

A Greek-Orthodox Easter
Page 2



The Source

forum of diversity

Vol 21 No 06 | March 24–April 7, 2020

www.thelasource.com



Photo courtesy of IFC's Portlandia

Verbatim

Somewhere new is not something I am looking for

by SIMRYN ATWAL

I have never had the skin tightening feeling of growing out of a space, of packing a suitcase and finding my somewhere new. Vancouver is my perpetual somewhere new, a community transient, fluid and ever-evolving. It's my someone new I met in passing on the SkyTrain. It's my new discovery of an Indian-Chinese fusion place on my street, and it's the new multicultural festival being put on in Stanley Park this summer. I don't need to find a somewhere new because Vancouver is not the same place it was 20 years ago, and it certainly won't be the same place 20 years from now.

Moving to Canada and finding my home in a sea of foreign faces was never a part of my narrative, but it is the reason I am here now. My great-great-grandfather sailed from his native Punjab to British Columbia nearly a hundred years ago, searching for a better future for his family in an unknown and unforgiving world. He came to Canada to work on the railroad and had a hand in helping expand the tiny Punjabi population through his work building the first temple in British Columbia. However, throughout his time here, he never gained acceptance and was never viewed as an equal. His story is not so different from many others who have experienced immigration in Canada. Being from a family of original Punjabi pioneers, this is a story that has been reiterated countless times, held up as a reason to be grateful for being born in an era of change. It has also given me the understanding that British Columbia has not always been this multicultural mosaic of communities and acceptance.

See "Verbatim" page 3

Racial passing – an outdated term?

by HARRY JING

'Racial passing' is used to describe when an individual is accepted as a member of an ethnic group other than their own. In today's world, does anyone choose to 'pass' as another race? Does the term 'racial passing' still merit any use?

Jeff Chiba Stearns, 41, co-founded Hapa-Palooza Art Festival in 2011 with the objective of

celebrating mixed roots ideas through art and culture.

What is racial passing?

A Chosen Exile: A History of Racial Passing by history professor Allyson Hobbs defines racial passing as "the practice in which light-skinned African Americans chose to present themselves as white." [1] In a more general sense, racial passing is the phenomenon when a person classified as a member of one ethnic group 'passes' as a

member of an ethnic group other than their own. The term was historically used in the United States to describe people of an ethnic minority or multiracial people who assimilated into the white majority.

"People want to guess what [race] you are, or constantly ask what you are," says Stearns.

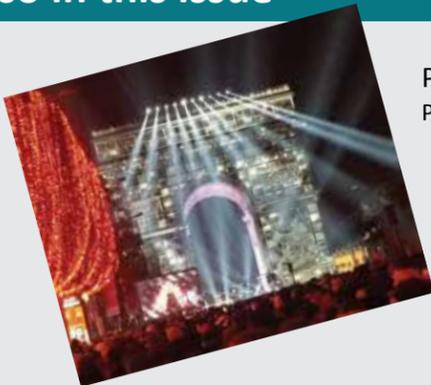
Stearns explains that living in a nation with a colonial past, such as Canada, people often want to know where a person comes from if they're not white.

This curiosity is fairly ingrained in the collective conscience and many instinctively question people of colour where they originate from without meaning any disrespect.

However, Stearns disagrees with the underlying notion that if a person isn't white, they have to be from somewhere else, believing it to be unjust and problematic. This curiosity towards people's ethnic background can manifest itself in other ways as

See "Racial Passing" page 4

Also in this issue



Paris on my mind
Page 5

A book of
resilience
and hope
Page 6



Reach the growing FILIPINO COMMUNITY in British Columbia!

Advertise in Dahong Pilipino
THE FILIPINO CANADIAN COMMUNITY DIRECTORY
www.dahongpilipino.ca



Cultural Spotlight

Easter: religious rites blend with culture

by MASHA RADEMAKERS

Easter: a time of hopping bunnies and chocolate eggs? Not for the religious communities of Metro Vancouver, who are living it up towards the Holy Week at the end of March with a whole month of special religious services, culminating in the Easter celebration on the 1st of April.

The Christian Easter period begins with the Great Lent, a 40-day period preceding Easter, which is the longest fasting period of both the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Eastern Catholic Church.

