

Urban ink
fuses hip hop
and history
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Vol 14 No 8 | May 13–27, 2014

www.thelasource.com



▲ Bowen Island residents listening to the emergency preparedness session offered by Canadian Red Cross volunteer Sarah Thompson.

Verbatim

Contrasts

by CLEMENCE SEINCE

I arrived in Vancouver in March of this year, work permit in hand. I was already acquainted with Montreal and Quebec City as well as with their glacial climate. Hailing from Brittany a little rain did not faze me so I decided to settle for a time in the Canadian equivalent of the “left coast.” This large city in the Canadian west is still relatively unknown in France. I quickly felt at ease in the large open spaces and was soon struck by the varied perspectives of scenery and culture. My first thought was of the power of contrasts. Contrasts in nature. Contrasts in culture. Contrasts in structure.

When the rain relents – which to my pleasant surprise happens more frequently than I was led to believe – Vancouver is a very pleasant city in which to stroll. A pedestrian can grasp the subtleties of the city and better discover and savour the contrasts



▲ A natural urban landscape.

which make up the whole. He is at ease to stop, observe and to listen. To spy the snow clad peaks beyond a corner of Chinatown, to be inspired by the briny Pacific air at the foot of a soaring glass tower.

See “Verbatim” page 7 ►

How to survive a disaster in Punjabi and other languages

by SIMON YEE

All people are vulnerable to natural disasters but for culturally diverse communities, language barriers and unfamiliarity with emergency procedures pose additional challenges.

Surviving a natural catastrophe is the focus of Emergency Preparedness Week, an annual campaign organized by Public Safety Canada in partnership with community groups throughout B.C. The initiative offers workshops, fairs, and ral-

lies in multiple languages to broaden knowledge of disaster

sits on the Pacific Ring of Fire, the province is more prone to earth-

about disaster preparation often differs from accepted practices

“We wanted to reach different demographics with this [disaster awareness] rally.

Cory McLaren, assistant emergency planner, New Westminster

preparation and reach as many communities as possible.

Getting the word out in the right languages

According to a 2008 provincial fact sheet, since British Columbia

quakes and related disasters such as landslides and tsunamis. While many new immigrants to B.C. come from other Ring of Fire countries, such as the Philippines and Japan, the information taught in their native countries

in B.C., according to Kenny Leung of the Canadian Red Cross.

Public Safety Canada's Get Prepared website recommends three steps to be prepared for an emergency: know what types See “Emergency preparedness” page 2 ►

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Generation One
supports local artists
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spectacle of
Bhangra music
and dance
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My Turn

The politics of division

More than ever, the Harper government's electoral strategy seems quite clear: divide and rule. Conservative followers might not agree with this point of view but the Prime Minister and his acolytes' actions make it increasingly hard to come to any other conclusion.

The most recent example is his public spat with no less than the head of the Supreme Court of Canada – an unprecedented event, at least in Canada's recent history. Many people might opine that it is perfectly acceptable, in our democracy, to disagree with a decision ruled in our courts and that there are procedures in place for both governments and individuals to appeal such decisions.

However, even appeals have to be capped, sooner or later. In this country, as in many others, it is the role of the Supreme Court, the uppermost tier of the Canadian judicial system, to give a final ruling. Its decisions are beyond any appeal. This does



▲ Beverley McLachlin, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada

not mean that the government is without recourse when facing judgments issued by that court. Governments can always opt to change laws, as long as they meet the highest tribunal's criteria. We saw such changes here in B.C. during the recent dispute between the provincial government and the province's teachers.

But when it comes to the Conservative government in Ottawa, it is clear that one of their main concerns has always been with the powers bestowed to the courts. The current Prime Minister follows the school of thought that Parliament should be the lawmaker, not the courts. In fact, the Prime Minister is right. It's for Parliament to write laws. This is one of the pillars of our democracy. Parliament and provincial legislatures are in charge of presenting and adopting various legislative measures.

This fundamental separation of powers between Parliament and the judicial system is important. However, the way Harper is using innuendo when it comes to the courts' powers is troubling. His approach is key to the divisive politics that top the list in the Conservative's electoral campaign strategy. This modus operandi has been and continues to be that of the Republican Party of the United States. There is nothing very elegant in this way of addressing such a core part of our democracy as general elections, yet such machinations do meet with a certain degree of success.

This brings me back to the public altercation between the Prime Minister and the Chief Justice. The whole thing is so bizarre that we can only conclude it is a

Spencie's View



political ploy aimed at fortifying the Conservative Party's base. A bit sad, but more often than not divisive politics spark the troops into rallying and amassing funds.

Where are the limits to this? We'll know come next general elections. ✂

Translation Monique Kroeger

► "Emergency preparedness" from page 1 of disasters are most common in your province, make a plan so that family members know what actions to take during an emergency, and get an emergency kit to survive for at least 72 hours while emergency responders help those in critical need.

Many Lower Mainland municipalities offer emergency preparedness workshops that help people accomplish these steps and while most are conducted in English, several municipalities, including Vancouver and Surrey, offer workshops in Cantonese, Mandarin and Punjabi upon request. The Get Prepared website

in a disaster in their own languages and in a way that is culturally appropriate.

According to Cheekwan Ho, communications manager at Canadian Red Cross, the program has enlisted 15 volunteers to visit 400 Greater Vancouver households of non-English-speaking, socially isolated seniors in order to educate them on staying safe by preventing falls and earthquake proofing.

Beyond workshops through rallies and fairs

Other B.C. communities promote emergency preparedness in creative ways. The town of Col-

emergency supplies quickly throughout the city. New Westminster's assistant emergency planner Cory McLaren hopes this activity will expand next year to include even more cyclist participation.

According to McLaren, these types of events can help more people prepare for disasters.

"Workshops and dioramas are important in getting the message across to families," says McLaren. "But we wanted to reach different demographics with this rally."

Volunteers key to preparedness initiative

According to Emergency Management BC, there are approximately 13,000 volunteers across British Columbia who are ready to assist first responders in an emergency. Additionally, many also offer their time to educate and prepare others for emergencies.

"We know that our communities come together during emergencies, and that neighbours and friends support each other when disaster strikes," says Susie Gimse, a director from the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, in a news release.

