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Eastern exercises
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Experts reveal cultural dietary wisdom

by BESSIE CHOW

Russian-born Yana Ilinykh, 36, and India-UK immigrant Nina Lindley, 55, represent the multicultural base from which many Vancouverites might draw dieting wisdom. The global variety of tastes and palettes in the city makes the quest for the "ideal diet" particularly challenging.

"Most traditional diets are more in line with nature."

*Madhuri,
Ayurvedic specialist*

Ilinykh, who migrated to North America with her husband in 1998 and has been in Vancouver since 2010, decided to have a traditional Russian feast on New Year's Eve. A rare treat, the hearty meal includes specialties like *vingret*, a salad made of boiled vegetables, onions, sauerkraut, green peas and pickled cucumber, *olivie*, another traditional salad of meat, eggs, potatoes and mayonnaise, and crab legs with butter sauce, smoked salmon blintz and caviar.

"Traditionally, Russian food is very heavy," says the slim, 5-foot-6 mother, who admits to being a frequent dieter in the past.

Among the many weight-loss methods Ilinykh has tried is the popular cabbage soup or "Russian peasant" diet, which consists of eating a low-calorie cabbage soup for seven days.

Lindley shares a few of her own traditional remedies for stub-

See Nutrition" page 2 ▶

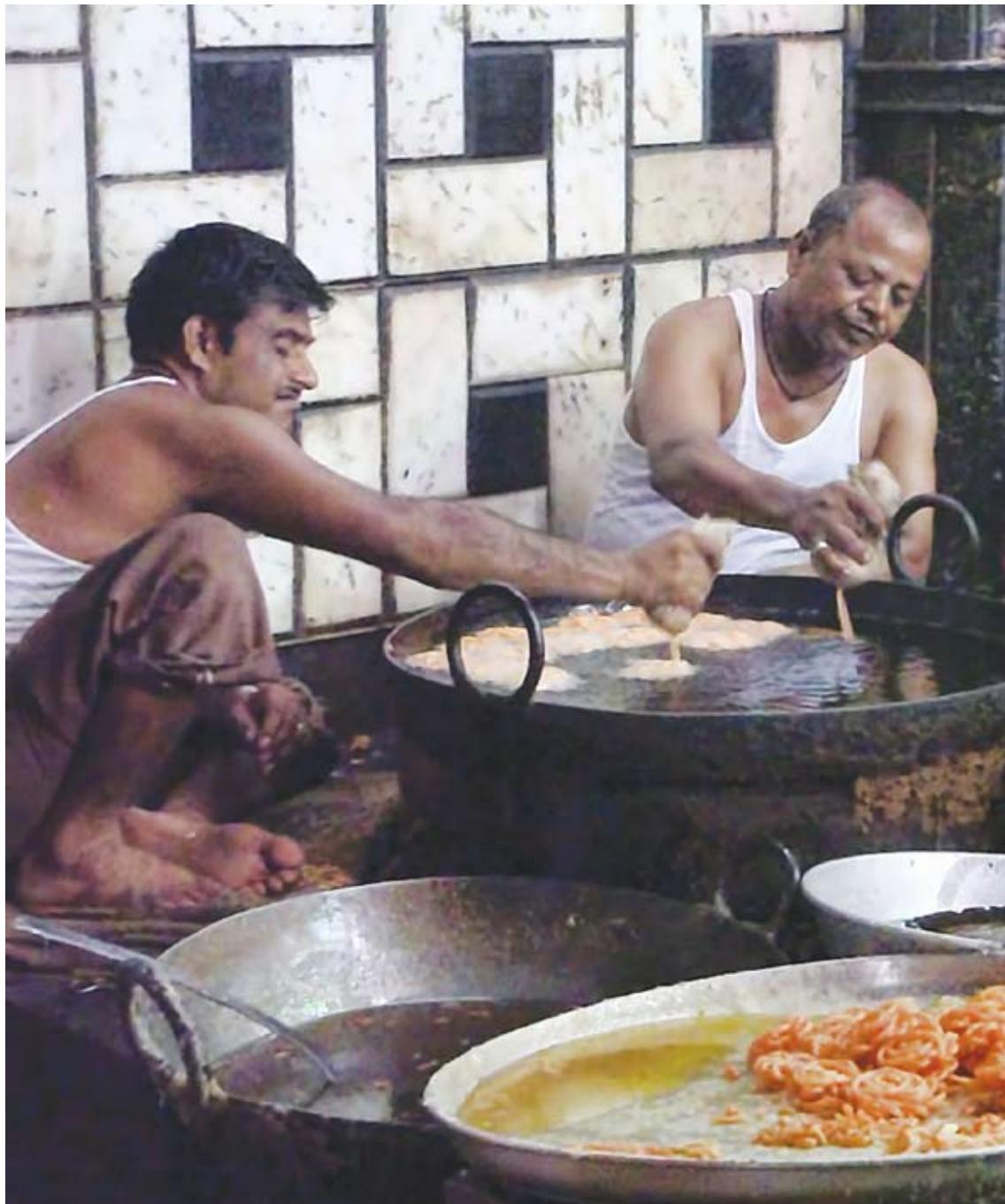


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Verbatim

Political beliefs
and cultures

by ANNE-LAURENCE GODEFROY

After a 15-hour flight with Air Canada, I finally get off the plane and walk through the Paris Charles de Gaulle airport to the railway that will take me into the city, carrying my heavy luggage behind me. I go by several newsstands. A stern-faced François Hollande stares out at me from the cover of many magazines.

The sight of politicians' headshots and catchy titles awakens in me feelings of surprise, interest and satisfaction, which combine to make me want to dive into the news again, at least while I'm in Paris. These two weeks in France will allow me to catch up on politics, because here they are a part of daily life and difficult to avoid. By contrast, since I've been living in Vancouver, it's been difficult for me to follow international news in any depth. Here in Vancouver, national daily newspapers are few, and international and domestic political coverage is limited. Of course, the information exists, but it is difficult to find enlightening articles or programs able to stimulate reflection and nourish informed opinion.

My experience here has also shown me that Vancouverites are not open to political debates; I would even say that they want to avoid such topics altogether. Unfortunately, it seems that a lot of Canadians don't have any political beliefs at all. Politics don't interest them much and they are too polite to admit when they have a different opinion on a subject.

In fact, in his November editorial, John Burns, Vancouver Magazine's editor in chief, raised the alarm about Vancouverites' lack of interest in the upcoming 2013 provincial elections. Indeed, with a turnout of only 55 per cent

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My Turn

SERGE CORBEIL

2013: A pivotal year in politics



Photo by Jonathan Reed/Flickr

▲ Protestors at Idle No More rally.

It's the beginning of a new year. Unlike last year – which was a rather quiet one in politics – 2013 will be a turning point.

