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forum of diversity

Since 1999

B.C. is the cross-cultural hotspot for couples

by JAN HILARIO

As Metro Vancouver's population becomes increasingly diverse, more opportunities blossom for individuals to form relationships with someone from a different ethno-cultural background.

Cross-cultural relationships vary according to individual characteristics such as generational status, birthplace and particular visible minority groups. They could be comprised of one visible minority group member and one non-member, or of individuals who belong to two different visible minority groups.

Interracial relationships reflect one aspect of diversity in Vancouver. And in fact, many sociologists see mixed race unions to be the most accurate barometer of a community's racial and cultural integration.

Dr. Faizal Sahukhan, a registered counsellor, sex therapist and the national communications director for the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association, asserts that, as a society, Vancouver is now more introspective. "We are more progressive, more respectful of other cultures and people from different backgrounds ... we're becoming more non-judgmental," he says.

A report by Metro Vancouver shows that people born outside of Canada represent approximately 40 per cent of the total population, compared to 20 per cent across Canada.

William Fritzberg, an American filmmaker and multimedia artist who is married to a Fili-



▲ Carla Hilario (left) and William Fritzberg (right), a cross-cultural couple, hang out under the sun along the Stanley Park seawall.

pino-Canadian, agrees with the perception that Vancouver is primarily accepting of interracial relationships, and points to the city's multicultural demographics as the cause.

Comparing Vancouver to Seattle, Fritzberg makes note of a difference.

"When I am in Seattle, nine out of 10 people I meet are from the West Coast," he says. "The one per cent is from a different state, Seattle-born or from a different country. In Vancouver, nine out of 10 people I meet aren't from Canada originally. And the one per

cent is from B.C. The likelihood of two people coming together from different backgrounds is greater."

Statistics on cross-cultural relationships

While same-race unions still greatly outnumber mixed-race unions, the 2006 Census of Canada counted a 33 per cent increase in the number of cross-cultural married and common-law couples within five years.

According to a Statistics Canada study, British Columbia has the highest proportion of interracial unions in the country. See "Mixed Unions" page 2 ▶

Verbatim

The peach and the coconut

by JEANNE SEMICHON

Travel broadens the mind, they say, so here I am in Vancouver. What kind of culture shocks should I expect? What culture clashes will open my mind and make me grow ... again?

I was of course stunned by the wild landscape surrounding glass buildings, scattered in the downtown area right down to the water.

But being a Frenchie, I also stared, wide eyed at the pick-up trucks zipping by on the large, crowded streets of the city. I was equally impressed by the enormous variety of fast food available and by the many sizes of coffee cups. I was discovering North American wealth.

Surprises only last for so

long, so I quickly started to pay more attention to the strange way Canadians welcome people in their beautiful country. Here, waitresses wear short garments and offer you their best smile. Shopkeepers ask you how you're doing as soon as you walk into their shop and the banker calls you by your first name.

Canadians are struck by the fact that the French do not meet the terms of their politeness. French people, on the other hand, are unsettled by so much friendliness and often see only the superficiality of this open and social way of being.

When French people don't know each other they indeed keep a distance and are undemonstrative. For example,

See "Verbatim" page 6 ▶

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My Turn

SERGE CORBEIL

Lucky Obama

Watching events unfold in the midst of the Republicans' Presidential Race in the U.S., we can only draw one conclusion; Barack Obama is one lucky guy.

The tragic-comic performance acted out by his opponents can only be a sign that there is hope for the Democrats in this November's election.

This isn't really a gift from heaven for the President who, according to economic indicators south of the border, should, if history were to repeat itself, bite the dust next November. Yet the orcs are showing signs of aligning in his favour.

The current primaries cast a light on the profound divisions within the Republican Party. Leadership races are rarely child's play, but the Grand Old

Party's is particularly vicious. And it will leave deep scars.

As for the Democrats, they don't even have to lift a finger. The Republicans have only themselves to blame for their present situation. After all, their own members are at the forefront of a protestation movement, within their own ranks, which sets up for a less than edifying campaign, and this alone unveils what is most extreme in the Party.

In fact, besides Mitt Romney, the least right-wing candidate in his right-wing party, the other candidates scrambled in an escalation of political supporters to please the far right of that party. The discussions revealed what appears to make-up a good slice of the party of Abraham Lincoln.

The Tea Party's weight has made

traditional political calculations very difficult. How else to explain that the primaries in Iowa and in South Carolina don't seem to have played their traditional role in determining who will win the race?

Barack Obama's team must be hoping to high heaven that Newt Gingrich keeps on track and wins this investiture. But even a divine intervention probably won't make it that easy for the Democrats. The Florida results gave Romney and his team a well needed shot in the arm.

This victory allows for two things: a momentum early in the race and the capacity to attract a lot of cash.

And, as we well know, money is everything when it comes to politics. Especially in the U.S. For example: it has been reported that Obama's 2008 campaign cost around 730 million dollars. An exorbitant sum, for sure. I read somewhere that it would take an average American family 14 000 years to amass that much money.

But getting back to the Republicans: for Gingrich, the battle will be difficult. Most of the Republican Party's pundits have pulled ranks against him. He must now face

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Super Tuesday, early next March, when 11 states will be electing 20 per cent of delegates. Short of a solid performance, it should be the end of the road for Gingrich.

Obama must find a way to benefit from the republicans' internal strife. After all, we can't forget that once their choice is made and especially if it happens to be Mitt

Romney, the real battle will begin.

It will be a tough one and will demand of Obama his very best. His successful rhetoric of 2008 will not do this time around. With Romney, Obama will have to play the social class card. A dangerous game to play, in the U.S. of A. ✂

Translation Monique Kroeger

► "Mixed Unions" from page 1

cial couples, at almost six percent, and Vancouver has the highest proportion of cross-cultural couples of all cities across Canada.

