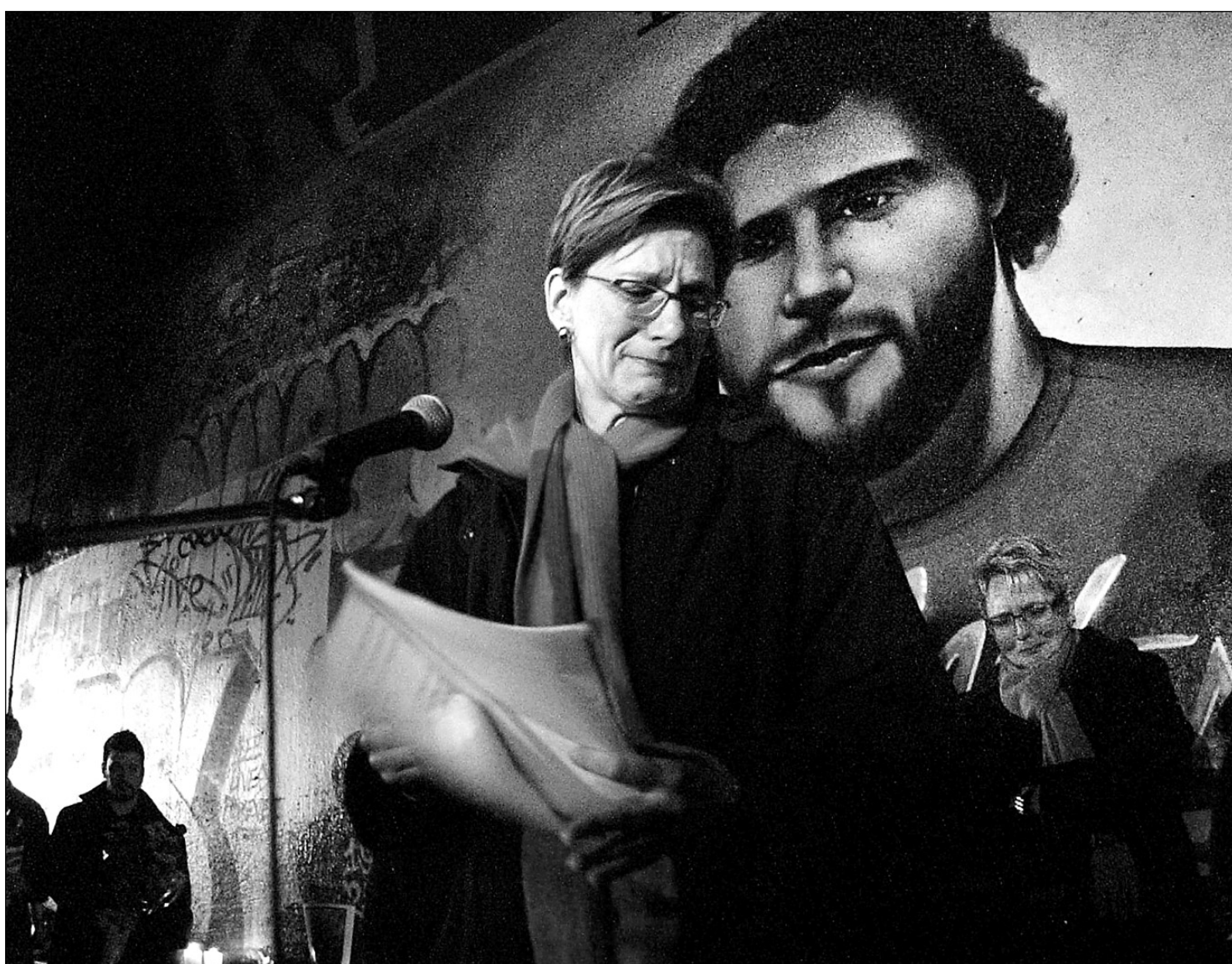


PRISON LIFE

Conservatives axe pilot program that lets prisoners get cheap tattoos

The Conservative government has cancelled a pilot project that set up tattoo parlours in federal prisons, despite assertions that allowing prisoners to practise safe tattooing cuts down on infectious diseases and costs less in the long run. Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day told a news conference yesterday that "providing tattoos for convicted criminals" is not an effective use of taxpayer money. The former Liberal government implemented the \$600,000 pilot project in August, 2005, at six federal penitentiaries. Prisoners could get tattoos for about \$5 to \$15 each. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation lauded the decision while the Canadian HIV-AIDS Legal Network said its cancellation was short-sighted. *CanWest News Service*



Susan Jessop in front of a mural of her deceased son Lee Matasi. The 23-year-old artist was shot in Vancouver's Gastown district in 2005.

Fatal shooting drives mother's campaign

OTTAWA SUMMIT

Legislation seeks tough new custody regulations

BY EMILY MATHIEU

When Susan Jessop attends a national victims summit in Ottawa today, it will be the culmination of a year of campaigning for a movement which she never wanted to join.

She began lobbying against gun violence when her son Lee Matasi, a promising young Canadian artist, was killed in Vancouver's Gastown district a year ago.

The 23-year-old's death became part of a wave of similar random shootings — including the high-profile death of Toronto's Jane Creba — that galvanized

the nation, and politicians.

In fact, when the federal government introduced its tough new custody regulations recently for those charged with a serious gun crime, they were in large part a response to the outcry over the quick release on bail of the man charged in Mr. Matasi's death.

The reverse-onus legislation, introduced less than two weeks ago, would require that anyone charged with a violent gun crime defend their case to a judge before they are granted bail. The proposed law would make it much tougher for a person charged in a shooting like Mr. Matasi's to get out on bail. (Dennis Robert White, 29, was released into his mother's custody three weeks after he was charged in the shooting.)