Starting in May right here in British Columbia, voters will be electing the next provincial government. The race should be tight, and if the past repeats itself, it will be even tighter than polls suggest. In the upcoming weeks, party leaders will be setting up and beginning their respective pre-electoral campaigns. Interestingly, aside from Green Party leader Jane Sterk, the other three major party leaders will be confronting one another for the first time in this election.

On the federal scene, too, the year will be one of transition. At the end of 2013, the Conservative government will be at its term's halfway mark, which means that towards the end of the year it will have to start thinking about re-election. True, governments today are in perpetual election mode, but there comes a time when they must step up the rhythm. That time is usually at mid-term.

We should see a change in the tempo and tenor of governmental affairs. The least popular measures will be pushed back and the focus will turn towards policies that appeal to voters.

Even though Theresa Spence, the Cree leader who initiated the movement, has herself been in the middle of controversies regarding the leadership of her band, the strength of the movement as a whole cannot be easily dismissed. Governments who ignore what happens around them do so at their own peril. This situation will probably be the most important challenge for Harper as the new year begins. It might, in fact, turn out to be the most difficult dossier he has had to deal with since he gained power. However, to date, Harper has proven he knows just when and how to act in order to diffuse tensions. It would be surprising if the government hierarchy isn't already concocting a plan to smooth over this crisis and come out of it unscathed.

All this will be done with an eye on the Conservative electoral base, which a recent Ipsos-Reid poll tells us is still solidly behind the prime minister. The poll confirms what most people already know: you either like Harper or you don't. There's not much room for subtlety here. But for the Conservatives, the core voters who form the very heart of the party are large enough for the government to justify policies and actions designed to satisfy and maintain that core.

Spencie's View

**WHEW! THAT WAS CLOSE!
PUBLIC CONSENSUS GOT YOU OVER
A CLIFF TOO - HUH?**



**NAH! - JUZ
HANGING OUT.
THOUGH, IT DOES
GET A LITTLE
LONELY OUT
HERE!**

attempting to brand the new Liberal leader.

One thing's for certain: Conservative strategists will be listening with great attention to what is being said during the Liberal leadership campaign in order to glean a few juicy quotes to be pulled out of the bag when the time comes. The tactic has served them well in the past. ☺

Translation Monique Kroeger

► "Nutrition" from page 1
born pounds and digestive troubles: drinking warm water with lemon in the morning, eating fennel seeds or *Ajwain* (Bishop's weed) after a meal and drinking various teas.



Photo courtesy of Yana Ilinskyh

"These methods were passed down through generations and word-of-mouth [in India]," says Lindley, who lived in the Yukon for 17 years and moved to Vancouver in 1997.

While neither Ilinskyh nor Lindley intend to diet this year, both appreciate the ancestral experience.

ence at the heart of their respective traditions.

"Culture heavily influences the way people eat. Our diets are more than just about the physical health of our bodies; it's also about our emotional health and healthy relationships," says Vancouver-based nutritionist Vashti Timmermans.

Having travelled extensively through Japan, Central America, Europe, Turkey and Ecuador, the self-described "adventurous eater" literally promotes variety as the spice of life.



Photo by Bessie Chow

However, to clinical Ayurvedic specialist and Langara College yoga teacher Madhuri (née Melanie Phillips), the concept of a balanced diet is a little more complex.

"How one digests is unique to the individual and depends on individual constitution, season and climate," says Madhuri, who received her spiritual Sanskrit name, meaning "inner sweetness," during her initiation at the Bihar School of Yoga in India.

According to Ayurvedic principles, Madhuri explains, there are six tastes in food – sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter and astringent. Everybody needs all



This approach is not unlike traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), which recognizes energies in food and a range of individual effects based on the Five Element Theory. Like Ayurveda, TCM includes extensive study of the functions and relationships of various systems of the body, mind and emotions which are all considered parts of an integrated whole.

"We hear varying reports about foods having good qualities and bad qualities, but there's not necessarily any problem with the food. It's the way we've manipulated the food, or that for the individual the food is not suitable," says local TCM doctor Melissa Carr.

Both Carr and Madhuri attribute the wisdom of their respective disciplines to thousands of years of experience, trial and error and natural observation.

"Most traditional diets are more in line with nature," says Madhuri who, along with Timmermans and Carr, encourages the habit of choosing locally and seasonally available food.

Yet ever-changing economies, lifestyles and social and cultural interactions present particular challenges for conventional approaches.

Carr refers to the Inuit's struggle with diseases since the introduction of excess carbohydrates not part of their traditional diet of mostly protein.

"If someone is new or from a different culture, they should

find something that is similar to what they have been eating and not just go with whatever is non-fat or talked about in the media as the new superfood," says Carr, who is of mixed Japanese and Caucasian heritage.

While Timmermans is reserved on the biological evidence supporting theories of ethnic or individual constitution, she agrees the increasing modification and processing of food is more harmful than healthful.

In fact, all three experts recommend reducing the intake of processed and refined foods, watching portion size and eating more vegetables.

"Regardless of where one is from, there is always room for improvement. Eating well is a balancing act," says Timmermans. ☺



Photo courtesy of Melissa Carr



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"If you're getting a variety of cuisines using a variety of ingredients, you're sure to get the diversity of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that you need," says Timmermans, who also believes the healthiest way to eat is to cook at home.

six to ensure proper balance and well-being, but the required combination depends on the unique make-up of each individual.

"There is a natural intelligence of the body which, when it's in balance, will naturally move towards what it needs," says Madhuri.

