

Angeline Pete:  
lost but not  
forgotten  
Page 3



## Families prepare for Lunar New Year celebrations

by KATE KOVALEVA

Although widely used throughout the world, the Gregorian calendar is not the only one around and not the only one with New Year's celebrations in January.

On Jan. 23, many Asian and non-Asian communities are gearing up for Lunar New Year celebrations of their own.

The Lunisolar calendar, which tracks both solar years and lunar months, is responsible for the festivities falling on different days each year. In China, the largest country celebrating the Lunar New Year, the Lunisolar and Gregorian calendars are used concurrently.

The Lunar New Year is a major celebration that can last up to two weeks. There are many events planned in the Lower Mainland, including a public celebration scheduled for Richmond's Lansdowne Centre on Jan. 22 and the Chinese New Year Parade in Vancouver on Sunday, Jan. 29.

The Gung Haggis Fat Choy dinner performance is a combination of both the Chinese New Year and the anniversary of Scotland's national poet Robert Burns' birthday.

Events also include lion dances, marching bands and colourful performances, but for many Vancouver families, the celebrations happen at home.

### Tét: Vietnamese New Year and the first day of spring

Chi Bui, originally from Vietnam, is studying to be a nurse in



Asian and non-Asian families all across metro Vancouver are preparing for fun-filled days in celebration of the Lunar New Year.

Vancouver. She speaks about the holidays with fondness.

"People say 'Happy New Year!' [at midnight on New Year's Eve]," says Bui, "and family and friends come and celebrate together in the house."

Bui says that on the first day of the year, her mother turns on the gas stove and all the lights in the house.

"We open the stove and we put it on and we boil water ... it's for good luck."

She says that the flames from the gas stove are kept on for a few hours to symbolize the

warmth, happiness and brightness which is hoped for in the new year. There is a lot of preparation before the festivities and the house is thoroughly cleaned.

"That's what my mom and dad are doing right now, making [the house] very neat - and buying new clothes," says Bui.

Different types of foods, like rice cakes, are prepared in advance and the house is decorated with colourful flowers. Yellow and red are considered particularly festive.

See "Lunar New Year" page 2 >

## Verbatim

### From Prince George to Surrey

by ALEX THEESSEN

Last February I moved to Surrey immediately after graduating from the University of Victoria in order to start up a new business - Class Act Painters. I had a hell of a time, for two reasons. One, because starting a new business is a lot of work, and two, because living in Surrey is ... well, it's living in Surrey. I find Surrey to be much like a larger version of Prince George, where I grew up, except it's easier to leave.

While living in Surrey, it wasn't long until I found myself making frequent escapes to Vancouver to have experiences I just could not find in Surrey. This year, I finally made the move to Commercial Drive and I'm excited to start

painting movie sets in the IATSE union local 891.

I spent much of my university days travelling, studying and working in Latin America and Europe, so one of the things I enjoy the most about Vancouver is that it is so multi-cultural. This allows me to keep in touch with the left ventricle of my heart, which is dedicated to all things associated with Latin America. Whether it be striking up a conversation in Spanish on the Skytrain or going to events held by the Spanish speaking community, it is enough to keep that part of me satisfied and prevent me from fleeing the reality of everyday working life by flying to Spanish-Land.

There are two great contrasts that come to mind here >

See "Verbatim" page 5 >

### Also in this issue



Eric Wong: singing out for diversity  
Page 6



PuSh-ing along the festival circuit  
Page 7

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CAFÉ DE FLORE Jean-Marc Vallée Jan. 19, 2012

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# My Turn

SERGE CORBEIL

## Questions abound for the federal Liberals

Major defeats are often opportunities for serious introspection. What happened? Why? How are similar circumstances avoided in the future?

These are questions pondered by pundits and supporters of the Liberal Party of Canada after the bitter defeat they suffered in last May's general election.

For the first time since its electoral beating, the party has gathered its followers for its biennial convention.

Reading into what transpired from last weekend's meeting, the party Sir Wilfrid Laurier formed still has a long road to travel before it can seriously aspire to an executive position in the capital city.

For a party demoted to third place for the first time in its history, it is strange to see that, apparently, the lessons weren't learned – that is to regroup delegates and supporters in order to

concentrate, morning, noon and night, on what really matters: political organization in all the ridings across the country.

Scrutinizing the biennial convention's debates, one can only conclude that the party is still in the midst of an identity crisis. This inability to define itself in 21st century Canada is an obstacle that followers and leaders must overcome at all cost, if they wish to have a chance to win the next election.

We must admit that, in spite of what some called a dramatic situation, delegates were able to make a number of judicious decisions. For example, they defeated the idea of choosing their next leader following an American-style primary system.

The delegates were right to do so. The only winner in such a scenario would have been the Conservative's strategists. They would have benefited from months of

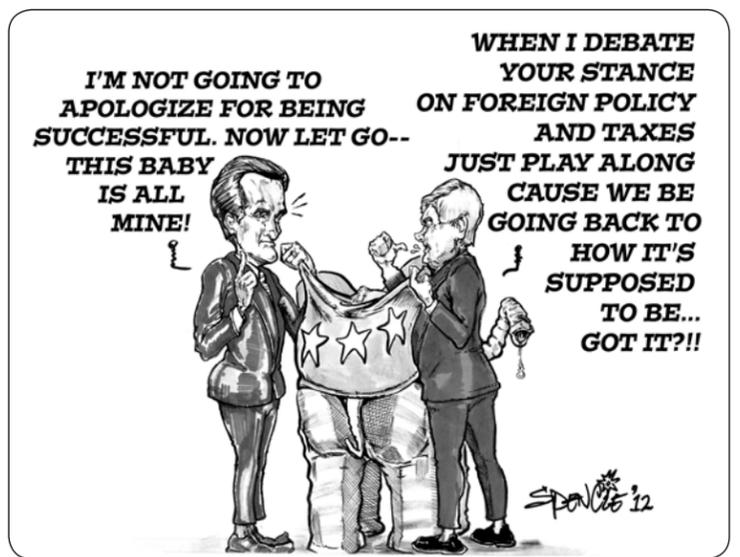
internal strife within the Liberal Party, and harsh words by the various contenders would have given Stephen Harper's troupes plenty of political ammunition to stockpile until needed.