"Emergency Preparedness Week gives us a chance to talk about emergencies before they happen, and to connect with the groups, services, and agencies that work to keep our community safe and resilient every day." ✂

To learn more about emergency preparedness and for workshop information, please visit: www.getprepared.gc.ca/embc.gov.bc.ca/em/index.htm www.redcross.ca/what-we-do/migrant-and-refugee-services/smartstart-disaster-preparedness-vancouver



▲ An emergency kit for 72 hour survival.

has pamphlets in several languages as well.

In addition, the Canadian Red Cross offers free SmartStart workshops in 18 languages. These workshops are specifically aimed at providing newcomers and other non-English speakers with the practical skills needed

wood held their 7th Annual Regional Emergency Preparedness Fair, which provided interactive learning opportunities children and families.

New Westminster's Emergency Management Office wanted to draw attention to the importance of cyclists during a disaster, as they may be able to reach places that larger vehicles cannot.

The city hosted their first ever Amazing Disaster Rally on May 10 where 50 cyclists participated in a series of exercises designed to simulate routing of disaster response teams and transport

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

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



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by FLORENCE HWANG

When Grade 10 David Thompson Secondary School student Simran Kalkat heard about an opportunity to learn about South Asian issues, she quickly signed up. Simran, along with other Vancouver high school students, are proving they can make an impact through Mosaic Institute's "Next Generation" project.


After the four-month project, students at David Thompson

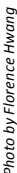
In 2011, the South Asian Canadian Global Citizenship Project began

Sharni Kalkat, Grade 12 student, David Thompson Secondary

In 2012, the South Asian Canadian Global Citizenship Project took home the Canadian Race

“Next Generation” is a series of four workshops held over four months. It is the first time this project has been held in

"This is my message to everyone – when you have children, please tell them what's happening [gendercide] so they can prevent it from happening. They should be happy to have girls," says Simran. 



▲ *Grade 12 students show off the merchandise they are selling to fundraise for GirlKind, an Abbotsford organization focused on raising awareness about gendercide.*

explor^{ASIAN} 2014

VANCOUVER ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

MANY CULTURES, MANY LANGUAGES, ONE CELEBRATION

MAY 1 - JUNE 1
explorasian.org

★ May 1-30
A View Within a View: Garden expressions, exchanges & explorations UBC Library's Irving A. Barker Learning Centre, 1981 E. Mall, Vancouver
barkerlearning@ubc.ca

On the far East Classical Chinese Garden presents the "China Maple Hall," symbolizing the union between China and Canada, showcasing China's cultural legacy through philosophical principles of Feng shui and Taijitu, striving to achieve harmony and a balance of opposites.

★ May 2-4
The Life of Restless: Persia's Glimpse from the Shadowlands (Book of Kings) West Vancouver Community Centre, 4225 Marine Dr., West Vancouver
wvcc.norfolk.ca

Life Storytelling through and beyond silent films, songbooks, memories, magical hints, dangerous dreams, era-crossed towns and much more as 30+ artists celebrate the life of the Persian West Persian in English with some Persia to introduce the young and young at heart to new place of Persian culture.

★ May 2 - 7 pm (Free admission 6 pm)
REED: The Life and Works of Roy Kiyooka Tourist Centre, 155-422 W 4th Ave., Vancouver
604-687-2172

Screening of REED: Roy Kiyooka, Japanese-Canadian multimedia artist was a seminal force in the New York School of Painting. REED follows the life of a brilliantly creative and often spontaneously unpredictable man whose work continues to electrify powerfully in our times. Panel w/ (Shirley Rye's legacy) Tickets: \$15.

May 3 - 2 pm
explorASIAN 2014 Festival Official Opening: International Arts Gallery, International Village Mall, 48 W Pender St., Vancouver
explorasian.org

★ May 3-31
Generation One Exhibition International Arts Gallery, International Village Mall, 48 W Pender St., Vancouver
604-687-2172

This two part exhibition starts with the "So Day is Canada" exhibition of works of first generation Pan-Asian immigrant artists that is "Vancouver" by photographer and Water Park Artist from using traditional Chinese paper, brush and ink as medium of painting. Water POOL made a best attempt to use acrylic paint to depict the scenery and beauty of Vancouver.

May 5, 9
BEYOND THE WALLS: YCO concert Sound of Dragon Music Festival Sheddott Centre for the Arts & The Neighbourhood Community Arts & Recreation Centre - yco.ca

"Beyond the Walls" will feature a program of music by BC composers Lin Zhong, Cao Lang, Farnah Samadpour, Mark Amernick, and visiting Taiwanese guest artists Yu-Chen Chang and Ling Hsueh Shen. The repertoire will range from traditional to newly composed works, featuring instruments of many cultures in traditional Chinese instruments and conducted by Chih-Sheng Chou, Music Director of the Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra of Taiwan.

★ May 7, 10, 14
First Families, First Stories: Research workshop Sheddott Centre - yco.ca

explorASIAN's First Families, First Stories History project initiated by the Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society to begin the process of giving voice to pioneering families of Asian heritage and to share the story of their arrival and settlement in Canada.

Part One: History Research Workshop, May 7 - 11, 6:30-8pm, Vancouver Public Library. This workshop will help you learn to use search engines, access Ancestry Library Edition, FamilySearch, etc., as well as various Special Collections resources.

Part Two: Writing a Historical Narrative, May 10, 1-4pm, USC Learning Exchange, 625 Asian Canadian Heritage - for those who are interested in researching their family and community's history. Facilitator: Yui Tan-Mountain aka "Mountain" (aka "Mountain").

Part Three: An Asian North American Primer - All you need to know but never bothered to ask. May 10, 2-4pm, USC Learning Exchange, 625. Do you know that the first South Asian person set foot on North American soil in 1449 and that South Asians were kept as slaves on American plantations? Materials: Kim Wong Chee will advise you with little known facts about your early Asian ancestors.

★ May 10-14
Summe Project Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre, 6888 Southwold Cres., Burnaby
604-773-7000 • info@nikkeimuseum.org

Summe, a popular festival of good luck in Japan, traces back to the origin of Zen in the 9th century. 100 artists will participate in a Summe for a special exhibition opening in conjunction with NWACC Spring Bazaar on the 10th coinciding with May 24 Landmarking party at Asian Her.

★ May 10-31
BC Chinese Orchestra LIVE! Concert Gateway Theatre, 6100-60th Ave., Richmond
604-272-8607 • mail@bccho.ca

A unique blend of Chinese instrumental soloists, composed by Mr. Guan Rui Guo Yan Shuangliang who will accompany the concert.