Interestingly, 86 per cent of cross-cultural unions are comprised of one person who belongs to a visible minority group and one who is not a visible minority. This type of mixed race relationship made up 3.3 per cent of all couples in Canada in 2006.

Less than one per cent (0.6) of all couples in Canada consisted of members who belonged to two different visible minority groups.

Visible minority is defined under the Employment Equity Act as "persons, other than Aboriginal Peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." This includes Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab, West Asian, Filipino, Latin American, Japanese and Korean.

According to the same study, the Japanese were the most likely to be involved in an interracial relationship at 75 per cent, followed by Latin Americans at 47 per cent.

The exotic allure

Sahukhan, who is also the author of the book *Dating the Ethnic Man*, argues that while interracial romantic relationships are becoming increasingly common, they come with specific challenges.

Fritzberg agrees, noting that this is inevitable when two individuals, who are already distinct in their own perceptions and ideas, enter an interracial relationship with the added factors of differing cultures, religions, and often, family values.

"In our multicultural society many people are attracted to



▲ William Fritzberg and Carla Hilario.

those of different backgrounds. Their accent, exotic appearance or unfamiliar relationship style are often irresistible. But the very things that attract can also create problems," states Sahukhan on his website www.multiculturalromance.com.

Given the additional challenges that come with being in an interracial relationship, why is there still an increasing proportion of cross-cultural couples?

Sahukhan recognizes that we are a "very curious people" in Vancouver, and being in a romantic relationship with someone outside one's race or culture is becoming the norm in this city.

In fact, statistics show that second and third generation visible minorities in Canada are now more likely to marry outside their ethno-cultural group than within it. Fifty-one per cent of second generation visible minorities are in a cross-cultural relationship. Among third generation visible minorities, more than two-thirds are involved with someone who is not from their cultural group.

The challenges in handling differences in attitudes and expectations when it comes to facets of a romantic relationship such as courtship, rules around public displays of affection or family ties, is rooted in misunderstanding, Sahukhan notes. Specifically, it comes from "not understanding the intimacies of ... [a] partner's cultural background."

Sahukhan says that in order to increase understanding, couples should do some research.

"You need to do ... research to truly understand your partner's culture ... customs, and traditions. By doing that, you're showing your partner that you appreciate where they come from and that you're being active and proactive in the relationship," he explains.

Fritzberg's experience echoes this, as he recounts his recent first trip to the Philippines. Although the purpose of the trip was to meet his partner's extended family and understand the nuances of her cultural background, the attraction to new experiences was also genuine.

Vancouverites, particularly

in the younger generations, are typically eager for adventure and exploration, which is probably another driving force behind the increase in cross-cultural relationships.

Vancouver has "a holistic culture," remarks Sahukhan, in the sense that when we look at an individual, "we look at everything, not just their race, colour or creed ... but we look within."

Perhaps that's exactly the explanation why l-o-v-e in Vancouver is colour blind. Because race is really just one factor, and there is as much diversity between individuals within one culture as there is across cultures. ✂

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

Bernie, First Nations counsellor

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Vancouver celebrates Black History Month

by ERIC CHU

If you take a few minutes and briefly browse the streets of downtown Vancouver at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, you will notice that the city consists of

ally spread to other parts of the province.

In 1955, Eleanor Proctor Collins from Vancouver became the first African-Canadian woman to own a national television show. This was the first time African-Can-

worker and later politician, took on the challenge to live on the same income as people on social assistance. This was a compassionate and inspirational act that continues to influence millions of Canadians, even 25 years later.

co-existing with the dominant culture."

When prompted for advice to new African immigrants, Jones stresses the necessity to understand Vancouver and take the initiative to help improve the city.

Jones also thinks it is "deceiving to think that there aren't as many African-Canadians in Vancouver."

"The demographics are more spread out here, which means that people are less visible in clusters. With increased immi-

“ [It is] deceiving to think that there aren't as many African-Canadians in Vancouver.

Roger B. Jones, prominent Black Vancouverite

"What I would like to see happening is respect and equal opportunity for all diverse groups living in our cities," says Roger B. Jones, a prominent African-Canadian who lives in Vancouver. As a professional speaker, he has devoted himself to issues of disability, inclusion and diversity over the past two decades.

"In my opinion, the term 'multiculturalism' only serves to further fragment our societies by putting one group against another to compete for government dollars," says Jones. Everyone should feel safe and secure practicing their own cultures while

"Many African people do immigrate to Vancouver and they face too many challenges to list," he explains. "That said, we are lucky to live in one of the greatest cities in the world. The only advice I would give is to study the history and culture of Vancouver, British Columbia and Canada. Once you have an understanding, determine the best way for you to contribute and help improve this wonderful place."

Here, Jones makes the implication that by making an effort to improve the city, an immigrant can find ways to overcome the "many challenges" on the list.

gration and cross-country mobility, I believe that we will see many more African-Canadians moving to the West Coast."

Jones highlights some notorious figures in the Black history of Vancouver.

"Since its inception, Vancouver and British Columbia have been a welcoming place for people of African descent," he says. "Contributions from James Douglas, Rosemary Brown, Joe Fortes, John Sullivan Deas and many others too numerous to mention, have helped to shape the city and province into the great place that it is today." ✍



Photo courtesy of Roger B. Jones

▲ Roger B. Jones, CEO and owner of World Accessibility.

