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a fresh approach
to retail
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Photo by Jennifer Smith, courtesy of Media Gallery

Verbatim

Homeless in the city: from Tokyo to Vancouver

by SUMIYO NAKAMURA

It has been three years since I came to Vancouver from Japan to study communications and media studies. Vancouver has earned an international reputation as one of the most livable and beautiful cities in the world and my initial impressions of Vancouver were most favorable – the city was lovely and people were friendly and open. On more than a few occasions, when I needed directions, I was helped by compassionate strangers. Vancouver appeared to be a global economic hub, with corporate headquarters housed in gleaming office structures.

At first glance, the city was perfect. Over the long term, however, another impression became a counterpoint to this flawless image. I was increasingly dismayed by the extraordinary number of homeless people on the streets and in shelters, especially in and around the Downtown Eastside. In Japan, there are of course, homeless people, particularly in the major urban centres of Tokyo and Osaka but according to Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the number of homeless people in Japan has decreased dramatically from approximately 18,564 in 2007 to 9576 in 2012. In contrast, the number of homeless people in Vancouver has increased substantially and the Metro Vancouver Homeless Count, released by the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness in February 2012 showed there were over 2600 homeless people in the city.

Unlike in Japanese cities, people in desperate situations beg for money and food on the streets of Vancouver. I've had a few conversations with homeless people on the

See "Verbatim" page 9 >

Cultural open house – traditions preserved and shared

by DIANE WALSH

Vancouver's many cultural centres offer a place for different communities to gather and celebrate their own traditions, but also a venue to share those traditions with others.

Place Maillardville, a community cultural centre located in the historic French Quarters in Coquitlam has been a bastion of Francophone culture in the area for more than 100 years. Le Festival du Bois, the largest Francophone festival on the West Coast, is held in nearby

Mackin Park in late February and March and adds to the historical memory.

The centre has long been considered the hub and the heart of

kids and pre-schoolers called *Les Petits Français*.

Jennifer Smith, longtime manager at Place Maillardville, and newly-appointed executive di-

rector Luke Balson explain that the influx into Maillardville has been enormously diverse and that today Place Maillardville is meant to serve as a focal point for current residents, newcomers and immigrants.

“Its mission is to serve the community multiculturally, increasing a sense of belonging in Maillardville. We offer adult and family services and language courses for all ages and abilities, organized at the centre [in the] French roots setting of the town itself,” says Smith.

Balson, whose background is with the City of Coquitlam, work-

See "Cultural centres" page 2 >

“Its mission is to serve the community multiculturally.”

Jennifer Smith, manager, Place Maillardville

the French-speaking community. But it is also a popular hangout for a whole mosaic of people. People with different cultural backgrounds participate in colourful, seasonally revolving activities provided to adults, teens,

and immigrants.

Also in this issue

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Surrey libraries
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Writing across
cultures: author
Rawi Hage
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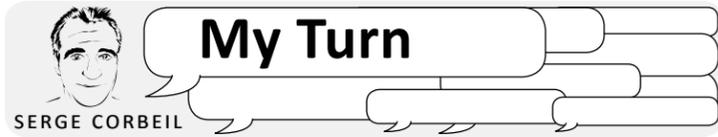
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My Turn

SERGE CORBEIL

2014 will be no exception: New developments ahead in Canadian politics

Here we go again. A year behind us, a new one ahead. It's an ideal time to try and read the tea leaves and see what's in store for us in 2014. As usual, I will focus on politics.

But before I look ahead, I want to glance back at an item or two from the year just finished. It was, evidently, Christy Clark's year, as she wrestled a win for her party, allowing for a fourth consecutive Liberal government in the province of British Columbia. As with Ceasar, she therefore deserves to receive a prize for having been able to execute a sudden reversal of a political situation as few have ever done.

2014 will reveal the name of Adrian Dix's successor as NDP leader. Not many will be in the running for the leadership race and the names of the candidates should be announced within the next few weeks. I think Mike Farnworth, David Eby and George Heyman will be among those to throw their hats in the ring.

As for our federal government, 2013 must have been the hardest one for Harper and his Conservatives since their rise to power. He spent the better of the year getting nowhere, unable to gain control of the political agenda. Still, he was able to keep on governing and he brought to the table bills that are important to him



▲ Mayor Gregor Robertson faces a difficult election this year.

and his party. Events such as the Senate scandal have done nothing but keep him bogged down in the political equivalent of quicksand, but – lucky for him – he won't have to face the electorate before 2015.

Still, it is clear that 2014 will be a crucial year for Harper if he is to regain control of the situation and dramatically curb the downward spiral of his popularity in polls and get a grip on the political agenda in Ottawa. In order to do so, I think he will take on initiatives that draw on his strengths, particularly in the area of economics and law and order. The next federal budget, to be released in February or March, should confirm a balanced budget by 2015.

One thing seems to me a certainty: the government won't be relying exclusively on its own performance to regain the electorate's confidence and ensure a victory come 2015. This is why we will see the Conservative party intensify their political attacks, particularly against Liberal leader Justin Trudeau. We can therefore expect to see more of the type of ads that have worked so well for the party in the past. Two themes will dominate: the fragility of the economy and the need for the Conservative's expertise, and Trudeau's lack of competence to rule the country.

Spencie's View

2013 STANDOUTS



Back here in British Columbia, 2014 will be a year for municipal elections. All eyes will be on Vancouver, where Mayor Gregor Robertson will be vying for a third consecutive mandate. My prediction is that it will be the most difficult one for him and his Vision Vancouver team. 2013 marked a turning point in Vancouver and the dissatisfaction towards the municipal administration, even if it hasn't reached insurmountable heights, is more palpable than ever.

Slowly, but surely, the cards being dealt favour change in the

mayor's office. Nonetheless, the Non-Partisan Association, Robertson's main opponent, will have to choose its candidates very carefully. Its choice of flag-bearer for the position of mayor will be decisive. And, should Robertson fail in his bid for a third term, it wouldn't be surprising to see him surface as a preferred candidate for the Liberal Party of Canada in 2015. Time will tell.

That said, I wish you all a Happy New Year. ☺

Translation Monique Kroeger

► "Cultural centres" from page 1
ing with children and youth, also highlights the wide impact of the centre's programs.

French and learn about French culture."

The centre's popular French Conversation Club reflects that



▲ Place Maillardville Community Centre in Coquitlam.

"We are serving 2800 community members at any given time, making Maillardville a better place to live – *Pour mieux vivre à Maillardville*," adds Balson, citing the centre's motto.

Virginia Martin, an Australian-born speech-language pathologist has been attending evening adult conversational French classes for three years.

"There's a great benefit, this community centre has given me," Martin says. "In Western Canada, French is not spoken widely. I deeply value the opportunity to develop my conversational French language skills in my own community of Coquitlam, by attending high-quality weekly adult evening classes with participants who are similarly inspired to understand and

motto of inclusion, with guest speakers, musicians and group activities. It serves as a resource and referral centre for other French activities in and around the Lower Mainland. The centre also provides an English practice group to help new immigrants improve their

skills in Canada's other official language.

Polish Community Centre

Zgoda Polish Friendship Centre was founded in 1926 by seven friends eager to maintain Polish identity, preserve the Polish language and help new Polish immigrants. After World War II, an influx of Poles settled in the Lower Mainland. In 1959, the association opened the Polish Community Centre on Fraser St.

"The mission of the centre is to promote Polish culture, language and tradition and knowledge of Polish history in Canada," says Erika Moslinger, the centre's manager.

anese War of 1904. Not wishing to return to Russian-occupied Poland, they took the chance and immigrated to Canada to work on farms or on the railway in the Lower Mainland.

The centre's mission has not wavered since its early days. The centre helps immigrants with official forms, makes phone calls and points them in the right direction for services, including lawyers and schools.