Kites

The Greek-Orthodox community started this period in February with “Clean Monday,” a day where, especially in the past, the house was cleaned of all meat products.

“In Greece we usually go outside for picnics and we fly kites on this day – it is a big celebration,” says Lizette Pappas, a member of the Hellenic Community of Vancouver and St. George Greek-Orthodox Cathedral.

Most Greek people are Greek-Orthodox, but there are a small percentage of Roman Catholics.

“My family came from the island of Naxos in the fifties, and we immigrated because there was not much opportunity for us there. My parents came to Canada with a vision – they were so motivated to give their children a better future,” says Pappas.

St. George Cathedral was the first Greek-Orthodox church built in Vancouver and together with the Hellenic Community Centre, it formed the central meeting point of the Greek community.

“For Easter, our ladies society, Philoptochos, is going to bake 700 Easter breads, tsoureki, and sell them to the community,” says Pappas.

Pussy willow

Religious and cultural activities are closely related, something that Theresa Herchak, librarian for the Ukrainian Community Society of Ivan Franko, can relate to.

“On Palm Sunday we bless pussy willows as a symbol of good health, and remind ourselves that Christ was welcomed to Jerusalem a week before his crucifixion,” says Herchak, who is a member of the Holy Dormition of the Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church in Rich-

mond. “Instead of palm leaves, pussy willow branches are blessed in Ukrainian churches. We tap each other on the shoulder with the pussy willows and wish each other health, strength and beauty.”

This all happens during the Great Lent, when both the Catholic and Orthodox communities are supposed to abstain from eating animal products and from drinking alcohol.

“In this period we keep ourselves focused on the resurrec-

ferent kinds of meat and special breads, are blessed in Church.

“When I went to Ukraine, just after the country became independent in '91, people would all put their Easter baskets outside on the lawn. For a long time the Ukrainian Catholics had been persecuted, and finally they had the freedom again to celebrate. People would come to church in traditional costumes and I even saw two young boys high-fiving each other while saying ‘Christ has risen, indeed he has,’ a reli-



▲ Easter egg bread.

tion of Jesus and the resulting salvation of mankind, which is at the heart of the Christian faith. As a child, this period was really challenging. If anyone gave us candy we would keep it until the end of Lent, when we could enjoy the things we had denied ourselves,” says Herchak.

Procession

In the Holy Week before Easter, a week full of religious services will start. On Friday, the day on which Christians commemorate the crucifixion of Christ, both the Catholic and Orthodox communities create a tomb in which they symbolically place a picture or statue of Jesus.

“This is a very solemn, painful day, on which we abstain from eating boiled foods and oil. After the church service, the tomb is taken out of church and we walk like a funeral procession around the block, chanting different hymns and holding candles,” says Pappas.

The Ukrainian Holy Dormition of the Mother of God Church holds this procession at the crack of dawn.

“In the early morning light we walk three rounds in procession around the church, with wooden clappers and a set of bells. The priest knocks three times on the church doors and says ‘Christ has risen,’ and then everybody repeats his words. When the doors open, mysteriously the tomb has disappeared, and three wonderful days full of joy start,” tells Herchak.

On Easter Day, during the Divine Liturgy, the Ukrainian Easter baskets filled with traditional Easter breakfast items like eggs, beet, horseradish, dif-

ferent kinds of meat and special breads, are blessed in Church.

Luck

The Greek-Orthodox community celebrates breaking the fast with an extensive Easter breakfast during which the red dyed eggs are cracked open.

“Whatever egg remains the strongest will have the most luck the following year. The red paint on the egg stands for the blood that Jesus shed for us. Because of the cracking, most of the families need three or four dozen eggs,” says Pappas.

The second Easter day, most Greeks eat lamb as a traditional dish, which was traditionally roasted on a spit, but nowadays a lot of people barbecue it.

“All the foods that we denied ourselves during the forty day fast – meat, cheese and butter – are all elements of the Easter dish,” says Herchak.

Rev. Fr. Timoleon Prattas, parish priest of the Sts. Nicholas and Dimitrios Greek-Orthodox Community, usually reads the gospel in different languages on Easter day, among others in English and Greek.