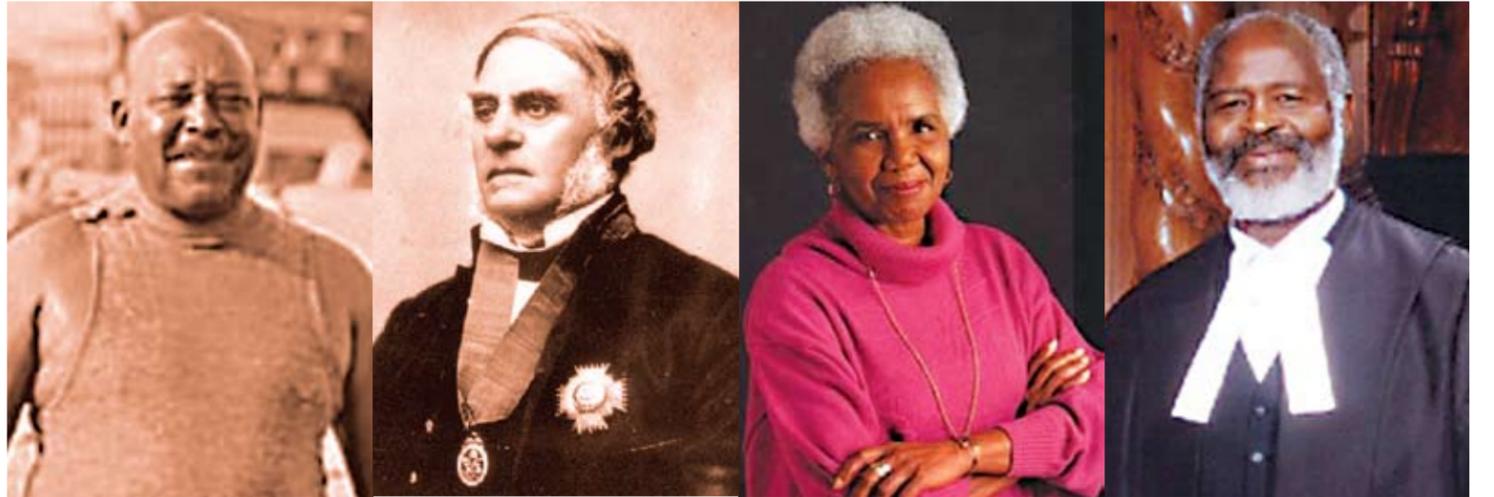
people from virtually all parts of the world. Diversity is, and has always been, at the very heart of our culture.

In light of this diversity, distinct cultures have contributed significantly in shaping Vancouver as a city. One pertinent yet often overlooked factor in this development is Black history. In celebration of the Black History Month, let us take a few minutes to briefly discover how African-Canadians shaped the city we live in.

1858 marks the arrival of the largest group of Black immigrants. This group composed of roughly 800 people withdrawing from the racially oppressive society in San Francisco. They became one of the first groups of people to pioneer Vancouver Island. Over the years, the African-Canadian population gradu-

dian culture became a part of the Canadian media and influenced our culture.

In 1986, Emery Barnes, the Canadian football player, social



▲ Famous Black Vancouverites (from left to right): Joe Fortes, James Douglas, Rosemary Brown and Emery Barnes.

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Canada Malaysian Art

Exhibition uses art to explore similarities and difference

BY DINA ABDEL-HAQ

The Malaysia-Canada Indigenous Communities Applied Arts Exhibition will showcase the applied art and design of two different countries that are coming together in hopes of sharing their culture, tradition, and history with the public.

The exhibition, which opens on Feb. 20 at the Pendulum Gallery on the corner of W. Georgia and Hornby, seeks to explore the differences and similarities between the two cultures through their works of art. Visually stimulating, functional, and with a story to tell – these pieces of art can be used in everyday life.

Sam Carter is a professor at Emily Carr University of Art and Design. He is also the co-curator of the exhibition. He describes the selections as being inspired by *mengei*, a Japanese term meaning peoples' art.

Judy Chartrand is an artist who specializes in traditional First Nations art such as porcupine quill work, caribou hair tufting, moose hair link work, beading and more. She describes art as a way to “bring about an awareness of one's reality.”

Chartrand believes that art can help break down stereotypes that have been developed over time. She also explains that pieces of art can represent pain or discontent, which gives the people a better understanding and a way to connect to an artist's reality.

According to Carter, the exhibition will consist of a variety of functional objects such as jewellery, weaving, textiles, baskets, toys, tools, and even treasures and souvenirs that are traditionally inspired.

He says that the exhibition seeks to bring together students, politicians, professionals, educators, residents, visitors and tourists from all around the world. He also explains that an online learning tool, which will include a virtual gallery of the exhibition, will be used in schools around the world.

To understand the effort and work that has gone into supporting and encouraging the arts of the Canadian indigenous communities, Carter describes the wonderful array of products designed by the artists that are being displayed at museum gift shops at the Vancouver International Airport.

“Canada should celebrate the great jump forward over the past years that have encouraged Canadian indigenous commu-

nities to celebrate and acknowledge their traditional art and make it available to people from all walks of life,” he says.

Through her works of art, Chartrand tries to convey the anger she feels from the racism the First Nations people have endured since their territories were first invaded.

She explains that she feels that she has done her job when the pieces of art that she creates push buttons and create a feeling of unease amongst people. She states that the message she wants her art to represent is that

works of art. In addition, he mentions the exhibition in the context of bridging traditional and innovative culture and how

over, he describes how looking at their works of applied art, one can most definitely get a glimpse of their history and pain.

helped shape their art and the stories they convey. According to Chartrand, an exhibition of this kind can help indigenous commu-

“ [This exhibition helps indigenous communities] around the world gain insight into other lived experiences, which in turn, end up being very similar right across the board.