When at one time, there may have been pressure for immigrants to give up their mother tongue and exclusively speak English, many youth of Polish descent are now learning the language of their parents and grandparents.

at the corner of Arbutus and Valley Drive, the Hellenic Community Centre of Vancouver opened in 1977. Gus Karvelis, the centre's manager, says he feels privileged to have to grown up through the centre himself. Speaking on behalf of Effie Kerasiotis, president of the community centre, he says the centre represents more than 12,000 Greeks in the Lower Mainland.

In the centre, entralling to the eye, are images of antiquity and artefacts displayed behind glass. Overlooking the venue space is a massive wood mural pyramid.

"This space doubles as a gymnasium and banquet hall. We offer full catering," Karvelis says.

He adds that they have a professionally organized and catalogued library for members of the community to use, which has been in place since the 1980s.

The centre's list of programmes serving the community is long and impressive, with everything from pre-school services for growing families, to language lessons and traditional activities of all types. Karvelis highlights the Odysseas Project, Greek language tutoring online assistance, and classic performances of Hellenic traditional song, dance and instruments, but also points out that many social events which take place at the centre are intercultural in character.

"We welcome groups from outside to utilize the hall," he says.

By bringing friends and showing them in, as Karvelis says, perhaps individuals who have never had the chance to see inside one of Vancouver's cultural hubs can learn more about the other cultures and communities that make up their city. ☺



▲ Polish Friendship Centre Folk Dance Ensemble.

According to Moslinger, many of the seniors and elderly are veterans and it is this history which informs the plight of early Poles in Canada. She says the first significant wave of Poles came to Canada after serving with the Russian forces. Many were taken prisoner by the Japanese in the Russo-Jap-

"Lessons at the centre enjoy full participation," says Moslinger. "[Youth] are deeply involved in events throughout the year."

Hellenic Community of Vancouver

Beautifully nestled behind St George's Greek Orthodox Church



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Mailing Address
Denman Place PO Box 47020,
Vancouver BC V6G 3E1

Office
204-825 Granville St., Vancouver BC

Telephone (604) 682-5545
Email info@thelastsource.com

www.thelastsource.com

Founding Publisher Mamadou Gangué
Associate Publishers Saeed Dyanatkar (Digital),
Monique Kroeger (Print)
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Editor-in-Chief Julie Hauville
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For full schedule of community dance classes and/or opportunities to be involved as lead dancers, please visit our facebook page Cedar Cottage Intercultural Flashmob or call 604-874-4231 (Olga Shcherbyna).

In partnership with the ReMYX Youth Group (Multicultural Helping House Society), Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House is organizing an Intercultural Community Flashmob that aims to celebrate historical contributions of different ethnic and cultural groups to the development of Cedar Cottage neighbourhood and foster intercultural connections between new and long-term residents.

Local choreographers developed the flashmob choreography and will train the lead dancers who will teach free community flashmob (dance) classes to the public and perform the flashmob in public places.

The choreographers selected the song by Delhi2Dublin, "Turn Up the Stereo" for the flashmob. This local, "made-in-Vancouver" band combines many different cultural styles and experiments with diversity in music in a way that appeals to people of all generations and cultures. The

multicultural dimension of the song is believed to attract a wide audience including the neighbourhood youth.

There are many opportunities to get involved in the community flashmob initiative. Starting from January 13, 2014, community flashmob classes will take place at Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House, Trout Lake Community Centre and Multicultural Helping House Society. Starting from February, lead dancers and community members will perform the flashmob in public places in the KCC neighbourhood. Local community and civic leaders will join community dance classes and flashmob performances.

There are still spots available for lead dancers who would like to learn the dance, teach community flashmob classes and perform the flashmob. Community members are also encouraged to get involved into Cedar Cottage Flashmob

initiative which aims to build neighbourhood capacity by connecting local cultural and community groups, celebrating our cultural diversity and empowering people through dance and culture.



The project is a part of the Building Welcoming and Inclusive Neighbourhood (BWIN) Initiative which is delivered in Metro Vancouver by 14 Neighbourhood Houses and funded by the Province of British Columbia. BWIN aims to support local community programs that build and enhance the ability to deliver effective programs and services towards creating welcoming neighbourhoods and integrating immigrant newcomers.



Photo courtesy of DFAT Photo Library, Flickr

Deconstructing 'honour' violence

by SARAH FUNG

Within the last decade, violence against women arising from notions of protecting an unwritten cultural 'honour' has been highlighted in several high-profile cases of 'honour killings,' including the 2009 Shafia family case and the 2007 murder of Aqsa Parvez. Since then, the Canadian government, via its organization, Status of Women, has provided funding targeted at preventing and reducing violence against women and girls in the name of honour.

'Honour' violence, a misleading label

One of the recipients of this funding is MOSAIC, a Vancouver based non-profit organization that supports and empowers new immigrants and refugees transitioning into Canadian society. They have been actively conducting research on such violence. Eight focus groups, including two groups from rural communities in British Columbia, one that involved only men, and another only youth, together provide a more comprehensive perspective on violence attributed to honour and a step forward towards tangible solutions.

Rubina Mudhar, one of the lead researchers in the study, reveals that contrary to mainstream stereotypes, the violence is not restricted to South Asian and Middle Eastern communities. In fact, all communities are at risk.

"Honour...becomes the [offenders'] justification for violence against women. It arises from a power imbalance," states Mudhar.

Relegating gender violence to some cultural concept of honour becomes doubly problematic as it may reinforce faulty stereotypes and lead to stigmatization for women from visible minority groups. Mudhar suggests that assigning the violent acts to honour, rather than seeing the underlying violence as gender-based, may further hinder a woman's courage to seek help for herself when she considers how her personal struggle might then be interpreted to portray her culture and community in a negative light.

Spreading awareness about gender-based violence

After the publication of her novel, *Tears of Mehndi*, Raminder Sidhu has also been made keenly aware that this type of violence occurs across cultures every time she receives the many personal stories from readers of every culture who have faced gender-based injustices similar to the experiences of the fictional characters in her book. Reflecting on the feedback from her readers, she notes that both

men and women have expressed their concerns regarding gender-based violence and the harm of the negative connotations when ethnic minorities are singled out. "When there is gender inequality, it leads to violence. The community is concerned and the violence needs to end," says Sidhu.

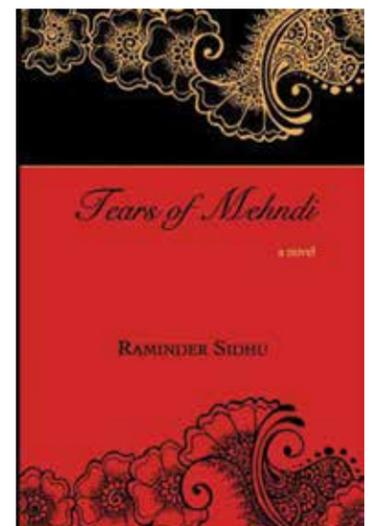
She is hopeful that progress is achievable, but says more awareness is needed.

“Honour... becomes the [offenders'] justification for violence against women.

Rubina Mudhar,
MOSAIC researcher

"Women may be afraid to speak out. I don't know if [they] are aware of the services out there," says Sidhu.