★ May 10 - 2-4 pm
Pioneers, Mavericks and Game Changers Britannia Cultural Centre, 10851 Napier Rd., Vancouver
britculturalcentre.ca

World Poetry readings, innovative Asian Canadian writers and poets who are being discovered by their ethnicity to embrace a broader vision of what it means to be Asian Canadian.

★ May 10 - 3pm
"Truth Be Told" film screening, Life and Times of a Chinese Canadian Writer USC Learning Exchange, 625 Asian St., Vancouver • www.uscmedia.com

May 10 - 7:30pm
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★ May 10 - 3pm
Illustrated Cultural Narratives & Graphic Novel by Asian Canadian Writers' Workshop USC Learning Exchange, 625 Asian St., Vancouver
604-355-9799

★ May 10-31
Summe Project Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre, 6888 Southwold Cres., Burnaby
604-773-7000 • info@nikkeimuseum.org

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May 14 - 5-8pm
Living (and Dying) for Canada's Ideals Chinese Canadian Military Museum, 2nd Floor, 10851 Napier Rd., Vancouver
events@ccmm.ca • 604-608-8880

This event acknowledges those who sacrificed to make Canada a more just society, featuring an exhibition, film screening and panel discussion.

★ May 14 - 7-9pm
2014 Arthur K. Wong Lecture: The Global Eco-civilization, Resilience and Adaptability by Dr. David Suzuki The Green Center for Performing Arts, 5205 Creighton Rd., Vancouver
studios.ubc.ca

In such uncertain times, we must look to biology to find a strategy for survival and the link is diversity.

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studios.ubc.ca

In such uncertain times, we must look to biology to find a strategy for survival and the link is diversity.

★ May 17 - 2:30 & 4-5:30
Bhikkhū-An Afternoon of Bengali Poetry Richmond Cultural Centre, 7705 Blenheim St., Richmond • 778-482-4370

An anthology of Bengali poetry presented in a culturally entertaining way with singing, instrumental music, dance or expressive acting. English translation of presentations with social interaction and discussion over refreshments.

★ May 21-22
100th Anniversary of the Kamagata Maru Episode Museum of Vancouver, 1200 Chestnut St., Vancouver
kamagatamaru100.com • 604-736-4431

May 21 Opening of Unsettled: Vancouver's Weight of the Kamagata Maru. Pacific demonstration, intercultural dialogue and political evolution come together to ensure the Kamagata Maru story.

★ May 22 - 2-3:30pm
The Search of Peiking Man Asian Century Hall, 10851 Napier Rd., Vancouver
asian.ubc.ca • 604-522-2477

The significance of the Peiking Man fossils (30,000 to 700,000 years old) is explored. The dramatic and mysterious story of their discovery and the subsequent search in Japan, China and the U.S. is told by Dr. Harry Lee, emeritus professor, McGill.

Many are still trapped today into the streets and landscapes of West Vancouver.

May 22 - 6:30-8:30pm Kamagata Maru Episode, 10851 Napier Rd., Vancouver
kamagatamaru100.com • 604-736-4431

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★ May 22 - 3:30-5pm
The Search of Peiking Man Asian Century Hall, 10851 Napier Rd., Vancouver
asian.ubc.ca • 604-522-2477

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★ May 22 - 30
explorASIAN Book Launch Victoria, San Pedro • explorasian.org

Reading stories from the heart of the Vancouver 50th anniversary. Unique and powerful, bristly honest yet compassionate.

Part One Readings: Heidi Santa Singh and other stories by Sandra Boring, May 22, 7-8:30pm, Vancouver Public Library, 200-343 Renfrew St., Vancouver: 604-321-4100

Part Two Readings: Jim Choi, Kevin Chong, Donnie Lee and Nancy Lee, May 26, 6:30-8pm, Puffinblower Books, 2422 Main Street, Vancouver: 604-674-4311

★ May 24 - 1-3pm
Hyphen Nation Magazine Launch Irving A. Barker Learning Centre, USC, 1981 E. Mall, Vancouver
hyphenationmagazine.ca

Julia Lin, author, reading of "Ward" and Chung Collection. Hyphen Nation Magazine launches "Hyphen Nation Magazine" Centre to hear readings, watch film screenings and learn more about what's going on in the Asian Canadian arts community.



DERRICK O'KEEFE

Left Bank



What happened to Vancouver's civic left?

I'm writing this column in somewhat of a daze of sleep deprivation and euphoria. Our second son, Camilo, was born a week ago.

Our little family of four can't afford to live in Vancouver. But we're doing it anyway, with our 750 or so square feet downtown. After our first son was born, we gave up our small co-op housing unit in the Downtown Eastside in favour of three bedrooms out in Richmond, where I grew up and where rents are ever so slightly less insane. But we couldn't handle the commuting. We both worked downtown, and we also commuted to see friends, and to attend social and political events.

Vancouver is our home. So we moved back, managing to find a two bedroom apartment in one of the scattered non-profit run buildings downtown – in Yaletown, no less. We pay “market rent,” but it's way less per month than most units in the buildings around us.

All that to say that it takes persistence and luck for low and middle income earners to find a place where they can live in this city. The relentless logic of Capital, manifest in real estate speculation and high end development, is driving people out of Vancouver or leaving them without a home at all – out on the street or in a shelter.

This crisis of affordability should be the central issue in this year's Vancouver municipal election. As I've argued before, Vision Vancouver and Mayor Gregor Robertson have failed to live up to their promises. I would add that Vision is structurally incapable of fulfilling these promises, because of their links with the city's biggest developers. He who pays the piper calls the tune.

What Vancouver needs more than anything is a clear political voice expressing opposition to developer control of City Hall. A political alternative that can present a principled critique while recognizing and defending the things that this administration has done right, like opposition to tar sands pipelines, from right-wing attacks.

What are the prospects for a renewed left alternative in Vancouver?

The Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE), the historic vehicle of the civic left, has been decimated. It has been split, and split again. It's been a painful past dozen years since COPE swept the 2002 elections with Mayor Larry Campbell.

The joy of E-Day 2002 soon turned to horror as COPE supporters learned the most painful lesson of liberal “democracy” under capitalism: winning office doesn't mean winning power. Campbell had progressive views on drug policy, from his years as a coroner, but not much else; the ex-cop was about the worst person to head up a progressive administration made up of gadfly councillors and a base expecting real political change. Campbell was rightly described as a Trojan Horse for Vancouver's left, and he went on

to be appointed as a Senator by the federal Liberals.

