As someone of Sri Lankan origin, I'm really touched that so many people all over the world want to help," he says. "I feel like this has been a wake-up call for me. I've always wanted to do overseas work, but everyday life always takes over. I'm hoping this has changed me, that I'm going to be available to do relief work next year, as well as this year."

That's what the Red Cross and Medecins sans Frontieres wish, too. Though they can't send every volunteer who'd like to go to the tsunami-struck areas, both agencies say they hope the desire to help inspired by this disaster will convince more medical professionals to sign up with their organizations for training or field placements. They hope, too, that the generosity this tragedy has inspired in so many Canadian donors will carry over to other, less high-profile, relief efforts. Still, with the crisis fresh in their minds, Singh, Fernando and their friends want to put their training to work now. They're not looking for money; they're more than willing to pay their own way and buy their own medical supplies. They just want to be sure that their efforts will count. By going public with their quest, Singh hopes they may yet find a way. Sitting here, watching helplessly from afar, is just too hard. "We have no criticism of the NGOs, because they will be the ones still battling in the trenches a year from now when everyone else has forgotten the daily horrors of this," he says. "However, our situation highlights the frustrations of MDs who want to help but can't find a way to do so."

psimons@thejournal.canwest.com

STRAW VOTE

The Alberta government has pledged \$5 million to tsunami relief. Should Alberta donate more money to help tsunami victims? 62.12 % No — Alberta has been very generous 37.88 % Yes — Alberta should donate more There were 1,056 votes.

To vote in our online polls, go to www.edmontonjournal.com.

Nick Lees Schmoozing every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday in CityPlus. Battle of Alberta Edmonton Defends Its Provincial Title Gord Steinke & Lynda Steele

Bottom Line Gary Lamphier Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays in Business. BUILDING EDMONTON BOARD BY BOARD You can make a difference in our city! The City of Edmonton is accepting applications for volunteer citizen-at-large vacancies to serve on one of the following agencies for the 2005 term: Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities, Edmonton Taxi Cab Commission, Edmonton Space and Science Foundation, Kinsmen Park Management Committee, LTAB Board, The River Valley Alliance.

New Full-Time Physical Therapy Assistant Diploma. STRETCH your career potential! Work in private clinics or hospitals. Clinical work placements. Program starts February 7, 2005. Register today! Call (780) 644-6385. NorQuest College.

BOXING DAYS BLOW-OUT 30-60% Entire Store Best Prices of the Year. FINE FURNITURE AND REALLY NEAT STUFF! Oak, Pine & Maple Furniture 10015 - 50 Street 490-4901 Mon, Tues, Wed & Fri 9:30-6pm, Thurs 9:30-9pm, Sat 9:30-5:30pm

Office Professional A Career that Counts! Specialize as an Accounting Assistant or Office Administrator in just 8 months! 94% employment rate 4-week work experience. Register Today! Call (780) 644-6471. Program starts February 2005. Student funding available. NorQuest College.

EDMONTON Volunteer to make a difference! Property and Business Tax Structure Review Committee. Edmonton City Council has established the Property and Business Tax Structure Review Committee. The Committee will make recommendations to Council on property (residential, multi-residential and non-residential) and business tax policy by September 30, 2005. The Committee will be composed of: 2 Members of Council, 4 Members representing a cross-section of residential, other-residential, non-residential, and business interest groups, 1 Member will be a senior from a seniors' group, 1 Individual who will also serve as Chair. If you are interested in filling one of these positions, application packages are available on the City's web site, www.edmonton.ca/recruitment and from the Office of the City Clerk, 3rd floor, City Hall. For more information call 496-8178 or e-mail civic.agencies@edmonton.ca. Applications must be submitted by 4:30 p.m., Friday, February 4, 2005.

SPANISH Register with us and you can win a trip to Mexico or Latin America! 4 levels of Spanish for adults Saturdays from 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. or Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30 to 8:30 P.M. Spanish 10, 20 and 30 High school students obtain 5 credits per course Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Excellent opportunity to learn Spanish and Latin American culture with native speakers teachers. Small class size. Taught by experienced and qualified teachers. Free parking. Registration will be on January 8 from 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. At 9359-67A St. (Braemar High School) * Some restrictions apply. Please call 914-6574 for more information Gabriela Mistral Latin American School

EDMONTON Notice of Development Permits. The following development permits have been approved under the terms of the Edmonton Zoning Bylaw #12500. For more information about these permits, please call the Customer Information Centre, Planning and Development Department, at 696-3105, any time from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Development Permit Number: 1021 - HAYTER ROAD NW, 1022 - 1023 STREET NW, 16008 - STONY PLAIN ROAD NW, 9427 - 61 STREET NW, 8710 - 75 AVENUE NW, 2121 - 101 STREET NW, 10200 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10201 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10202 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10203 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10204 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10205 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10206 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10207 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10208 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10209 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10210 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10211 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10212 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10213 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10214 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10215 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10216 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10217 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10218 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10219 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10220 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10221 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10222 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10223 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10224 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10225 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10226 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10227 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10228 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10229 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10230 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10231 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10232 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10233 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10234 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10235 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10236 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10237 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10238 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10239 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10240 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10241 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10242 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10243 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10244 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10245 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10246 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10247 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10248 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10249 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10250 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10251 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10252 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10253 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10254 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10255 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10256 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10257 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10258 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10259 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10260 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10261 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10262 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10263 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10264 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10265 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10266 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10267 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10268 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10269 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10270 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10271 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10272 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10273 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10274 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10275 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10276 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10277 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10278 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10279 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10280 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10281 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10282 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10283 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10284 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10285 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10286 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10287 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10288 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10289 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10290 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10291 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10292 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10293 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10294 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10295 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10296 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10297 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10298 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10299 - 51 AVENUE NW, 10300 - 51 AVENUE NW.