Fortunately, based on the needs assessment phase of MOSAIC's research project, a campaign to improve awareness is about to be launched. Marc Larrivée, senior manager of specialized programs, says that MOSAIC will be embarking on a media campaign using a multilingual, multicultural approach to specifically reach out to the women who may not otherwise be aware of the resources available to them. The organization will be forming support groups in the hopes that individual women may find the means to



▲ In *Tears of Mehndi*, Raminder Sidhu exposes violence in Vancouver's Little India community.

non-threatening, non-judgmental aid should they find themselves the victim of violence. MOSAIC works towards educating men, women, and youth, increasing awareness, and improving access to services. In this way, Mr. Larrivée says MOSAIC is attempting to "target the barriers for women to seek help." ☞

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Depuis sa création en 1995, le Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique offre des programmes et des services éducatifs valorisant le plein épanouissement et l'identité culturelle des apprenantes et apprenants francophones de la province. Le conseil compte aujourd'hui plus de 5 000 élèves, 37 écoles publiques et dessert plus d'une centaine de communautés réparties dans l'ensemble de la province.

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Left Bank



New Year's Resolution: In 2014, B.C. can stop Enbridge – and help defeat Harper

In so many ways, 2013 was tough on everyone in B.C. who cares about social justice and the environment. The surprise election victory by Christy Clark and the BC Liberals, alone, is enough to make me happy to put that year behind us. Adding insult to injury, the National Energy Board (NEB) wrapped up the year by announcing, the week before Christmas, conditional approval of the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline.

The NEB ruling – though not unexpected – was a big holiday season lump of bitumen for British Columbians, who in their significant majority oppose this reckless export mega-project.

Enbridge has arguably generated more serious opposition across the board – from First Nations to fishers, from the north to the south, coast to interior – than anything in this province for decades. You have to go back to Clayoquot Sound in the early 1990s, or maybe even the Solidarity coalition of 1983, to find such an organized and militant protest movement.

That's the silver lining to the NEB ruling. The sheer scale of the polarization around this issue and the high stakes of this debate, put B.C. in a position to change the national political scene. It's worth remembering that the B.C. government of Christy Clark formally opposed Enbridge in their submission to the NEB. So while Clark's political disposition is to support the oil and gas industry, she has to tread carefully. How the public discussion about Enbridge plays out has implications not just for the other big tar sands pipeline proposal, Kinder Morgan's, but also for Clark's efforts to push

tion? Or will he find a way to delay the final decision, perhaps by sending Enbridge back to the drawing board to come up with a different route?

Given the lay of the land in Ottawa, it seems clear this government can hang on until 2015. But they're already shaky, and can be defeated this year in the court of public opinion – starting a country-wide discussion about what comes next.

Harper's looking vulnerable, in part, after a year of disastrously bad scandal management. His denials, and his non-answer non-denials, in the Mike Duffy-Nigel Wright payoff were laughable and at times self-contradictory. Basically, Harper's defence in this affair relies on us believing he's incompetent to the point of not knowing what was happening in his own office.

The scandals alone, however, are unlikely to defeat Harper. At times it looks like his government will just implode under the weight of its own incompetence. But it would be a big mistake to count on this. Besides, the biggest scandal is the whole economic system behind the throne. Harper needs to be defeated politically, and that's going to require an epic effort and mobilization right across the country. There are no shortage of issues that can help galvanize concerted opposition to Harper. Besides pipelines, the cuts to Canada Post and the changes to the Canada Pension Plan should be at the top of the list.

What we don't really have, yet, is a mechanism to weave together the various threads of resistance to Harper's agenda. In this respect, the People's Social Forum, taking place in Ot-



Photo courtesy of Peoples' Social Forum

▲ August's People's Social Forum will bring together activists of all stripes.

tawa August 21-24, could be a game changer. The Social Forum – bringing together Indigenous activists, and labour and social movement activists from Quebec and the rest of Canada – will be a great chance to build a coherent and ramped up resistance to this government, as well as debating and working on alternatives to this rotten system.

The forum will be a golden opportunity to spread the momentum of the movement against Enbridge across the whole country. 2014 is the time for us to revive an old and proud tradition of protest caravans converging on the capital. On to Ottawa!

Let's make this a collective New Year's resolution: if we can block Enbridge, we can defeat Harper. If we can do both, the political terrain will shift dramatically for the better. And then we'll be in a much better position to block future fossil fuel mega-projects – no matter who is in power. ✂

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Revitalizing retail spaces to develop diverse communities

by PEGGY LAM

For Mariana Garcia, the retail business is not just about the latest trends and the lowest prices. It's also about building communities.

Garcia, who immigrated to Canada from Brazil several years ago, spent two years working for two women's organizations in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. As the social enterprise program manager for these organizations, she revamped two thrift stores and opened an art boutique for local artisans in the neighbourhood.

"It was a beneficial initiative, promoting products and services that reflect individuality and local culture. It helps to keep the money in the community and reduces impact on the environment because it's not about chain stores and mass production," she says.

A different approach

While working for the non-profit organizations, Garcia noticed a trend in the retail industry. Sales were seasonal, while retail stores would be open all year round. Therefore, she decided to start Pop Villa, a firm dedicated to opening up temporary stores for retail clients.

As Garcia explains, pop-up stores – using a temporary location to display and sell products – are a powerful marketing strategy that provide a safe and convenient way for new retailers to enter the market. The model works equally well for services offering point of sales for products or point of information for services.

"It's a win-win situation for the retailers: they can test the receptiveness of the consumers with-



▲ Mariana Garcia runs Pop Villa, a business dedicated to setting up temporary shops for retail clients.

out a long term commitment, create a unique shopping experience and positive brand awareness," says Garcia.

For Garcia, her strong sense of social culture and Brazilian identity is embedded within her business ideals.

"I'm Brazilian with European background. Brazilian culture is less individualistic and more social. Both individualistic and social cultures have their positive and negative aspects," she explains.

From the social culture that she was brought up, Garcia grew up in an atmosphere with close family ties and a strong connection with the people and environment around her – all of which

have pushed her to build community in retail spaces.

"This social background [that I grew up in] helped me bring events ideas and entertainment to Pop Villa. In these retail stores, I always liked to organize in-store events [to] create a community feeling – a space for people to socialize – which also bring clients and increase sales," says Garcia.

Pop Villa was also started with the goal of building more vibrant and diverse communities. When Garcia acts as an event planner for other companies, she provides retailers with a chance to diversify the local economy by offering different products from local companies.

"The pop-up shops are more than sales – they also help revitalize communities by bringing something new, exciting, and fresh to empty retail space," Garcia concludes.

Building better communities

Alexis Morgan, an instructor at the Sustainable Development Program at SFU, sees diversity and cultural interaction as a source of innovation for the economy, and therefore a tool to build better communities.

"From a social perspective, cultural diversity builds understanding and compassion. From an environmental perspective, it can often provide insights to reduce waste and teaches us to

think about taking advantage of local resources. From an economic perspective, cultural diversity fosters innovation and thinking differently. When all of these factors come together, they can help build communities with greater wellbeing," says Morgan.

Garcia's rich cultural background and appreciation for diversity have led her to have high hopes of operating large-scale kiosks in multiple locations in the future. Social values, social justice, human rights, equity, sustainability and fair trade are only a few of the things she hopes her business will breed. Diverse communities can also be added to the list, starting right here in Vancouver. ✉

CHILD TO CHEF SERIES

Popular Vancouver-based French chef publishes tasty culinary memoir of growing up in southwestern France

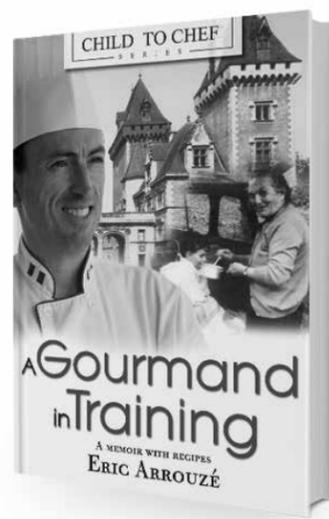
Just in time for holiday feasting and gift giving, popular Vancouver-based French chef and UBC culinary instructor Eric Arrouzé has published *Child to Chef: A Gourmand in Training*. This is Arrouzé's first book in a series tracing his unlikely but inspiring path from mischievous boy in a small, blue-collar French town to a successful professional chef.