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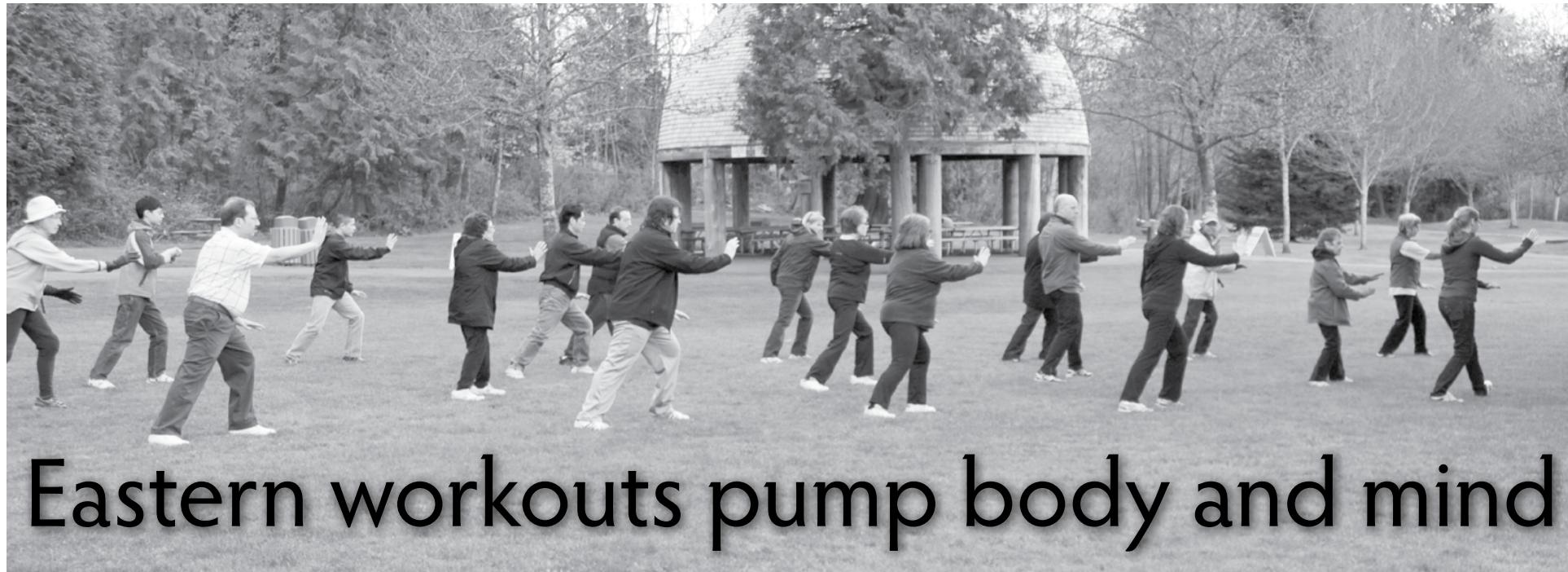


Photo by Devon D'Ewart, Flickr

Eastern workouts pump body and mind

by PHOEBE YU

For everyone who believes in new years resolutions, one that almost always makes the top of the list is to get in shape. For those considering a new workout routine, it's important to consider that popular choices of physical activity in the city such as yoga, tai chi and gym workouts, offer different benefits for the body. So when thinking about which fitness classes to take, consider that yoga and tai chi work on connecting mind, body and spirit, but for those who like high-powered, cardiovascular workouts, a gym provides that avenue.

Vancouverites' fascination with yoga is evident, from the ubiquitous yoga centres around town to the athletic street wear that local clothing designers have popularized. But yoga is more than a fad. According to the American Yoga Association, some yoga techniques date back more than 5,000 years. Yoga gained popularity in North America in the 1960s because of youth culture's fascination with the East.

Certified Iyengar yoga teacher and owner of Yoga on 7th, Eve Johnson, suggests that yoga is popular because there's no other form of exercise that does so much for your life. According to Johnson, the body and the mind is a continuum, and by regularly doing yoga you begin to think about your body differently – it's about being kind to your body and to yourself.

"It's not a workout, it's a work-in," she says.

Another Eastern exercise that works on connecting the mind and the body and has received attention in the West is the ancient martial art, tai chi. Tai chi belongs to an 'internal' style of martial arts, distinguished by soft movements, compared to 'external' or 'hard' styles, like kung-fu.

Tai chi is based on Taoist philosophy – on the interaction of yin and yang, opposite but complementary energies that run through the universe.

"We have the soft movement with some power emission. So in every single movement, it embodies this yin and yang philosophy," says Helen Liang, president

of martial arts school, Shou-Yu Liang Institute.

Tai chi is especially good for improving flexibility, balance, coordination and breathing, says Liang.

When thinking about what it means to be physically fit, André Potvin, president of Infofit Educators, says that physical fitness can be measured in five components: cardiovascular, muscle strength and endurance, flexibility and body composition. A physically fit person is someone who exceeds the average norm for his or her age in several of these components, according to Potvin.

The gym provides an environment that inspires people to become healthier by helping them work on their muscle tones, reducing fat and increasing cardiovascular fitness, says Potvin.

Liang suggests that going to the gym is good for young people who want to do high impact exercises. But even though tai chi looks gentle, Liang says there's a misconception that it's easy.

"Tai chi does not give you that type of heavy breathing, but at the same time you feel like you've

exercised and you're sweating," Liang says.

When comparing the workout one can get in a gym versus a yoga studio, Johnson urges people to consider that by using machines in a gym, one can strengthen the major muscles; however, yoga is good for strengthening both the major and supporting muscles. This is done through different

poses, such as a handstand, says Johnson.

In order to stay fit and healthy by doing yoga, Johnson suggests being kind to yourself and finding a class you feel safe in. Johnson encourages people to do yoga because it results in lifestyle changes, due to the meditative and introspective aspects of the practice.

"[Yoga] helps you achieve mental clarity and lets you be at peace with yourself," says Johnson.

But no matter what kind of exercise regime it is, Liang says that it is all about persistence and practice.

"Even if it's ten minutes a day, it makes a whole world of difference," says Liang.

For Potvin, maintaining a healthy body is about eating right and making time for physical activities.

"Learn how to eat healthy, which includes purchasing a cookbook that deals with raw, organic, alkaline forming foods. Get into a rhythm of grocery shopping for healthier food choices. [And] organize your weekly schedule to include specific times for physical activity," says Potvin.



Photo courtesy of the Shou-Yu Liang Institute

▲ Helen Liang.

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Left Bank

New era of politics in store for B.C.

British Columbian politics will see much change in 2013. Barring a major reversal of public opinion, the B.C. Liberal government that has ruled for a dozen years will be tossed out of office. All the polls point to a convincing win for the B.C. NDP in the provincial election scheduled for May 14.

The Liberals' time in power has seen serious rollbacks of workers' rights; this is par-for-the-course, historically, as the Liberals are just the latest name for the coalition of big business interests that has effectively governed British Columbia for most of its history.

On the few occasions that the NDP has won elections, the media and business elite of the province have worked hard to both limit what change they implement and, ultimately, to use their power to restore a more corporate-friendly government to power. To understand how this dynamic has played out, read Daniel Gauthrop's book, *High-wire Act*, about the Harcourt NDP government in the 1990s, or the recently released book *The Art of the Impossible*, by Rod Mickelburgh and Geoff Meggs, about the Dave Barrett government of the 1970s.

One of the lessons you'll pick up from reading about this province's history is that getting rid of the Liberals this year may be the easy part. Making real change can't and won't happen just at the ballot box; it can only happen with powerful movements of people getting organized at all levels to run society differently.

Compared to almost any government before or since in Canada, the Barrett government had an ambitious, progressive agenda, implementing wide-ranging measures. Nevertheless, they alienated some key allies on the left and in the labour movement; after just three years, they were defeated by a reorganized big business coalition and their media outlets.