"How did we come to this place where gun violence is a part of our landscape in Canada?" says Ms. Jessop, whose own response to her son's death came through a campaign called

Artists Against Violence.

She wants to remain focused on the things she can change: "I've never done the 'Why me?' — Why anyone? Why is this happening in our country?"

The summit she is attending is through the Office for Victims of Crime, bringing together victims, academics, police and government.

On the weekend, friends of her son held a tribute party for him at Antisocial, a skateboard shop and gallery in Vancouver's east end, where various prints of Mr. Matasi's art were on sale to raise funds for a skateboard park he founded as a teenager, which eventually became known as Leeside.

In the year after his death, tributes to Mr. Matasi — who was also known as a graffiti artist named AVERS — have shown up in graffiti art scrawled everywhere, from walls in Paris to bridges in Rome.

The Ottawa School of Art,

from which he graduated in 2005, has renamed the student gallery for its former pupil and established a scholarship in his name.

The tributes highlight Mr. Matasi's two loves: If "Little Lee," as he was called before he hit 6'2", wasn't painting, he was on a skateboard.

At five, his father, Lou Matasi, made him a deal — learn to tie his shoelaces and he'd get a skateboard. He had it figured out in less than a day.

It wasn't long before the goofy kid with the lisp and long purple shorts was a regular in the skateboarding scene. As a teenager, he began clearing out a 50-metre long tunnel near Vancouver's Hastings Park to create a dry place to paint and skate. It was dubbed Leeside.

After years of doing his painting on Leeside's walls, Mr. Matasi travelled to France in 2002 and began painting in an abandoned convent in Saint-Erme.

He spent his days skateboarding down cobblestone streets, trading art with locals to use their showers, and hosting barbecues on the convent lawn. *Sugar*, a French skateboard magazine, wrote about him, and he was also featured in an image for a French Yellow Pages ad.

When Alex Cameron, the Canadian artist who had Mr. Matasi as his apprentice, went to Paris last year to visit Mr. Matasi's friends, he was overwhelmed by the impact the young man made in such a short time.