Book One covers Arrouzé's vivid and humorous recollections of his childhood accom-

panied by 31 authentic French recipes prepared by his grandmother, Mamie Augusta, his aunt and others in the colorful cast of characters who contributed to his early culinary education. These include Garbure, a hearty French peasant soup, and Poule au Pot, or chicken-in-a-pot, the aromatic dish made famous by French king Henry IV.

Chef Eric Arrouzé has been a popular culinary instructor at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada for 13 years, where

he teaches courses in regional cuisine and leads culinary tours to France and Quebec. He also runs a widely recognized online gourmet recipe, culinary travel, and video cooking instruction website, 911cheferic.com. Recently, Chef Eric has become a part of the world-famous *Chaine des Rotisseurs*. Chef Eric's contributions to the advancement of culinary education have been recognized in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Calgary Herald*, and *Saveur* magazine.



Born in the southwestern French town of Pau, Arrouzé has more than 30 years of experience working at fine dining establishments in France and Canada, including a stint, at the age of 23, as executive chef at Le Cap-Estel, a five-star hotel on the French Riviera where he supervised a team of 14 chefs, and had the privilege of cooking for Prince Albert of Monaco, Catherine Deneuve, and the members of the band U2...to name a few.

Child to Chef – Book One: A Gourmand in Training paperback version is available to order online at www.childtochef.com. Retail price is \$16. Paperback and Kindle versions also available on Amazon.ca.



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Education enables Filipino youth to transition into Canadian culture

by ANASTASIA SCHERDERS

In Canada, post-secondary education is often seen as necessary in order for youth to compete in the job market and achieve their professional ambitions. But for Filipino youth, studying in Canada may also be fundamental in making a successful transition to a new country.

Patrick Cruz, 26, is a visual artist who moved to Canada when he was 18 years old and studied at Emily Carr in Vancouver.

"School is very important in

onstrates the difficulties for Filipinos, especially youth, who are seeking fair and meaningful employment.

This is an issue that the recently opened Filipino Community Centre in North Vancouver hopes to improve by providing resources that help Filipinos connect with better employment.

Adaptation and identity

For a Filipino youth, migrating to Canada also involves navigating his or her identity as a young adult and a Filipino-Canadian.

“School is very important in terms of shaping and broadening the perspective of someone who is transitioning.

Patrick Cruz, Filipino immigrant

terms of shaping and broadening the perspective of someone who is transitioning,” says Cruz.

Tamara Hombrebueno, an undergraduate student and Ambassador of SFU's Beedie School of Business, moved to Canada at the age of 8 and shares the same enthusiasm for post-secondary education.

"Attending a Vancouver-based university or college is a great way to transition to the local community," says Hombrebueno. "The students, faculty and staff are so welcoming and understanding of multicultural backgrounds, making it easier for anyone who is new to the city."

Work-life

While young Canadians may be the most educated generation in history, underemployment and unemployment of youth (ages 15-24) is a significant concern in Canada – according to Statistics Canada, this year the average for unemployed youth was between 13.5 and 14.5 per cent – and one that deserves further attention when considering immigrant youth populations.

Filipino youth who have recently moved to Canada face these economic conditions while also contending with the anxiety of being displaced from their country, language and community. According to Cruz, it is an experience filled with struggles, successes and conflicts.

Like many young Filipino-Canadians, Cruz's first job was at a fast food restaurant in Surrey.

"[Many fast food workers] are also immigrants like me who also took the job upon their arrival. A lot of them also held their positions for as long as 10 years and never looked for another option," says Cruz.

Many Filipinos who move to Canada are employed in food and hospitality services and domestic care despite having high levels of education or professional experience. This dem-

Cruz believes that Filipinos who have immigrated to Vancouver tend to attach too much of their agency to their family or community and that this insular mentality contributes to a fear of adaptation and a lack of risk-taking.

"Although it is safe and secure, it is also highly problematic and limiting, especially for the youth," says Cruz.

Cruz's art explores notions of cultural identities as fluid and adaptive.



▲ Red Horse (Banketa Session), acrylic painting by Patrick Cruz.

"[Education] can help open the young minds of the Filipino youth with what is possible beyond our own cultural beliefs and traditions," he says.

While living and studying in Canada might influence young immigrants to adapt their beliefs, perhaps more readily than older adults, this may also affect their involvement in their former cultural traditions and language.

"It is easy to get caught up in the Canadian lifestyle and forget one's roots and traditions," says Hombrebueno. "I have changed [much] since arriving in Canada, and it has been hard to retain certain things such as the Filipino language."

Hombrebueno feels that young Filipinos can respond to these challenges by becoming involved in organizations like Filipino youth groups, which can be found on campus and in the local communities.

"There are plenty of Filipinos living in Vancouver and thus lots of opportunities to get involved in that community," she says.

Literary boon in Surrey for Francophones and Francophiles

by DEANNA CHOI

Surrey libraries will soon feature a greater collection of French books. With funding provided by the British Columbian government and the City of Surrey, Surrey libraries will be able to utilize a \$30,000 grant to purchase French books for all ages. The Surrey Public Library has nine branches, eight of which currently offer French materials for children, and seven of which feature French literature for adults.

"It's very important for the Francophone community, as well as French immersion students and those interested in French language and culture, to have access to books and other materials at their public library," says Melanie Houlden, chief librarian of the Surrey Public Library. "This funding helps make that possible and provides a wonderful addition to the collections at Surrey libraries."

A developing demand for French materials

With a growing French-speaking population, and a keen interest in French immersion, there was an increasing need for French language materials, particularly for children. Once the grant was made available, the Surrey Public Library was eager to expand the collection.

"We wanted to have better collections all around because we know that the materials we have already are getting pretty heavily used," says Houlden. "We just wanted to improve our service for French speakers too."

Prior to the provision of the new grant, there was public interest in expanding the collection of French-language books.

"A group called Parents for French are really interested in making sure there are enough materials for their children who are in French immersion schools," says Houlden, "because the schools [and] their libraries aren't substantial enough to support all their research needs."

In addition to the growing compilation of French books, the Surrey Public Library has also started a pilot French storytime program at the Newton Library

where children can hear stories, and learn rhymes and songs in French. There has been some interest in extending the program to other Surrey libraries.

"It depends on whether or not we have the staff to support the program," says Surinder Bhogal, Deputy Chief Librarian of the Surrey Public Library. "There are no concrete plans at the moment, but, yes, we do want to expand it for sure."

A greater outreach of French culture

Presently, there are over 290,000 French-speaking citizens in British Columbia. The French language and culture in the province are represented by more than 40 Francophone associations and organizations.

operation with schools offering French immersion programs," says Etienne. "With more books at hand, there will be a greater outreach."

Although word of the new addition of French books has not yet become widespread, there are hopes to change that.

"We're certainly going to advertise the fact that they're here so that people know the resources are available to them," says Houlden. "It's one of our battles, making sure that people know about the resources that are already here because we have so many and many different kinds. The more that we can let people know that the materials are here, I think the better it is."

As of now, the new books are in the process of being ordered.



▲ Chief librarian, Melanie Houlden, with French books at the Surrey Public Library.

One French-English interpreter and translator, Florence Etienne, whose first language is French, has shown great enthusiasm for the new addition of French books in the Surrey libraries.

"I thank all parties involved in the project, for this addition will mean an enriched catalogue of publications and enhanced co-

It may be several months before they are delivered, but their arrival is well anticipated.

"I have noted that since its opening, the Surrey Central branch has been enriching its collection, as I see new titles displayed regularly," says Etienne. "To see more books in French would be great."