The whole political terrain has shifted since the Barrett years, because of the dominance of neoliberalism, and so it comes as no surprise that today's NDP government-in-waiting is promising only a very limited vision of change. There is not much talk from the party of undoing all the damage done by the Liberals, let alone going further and proposing systemic change.

Outside of official party politics, however, powerful forces are stirring, shaking the neoliberal consensus and beginning to outline a bolder, more ambitious vision.

The power of people's movements to drive change and alter the political terrain has never been more evident in Canada than in the past month's resurgence of Indigenous peoples known as "Idle No More." Since early December, this grassroots-led movement has mobilized and inspired people right across Canada – even drawing support and media attention worldwide.

Idle No More's flash mobs, round dances and other protests,

combined with the hunger strike of Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence, have even caused Stephen Harper to blink. The Prime Minister had stubbornly ignored Chief Spence's action and the wider Idle No More movement for weeks. But with the global spotlight growing, he was forced to change direction, agreeing to meet with some representatives of the Assembly of First Nations, to be held on Friday, January 11.

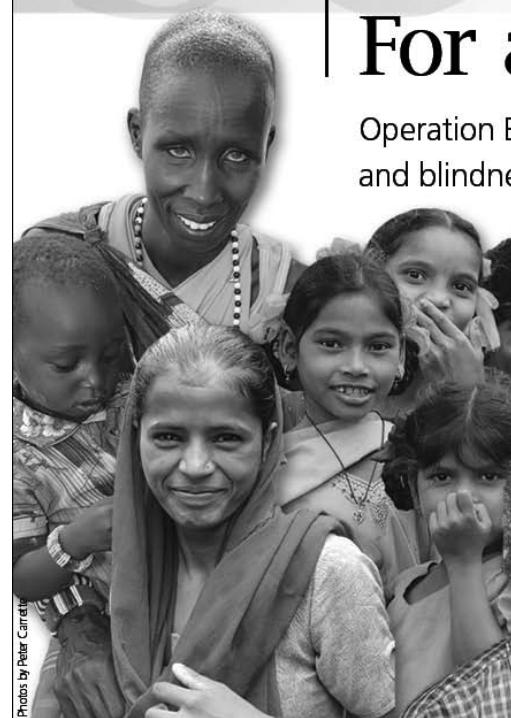
The Idle No More movement is keeping up the heat, however, planning a global day of solidarity to add massive pressure from the outside while the politicians meet. Harper's initial stubborn and arrogant response may have in fact made Idle No More that much more powerful.

B.C. politicians should not discount the ability of Idle No More and related movements to impact the year ahead in provincial politics. After all, the opposition to the Enbridge pipeline – perhaps the single most polarizing and high profile issue in B.C. – has been in many ways driven by Indigenous activists and leaders. Then there is the fact that B.C. is mostly unceded Indigenous land, no treaties having ever been signed. First Nations communities, including the urban aboriginal population, suffer some of the worst poverty and marginalization in the province.

In Gordon Campbell's first term in office, his B.C. Liberals chose a confrontational approach to Indigenous communities by holding a province-wide referendum on Native rights. Campbell is long gone and that disrespectful, borderline racist approach is no longer an option for anyone hoping to govern B.C.



▲ Idle No More protestors in Vancouver.



Photos by Peter Carroll

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Photo by Arne Jarske/Flickr

It takes two to tango

Balancing two careers and a relationship

by ERNA VAN BALEN

David and Shannon Simpson were nervous and a little sad to leave good friends behind. But they were also excited to begin a new adventure together. It was August 2012 and the couple were preparing to relocate to New Zealand, where David had just been appointed to a lecturer position at Massey University. For couples like the Simpsons, relocation brings both opportunity and uncertainty. David could look forward to an exciting new position, but Shannon was faced with finding a job in a new country with no connections or work experience there.

The Simpsons had been through a similar relocation before. They were lucky when they first moved from Colorado to Vancouver in 2009: Shannon was accepted into her desired library science program at the University of British Columbia right around the same time her husband found a position in the mathematics department there.

But it's not always that easy for a spouse to find a job when one partner relocates for his or her job, especially in Vancouver.



▲ Jayne Booth.

"Some industries are just not served in Vancouver the way they are in other major world cities. [Vancouver] hasn't got many head offices, it's not got any major centres like Toronto, like London in England, or Paris. We haven't got what people expect there to be. [Spouses] just assume they're going to be able to get a job. The problem starts when they get here and they can't," says Jayne Booth,

[Spouses] just assume they're going to be able to get a job. The problem starts when they get here and they can't.

Jayne Booth, manager, Work-Life and Relocation Services Office, University of British Columbia

manager at the Work-Life and Relocation Services Office at the University of British Columbia.

In a city that is one of the most expensive in Canada in which to live, there is urgency for a spouse to get a job. One of Booth's tasks is to help 60 to 70 spouses a year find work, but there can be many challenges, including a lack of Canadian work experience, English language skills or professional certification that is recognized in Canada. If the wife of a new hire – and it usually is the wife of, according to Booth – can't find a job, this can result in financial as well as emotional stress.

"Luckily, financially we're okay, but career-wise... I don't want to have graduated school and then be unemployed for a year and have to try and explain that," says Shannon Simpson.

Exact numbers on how many spouses arrive in Vancouver each year are not readily available. British Columbia welcomed 34,685 new permanent residents in 2011, 29 per cent of whom are family members, a category that includes partners, children and grandparents. In addition, 27,273 temporary foreign workers came to Vancouver in 2011, some probably accompanied by their spouses. These partners automatically receive a work permit that allows them to work for any employer, but that doesn't necessarily mean they are successful within the job market.

[that] here. I've been working as a houseman, mostly, and I don't mind to do that, actually," Hofmann explains.

He does want to return to work as a manager of a geosciences lab at some point but, for now, he does not regret his move. He and Emig like Vancouver and have made friends here, and, most importantly, he wanted to be with his partner and support her in this experience.

Shannon Simpson, who just landed herself a dream position at the city library in her new hometown of Palmerston North in New Zealand, also believes that relocation is a process of give and take.

"Do I want a librarian job or do I want to be with David? I guess I'd rather not be a librarian and be with David," she says. ☈



▲ Heiko Hofmann.

Photo courtesy of Heiko Hofmann

Vancouver bottle depot seen as a model in Montreal

by ANNE-LAURENCE GODEFROY

On a bright cold Saturday morning in downtown Montreal, Ken Lyotier, founder of Vancouver's non-profit United We Can Bottle Depot (uwc), is counting his stash, tying full plastic bags and dragging them to a storage area. The 65-year-old is an expert at the job. Binning – or collecting recyclable materials for their deposit value – was his main source of income during his years as a homeless man before he created uwc.

