

Down and out "Hero" Deserves Boot with Wooden Shoe^[1]

Allow me to give it a different spin--without knowing Hendrik Buene in person.

So, there's this hero, my fellow Dutchman, living in this East Side below-par hotel, in a room you can hardly turn around in. Surrounded by mental illness, alcohol, drugs and nicotine. But, hey, Hendrik is there because he wants to help the people living there.

Helping these people has been his life. Admirable. Noble, undoubtedly. From the story I get the impression that it cost him both his family and business. Hendrik was going to help the East Side poor, even against the will of his wife and family. He was ready to sacrifice the most important relationships in order to fulfill his mission. Use and abuse every relationship, every person and every agency he could to further a mission to which no one appointed him.

So, now he does this noble mission, living a sparse life in sparse surroundings. He squeezed out of his wife and children what he could. Ditto his business. Then he turned to the benighted Santa Clauses operating our welfare system and talked them into supporting him.

Och, arme Hendrik. Aw, poor Hendrik. That cheap Liberal government gives him only \$607.92 a month. Out of that, they have the nerve to deduct \$20 to recover his forfeited damage deposit. What kind of cheap, unfeeling government is that? Come on, folks, let's call NDP back into the seat so we can have some justice. That's Hendrik's human right after all, right?

You know what my problem is? Which Santa Claus agreed to pay my \$600+ to Hendrik who has freely chosen this way of life? "I enjoy my freedom," he admits. "I don't want to give that up too easily for a regular job." Hell, no, I wouldn't either if I had no more conscience, ambition or pride. If you can squeeze it out of Santa Claus, why not? So what if all these tax payers have to get up at 6 am to make their way to the daily boxing ring? As long as Hendrik can live out his mission!

You know, I'm not sure whom I first want to kick a solid wooden shoe in the rear--that Santa Clause or Hendrik, or perhaps Cheryl Rossi for twisting this guy into a "hero." --

Or the whole works! On second thought, a wooden shoe just wouldn't deliver the payload that Hendrik deserves--not sharp enough.

^[1]Letter to the Editor, *Vancouver Courier*, 12 Sept/2005 in response to Cheryl Rossie, "A Room of One's Own," 7 Sept/2005. *Every Square Inch*, vol. 4, p. 136.

Moccasin Theory Softer than Wooden Shoe Approach

In response to John Boer's letter
by Kaye Paulson

To the editor:

Re: "A Room of One's Own" (Sept. 7) and Dr. Jan Boer's letter ("Down and out 'hero' deserves boot with wooden shoe," Sept. 18).

I was surprised to see the rather vicious and personal attack of Dr. Jan Boer on his "fellow Dutchman," welfare recipient Hendrik Buene.

The doctor stated that he first wanted to kick Mr. Buene in the ass with a wooden shoe but decided it would not be sharp enough.

An old North American saying, purportedly of First Nations origin, counsels a different approach: "Do not be hard on a man until you have walked a mile in his moccasins."

On the other hand, one can see that a wooden shoe is better footgear for kicking a fellow human being when he's down.