



Community libraries provide easy access to people and resources

Verbatim

Notes on a Paradise

by SONJA GRGAR

My feet had hardly touched the ground in Vancouver after a decade long absence before I was inundated with the phrase: "British Columbia. The best place on Earth!" I immediately found the arrogant implication in that statement shocking, and marvelled at the large number of locals who recited it with glowing ease.

Returning from a decade of living in Ontario, I quickly became fascinated with the Vancouverite compulsion to extol the virtues of this city in such a brazen manner. The mountains and the sea are lovely, and the air is cleaner compared to the rest of the country, but there are numerous other places in the world that boast similar attributes, yet appear to have less inflated egos.

Vancouver was my first Canadian home after moving here from the former Yugoslavia nearly two decades ago, and I have a special kind of tenderness for this city. I appreciate its natural beauty and eclectic cultural vibe.

However, I don't think that idealizing Vancouver is a prerequisite for truly loving it. Just the opposite: I feel that acknowledging the city's challenges such as high cost of living, and the plight of marginalized communities like the Downtown Eastside, are signs of a more sincere affection than inundating it with the best-paradise-on-Earth like status.

Last fall when I visited Cuba, a place whose natural and cultural vibrancy often attract paradise like comparisons, I didn't want to fall prey to the seductive tourist billboards. Instead, I wanted to look at the country on its own terms, wide-eyed and open-hearted.

I thought that this would be difficult staying in a resort, as they're in the business of

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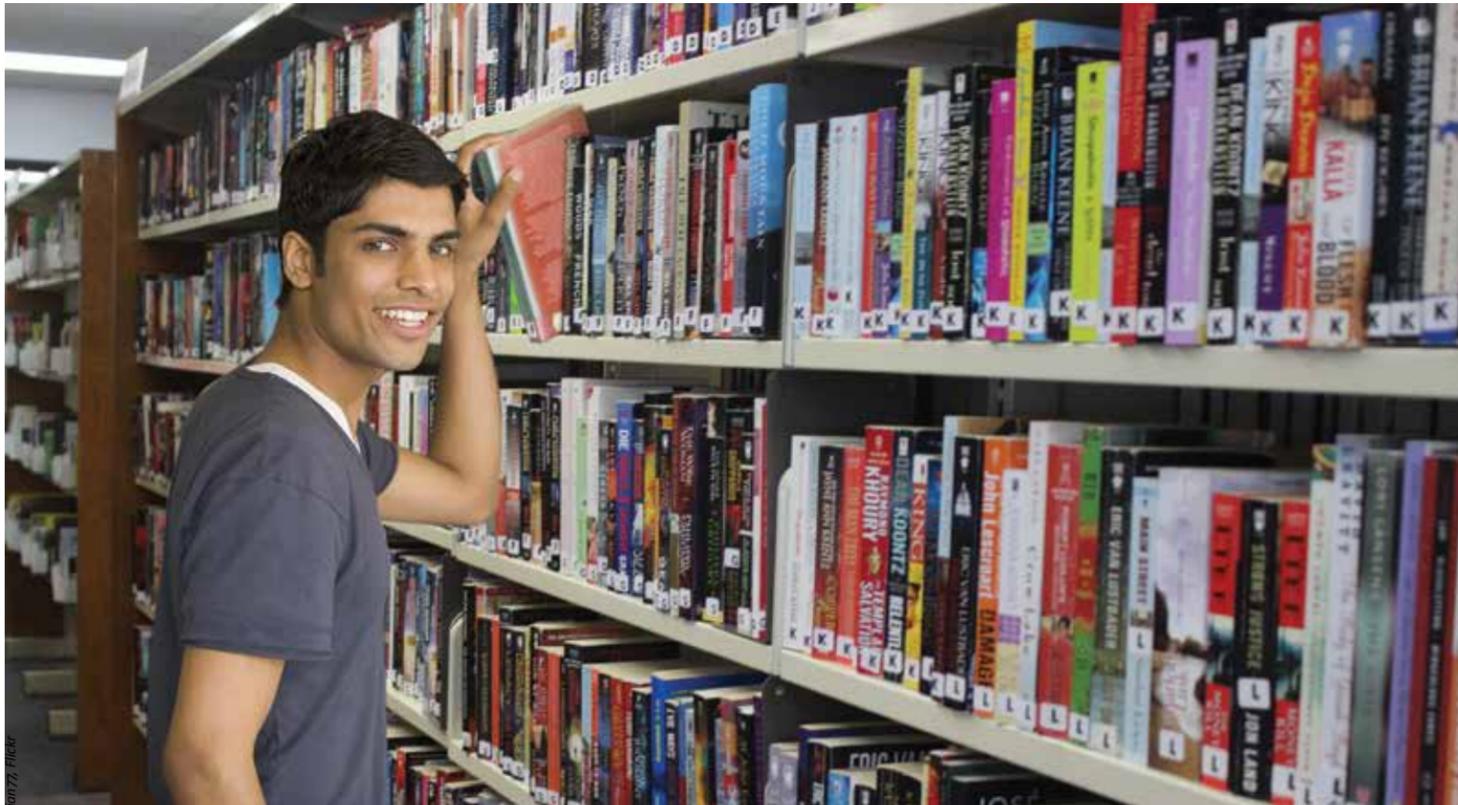


Photo collage by Laura R. Copes, with photos from Phoebe Yu and Cybrar.

by PHOEBE YU

It's a rainy spring morning in May, but a steady flow of people from various age groups and cultural backgrounds could already be seen going in and out of the Joe Fortes library on Denman Street. One such regular patron of this branch is Richard Bisson, who lives just across the street.

"I'm here several times a week," he says. Bisson reads everything from novels to current events to

poetry. Convenience is key for the retired court interpreter, as well as access to a wide variety of books in English, French and German. Although raised in English Canada, Bisson didn't learn English until he was 12 years old. He is a native French-speaker, and also speaks German.

"This is a funnel, if you like, I can get everything here that I want," he says, when talking about the kinds of books available in the library. Even if the French or Ger-

man collections are incomplete, he can ask the library to order certain books for him.

Catering to the community

Susan Everall, a neighbourhood services manager for the Vancouver Public Library, says library collections reflect the community's demographics and it's their job to hone the collections according to public interest. Everall cites the Renfrew branch, where there is a large Chinese language collec-

tion to cater to the Chinese population in the area, as an example.