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Dan Whitehouse and Anja McCloskey Announce Joint Canadian Tour



Birmingham-based singer-songwriter Dan Whitehouse and German-American accordionist and singer-songwriter Anja McCloskey undertake a joint Canadian tour in January and February 2014.

The pair have written and recorded a joint EP, *Still*, which will be released on UK indie label Sotones Records on 20th January 2014.

Press on Anja McCloskey:

"Like Philip Glass re-imagining Prussian folk." (The Arts Desk)

"Virtually impossible to pigeonhole." (This is Fake DIY Magazine)

Sultry folk, like a Romany-Gipsy Cabaret." (Q Music)

Press on Dan Whitehouse:

"Lyrics which involuntarily swerve your gaze to the sky" (Music Week)

"Sensational" (Tom Robinson/ BBC 6 Music)

"Really, really gorgeous songs" (Janice Long/ BBC Radio 2)

The tour will see Anja and Dan start off in Vancouver and then head through the Rocky Mountains. "We are really excited about going on the road in Canada in winter time," says Anja McCloskey. "In fact, I couldn't think of a more beautiful time of year to explore this part of the world and begin this new musical collaboration."

The pair first met at London Regent's Park Zoo in 2002, introduced to each other by John Peel favourite and legendary UK indie singer-songwriter Helen McCookerybook – whilst Dan was playing (rudimentary!) accordion to the animals as part of a school songwriting project. Anja lambasted Dan for his clumsy accordion chops, and a friendship was born. They stayed in touch and whenever they met would talk longingly about collaborating together, but it was not until the autumn of 2013 they finally started writing music together. You can come and see Anja and Dan perform at one of these shows:

- 24.01.14 - Bozzini's, **Chilliwack**
- 25.01.14 - Benoit's Wine Bar, **Revelstoke**
- 26.01.14 - Wild Flour Bakery, **Banff**
- 28.01.14 - Harvest Coffee Shop, **Pincher Creek**
- 29.01.14 - Centre 64, **Kimberley**
- 30.01.14 - Cafe Books West, **Rossland**
- 31.01.14 - Minstrel Cafe and Bar, **Kelowna**
- 01.02.14 - The Art We Are, **Kamloops**
- 02.02.14 - Cafe Deux Soleils, **Vancouver**

Vancouver's newest film festival a home for Italian cinema

by NAOMI TSE

Vancouver has hosted a number of film festivals, but never before has Italian cinema been showcased at an event all its own. This year, the inaugural Italian Film Festival will be added to Vancouver's list of cultural events. The idea of an Italian Film Festival was conceived by Mauro Vescera, executive director of the Italian Cultural Centre, who collaborated with the Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF), the Insituto Italiano di Cultura, and the Italian Cham-

The event will also feature live music before and after the movie screening, played by instrumental pop fusion duo Roy and Rosemary. Rosemary Siemens, one half of the duo, describes their style as a combination of pop and classical music played on the violin and piano. Since both Roy and Rosemary have perfect pitch, they frequently take requests from the audience and create a song on the spot to bring them into the creative process.

"[The audience] can tell us to incorporate elements such as the sun or wind into the song and



▲ A screenshot from the Italian film *Mr. Volare*.

ber of Commerce in Canada West to bring the festival to Vancouver. "One of the things I've always wanted to do was to start a film festival," says Vescera.

Many other communities in Vancouver have their own film festivals such as the Latin film festival, the Taiwanese film festival and of course VIFF itself. The Italian film festival will feature five new films from the last two to three years as well as five classic films. Vescera hopes that this film festival will become an annual event.

"I'm hoping the [Italian] community will come out and support it, [Italian film] has a great history and it's another cultural event [for Vancouver]," says Vescera.

The Vancity Theatre will host the week-long event.

"What I really liked about the idea that [the Italian Cultural Centre] came up with was to mix new and old films," says Tom Charity, program coordinator for the Vancity Theatre.

In an effort to achieve a balanced repertoire of films, the festival will include genres ranging from comedies to psychological thrillers to musicals, all representing different filmmakers. Although putting together films for a festival may sound easy, Charity explains that many films were excluded from their list due to difficulty acquiring the rights or securing a copy in an appropriate format with subtitles. With this in mind, he thinks that this is a great opportunity to remind people of the rich cinematic culture of Italy and to give people a chance to see these great films. Furthermore, Charity says that many Italian films struggle to get released in cinemas internationally, so there are quite a few films that Vancouver audiences don't get to see.

An evening of film, visual art and music

The opening night of the film festival will include two highly anticipated events: an exhibit of the influential Italian film director Federico Fellini's drawings of food as well as the Canadian premiere of the documentary *Federico of the Spirits*.

then we create it for them," says Siemens, "Improvising and versatility is one of our big gifts."

Roy and Rosemary will also be playing music inspired by Italian cinema, such as songs from *The Godfather*.

What is special about Italian cinema?

The films showcased at the festival will address themes that are uniquely Italian as well as those that anyone can relate to.

"Italian cinema is much more true to Italian roots, I think you see political and social is-



▲ The Italian film festival will also feature an exhibit of director Federico Fellini's drawings and a performance by duo Roy and Rosemary.

sues coming through [in Italy] and also universal issues such as problems with immigration," says Charity. ☺

The Italian film festival will run from Jan. 10–16 at the Vancity Theatre. Membership with the VIFF is mandatory for viewing all films. For tickets and more information, please visit: www.italianculturalcentre.ca/event-registration/?ee=161 and www.viff.org/theatre/series/italian-film-festival



Books embodied: Human Library invites a different kind of reading

by SONJA GRGAR

Human Library, a project entering its second year with Vancouver's 2014 PuSh International Performing Arts Festival, stands by the expression that one shouldn't judge a book by its cover. In addition, it invites us to redefine what books and reading can be.

As part of this project, festival patrons get an opportunity to 'sign out' a human 'book', a person who shares with them their unique life story or perspective in a one-on-one session held at the Central Branch of the Vancouver Public Library.

Immersive communication

Dave Deveau, writer and dramaturge, is the project's curator. He believes that Human Library (HL) has an incredible capacity to open up the hearts and minds of the Vancouver public to individuals and experiences that they may have never had the opportunity to encounter, as well as to challenge their pre-conceived notions.

"Human Library is a very interesting middle-point between the world of contemporary performance and the world of the festival goer. It

is pushing boundaries, but also at the same time tapping into something really personal and really emotional," he explains.

In order to recruit the human books, Deveau reaches out to community organizations and puts out an open call for prospective participants. Once the individuals are selected, Deveau trains them in order to present their stories in succinct and engaging ways.

When the project launches, the public can sign up for 20 minute sessions with the various books, where they are invited to both listen to stories, as well as engage in conversation.

For Antonette Rea, a poet who identifies as a transgender woman, HL is an opportunity to share her experience of healing from the violence and prejudice she has faced in the course of her lifetime because of her sexual identity.

Rea, whose book name in this project is *Middlesex*, chooses to let her poems tell her story, and was amazed at the supportive responses she received during last year's festival.

"Many people don't read poetry, but when they hear mine, it jumps off the page. Poetry was my way of coping with things. That's the most valuable thing I have: my stories," she says.

Rea appreciates the project's capacity to promote respect and appreciation for marginalized communities.

"It's an opportunity to educate and to have people ask ques-

tions they were afraid to ask," she says.

Conjuring change

Lea Ricketts, a writer working on a memoir about abducting her own daughter in order to flee from the child's violent and abusive father, is also returning for her second year. Her book title at HL, *I Abducted Her*, is also the title of her own work.

Ricketts says that last year many festival patrons were afraid to meet her because they weren't sure of the context of the abduction implied in the title. However, upon hearing her story, many had a very emotional response and could relate because they had also experienced abuse in their lives.