Lyotier is a special guest at a downtown container-gathering event organized by the newly founded social co-op *Les Valoristes*. The co-op sees uwc as a model of social involvement in addressing city waste management issues. Like Lyotier did in B.C. in 1991, the co-op is fighting provincial laws and powerful food and drink retailers for an expansion of the deposit-refund system in Quebec. Together they hoped to draw public attention to the social benefit a better deposit-refund system could bring to the poor.

"[In Quebec] they are where we were about 20 years ago," he explained. "But it might be not so difficult to change."

It all started when Lyotier was surviving on binning along downtown Vancouver streets in the early '90s. At the time, only a few containers were part of a refund-deposit scheme, meaning the income from binning was low to nonexistent. Lyotier realised extending it could save tons of plastic and glass from ending up in the landfill, as well as bringing him an income.

Hoping to attract public attention, one day he asked all binners to drop their containers in Victory Square. Word-of-mouth got around and binners built a huge mountain of bottles.

"Binners were lining up all around the park and up Hastings Street," he recalled.

Soon after, the B.C. government agreed to extend the re-



▲ Ken Lyotier poses with an aluminum fortune.

than 700 binners drop off about 55,000 recyclables to the bottle depot each day, and up to 120,000 on a busy summer day. A "professional" binner can make up to \$20 dollars for a big collection.

Mixing environmentalism and social equity, uwc was a pioneer in creating "green jobs," Lyotier says. Annually, it pays \$2.7 million in deposits back to the community.

Despite his natural humility, Lyotier's actions have been publicly recognized: Mayor Gregor Robertson chose him to carry the Olympic flame in 2010, and UBC rewarded his courage with an honorary degree.

"I'm a doctor of law," he says, laughing.

In Montreal, the deposit-refund system has changed little since its creation in 1984. Even the amount of the refund has

But Lyotier recalls it took years for the law to change in B.C., too. The debate was closed in 1997 when city council in Vancouver approved a regulation expanding the beverage container deposit-refund system in B.C. despite pressure from major provincial food retailers and drink associations.

Tagliero claims the refund system is a powerful tool not only against urban pollution, but also against poverty. *Les Valoristes* co-founder Tagliero believes that binning is often the only income for poor people in urban settings.

"It is time for politicians to send a clear message and take action for a more efficient refund system that would benefit the collective well-being," she states.

Tagliero hopes one day to create a uwc-style depot in Montreal and praises the success of the organization for maintaining an informal economy while helping those in need earn an income, clean the city and improve their quality of life.

University of Victoria professor Jutta Gutberlet has studied the binning business in Canada and in Brazil. She believes urban waste issues can be solved with social and economic inclusion. According to her, uwc's business plan could be applied in just about any urban area in the world.

Tagliero couldn't agree more. Collecting recyclables is a global phenomena : Binners in Vancouver, catadores in Brazil, cartoneiros in Argentina, cachineros in Peru. She says the need to bin is increasing throughout the world.

"We just want to acknowledge their work and make it easier by the creation of a depot as a collective business," she says.

In less than two hours in downtown Montreal, local binners brought in about 8,000 containers not valid for refund in Quebec but refundable in B.C. She acknowledges the fight against lobbyists will be hard.

"One thing is for sure, this fight is one of David against Goliath. I just hope it will end the same too," she says. □



▲ Montrealeans are inspired by Vancouver to sort through recyclables for cash.

fund-deposit scheme and raised the refund amount. Inspired by the changes, Lyotier created the non-profit bottle depot in 1995, where anyone could bring containers that were part of the extended scheme in exchange for cash.

Financially independent and operated by street people, uwc is a social enterprise that creates hundreds of employment opportunities for the Eastside community. He says there is an emotional connection between binners and a unity between people on the street, hence the name.

Seventeen years later, more

stayed the same, not even adjusting to inflation.

The former Liberal government, which lost provincial elections last September, had agreed to increase the price of refundable containers from \$0.05 to \$0.10 in 2013, but the Parti Québécois has made no public statement since it came into power.

For Marica Vazquez Tagliero, founder of *Les Valoristes*, it's bad news. She fears the province will give up the deposit-refund system altogether and succumb to powerful lobby pressure to exclusively use an already implemented household recycling scheme.

Variety's Got Talent presented by Coast Capital Savings is BC's premier talent search for BC's next singing sensation!

Jan 2nd-Jan 16th:

Video auditions accepted at www.varietysgottalent.ca
o VGT is open to everyone from the ages 13-29 who reside in BC.

o All auditions must be submitted online

o All videos will be judged by music producer Su Bailey and Sam Feldman & Associates.

Jan 15th-Jan 26th:

Top 9 Audition Videos are selected for the VGT Finals and remaining Top 20 for the People's Choice Competition.

Jan 27th-Feb 3rd:

Variety's 'People's Choice' competition on The Province's website.

o Public votes for their favorite video of the remaining Top 20 audition videos.

o The competitor with the most votes will win a spot in the VGT Finals.

Friday, Feb 8th (10:30am-4:00pm):

VGT Boot Camp at Tom Lee Music Granville St

o 10 VGT Finalists receive performance, singing, and stylist coaching from industry professionals.

Saturday, Feb 9th (7:30pm-10:00pm):

VGT Finals at the River Rock Theatre

o Top 10 Audition Videos & the Variety 'People's Choice' winner will each perform a song.

o The panel of celebrity judges include: Bruce Allen; Steve Darling, Global TV morning news anchor; Stuart Derdeyn, The Province arts columnist; and more

o Tickets for the VGT Finals are \$10 plus service charges, and will be available Jan 6th at www.varietysgottalent.ca.

The VGT Prize:

o Rising Star Music Package (\$600 Tom Lee gift certificate, songwriting lesson with Colin Wiebe, and TBD).
o Appearance on the Variety Show of Hearts Telethon on Global TV BC on Saturday, Feb 16th.

Established in 2011, Variety's Got Talent attracted hundreds of submissions from singing talents across the province in its first year. The inaugural winner, Shylo Sharity from Langley has continued to pursue her singing career and opened for Wynona Judd. Last year's winner, 16 year old Asha Diaz, just released her first CD *Jumpin' Off*.



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Photo Mosaic by Jan Hilario

Incredible India

India, India, incredible India. You're one country, but as vast as a continent. Everyone warned me that India would be the hardest country to travel on this trip and, I admit, there were difficult moments. Most notably, 14 hours sitting in the general class train, where the floor, the bars hanging off the seats and even my right thigh counts as a place for someone to sit. But all in all, India was so kind to me. I didn't even get *Delhi belly* and I ate everything.



▲ Jan Hilario in India.