And as demographics shift, the libraries have to reflect that change as well. Everall explains that the government issues studies and projections every five years. She says the library staff follows those reports, and also carefully observes the library patrons and the overall neighbourhood for any demographic changes.

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My Turn

SERGE CORBEIL

Like school children, the government must be looking forward to summer

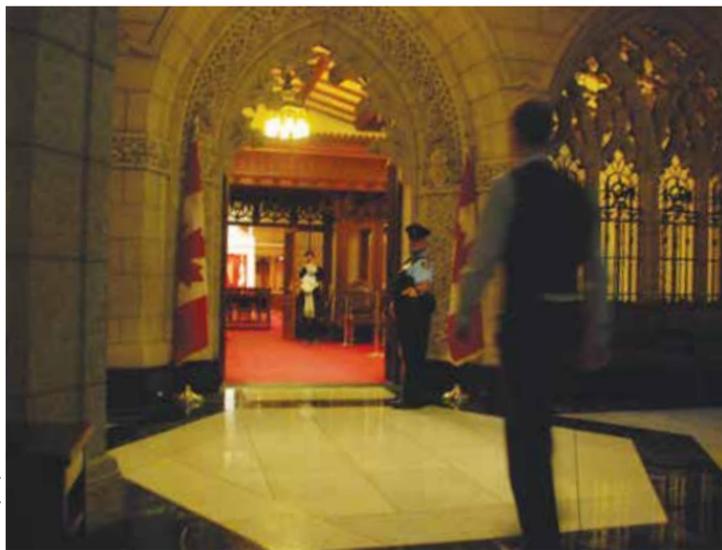


Photo by vapourtrails, Flickr

▲ The Conservatives would like nothing more than to close the door on the Senate scandal.

The government in Ottawa is going through its toughest time since the last federal election. For Justin Trudeau, however, things seem pretty good since the Liberal Party named him leader.

This is according to recent polls, anyway.

Well, if we go by the recent discrepancies between results predicted by polls and election day's realities, one may say that all's far from being over for the Conservative Party.

True enough, his first electoral test – the term is generous – was a crowning success. However,

many have interpreted the Liberal win over the Conservatives in Labrador's by-elections as a sign that Trudeau's election has had the intended impact. But we must be sensible: a by-election doesn't announce a new government, just as a single swallow cannot be the harbinger of Spring. We need to take this by-election with a grain of salt and remember that this riding has strong Liberal traditions. The outgoing Conservative MP only won by 80 votes in 2011.

That said, the Conservative boat is on troubled waters these days. It's been a long time since the Conservative government has struggled to control its political agenda. And now, alas, the Senate is causing it trouble.

I'm convinced the Prime Minister recognizes the irony in the fact that the Senate, a chamber he has long criticized, coupled with his very public Conservative appointments to the body, is now back to haunt him. When all this blows over, will Stephen Harper see a chance to convince Canadians the Senate is in serious need of reform?

The Senate has been in Prime Minister Harper's line of fire since the Reform Party days. He has asked for its abolition on numerous occasions. If we believe comments coming from right, left and centre, it seems people are warming up to the idea of re-

Spencie's View



form in the Senate; maybe not its abolishment but, some serious changes at the very least.

In another ironic twist of fate, these unflattering stories about the Senate and its members make the headlines just as the government announces tightening measures in order to control government employees' performance. We should perhaps consider the proposed measures as far as Senators are concerned. As for MPs, their performance is a matter for the electorate, who have the responsibility of passing the last judgment.

Standing in the middle of the storm, the Prime Minister doesn't

look overly concerned, and understandably so. B.C.'s recent elections have shown just how long two years can be in politics. Since the next electoral rendezvous won't be until 2015, a lot of water will have passed under the bridge until then. However, any government must be careful not to accumulate so much trouble that the electorate will deem it controversial.

As for the Conservatives, we can only imagine that they can't wait for summer to roll along and carry them away from the chamber's limelight. ✍

Translation Monique Kroeger

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"Our communities are really different demographically and sometimes in their interest," says Beth Davies, also a neighbourhood services manager. Everall and Davies both oversee the VPL branches throughout the city.

Shelves full of knowledge

The type of reading materials available depends on the language they're in, and patrons' cultural background and expectations. Many of the non-English sections are mainly recreational reading, says Everall. But she points out there's a big Chinese population here, and so Chinese language books or DVDs are well used, and there's demand for popular non-fiction, such as cookbooks or health books.

At the Joe Fortes branch, there is also an LGBTQ collection, also known as the "rainbow collection." The librarian has traditionally been the one to select what goes into the LGBTQ section, says Davies.

But libraries have recently tried to engage the community in events or decision-making processes. Davies points out that librarians partnered up with Qmunity, an LGBTQ resource centre, and group members were directly involved in choosing books for the library's collection.

"We build on the relationships that we have with our community partners to actually direct-

ly ask them, how do you see us changing and how can our collections change," Davies says.

Davies adds that they're doing a lot of community consultations for the Downtown Eastside Strathcona branch, currently in the works to open by 2015. It is anticipated to have both a large collection of Chinese and Aboriginal materials, due to a high population of Chinese seniors and Aboriginal people in the area.

Creating a space beyond words

Still, other community engagement initiatives involve pro-



▲ Richard Bisson, Joe Fortes Library patron.

grams aimed at getting youth to read more and use the library. At the Renfrew branch, which is close to residential areas and surrounded by a lush park, Everall says that the library partnered with the Renfrew Community Centre to design a camp for teens last year. This year, they're focusing on elementary kids, with programs such as the summer reading club.

"I think libraries are the centre of the community in so many ways," says Davies. She believes



▲ Books in other languages at the Joe Fortes Library.

that the library has become more of a people space than a space for just books. It has become like a third space between home and school, suggests Davies.

Everall agrees. She believes that libraries are social, educational and recreational places, where everybody has access.

"A lot of people come in with their laptops, and they spend hours in the library and it's not necessarily because they don't have Internet access at home. Sometimes, it's just the social feeling and wanting to be around people," Everall says.

When it comes to smaller community branches, Everall suggests that some people prefer the smaller space, where they don't feel overwhelmed.

And just like going to your neighbourhood grocery store, Davies believes that community libraries also provide a sense of familiarity, where friends and

neighbours can bump into each other.

For a regular like Bisson, the library is a place that keeps us informed because reading shapes our ideas, our culture and our way of thinking. Although he doesn't participate in library events, he contends that the Joe

Fortes branch serves the community well, and he's happy if they provide events for the community.