The feedback she gets from the public at HL inspires Ricketts to

continue writing in the hopes that her memoir will help redefine Canadian child custody laws.

"When you have something hard to tell, most people keep it a secret, and I am doing the op-

"The impact you make as an artist is really related to what other people do with what you have [created]. Copyright is an obstacle to using art in a way I see art as being useful," says Cooke.

“Many people don't read poetry, but when they hear mine, it jumps off the page.

Antonette Rea, poet

posite. I am hoping the book will be an inspiration to others to help make change," she explains.

Deconstructing culture

Filmmaker Devon Cooke views HL as an opportunity to share his criticism of copyright policies. His book title at the festival is *Cultural Pirate*, and his presentation questions cultural ownership.

Cooke feels that the ability to comment on the artistic works of others without having to worry about copyright is an essential aspect of keeping culture vibrant and functional. He believes in the practice of referencing another artist's work without paying copyright fees because he introduces it to new audiences and, in a sense, further promotes it.

Norman Armour, artistic & executive director of PuSh, thinks HL, and the festival as whole, promotes a fresh approach to art.

"We want people to gain a renewed sense of excitement and adventurousness for live performance and gain a great appreciation of how the Vancouver performing arts scene fits in with other creative communities across Canada and around the globe," he explains.

You can check out Human Library between 12 and 5 p.m. on Jan. 17-19, 24-26, 31, and Feb. 1-2, on the 3rd floor of the Central Branch of the Vancouver Public Library. For more information visit: pushfestival.ca/festival-events/main-shows.



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"Grease is an iconic movie that comes with all sorts of expectations. By working with the original script and score, I am aiming to let go of all those expectations and discover this show as if for the first time, and Studio 58 is the ideal setting for this to take place."

Peter Jorgensen, Director

Peter Jorgensen (Avenue Q, The Full Monty, The Light in the Piazza) makes his Studio 58 directorial debut with this production of GREASE. He is joined by a cracker jack creative team including musical director Courtenay Ennis (Avenue Q, Songs for a New World, The Last Five Years), choreographer Kayla Dunbar (The Park, Stationary: A Recession Era Musical), set designer Omanie Elias (Oklahoma, Hello Dolly, Will Rogers Follies), costume designer Jessica Bayntun (Avenue Q, The Light in the Piazza, It's a Wonderful Life) and lighting designer Alan Brodie (Spring Awakening, Julius Caesar, Tear the Curtain).

WARNING: Contains adult situations and language. Not suitable for children.

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Unconventional one-man show takes audience on journey of self-discovery

by KUMIKO AOKI

As a writer, performer and director, TJ Dawe discovers himself through many of his autobiographical works. *Medicine*, Dawe's 12th one-man show, to be held for the second time at the Firehall Arts Centre from January 14 to 25, will present Dawe's experience of joining a retreat led by addictions physician Dr. Gabor Maté.

In the retreat, participants ingest the Amazonian psychotropic plant medicine *ayahuasca* (ah-yuh-wah-skuh). Participants are challenged, through Maté's guidance, to discover their core issues and questions.

What led to *Medicine*

Dawe's discovery of the retreat led by Gabor Maté had a fateful beginning. Dawe, who was first introduced to the work and books of Maté through a recommendation, says he found Maté's work to be fascinating.

"He [Maté] has this book about addiction. I'm not addicted to anything, but it still spoke to me," says Dawe.

Dawe recommended Maté's books to his family members and they all started reading them. Dawe says that this facilitated communication within his family like never before. He then decided to write a show about it and he invited Maté to see it.

According to Dawe, Maté was delighted and enjoyed the show. The addictions physician also pointed out that Dawe himself might have an internal issue yet to be discovered.

"He [Maté] got a sense from watching the show that I was interested in finding out the truth, whether the truth is what I wanted to hear or not. And under the right circumstances, that's what *ayahuasca* can do for a person" says Dawe.

Maté indicated that Dawe might get something very valuable from ingesting *ayahuasca*, so Dawe decided to try it without doing prior research on this psychotropic medicine.

"I just plunged in. Intuitively it felt like the right thing to do," he says.

Exploring the core issue

Dawe said that the effects of ingesting *ayahuasca* were physically and mentally grueling for him. However, he does not regret the decision. Rather, he described the experience as so profound and life-changing that he felt

moved to write a show detailing the experience.

"I went through some of the most difficult times of my life on that retreat. But maybe what I got out of it was proportionate to how difficult it was," he says.

exploration because it's always been tremendously intense and potentially life changing for me," says Dawe.

The real challenge, Dawe explains, is integrating the experience after the retreat is over so



▲ TJ Dawe, Canadian writer, performer and director.

Dawe explains that his issue, in general terms, is a profound sense of social alienation. However, through performing *Medicine* and engaging with people who come to the show, he feels liberated and accepted.

"That sense of alienation just isn't there because people are there with me and the rejection I feared my entire life clearly isn't there," says Dawe.

Integrating the experience

Although Dawe had ingested *ayahuasca* during the retreat led by Maté and participated in another retreat this past October, ingesting the African plant medicine *iboga*, he says psychedelic drugs are something he has never taken lightly.

"It's not been a frequent form of recreation or intoxication or

it doesn't become an event one slightly remembers or doesn't remember.

Dawe mentions that although his biggest goal is to take the audience on a ride through *Medicine*, he also hopes the audience will be encouraged to discover their own hidden issues and also be open to the potential of *ayahuasca*.

"I would love if people would be encouraged to delve into their own issues, their own soul, and their own life and see some part of themselves reflected [in the show]. Thirdly, I would love if more people knew about this [*ayahuasca*] as a therapeutic potential," Dawe says. ☞

Medicine will be playing at the Firehall Arts Centre Jan. 14–25.

► "Verbatim" from page 1

street, and one man, in particular, stood out for me. He was 37, suffering from mental illness and using illegal drugs regularly. He said that when he was a child, he suffered abuse from his father. After his parents divorced when he was 14, he lived with his mother and his grandmother and started to use drugs as an escape from a harsh and traumatic life. He also said that he was not able to work as normal people do because his mental illness made him isolated and uncommunicative. Addicted to harmful drugs and wracked by his childhood traumas, he continued his downward spiral.

His story was difficult to listen to, and while it was im-

possible to know precisely what might be true and what might be embellished in his narrative, his emotional connection to the events he described was obvious and compelling.

I went to Chinatown for a research project in a sociology class last year. It was my first visit to the Carnegie Community Centre on East Hastings. One sees many homeless people, many addicted people, and many disaffected people in the neighbourhood and around the building. The washrooms of the Carnegie Centre have prominently situated boxes for the disposal of needles. From my rather naïve Japanese perspective, I wondered about the needle disposal boxes – it seemed to me as if the centre and the government

were encouraging drug use. Of course, I came to realize that the needle disposal box is essential for safety, as it is one means of protecting people from infectious diseases.

I never saw such conditions in Japan, but my eyes have been opened to be sure. Solutions to the apparent health and social problems in the Downtown Eastside are not easily found. Homelessness is an enormously complex social issue and is clearly tied up with poverty, addiction, mental illness, racism and more. My time in Vancouver as a student has introduced me to one of the city's most glaring and difficult social problems – a problem that is as daunting as it is urgent. ☞

Documenting life's kaleidoscope

by MARIE-NOËL CAMPBELL

For author Rawi Hage, the most recent writer in residence at the Vancouver Public Library, essentializing and categorizing is impossible – even about his own life.

“There is no one self. There is just a sequence of selves. My life is not homogenous, it's a long trajectory, with many lives,” says Hage.