Judy Chartrand, First Nations artist

these two different communities share strikingly similar stories that can be seen in their different and distinctive designs. More-

Carter describes the products that they create as something that you will want to hold on to forever. After all, their histories have

nities “around the world gain insight into other lived experiences, which in turn, end up being very similar right across the board”.



▲ Canadian drums (left) and Malay hats (right).

“whatever happened, it was not due to First Nations inability to ‘pull up their bootstraps,’ it was due solely to white racism.”

Tim Strang, marketing manager at Hill's Native Art Gallery says that art is essential in bridging cultures. He explains the importance that galleries have in displaying works of art. “As cultural ambassadors and curators...the benefits to the native communities are economic and educational and we see our role as helping to preserve and promote a West Coast way of life,” he explains.

Carter believes that an exhibition of this kind can shed light on the accomplishments and progression the indigenous communities across Canada have had, and continue to have, in their works of art. He says that the international recognition that they have received for their product designs and applied arts, have allowed them to experience “great pride, income, and satisfaction.”

According to Carter, Vancouver is a great city to showcase this event, given the hard work that indigenous communities in Vancouver and British Columbia have put into pioneering their

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Writer revisits 1970s South Africa through book

by TIM REINERT

When one thinks of apartheid-era South Africa, one tends to think of the end of the story: major grassroots riots, solidarity concerts led by '80s music icons, Nelson Mandela being released from prison, etc.

But for writer Erich Rautenbach, his South Africa was a very different experience with mandatory army service, arrests and prison time – not to mention a healthy dollop of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll.

He has lived in the Lower Mainland since the early 1980s, and has written a book about his experiences, called *The Unexploded Boer*. It's published by Zebra Press, a South African imprint of Random House Struik.

1970s South Africa

"I describe it [the book] as being about a dysfunctional kid, from a dysfunctional family, in a dysfunctional country, trying to do the right thing, and trying to figure out what the right thing is," says Rautenbach.

In South Africa at the time, all white men were faced with a choice after high school: university, or the army. Rautenbach chose neither.

"Trying to stay out of the army was my goal, and trying to not fight and kill fellow citizens who just wanted to vote," says Rautenbach.

That decision proved to be a fateful one, and took him on a raucous years-long "lost weekend" in Capetown, full of tragically colourful characters that could have only lived in that place, and in that time. It also landed him in prison, and then in a mental institution.



While the book is on the surface a memoir of Rautenbach's experiences in 1970s South Africa, it's in some ways an apocryphal one, and one that doesn't rely so much on facts as it does on its author's unique interpretation of memory and history.

"It was written as a bit of a fantasy. Did that really happen to me? The idea that all that happened to me is pretty far-fetched," says Rautenbach, adding that for him, the actual events described in the book aren't as important as his manipulation of words.

"What it's about is really an excuse [to write]. It just happened that I had this little story that I

could use." He says that for him, writing is about playing with words, as opposed to imparting facts.

"I'm spinning poetry, without any real meaning."

The Return

Rautenbach recently returned to South Africa, where he spent several months on a promotional tour supporting *Boer*. He hasn't



▲ Erich Rautenbach, South African author.

lived there since 1981, and apart from a brief trip in 1996, hasn't been back. He says that the changes in that time have been huge, though in some ways superficial.

"Nowadays, South Africa is utterly different from what it was before, except for the fact that there's still a lot of wealthy white people with British, German, and Swiss accents living in mansions, and the majority of the people still live in little tin shacks outside the city proper."

Still, Rautenbach says that the changes are welcome.

"Now, Johannesburg looks like Africa, rather than just a hot New Zealand," he explains. "When I left there were lots of nice clean buildings with a few white people strolling around and lots of space between them in the streets; but when Africa comes to town, there is no space, there's just lots of Africa. There's now lots of people, and the sidewalks are crowded, full of people that were just hidden away before."

Life Since

Rautenbach has spent the decades since creating a life for himself in the Lower Mainland. Throughout the 1980s, he played in dozens of independent rock and punk bands of variable fame, and has continued his involvement with the music industry by launching a music copywriting and promotions business from his home. But his main priority these days is raising his three sons with his partner, Mary Anne. In fact, he cites his kids as being a prime motivation for writing *Boer*.

"I went through a near-death thing [a serious bout with leukemia] last winter, and if these stories weren't written down, my kids wouldn't know about them," he says.

"Hopefully, this provides them some sort of link that connects them to my path." ☞

Postcard



Photo by Jesse Andrewartha

Commonwealth Connection

As my family's three-week trip around Victoria and South Australia comes to its final days, I find myself at Melbourne Museum, walking through an exhibit created in conjunction with local Aboriginal Australian outreach societies.

Amid the colourful artwork, a video installation catches my eye. Teenage girls with dark skin, clad in large worn t-shirts and shorts, stand in a calm river of water.

They playfully act out words in their indigenous language while a phonetic transcription appears in subtitles with an English translation. I pause to watch the repetitive video, awkwardly, feeling like it was not intended for me to see.

I have always envied those who could trace their family's ancestry. While others could ramble off where at least their great-grandparents came from, I would sit in the sidelines imagining my great-grandfather was Lord Granville, whom half of Vancouver was named after...and maybe he was.

My family history was clouded by my own parents' painful memories, death and indifference to our lineage. My own lighter skin, language, and surname do not reveal that one generation ago, my dad was a dark Mexican-Indian.

Like Canada, Australia's controversial and deleterious methods attempting to assimilate those of Aboriginal descent into a Eurocentric so-

ciety is baffling. Beginning in the mid-1800s, the Australian government sculpted laws to remove the rights of Aboriginal parents, making it then legal for children to be essentially stolen from their biological parents and put into facilities run by religious or charitable organizations.