"I think of most places around here as extensions of my apartment," he says. "It's a community library, it feels like a community library and I find that very pleasant." ✍

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▲ Blood donation by Sikh nation Campaign volunteers at Surrey clinic with CBS staff.

National Blood Donor Week builds awareness among ethnic groups

by ERNA VAN BALEN

When 18-year-old Jastej Kaur Sidhu went to donate blood for the first time, she was a bit nervous. But by volunteering with the Blood Donation by Sikh Nation campaign since she was a child, she had also seen how donating blood affects people in her community positively.

"[What motivates me is] to give back in such a great way," she says.

donation drive called Blood Donation by Sikh Nation. Sukhdeep Singh is one of the people who started this campaign in 1999 to commemorate the violence against Sikhs in India in 1984. He and some friends wanted to do something meaningful to prevent further bloodshed and save lives and decided to start rallying for blood donation.

"Let's bring awareness in the society [of] how important the lives are, and we should step for-



▲ Campaign volunteers registering donors during blood drive days at Surrey clinic.

Ethnic groups are underrepresented in Canada's blood donor base. With an aging – and largely Caucasian – donor population and with the proportion of immigrants in Canada set to grow, there's a need to engage more people of different cultural and ethnic groups to become blood donors. During National Blood Donor Week, June 10-16, Canadian Blood Services (CBS) will be working with its ethnic community partners to build awareness around blood donation in different cultures.

Recruiting ethnic donors

British Columbia has almost 59,000 active blood donors. Canadian Blood Services aims to recruit 12,000 new donors this year and is hoping to engage people of Chinese, South Asian and Filipino backgrounds. Its research reveals that only seven per cent of blood donors self-identify as a visible minority, whereas this proportion in Vancouver's total population is almost 42 per cent.

"There's a gap, [an] opportunity for us to build towards that," says Ed Yee, director of donor and clinic services with CBS.

CBS addresses that gap in part with its Partners for Life Program. CBS works with 800 partners, ranging from large companies to small faith-based organizations. Yee says that one of the most important partners in Vancouver is the Sikh nation, which organizes an annual blood

ward to save them," says Singh.

According to Sikh faith, every Sikh is bound to serve humanity without discrimination. Donating blood is part of a Sikh's responsibility, says Singh.

Cultural influence or personal choice?

Yet the decision to become a blood donor is not necessarily culturally inspired, but more a personal choice. For example, in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), blood is viewed as a system in balance where blood (*yin*) and *qi*, or energy (*yang*), are always working together. But according to Dr. Henry Lu, principal and professor at the International College of TCM, Chinese are no different than other populations when it comes to donating blood. He supports donating blood and emphasizes that TCM's view of blood has nothing to do with blood donation.



▲ Ed Yee, Director of Donor and Clinic Services.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is eligible to donate?

The minimum age is 17 years old. One must be in general good health and feeling well on the day of the donation.

How often can one donate?

Once every 56 days

Do I get paid for donating blood?

No. Canada's blood system is founded on the principle of gratuity. Just as recipients do not pay for the blood products they receive, donors are not paid for the blood they give.

What are some common misconceptions about donating blood?

Ed Yee: "That it hurts. [But] if you can pinch yourself as hard as you can, and if you can handle that, you can handle a blood donation."

Ed Yee: "That it takes a lot of time: It doesn't. The average donation time is somewhere around the 4550 minute stage."

Sukhdeep Singh: "[That there is] the risk of infection, risk of getting some sort of disease. [But we are] telling them how safe the blood system is in Canada, they're not going to drain you out."

TRIVIA

Virtually all Chinese people have blood type B+.

"You can't say the Chinese have any unique concept of blood donation," he says.

Yee agrees that donating is largely a personal choice, though he does suggest that culture and upbringing do affect people's decision. For example, Yee suggests that in many Asian communities, there simply isn't as much awareness about blood donation, which explains why they are underrepresented among donors. That is why CBS works with community leaders: the opinion of respected people in the community is extremely powerful, says Yee.

As for Kaur Sidhu, she's glad she is part of a community that recognizes the value of giving blood. ✎

More information:
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Left Bank



DERRICK O'KEEFE

Is this the end of Enbridge's B.C. pipe dreams?

There is cause for celebration in B.C., just over two weeks after an election result that was devastating to progressive and environmentally minded people in British Columbia.

The good news: the B.C. government formally came out against Enbridge's Northern Gateway pipeline proposal. The B.C. Liberals' Minister of Environment, Terry Lake, announced the official position in conjunction with submitting a formal letter from the province to the Joint Review Panel currently underway.

What explains the anti-Enbridge stance of the re-elected B.C. Liberals, who just ran a campaign fuelled by Big Oil backing and money?

The most succinct early analysis of the news came from Dogwood Initiative, one of the groups that has for years campaigned against Enbridge:

"Premier Clark has staked her political future on rapidly ramping up Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports from B.C. It was the centerpiece both of her jobs plan and the cash cow that would help her claw her way out of significant budget deficits."

"Anything but a strong NO to Enbridge would have raised the ire of northern First Nations and communities – those whom she quickly needs to appease to fast track her LNG plans. Simply put, a YES to Enbridge would have ... unleashed a backlash of civil disobedience unprecedented in our province's history"

Dogwood explained it was "good politics" for the B.C. Liberals to come out now against Enbridge, seeing as the pipeline project has become "politically toxic" in this province.



▲ Defend Our Coast protest in Vancouver in October, 2012.

The B.C. NDP, for its part – who came out clearly against Enbridge a couple of years ago, but waited until mid-election campaign to oppose the other major tar sands pipeline proposal, Kinder Morgan – issued their own statement:

"It is a case of too little, too late. The B.C. Liberals signed away decision-making authority to Ottawa in 2010 and that has not changed. We know Ottawa continues to support the project, so saying 'no' today is a toothless gesture and the Liberals know it. If they had any interest in actually stopping the pipeline from being built, the Liberals would withdraw from the agreement that gives Ottawa the only authority for approval of the pipeline."

So no one should be planning the anti-Enbridge victory parade

just yet. Final decision-making power indeed rests with the federal government, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper has indicated that they would be willing to use Cabinet powers to approve the pipeline even in the event the Joint Review rejects it.

What is important to note and, yes, to celebrate, is just how far the political ground has shifted in less than two years on this issue.

