

To riot or
not to riot?
That is
the question
Page 3



Getting married for all the wrong reasons

by RALUCA MANOLACHE

Fraudulent marriages in Canada happen on a regular basis. However, the numbers, the impact and preventative measures are not very well known.

Richard Kurland is one of the top immigration lawyers in Canada. He says the topic of marriages for the sake of convenience is popular in many ways.

“The subject of fraud marriages has gained a lot more public attention,” says Kurland, “even if it’s in the hundreds of files every year, you have two types of files; the ones where both people are conspiring and the bogus files where someone’s heart gets broken.”

Kurland added that fraudulent marriages have become very visual in the media. He works in collaboration with *The Globe and Mail*, *The Vancouver Sun*, *The Province*, CTV, CBC, and many more media outlets.

“If you are trying to attract eyeballs...what kind of story do you want to run? It is a question of news worthiness,” says Kurland. The presence of stories of fraud marriages in the media has forced and will continue to force some hard questions and answers.

Kurland says preventing fraudulent marriages takes a lot of effort, money and human resources.

“The real issue is who is going to pay for all of those resources. If you put two or more people in an office to do those interviews that means [fewer] people on the refugee side,” says Kurland. “As a



Photo by Ewen Le Borgne, Flickr

result, refugee processing times double. Are you willing to do that? Or do you have to increase taxes, or [do] you have to take resources away from the health system and put [them] into this immigration system or away from drug trafficking counter-measures?”

Johanne Nadeau, spokesperson for Canadian Citizenship and Immigration Canada, emphasized the relevance of the fraudulent marriages problem.

“Marriage fraud can victimize Canadian citizens or permanent citizens and poses a serious challenge to the integrity of commu-

nity and citizenship and immigration programs,” says Nadeau.

She added that Canadian Citizenship and Immigration Canada takes all tips, complaints and reports of alleged marriages of convenience seriously.

“Our department focuses on detecting marriage fraud at the visa application stage. Visa applications are often refused for more than one reason. That’s why it’s difficult to specify how many people are refused solely on the basis of marriage fraud,” says Nadeau.

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Verbatim

Domestic Culture Shock

by ELLEN BIRD

There’s not much that defines us as Canadians – we’re polite, we make maple syrup. One of our famous comedians, Mike Myers, went so far as to say Canadian culture is “more like celery as a flavour.”

But perhaps we just have a subtle culture that is less accessible to identify and define. If you are one of those lucky Canadians who have lived in multiple provinces, you’ll have noticed the uniqueness and diversity of our country. Sometimes we’re so worried in contrasting our culture with different countries that we don’t realize that we have unique sub-cultures from province to province, region to region.

When I moved here from Halifax in 2009 I experienced domestic culture shock. I stepped off the Canada Line at Broadway and Cambie at 11 p.m. and was blown away by the traffic and restaurants and the sight of a wall of skyscrapers in the distance.

Although I was only moving from one Canadian city to another, I had to adapt to a different climate, a much faster pace of life, and new societal norms. Sadly, I was once one of those clueless people holding up the escalator flow by lounging on the left-side of the railing.

Vancouver’s unique culture influenced me even more. I became more conscious of how I dressed – no more hiking boot errands for me. I learned what

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Also in this issue



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the sun around
the world
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Brazilian style
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My Turn

Harper: a fine summer launch

Since he obtained his coveted majority on May 2, Prime Minister Stephen Harper hasn't wasted time getting used to and getting comfortable with his new reality.

So far, we have witnessed two different labour conflicts: Air Canada, and Canada Post. In the first case, the threat of a law to force workers back to their jobs brought about the desired results. In the other case, although no resolution was achieved, it didn't stop the majority government from forcing employees back to work.

Two aspects of these maneuvers struck me: First, the determination of this government to send a clear message. The bill, proposed by the Labour Minister, included wage provisions lower than what Canada Post put forward in its final offer. By doing so, the government plainly defined, by drawing a line in the sand, so to speak, what could be expected in the future with regards to any labor disputes in industries affiliated with the federal labour code.

The second aspect that held



▲ Prime Minister Stephen Harper

my attention was the Conservative's political boldness. The Conservative troops managed to kill two birds with one stone in these matters. We must admit that from the beginning, it transpired that a postal strike no longer carried the weight it used to. We could even bet that a numbers of young Canadians didn't even know that a strike was paralyzing Canada Post last month.

