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GUIDE
Page 46

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**PEOPLE
WHO MADE
THE CITY
BETTER**

IN 1980
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REDEFINED
HEROISM



CASUALTY OF WAR

Capt. Trevor Greene's
Miraculous Recovery

**SAM SULLIVAN VS.
THE SUBURBS**

Why Downtown Needs
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TO TWEET & PROTECT

After The Riot, The
Cops Are All A-Twitter

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CONTENTS

June

VOLUME 44 // NUMBER 05

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Features

41

MY WAY

Developer Peter Wall charted his own course to riches and influence; his legacy goes well beyond the built environment **By Frances Bulc**

50

THE OUTSIDERS

Disenchanted by the city's condo-gorged skyline, architects John and Patricia Patkau take their humane design into the field **By Michael Harris**

71

GOOD & CHEAP

Our guide to the city's best top-value, delicious, mind-blowing budget meals, featuring artisanal pizzas, fragrant pho, and more **By Rebecca Philips**

61

CITY BUILDERS

Cover Story To mark our 45th anniversary, we select 45 people — from a park commissioner to a lieutenant-governor — who have helped make the city a better place



Panorama

11

Calendar

Picks from the jazz fest, plus all the finest doings this month

20

ShopGirl

Get set for warm weather with these summer-savvy buys

22

Personal Space

In the kitchen with recipe tester and cookbook author Joan Cross **By DJ Kearney**

25

Top Stories

Vancouver's future, says Sam Sullivan, is looking up. **Plus** Cops walk the social-media beat

28

Vancouver Life

Stepping out with a Brat Packer, a biker, and five little Batchildren

Departments

30

Samuel Roy-Bois

At Langara, the Montreal artist smashes our sense of privacy **By Myriam Lacroix**

46

Getaway Guide Whistler

Five insiders dish on don't-miss restaurants and outdoor activities

54

Casualty of War

His head split by the Taliban, a Canadian soldier redefines the word "warrior" **By Noah Richler**

Eating + Drinking

78

Drink

Two French white wines treat seafood right **By Christina Burrige**

80

A La Carte

Roast suckling pig from Steeve Rayé of Café Régala. **Plus** a multitasking mixer, and a vegan supermarket outta New West

New Online

ShopGirl's Picks

Roundups of our favourite sunglasses, beachwear, sandals, and more, plus best beauty products for a sun-kissed glow

Videos!

We go into the kitchen with some of Vancouver's best chefs to learn simple, at-home tricks for deboning a fish, cooking a perfect soft-boiled egg, making DIY mayonnaise, and more

vannag.com

82

Endmark Mayor Robertson and council have set themselves against Kinder Morgan Canada's wish to twin a pipeline from Alberta to Burnaby. Expansion would increase traffic through Burrard Inlet from a few tankers a month to one a day. "World's greenest city" vs. "Gateway to the Pacific": the battle lines are drawn



Towering Ambition

As mayor, Sam Sullivan made density the agenda at City Hall. Today he's more committed than ever to shaping Vancouver's future **By John Burns**

Urban Planning

W

WHEN SAM SULLIVAN was in his early 30s, he called up a fellow he knew, an engineer named Paul Cermak. This is what Sullivan did back then—we're talking a dozen years before he won the mayor's chair, before controversial initiatives like EcoDensity and Project Civil City, before the high of flying the Maple Leaf in Turin and the low of being routed by Peter Ladner. He'd invite a bright light to lunch, talk a little, listen a lot, then drop some impossible challenge. Then he'd sit back and, with a widening of the eyes, ask when he might expect results. Actually, he's still doing it.

That day, he was musing with Cermak about mobility. Sullivan, a quadriplegic with no feeling in his legs and only limited use of his biceps and wrists, had pioneered a way to pilot a sailboat and an ultralight aircraft. Now he wanted to hike. He'd already tasked a group of engineers with adapting a golf cart to access the wilderness, but he figured Cermak could gin up something more eco-friendly. The two had worked together



What's wrong with this picture? Sullivan's Global Civic Policy Society argues for a revamp of downtown: tall towers, thronging streets

on various home-based adaptations: shortcuts that allowed Sullivan to feed and dress himself, and to open his apartment blinds. Recalling the lunch, Cermak told the filmmaker Ali Mehdi, "Sam put a few lines on a napkin and asked me if I could build it." The squiggle, he recalled, looked like a Chinese rickshaw, so that's what he built: a rugged two-wheel recumbent lawn chair on which Sullivan was pushed and pulled into Manning Provincial Park. Mehdi's *Access Challenge* is

the story of that TrailRider outing, and though they didn't reach the summit (the team hauling the contraption was unprepared for the labour required of mud-slick trails), it shows how a Sullivan lunch can start casually, then morph into something unexpected—a doodle growing into an engineering accomplishment that has taken quadriplegics up Mt. Kilimanjaro and to the base camp at Mount Everest.

Watching Sullivan power through the *salal* puts a new spin on the interven-

ing decades. Of course he's persistent (maybe his bullishness predates the accident or maybe it crystallized during his recovery—Sullivan's not wasting a lot of daylight worrying either way). Of course he's good at troop-rallying. What's surprising is to see him removed from his habitat. "See the person, not the chair"—that's the cry of the disabled. But it's not the chair that defines Sam Sullivan. It's what the chair needs. He's a city boy, a creature of curb cuts and full-access buses (legacies of his public service years) and ramps and elevators. He's most at ease where barriers are few, where human ingenuity is paramount. It's no wonder he champions cities, that he works so hard to grow them bigger, higher, denser.