Back in early 2012, the B.C. NDP was still pretty quiet on the pipeline, and Premier Christy Clark had brought on Ken Boessenkool – a former lobbyist for Enbridge and senior policy advisor to Harper – as her chief of staff.

Around the same time, Harper's natural resources minister Joe Oliver began brazenly insulting any and all opponents of the Enbridge pipeline as 'radicals' and 'foreign-funded' extremists.

Oliver's political offensive failed spectacularly, spurring much more discussion about Enbridge in B.C. Throughout 2012, the issue dominated the headlines. The more people in this province learned, the more their opposition to the project solidified.

At the same time, an inspiring and unprecedented "wall of opposition" was building, with First Nations at the foundation. The Save the Fraser Declaration brought together over 130 First Nations chiefs from across B.C., Alberta and beyond in opposition to both Enbridge and Kinder Morgan. And this was supplemented by grassroots environmental campaigns and mobilizations.

Finally, Christy Clark realized she had to say something about the pipeline, so she came out with her "five conditions" the pipeline had to meet and engaged in some media sabre-rattling with Alberta Premier Alison Redford. But that rhetorical back-and-forth, focusing on B.C.'s financial stake or lack thereof in the pipeline, revealed Clark's lack of understanding of the fundamental ecological and indigenous rights case against Enbridge.

In October, while the legislature in Victoria was shut down (Clark was barely opened the place since becoming premier two years ago), many thousands descended on the provincial capital on a Monday morning for a 'Defend Our Coast' action that highlighted the strength of the opposition to tar sands pipelines.

So while we can thank Joe Oliver and his tacky, over-the-top rhetoric for fuelling the fire, it is ultimately these mobilizations and alliances, building on longstanding indigenous rights and sovereignty movements in B.C., that forced the Liberals' position against Enbridge.

While it's true that the Liberals' announcement isn't the end of Enbridge, it does mark a victory that they have been forced into this position. And while we keep the heat up on the scandal-ridden Harper government, we should also study the success around Enbridge in order to better campaign and mobilize against Kinder Morgan and Clark's flagship LNG-fracking carbon corridor plans in the north.

So celebrate in moderation; there is much to learn and apply to the big battles ahead. ✍

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Democracy at home: A snapshot of the local Persian community

by TREVOR GAIR

On June 14, citizens of the Islamic Republic of Iran will vote in a national election. Though they won't have a chance to cast a ballot, members of the Lower Mainland's Persian community will watch the process keenly. For many, the election will be a reminder of the democratic gulf that exists between their adopted and original homelands.

followed, civil liberties were curbed and many Iranians emigrated. Canada continues to be one of the most popular landing grounds for individuals and families with the means to seek a new home. Metro Vancouver has an established, though sometimes overlooked, Persian community.

Settling in

Fred Farhad Soofi first arrived in Canada as a student in 1972. A

and executive director of Iranian Educators for Families, a local nonprofit, experienced nostalgia for Iran before making a new home in Vancouver. She left Iran in 1987 and spent a decade in Sweden before settling on the North Shore in 1998.

"When we first arrived, nobody unpacked their luggage. We were like tourists waiting to go back," says Poregbal.

As a counselling therapist whose clients are mainly from

“The whole point of us emigrating was to come to a country with a democratic system.

Anahita Matloubi, Persian-Canadian

Anahita Matloubi was 13 when she moved to Canada with her parents. She represents a younger generation of Persian-Canadians who are proud to have cast their vote in the recent B.C. provincial election. According to Matloubi, her parents uprooted their lives in Iran to move somewhere where she could experience more political freedom.

"The whole point of us emigrating was to come to a country with a democratic system," she says.

The current Iranian political system can trace its roots back to 1979, the year the Shah of Iran was overthrown in a revolutionary uprising. In the decades that

longtime Metro Vancouver resident, Soofi was narrowly defeated in his bid to join the Coquitlam City Council in 2011. He describes the local Persian community as large and diverse.

"Most settled immigrants are well educated and many are interested in starting their own businesses," says Soofi.

He admits, however, that the generally rosy picture is not without short-term challenges. In many cases, newly arrived citizens are excited to join the community but experience bouts of disappointment. Their expectations of building a new life rarely align with the realities.

Poran Poregbal, now founder

the Persian community, she believes that tighter lines of connection with their shared homeland have actually helped both her and some of her clients to truly settle in their adopted home.

"With the rise of the internet, better access to communication enabled us to better keep in touch with people back home," says Poregbal.

A growing political community

Across Canada and in the Lower Mainland, the Persian-Canadian community continues to grow. As numbers increase, Soofi hopes that Persian-Canadians will start to deepen their roots further with forays into the local politics.



Photo courtesy of Sonja Be

▲ Poran Poregbal (left) and daughter Sonja (right) relocated to North Vancouver years ago, but they remain knowledgeable of Iranian politics.

"[In Canada] members of the same household can belong to different parties, but it doesn't mean that you are enemies," says Soofi.

Although Soofi, Poregbal and Matloubi are all proud to be active in Canada's political process, they long for representative democracy in Iran. Poregbal would

consider a return to her country of birth, but only if Iran is able to build a free and functioning democracy, she says.

To many Persian-Canadians, that day feels like a long way off. But with the freedoms of their adopted country, a model for optimism is already in place. ✎

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Jean Bethke Elshtain is the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics at The University of Chicago. In addition to her many award-winning books, Professor Elshtain writes frequently for journals of civic opinion and lectures widely on themes of democracy, ethical dilemmas, religion and politics, and international relations. In 2011, she was honoured with the Democracy Service Award, previously given to the Dalai Lama, Lech Walesa, and Vaclav Havel, among others.

The 2013 Milton K. Wong Lecture is presented by The Laurier Institution, UBC Continuing Studies and CBC Radio One, and will be recorded for broadcast on the CBC Radio One program, *Ideas*. For online resources, view miltonkwonglecture.ca

Celiac disease changes Latina's lifestyle

by SASHA LALLOUZ

When Lilian Camey was in her late twenties preparing to start a family, celiac disease wasn't anywhere on her radar. Born in Guatemala and raised in Hamilton, Ontario, Camey had always enjoyed a traditional Latin American diet, including burrito-based meals, until she was diagnosed with celiac disease two years ago.

to absorb such vital nutrients as minerals, protein and vitamins. Common symptoms of celiac disease include weight loss, fatigue, cramps, chronic diarrhea and bloating. Although Camey found the diagnosis initially shocking, she looked forward to relief from years of unexplained abdominal pain, fatigue and anemia.

