

# Slippery floors deadly hazard

by Shauna MacDonald

Slippery floors are probably something you don't think of too often. But falls are the fifth-leading cause of deaths for the elderly and children. In farming, falls are the second big killer.

Dr. Andy Harrell from the U of A does research on the psychological and social effects of slippery floors. Some companies such as Sears believe glossy floors raise an expectation of falling, and that people will be more careful when walking.

Harrell has found that it doesn't matter whether the floor is shiny or not.

On campus he has clocked people walking, counted their number of steps, and even included their sex. He has found that on waxed or non-waxed floors people don't alter their speed or number of steps, and women in high-heel shoes manage as well as those who have a pair of running shoes for all occasions. But then women who wear high-heels tend to be more kamikaze anyhow!

Harrell noted that if some hazard is put in the way such as sawdust, speed and number of steps are unaltered, and people walk around the hazard.

Harrell has found that use of non-slippage material is more hazardous because people become

careless when they feel safe.

Harrell is also observing cross-walks. He has found that when roads are wet or icy 50 per cent of pedestrians check for cars. Under dry conditions only 35 per cent of pedestrians check. And if you're with friends or a group of people, the chances of you checking for traffic decreases even more. In this situation it's best if you strategically place yourself in the middle. One or two people on the outside of you should stop a car.

Harrell intends to do more studies into falling and slippery floors. He has found there is very little literature and research done on falls except for medical and engineering reports. At the present time he isn't funded by anyone.

An interesting note about Harrell's lecture is the number of people who attended (Bravo!). In a lecture the day before on the geo-strategic setting of Canada's defence policy, there were half the number of people that Harrell was able to attract. This shows students are less worried about our butts being blown to smithereens than we are about falling on them. As students our butts are probably the second most important part of our anatomies, next to our brains. Let us should have to stand and study at the same time!



## Quips 'n' Quotes

**So this is hell. I never thought it would be this way. You remember the sulphur fumes, the fire, being cooked alive. Ah! How funny it all seems now. There is no need to be cooked alive; hell is the other people you have to contend with.**

Jean-Paul Sartre  
Huis Clos, 1944

# Cambodian girl located

by Susan Winkelaar

Dave Walker's search for a kidnapped Cambodian girl is finally over. The girl, 16 year old Sary Dy, will soon be on her way to Canada.

When she was 12 years old, Sary was crossing the Thai-Cambodian border each day to work for a family in Thailand. One night in 1982, on her way home, she was kidnapped. Shortly after that, fighting between the Vietnamese and the Khmer sealed off the border. There was no way to get to Sary.

When the Dy family came to Canada in 1984, they had to leave Sary behind, not knowing whether she was alive or dead.

Walker, an Edmonton private investigator, became involved with the family when they were having trouble with their landlord. He got to know the family and learned about Sary. He promised he would try to find her.

"I sent 160 posters to the Red Cross, got in touch with old National Army contacts, and contacted people at the Refugee Release Agency," says Walker.

On February 11, 1986, Walker's contacts paid off. He located Sary in a camp called Greenhill.

"I could have got her out then and there," Walker says, "but she would have been arrested."

According to Canadian Immigration policy, she would have been classed as an illegal alien and would not have been granted the interview that is mandatory for all immigrants coming to Canada.

When asked if he received much

help from the public or the government, Walker laughed. "No way. I came close to giving up the operation," he said. "But I'd promised the family."

Walker was hoping to raise \$8500 to cover expenses, but all he got was \$2800. Half of that went to pay his airfare to Cambodia.

Despite a lack of funds, apathy, and, in some cases, outright opposition, Walker found Sary. She received an interview in November and has since been moved to a transit camp, where she is waiting to pass a medical exam. This will take six to eight weeks. Then Sary will be on her way home.

According to Walker, there are about 700 families in Edmonton who still have family members back in Cambodia.

Sary Dy's story is just one of many. Over three million people died in the Cambodian conflict—a holocaust worthy of being ranked with World War II. Yet relatively few people know about it. Awareness is growing, due to movies like *The Killing Fields*. A U of A drama class has written, produced and directed a play called *The Cambodians (We Live a Danger)*, which has also helped increase awareness. It is currently being performed in schools around the city.

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A poster of Sary Dy, asking Cambodians to keep an eye out for her.

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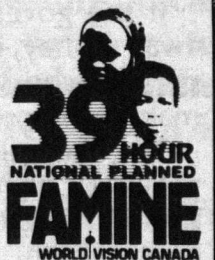
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