However, the delegates made a decision that will someday come back to haunt them. They have resolved to allow anyone claiming to be a party supporter to vote for the next leader of the Liberal party. A person no longer needs to be a party member to enjoy that benefit. The next leadership race will prove to be an interesting one, to say the least.

I think it's a mistake. The party Leader has specific powers in the party's management and this person could be chosen by people who aren't really serious in becoming party members. We can already see how special interests groups might try to influence the votes.

All in all, the fact that the Liberal party managed to gather 3000 delegates on a January weekend can be seen as an encouraging sign. The party is still alive. Its managers and its caucus must now find a way to transform it into a party that speaks to the Canadian people. This remains

## Spencie's View



as a major challenge.

Furthermore, three recounts were needed to elect the party president. An election this tight shows the party must still live with some division.

Still, this is far from a serious matter as no one is overly concerned who the president of the party is. What is important is who the next leader of the party will be, and this is why the next

crucial step to be taken by the Liberal party is to choose their next leader.

The party must select its new leader by June 2013. A bizarre decision, as I have mentioned before, but nevertheless, an informal race has already begun. And with interim leader Bob Rae keeping his options open, the race should be turbulent. ✂ Translation Monique Kroeger

### ► "Lunar New Year" from page 1

Everyone is involved in the preparation, including children, who often help with cooking and cleaning. However, the children enjoy themselves in spite of these responsibilities.

"[Children] get lucky money from older people, they have fun, and eat all they want; there is no school," Bui says.

dition, Bui's family makes rice and other foods and brings them outside.

"We place all the food on a small table or chair and pray to the sky," she says. It is the time when guardians of each house return to heaven and the offerings are meant to assist them on their journey.

Although they are far from

Jessica says that on the night before Chinese New Year, her mom puts little mandarin oranges around the house.

"She also gets red money envelopes for us," says Jessica, "and she likes the new bills that haven't been used yet, so she goes to the bank [to get them]."

Although every family celebrates differently, some traditions live on. Jessica's family, for instance, always shares the first and last meal of the year together.

Niangao, the traditional Chinese New Year cake is prepared for her parents' friends. Jessica



▲ "Lucky money" is given to children.

amusingly describes it as a "really sticky pie that you bake."

According to Jessica, her mom is more relaxed now than she used to be, and has fewer traditional rules around the holidays, which means that even this ancient celebration is being influenced by modern society.

"Mom [used to] say, don't cut your hair on New Year's, because cutting it off is like shortening your life, and wear something red for good luck," says Jessica. "As the years go on people are less traditional about it, and not as strict as before." ✂



▲ Vietnamese new year's dinner.

When asked about special traditions that take place, Bui recalls that the first person to visit a family's home on the first day of the year is often carefully chosen. This is because the first guest inadvertently decides the family's fortune for the whole year. In the coming Year Of The Dragon, for example, someone with dragon-like qualities might be sought out for the special honour.

Other traditions include being careful not to break things, as it bodes poorly for the new year, and not throwing garbage out, which can symbolize throwing luck away.

At midnight on the first day, in accordance with Buddhist tra-

dition, thanks to their extended family, Bui and her sister won't be alone this holiday season.

"My auntie is here. We will [celebrate] the same way as in Vietnam," she says.

### Gung Hay Fat Choy: prosperity and happiness for the Chinese

"I'm not sure what it would be like in China, because it's a bigger deal there ... but we only [celebrate with] immediate family," says Jessica, who chose not to reveal her real name.

In their East Vancouver home, siblings and parents are preparing for the holiday, though Jessica's mom is the main organizer.

She does the grocery shopping and cooks all the meals for the family during the New Year celebration. The aroma of cooking rice, a variety of delicacies and mandarin oranges permeates their home.



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# Grandmother holds hope and memories of missing granddaughter

by SAMUEL RAMOS

When someone disappears from your life, memories are all you have to fill the void.

Angeline Pete disappeared in May 2011. Her grandmother, Eileen Nelson, raised Angeline from the age of three on the Quatsino Sound First Nation reserve on Vancouver Island.

Although many have come to know of Angeline as a missing person, her grandmother remembers her as a girl full of strength and happiness – a girl free to explore.

“When we were out on Hope Island [once], she was about 12 years old with her kid brother and my husband. We didn’t have any electricity except at night, when we had a generator that she learned how to run,” says Ms Nelson.

“That was her most treasured time because there was nothing else to disrupt our lives – it was just the four of us in the house there.”

Ms Nelson remembers a happy kid who never wanted to leave her grandmother’s side, except to go fishing. She says that Angeline loved to go fishing in the placid waters at the tip of Vancouver Island. It was then, says her grandmother, that Angeline felt free, in control and at peace.

“She enjoyed fishing because of the motion of the boat, and my husband taught her how to

run the boat herself. She’d be at the wheel steering the boat with just us on there. Just being on the boat and being together, and just enjoying herself and smiling.”

A few years ago, Angeline left Quatsino Sound to work in a carnival that toured throughout Vancouver Island, into Vancouver and as far as Alberta. While in Vancouver, Ms Nelson says that her granddaughter ran into some trouble and was put on probation. This forced Angeline to stay in the city, but she continued to call her grandmother regularly.

Ms Nelson last spoke on the phone to her granddaughter in

mid May. After a few weeks of not hearing from her, Ms Nelson became worried.

“She’d phone me when she wanted a recipe, or just to talk.

Angeline’s grandmother says that her granddaughter needed to come home to heal, continue exploring and be loved by her family and friends.

ple from the streets. She never had that in her life. She always had her own space and freedom.”

Before moving to an East Vancouver shelter, Angeline lived in

“I stopped watching the news for a while because it was upsetting to see nothing about her.