India, I feel like I just arrived and now I've already left. I'll miss chai with shop owners, overnight sleeper trains and buses all over the country, the *Ganges*, bare feet on temple floors, colourful saris and the poise of *Rajasthani* women, desert nights, crashing weddings, *malai kofta*, *ras malai*, *thali*, Indian hospitality, the lessons of resilience and strength. India, you're both the challenge and the reward.

Until we meet again,
Jan Hilario



▲ On a train in India.



▲ Pushkar, Rajasthan.



▲ A guide and his camel in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.



▲ The food in Orissa.



▲ Travelling from Amritsar to Jodhpur.

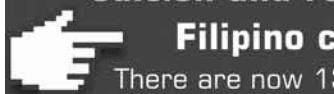


▲ At the Ganges River in Varanasi.



▲ An Indian wedding.

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In some parts of the world, it's still Christmas

by IRYNA SHYROKA

Not everyone celebrates Christmas in December. In Eastern Europe, Orthodox Christians look forward to a celebration as late as Jan. 7, when Christmas falls in the Julian calendar. Depending on the country, and even the region, Christmas traditions vary.

In Ukraine, some Christmas customs date back to the Neolithic Era and reflect the agricultural way of life of that time. After the introduction of Christianity, many of these customs were accepted by the Church, and adapted to Christian traditions.

The most important and colourful part of these traditions and festivities is on Christmas Eve, which revolves around the gathering of family, the commemoration of ancestors and the religious observation of Jesus Christ's birth.

For the Christmas Eve supper, the table is strewn with a small handful of hay in memory of Christ's birth in a manger and over it is spread the very best tablecloth adorned with richly decorated embroidery.

The central table decoration is what is called a *kolach*. This is a circular bread symbolizing the sun and eternity.

The rest of the Holy Supper consists of twelve meatless dishes that are all prepared with vegetable oil. The main dish, *kutya*, is served first and is cooked from whole wheat with honey and ground poppy seeds, which symbolizes the fertility of God's nature. This is



▲ A Christmas tree in Red Square, Russia.



▲ Kolach.

a ritual dish with ancient symbolic and agricultural meaning, and reflects family unity. *Kutya* also symbolizes peace, prosperity and good health.

The celebrations begin at dusk. Typically, the mother calls the children to see if the first star has appeared in the evening sky. The star is the first sign and a call to the Holy Supper. Next, the father comes

into the house and offers his good wishes to his family.

From then on, the family gathers around the table and begins their meal. As they eat, carolers stop by and sing Christmas songs. After the singers are done, they collect donations from the father, thank the family and continue on their merry way, leaving the family to celebrate on their own.

If this sounds familiar, it's because many North American Christmas traditions derive from the very festivities happening in Orthodox homes all over the world this month.

So next Christmas, think of these historic traditions, and remember that somewhere in the world there are people living by a different calendar, still waiting to celebrate. ☺

► "Verbatim" from page 1
of registered voters in 2009, the voter participation rate in British Columbia was one the weakest ever recorded in the province. This is a phenomenon that affects the rest of Canada as well. In France, on the other hand, the voter participation rate in presidential elections has maintained an average of 80 per cent of registered voters since 1958, according to the In-



▲ French President Francois Hollande.

ternational Institute For Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

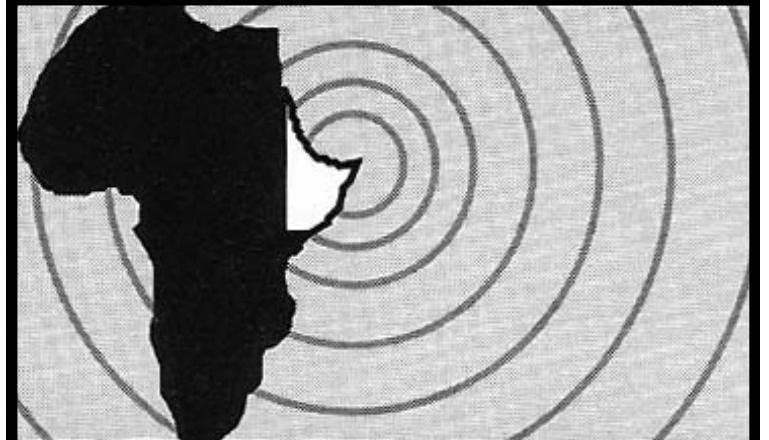
But beyond voter participation rates, it seems to me that French people just like to talk politics more. They have a drive for debating. A good dinner in a restaurant with friends often ends up in a political debate, sometimes heated, helped along by a few bottles of wine. People like to discuss their president, ministers, social laws, the government's role and education's influence on the country. There are no limits on topics to be examined and, to my mind, very few taboos among French people. Facebook is often an outlet for political discussions, which can be spirited. French people are surrounded by politics, whether they like it or not. It's in the air. Have a walk through the dark alleys of Paris and you will see that even the graffiti is political.

After all, the French population rose against its king and beheaded him in 1789. This event,

which undoubtedly changed the course of history, forged our nature and we have kept a semblance of revolutionary spirit in our culture. People will always have the power to change everything. French people think, talk, debate and protest. As a matter of fact, they are well known abroad for availing themselves of their right to strike on a regular basis.

On a positive note, Vancouverites' political interest seems to be growing, thanks to the incredible passion they have for environmental protection. They understand that their exemplary pro-environmental actions are often achieved through political movements and choices. In other words, Vancouverites recognize that we need to know about the mechanisms of politics in order to bring about the maximum positive impact on the environment. ☺

Translated by Anne-Sophie Loks



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Ven/Fri. Jan. 18, 2013, at 6:30 pm, with E. subt.

JE N'AI RIEN DÉBUTÉ
Bruno Chiche, France, 2010,
with Gérard Depardieu, Alexandra Maria Lara, Françoise Fabian, Niels Arestrup.
Conrad is in the service of Senn family since his early childhood and has got the Alzheimer's disease.

Ven/Fri. Jan. 25, 2013, at 6:30 pm, with E. subt.

LES NEIGES DU KILIMANDJARO
UN FILM DE ROBERT GUÉDIGUIAN
Robert Guédiguian, France, 2011, with Ariane Ascaride, Jean-Pierre Darroussin and Gérard Meylan.
Michel and Marie-Claire lived happily for more than 30 years, even after he lost his job. The big shock comes from the

Ven/Fri. Feb. 1st, 2013, at 6:30 pm, with E. subt.

LAWRENCE ANYWAYS
Xavier Dolan, Québec, 2012,
with Suzanne Clément, Melvil Poupaud, Nathalie Baye.
Laurence Anyways centers on a French teacher and his loving fiancée and how the two deal when the

rendez-vousvancouver.com

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A LITTLE JAZZ / A LITTLE TANGO Songs of Passion

8 pm Friday, January 18, 2013

Ryerson United Church
2205 W 45th Avenue (at Yew Street),
Kerrisdale, Vancouver

Vancouver Chamber Choir
Jon Washburn, conductor
with Miles Black & Linda Lee Thomas, piano
Jodi Proznick, bass

The title of this concert, A LITTLE JAZZ / A LITTLE TANGO, is self-explanatory.