And so, it happened that the bill presented by the Harper government passed and in spite of the parliamentary marathon it induced, went unnoticed. It

never really produced the general upheaval this kind of bill usually generates. True enough, the postal workers' union got tough with government, but my guess is that's just what Harper was hoping for.

He managed, by that move, to engage Jack Layton's NDP troops in a vehement defense of the postal workers' union. There is of course nothing wrong with this in itself. However, the NDP has always suffered from being perceived as a little too close to unions in general. And so, Stephen Harper, in one fell swoop, managed to force Jack Layton to show his hand.

Furthermore, the government did nothing to put a stop to the parliamentary debate, although it could easily have done so. Instead, it decided to let orator after orator take the floor, to the full extent of their allotted time. By doing this it made it look like it was Jack Layton's doing to keep the Commons engaged during Quebec's national holiday.

The Prime Minister lost none of his political clout over these two labor conflicts. And then, shortly after the bill passed, Stephen Harper had the good fortune to play host to the British royal couple, gaining, accordingly, invaluable media coverage.

Summer is off to a good start for Stephen Harper. ✍

Translation Monique Kroeger

Photo par Προβουλευτης της Ελλάδας Flickr

► "Fradulent Marriages" from page 1

In terms of international students that might have ended up in a fraudulent marriage, the numbers are just as hard to predict.

A senior staff member at SFU International Student Services, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, says that "what happens in the students' lives outside studying [is unknown]. Definitely some international students do marry Canadians, but I think that is really an exception."

The staff member told *The Source* that students who come to SFU have a family commitment, where their family supports them throughout their studies in Canada and they are expected to return once their studies have ended.

"Many students come from Asia where these kinds of marriages are not appropriate anyway," says the staff member.

Nadeau says that, in light of these circumstances and concerns, steps have been taken to address the problem of fraud marriages.

"Regulatory changes are being proposed to crack down on marriage fraud and to deter people from using relationships of convenience to circumvent Canada's Immigration Laws," says Nadeau.

This compliments the current requirements that if you are going to sponsor someone as a spouse, you are asked to provide that person with basic needs and



▲ Marrying for convenience is not as easy as some people might think.

necessities for a period of three years. Even if the relationship ends, a new person cannot be sponsored during this period. CIC recently launched short videos to warn people not to be drawn into a relationship of convenience. This is part of their larger Public Awareness Campaign.

"Canada has also increased the number of interviews overseas, where marriage fraud seems to be more prevalent," says Nadeau. "While this process is resource intensive, these interviews have been proven successful to detect

fraudulent marriages.

"For example, in 2008 [there was a high] rejection rate for applications in the spouses and partners category originating from southern China. Processes that are commissioned in Hong Kong increased by 50% as CIC increased their interview rate for applicants that did not prove legitimate relationships," says Nadeau. "In the following years the number of applications in this category did decrease significantly. We see some improvements there." ✍

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Spencie's View

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Playful rioters

For some it was a game, for others it was anarchy

by CATALINA PARRA

This year’s Stanley Cup final lead to an event that many claim isn’t representative of Vancouver. Smashed windows, burned cars and looted stores are now part of what’s known as the 2011 Riot. Youtube is ripe with videos.

Some Vancouverites may have found themselves in an unknown land, confused by the unexpected end of what appeared to be a season of celebration and joy. Many explanations have emerged since the incident; hockey hooliganism, an angry youth, mob mentality, alcohol, or a combination of these possibilities.

Jorge Rivera, a Colombian-Canadian student at UBC, was shocked and ashamed by what happened in Vancouver. Coming from a violent country that constantly faces social and economic crises, Jorge doesn’t understand how some people from this community reacted in such a way.

“It’s pathetic to see that people used the game as an excuse to riot and steal things; knowing that in other countries people do it because they want to change the unjust systems in which they live.”

Rivera mentions that many countries constantly confront this kind of social upheaval; for instance, the riots in Athens during the 2004 Olympics. But it’s for a purpose; a crisis of

some kind. Usually it’s a crisis that explodes when the unsatisfied population has had enough with their political leaders and the economic system.

Indeed, there are several cases that exemplify this social phenomenon, especially in developing countries where one of the most efficient ways to participate in the political realm is through violence. But, in Vancouver the situation was different.

“Some people were ready for the Canucks to lose, so they could riot,” says Rivera, “there was no real reason behind it. In countries like Colombia people [see] inequality and injustice...violence seems to be the only way to get attention from the media.”