“During the actual Easter day, which we call Pascha, we have vespers of love and many families will attend the church service. We read it partly in English so the children can understand it. This is the most important day on the orthodox calendar, and there is absolutely no fasting,” says the Reverend. ✉

For updates on the Covid-19 situation at the church, please visit: www.goeastvan.ca/covid-19

Help keep this space clean and healthy

WIPE DOWN fitness equipment before and after use.



USE YOUR OWN WATER BOTTLE and avoid sharing with others.



BRING YOUR OWN MAT or cover the mat with a clean towel before using it. Don't forget to wipe it down too!



PLEASE DON'T SPIT on the ground or elsewhere.



We're committed to providing a high standard of cleaning in our spaces. We use high-quality cleaning solutions, and we're increasing the number of times we disinfect throughout the day, paying close attention to high-touch areas.



The Source is always looking for volunteers

LAYOUT ARTISTS

Layout Artists help design and produce the print version of our newspaper. Position is on the weekends only, for at least one weekend per month. Knowledge of Adobe InDesign and Photoshop required. Illustrator would be an asset. Knowledge of design principles and a good aesthetic sense are important. Knowledge of French a definite asset. Students/recent graduates of graphic design programs, or working graphic design professionals strongly preferred.

Email your resume and portfolio to info@thelastsource.com

Visit The Source online

Visit us online at www.thelastsource.com
Twitter/Facebook: @thelastsource



THE SOURCE NEWSPAPER

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 and Editor-in-Chief
Mamadou Gangué
Associate Publishers Saeed Dyanatkar (Digital),
Monique Kroeger (Print)
Art Director Laura R. Copes
Senior Editor (English and French Sections)
Monique Kroeger
Copy Editors (English) Frank Abbott, Colleen Addison, Andrea Baedak, Deanna Choi, Andrea Keen, Annette Gingrich, Thierry Maout, Cheryl Olvera, Melodie Wendel-Cook, Lauren Wolf
Senior Copy Editor (French) Louise T. Dawson
Page Editor (Francophonie)
Jean-Baptiste Lasaygues
Executive Assistant Kevin Paré
Website Supervisor Enej Bajgoric
Website Coordinator Pavle Culajevic

Website Sepand Dyanatkar, Vitor Libardi, Silvia Pascale
Social Media Nathalie Astruc, Harry Jing
Editorial Content Advisor Denis Bouvier
Contributing Editor Simon Yee

Layout Artist Yvonne Kwok
Illustrator Joseph Laquerre
Writers Nathalie Astruc, Simryn Atwal, Felipe Câmara, Kristy Dockstader, Anindita Gupta, Michael Huenefeld, Harry Jing, Amélie Lebrun, Kylie Lung, Laury-Ann Mahieu, Gail Pinto, Masha Rademakers, Andreina Romero, Selma Van Halder, Lin Weaver, Simon Yee, Robert Zajtmann

Translation Barry Brisebois, Louise Dawson, Monique Kroeger, James Mainguy

Distribution Joseph Laquerre, Kevin Paré

Photo credits for front cover
Page 2 (top): Photo by Emily, Flickr
Page 5 (bottom left): Photo by Kristy Dockstader
Page 6 (bottom right): Photo by Nora el Najjar

LEGALITIES

The Source shall not be liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. The Source's liability for other errors or omissions in connection to any published advertisement is strictly limited to the repeat of the advertisement in future publications or for the refund of any monies paid for the advertisement. We welcome appropriate, unsolicited editorial submissions if accompanied by the author's real name, address and telephone number. The author should retain the original as we cannot return submissions without prior agreement, nor does submission guarantee publication.

For advertising call: (604) 682-5545

Towards a rights-based model of conservation

by GAIL PINTO

In light of the recent pipeline conflict and the fraught deadlock Canada has found itself in, Madison Stevens talks about the intersection of stewardship rights and conservation, where people may find ways to reduce community friction and promote greater understanding.

From a BA in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies from Franklin University in Switzerland, to the pursuit of a PhD at the Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability at the University of British Columbia (UBC), Stevens has come a long way. Her work in conservation has taken her from the Wapusk National Park Leadership Camp in Manitoba with Polar Bears International, to Uttara-

khand in India for her current research. Her doctoral research on the intersection of human rights and biodiversity conservation has led her to explore approaches to the complex overlap of these two needs.