Eileen Nelson, grandmother of Angeline Eileen Pete

She’d call me all the time. Every time, she would call. It’s not like her not to call,” says Ms Nelson. Her mother, Molly Dixon, reported her missing in August 2011.

“Being in Vancouver was not a good place for her,” remembers Ms Nelson. “She wanted to come home. She wanted to come home badly, and she wanted the probation changed to here [Quatsino Sound], but the probation officer said no.”

Ms Nelson says the other girls on the reserve needed her as well, and Angeline needed all of them. In Vancouver, she says, there was never any support for her granddaughter.

“Vancouver isn’t the place for her,” says Ms Nelson. “She had no support system there. She needed someone to stand beside her. To help her. Someone to hold her when she was hurting.”

Ms Nelson suffers from severe arthritis and wasn’t able to visit Angeline in Vancouver. However, she has visited Vancouver once since she last heard from Angeline. She saw where her granddaughter had reportedly last stayed – one of the many shelters in Vancouver.

“It broke my heart to see that she had to share space with peo-

ple from the streets. She never had that in her life. She always had her own space and freedom.”

North Vancouver with a man who promised to marry her. After several altercations and a split lip Angeline took off, but because of her probation she couldn’t leave Vancouver. Now, her grandmother says, no one knows where she is.

“The hardest thing to think about is if she has a bed to sleep in and where she’s at and if she’s being treated properly. You hear so many stories ... I stopped watching the news for a while because it was upsetting to see nothing about her.”

Along with others who have recently been reported missing, Angeline’s image is on several lampposts in Vancouver. Some of the posters have become tattered and worn by the rain, waiting for Angeline’s mother, Molly, to come and replace them.

In Quatsino Sound, Angeline’s grandmother is left with hope and memories of a daughter missing in person, but never in her thoughts and heart.

“I’ll always cherish her laughter.”



▲ If you have information on Angeline’s whereabouts, call Crimestoppers 1.800.222.8477.

Photo by Ian Hilario

## Celebrate the Year of the Water Dragon at the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden

Get a taste of a traditional hot & noisy Chinese Temple Fair and enter to win a Pan Pacific Vancouver Garden Getaway weekend

Sunday, January 29, 2012  
10:00 am–4:30 pm  
Admission by donation

This year – 4710 in the Chinese calendar – is the Year of the Water Dragon.

According to Chinese horoscope, Dragons are the flashiest of the signs. Dragons are eccentric, artistic, impulsive and unpredictable. They dislike routine and possess a powerful personality. The New Year celebrations at Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden would suit a Water Dragon perfectly!



Dr. Sun Yat-Sen  
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The Garden – recently rated the #1 City Garden in the World by National Geographic – will be alive with activity and light, including huge dragon-shaped lanterns.

Designed to recreate the feeling of a traditional temple fair, this year’s Chinese New Year celebrations offer a hot & noisy (re-nao) mixture of cultural activities including:

**Traditional Chinese games and activities** Calligraphy, bean bag toss, traditional toys, arts and crafts for kids

**Special New Year’s activities** Red envelopes from Grandma and Grandpa, incense and wish making at the altar, fortune telling

**Music** Larry Yan on the flute and the spirited Chinese-Celtic tunes of the Black Bear Rebels & Friends, featuring Toddish McWong

**Food and drink** Chinese tea, traditional dumpling making and tasting, freshly-baked Bonchaz buns

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## Potential oil pipeline expansions continue to raise concerns

by ANITA KOVACS

With the United States' recent rejection of the Keystone XL pipeline, the debate around the construction and expansion of oil pipelines in B.C. has seen renewed vigour.

Enbridge's proposal to build the Northern Gateway project, which would see a twin pipeline running from Bruderheim, Alta. to the coastal city of Kitimat, B.C., would help expand Canada's current oil exports to a growing Asian market.

According to Greenpeace Canada, however, the potential environmental costs would far outweigh any benefits.

"The environmental implications [of the Gateway project] would be huge," notes Mike Hudema, Greenpeace's climate and energy campaigner.

"Over 1,100 kilometres of pipeline would go through some of the most pristine areas of the country," he explains.

"It would cross over a thousand rivers and streams, many of which are salmon bearing streams that are of course essential to the B.C. salmon industry. It would also go through the Great Bear Rainforest which is the last intact temperate rainforest [in the world]."

Hudema notes that it isn't a question of if there will be a spill, but when.

"You have to look at Enbridge's history; between the years 1999 and 2008 they had over 600 spills, which is over one spill a week," he says.

"We even have quotes from Pat Daniels, the CEO of Enbridge, who has said that they can't absolutely guarantee that there would be no spills."

Although a potential spill or leak in the actual pipeline is a key concern, oil tankers navigating the rocky B.C. coast are yet another issue.

"The pipeline would bring over 100 to 200 tankers through the B.C. coast, and they would be navigating through very narrow and very tumultuous inlets; it would be an ongoing danger to the B.C. coastline," says Hudema.

"Each one of these tankers would carry more oil than the Exxon Valdez. Any type of tanker rupture would be disastrous for everything along the coast: the animals, the aquatic species and the humans that depend on the coast for their livelihood as well."

While the repercussions of a pipeline leak or tanker spill associated with the Gateway Northern project would be far reaching, the expansion of the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline is even closer to home.

The pipeline currently runs between Edmonton and the Lower Mainland, with its shipping port on the south shore of the Burrard Inlet.

Kinder Morgan is proposing to twin the pipeline, which would more than double its current carrying capacity, and increase tanker traffic in the inlet.

See "Pipeline" page 7 ➔

## Spinning the wheel of conscience

# Mexican journalist appeals to stay in Canada

by SAL RIZAL

At this time last year, a memorial was unveiled at Halifax's Pier 21 to mark the spot where the M.S. St. Louis would have docked in 1939, offering 907 German Jews security on Canadian soil. "Would have" are the key words.

Canada turned the ship away, refusing entry to the passengers onboard. Of the 907 Jews returning to an uncertain fate in Europe, 254 did not survive the Holocaust.