He and Mr. Matasi spent much of the summer of 2004 together, which Mr. Cameron recalls not as teacher-student, but two fellow artists talking, painting and drinking together.

"I considered him already to be an artist," he said. "I would look at his [work], he would look at mine. I never sat down and taught him anything... The enormity of the number of people who knew and loved this guy blows my mind, it's phenomenal for someone his age."

National Post

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NATIONAL REPORT

OTTAWA TO SPEND \$100M TO REPAIR CULTURAL BUILDINGS

Ottawa The federal government will spend almost \$100-million to repair the buildings housing five of its major cultural institutions in Ottawa-Gatineau but has warned them they must increasingly look toward getting money from the private sector. Heritage Minister Bev Oda, pictured, and Treasury Board President John Baird deliberately made their announcement yesterday at the Canadian Museum of Nature, where a new \$10-million fossil gallery has just opened with the help of a \$2-million grant



from Talisman Energy Inc. "It's a great example, the Museum of Nature, involving the private sector as well," Mr. Baird told a news conference. "We've got to see more of that in our national institutions, whether in Ottawa or around the country." Mr. Baird and Ms. Oda indicated

they are in no hurry to resolve many other long-standing requests for the funding of cultural institutions, including the opening of a Portrait Gallery of Canada, \$6.5-million for Ottawa's proposed concert hall on Elgin Street, a new home for the Canada Science and

Technology Museum, \$49-million for the so-called Big Six cultural institutions in Toronto and a host of other requests from Vancouver to Halifax. The signals from the ministers and from federal cultural bureaucrats

interviewed yesterday are that the Stephen Harper government will first look after the institutions that benefit "all Canadians" and that provinces and municipalities should be more mindful of financing institutions in their own jurisdictions. *CanWest News Service*

TWO ALBERTA BROTHERS DIE IN HUNTING CABIN TRAGEDY

The bodies of two brothers were found in a remote Alberta hunting cabin over the weekend, apparently having frozen to death while breathing in carbon monoxide. Police say Kristopher Todd, 27, and his 21-year-old brother Travis had planned to go hunting with a friend, Eric Jones, in the Porcupine Hills area, about 90 minutes south of Calgary. The three arrived at the small, propane-heated cabin Thursday evening. It was during that night, police believe, that the heater's toxic fumes. It appears the heater stopped working sometime that night, police

said. "Because the cabin was so cold, they probably succumbed to the elements," said Corporal Marty Schneider, with the Claresholm RCMP detachment. He estimated that the temperature dipped to -20C. The three men were not found until Saturday, when friends arrived for a previously scheduled rendezvous. The friends' persistent banging on the door roused Mr. Jones from his semi-conscious state, police said. Autopsies performed yesterday on the Todd brothers, both from Coleman, Alta., were expected to determine the exact cause of death. Foul play is not suspected. *National Post*

10,000 COWS ATE FEED TAINTED WITH ANIMAL BY-PRODUCT

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency said yesterday that 10,000 cattle in Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec have consumed feed containing traces of animal by-products, but the risk of exposing humans to mad cow disease is negligible. The feed used on 113 farms became contaminated recently when a rail car used to ship meat and bone meal for hog and poultry feed was later employed to transport blood meal that was added to cattle feed. The beef will be sold to Canadians, but the food inspection agency has decided to track the cattle movements so they cannot be exported. The food inspection

agency refused to identify the farms that used the feed for privacy reasons. Agribroads Canada spokesman Rob Meijer said the company voluntarily recalled the feed produced at its plants at Addison, east of Montreal. Mr. Meijer said the company disposed of the feed at landfill sites and replaced it with cattle feed that did not contain meat and bone meal. "Feed ingredients come in bulk rail-car shipments and there is a cleanout procedure when you are unloading and loading," Mr. Meijer said. "Unfortunately in this case the cleaning may not have been done thoroughly enough." *CanWest News Service*



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