AFTER HIS DEFEAT IN 2008, Sullivan took a year off. With his partner Lynn Zanatta, a girlfriend from high school he reunited with during his run for mayor, he withdrew into the private life he'd put on hold for 15 years. No politics. No media. Even in the dark time, though, a fellow's going to take a lunch, and when he returned to the spotlight, the two of them had funding for a new Global Civic Policy Society, a think-tank, says its website, dedicated to "research and reflection on civil society, local government, and citizenship."

The society is the latest in a

Vancouver needs more density, says Sullivan, a lot more. **Let's become a real city** rather than a collection of shiny-brochure "villages"

string of Sullivan incubators. Over the years, he's founded a half-dozen nonprofits, from a disabled-sailing group to the Vancouver Adaptive Music Society. (A keyboardist in his teens, he'd just bought a keyboard and was gigging around town when he broke his neck skiing.) The Sam Sullivan Foundation that supports these groups has raised \$20 million to date.

From broken bodies he's turned his interest to broken cities. In his view, Vancouver needs more density—a lot more. Let's become a real city, he says, rather than a collection of shiny-brochure "villages" and single-family-home suburbs. It's better for the environment—he cites a recent World Bank study that compares a section of Toronto, where each resident creates 1.3 tonnes of greenhouse gases per year, with nearby Whitby, where it's 10 times that.

"We're focused on the wrong things," he says one afternoon at Uva, one of the Seymour Street haunts where he conducts business. (Commune's another.) "That's what I wish the environmentalists understood. They're focused on changing light bulbs and keeping up SUV tire pressure." Those might save a few hundred pounds of CO₂ a year; living downtown and taking the bus instead of driving to the suburbs saves thousands. Density is better economically, as well—increase population and GDP rises—and even socially. Suburbs are exclusionary: there's a reason gay clubs and social housing are more welcome downtown than farther out.

Sullivan's concern dates back to his time in civic politics. "Let's change the model," he says, recalling his goal when he took office. "The whole system of City Hall. Density was a bad word. Well, I insisted on putting it right in the name of the initiative: EcoDensity. They wanted euphemisms. 'Smart growth.' I wanted to get people's backs up."

He's still confronting the unconverted; hence his Vancouver Urban Forum, happening at the Playhouse on June 6. A daylong symposium on "Fourth Wave Urbanism: Achieving Urban Densification," it marshals leading proponents of growth like Harvard economics professor Edward Glaeser, whose bestselling *Triumph of the City* catalogues the ways that cities enable human achievement. (Glaeser's Vancouver talk, a rebuttal to planning guru Jane Jacobs, will focus on the relationship between density and affordability.) Also speaking will be former Manhattan chief planner Vishaan Chakrabarti on the role density transfers played in creating New York's mile-long elevated High Line park, and Toronto author Alan Broadbent on how urban areas are underrepresented electorally.

Healing cities is about more than density. In his campaign for mayor, Sullivan stressed our multiculturalism: rather than seeing those of different cultures as "the other," we could expand community with the simplest of gestures: he learned Cantonese, gave speeches in Punjabi. Nowadays, his society hosts a Greeting Fluency program and app.

A recent all-day presentation filled the Woodward's courtyard and Djavad Mowafaghian theatre with citizens curious to learn how to greet one another in some of Vancouver's many languages. Each presenter who led us in "Bonjour, monsieur" and "Ogenki desuka?" greeted Sullivan warmly by name.

"My good friend Sam," Michaëlle Jean, the former governor general, said before one of Sullivan's quarterly Public Salons, another Global Civic project. "I speak French, he speaks English. Together, we always speak Italian." The salons, TED Talk-style presentations that grew out of dinners he used to host at the homes of friends, do what Sullivan does: they throw together disparate thoughts and people to create a better citizenry—napkin-doodle lunches writ large.

It's tempting to conclude any story about Sullivan the way so many stories conclude. "They're really nice," he says, dismissively. "Formulaic. 'Able-bodied guy breaks his neck, suffers depression, gets quality of life, helps others.' It's boring." When he was mayor, he realized the people he admired, "the guys getting stuff done, really kicking ass, were hated. I felt jealous. I was getting the 'crip' story. I wished I could be like them."

Sullivan's fascination with ideas and commitment to his civic vision may yet attract the scorn he'd love to earn. As I rise to leave, he raises his arm in a small gesture of defiance. Rooted in his wheelchair, the bar filling with the after-work crowd, he lifts his fist in ironic salute: "Free the buildings!"

Society



To Tweet and Protect

Cops learn to walk the social-media beat

By Remy Scalza

ON A RECENT rainy afternoon at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, 150 cops from as far away as Australia are getting chewed out by one of their own. "A riot can go from zero to 150 with one Tweet," says Toronto training constable Nathan Dayler. A veteran of both the G-20 riots and Occupy demonstrations, Dayler has had more experience than most policing the Twittersphere. "You can't let tension just simmer on social media," he says. "That's not an option."

Tweets, hash tags, and netiquette are the subjects of the day at the fifth installment of Social Media the Internet and Law Enforcement (SMILE). A kind of boot camp for police departments training up on social media, the conference broaches issues as diverse as mining Facebook for open-source intelligence to getting the most out of your 140 characters on Twitter.

"There's such a big gap between where law enforcement is and what they can achieve with these tools," says Lauri Stevens, who started SMILE in 2010 and has 14,895 followers on Twitter. The rare expert equally at home discussing