Almost immediately, COPE's caucus was sharply divided on a series of issues: the use of police to end an historic housing squat at Woodward's, the public-private-partnership construction of the Canada Line, and expanded gambling in the city – among other things.

After a couple of years of a bitter internal split in the caucus, Campbell and a group of councillors left to form Vision Vancouver. Those who stayed in COPE have been split on strategy for the past three elections, with some version of cooperation or non-competition with Vision Vancouver winning approval from COPE's membership each time.

The bitterness of the debates has driven away many stalwarts, plus the agreements have meant smaller and smaller COPE slates, no mayoral candidates, and thus an ever lower profile. Meanwhile the internal division and acrimony hurt the party's ability to organize issue-based campaigns and to attract new members.

While COPE was being diminished, Vision Vancouver was establishing a new ‘big tent’ hegemony over city politics, attracting moderate right-wingers (the type who don't viscerally hate cyclists and environmentalists, for example) and getting support and money from both big developers and many labour unions.

In the past year, COPE lost its only elected member, Allan Wong on the School Board, to Vision Vancouver, and another quiet split took place, with the resignations of David Chudnovsky and RJ Aquino from the COPE executive. They have recently announced the formation of OneCity, with Aquino declaring he will run for City Council with the new party. I was encouraged by the language of OneCity's first public statement: “OneCity emerged out of a deep concern that social inequality is growing, current development policies are making the situation worse, and City Hall is not listening.”

Full disclosure: I served on the COPE executive in 2006–2007, and I was invited to a consultation meeting organized by the founders of OneCity. I have many friends and allies in both parties. It's been a rough past decade for all of us on Vancouver's left. The solution to this impasse will involve members of both COPE and OneCity, as well as disgruntled Vision supporters and people not presently involved at all. It can be hard after so much division, but we have to assume good faith in others even when we have big strategic disagreements.

This city is my home, and I'll be damned if we are going to let it become a soulless land of condos for the rich without a fight. ✂

**That's two columns sketching the big picture of Vancouver politics – next week we'll get into specific policy analysis with a look at COPE's important proposal for a local Housing Authority.*



MOSAIC Settlement Services
Eris Lam
604 254 9626
elam@mosaicbc.com
www.mosaicbc.com/settlement-services

Free Community Workshops May 12–16 English & Multilingual

Canadian Citizenship Application Process	
Time:	May 16, 1–3pm
Venue:	MOSAIC Vancouver, 1720 Grant St
Registration required:	Call 604 254 9626 ext 227
Cyber Awareness Workshop (English with Mandarin support).	
Time:	May 16, 1–3pm
Venue:	MOSAIC Burnaby Centre for Immigrants, 5902 Kingsway
Registration required:	Call 604 438 8214 ext 114
Canadian Citizenship Preparation (Tagalog)	
Time:	May 20 & 21, 5:30–9pm
Venue:	MOSAIC Vancouver, 1720 Grant St, 2 nd floor
Registration required:	Call 604 254 9626 ext 484
Canadian Society & Social Expectations (English, with Dari and Pashto support)	
Time:	May 21, 10am–12pm
Venue:	MOSAIC Moving Ahead Office, #310–7155 Kingsway
Registration required:	Call 604 218 2685
Estate Planning Workshop for Seniors (English, with free multilingual interpretation available upon request)	
Topics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is a will and why you need one• Executors• Power of Attorney and Representation Agreements• Guardianship
Time:	May 22, 12–2pm
Venue:	MOSAIC Burnaby Centre for Immigrants, 5902 Kingsway
Registration required:	Call 604 438 8214 ext 115
Financial Literacy Workshop	
Time:	May 22, 7–8:30 pm
Venue:	5064 Kingsway, Burnaby
Registration required:	Call 604 438 8214 ext 112

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



Surrey International Children's Festival – The Dinosaurs Are Coming!

Surrey, BC – The Surrey International Children's Festival is ecstatic to be invaded by Earth's Dinosaur Zoo! Meet a menagerie of insects, mammals and ancient life like dinosaurs that are alive and mostly friendly (!) in this journey into the past when prehistoric animals once roamed free.

Festival dates: May 22-24, 2014, Thurs/Fri: 9:00 am – 2:30 pm, Sat: 10:30 am – 7:30 pm. Tickets are on sale now at Surrey Art's Centre box office. The Arts Centre Box Office can be contacted at 604-501-5566

The Surrey International Children's Festival is the only arts-based international children's festival south of the Fraser River, providing an opportunity for children to become the creative thinkers of tomorrow. Every year thousands of children have the opportunity to discover and develop their creativity.

About The Surrey International Children's Festival
The Annual Surrey International Children's Festival inspires young hearts and minds to greater possibilities, and celebrates our rich and diverse cultural heritage through performing and visual arts experiences. www.surrey.ca/childrensfestival

Arts Centre Box Office: 604-501-5566
Festival info line: 604-501-5598

Issues & Ideas



All eyes on Nigeria as international outrage builds

by DEBO ODEGBILE

Nigeria is currently in the international spotlight over the terrible events of the past three weeks. Two bombings rocked the capital city, resulting in the deaths of at least 89 people, and on top of that, more than 200 secondary school girls were kidnapped, plus another 11 girls this month. These events add to the long list of attacks attributed to the Boko Haram group since it began terroriz-

It is unfortunate that many good things about Nigeria rarely make it into the international press, such as the significant support it has provided in peacekeeping missions in other countries, its booming industries, and the vibrant creative arts scene, including literature, fashion, music, and films. However, the current bad press the government is receiving is focusing much-needed attention on the shaky foundation on which the country currently oper-

“In these often cynical times, this story highlights the difference that our attention and voices can make.

ing the north-eastern part of country in 2002. The group’s reign of terror includes the murder of more than 70 male students in two separate incidents in Sept. 2013 and Feb. 2014, as well as last year’s kidnapping of women and children (who were later released in a prisoner swap), attacks on the United Nations headquarters in the capital, journalists, churches, military barracks, and telecommunication infrastructure.

Until recently, we had seen very little action from the Nigerian federal government. Nigeria’s president, Goodluck Jonathan, has been rightly criticized both in Nigeria and around the world for doing little, if anything, to seriously tackle the years-long security crisis. The Nigerian government was embarrassed into taking more action by media focus contrasting the government’s silence and outrage expressed by political leaders in other countries, including President Barack Obama.