Raised as a Christian in the midst of the Lebanese Civil War, Hage immigrated to New York City in 1984 and has been living in Canada since 1992. Since his arrival in America, he has worked in varied professions, from freelance photographer to faculty advisor to novelist. His second book, *Cockroach*, depicts with realism and dark humour the life of an unnamed immigrant in Montreal. It is currently shortlisted as one of five novels for Canada Reads 2014.

Cultural meeting as a chemical reaction

Hage was exposed to French and Arab cultures during his time in Beirut, a city that has long attracted thinkers from around the Middle East and beyond.

clusively in English, his third language. When asked how he marries his various cultures, he explains that it is not a conscious choice as he goes from one to the other organically.

“Cultures were always mixed, it is a process that has been happening since the beginning of time, through war, culture or trade. There is no pure culture.”

“[Cultural mixing] is like a chemical reaction. You put two chemicals together and they become something totally different: a third identity gets created.

Rawi Hage, writer in residence at VPL

The self-described transnational writer asserts that when several cultures come together, they do not become diluted.

“This process is like a chemical reaction. You put two chemicals together and they become something totally different: a third identity gets created,” he states.

A wanderer's perspectives

In his first book, *De Niro's Game*, Hage follows the lives of two young men living during the brutal times of the Lebanese

“The only people who took it unto themselves to record it into history were artists,” says Hage.

In *Cockroach*, his second novel, he writes from the perspective of an immigrant coming to North America. Before setting foot in the United States, Hage's idealized vision of the place was, in his own words, almost like a disease.

“For me, the West was a picture of money, excitement, with green meadows. Although,” he admits with a smile, “I don't like nature.”

Far removed from this utopic existence, *Cockroach's* main protagonist survives in a state of extreme misery. The book evokes Hage's own experience of cultural shock in New York City while working odd jobs, including as a warehouse labourer where the building's entrance was regularly used for drug dealing.

“I became part of the proletariat. I had grown up in the middle class in Beirut, gone to decent schools. In New York, my life went upside down,” says Hage.

A dialogue with his audience

Hage does not write his novels to articulate any particular morality but believes that, if writers have a responsibility, it is to exercise their freedom. Hage's writing prompts the reader to question established modes of thinking and invites consideration of new possibilities.

“The point of fiction is to present possibilities. Human are very contradictory and good writers know how to write on these contradictions,” he says.

He believes that this embrace of contradiction distinguishes literature from religion, which prescribes a path to follow. In his most recent novel, *Carnival*, the protagonist constantly questions humanity's apparent necessity for belief and detests the certainty offered by religion.

“Religion dictates; literature does not. [It] is one of the rare spaces where humanity is allowed to play,” says Hage.

Canada Reads 2014
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Photo courtesy of Vancouver Public Library

▲ Author Rawi Hage.

“[Beirut] is a refuge for a lot of intellectuals from the Arab world. [Accordingly, its] contribution to the cultural scene is wider than the city itself,” says Hage.

Today, while he lives in Montreal, he writes his novels ex-

Civil War. In describing the war's aftermath, he recounts how everybody acted as if nothing had happened. Unlike South Africa, where a Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established, no similar action was undertaken in Lebanon.



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- 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.







Annual General Meeting and Special Film Screening

Thursday January 9th 2014
SFU Woodward's Goldcorp Centre
Djavad Mowafaghian Cinema
149 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, V6B 1G8

6:00 pm – Doors open for member registration

7:00 pm – Annual General Meeting

7:30 pm – Special Screening of “HUE: A Matter of Colour”

A BC-produced film honouring our local film community and its commitment to our causes. Special post-film discussion with Selwyn Jacob, “Hue” producer and award-winning National Film Board director

Advance Ticket Pricing for the screening on Eventbrite (no additional charges)

Members attending AGM and film \$5

Members attending film only \$10

Non Members \$12

Ticket Prices at the door (cash only)

Members attending AGM and film \$6

Members attending film only \$12

Non Members \$15

Hue: A Matter of Colour

Fresh from its successful debut at the Vancouver International Film Festival in 2013

Giant steps have been taken world-wide to eliminate racism, yet an ancient and widespread form of discrimination called colourism – when people from one race discriminate against others of that race based on their skin tone – has been largely ignored. Hue, the latest documentary from acclaimed Canadian filmmaker, Vic Sarin, brings us face to face

with the effects of this insidious form of intolerance. Light skin preference is alive and well in communities of colour around the globe. In Hue, international notables of the entertainment and political realm weigh in on this multi-cultural phenomenon: one that affects the selection of orphans in India, fuels a billion dollar skin-whitening fashion industry in China, and is sparking a trend at fertility clinics in the United States where, increasingly, African American women are requesting light-skinned donors. Hue is a personal point-of-view documentary tracing one man's provocative exploration of colour hierarchy within a variety of cultures worldwide. Director Vic Sarin plays the part of both student and provocateur as he seeks answers to his own questions while sparking debate on colourism.

Hue will take you from continent to continent to share the raw and personal stories of those most affected by colourism, while exposing just how prevalent it is in the 21st century.

Supported by Simon Fraser University's
 Vancity Office of Community Engagement

Please ensure that your membership is current and has not expired by checking the expiry date appearing on your membership card – You may renew your membership on-line at <http://reelcauses.org/membership/> or from 6:00 to 6:45 pm at the membership desk in the SFU Woodward's lobby prior to the Annual General Meeting.



Cultural Calendar

January 7–21, 2014

by JESSICA LI

It's the beginning of 2014 – and what better way to start the New Year than immersing yourself in the best events the city has to offer? Try a new restaurant at a discounted price, or discover the music of a talented mandolin virtuoso. If you want to have a rad time, go see Studio 58's production of *Grease*.

Uncle Vanya

Now until Jan. 18
The Cultch (Vancouver
East Cultural Centre)
1895 Venables St., Vancouver
thecultch.com
604-251-1363

Vancouver's finest presenter of classical theatre is back with Anton Chekhov's heart-wrenching *Uncle Vanya*, a timeless 19th century masterwork rich in improbable love, yearning and folly. The play will acquaint audiences with Vanya, whose monotonous



Illustration courtesy of The Cultch

▲ See Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* at the Cultch.

country estate existence is thrust into chaos when his pedantic, aging brother-in-law returns with a new young wife – the beautiful and irresistible Yelena. Tickets are \$18 each.

Vancouver Shogi Club

Jan. 11
Nikkei National Museum &
Cultural Centre (2nd Floor)
6688 Southoaks Crescent, Burnaby
shogivancouver.wordpress.com
604-777-7000

Join the Vancouver Shogi Club for its debut event! The club meets to play *shogi* (Japanese chess) on the second and fourth Saturdays of every month. Everyone is welcome, including beginners. There is a cost of \$5 to cover room rental fees.



▲ Fire and ice come together at Whistler Blackcomb.

Vancouver Recital Society: Avi Avital

Jan. 12
Vancouver Playhouse
600 Hamilton St., Vancouver
www.vanrecital.com
604-602-0363

Recognized by The New York Times for his "exquisitely sensitive playing," Grammy Award-nominated mandolin virtuoso Avi Avital has emerged as one of today's most exciting and entrepreneurial young musicians. Come hear him perform music by composers as varied as J. S. Bach, Yasuo Kuwahara, Maurice Ravel and Béla Bartók. Tickets from \$25.

PuSh: International Performing Arts Festival

Jan. 14–Feb. 2
Various venues in Vancouver
www.pushfestival.ca
604-605-8284

The PuSh International Performing Arts festival is Vancouver's

mid-winter festival representing acclaimed local, national and international artists. Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the festival features adventurous programs of theatre, dance, music and multimedia at venues in and around Vancouver.

Whistler Blackcomb's Fire and Ice Show

Now until March 30
Skier's Plaza
(in Whistler Village)
4545 Blackcomb Way, Whistler
www.whistler.com/events/
fire-and-ice
1-800-944-7853



▲ Avi Avital and his mandolin play the Vancouver Playhouse Jan. 12.