Amanda Rodriguez, an international student from Mexico, was trapped in the chaos. She told *The Source* that it was barbaric and senseless to see her city torn apart.

“Though I was not born in Vancouver, I have been living here for more than three years; and I feel this city as mine.”

Amanda was about to have dinner at a restaurant after the end of the game, but found herself and her friends trapped in the mob. Her friend told her to run and she saw everyone running towards her.

“It was tear gas! Everyone was running away from it. I’ve never experienced that before, it was horrible.”

The next day she could not believe it. She walked through down-



Photo by Jason Hargrove, Flickr

▲ Rioters revel in their self-created chaos.

town and saw the coffee shops, stores and restaurants destroyed.

“It is really sad. I wanted to cry. Vancouver is such a beautiful city, and it was all gone.”

According to a police officer who agreed to speak with *The Source* if we didn’t use his name, few people were well prepared to instigate riots and destroy parts of the downtown area. He says that it’s true that emotions and alcohol played a trick on many people who would have never acted in such a way. However, there were others who wanted to cause chaos even if the Canucks would have won.

He mentioned that there was a small group of instigators with clear intentions to destroy peace and order during the Stanley Cup finals. In the same way, he made it clear that, “they are not representative of our city.”

“Few people were ready with masks, bats and gasoline in their backpacks. These people are against everything; they are anti-social, anti-police, anti-peace; they just want to disrupt the city and cause disorder.”

South Sudan’s Road to Independence

One Man’s Struggle for Freedom

by PHOEBE YU

The world’s newest country was formed this month, but very few may have noticed. Republic of South Sudan officially seceded from the rest of Sudan

but he does recall the dire conditions of the Ugandan refugee camps, while at the same time acknowledging and thanking the Ugandan government for accepting refugees.

“The situation was horrible...it

“ I believe in 40 years...South Sudan will change, will be more democratic...

Charles Pioneson, Sudanese activist

after an majority voted for independence in a referendum earlier this year. Although this may seem like an echo of the Arab Spring uprisings in recent months, the Southern Sudanese have been fighting for their freedom for decades.

Charles Pioneson is one such example of someone who has been part of the struggle for South Sudan’s emancipation. Pioneson is the executive director of the Canada Relief Services Society (CRSS) and founder of South Sudan Concern Citizens International (SSCIA).

Pioneson describes growing up in South Sudan as hectic. Coming from a family of activists and rebel fighters, his family has come under attack by the government. But Pioneson hesitates to use the word ‘rebels’ because he

was like a detention camp,” says Pioneson. “In the camp, food was limited, there was no chance of employment, and you needed a permit to get out of the camp. If the permit expired while you were still outside of the camp, you wouldn’t be allowed back in.”

Pioneson eventually came to Canada in 2004 through the help of an Israeli human rights organization whose name he doesn’t want to mention.

“I’m very happy and proud of them. I’m proud of the Canadian government for accepting peace and people whose voices have been silent because I [didn’t] have freedom,” he says.

January of this year saw South Sudan hold a referendum on whether to secede or reunite with the north, as outlined in the 2005



Photo courtesy of Canada Relief Services Society

▲ Charles Pioneson (right) stands in support of an independent southern Sudan state.

says, “they’re what I call people who are...struggling for the freedom of the marginalized.”

Sudan used to be a disparate collection of small independent kingdoms before Egypt unified the country, which eventually culminated in a joint Anglo-Egyptian rule in the late 19th century. Sudan’s independence from Anglo-Egyptian forces came about on January 1, 1956. Since then, the country has been caught in a series of civil wars.

The particular conflict involving the north and the south has been going on for much of the past half-century. It is often portrayed as a religious war between the Arab Muslim-dominated north that runs the government, and the largely Christian and animist south. There are also tensions involving economic inequality, ethnic discrimination and human rights abuses.

Pioneson advocated for peace and people’s rights as an activist in South Sudan. He says he doesn’t remember when exactly he started doing advocacy work. Pioneson has always been in that type of environment, largely because of his father’s influence,

Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the SPLA and the government of Sudan, which was designed to end the civil war. Nearly 99% of the voters voted for a sovereign state. Pioneson echoes the current optimism surrounding the south.

“I believe in 40 years...South Sudan will change, will be more democratic, there will be [respect for] human rights,” he says. But he provides some cautionary advice for the incoming president, Salva Kiir Mayardit. “[He] is a president of peace, but he has to take advice from the people. The only way to bring peace to South Sudan is [by] allowing freedom...the government, employment system must be inclusive,” he says.