The scale of the international community’s attention has been surprising and is certainly welcomed; this may be the best hope for getting these girls safely back to their families. Had it not been for this groundswell of attention, worldwide protests and social media campaigns (e.g. #bringbackourgirls), the Nigerian government might have continued to view this event as another minor distraction from its real priority: getting itself re-elected in 2015.

ates, fueled by an unhealthy obsession with wealth and material things that is derailing Nigeria from achieving its great potential. Nigerian civil society groups and ordinary citizens have been complaining about this situation for many years, but it is the international spotlight created by the abduction of these young girls that is now leaving the Nigerian government exposed and on the defensive.

The one piece of good news coming out of this tragic story is the outpouring of concern that has come from different parts of the world, which has in turn galvanized more intensive efforts to find the missing girls and brought in on-the-ground support from additional security experts. Continuing shows of support from around the world, such as the May 10 rally held in downtown Vancouver’s Robson Square, are crucial to maintaining momentum in the mobilization of assistance from around the world, such as the Canadian government’s offer of military surveillance equipment and personnel, to help find the girls. Such actions are also necessary because the plight of these girls might otherwise be forgotten once the news cycle determines that it has had its fill and is in need of a fresh story. In these often cynical times, this story highlights the difference that our attention and voices can make, even in situations that seem far removed from our reality.✍

Elders and Roots: Ginseng and Chinese migrants

by SALENA TRAN

The ginseng root is considered a cultural delicacy in Chinese culture, but it is not commonly used in modern artwork.

Evan Lee, a Vancouver based artist, combines images of Chinese migration to Canada and the plant root together in his new art exhibition *Elders and Roots*. The art exhibition, held at the Richmond Art Gallery until June 15, includes three separate works: “Ginseng Roots Studies,” a collection of scanned ginseng photos, a series of hand drawn photos called “Old Women,” and a video titled “Manual Labour.” Lee believes that all three bodies of work are connected under the theme of migration and globalisation.

“The migration theme came from the curator, who proposes that in one form or another, the subjects of all the works are migrants. My work is increasingly focused on this topic. I am not a migrant but most of my friends and family are,” says Lee.

Inspirations for the Works

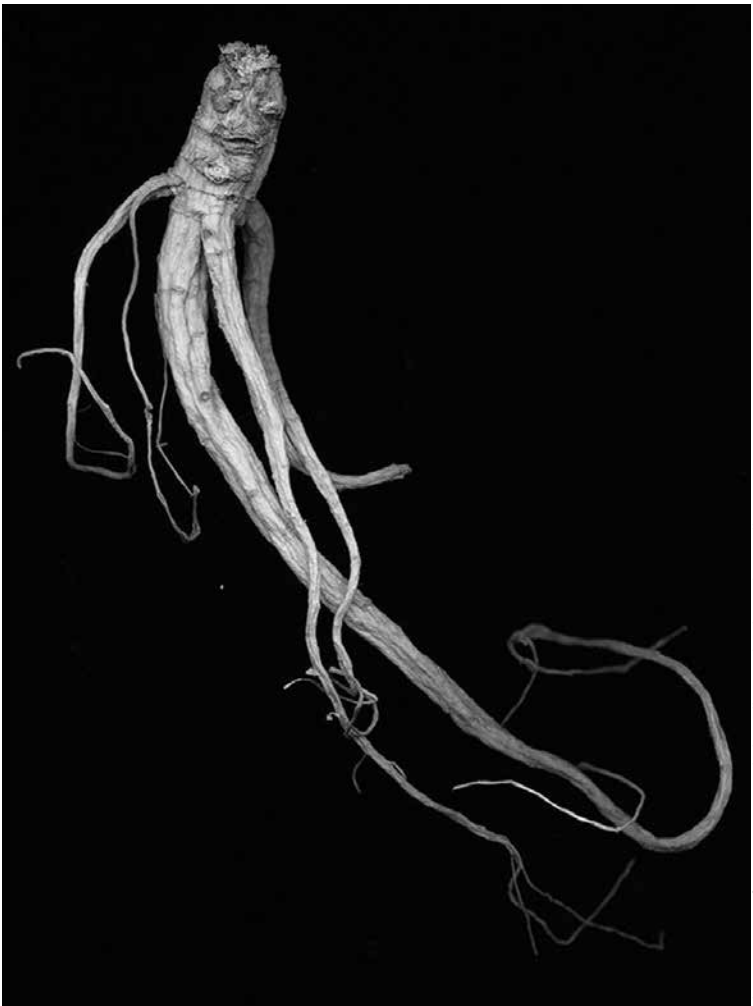
Elders and Roots focuses on three different aspects of migration. The ginseng root is delicacy in Chinese culture and Lee used this as an inspiration for his first work “Ginseng Root Studies”.

“I have a memory of my parents taking us through Chinatown and showing us how the roots on display in the windows looked like people,” says Lee.

Lee tries to recreate this memory by scanning ginseng roots and positions them to resemble different human actions. Lee says the process of scanning the roots was complicated, stating that the entire series which included multiple steps of preparation, capturing, editing and selecting, took over a year



▲ Evan Lee, Vancouver based artist.



▲ A ginseng photo part of the series “Ginseng Root Studies.”

to complete. Lee’s second body of work titled “Old Women,” is a collection of hand-drawn photos of elderly Chinese women walking the streets of Chinatown rummaging for unwanted goods. Lee’s inspiration to include this body of work in his exhibition comes from the idea that these women are migrants who came to Canada looking for a new life. “Old Women” also explores the idea of a modern-aged gleaner. Lee believes that together, both the “Ginseng Root Study” and “Old Women” complement each other.

“Both the roots and elderly women can be said to be at the same time frail but powerful, graceful yet rugged and archetypical yet unique. I had always wanted to show them together,” says Lee.

Reaction to the Exhibition

The combination of human-like ginseng and the drawings of elderly women has brought attention to the exhibit.

“Many enjoy the life-like photos of the ginseng. If you look closely, you see the faces, the

hair, and the arms of people in [the Ginseng]” says Su Jin Lim, the emerging artists committee chair at the Richmond Art Gallery.

She mentions that the initial reaction of the guests is bewildering, but that the connections between the ginseng roots, the video, and the old women become obvious to most of those who come and visit. Francis Nguyen, 19, does not visit art galleries often, however, he found this one to be particularly interesting. Nguyen heard about the gallery through his friend and decided to visit after hearing about the ginseng photos. Nguyen says that the exhibition is interesting even for someone who isn’t an art enthusiast.