The CCA explains that treatment requires strict adherence to a gluten-free diet, which

didn't know what she could eat. But it just takes time until you can find the alternatives. Anything that is manufactured, even some gums, you have to look online because it might not say on the label. If it is not online, we call them to make sure," says Kut.

Looking forward to a family in the future, Kut understands the importance of maintaining a strict gluten-free diet in the household.

"I eat almost 99% gluten free. I eat regular bread, but we separate it because of cross-contamination. Other than that, everything else is gluten free," says Kut.

Celiac disease was new to Camey's parents, who quickly adjusted to the new routine.

"When I went back home, they separated my cutting boards and frying pans, and my mom bought new baking dishes. My dad actually felt bad and tried to hide when he would eat stuff," says Camey.

Since food is a focal point in Latin American culture, Camey had to make gluten-free adjustments at traditional ceremonies.

"At weddings or *Quinceañeras* cake and food is important, but if I know there aren't going to be gluten-free options I will bring my own food and cake," says Camey.

She used to attend Catholic mass and skip communion, although now gluten-free communion is available at her church, adds Camey.

She avoids traditional Latin American treats like pastries, but is still able to enjoy many of the dishes that are naturally gluten-free.

"Mainly I make my meals without the spices, which I have to be careful of. I can still have anything that is made from corn, like tamales, tortillas and enchiladas. You have to adjust," says Camey.

Gluten-free alternatives

Camey enjoys many gluten-free bakeries and restaurants, including Baru Latino, a traditional restaurant that is 95% gluten-free. However, whenever there is a possible cross-contamination, Camey refrains from eating the meal.

Those new to gluten-free eating can find restaurants online at *The Celiac Scene*, a guide started by Ellen Bayens to help those suffering from the condition. Bayens agrees that cross-contamination is a real challenge when eating out.

"Thirty percent of inherently gluten-free flours like quinoa and chickpea flour are cross-

contaminated with wheat," says Bayens.

Bayens says that about 5 percent of restaurants on *The Celiac Scene* are Mexican or Latin American.

"When you have a culture where their food is predominantly corn-based, that is a huge advantage. The culture is welcoming and it is food oriented – these restaurants are accommodating to gluten-free needs," says Bayens.

Over the past two years, Camey has turned tough lessons into tried-and-true advice.

"If you are diagnosed, it is okay to go through the process of grieving. Know that you aren't the only one, there are a lot of us out there and there are associations to help. Get knowledge – it's a lifestyle change," says Camey.

www.theceliacscene.ca



▲ Lilian Camey preparing a gluten-free Latin American meal.

On the evening Camey received the test results, she had planned to have pasta for dinner. Once the doctor explained that she was allergic to anything containing wheat, Camey's first response was pragmatic: "What am I going to cook for dinner now?"

According to the Canadian Celiac Association (CCA), celiac disease is a condition where the absorptive surface of the small intestine is damaged by gluten. As a result, the intestine is unable

means eliminating products that naturally contain gluten such as wheat, spelt and kamut, as well as products cross-contaminated with gluten during processing. The gravity of this lifestyle change did not weigh in until Camey stopped by Safeway on her way home and realized many ingredient lists contained gluten.

Giving up gluten

Husband Kaan Kut explains the change was difficult at first. "We

▶ Verbatim from page 1

manufacturing illusions of paradise. However, I was surprised at how I was able to use the few connections I made with the staff to learn a little bit about authentic Cuban life.

As a salsa dancer and instructor for many years, I befriended a dancing instructor named Sandra working at the resort. She had just taught a *merengue* class on the shore, and I was coming out to meet her from our so called "diamond section," an upgraded and reserved area for paying tourists. My family paid extra in order to get the late check out and to be able to inhale every last atom of our vacation until the end.

Sandra seemed fascinated by this diamond reserved area, and opined that it's no wonder that tourists go for that sort of thing, because people love to separate themselves from one another. I knew that her comment wasn't directed at me, but I felt an immediate discomfort because I could imagine that, every second of her work-life, Sandra felt the enormous economic gap between her and the tourists. She knew that we have access to material goods that she can only dream of. She knew that the tables wouldn't turn, and she couldn't afford to visit Canada. And there I was, embodying this disheartening hierarchy by sitting in a segregated area of the beach.

Yet, I was oddly thrilled that even in the context of this carefully groomed tourist playground a local trusted me enough to let her true feelings seep beyond the professionally required smile. Over dinner at

the hotel cafeteria she told me how, though lucky to have this hotel job, she is exhausted by the pace of the four hour daily commute to work, and by the fact that she hasn't had any vacation time in a long time.

She was amazed when I told her that in Vancouver it's tough to find a full time job in my field of journalism. I couldn't elaborate further on the challenges of my life in Vancouver without sounding like a spoiled first world citizen complaining about what Sandra could likely have perceived as the little things. She may even have trouble believing this because North American lifestyle is excessively glamorized everywhere, even in Cuba. Despite our newfound ease with one another, some barriers between Sandra and me were immovable.

A week of sun and sand passed quickly, and the two hour bus-ride back to the airport went through the Cuban countryside, and as it meandered past a church, my eyes accidentally drifted to what appeared to be a church attic. There was a man standing there, and he waved at me, and smiled with a touching sadness. In seconds, he was gone, but I took his smile, and the memories with people, like Sandra, with me.

Despite the glorious beach that I had just spent a week enjoying, in the end what I treasured the most about my trip to Cuba is what I also cherish the most about Vancouver: those moments when paradise gets a chance to let its hair down, take off its glossy makeup, and give me a glimpse of its flawed, yet undeniable beauty. ✍

WHITE BEAN SOUP



Ingredients:

2 cups white beans rinsed, soaked, drained
5 cups water
4 garlic cloves pressed
4 tbsp. olive oil
1 white onion chopped
1 celery stalk chopped
1 red pepper chopped
4 tomatoes chopped
¼ cup fresh cilantro chopped
Salt to taste

Method:

1. Pressure cook beans with water and 2 garlic cloves until tender (about 5-10 minutes)
2. In large pot, heat olive oil on medium-high and add onions, celery and remaining garlic until golden.
3. Reduce heat to medium and add pepper, cilantro and tomatoes. Cook for 5 minutes.
4. Add beans and cooking liquid, boiling ingredients then reducing to simmer.
5. Stir occasionally for 5-10 minutes, add salt to taste and serve.