The cost of conservation efforts

Looking at history, Stevens says, it becomes clear that the cost of conservation efforts was, and sometimes still is, human rights abuses. “Much of the world’s conservation practice has been what we called ‘fortress conservation’. Essentially, you build a wall and you say that the wildlife is inside, and the people are outside,” she says. “And that’s been the dominant model for conservation around the world for a while now, at least since 1872, when Yellowstone National Park was founded. This model would lead to the displacement of millions of people.”

There has been a widespread displacement of Indigenous peoples and local communities, and the abuse of their rights to resources, or their rights to participate in decision making. “Conceptions of conservation began to shift in the 80s or 90s to a mode of ‘participatory conservation’, which was the second kind of conservation model, often involving varying degrees of consultation and benefit sharing”, says Stevens

One of the biggest landmark moments, she explains, happened at the 2003 International Union for Conservation of Nature World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, when a group of activists protested prioritizing conservation over human rights. “It was about giv-

she says. “That involves unpacking the terms ‘territories’ and ‘taking care’, about which many people have different perspectives and priorities, and so it isn’t as straightforward as it seems. A lot of the rights that stewardship involves are procedural rights, such as decision-making”.

to make the decisions about conservation? Historically in Canada, the ‘we’ that made the conservation decisions has been the Crown, which is dominated by a settler-colonial process. Who gets to decide is important because that’s where the procedural rights come in?”. She points

“What I mean by stewardship rights are the rights which enable communities – particularly Indigenous and other local communities – to effectively take care of the land and territories they call home.

Madison Stevens, PhD candidate at the University of British Columbia (UBC)



Photo courtesy of UBC

▲ Madison Stevens.

ing the right of decision-making to the people who lived in and around regions of the parks and protected spaces. This resulted in what we call the ‘new paradigm’, which is rights-centric,” she explains.

Thinking inclusively about conservation

One often hears about ‘stewardship rights’, but what exactly are they? Stevens clarifies. “What I mean by stewardship rights are the rights which enable communities – particularly Indigenous and other local communities – to effectively take care of the land and territories they call home,”

Canada has been home to the First Nations, Metis and Inuit Peoples since time immemorial. Later, it also became a settler-colonial nation. Stevens observes that this makes it a complicated case. In addition to Indigenous People’s rights, the rights of other vulnerable groups, such as migrants, are something she still struggles with when thinking about an inclusive paradigm for conservation.

“When one asks how we are to promote conservation in settler-colonial regions, I feel like the best course of action is to start by defining ‘we’,” Stevens explains. “Who is the ‘we’ that gets

out that Canada is home to many successful conservation efforts. “There are some successful cases of co-management here. Wapusk National Park, where I was working, is a protected, co-managed area. It is managed by a panel which includes Cree, Metis, Dene and Inuit, as well as the federal and provincial governments,” she says.

It may be a complex and tough road ahead to balance the two goals of human rights and biodiversity conservation, but Stevens remains optimistic. “We need to be comfortable with sitting down with complexity,” she adds. ✍



“Verbatim” from page 1

When my mother and father grew up in Surrey in the 1970’s, they were the only non-white kids in their entire high school. They had to face daily discrimination, relentless bullying and intolerance because of how they looked and the religion they practiced. They never gave up hope for a better future, of a more tolerant British Columbia. The fight for acceptance from the immigrants of the past is the reason why we can have Vaisakhi in Vancouver, and why I have never been sneered at or endured racist slurs on the street. There will always be

struggles as a member of a minority, but sometimes it is easy to forget just how far we have come on the backs of the people who fought before us.

Diversity in my parents’ generation meant being able to find one or two other Indian families in their town. Diversity to me meant growing up in a classroom where you could fling a dart haphazardly into a map and find someone who had roots there. A classroom where you could take Mandarin and Punjabi as second language classes. I am reminded of how much Metro Vancouver is growing when I stop in my daily commute from work to admire the paper lanterns set up in shop windows for Chinese New Year. How the sky is littered with light and the air is filled with the cacophony of firecrackers from all the families during Diwali.