“I felt the ginseng work is really unique and you can see the human postures and the resemblance. It was something I’ve never seen before,” says Nguyen.✍

Elders and Roots has been showing at the Richmond Art Gallery since April 26 and will continue to show till June 15.

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Generation One: First and second generation artists pave the way for future generations

by PEGGY LAM

Art is given a supportive hand as new immigrants find ways to express cultural identity. On May 3rd, the Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society (VAHMS) launched the Explore ASIAN festival.

The festival started with an opening ceremony introducing the “*So This Is Canada!*” art exhibit. With approximately 200 people in attendance at the International Art Gallery, the event consisted of a reception with participating artists, as well as a public art demonstration by artists Danvic Briones and Hai-Ping Lee.

As part of the festival, VAHMS is organizing the Generation One art exhibit: an inter-generational and intercultural show of artwork from first and second generation Canadian pan-Asian artists. Titled “*So this is Canada!*” the exhibit is in its fifth year, and features 39 artists from the Lower Mainland and showcases 61 pieces of their work.

VAHMS and Generation One

Prior to 2010, VAHMS concentrated on promoting Canadian-born artists of Asian heritage. However, given the huge wave of migration in the 1990s and early millennium, the organi-

zation saw the need to support new immigrant artists.

Generation One fosters a link between Canadians who have been here for a long time and those who have just arrived.

The barriers for new immigrant artists still remain difficult to overcome.

Esmie McLauren, artist and organizer of Generation One, says, “The journey to being a professional artist is tough enough under normal circumstances, and being an immigrant artist makes it even more challenging.”

The Struggling Artist Adapting to a New Way of Life

Artist Hai-Ping Lee testifies to this experience. Lee graduated with a fine arts degree in Taiwan and immigrated to Canada thirty years ago. After attending Emily Carr and starting her own gallery for two years, she moved away from the arts in search of better ways to support family.

“I never wanted to get away from the arts,” Lee states. “At that time it was just really tough. I had my first child so I went the other route. I started to study accounting and got a job in the bank as an account manager. Once my kids [were] older, I knew this [would be] my opportunity. So I came back, trying to be a full-time artist.”

Danvic Briones, artist, began his art at age six in the Philip-



▲ Artist Hai-Ping Lee doing an art demo at “So This is Canada!”

ines, when he was challenged by his uncle to draw a simple elephant. He continues to practice his art since.

“It was just serendipitous from there,” he recalls. Since coming to Canada in December 2011, Briones struggled with finding the right opportunity and moments to showcase his artwork. He believes Generation One is the first step to introducing Vancouver to his art and the way he creates his work.

“My art would always be adapting to the new environment. Now my art is about what I see in Can-

ada – now it’s about Canadian integration. This event is inspiring, in this sense, because it gives a chance for first generation immigrants and artists to show their crafts and culture to Canada.”

Finding an Artistic Identity

Generation One’s diverse exhibit consists both of traditional and modern styles; and it represents both Asian culture to the larger masses, and conveys Canadian culture to immigrants. “One of the ways people know about other people’s culture is through the visual arts – it’s a holistic way



of sharing. Your art emanates where you are, who you are, and what you are,” says Briones.

Through the “*So This is Canada!*” exhibit, VAHMS also aims to provide the younger generation with the means to find their identities in Canada’s multicultural fabric. “It’s important,” Lee explains. “We want to pass down our traditions to the next generation right? If we don’t give it to them, they would have no background anymore. We need to keep our cultures and our traditions. I learned that as a parent. I want to pass that on to them.”

As visual arts play an important role in the recording of history for different cultures, the artwork at Generation One develops the potential for the younger Asian generation to deepen the understanding of their cultural history.

“Through [the exhibit], they can see their way of life and what their ethnicity is. It gives them a brief history, [an] education, and [a] rich variety of information of how people lived and do things – not only of themselves, but of other people’s cultures as well,” says Briones. ☞

The “*So This is Canada!*” exhibition runs May 3 to May 14 at the International Art Gallery. For more information, visit www.explorasian.org/generation-one



Present

Sal Capone: The Lamentable Tragedy of

“the performances range from high-octane to explosive” – Montreal Gazette
“a must-see. No doubt about it...I implore you to go see Sal Capone” – Bloody Underrated
“balls-out performance” – Montreal Godzilla

April 7, 2014 urban ink productions in association with Black Theatre Workshop, presents the Vancouver premiere of **Sal Capone: The Lamentable Tragedy of** at the Roundhouse Performance Centre May 22 – 31 2014.

This hip-hop theatrical powerhouse, written by Montreal native and Vancouver resident Omari Newton and directed by urban ink Artistic Director Diane Roberts, was inspired by the loss of unarmed youth Fredy Villanueva in a police shooting six years ago in Montreal. Following the ensuing protest come riot, the playwright was compelled to investigate the complex relationship between socially and culturally marginalized youth and the police, and the pressures they face while trying to reconcile the violence that impacts their lives. **Sal Capone** adds an essential voice to this timely and relevant conversation.

The play follows a young hip-hop group caught in the aftermath of a violent police shooting. Struggling to cope with the death of one of their members, the group confronts issues of their own biases, racism and a distrust of authority. **Sal Capone** evokes the urgency of youth struggling to find their place in the world through an energetic mix of hip-hop, spoken word and experimental sound and video. For a taste of Sal Capone please go to <http://vimeo.com/90914002>.


This unique collaboration brings together a talented cast of actors and design team from across the country including **Letitia Brookes** and **Tristan D. Lalla** (Montreal), **Billy Merasty** (Toronto) and **Kim Villagante** and **Jordan Waunch** (Vancouver). **Troy Slocum** (original sound design); **Ana Cappelluto** (set/lighting design); **Candelario Andrade** (projection design); **Sarah Hall-Khlifi** (costume design)

urban ink is dedicated to developing, producing, touring and disseminating astonishing works of theatre sourced from Indigenous and intercultural processes. Our goal is to ultimately create, through every project and every event, a fertile meeting ground— creating and producing extraordinary theatre from diverse cultural perspectives.

