

THE CITY » A BIWEEKLY LOOK AT LIFE IN VANCOUVER

# Microphilanthropy feels as good as it tastes

Giving back at supper clubs can generate a virtuous cycle of good deeds, as small groups make a big difference



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The Scotty Hard Supper Club phenomenon has really taken off in the city (Scottyhardsuppers.com). As of this past Saturday night there will have been seven fundraising dinners in Vancouver. Six more are in the works as well as a host of other contributions from restaurants and food industry suppliers.

All of these events are in support of the Vancouver native, Scott Harding, who was hit by a car and paralyzed in New York in February. The accident left the well-known Brooklyn-based sound engineer and former member of Vancouver's Jazzmanian Devils paralyzed from the chest down and in hospital, racking up thousands of dollars in uninsured health care bills a day.

"A friend and I started adding it up," he told me last week on the phone from New York, where he is still involved in full-time spinal injury rehabilitation. "We stopped when we got to \$250,000 U.S. If I ever had to pay that, I'd be bankrupt."

The fundraising effort started with benefit concerts given by many musician friends, both in New York and Vancouver. And while Scotty (as he is invariably known) is by no means in the clear, the fundraising is well into the tens of thousands now. Scotty told me he was "overwhelmed and eternally grateful."

The fundraising effort in Vancouver, however, has taken on an interesting momentum as events have shifted from music to eating. And here is where local fundraisers may do well to pay attention, living as we do in a city where they face an environ-

ment of private donation that one long-time consultant in arts and cultural development described to me as "grim," particularly as compared with Toronto.

Spearheaded by Christopher Mooney – a Paris-based journalist, long-time friend of Scotty's, and gourmand of almost unparalleled enthusiasm – the Scotty Hard Supper Club concept involves big name chefs cooking at their restaurants or at private residences for diners who pay a flat fee to the Scotty Hard Trust (Scottyhardtrust.com).

The supper clubs work because they make use of microphilanthropy – a technique that brings a grassroots network of people who wish to help close to the situations they are being asked to help. What results is a loop of positive feedback, where the good deed gives rise to such high perceived returns that it is repeated, not only by the original actors, but by new participants inspired to pursue the same positive feedback.

How does it work in this case? You can go some ways toward answering that just by looking at the menus. The first supper club, hosted by the chefs of the new La Quercia, Adam Pegg and Lucais Syme, featured a seven-course northern Italian menu including spot prawns, cold veal scaloppini with tuna and caper sauce, rolled rabbit with fava beans and pancetta, and mussels with rapini.

A few weeks later, the folks at Marrakech stepped up to the table with a nine-course North African feast including braised Polderside duck bastilla in saffron broth, sautéed eggplant stuffed with almonds, Moroccan lamb brochettes, and braised lamb shank tagine with figs and apricots.

People love to eat, certainly. And these dinners were great value at \$75 and \$125 a couple, respectively. So you can probably imagine the loop of positive feedback that will drive traffic toward the events



Butcher Sebastian Cortez's Sebastian & Co. Fine Organic Meats offered, unsolicited, to donate organic pork for a fundraising picnic to benefit Scott Harding. LYLE STAFFORD FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

planned for Bistrot Bistro, Gastropod, the new Chambar café, and Wild Rice.

But good food isn't the whole of it.

What is snowballing the Scotty Hard Supper Clubs – prompting people to host them and attend them, contribute to them and write about them – is the healthiest kind of competition and mimicry in our culture. It's the impulse to match and even increase the contribution you see made by others, because of the pleasure and other returns they seem to get out of their involvement. Microphilanthropy harnesses a benign self-interest in service of community, in other words. People are having fun, doing some good. Others are drawn to it.

I was, too, admittedly. My wife and I don't know Scotty, but we went to the Marrakech and have been watching the whole phenomenon unroll with interest this summer. We throw a decent-sized feed for our birthdays, typically. So this past Saturday, we made mine a Scotty Hard Birthday Party. No gifts, no cards, only donations to the trust. So contagious was this idea, in fact, that Sebastian & Co. Fine Organic Meats in West Vancouver offered, unsolicited, to donate the organic pork shoulder I needed for the feast.