The Choir is joined by piano icons Miles Black (jazz) and Linda Lee Thomas (tango) and a great rhythm section of bass and drums for a taste of choral music from the lighter side of the repertoire. (Click on the names to learn more about the musicians.)

Famous names Astor Piazzolla and George Shearing will anchor the program, with the premiere of Elise Letourneau's Four Love Poems by E.E. Cummings, and some special treats and surprises from Choir favourite Bob Chilcott and others.

George Shearing, *Music to Hear*
Elise Letourneau, *Four Love Poems by E.E. Cummings*
Bob Chilcott, *The House of the Rising Sun*
Bob Chilcott, *Tell My Ma (the jazz version)*

Astor Piazzolla, *Ave Maria*
Astor Piazzolla, *Music from María de Buenos Aires*
Saúl Cosentino, *Himno a Buenos Aires*
Loreena McKennitt, *Tango to Evora (the tango version)*

Tickets to A LITTLE JAZZ / A LITTLE TANGO are \$24.50-\$28, available at Ticketmaster. Student rush tickets are available for \$10 when doors open one hour before the concert. Visit [Ticketmaster.ca](#) to purchase online or phone 1-855-985-ARTS (2787).

The Vancouver Chamber Choir acknowledges the generous assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts, the City of Vancouver, the British Columbia Arts Council, the Province of British Columbia, The Vancouver Sun, and London Drugs.

Vancouver Chamber Choir
[www.vancouverchamberchoir.com](#)
info@vancouverchamberchoir.com 604-738-6822
1254 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6H 1B6

Cultural Calendar

January 8–22, 2013

by PHOEBE YU

There's still opportunity for some holiday cheer as the 6th Annual Russian Christmas will be happening this month. Other notable events include the theatrical performance, The Theory of Everything, and events that raise environmental awareness, Whale Shark Ecotourism in the Philippines, and Workshop: Energy Tonics.

2114 W. 4th Ave., Vancouver
604-763-1462
[www.palmetheatre.com](#)

Celebrate Christmas again with the Russian community. There will be kids programs, food, real Russian vodka, performances and more. Tickets: \$8.50 adults, \$4.45 students/seniors, \$2.34 kids under 6 years old.

* * *

that perished on a fateful roller-coaster ride, in a musical created by Victoria's Atomic Vaudeville. Tickets \$29-\$49.

* * *

**A Little Jazz / A Little Tango,
Songs of Passion**

Friday, January 18, 8 p.m.
Ryerson United Church
2205 W. 45th Ave., Vancouver
604-738-6822

[www.vancouverchamberchoir.com](#)



Photo by Fairen Bertrand

▲ Ride the Cyclone.

Haiti: Where did the Money Go?
Haiti Solidarity BC
Wednesday, January 9, 6:30 p.m.
Vancity Theatre
1181 Seymour St., Vancouver
604-685-0260
[www.viff.org](#)

Documentary about post-earthquake Haiti, followed by a panel discussion with the director, Michelle Mitchell, Haiti aid and solidarity workers. Tickets \$12.

* * *
The Theory of Everything
Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre
January 9-12
The Roundhouse
181 Roundhouse Mews, Vancouver
604-713-1800
[www.vact.ca](#)

An award-winning play by Thai-American playwright, Prince Gomolvillas, that takes a comical look at Asian-American identity across three generations. Every week seven Asian-Americans gather on top of a Vegas rooftop in search for UFOs, eventually forming deep connections with each other. Advance tickets: \$15 adults, \$10 students/seniors, \$20 at the door. January 9 preview, pay what you can.

* * *
Whale Shark Ecotourism in the Philippines
Thursday, January 10, 7:30 p.m.
Unity Church
5840 Oak St., Vancouver
604-737-3074
[www.naturevancouver.ca](#)

Speaker Josh Silberg will talk about ecotourism of whale sharks in Philippine waters and what impact the tourism has on this species. Silberg is currently doing his Master's in Resource and Environmental Management at SFU. Free admission.

* * *
6th Annual Russian Christmas in Vancouver
Sunday, January 13
1:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.
Russian Theatre Palme

What's Old is New
The Society for the Museum of Original Costume
Sunday, January 13,
2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.
Hycroft Manor
1489 McRae Ave., Vancouver
604-872-1230
[http://smoc.ca](#)

Featuring the museum's latest acquisitions of dated hats, gloves, jewelry, clothes and corsets. This is a 'white glove' event, where guests can touch the pieces and ask questions. Tickets: \$20 members, \$22 non-members.

* * *
Naoki Totsuka Solo Exhibition
Until January 14
10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Rufus Lin Gallery
5811 Cooney Rd., Richmond
604-303-6330
[www.rufuslingallery.com](#)

An exhibition by contemporary Japanese painter, Naoki Totsuka. Totsuka's paintings features Japanese landscapes and buildings, using her own cultivated technique of watercolour. Free admission.

* * *
Workshop: Energy Tonics – Kombucha and Beyond
Wednesday, January 16

5:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m.
UBC Farm Kitchen
6182 South Campus Rd., Vancouver
604-822-5092
[www.ubcfarm.ubc.ca](#)

Learn how to make your own health drinks. The workshop will teach participants how to make Kombucha, Bieler broth, barley water, beet kvass, potassium tea and more. Tickets \$36.87 (materials included).

* * *
Ride the Cyclone
January 17–February 16
Arts Club Theatre
1585 Johnston St., Vancouver
604-687-1644
[www.artclub.com](#)

A fortune-teller brings back to life a high school chamber choir

Choral performance of jazz and tango songs, accompanied by pianists Miles Black and Linda Lee Thomas. Conducted by Jon Washburn. Jodi Proznick on bass and Joel fountain on drums. Tickets: \$32.75 adults, \$29.25 students/seniors.

* * *

A Celebration of Robbie Burns Dinner & Concert

Saturday, January 19, 6 p.m.
Place Des Arts
1120 Brunette Ave., Coquitlam
604-664-1636
[www.placeedesarts.ca](#)

A celebration of Scottish poet, Robert Burns. Enjoy a Scottish dinner at 6 p.m., followed by a concert. Celtic band, Blackthorn, will be performing, along with Place des Arts faculty member, Rosie Carver, and guest piper, Jim McWilliams. Dinner and concert: \$35 adults, \$33 students/seniors. Concert only: \$15 adults, \$13 students/seniors.