Sal Capone : The Lamentable Tragedy of
May 22 – 31 2014, Roundhouse Performance Centre
Tickets \$12 - \$25
salcapone.brownpapertickets.com

Also Featuring :

BAMN! Youth Speak Truth to Power! (youth hip-hop performance)
May 25 and 31, 1pm (before 2pm matinees)
Rue Surreal Art Installation and spontaneous events
Roundhouse Exhibition Hall May 22 - 31



➤ “Verbatim” from page 1

To be amazed by the starfish glimpsed from a kayak on False Creek and amused by the varied perspective created by the freighters with their mountain backdrop off Kitsilano beach. All natural contrasts that blend together in seductive and unique harmony.

Vancouver also revels in the plurality of its cultures. At once American with its soaring buildings but also a little European with the intimate small cafes of Mount Pleasant or Commercial Drive. Asian as well with its Japadog stands and the dried fish displays of

Numberless joggers encountered while on a seawall jaunt, swanky downtown limos on a Friday or Saturday night. Yet the city also holds a darker side hidden from view. Many a Vancouverite will warn you away from infamous East Hastings where the marginalised, the junkies and the homeless have been put aside. As if uncovering this awkward reality would stain the reputation of one of the most pleasant cities in Canada.

So that is Vancouver, an amalgam of many cultures. The layering of many different ethnic and social memories makes for a

place of contrasts but one which is unique and authentic for such a young city. That is why it is such a pleasure for me to wander around town. Each neighbourhood, every street can be an opportunity to discover and observe the mix that makes up the whole. The contrasts stand out in Vancouver; they are fused, blended and mirrored in the City of Glass creating a unique urban experience. ☞

Translation Barry Brisebois



▲ Chinatown demonstrates one of Vancouver’s many cultural facets.

Chinatown. In the end though Vancouver is a truly Canadian city wedged in the wilderness between towering mountains* and the Pacific. The cultural contrasts are reflected in the faces of Vancouver, in the music played by restaurants and cafes, in the bilingual street signs in English and Chinese and in the sidewalk conversations held in many tongues.

Vancouver is also a city of social contrasts. At first glance rich, healthy, energetic.

by SONJA GRGAR

Bhangra as a fusion platform


Lal also points to the Balkan Bhangra show (June 6 and 7) that features four groups: Orkestar Slivovica Balkan Brass Band,

Oliver Schneider, Orkestar Slivovica's bandleader/manager, explains that the band's Balkan

Because traditionally many Balkan brass musicians are Roma, whose ethnic origins trace back to India, many of the tunes are inspired by Indian music. Therefore, it seems only fitting that Balkan brass music

"We enjoy a multicultural audience already, and it is both fun and good business to expand our audience reach [with festivals like VIBCI]," says Schneider.

The group plans to perform a new piece at the Media Arts Mehfil event on May 30, and they hope it

"[It was VIBC's goal] with this #BhangraLove theme to be able to push the envelope, to have people comment on the issue and to start the conversation. With #BhangraLove, it doesn't matter who you are, where you are from, and whom you love," she says. 

For more information on the festival, visit www.vibc.org



▲ #BhangraLove is the theme of the 10th annual Vancouver City of Bhangra Festival, and it celebrates all forms of cultural and interpersonal love.



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Music: Angelica Doyon | Photograph: Jerome Banta

Choreography & Performance: Alvin Eraso Tolentino
Video: Jan Leem | Costume: John Carlo Pagunating
Design: Karen Merrifield | www.companierasgastudio.ca



Cultural Calendar

May 13–27, 2014



Photo courtesy of Firehall Arts Centre

▲ The Art of Stealing will have its world premiere in Vancouver.

by JESSICA LI

As summer approaches, the days become longer – so take advantage of this to participate in the new, exciting events coming to Vancouver! Hear poet Kevin Spent read poetry with locally-based poets, or explore the new exhibit of Afro-Cuban art at UBC’s Museum of Anthropology. If you’re looking for a good time, listen to blues music and sample delicious African food at Afrobeat Blues Night.

Butterfly Factory
May 6–July 7, 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.
City Atrium Gallery
North Vancouver City Hall
141 West 14th St., North Vancouver
604-988-6844

In a breathtaking piece of installation art, Rosemary Burden has deconstructed pages of Shakespearean writings to create a 30-foot wide “Butterfly Factory,” which addresses the idea of repetition, art versus craft, and the oft-discussed possibility of the disappearance of the printed paper book in light of the emerging use of electronic books. It also speaks to the plight of the monarch butterfly whose habitat is under threat.

Small Books, Big Country
May 17–18, 2 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
Vancouver Public Library,
Central Branch
350 West Georgia St., Vancouver
604-331-3603

This exciting event is Stop #95 in Kevin Spent’s *Small Books, Big Country*, a poetry chapbook tour of Canada. Marking the uniqueness of the poetic landscape in Vancouver, Spent will read with some of the city’s most innovative poets—including Ray Hsu, Andrea Bennett and Leanne Dunic.

Afrobeat Blues Night
May 17, 9 p.m.
The Legion
2205 Commercial Dr., Vancouver
778-552-8238

This exciting event, featuring Kara-Kata Afrobeat Group and guests Blues Cannon, will have you grooving in no time to songs inspired by iconic blues musician Buddy Guy. Tickets, which are sold at the door, are \$7 per person

or \$10 per couple. Delectable West African food and drinks will be available as well.

**Without Masks:
Contemporary Afro-Cuban Art**
Now until November
10 a.m.–9 p.m.
6393 NW Marine Dr., Vancouver
604-822-5087
www.moa.ubc.ca

Curated by Cuban poet, art critic and curator Orlando Hernández, this exhibition of more than 80 Afro-Cuban artworks was first shown at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. It explores the ties that link the histories and cultures of Cuba and Africa and includes works that reflect controversial and conflicting aspects of the Cuban national reality that continue to affect Cuban society today, including problems related to race, stereotypes and religion.

Adventures With Orcas
May 20, 7 p.m.–8:30 p.m.
Vancouver Public Library,
Central Branch
350 W. Georgia St., Vancouver
604-331-3603
www.erichoyt.com

Come hear a fascinating presentation by Erich Hoyt, eminent whale researcher and author of *Orca: The Whale Called Killer*, about orca whales and the marine environment on which they depend for their survival. This lecture includes seldom-seen video footage of a rare white Siberian orca and a book-signing opportunity.