So we did our little bit, drank a few Brooklyn Lagers in honour, and plugged into the community.

Only, knowing the kind of menus that have preceded and will follow, we went with pulled pork sandwiches and coleslaw. Paper plates. You get the picture.

"And Dairy Queen ice cream cake," Scotty said, chuckling over the phone from Brooklyn as he read the menu online. "That's great, man. That's keeping it real."

Tasted good. Felt good. Was good. Here's health to Scotty. » Timothy Taylor is a novelist and journalist based in Vancouver. His latest book is the novel Story House.

## YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE » SALLY BROMPTON

If your birthday is today: Don't set yourself too many goals on your birthday this year because you will achieve more in the long-term if you react to events rather than try to make things happen. Each new day will bring new opportunities to excel – all you have to do is take them.

**♈ ARIES (March 21 - April 20):** Major challenges are coming your way but in each and every one of them you will find an opportunity to improve yourself. Creatively and romantically the next few days should be some of the best of the year. Give all you've got, then give some more.

**♉ TAURUS (April 21 - May 21):** Listen carefully to what friends and colleagues tell you because they can see things that you cannot. Don't let your ego blind you to the fact that some people have more experience than you. Make it your aim to learn something new each and every day.

**♊ GEMINI (May 22 - June 21):** As the upcoming solar eclipse falls in the communications

area of your chart you will be even more chatty than usual this week, if that is possible. You will also have some great ideas about how to make more of your talents. Live up to your potential.

**♋ CANCER (June 22 - July 23):** The decisions you make over the next five or six days will set the tone for the following five or six months, so make them carefully and make sure you know what the cost will be, not just financially but emotionally too. Can you afford it?

**♌ LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23):** With the sun, Venus and Mercury transiting your sign all things are possible and the closer you get to Friday's eclipse the more convinced you will be that you are on the cusp of something big. Strive to be the best at what you do. Don't just be good, be fantastic.

**♍ VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23):** You may be cautious by nature but the planets are urging you to take the kind of risks that

make things happen. Have faith in your own abilities and act as if there is a higher power guiding your actions. Never doubt you are on the right path.

**♎ LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23):** No matter how talented a Libra you may be you can only go so far on your own. The approaching eclipse can take you further than ever before but you must work with others as part of a team. Put your ego on hold and reach for your dream.

**♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22):** This week's solar eclipse takes place in the area of your chart that rules your social standing and your professional reputation and if you are not already up front and centre stage you soon will be. Show the world what talent and star quality look like.

**♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21):** You are who you are for a reason and no one has the right to demand that you be someone else. This week, more than most, you will insist on being true to your essential nature. If others don't like it,

too bad. It's your life – live it your way.

**♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20):** If you want to make some serious money, most likely by making a success of a business venture of some kind, you will have to live it and breathe it 24 hours a day. You cannot afford to be half-hearted. If it's important to you then give it your all.

**♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19):** It may at times seem as if other people are dictating to you, and maybe they are, but that need not be a bad thing. Let partners and loved ones and work colleagues make decisions for you over the next few days. Save your energy for more enjoyable things.

**♓ PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20):** A habit or routine that has been helpful to you in the past is now holding you back and the sooner you replace it with something more up-to-date the better. The planets will make it easy for you to change your ways but the decision must still come from you. » Visit Sally at [www.sallybrompton.com](http://www.sallybrompton.com)

## SUDOKU ©PUZZLES BY PAPPocom

7			6	2			9
2							7
	6	9		8		2	1
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		3				1	
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## SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

2	6	1	9	4	7	8	3	5
9	5	4	3	1	8	6	7	2
7	3	8	5	6	2	4	9	1
8	2	3	7	5	9	1	4	6
6	1	9	4	8	3	2	5	7
5	4	7	6	2	1	9	8	3
3	7	2	1	9	4	5	6	8
4	8	6	2	3	5	7	1	9
1	9	5	8	7	6	3	2	4

Fill in the grid so that each row of nine squares, each column of nine and each section of nine (three squares by three) contains the numbers 1 through 9 in any order. There is only one solution to each puzzle. Solution, tips and computer program at [www.sudoku.com](http://www.sudoku.com)

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