Very much like the "residential school" of Canada, these mostly lighter-skinned or mixed children in Australia of the Stolen Generations were forced to only speak English and punished severely for embracing any remembrance of their culture. It would take more than a postcard from me to go into the details of the cases of abuse reported beyond the mental anguish of the abductions from one's own family for the cases in both Australia and Canada.

Only recently there has been an acknowledgment by political leaders of the injustices lasting into the 1970s, although, in Canada, the last residential school closed in 1996.

In 2008, both Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and our very own Prime Minister Stephen Harper, on behalf of their respective governments, issued an apology to the Aboriginal nations for these injustices.

There has been more awareness into the history of these child abductions with documentaries and films like *Rabbit-Proof Fence* and *Australia*, but the damage has been done. Is there really any way to make up for the loss of being completely uprooted? ✉

ADRIANNA GRANVILLE



Photo by Adrianna Granville

▲ Adrianna's daughter "Squishy" walking along a beach in Australia.

► "Verbatim" from page 1

when I first went shopping, I rehearsed, in my head, how to ask the saleswoman for my size in some shoes that took my fancy, but lost my nerve when she came up to me saying: "Hi there! How you doing?" I gave her a nervous smile and left without a second glance. I felt disturbed by so much forwardness and my manners were put to the test.

Since I had come to Vancouver to discover new horizons and meet new people in the first place, I was never disappointed by the warm welcome of people. People here are easier to approach. It made me feel quickly at home and I found it easy to talk to the people I met.

Canadians are quick to engage in a conversation to help

you find the public library, the closest Starbucks or simply to chat about the weather or last night's hockey game.

However, establishing a "long-term relationship" doesn't seem to come easily for them. Even as you feel that there had been an initial connection. Your new "friend," when next bumped into, seems to have forgotten all about you.

In France, it's more of an all or nothing kind of rule. The French mistrust people they don't know and consider them as potential threats. But when they meet a person they finally decide to smile at and to whom they can relate, they need to build a stronger tie. And here comes the metaphor of the peach and the coconut.

My uncle, who immigrated to Canada, told me this story, and

it illustrates the cultural differences between Canada and France.

He says that Canadians are like a tender, juicy peach, with a stone that is very difficult to open. Whereas the French are like the hard shelled coconut, offering more warmth once cracked open.

Now that I am familiar with this particular cultural difference and have braced myself, I feel fully adapted to this environment. I have opened myself to new ways of acting and feel that I'm growing as a person.

And honestly, between people in a bad mood all day long and people who ask you how you're doing even if they don't know you, the choice is obvious. ✉

Translation Nathalie Tarkowska

Vancouver Chamber Choir

JON WASHBURN, CONDUCTOR



MUSICAL CIRCLES

Famous Families and Friends

Saturday, February 11, 2012, 8 pm

Ryerson United Church
2195 West 45th Avenue (at Yew Street),
Kerrisdale, Vancouver

Vancouver Chamber Choir
Conductors from the
National Conductors' Symposium
Stephen Smith, piano
Jon Washburn, conductor

Join John William Trotter for *The Making of a Conductor*, a pre-concert talk at 7:10 pm

Culminating the 32nd annual National Conductors' Symposium (NCS), the Vancouver Chamber Choir led by Jon Washburn and five Symposium conductors performs music from six famous "Musical Circles" - des Prez, Willaert, di Lasso; the Gabriellis and Schütz; the Scarlattis and Carissimi; Bach and his sons; the Haydns and Mozart; and the Schumanns and Brahms. A great evening of great music.

Each Symposium conductor will receive significant time working with the Vancouver Chamber Choir during a series of intensive masterclasses. Always a season highlight, the NCS concert provides a forum to display newly developed choral techniques, conducting gestures and score interpretation.

Selected and instructed by Jon Washburn, the NCS participants are Wei Cheng (Columbus, OH), Christopher Cheng (Hong Kong), Derrick Christian (Vancouver, BC), Chris Krampe (Mission, KS) and Andrew Schmidt (Princeton, NJ).

At 7:10, John William Trotter will present *The Making of a Conductor*, a pre-concert talk on the craft of conducting and the journey of conducting study using stories from his own experience as a participant of the National Conductors' Symposium.

Tickets to **MUSICAL CIRCLES** are \$24.50- \$28, available at Ticketmaster. Student rush tickets are \$10 when doors open one hour before the concert. Visit Ticketmaster.ca to purchase online or phone 1-855-985-ARTS (2787).

Sadie Kuehn: from the deep south to Kitimat

by SAMUEL RAMOS

From the very beginning of Sadie Kuehn's entrance into the world, her life was marked by diversity, challenges and expectation. Born in 1948, she was raised in Savannah, Georgia, U.S. by her grandmother from the age of three months. She was part of the Black middle class and raised Catholic in what she says was a predominantly southern Baptist family. To add more diversity to her already atypical life, she had Jewish godparents.

Kuehn's America was a very segregated one. She says that schools, churches, theatres, food counters in department stores and of course bathrooms were all segregated. Buses, being one of the only places where whites and blacks mixed, had a protocol of their own based on segregation.

When she was 5 years old, Kuehn and her 7 year old brother would enter through the front door, pay their fare and were forced to ride at the back of the bus to school. This was a common expectation for all black people until Rosa Parks shook up the establishment by refusing to give up her seat to make room for a white passenger on December 1, 1955. Parks was the sixth and most prominent black person to refuse to move to the back of the bus, which led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

From bus rides in the south of Georgia, to trudging through heaps of snow in Kitimat, B.C., Kuehn has battled racism every step of her way. Vancouver is now home for her, where she continues to fight for the rights of all races, creeds and nationalities.