The memorial, appropriately called *The Wheel of Conscience*, is meant to shed light on a dark corner of Canadian history.

Yet, the wheel of conscience has apparently stopped spinning as Canada may be repeating its mistakes with an ineffectual refugee determination system.

Despite escalating violence and an obvious collapse of the rule of law in Mexico, Canada maintains a tight belt around refugee claims of its hemispherical neighbour.

One such example is the story of 38-year-old journalist and Mexican national Karla Berenice García Ramírez, who now lives in Surrey.



▲ Karla Berenice García Ramírez.

While working for a government ministry in Mexico, the National Council for Culture and Arts (Conaculta), Ramírez uncovered several cases of corruption, including diversion of public funds with impunity. But, given that the culprit is one of the most influential cultural institutions in Mexico, no publication would publish her allegations.

Afraid of the death threats and intimidation targeted at her and her family, Ramírez and her hus-

band, Cesar Casso, fled to Canada as asylum seekers in 2008. They now have a 17-month-old daughter and a newborn baby, both born in Canada.

"The refugee decisions are subjectively taken by one person, one God: the judge, the officer."

Karla Berenice García Ramírez, Mexican journalist and refugee claimant.

Yet, she continued to speak up on the corruption witnessed in the Mexican government. With the aid of the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University, she published the book *El Talento de los Farsantes* (*The Talent of Charlatans*) last July, where she details her findings on the National Council for Culture and Arts, including "fake payments from the federal budget to ghost workers."

### Appeal Launched

With the request for refugee status denied by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), Ramírez explains that they then applied for a pre-removal risk assessment, which would allow them to remain in the country and apply to become permanent residents.

In 2011, the pre-removal risk assessment was also denied. She is now waiting for a response from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) on whether the decision can be appealed.



▲ *The Talent of Charlatans*, which Karla Berenice García Ramírez published under the pen name Karla Lottini.

In a press conference on Jan. 19, Ramírez announced that they are appealing to stay in Canada on humanitarian or compassionate grounds.

process, Ramírez contends that "the refugee decisions are subjectively taken by one person, one God: the judge, the officer."

She also criticizes that the sys-

tem cannot effectively and efficiently determine founded refugee claims from ones that are just "hilariously fake."

Director of Latin American Studies at SFU, Alexander Dawson, agrees that Canada should revisit its tools and policies around refugee determination. "Vendettas that are unrelated to the drug war are often carried out with complete impunity under its cover," Dawson explains.

"It is my hope that the Canadian government begins to adopt a posture that reflects the serious nature of these crises, and acts in a less restrictive manner in these types of refugee claims."

The migrant justice group, No One Is Illegal (NOII), garnered letters from community organizations and individual academics citing support for her case.

### Refugee Claims

A report published by Reporters Without Borders in September 2011 echoes some of the points brought up by Ramírez's supporters, namely that Mexico continues to be a dangerous country, particularly for journalists.

According to a news release on the CIC website, Canada received more than 9,400 Mexican refugee claims in 2008, almost triple the amount of 2005. Egged on by increasing claims from Mexico and a clogged processing system, Canada imposed visas on Mexican visitors in mid-2009. The number of refugee claims has declined significantly since then.

In a quotation from IRB spokesperson Melissa Anderson posted on the NOII website, approval of Mexican refugee protection claims have been "historically low," ranging from 10 to 17 per cent since 2006.

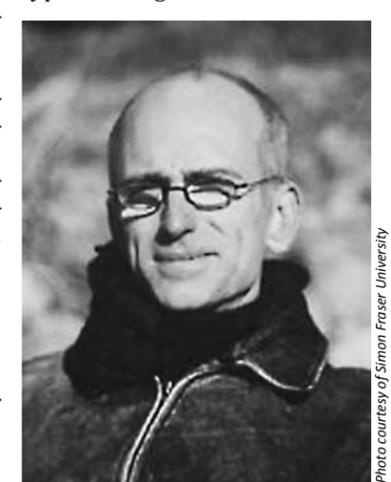
Of the refugee determination

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"It is my hope that the Canadian government begins to adopt a posture that reflects the serious nature of these crises, and acts in a less restrictive manner in these types of refugee claims."



▲ Alexander Dawson, Director of Latin American Studies at Simon Fraser University.

In the meantime, Ramírez will continue to care for her daughters and contribute in her community in Surrey and Vancouver.

She states that, while part of their hearts are still in Mexico, she and her family envision their lives here "as Canadian citizens."

"Sadly, [going back] to Mexico is not an option." ❧

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## Conservative crime bill affects new immigrants and marginalizes aboriginals

by TIM REINERT

If you live in Canada, your chances of being attacked by a beaver are higher than your chances of being an innocent victim of violent crime.

According to Statistics Canada, crime of all types has been decreasing steadily over the past few decades, and 2011 saw murder rates plummet to the lowest level in the past 44 years.

This being the case, the Conservative government finds it necessary to enact legislation that proposes stiff new sentences on crimes that, as Statistics Canada reports, rarely happen.

The long-term effects of this new legislation are yet to be seen, but politicians and activists are angered by changes to immigration procedures and repercussions to the already marginalized aboriginal community.

### New legislation passed

In the fall of 2011, the Conservative government introduced a massive crime omnibus bill called the Safe Streets and Communities Act – commonly referred to as Bill C-10.

The bill essentially combines the nine Conservative crime bills they introduced in their six years as leaders of minority governments, but were defeated by the opposition. This time around, with the Conservative majority in full swing, the bill was passed in parliament and is being presented before the Senate.

Of the many highlights, like new mandatory sentences, “U.S.-style prisons” and new harsher sentences for young offenders, the bill would grant the Immigration Department sweeping new powers. These powers would allow the department to deny work permits to any foreign national who is “at risk of abuse.”

### Politicians and activists concerned

Jasbir Sandhu is the NDP MP for Surrey North and critic for public safety. He believes that Bill C-10 is a reactive approach to criminal justice, and notes that similar approaches have already failed in the United States.