* * *

Nathan Coley Exhibit
Until January 20

Tuesday–Sunday,
12 p.m.–6 p.m.
Contemporary Art Gallery
555 Nelson St., Vancouver
604-681-2700
[www.contemporaryartgallery.ca](#)

First solo exhibition of the British artist in North America. Coley's works uses diverse forms of media to explore the social relationship of man with built structures. Free guided visit in French, January 12 at 3 p.m. Free English guided tour on closing weekend, January 19 at 3 p.m.

* * *

Craig Bowlsby: Empire of Ice
Monday, January 21
7 p.m.–8:30 p.m.
Vancouver Public Library
350 W. Georgia St., Vancouver
604-331-3603
[www.vpl.ca](#)

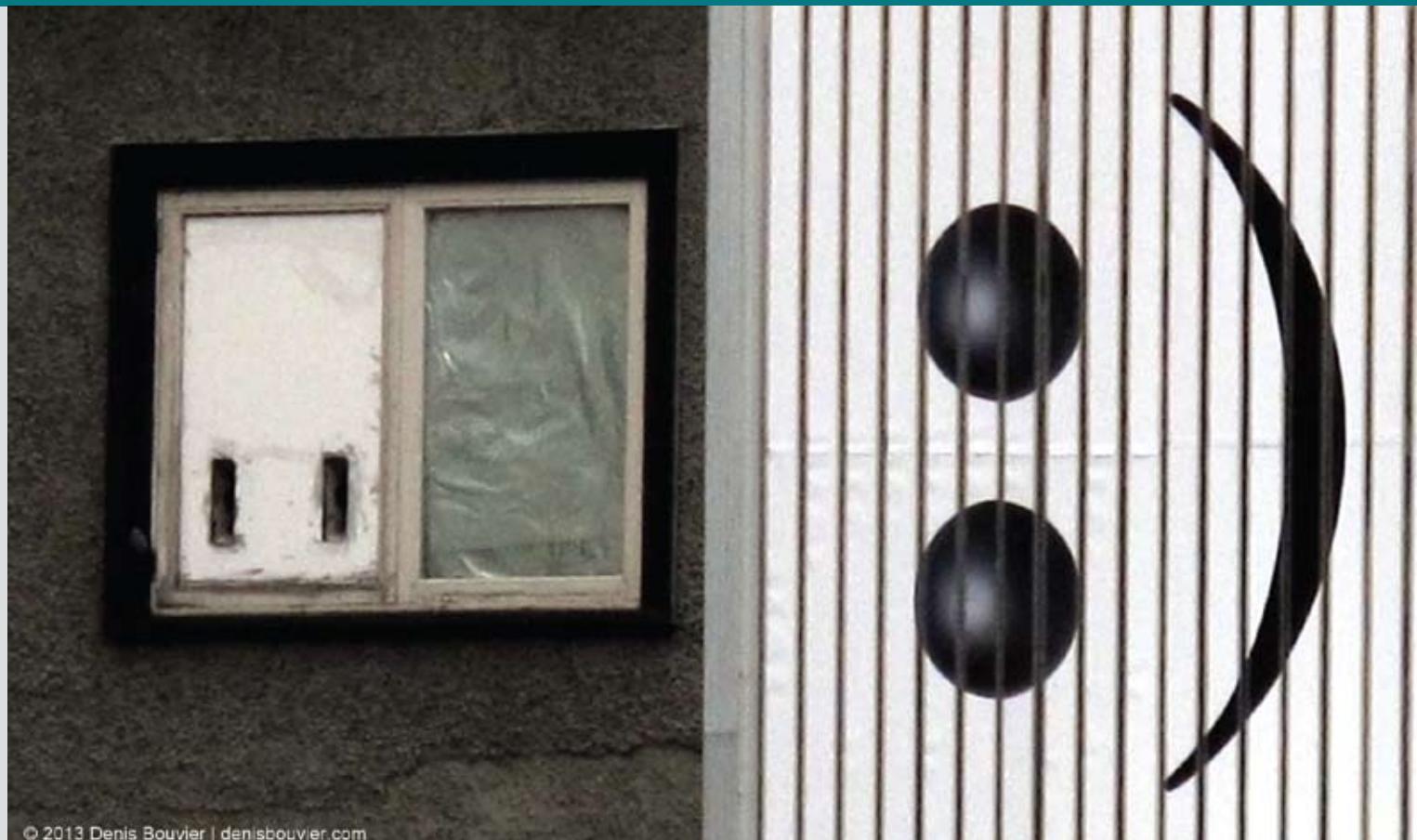
Craig Bowlsby presents his new book about the history of hockey. Free admission.

Street Photography by Denis Bouvier

Eyes on the Future

We have a tendency to become reflective at the beginning of a new year and the juxtaposition of these images readily lends itself to reflection. Looking at the plug in the window in the left half of the image is an obvious example of basic electrical technology. Is the happy face in the right image smiling because it can use technology being unplugged or wireless? Or is it happy because it's completely unplugged and can view the world for a while naturally, unobscured by being "on" or "plugged in" to an iPhone, or iPad?

Our world has certainly been transformed by computer technology, and it's not going away. We have made miraculous strides, but there are also downsides. Some would argue that our obsession with being "on" constantly has distorted the "window" through which we see reality. On the left half of the image, we see a conventional window not only with a barrier on one side, but converted to a plug



© 2013 Denis Bouvier | denisbouvier.com

on the other. In this unattractive extreme, we've traded our view on the natural world for a more technological one.

I remember driving with friends and their children up the Sea to Sky Highway years ago on the way to Whistler. I was overwhelmed as usual by the awesome beauty of the sea and mountains. I was always obsessed with natural beauty, especially the ocean, from my

earliest memories. The children in the vehicle were in their early teens and I realize this can be a self-absorbing time, but I was still astounded by their lack of interest in the view, even though this was their first time on the West Coast. Instead, they were completely absorbed in their video games.

Just the other day I saw 3 young men jogging and discussing the latest in GPS technology, while a

woman was jogging in the opposite direction, talking on her cell phone. We can see this on a daily basis in all aspects of our existence, constantly texting, talking on cell phones virtually everywhere, barely able to resist even during a beautiful live performance.

Perhaps we can envision our future in a more balanced manner, appreciating our technology

to enhance but not distort our view of the natural world.

This picture was taken near Burrard and Davie in Vancouver's West End. The happy face is part of a current billboard display and the window is on a building beside it. The plug in the window was used in a former publicity in conjunction with the billboard.

Don Richardson



Journalists Needed



The Source Newspaper, Vancouver's only bilingual English-French newspaper, is searching for outstanding journalists to join our English team. We're looking for journalists who have what it takes to seek out and produce mind-blowing articles with multicultural twists. We'd love to hear from strong writers, but we're also on the lookout for talented storytellers who aren't afraid to waltz up to strangers and (politely) get in their faces for the sake of an awesome story.

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