



PAUL BROWN

**Steve Bearden and Margaret Walkky purchase supplies for their weekly gourmet meals for Seattle's homeless.**

## Gourmet grub

Every Saturday for the last three years, Costco members Steve Bearden and his wife, Margaret Walkky, of Seattle, have cooked gourmet meals for about 150 homeless people in their area.

The couple carries out nearly every facet of this ongoing endeavour by themselves at an annual cost of about US\$15,000. "Being involved with the homeless has actually been a very humbling experience," says Walkky. "It certainly puts the ups and downs of my life in perspective."

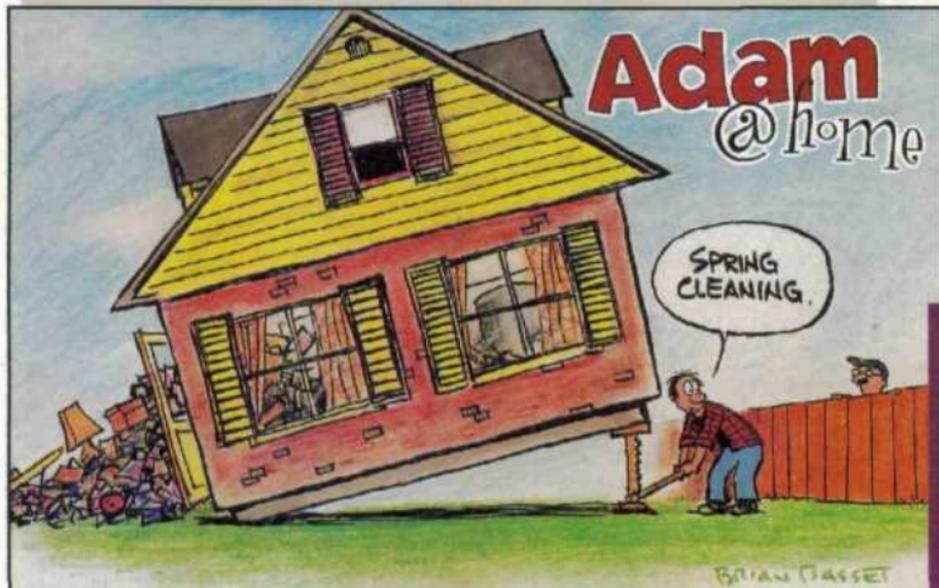
Bearden, a part-time student who is interested in playwriting, and Walkky, who works as a court reporter in Seattle, have come up with hundreds of recipes that most people would prepare only when they're pulling out all the stops for family or special friends. "We prepare meals fit for royalty because we feel, of all people in society, the

homeless will appreciate it most," says Walkky.

On Thursdays the couple, who are also in the middle of forming a non-profit organization called Gourmet Grub, go shopping for the week's meal. A recent menu included chips and salsa, meatballs in mushroom gravy on rice, spinach gratin, corn with butter, deep-dish cheesecake, milk, coffee and hot spiced cider. "We buy mass quantities at Costco," says Walkky, "They know us quite personally at our local warehouse."

After their shopping spree they spend about eight hours each Saturday preparing the meal. They drop the meals off at Tent City, an encampment for the homeless, and at a veterans' shelter. They don't stay to serve them up because they don't want to draw attention to themselves. We at *The Connection*, however, feel their efforts are very noteworthy.

—Will Fifield



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