“We can learn from them [the U.S.],” he says. “In 2007 and 2008, you had California, Texas and Massachusetts all on the verge of bankruptcy because of this tough on crime approach.”

Sandhu says that Texas realized the approach wasn’t sustainable, as their crime rate remained the same, so they started to reverse it. He says they took an alternative route when deal-

in society,” says Preston, “and all that this bill would do is to get more of these people in prison, for longer.”

### Immigration procedures changed

Sandhu is also concerned with how much authority this bill would give to the Immigration Minister when it comes to granting work visas to immigrants.

“If you’re going to have a crime and punishment approach all you’re going to do is to further marginalize people who are already marginalized.

*Chris Preston, Vancouver-based activist*

ing with young offenders. They went from 21 youth prevention centres to five in the last three years. Sandhu is impressed with the results.

“The reoffending rate for young offenders has gone down, and the overall crime rate has gone down, because they’ve invested in proactive programs, rather than reactive programs.”

Sandhu believes that the money for new prisons should be spent on preventative measures, like prison reintegration programs, and a more visible police presence.

Vancouver-based activist Chris Preston agrees. He’s been working with homeless and disadvantaged youth for several years now, and believes that the bill will be devastating to those that are currently disenfranchised.

“If you’re going to have a crime and punishment approach,” says Preston, “all you’re going to do is to further marginalize people who are already marginalized.”

He says that what’s needed is more mental health support, community support and youth support. Preston believes that such a long-term approach helps break cycles of crime and keeps repeat offenders out of jail.

He’s also concerned what impact this will have on aboriginal Canadians.

“First Nations people are in prison in a much higher percentage than they are represented by

“What they’re saying is that they’re trying to protect vulnerable members of society, and people who use work permits to bring sex workers into the country,” says Sandhu.

“But what it really does is to put too much power in the hands of the minister. It’s a blank check for the minister to decide who gets into the country and who doesn’t.”

Although it does appear as if the bill will pass, it has reopened debate in this country as to how we punish our criminals. But for Sandhu, the debate is already over.

“This approach has been tried and tested. It’s been a dead end in the U.S., so why are we going down the same road?”



▲ Activist Chris Preston.

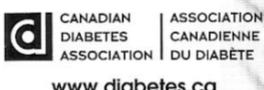
Photo by Wendy Perry

“Traditions are a big part of my culture. Unfortunately, so is diabetes.”

Bernie, First Nations counsellor

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### ► “Verbatim” from page 1

tween Canada and the other places I’ve lived in and travelled to:

#1) Everything is streamlined. As Canadians we often take for granted the extended store hours and the convenience of goods and services. Transportation is reliable — yes, even Translink — and grocery stores are open every day for the entire day. We also aren’t subject to the power outages and slow internet connections of the third world or the magnitude of strikes found in a place like France. The exception to all of this is, of course, liquor and tobacco. Liquor is bought at restricted hours in fewer locations and is illegal to consume on the street, while smoking can only be done on the street, is expensive and far less cool than smoking in a place like France or Cuba. Maybe all of this is for the best, but I have serious trouble giving up my personal freedoms for the good of society. It’s a personal problem.

#2) It’s live to work, not work to live. In my opinion, Canadians live to work rather than the other way around, at least when you contrast our lifestyles with other cultures. This has its pros and cons, especially when you look at how the economic pie is being divided. We may not like to admit it, but materialism is big here. When I’m confronted with issues, like the Occupy Movement, I find myself conflicted as a Vancouverite. Sure, the elite are taking more than their fair share, but at the same time there’s a reason that everybody is knocking at our door for visas. We may live in one of the best places to work in the world right now, so when it comes to closing down ports, let’s save it for places where the message really needs to be driven home, i.e. the United States of America. On the other hand, I worry about what kind of image Occupy Vancouver has left in people’s minds, because the movement as a whole is something I hope most people will seriously consider rather than toss away

as a bunch of hippy banter and homeless squatters.

Perhaps the greatest difference of all is our similarity to everywhere else — we are lucky to co-exist in this cultural mosaic of a city framed by a vast ocean and snowcapped mountains. We might as well take advantage of it.

For those of you who have similar cultural interests, I definitely recommend checking out Meetup.com where you can join a group dedicated to practicing your second language or even just connecting with cultural activities of your choice. Another way I found to meet people is Plenty of Fish. Even though they say the dating scene is changing, I am still ashamed when I tell people I have an account. But I shouldn’t be! From the few times that I actually get a response and meet somebody, it’s been a good way to meet new people.

As Christopher McCandles said, “the core of man’s spirit comes from new experiences.”

# Perspectives of diversity from Eric Wong

by SAMUEL RAMOS

Eric Wong has dedicated his entire life to diversity and human rights, and in November of 2011 he was recognized for his efforts with an Honourable Mention at the 2011 Cultural Harmony Awards.

After thanking numerous people, including his son, he did something unexpected—pressed play on an old tape player.

What came out of those two tiny speakers was the voice of Bobby Taylor singing *Does Your Mama Know About Me?*, a song about an interracial relationship between a black man and a white woman.

The song was originally written by Tommy Chung about a Chinese fella dating a white girl. However, as Wong told the audience, it was changed because that concept wouldn't fly with Motown.

The audience was captivated, not only by the rarity of hearing music in the council chamber, but also by the message Wong was conveying—that even though a lot of work has been done to integrate people of different cultures, more work is still needed.

Wong is no stranger to stand-

istence between people of all nations, the Source Newspaper asked him a few questions.

**Source Newspaper** *What can people do in their everyday lives to build bridges with people from cultures other than their own?*

**Eric Wong** Be open to new and different circumstances and at the same time, seeing the commonalities that unite us. We too often see multiculturalism as a

in Canada. The threshold for welcoming and valuing diversity has always been our laws and traditions for human rights and the principles laid down in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

**SN:** *What do we need to learn in Vancouver about being truly inclusive, and not just tolerant?*

**EW:** I personally don't mind starting with "tolerance" [because] it's a much better place

“ We too often see multiculturalism as a concept focusing on our differences when in fact it also invites us to embrace our similar values and beliefs.