Every Sunday night during winter, see a spectacular display of ski and snowboard skill at the legendary Fire and Ice Show in Skier's Plaza. Whistler's best skiers and riders jump and flip through a blazing ring of fire accompanied by fire spinners, a DJ and a fireworks display. An electrifying evening of free live entertainment to watch with family and friends.

Dine Out Vancouver

Jan. 17–Feb. 2
Various restaurants in Vancouver
www.dineoutvancouver.com
604-683-2000

The Dine Out Vancouver Festival is Canada's largest celebration of eating out, attracting tens of thousands of local and visiting food enthusiasts annually to experience the city's exceptionally diverse collection of restaurants. Diners can select from more than 230 restaurants each offering unique three-course meals at a fixed and reasonable price. Other exciting culinary experiences offered include wine tastings and cooking demonstrations.

A Celebration of Robbie Burns

Jan. 18
Place des Arts
1120 Brunette Avenue, Coquitlam
www.placedesarts.ca
604-664-1636

Come for the concert or come early and enjoy a Scottish dinner with all the trimmings – including haggis! This special musical celebration of Scotland's national bard features singer Rosie Carver with Celtic band Blackthorn and guest piper Jim McWilliams. From lively jigs and reels to heart-wrenching airs and ballads, you will savour their fun and sparkling renditions of Scottish melodies. Tickets \$35 for the dinner and concert or \$15 for the concert alone.

Grease

Jan. 30–Feb. 23
Studio 58
100 49th Ave W, Vancouver
www.langara.bc.ca/studio-58
604-323-5227

Studio 58 proudly presents one of the most popular musicals of all time, the original *Grease*! Be transported back to 1950's Rydell High, and sing along with the characters as greaser Danny and wholesome Sandy sort out their mutual attraction. This is a show you won't want to miss. Tickets \$12.25–\$27.75.

Need the skills to find a job? We can help!

Design a fantastic resume and cover letter, fine tune your interview techniques, learn valuable skills to succeed in the Canadian workplace, gain insight into the job market, access special services for skilled workers – all at NO COST. The Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS) Society, Vancouver Branch, has been helping immigrants and newcomers to Canada for over 14 years!

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

Past and current E.I. recipients are always welcome. Knowledgeable case managers are available to guide you through the process of reaching your career goals.

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.



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

Bernie, First Nations counsellor

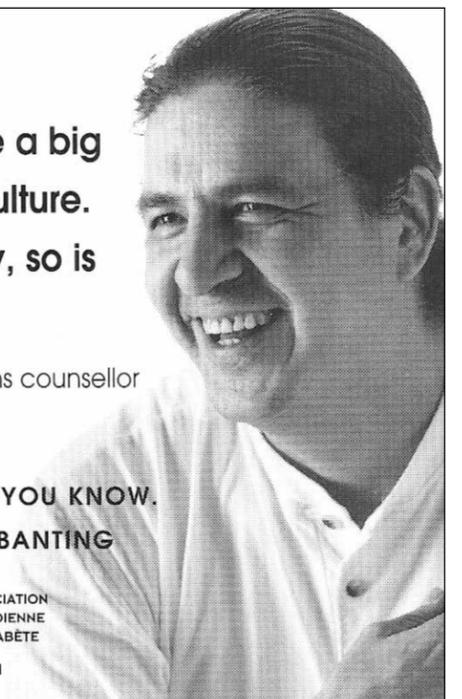
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www.diabetes.ca



Gesamtkunstwerk

Gesamtkunstwerk is the lettering on the bronze-coloured panel on the side of the Mini Storage building facing the Howe St. ramp of the Granville Bridge. Loosely translated, this German word means the concept of a work or achievement which involves the skill of integrating all its components. If we think of an opera with the composer conducting the musical piece, and directing not only the orchestra and singers but seriously influencing the stage set, costumes, auditory aspects of the theatre and taking close consideration of the make-up of his audience to weave a singular harmonious and esthetic result, this is *gesamtkunstwerk*.

On this rather bleak site at Howe St. and Beach Ave., there are some big players trying to implement this concept in the form of perhaps Vancouver's most dazzling and ambitious new tower. The \$400 million, 52-storey tower will have a triangular base to fit in a triangular space and then will twist its shape away from the Howe St. ramp and the Granville Bridge traffic to culminate in the upper levels having a rectangular shape. The windows are recessed and will give the building a honey-combed look. The balconies will incorporate a bronze trim, producing a metallic sheen. The overall effect has been described as a shimmering curtain being drawn aside to welcome people to Vancouver's downtown core.

There have been some issues with height and shadowing, but the shape of the building itself prevents permanent shading in the area, shrinks



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the footprint for tower construction and helps retain sight lines for drivers. Certainly this is a welcome departure from Vancouver's uniform sea of blue and green glass rectangular towers. One of the main players is the designer, renowned young Danish architect Bjarke Ingels. He believes architecture should consider social, cultural, economic and political issues, especially sustainable development and renewable energy. His company Bjarke Ingels Group, BIG, thinks like its acronym. His partner in Vancouver is DIALOG, a Canadian architectural firm in harmony

with BIG's principles. Some of DIALOG's projects include Granville Island's redevelopment, the new addition to the CBC building, the UBC Student Union building and several Canada Line stations. The developer is Westbank Corporation, whose projects include the Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel, the Shangri-La Residence/Hotel, Woodwards and the developing Telus Garden.

To further implement the lofty ideals stated above, there will be a mix of owned and rented units, retail and office space, including grocery, liquor and drug stores, and childcare services. The main

tower will contain mainly owned units while a 10-storey podium beside it will accommodate rentals and office space. Two 6-storey triangular structures, one located between the Howe St. ramp and the Granville Bridge and the other between the Granville Bridge and the Seymour St. ramp will be for office and retail. For environmental standards, the buildings will work towards LEED Gold certification and have green roofs. Along with 609 vehicle parking stalls, 723 bicycle parking spaces are planned. Finally, for community enrichment, the derelict area around the proj-

ect under the Granville Bridge will be transformed into a public space that will enhance the vibrancy of the area. Planned and possible uses include retail, restaurants, beer gardens, drive-in movies and an outdoor gallery installation on the underside of the bridge.

The project is expected to be completed in 2016. For detailed pictures of the proposed site: www.vancitybuzz.com/2013/10/beach-and-howe-tower-bjarke-ingels

DON RICHARDSON

Recipe by Chef Ben Kiely

Mussels steamed in cider with devon cream and thyme

The flavour combination of cider with the mussels for me is a perfect one.

The west coast of Canada has some amazing apple orchards that produce a very unique tasting cider that is slowly being used more in restaurants all over BC so please give this a try.

Ingredients

- 1 kg mussels, debearded and scrubbed clean
- 1 clove garlic, finely sliced
- 2 tbsp of finely chopped shallots or onion
- 2 tbsp of diced apple
- 2 tbsp of diced celery
- 150 mL cider

- 2 tbsp Devon cream
- 3 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 1 small bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped

Method

1. Take a medium size pot that has a lid to fit and place it on a medium to high heat add the mussels to the hot pot with the garlic, apples, celery, thyme and cider. Cover with a lid and leave to steam for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the mussels have opened and are soft, juicy and delicious. Shake the pan occasionally.
2. When all of the mussels have opened, they're ready. Transfer them to a large platter,



Photo courtesy of Ben Kiely

▲ Mussels and cider make a delicious pair.

leaving the juices behind in the pot. If any of the mussels have remained closed, throw those away, they're no good.

3. Stir the Devon cream into the pan then let it come to the

boil and bubble away for a couple of minutes. Add parsley and give the pan a jiggle then pour the sauce over your mussels and enjoy with crusty bread.

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