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Minister of Citizenship, Immigration & Multiculturalism

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- Agencies and organizations that can assist in your job search
- Professional associations
- Immigrant services
- Employer organizations

Library staff can also help with customized job search information with a special focus on the needs of trained professionals.

Location

The InfoCentre is located on Level 4 in the Central branch of Vancouver Public Library at 350 West Georgia Street and is open during regular Central library hours. Clients may be asked to book an appointment.





1720 Grant Street
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 604 254 9626
www.mosaicbc.com/settlement-services

COMMUNITY EVENTS BULLETIN
ALL EVENTS LISTED ARE FREE OF CHARGE

Micro-Loans Infosession

When: June 10, 10:30am-12:30pm
 Where: Tommy Douglas Burnaby Public Library, 7311 Kingsway
 Registration required. Please call 604 254 9626

Introduction to the Canadian Financial System

When: June 17, 10:30am-12:30pm
 Where: Tommy Douglas Burnaby Public Library, 7311 Kingsway
 Registration required. Please call 604 254 9626

Canadian Citizenship Test Preparation Class

When: June 18 and 25, 25 6-9pm
 Where: Vancouver Public Library, Hastings Branch, 2674 East Hastings Street
 Registration required. Please call 604 254 9626

MOSAIC is a multilingual non-profit organization dedicated to addressing issues that affect immigrants and refugees in the course of their settlement and integration into Canadian society.



"a new money system
 a new community spirit"

Problems with Conventional Money

It is Partisan: Conventional money it is **not** a neutral service provided by the government. It's created by private financial institutions on a for-profit basis. This system is designed to benefit the creators, not the users.

It is Based on Debt: Money is created when banks grant loans. For every unit created there is one unit of debt.

We are encouraged to think of it as a 'Thing': Money is essentially information and has no physical existence. Banks encourage us to think of it as a 'thing' so that they can 'lend' it to us and make a profit by charging interest. 'Thing' money also has to be created, distributed and controlled so that there is not too much of it. It can also be stolen, lost, counterfeited, etc.

It is Permanently Scarce: The money to pay the interest on debt-money is never created. There is therefore a permanent shortfall of money to pay back both the principal and the interest.

It causes Cancerous Growth: Banks continuously need to create more money than is required to pay back their loans so that borrowers can pay back the interest on those loans. This is the source of the growth imperative of our economies. There must be a continual expansion of bank credit or else the economy goes into recession. Systemic growth = environmental problems.

Its Value is based on its Shortage: There only needs to be enough to buy back the goods and services available. This has nothing to do with peoples real money needs. Those who have none are not seen by the market and are marginalized.

It is Expensive: Every unit of money is based on a unit of debt. This debt has to be paid back with interest, and the interest on the interest is compounding. Interest is built into the prices of everything we buy, resulting in higher consumer prices.

It Redistributes Wealth from the Poor to the Wealthy: Usury is the tool used by the wealthy to suck wealth from the poor and middle class to the moneyed class. Parasitism and class antagonisms result.

It promotes Dishonesty and Corruption: You can get it without delivering anything of value through speculation, interest, gambling, etc. Therefore many people concentrate on 'making money' rather than producing/delivering things of real value.

It Leaks Away from where it is Created: Conventional money knows no bounds and loyalty. It always leaks away to the 'money centres' (financial centres, corporations, big businesses, etc.)

It Destroys Local Economies: Goods produced cheaper elsewhere replace locally produced goods. This creates a local shortage of money and reduced markets for local sellers. It also results in the irrational transportation of goods worldwide.

It Destroys Community: Dependence on money means we no longer need our neighbours. We can get everything from anonymous strangers in return for money. We have no obligation to anyone when the bills are paid. Every trade is a complete and closed action: you provide me with something and I give you money. End of story.

It Fosters Competitiveness: The shortage of money means we all have to fight for a share of an amount that is too small to go around. The need to repay interest means that we have to eat others to keep from going under.

It Creates Poverty: While making some super rich, it makes most people poor. Poverty is caused by a lack of money (not a lack of jobs). Usury and the need to keep money scarce ensure that money moves to those who already have it.

It causes Social and Cultural Degradation: The elimination of local opportunities to exchange and relate to one another focuses attention on ways of getting money outside the community. Communities fall apart as they become indebted to entities outside their communities.

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 learn more about: the global CES: <https://www.community-exchange.org>

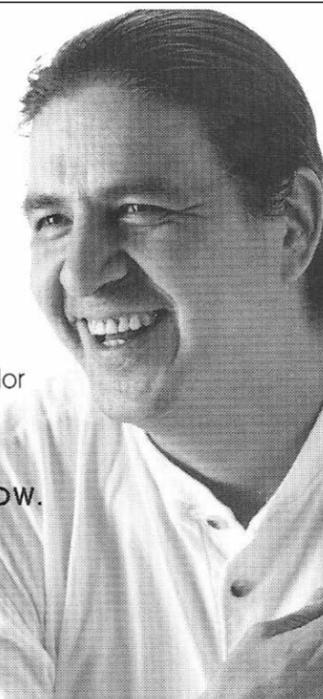
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Bernie, First Nations counsellor

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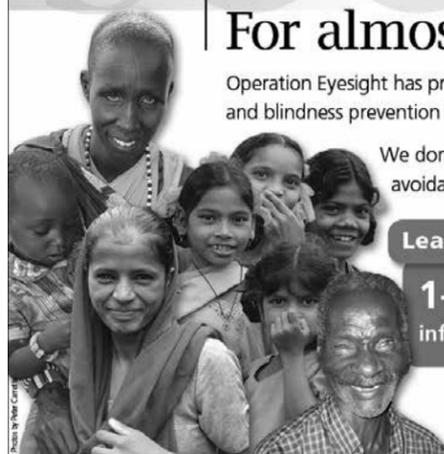
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Focus on Local Artist



▲ Hong Kong Exile's Milton Lim dances in *Exile*, a 15-minute piece performed with a live string quintet.

Canadian-born Chinese theatre group explores cultural identity through art

by MADHUSHANI RAMARAJU

In *Hive: The New Bees 3*, 11 emerging theatre companies will each simultaneously perform a 10-minute piece in the various spaces of Chapel Arts, a former funeral home. Natalie Gan, Milton Lim and Remy Siu, the interdisciplinary threesome that form Hong Kong Exile, will be performing in the morgue itself.

The name of the company is inspired by a musical composition by Remy Siu, and reflects all three Canadian-born Chinese artists' shared interests about their cultural identity.