In my opinion, British Columbia has transformed into a society where differences are celebrated and shared, a far cry from the classrooms that my parents attended and the mills that my great-great grandfather worked in. It is the reason why I have never wanted to find my somewhere new, because I am not alone in my otherness. This is why I am proud to be from British Columbia, it is a community that has evolved from its past, and I am looking forward to how it will keep evolving in the future. ✍



▲ “The fight for acceptance from the immigrants of the past is the reason why we can have Vaisakhi in Vancouver...”

Issues and Ideas

Echos from Brazil

The Covid-19 pandemic has required efforts worldwide to contain the increase in the number of cases and death. In Brazil, it has not been different. The largest country from South America has, until March 19, 647 cases, one death and some confirmed cases of local transmission. The scenario is concerning and it is expected a high increase in total deaths and cases by next week. Compared to the most affected country so far, Italy, Brazil largely has more (291 cases) in the 20th day af-

ter the first case confirmed than Italy (only 3 cases).

Since then, the number of cases and death has increased. Peo-

ple were asked to stay home and take protective measures. Local businesses were shut down at the first moment due to good sense from its owners. Angelo Tolentino is one of them. He has a pizza place in Manaus, in the north of the country. His sales in the restaurant since

In the federal capital, Brasilia, the number of cases has increased since last week. As a result, restaurants, cinemas and gyms are closed.

People in Brazil are doing the best to fight the pandemic. The collapse of the public health system due to a high number of infections is one

“ I know some local business owners that are desperate because they cannot survive after 15 days being closed.

Angelo Tolentino, owner of Manaus

ple were asked to stay home and take protective measures. Local businesses were shut down at the first moment due

the outbreak have dropped considerably, while deliveries have increased. But he says even though he keeps running his business, he worries about a major background. “I know some local business owners that are desperate because they cannot survive after 15 days being closed. The economic scenario was already hard before the virus outbreak, some of them have loans to pay and prices at supermarkets have risen”. He says his concerns about sanitizing and washing hands and surfaces have increased, and is done repeatedly both in his business and at home.

Only some establishments are working, such as supermarkets, gas stations and drugstores. Natasha Omena works for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees office in Brasilia. She has been working since Monday from home. Besides the virus, shortage of items is affecting the situation in refugee camps in Brasilia, as a result of the collapsing of supply distribution and prices rising. Masks, gloves and hand sanitizer, are lacking, not only for the refugees, but in the whole city. But vulnerable, like refugees who live in camps, are even more delicate, she says.

of the major concerns for the next few weeks. Large parts of the cities in the country have no access to water regularly and have poor sanitary conditions. Mental health of a population in quarantine is also serious. In this matter, Tolentino says he has an important role. “Rather than profit, which I won't have at this moment, my role is to deliver some joy to people at home. A good pizza can help people to forget, at least for a moment, the hard situation we are facing now.”

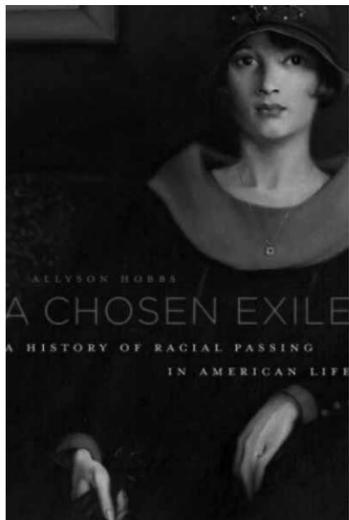
FELIPE CÂMARA is a Vancouver-based Brazilian environmentalist



▲ Manaus, Brazil.

► “Racial Passing” from page 1

well. When describing a mixed-race person whose physical features don't fit neatly within one ethnicity, the term ‘ethnically



▲ A Chosen Exile: A History of Racial Passing by Allyson Hobbs.

ambiguous’ is used. Do ‘ethnically ambiguous’ people choose to be defined as such, or are others’ perceptions forced upon them as a label?

The curious case of Fred Armisen

“For a lot of people in Canada, they can only trace their heritage as far back as what ethnicities their grandparents or grandparents were,” says Stearns.

Stearns points to American actor and comedian Fred Armisen as a potential example of racial passing. Self-identifying as part Japanese for his entire life, Armisen believed that his grandfather, Masami Kuni, was

Japanese. It was then revealed by genealogy experts that his late grandfather was actually Korean.