The Art of Stealing
May 28–31, 8 p.m.
Firehall Arts Centre
280 E. Cordova St., Vancouver
604-689-0926
www.firehallartscentre.ca

The Art of Stealing, a performance by dance choreographer Amber Funk Barton, will have its world premiere in Vancouver. This exploration of transformation, survival and death visually references her love of dark cinematic styles, live animation and graphic novels. Barton casts her ensemble of six talented dancers (including herself) as survivors in a mysterious, dark vision of a post-apocalyptic future. Barton’s most complex creation yet draws on an array of collaborators, including the Lululemon Lab team, who are producing a collaborative clothing line inspired by Barton’s explosively physical and athletic hybrid movement.

Paintings & Porcelain
Now until May 30,
10 a.m.–6 p.m.
Dr. Sun Yat-Sen
Classical Chinese Garden
578 Carrall St., Vancouver
www.vancouverchinesegarden.com



Photo courtesy of Erich Hoyt

▲ See rare footage of a white orca at Adventures with Orcas on May 20.

Book Launch: Fauji Banta Singh and Other Stories
May 22, 7 p.m.–8:30 p.m.
Vancouver Public Library,
Central Branch
350 W. Georgia St., Vancouver
604-331-3603

Set among people who emigrated in the late twentieth century

Two prominent artists, Water Poon (1998 Hong Kong Artist of the Year) and Ah Ngau, come together to produce a gorgeous exhibit of watercolor paintings and porcelain sculptures. This show is the result of a chance meeting – while driving, Water Poon saw and fell in love with one of Ah Ngau’s delicate porcelain figurines.



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The Ethos Collective, a unique, fresh and innovative young Vancouver-based instrumental sextet performing improvised and new music, presents *Impulse*, their 2013-2014 season’s featured collaborative performance. *Impulse* is an evening of music that is both evocative and energetic – a concert that blends works new to Vancouver with works that have local connections.

For this concert, Ethos will perform two important works of contemporary music from outside Canada. They will collaborate with the Nu:BC Collective and renowned clarinetist François Houle to present the Western Canadian premiere of Steve Reich’s Double Sextet. Ethos and Houle also perform the Canadian premiere of UK composer Graham Fitkin’s driving *Ardent* and the BC premiere of Canadian composer Anthony Genge’s cool and contemplative *Strata*.

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

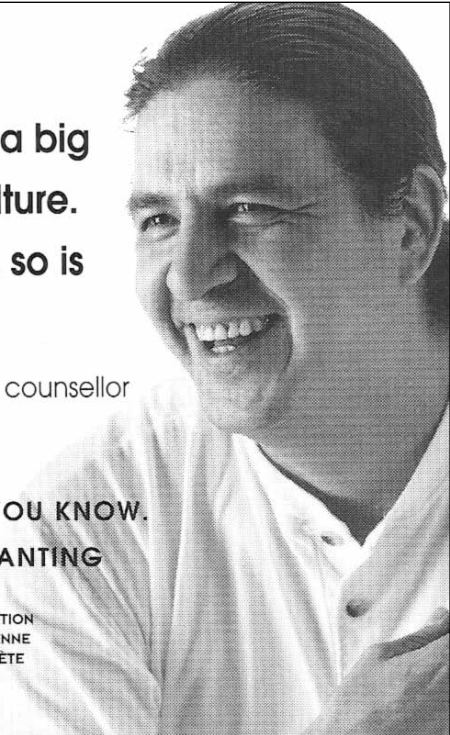
Bernie, First Nations counsellor

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Meet “Navajo Man,” Lawrence Crank, descendant of Huskeniene (he who passes on harsh wisdom). Huskeniene was a prominent Navajo medicine man who lived in Kayenta and Monument Valley, Arizona in the late 1800’s. Lawrence’s father and grandfather were also healers. Lawrence himself is a healer of sorts, with his uplifting personality. While recently touring northern Arizona, we encountered Lawrence at the Monument Valley Navajo Nation Welcome Centre. He served as the tour guide through Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park for Denis Bouvier, myself and a friend. He epitomizes the character of the Navajo people we met while touring in Navajo Nation with perhaps an extra flare. He has an acute sense of

humour, great knowledge of his culture, is wise and respectful of others. Lawrence teaches not only the local lore but history from a Navajo point of view. At the end of our 3 hour tour, we were not only more knowledgeable and respectful of the culture but genuinely happy to have had the experience told through wisdom imbued with light-hearted humour. Lawrence’s talents do not end as a tour guide. He is also an accomplished potter. Lawrence is one of the few Navajos that throws his pots on a wheel. He describes his work as “semi-traditional.” He buys his clay and paints instead of finding his own clay and creating his own paint. However, he is skilled in the use of traditional symbols. He gained a lot of his knowledge from his grandfather and from elders through

sweat lodges and chantings. This knowledge is incorporated into his pots, creating works that are intricate, beautiful and full of symbolism. The Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park is located on the northern border of Arizona and southern border of Utah and stretches for over 37,000 hectares. It’s a high desert setting about 1.7 km above sea level full of red stone free-standing rock formations and offers views of red stone buttes, mesa and canyons, all of which is breathtaking. The Navajo established this area as a park in 1958, not only for their enjoyment and spiritual enrichment, but to help conserve the area and support their people by welcoming visitors. This is a sacred place for the Navajo and many of the rock formations have names and special significance.

The park has also served as a backdrop for many western films, beginning with “Stagecoach” filmed by director John Ford in 1939 and starring John Wayne. These films have introduced this area to the whole world. All of the Monument Valley Park is within Navajo Nation, home of the Diné (Navajo for the People). Navajo Nation is home to the largest American Indian tribe in North America. Encompassing 70,000 km² of territory, it spans into southeastern Utah, northern Arizona and northwest New Mexico. The Navajo people are strong in their traditions and beliefs and many are accomplished artists creating beautiful rugs, baskets, pottery, sculptures, paintings, turquoise and silver jewelry. The Navajo arrived in this area nearly 1,000 years ago al-

though there is archeological evidence to show this area was inhabited for nearly 5,000 years. They are believed to have migrated from western Canada. Navajo Nation is truly like visiting another country; it is administrated by the Navajo and they operate most of the businesses. They are not without problems and have suffered similar indignities as Canada’s First Nations people. But I would like to end on a Navajo prayer that Lawrence Crank uses to acknowledge his gratitude to people who make the gesture of approval and appreciation when purchasing his pottery. “Hol Ago Hozhogo Nan Nado” (May You Always Walk In Beauty). Don Richardson

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