"It's [about] going back to a motherland that's actually not your motherland," says contemporary dancer Natalie Gan, referring to the notion of exile. "You go back, you're seen as a foreigner. You come home, and you're still seen as a foreigner."

Gan emphasizes that Canadian-born Chinese have to chase their heritage. Growing up, she felt sandwiched between two worlds: the traditional, ethnic life at home and the modern, Western culture at school. In her adult life, she recognizes that being Chinese is dependent on

political implications, says Gan.

"Cultural identity encompasses ethnicity, customs, values, the languages we speak and so on," says Dr. Wright, professor in the department of educational studies and director of the Centre for Culture, Identity and Education at UBC. He says that identity is the negotiation between obvious characteristics that we have, the identity that we assert, and the identity that people assign to us.

“It's [about] going back to a motherland that's actually not your motherland. You go back, you're seen as a foreigner.

Natalie Gan, contemporary dancer in Hong Kong Exile

"We need to think of the arts as an expression of culture in and of themselves," he adds. "Cultural identity is about performing an identity, not just [passively] having an identity. We have our culture when we perform our culture."

Gan's experience teaching theatre and English to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and attending a contemporary arts field school in Ghana have also given her a deep appreciation for the

dian heritage in order to portray a Russian character in the Chekhov play *Three Sisters*.

"I had to really tap in to how this could be Indian, and how the circumstances could be Indian, because that is the culture that speaks to me," says Noronha.

Dialogue between cultures

"It's important to note that cultural identity is not stagnant," says Dr. Wright. "New cultures

can emerge from the merging of different cultures," he says, including forms of music such as jazz and calypso.

In the conversation between the East and the West, Noronha recommends leaving the ego out of it, and says it's important for both cultures to perceive the other as equal, not as one threatened by the other.

"That is also very much the heart of Hong Kong Exile," says Gan. "When there is no eye-to-eye, [it's the understanding that] your perspective is shaped by different experiences and different realities."

Using art as a channel of communication and exploration to illuminate these differences leads to richly textured stories offering different perspectives, providing entertainment, and ideally, fostering understanding and curiosity.

"In many traditional cultures, stories were not merely entertainment, but were actually part of one's education," says Dr. Wright. Telling stories was not the projection of one's cultural identity, instead, one's cultural identity were the stories themselves.

And, as Dr. Wright eloquently quotes from an African proverb: "Why do we tell our children stories? It is because we are stories. If you want to kill a nation, kill its stories." ✍

Hive: The New Bees 3 runs from June 11-14 at Chapel Arts. For more information, visit www.hivenewbees.wordpress.com



▲ Natalie Gan, Milton Lim and Remy Siu (left to right) in front of their mahjong installation at the Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre. Their installation references an original work called *eatingthegame*, where they discuss China's role in the Canadian economy by using more than 800 mahjong tiles to build a set on stage.

her interpretation of what "Chinese" is.

Art ideal platform for expressing identity

While exploring this Eastern identity within a Western context, Hong Kong Exile strives to create art with strong social and

performance aesthetics of other cultures.

"[It was] nice to be reminded of different definitions of rhythm, speed, beat and timing," Gan says of African music and traditional Lebanese dance.

Indo-Canadian actress Adele Noronha sourced from her In-

Vancouver Chamber Choir

JON WASHBURN, CONDUCTOR



PACIFICA SINGERS AND ORPHEUM VOICES PRESENT

Fauré & Friends

Saturday, June 22, 2013 at 7:30pm

Canadian Memorial Church

1825 West 16th Ave (at Burrard St), Vancouver

Pacifica Singers, the associate vocal ensemble of the Vancouver Chamber Choir organization, will partner with Orpheum Voices for FAURÉ AND FRIENDS. The two ensembles will perform at 7:30pm, Saturday, June 22 at Canadian Memorial Church.

This concert will be Pacifica Singers' second with conductor Kevin Zakresky. "I am looking forward to performing these stunning a cappella works alongside the timeless Requiem of Fauré," said Zakresky. "What a perfect way to start our summer – light, beautiful, harmonious sounds and soaring melodies. The combination of Pacifica Singers, Orpheum Voices and members of the West Coast Symphony will surely make for a memorable Fauré."

Orpheum Voices is a new ensemble out of the downtown Vancouver Symphony School of Music. Begun in January of this year, the choir is a mixed ensemble that will focus on festival repertoire and choral favourites.

Repertoire

Randall Thompson – *Alleluia*

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina – *Stabat Mater*

Charles Villiers Stanford – *Beati quorum via* (from *Three Latin Motets*, Op. 38)

William Henry Harris – *Faire is the Heaven*

Eric Whitacre – *Sleep*

Morten Lauridsen – *O magnum mysterium*

Gabriel Fauré – *Requiem*, Op. 48

Tickets are \$20, available through all members of Pacifica Singers and Orpheum Voices, and at the door. They can also be purchased through the Vancouver Chamber Choir office. Please call 604-738-6822 to order with Visa or MasterCard.



www.vancouverchamberchoir.com

info@vancouverchamberchoir.com

604-738-6822

Cultural Calendar

June 4-18, 2013

by NATALIE MUNDY

The summer has officially begun and there's no time to waste. Relish the return of sunny season favourites like Bard on the Beach and the Stanley Park Bicycle Tours, or try something new like The Brewery and The Beast or Foncie's Fotos at MOV. If nothing else, get down to The Union on Tuesday and make some new friends at Be My Amigo. Seriously, do it.

Foncie's Fotos Opening Reception
Wednesday, June 5, 6:30 p.m.
Museum of Vancouver
1100 Chestnut Street
604-736-4431
museumofvancouver.ca

Vancouver's most prolific street photographer, Foncie Pulice, took about fifteen million images of Vancouverites in action as they strolled the city streets from the 1940s through 1970s. Get a first look at the photos at the Opening Night event. Tickets: \$15 (free for members).

LEO Awards 2013
June 7-8
Westin Bayshore
1601 Bayshore Drive
604-669-8282
leoawards.com

Join homegrown celebrities at the awards for excellence in B.C.-made film and television over two evening events this month: the Celebration Awards Ceremony, on Friday and the Gala Awards Ceremony, on Saturday. Tickets range from \$75 to \$225.

Vancouver Festival of Ocean Films
June 8-9
Vancity Theatre
1181 Seymour Street
vfof.ca

The 4th VFOF aims to raise awareness of the ocean as a place for positive recreation as well as



Photo courtesy of CBC Documentaries

▲ The Changing Sea is one of the films playing at the Vancouver Festival of Ocean Films.