*Eric Wong, educator of diversity and human rights*

concept focusing on our differences when in fact it also invites us to embrace our similar values and beliefs. We may have different communication styles but we all want to be treated with respect and want to treat others with respect.

**SN:** *What is your number one pet peeve when it comes to dealing with multiculturalism?*

**EW:** I worry every time there

to be than “intolerance.”” But I strive for inclusiveness, which embraces the concept of celebration. It is like the music my wife likes to listen to. I admit to “tolerating” it at first hearing it, but in time my appreciation for her music has grown. We are much happier having something we can mutually celebrate. I think this road requires a great deal of patience, being open minded and generous. Aren't these some of the virtues we see as being truly Canadian?

**SN:** *What is your opinion of Richmond being what some people call an “urbanized ghetto”?*

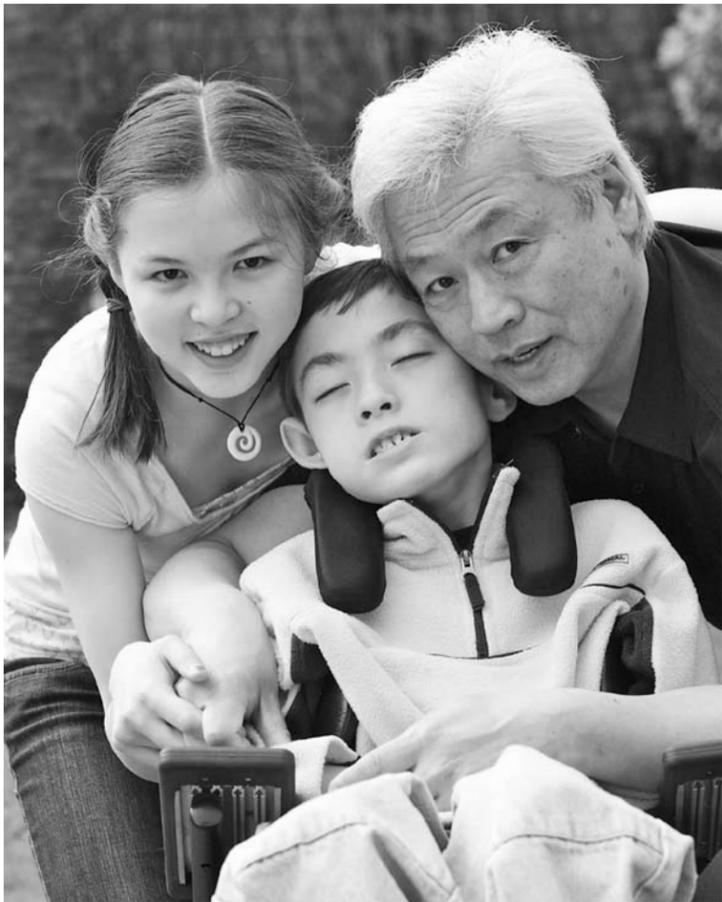
**EW:** Here is a good example where continuous work and conversation about a contentious issue is very much needed. One important question to keep in mind when having this difficult conversation is how can we welcome different languages in our community and have it be an element that adds to the richness of our diversity and not become a barrier to inclusion?

**SN:** *What role will/can the indigenous people play in our society?*

**EW:** All of us who are of immigrant background must keep in mind of our collective role in the colonization of North America and the cultural genocide of indigenous communities that was so integral to the assimilation policy of Aboriginal people in Canada. We need also to be mindful about how this legacy continues to be a force in Canada and counter it by acknowledging the legitimacy of self-determination for Aboriginal people.

**SN:** *On a multicultural level, what would you like to see happen in Vancouver in 2012?*

**EW:** It would make a good start to the year if we had the courage to refrain from engaging in conversations where we see only “right and wrong” and would participate in these difficult conversations with a greater degree of kindness and respect. ☞



▲ Eric Wong with his daughter Leilan and his son Gabriel.

ing in front of a crowd as he has a long track record of educating people on issues like diversity and human rights.

He has worked with organizations such as the Vancouver Police Department, Canadian Auto Workers Union and the First Nations Education Steering Committee.

Since he is well versed in what can make for a harmonious ex-

is a news item aired where someone of immigrant background is depicted in a “negative” way. We can, unfortunately, allow our minds to get lazy and can therefore easily get trapped into conjuring up a stereotype. There is also the notion that endures with too many people, that multiculturalism is about accepting practices, behaviours or values that are contrary to those we embrace

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## Les Beaux Jeudis du cinéma & Les 18<sup>e</sup> Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois et francophone de Vancouver

Every Thursday, a film in French, 7:30 pm, Nov.-March (With English subt.) The French Film Festival: Feb. 16-26, 2012

 <b>CAFÉ DE FLORE</b> Jean-Marc Vallée Jan. 19, 2012	 <b>LE SENS DE L'HUMOUR</b> Émile Gaudreault Jan. 26	 <b>INCENDIES</b> Denis Villeneuve Feb. 2	 <b>TROU STORY</b> Richard Desjardins & Robert Monderie Feb. 17	 <b>ON ME PREND POUR UNE CHINOISE</b> Nicole Giguère Feb. 21
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**Bientôt à l'affiche:**  
 Marécages (Guy Édouin): 17 fév.  
 Starbuck (Ken Scott): 19 fév.  
 Falardeau (Carmen Garcia): 21 fév.  
 Impasse du désir (Michel Rodde): 22 fév.  
 Monsieur Lazhar (Philippe Falardeau): 26 fév.

# PuSh festival celebrates the work of local and international artists



Photo courtesy of PuSh performing arts festival

▲ Rabih Mroue in *Looking for a Missing Employee* and *the Pixelated Revolution*.

by DINA ABDEL-HAQ

Since 2003, the PuSh International Performing Arts festival has been showcasing the talent and work of local and international artists.