Despite her seemingly bumpy life she says, "I, like many young Black women, [was] encouraged to excel in all that [I] did. To know our heritage and our roots, and be aware of, and make a difference for the larger community."

The Source: Why did you move to Canada and B.C. specifically?

Sadie Kuehn: I came to Can-

ada with my husband, who was of draftable age. His draft board had begun sending letters and requesting he attend meetings with them. It was thought that

“ Most people, groups and communities want to have people know about them, what they believe and what they do.

Sadie Kuehn, 2011 Cultural Harmony Award winner

it would only be a matter of time before he would be drafted.

My husband was offered a couple of positions. One was in a high school in Kitimat in northern British Columbia. We took it and came up in August of 1968.

S: What was life like for you and your family living in smaller places like Kitimat and Kamloops?

S.K.: In Kitimat at a staff get-together at our home, a guest start-

his way home from school. They thought it was funny.

Most of the people I had contact with in Midway, B.C. were great. The town was placed in

ed chatting to me about what it must have been like growing up in the [United States] as a negro/Black person. I thanked him for his empathy and went on to say that I thought Native people in Canada were thought of here much the way that we were by many people in the U.S. with the same stereotypes being used. [For example], that we were lazy; didn't work and didn't want to work; that we didn't look after our children; didn't clean our houses and lived in filth; [and] that we were promiscuous and were drunkards. He looked at me and said that I was ungrateful because I'd said what I'd said.

Kamloops was a somewhat different experience. The overall population was quite diverse. While the majority of people in the town and surrounding area were people of European descent, Aboriginal people, with six bands relatively close to the city certainly had a strong presence in the community. Japanese Canadians also were very prominent in the area, as were south Asians. Being stared at and never being able to be incognito is just what you come to expect.

Kamloops was one of those places that you could love for its outdoors, many of its people and friendships. For a period I sat on the community health board in the area.

I decided to leave the board after a number of months because I became fed-up with the ongoing racist and sexist jokes being expressed around the table and being told that I was being overly sensitive when I would ask that jokes not be made.

My son, while in kindergarten, [had] grade six and seven boys throw lit matches in his hair on

the spotlight and became national news when it was made known that the then school board chairperson had decided not to renew my husband's contract with the school district because he didn't like Negroes and didn't want them in his town.

S: What improvements need to be made to diversity, and how do we get there?

S.K.: The targeting, isolation [and] shunning of some individuals by some [groups], without those doing the shunning and isolating having any first-hand knowledge about what supposedly happened and why the action is taking place. The destruction this action [has on] the person targeted, their family and friends and what it says about those doing the targeting and our community. We must all work in our respective arenas to ensure that these types of behaviours towards others are stopped.

We can create more places for people to be engaged in real dialogue, where they can provide input and have it heard and acknowledged [and] model a city community where all know that everyone will be treated with dignity.

S: How do we build bridges between different cultural and ethnic communities?

S.K.: Open ourselves to the many possibilities of connecting with other people. A smile, which is offered and received, opens many doors. Most people, groups and communities want to have people know about them, what they believe and what they do. Often all we need to do is make the effort to begin the process.



▲ Sadie Kuehn is presented with a Cultural Harmony Award in 2011.

Photo by Denis Bouvier

see

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Community Portrait: Mount Pleasant

Mount Pleasant has become a thriving commercial and residential neighbourhood famous for its creativity, diversity and

social consciousness. According to 2006 Census data, more than one-third of the community's mother tongue is a language other than English.

Spanning from Cambie Street in the west to Clark Drive in the east, and E. 2nd Ave in the north to E. 16th Ave in the south, Mount Pleasant is home to community events such as the Autumn Shift Street Festival, The Main Event, Drift Weekend Art Tour, Main Street Car Free Days, Summer Spaces and Celebrate Mount Pleasant Days.

Historical and heritage buildings still stand, including the Beaux-Arts Heritage Hall, the Lee Building, and the Brewery Creek Building.

View these and other photos in colour on our website at www.thelasource.com



▲ Built as a brewery, the Brewery Creek Building is now an live-work studio.



▲ The crowd at the Autumn Shift Street Festival.



▲ Some of Mount Pleasant's diverse residents: a man on Kingsway, a bicyclist and his companion at the Autumn Shift Street Festival, and a woman on East 8th Ave.




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Our Group Job Search Workshops are a flexible, 5 module rotating program, running weekly, with 16 sessions each month. This includes basic computer orientation, with instruction on using Word and Excel, and accessing the Internet. Workshops are held within a culturally diverse environment, led by qualified facilitators.

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PICS Vancouver also offers one-on-one employment assistance, paid on-the-job work experience through our Wage Subsidy program, and a one-stop Career Centre with a broad range of job hunting resources. Funding for all programs is provided by the Ministry of Social Development, Employment and Labour Market Services Division

Please call 604-324-7733, go to www.pics.bc.ca, or visit us at 200-8161 Main Street, Vancouver, to find out how we can best help you.



Spanish-themed movie festival arrives for the first time in Vancouver

by ALONSO AGUILAR

Since 2008, Pragda has been partnering with local organizations in North America to feature the award-winning latest generation of Spanish Cinema. This year, in collaboration with the Vancity Theatre and Aja Entertainment, the organization presents the New Spanish Cinema Week from Feb. 10–16,

Marta Sanchez, curator of the New Spanish Cinema Week, says that she created the series five years ago trying to offer a window for some of the best cinema made in Europe, and make it accessible to the audience in North America. She argues that there is a lack of exhibitors that are willing to make room for independent foreign-language cinema. She adds that after presenting

after 18 years of the creation of VLAFF, he says that the presence of the Hispanic and Portuguese community in Vancouver is more notable than ever, "Latinos have an increasing participation in international events such as the Jazz Festival, VIFF and PuSh," he says.