Pioneson also remains thankful to the Canadian government. “I want to thank the government of Canada who help[ed] the refugees. Now they’re good citizens and giving back to the people.”

For more information on South Sudan or for volunteer/donation purposes, contact Canada Relief Services Society. www.canadareliefservices.ca

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Erratum

In last issue’s Verbatim, writer Lynka Bélanger’s quote was omitted from her piece. In reference to people being unique and having the same feelings in common, she says, “All different and all equal.”

Photo by Madeline Norris, Flickr



Seasons Greetings...Astronomically Speaking

by IRYNA SHYROKA

Summer is upon Vancouver at last. While Vancouverites revel in the sunshine, how many actually know the way the passage of the seasons is marked?

It is interesting how different countries mark the transition of seasons. For example, in Ukraine every season starts on the first day of March, June, September and December. Canada, on the other hand, uses the astronomi-

cal calendar that places the first day of spring on Mar 20, the beginning of summer on June 21, the commencement of autumn on Sept. 23 and the start of winter on Dec. 22.

The solstices and equinoxes that signify the beginning and the end of the seasons should technically occur in the middle of their respective months. Because of thermal lag, however, regions with a continental climate often use the astronomical cal-

endar dates to mark the seasons. The length of the seasons is not uniform because of the elliptical orbit of the Earth and its varying orbital speed.

“The summer solstice is the longest day of the year and the winter solstice is the shortest,” says Stan Geller, an Ecology Master of Science candidate at UBC. “The equinox is the time when the day and the night are the same number of hours.”

In Sweden and Finland, meteorologists mark seasonal transitions with a method based on temperature. Spring starts when the daily average temperature permanently rises above 0 C, summer begins at a permanent temperature of above 10 C, summer ends when the temperature falls below 10 C and winter begins below 0 C.

“Permanently” is defined as the daily average temperature that remained above or below the limit for seven consecutive days. For the Swedes and the Finns, the seasons do not begin at fixed

dates but must be determined through observation and are known only after the fact. Furthermore, seasons can (and do) begin on different dates in different parts of Sweden and Finland.

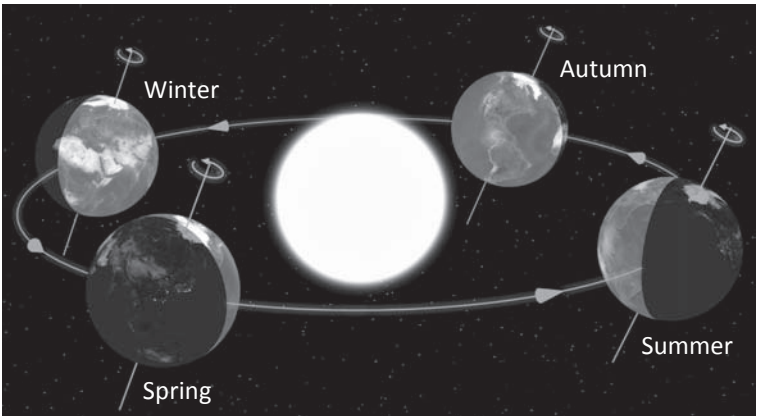
The ancient Celts, on the other hand, only celebrated the passage of summer and winter (the symbolic death and rebirth of the sun). The occasions were marked by the harvest festival of *Samhain* and the spring festival of *Beltaine*. Both events are celebrated among the Six Celtic Nations and their diasporas.

Chinese seasons are based on 24 periods known as “solar terms” in traditional East Asian lunisolar calendars (calendars

that indicate moon phases and the solar time of year). Seasons begin at the midpoint of solstices and equinoxes. The Hindu calendar, by contrast, is unique in the sense that it recognizes – and marks – six seasons in a year, which are divided into two-month intervals in the twelve months of the calendar.

Regardless of how many seasons or months each calendar has, there are still 365 days – 366 in a leap year – to enjoy. Though there are many warm days ahead for Vancouverites who love to soak in the sun, the warm, heady afternoons of summer won’t last long before autumn makes its return, so make the best of it. ☼

Illustration by Tau'olunga, Wikimedia Commons



▲ The Earth’s astronomical seasons, as seen from the northern hemisphere.