This year is no exception as the festival will feature several performances and shows until Feb. 4.

Among these will be a multimedia show called *Looking for a Missing Employee*.

The show, which is presented by Rabih Mroue, uses a combination of storytelling and live sketch art to unfold the true story of a man who goes missing while working at the Ministry of Finance in Beirut, Lebanon.

Mroue, who is a Lebanese

actor, director and playwright, will also present another performance called *The Pixelated Revolution*. This performance, which takes place in the form of a lecture focuses on the recent Syrian revolution.

It will examine the usage of mobile phones and the medium of social networks such as Facebook.

Another production, called *No.2*, features a Fijian matriarch who wakes up one morning and decides to gather her grandchildren in order to choose her successor.

Hailing all the way from Tokyo, *Hot Pepper, Air Conditioner and the Farewell Speech* is the name of a theatrical work consisting of lots of dialogue and choreography. It plays with dark humour and the

themes of promise and despair of a new generation that was dealt a bad card.

On a similar note, an Argentinian production, called *El Pasado Es un Animal Grotosco*, follows the lives of four people in their mid-twenties and how their lives unfold amidst the obstacles they will face over the next 10 years, as Argentina's economy begins to deteriorate.

Whether it's a monologue, a lecture, a performance or a theatrical piece, the PuSh festival will definitely not disappoint. Promoting artists from all corners of the globe, the festival has many stories to tell. ✎

For more information, visit [www.pushfestival.ca](http://www.pushfestival.ca)



Photo courtesy of PuSh performing arts festival

▲ *El Pasado Es un Animal Grotosco*



Photo courtesy of PuSh performing arts festival

▲ *Hot Pepper, Air Conditioner and the Farewell Speech*.

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► "Pipeline" from page 4

"The Kinder Morgan expansion would have similar problems [to the Gateway Northern project]," explains Hudema. "Twinning the pipeline would cause all sorts of risks. You already had a massive blowout in Burnaby from this

of oil spills and we have seen firsthand the inadequacies of emergency response and clean up efforts."

He says that the Tsleil-Waututh Nation is supportive of economic development initiatives, but that there must be a balance between



Photo by system99, Flickr

▲ *Opposition to pipelines through B.C. continues.*

pipeline, and this would increase that danger."

The blowout referred to occurred in July 2007, and resulted in about 1500 barrels of oil contaminating the Burrard Inlet and adjacent areas.

The Burrard Inlet is home to the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. In October 2011, Chief Justin George stated that "our community was deeply affected by the 2007 oil spill."

In reference to the Kinder Morgan project Chief George said, "The risks associated with the ... project are too great to accept." He goes on to say that "our Inlet has been scarred by the impacts

the environment and the economy. According to Chief George, "Tsleil-Waututh has embraced sustainable development on our reserve land and in our traditional territory. We are property developers and business owners in renewable energy technology. We have an array of government and industry partnerships that we rely upon to foster the economy that helps to sustain the community."

The community also makes it clear that everyone is affected by this issue because every person, government and group relies "on the health of marine ecosystems to sustain their culture and well-being." ✎

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# Cultural Calendar

January 24–February 7, 2012

by PHOEBE YU

The streets of Vancouver are filled with merriment and entertainment with lots of performing arts shows to choose from.

There are some interesting public lectures, such as *The Tibetan Refugees' Dilemma*, or *Haiti Through the Lens of Wikileaks*. And there is also the French-Canadian Festival, *Vive les Voyageurs* Winter Festival, which is just a short drive from the city.

\* \* \*

## The Tibetan Refugees' Dilemma: Between Exile and Accommodation

Trans-Himalayan Aid Society  
Wed., Jan. 25, 7 p.m.  
Langara College, Rm. A122B,  
100 W. 49th Ave., Vancouver  
604.224.5133  
www.tras.ca

A talk by Dr. John Conway on the Tibetan refugee life and the problems the Tibetan people face when the present Dalai Lama is no longer around to lead them. Conway is a Professor Emeritus of History and International Relations at UBC. Proceeds from this event go to the Tuting Adult Literacy Project. Admission by donation.

\* \* \*

## Prokofiev's Big Moves

Wed., Jan. 25  
Coffee at 10 a.m.,  
Music at 10:30 a.m.  
Vancouver Academy of Music  
1270 Chestnut St., Vancouver  
604.873.4612  
www.musicinthemorning.org

Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev in his lifetime, mastered many different types of compositions including, symphonies, concerti, operas, film scores and ballets. Frederic Chiu will perform Prokofiev's works on the piano, accompanied by violinist Joshua Bell. Tickets: adults \$32, seniors \$30, students \$16.

\* \* \*

## The Drive: A Retail, Social and Political History of Commercial Drive

Vancouver Historical Society  
Thurs., Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m.  
Museum of Vancouver  
1100 Chestnut St., Vancouver  
604.736.4431  
www.vancouver-historical-society.ca

Speaker Jak King, author of *The Drive: A Retail, Social and Political History of Commercial Drive*, will talk about the history of this vibrant multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-sexual community. Open to the public.

\* \* \*

## Song of Songs Poetry and Palestrina

Vancouver Chamber Choir  
Fri., Jan. 27, 8 p.m.  
Ryerson United Church  
2195 W. 45th Ave., Vancouver  
604.738.6822  
www.vancouverchamberchoir.com

An evening featuring motets of the biblical "Song of Songs" or also known as the "Song of Solomon." The repertoire will mainly consist of the renaissance composer Palestrina's motets and will also include other composers from the renaissance and early baroque periods. Professor Emeritus of UBC's School of Music, J. Evan Kreider, will give a pre-concert talk at 7:10 p.m. Tickets: adults \$32.75, students and seniors \$29.25.

\* \* \*

## Vive Les Voyageurs Winter Festival

Sat., Jan. 28–Sun., Jan. 29,  
10 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Fort Langley National  
Historic Site of Canada  
23433 Mavis Ave., Langley  
604.513.4777  
www.pc.gc.ca

Experience the unique French-Canadian culture. There will be French-Canadian food, finger weaving, music, children's entertainment and much more. See schedule on website for more details. Tickets: adults \$7.80, seniors \$6.55, youth \$3.90.