It's going to be interesting to observe the reaction of Vancouver's audience to such an eclectic collection of films. The selection includes a screwball musical comedy (*With or Without Love*), a multi-awarded horror thriller (*Kidnapped*), a Basque elderly gay drama (*80 days*), the Goya Award Best Documentary winner (*Bicycle, Spoon, Apple*), and a mega-production à la Shakespeare in Love about Spain's most famous dramatist (*Lope*). Sanchez wonders if the Vancity theatre is going to be filled by the Hispanic demographic willing to support its own-language cinema, or the Canadian anglophone cinephiles that demand more European high-quality cinema.

According to Sanchez, the series succeeds in cities such as Houston and Chicago, where the Latino community is actively organized. A key element is that these networks know how to choose the right venue. In Portland, Ore, where there is a lack of an organized Hispanic community, the event ended up being hosted at an art museum, making it very elitist. ☞

For more information on the New Spanish Cinema Week, visit www.viff.org.



▲ Chico & Rita opens the New Spanish Cinema Week at the Vancity Theatre.

The series offers individuals a chance to watch films recognized by San Sebastian, Mar de Plata, and Toronto film festivals. The festival also features many winners of the Goya Awards (the Spanish Oscars).

The opening film, *Chico & Rita*, is an animated feature directed by the multi-awarded Spaniard Fernando Trueba. The film has just been nominated for an Academy Award and is competing against blockbusters like *Kung Fu Panda 2* and *Rango*.

the series in the U.S. and Canada, it is now in cities like Ottawa and Edmonton, where the non-Hispanic community is more open to these "subtitled" films.

The bet becomes interesting in a city like Vancouver where the New Spanish Cinema Week will try to find a space in the yearly cultural agenda. Victor Martinez Aja, founder of the Vancouver Latin American Film Festival (VLAFF), feels optimistic about the support of the cinephile community in town. Looking back



Photo courtesy of Vancouver Art Gallery

Artwork homogenizes humanity at the VAG Offsite project

by SAMUEL RAMOS

People at the corner of Thurlow and Georgia are up in arms, and they're not going anywhere for a while.

They're not angry at the establishment or furious with the state of the global economy. In fact, they're not even real – they're painted and made out of wood in an art installation titled *Hand Vote*.

Hand Vote is the latest *Offsite* project by the Vancouver Art Gallery. This large-scale wooden tableau by artist Kota Ezawa shows a group of people raising their hands in a vote at a town hall meeting, parliament or even the United Nations. Ezawa describes his work as "a visual representation of democracy by one of its most prevalent signifiers: the vote."

Although his work is big, colourful and stands out amongst the crowd of tall grey buildings, what isn't so prominent is the race of any of the figures. Not being able to tell what cultural background they're from is just what Ezawa intended.

Ezawa says that by "eliminating details, the image refers less to a specific group of individuals, and more to a general sign of a collective body united in a common purpose."

Kristina Molloy is a consultant in the areas of group facilitation and training. She delivers sessions on diversity training which include topics such as racism, stereotypes, how to combat these issues and what we can do to make our space a much more inclusive one. She recently had a chance to view Ezawa's work and was impressed by what she saw.

"It [*Hand Vote*] made me think of the importance of recognizing that people of diverse backgrounds have a voice," says Molloy, "particularly within the Canadian context."

"The gesture made me think of the importance of recognition, and particularly of who is being recognized and who is representing their opinion when going through the process of voting."

In a recent training session for an after school program run by the YWCA Metro Vancouver, Mol-

loy used a snap shot of *Hand Vote* to elicit answers from her eager crowd.

"I incorporated the image into my training, and the impression the piece made on me, as a reflection on diversity – and found it useful in terms of the comments and perspectives that participants had when viewing the image," says Molloy.

A lot of the impressions she herself found while looking at Ezawa's piece were confirmed and brought up by the trainees in her group.

"For instance, [the trainees noticed] that there are few females, and that the actual nationalities or cultural background of the figures are unclear."

Although Molloy used Ezawa's image in her training, she doesn't agree that it fully represents or adds to the diversity work that she does.

"To me the action of raising hands and being counted was reflective of different perspectives, but at the same time the fact that the group of individuals is more homogeneous is not very representative of a diverse population."



▲ Kota Ezawa, self portrait, 2006.

Artwork by Kota Ezawa

Regardless, Molloy welcomes artwork that motivates discussion amongst people, and Ezawa's work did just that this past weekend.

"Artwork in general is helpful when facilitating a discussion or speaking about diversity...it evokes so many different points of view. Reflecting on the fact that individuals are different and bring different perspectives to any experience is exciting, and hearing people's take on a piece of art is a great representation of those differences." ☞



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 apprenantes et apprenants 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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Cultural Calendar

February 7–20, 2012

ing-gear entanglement to baleen whales. McMillan and her colleagues aim to determine when and how often the whales get entangled and provide strategies to resolve this problem. Free admission.

Illuminate Yaletown

Fri., Feb. 10–Sat., Feb. 11
Yaletown, Vancouver
604-733-7171
www.cityandslope.com

As part of the City and Slope Winter Festival, Illuminate Yaletown brings contemporary light art installations out in the streets of this lively neighbourhood. The event starts as soon as the sun sets. Free and open to the public.

Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival

Feb. 10–18
Various Venues
778-707-2037
www.vimff.org

This unique festival aims to showcase outdoor and mountaineering films and gather a community of like-minded people. This year's lineup will have documentaries and fictional films about outdoor adventures, ocean crossings, mountaineering and more. See website for full schedule and details. Tickets \$18 in advance, \$20 at the door. Multi-day passes available.

Something(s) Relative Science Friction

Feb. 16–18, 8 p.m.
Scotiabank Dance Centre
677 Davie St., Vancouver
604-606-6400
www.thedancecentre.ca

Co-presented with Science Friction Dance Company. The show is inspired by Alan Lightman's novel, *Einstein's Dreams*, which explores ideas of time and space and asks whether dreams are truly a window to our inner selves. Choreographed by Science Friction's co-artistic director, Shannon Moreno. Tickets \$20 adults, \$18 students and seniors.

Hunchback

Catalyst Theatre
Feb. 18–Mar. 10, various times
Vancouver Playhouse
127 E. 2nd Ave., Vancouver
604-873-3311
www.thecultch.com

A new theatrical interpretation of Victor Hugo's classic story. Get swept up in the dark musical with the deformed bell ringer Quasimodo and his tormented love for Esmeralda. The show runs until March 10. Tickets \$50–\$75.

Eternal Light

Vancouver Academy of Music

Sun., Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m.
Orpheum Theatre
884 Granville St., Vancouver
604-734-2301
www.vancouveracademyofmusic.com

A tribute concert in memory of Maestro Wallace Leung. The repertoire will feature Beethoven's Symphony #5, Brahms' Violin Concerto and Estacio's Eternal Light. Tickets \$10 adults, \$6 students and seniors.



▲ Hear music by Beethoven, Brahms and Estacio at Eternal Light.

Urbana Big Band

Mon., Feb. 20, 7–8:30 p.m.
Vancouver Public Library
350 W. Georgia St., Vancouver
604-331-3603
www.vpl.ca

An evening of swingin' jazz tunes from classics like Ellington and Basie to contemporary sounds by Canadian and international artists, under the direction of local jazz musician and music educator, Robin Shier. Free admission.



▲ Illuminate Yaletown.

by PHOEBE YU

Nothing says Vancouver like the great outdoors. The Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival reflects that very spirit. Another interesting event this month is Illuminate Yaletown, an outdoor art installation. There are also lectures, musical and theatrical performances to look forward to.

Philosopher's Café: Should We Teach Religion in Public Schools?

Wed., Feb. 8, 7 p.m.
Nature's Garden Organic Deli
8968 University High St., Burnaby
778-782-8000
www.sfu.ca/philosopherscafe

Moderator Jason Carreiro, a PhD student in education, will lead the discussion on whether Canadian schools should consider adding a spiritual and/or religious component to the curriculum. Open to the public.

The New Middle East

Wed., Feb. 8, 7–9 p.m.
SFU Woodward's
149 W. Hastings St., Vancouver
778-782-3363
www.sfuwoodwards.ca

What's next for the revolutionaries of the Arab Spring? And what is Israel's fate amidst the changes happening to its Arab neighbours? Canadian author and journalist Gwynne Dyer, will discuss these issues in a public lecture. Tickets \$10.

Chelsea Hotel, featuring the songs of Leonard Cohen

Feb. 8–Mar. 3
Firehall Arts Centre
280 E Cordova St., Vancouver
www.firehallartscentre.ca

Leonard Cohen's powerful and inspirational music and lyrics are the heartbeat for Chelsea Hotel an illusory world full of enchantment, desire, passion and love. As the Writer seeks inspiration

for a new song, muses from his past battle for his attention while a new muse yearns to be noticed in this riveting fusion of music, dance and theatre.

The Humpback Comeback Project

Thurs., Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m.
Unity Church
5840 Oak St., Vancouver
604-737-3074
www.naturevancouver.ca

Speaker Christie McMillan will speak about the threat of fish-



Lower Mount Pleasant

Pleasant is indeed the word that comes to mind when visiting this area. This gem of a community sits between Cambie and Main, bounded by Broadway to the south and West 2nd to the north.

The other day I had some business with a printer at West 2nd and Yukon, and charmed by the old building in which my printer was located, I was stimulated to walk through the neighbourhood. I was struck by a feeling of nostalgia as well as vibrancy. There are about 50 old houses left in the area grouped in little clusters. They reminded me of the Vancouver

I knew in the early 70's as well as a more gentle time, less hurried, more calm, a place to walk and greet neighbours.

The houses are interspersed with light industry. You can find architectural offices, film companies, artist studios, galleries, print shops, and even St. Andrew's Gift and Church Supply where you can get great candles. Jonathan Rogers Park between 7th and 8th off Columbia is a great place for residents, their children and dogs. There are restaurants, cafes, a brewery, a wholesale Italian food emporium. All this creates employment for over 7000 people.

In short, what you have is a vibrant, still affordable neighbourhood which attracts light industry and can support both young and established artists with a place to live and work. It's a place where you can come across Laura's Coffee Shop at 4th and Manitoba shown in the picture above. It serves typical diner food as well as Canadian Chinese food. You can see it sandwiched in between industrial buildings. This is what I would call a pre-gentrified look. This is a place that celebrates diversity in its buildings and the people who live and work in them.

In the background you can see construction cranes looming

from the huge new Pinnacle development on 1st Ave, between Columbia and Ontario. This creates pressure to rezone Lower Mount Pleasant for more residential development in the form of condos. There have been a few, but right now there is zoning in place that somewhat protects the present character of the neighbourhood. With so few places remaining in the city to support the vibrancy and diversity we see here, we need to be vocal when the pressure comes to redevelop this area into another barren sea of glass towers.

Don Richardson

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