Photo courtesy of Dancers of Damelahamid

▲ Dancers of Damelahamid are a professional Aboriginal dance company originally from Northwestern B.C. You can catch them on June 15 at Scotiabank Dance Centre.

sustainable and responsible commerce. Net profits from the festival will be donated to the Georgia Strait Alliance to assist in their mission to protect and restore the marine environment. See website for tickets.

#bemyamigo
Tuesday, June 11,
7:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.
The Union
219 Union Street
604-568-3230
bemyamigo24-es2.eventbrite.com

Every two weeks on Tuesday a group of strangers gather at the communal tables of The Union to share in offline conversation. Created to break Vancouver's infamous "ice wall", this initiative encourages people to meet strangers and be proactive about building bonds with their neighbours. Open to the public. RSVP online.

Bard on the Beach
June 12-September 14
Vanier Park, Kits Point
1695 Whyte Avenue
604-739-0559
bardonthebeach.org

The 24th season of this summer festival begins June 12. Showing under the iconic red and white tents at Vanier Park this year are Twelfth Night, Hamlet, Measure for Measure and Elizabeth Rex. Also on offer are a lecture series, wine tasting, operas, the Bard-B-Q and a book launch. See website for tickets.

You Are Very Star
June 12-29

H.R. MacMillan Space Centre
1100 Chestnut Street
604-253-4222
electriccompanytheatre.com

Vancouver's Electric Company Theatre will transport audiences back to 1968 and forward to 2048 in an immersive, transmedia experience. Pushing the boundaries of where theatre exists, the show is encountered online, through social media and as live performance inside the planetarium. Tickets from \$15.

Pottery24: A Pottery Marathon, with Purpose
June 14-15
1803 E 1st Ave.
604-734-2104
justpotters.com

This local social enterprise hosts an annual 24-hour pottery marathon fundraiser to support continued meaningful employment to people facing barriers to work. Meet the potters and tour the studio at the open house on June 15, or visit their booth at Commercial Drive's Car Free Day on June 16. Open to the public.

Stanley Park Bike Tour
June 15, July 20 and August 17,
9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Devonian Park at
Denman and Georgia
604-264-9642
vancouverheritagefoundation.org

Enjoy a leisurely paced cycle with the Vancouver Heritage Foundation while digging into the storms and controversies that have formed Stanley Park. Spokes Bicycle Rentals will be of-

fering discounts on bike rentals for attendees. Tickets: \$20.

LUU HLOTITXW: Spirit Transforming Premiere
Saturday, June 15, 7:30 p.m.
Scotiabank Dance Centre
677 Davie Street
604-922-5277
damelahamid.ca

Dancers of Damelahamid are a professional Aboriginal dance company originally from Northwestern B.C. Gearing up for celebrations for National Aboriginal

604-618-7919
kpsc.brownpapertickets.com

The rich and diverse culture of the Philippines is showcased at this 20th anniversary presentation of folk dance and music. Dance styles and influences include indigenous, Arabic-Malayan and Spanish and western vestiges. Tickets: \$20/ \$25.

Brewery and the Beast
Sunday, June 16,
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Concord Pacific Lot



Photo courtesy of Just Potters

▲ Get your pottery on for 24 hours on June 14 and 15.

Day, they will present their new work *Spirit Transforming* - a collaboration with Emmy-nominated animator Dallas Parker. Tickets: \$25 adults, \$20 students/ seniors.

Kinabukasan
June 15 at 7:00 p.m. and
June 16 at 5:00 p.m.
Vancouver Playhouse
600 Hamilton Street

88 Pacific Blvd
breweryandthebeast.com

A handful of Vancouver's finest restaurants and chefs will be serving up smoked meats, classic BBQs, whole pig and lamb roasts and other meaty goodies for the city's first Festival of Meat. Entry includes live music, beverage tastings, and a whole bunch of food. Tickets: \$79 (19+).

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A Green Plume in Seattle's Cap

Located at 1501 East Madison St. in Seattle, Washington where Capitol Hill and the Central District intersect is the greenest office building in the world. It's the first heavy timber mid-rise building in Seattle since the 1920s, and that's just the beginning of a long list of unique features. It opened on Earth Day, April 22, 2013.

The six-story 50,000-square-foot Bullitt Center is a project of the Bullitt Foundation which promotes innovative approaches to sustainable development in the Pacific Northwest. It utilizes the Living Building Challenge which is the most stringent and progressive building system in the world. Buildings using this system are designed for location, climate and culture and produce their own water and electricity; they are free of "red chemicals" which produce cancer, asthma and allergies. They must be architecturally beautiful as well as functional. The system challenges the building industry to design and think beyond conventional practices and make environmentally sustainable buildings not only possible, but have them serve to stimulate continued innovation in this area.

Part of getting certified with the Living Building Challenge standard requires monitoring for one year to ensure the building is self-sufficient in power and water production. Only three buildings in the United States have been fully certified so far;



all much smaller than the Bullitt Center.

To meet these standards, the Bullitt Center's water supply is rainwater collected in a 56,000-gallon cistern and then filtered and disinfected.

The roof has an array of solar panels which you can see extend beyond the building and are expected to produce 230,000 kilowatt-hours a year; energy use can be measured down to the individual socket. There are also 26 geothermal wells.

The timber and steel frame uses

native Douglas fir certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. The 10-foot-high windows provide every worker with access to fresh air and daylight. And all the non-toxic building materials used have stimulated green industries in the area.

A glass-enclosed stairwell with panoramic views of downtown and Puget Sound encourages its use over an elevator.

The only on-site parking is for bicycles.

The use of composting toilets is a first for commercial buildings.

A major component of the facil-

ity is being inclusive of the community and providing learning opportunities. The lower two floors give students, homeowners, policy makers, public agency staff and other green building proponents access to hands-on exploration of the latest technologies, research, building mechanical systems, and also provide classes. However, the building's proponents feel the learning process will not be a success if it is still the most high-performing office building 10 years from now. The whole point is to see this building as a prototype

to stimulate further innovation and higher performance.

This project was expensive (\$30 million for the land and building), but it will be energy and carbon neutral and has been designed to last for 250 years – not typical in today's short-term gain world we live in. Also not typical and incredibly encouraging is the cooperation between the community, architects, developers, bankers and local government to make this project happen.

Don Richardson

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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.



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