Farmers Markets 2011 Summer Schedule

Trout Lake Farmers Market – Saturdays, May 14–October 22
North Parking Lot of Trout Lake Park behind 13th Avenue
between Templeton and Lakewood
Interactive Market Map:
<http://www.managemymarket.com/mapping/?marketID=314>

Kitsilano Farmers Market – Sundays, May 22–October 23
10th and Larch at the Kitsilano Community Centre
Interactive Market Map:
<http://www.managemymarket.com/mapping/?marketID=313>

Main St Station Farmers Market – Wednesdays, June 1–October 5
Station Street between Terminal and National in front
of the Pacific Central Station and Thornton Park
Interactive Market Map:
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West End Farmers Market – Saturdays, June 1–October 22
1100 Block of Comox Street between Bute and Thurlow
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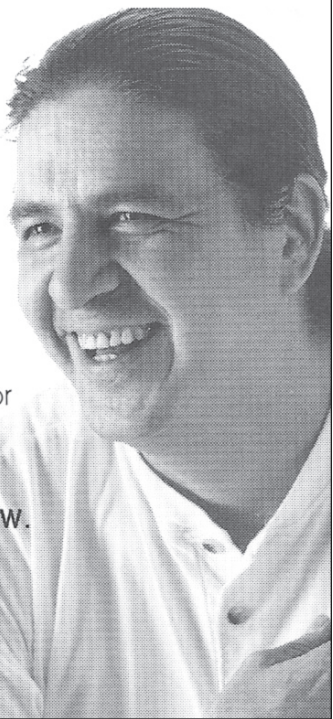
Vancouver Farmers Markets is a non-profit community-based group that organizes four farmers markets in Vancouver each Spring to Fall, a weekly Winter Market and an annual Holiday Market.

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

Bernie, First Nations counsellor

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Brazil Fest

Eat and dance the day away

by SAMUEL RAMOS

Brazil is big. Not just its geography, as they take up the majority of South America, but everything they do is big. Their culture, their importing and exporting, their music, their dancing, and of course their soccer. So it's fitting that on August 6 Brazil and all that it represents will be highlighted in its very own festival along Granville Street.

"What I love the most about Brazil and its people is...how easy [they are to talk to]," says Nate Speedie, Relationships Manager and Community Development officer for Canada Home-stay International. Speedie has traveled the globe from Mexico to Korea to the Philippines and spent four months in the north eastern coast of Brazil.

"I also love that, in Brazil, there need be no reason to start dancing," says Speedie with a chuckle.

With the summer season comes a slew of festivals in Vancouver. These festivals serve to highlight many different cultures, musical tastes and different ideas. Speedie says that it's these kinds of festivals, and much more, that make Vancouver such an attractive place to visit and live. He's certain that Brazil Fest will add to the already multicultural flavour of Vancouver.

This is Brazil Fest's second annual party and the first year that Vancouver's Brazilian Community Association is organizing it. Last year, Brazil Fest saw more than 17,000 people attend. This year organizers are expecting about 25,000.

Bianca Ozawa is the President of Vancouver's Brazilian Community Association. She and eight other board directors are working together to put this event together. Not only is she enjoying every second of planning this event, Ozawa and the other directors feel they are playing a key role in the development of the Brazilian community in Vancouver.

"We talk about what the festival is going to be like 15 years from now," says Ozawa, "and how our hard work [will have] turned out."

North America has its fair share of Brazilian festivals, from Toronto to Oakland, California, but New York continually takes

sponsors to draw prizes, like trips to the Rocky Mountains and English classes, instead of paying to be in the festival. Every dollar

Brazilian music from pop rock to folk music, from samba to ca-poeira songs.

For foodies there will be

“Every dollar paid by the sponsors in the festival is going towards the event to pay the bands, stage, power, licenses and so on. In that way we are putting together a much better festival than last year.

Lucas Socio, Communications Director, Vancouver's Brazilian Community Association

top spot when they hold their own Brazil Day.

The crowds have been growing since the festival started in 1984. People pile onto New York streets to contribute to the vibrant energy Brazilian musicians create and food vendors feed. The festival originated on 46th Avenue – now renamed “The Brazilian Street.”

Although Vancouver's Brazil Fest is tiny compared to the one in New York, Vancouver's Brazilian Community Association aims to one day have a major festival, the likes of New York's. They are in the early stages of garnering support and interest from a wide variety of people and places like other community groups, the city and the media.