\* \* \*

## Living with Hiroshima My Memories of 66 Years

Sun., Jan. 29, 6:30–9 p.m.  
Unitarian Church of Vancouver  
949 W. 49th Ave., Vancouver

604.261.7204  
www.peacephilosophy.blogspot.com

Atomic bomb survivor and author of *Hiroshima: 60 Years of Memory*, Koko Tanimoto Kondo, will speak about the effects of the bomb on her life and her ongoing efforts for peace. There will also be a mime performance by Yayoi Hirano, accompanied by pianists Sara Buechner and Chihiro Honma. Admission by donation.

\* \* \*

## Haiti Through the Lens of Wikileaks: How the U.S. Conspires to Keep Haiti Poor

Mon., Jan. 30, 7–9 p.m.  
Harbour Centre  
515 W. Hastings St., Vancouver  
778.858.5179  
www.canadahaitiaction.ca

Kim Ives, editor of the Haitian weekly newspaper, *Haiti Liberté*, will speak about the experience of *Haiti Liberté* in publishing the U.S. diplomatic cables on Haiti from 2003 to 2010. Open to the public.

\* \* \*

## Cats, Moons, Cockatoos and Queens

Wed., Feb. 1, 7 p.m.  
Vancouver Public Library  
350 W. Georgia St., Vancouver  
604-331-3603  
www.vpl.ca

Soprano Robyn Driedger-Klassen and pianist Terence Dawson will perform songs by contemporary composers. They will present Libby Larsen's *Try Me Good King*: the last words of the wives of Henry VIII and songs from Vancouver's own Lloyd Burritt and Leslie Uyeda. Free admission.

\* \* \*



Photo courtesy of Larissa Blokhuis

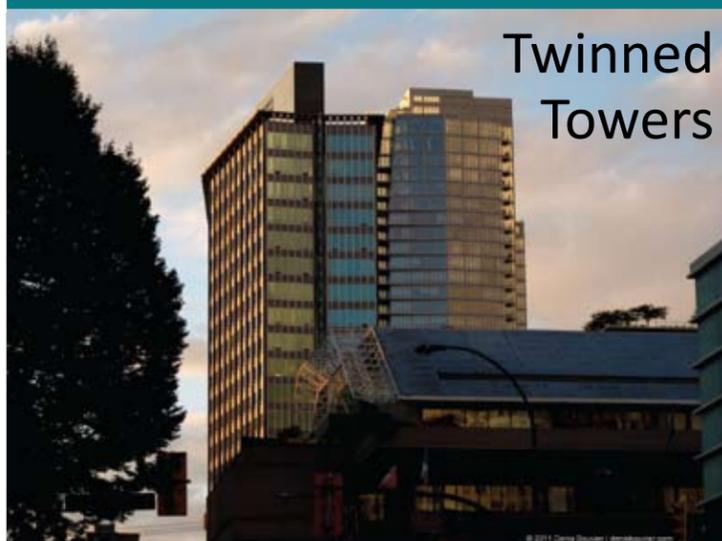
▲ Ocean life-inspired glasswork by Larissa Blokhuis on exhibit at North Vancouver District Hall.

## Larissa Blokhuis & Roksan Kohen Exhibit

Until Feb. 8, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.  
North Vancouver District Hall  
355 W. Queens Rd.,  
North Vancouver  
604.988.6844  
www.nvartscouncil.ca

Larisa Blokhuis is a glass artist, using glass to create art and to call attention to preserving ocean ecosystems and biodiversity. Roksan Kohen's work aims to understand the complex nature of individuals and human relationships, which is reflected in her paintings and drawings. Open to the public.

## Street Photography by Denis Bouvier



## Twinned Towers

Taken from Nelson and Richards St., this picture presents 3 iconic buildings in Vancouver.

In the foreground we have part of the Robson Square Complex built in the 70's. The 2 towers in the background which are the main focus of this picture are the Electra on the left and the Patina on the right.

What's remarkable about this photo is that it makes 2 buildings appear to be side by side and the same height.

However, the Electra has 21 storeys compared with the Patina's 42 storeys, and they are on opposite sides of the street.

The glass and steel eastern face of the recently completed Patina was designed to harmonize with the buildings in the downtown core. We can see the similarity in the amount of glass and window design in both the Electra and Patina.

The Electra at Nelson and Burrard is the former BC Hydro Building, built in 1957. This landmark heritage building is an example of the international style of modernist architecture and features coloured glass mosaic tiles by artist BC Binning.

The tallest building of its time in BC, it was symbolic of BC's dynamic resources and the prosperous future that promised.

For years, BC Hydro's office lights were left on all night to illuminate this fact. Horns fitted at the top of the building played the noon horn from 1967 to 1990 when BC Hydro vacated the building.

In 1995, the building was converted to strata lots and now houses 205 commercial units and 242 condos.

At Barclay near Burrard, we have the 42 storey Patina with over 250 condo units developed by Concert Properties. It has been nominated for 2 architectural awards: the Sam and the Georgie for the best in multi-family high rise development.

The Patina gained its height in part as bonus density for providing the restoration and modernization of the heritage YMCA located in front of it.

Often with bonus density, residents do not feel that the accompanying community amenities have been provided.

In this case, we have a restored YMCA in central downtown which not only functions as a state of the art fitness centre, but also as a vibrant community centre with educational programs and a childcare, preschool and family development centre.

Don Richardson



Depuis sa création en 1995, le Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique offre des programmes et des services éducatifs valorisant le plein épanouissement et l'identité culturelle des apprenants et apprenantes francophones de la province. Le conseil compte aujourd'hui plus de 4 600 élèves, 36 écoles publiques et dessert plus d'une centaine de communautés réparties dans l'ensemble de la province. **Inscrivez votre enfant dans une école du CSF !**

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