"Before any decision [is made] we think about the community and how they will receive it," says Lucas Socio, Communications Director for Vancouver's Brazilian Community Association.

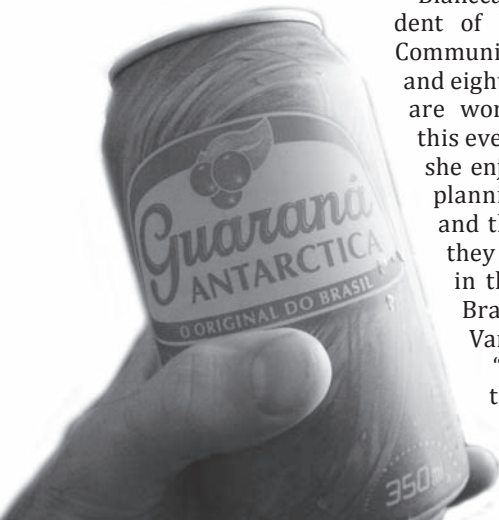
"For instance, being a non-profit association, [we] asked some

paid by the sponsors in the festival is going towards the event to pay the bands, stage, power, licenses and so on. In that way we are putting together a much better festival than last year."

This year's festival is sure to please Brazilians and non-Brazilians alike. At least 10 bands will perform that day, playing

booths selling Brazilian food, traditional deserts like *brigadeiro e beijinho* and *guarana* (Brazil's own soft drink). All of this is music to the ears of Nate Speedie.

"I expect some good dancing and beautiful people," says Speedie. "And, of course, a lot of meat on sticks." ❧



▲ Guarana, a popular fruit soft drink from Brazil.



▲ Brigadeiro e beijinho, Brazilian chocolate and crystal sugar bonbons.

➤ "Verbatim" from page 1

a Coach purse was, but I am still a Maritimer and I refuse to pay more than \$20 for something that holds keys and tissues. And like most people in Vancouver I have become a sushi connoisseur.

Living in this beautiful setting with mountains, ocean and careful city planning, I started to feel that my beloved Halifax was in comparison, a country bumpkin. With Vancouver's renowned aquarium, perfectly manicured seawall, bustling Gastown and tantalizing Grouse Grind, I scratched my

head when someone asked what defines Halifax.

Well, Halifax has some pubs, lighthouses, a couple old fortresses...things that can be found bigger and better in thousands of other places in the world. This begged the question of why I'd been so proud of my hometown, anyway.

But the answer came to me quickly. I realized that Halifax isn't trying to be the best at anything. It's not trying to be bigger than it is. It's not trying to define itself. It is what it is. It's a small unassuming city with a culture and identity of its own that

makes it a more than desirable place to be.

Both cities are fascinating on their own accord. Vancouver

boasts mountains and glass skyscrapers and Halifax has shipbuilding and heritage buildings; around-the-block lines for the

hottest Vancouver clubs, live bands on every corner in Halifax; billion dollar movie sets versus lone bagpipers playing on the piers.

But if I could make one aspect of Vancouver more like Halifax, I would want Vancouverites to muster up some Maritime friendliness – chats on the bus and warm smiles never hurt anyone. If we can discover such unique cultural differences between Canadian cities, imagine the interesting things we could learn from one another if our widely multicultural population began to open up. ❧



▲ Halifax, on the other coast of Canada, but near and dear in the heart of Ellen Bird.

Photo by Toss, Flickr

Photo by Alessandro Martins, Flickr

Street Photography by Denis Bouvier

Second Date

Second Date is the latest and fourth installation at Vancouver Art Gallery Offsite, located outside the Shangri-La Hotel on Georgia Street. It's been created by award-winning Vancouver-based sculptor Elspeth Pratt who has been exhibited both nationally and internationally. She uses ready-made industrial materials to redefine our urban space and certainly succeeds.

Two walls are built at right angles bordering a reflective pool which flows over a bright yellow shape made from vinyl. The two walls are lined with vertical wave-like forms which create a sense of fluidity to the

reflective nature of the walls. The pool reflects the colour of the yellow shape onto the walls and the walls themselves reflect the surrounding buildings, sky, as well as the moving shapes of cars and people. What you see reflected depends on the varying light conditions and so would change throughout the day.

The whole effect is quite arresting and beautiful. There's something essentially refreshing and uplifting about it which really is a transformative effect amongst the density of the area. Second Date can be seen until January 8, 2012.

Don Richardson