Unbeknownst to Armisen, his grandfather chose to actively pass as Japanese following racial violence in Japan against ethnic Koreans. Being one quarter Japanese formed a core part of Armisen's identity, and he had proudly proclaimed his heritage on numerous occasions. In Armisen's case, he wasn't trying to pass as Japanese-American. He simply self-identified as one quarter Japanese based on his knowledge of his family history. Armisen's case goes to show that claiming a heritage that isn't one's own can often come about due to misunderstanding and a lack of information. Do Armisen's mistaken claims of having Japanese heritage constitute racial passing?

Rachel Dolezal – racial passing or blackfishing?

Stearns points to so-called Black rights activist Rachel Dolezal as another potential instance of racial passing. Dolezal was believed to be an African-American woman who cared deeply about civil rights and even served as president of the Spokane chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

After allegations from her parents that Dolezal was only passing as black, it was revealed that she had no African-American heritage. Later, Dolezal acknowledged that she was born to white parents, but also maintained that she self-identified as

black. Dolezal's story seems to fit the definition of racial passing, but can her actions be classified as racial passing or was she actually stealing a heritage that

wasn't hers? Is there a difference between the two?

Racially passing vs self-identifying

“There's this idea that [mixed-race people] are living between a hyphen, we're either this or that,” says Stearns.

Although Stearns is of Japanese and European descent, his appearance may lean towards white-passing, even being mistaken for Brazilian or Mexican. Stearns also recognizes the privilege that can come with looking whiter.

However, he explains that his outward appearance and how he's perceived by others doesn't mean he's trying to pass as white. Rather, what's important is that he firmly self-identifies as Japanese-Canadian, a decision that should be respected. Stearns doesn't believe anyone ac-

tively chooses to racially pass as an ethnic group other than their own. In short, Stearns advocates for the ideals laid out in the Mixed Race Bill of Rights, one of the most important being that any mixed-race person should be able to identify themselves regardless of what others expect them to identify as.

“Looking at me, you may not see Asian features, but that doesn't mean you can take that away from me,” says Stearns. “I'm still self-identifying as Japanese-Canadian.”

Aside from a few people claiming an ethnic background not belonging to them for personal gain, does anyone actively attempt to pass as a race they're not? If not, does the term ‘racial passing’ still warrant use.

“The term ‘racial passing’ is a very open-ended expression,” concludes Stearns.



▲ Rachel Dolezal.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Due to growing concern on the spread of COVID-19 in the community, we have decided to cancel the Easter EGGSTRAVAGANZA which originally has been scheduled to be held on 11 Apr (Sat) afternoon.

The situation is just risky right now for gathering. Hope everything will be back to normal soon.

Take Care and Stay Healthy!





Photo courtesy of Senate of Canada

Women empowerment – the struggle continues

The theme of International Women’s Day this year is #EachforEqual. It highlights the strength that comes when individuals with different lived experiences come together for a greater purpose. When we all work together, we can achieve anything.

As senators, we are particularly privileged because we hold some power. As women, we draw on our own experiences to inform how we use that power and privilege to achieve the goal of equality and represent women in Parliament.



▲ Wanda Elaine Thomas Bernard
ISG - (Nova Scotia - East Preston).



▲ Marilou McPhedran
ISG - (Manitoba).

Decisions made without the input, support, and leadership of women are deficient; simply having a seat at the table does not suffice. This is the crux of our work – women of all backgrounds must be involved in decision-making at the highest levels.

We are proud to represent women in the Senate – an institution that boasts 48 female senators out of its current membership of 98. Indeed, many of us play senior roles; about half of the leadership of Senate groups and caucuses is female.

We try to represent and empower women outside of Canada as well. As founding members of the Canadian Association of Feminist Parliamentarians, our local and international activities are guided by intersectional feminist values and global perspectives.

Despite the gains of the past decades, the struggle for



▲ Julie Miville-Dechêne
ISG - (Quebec - Inkerman).

equality continues. Parliamentarians have a responsibility to bring awareness to intersectional women’s issues in the Senate and the House of Commons. Women’s issues are community issues. Women’s issues are parliamentarians’ issues.

As senators, we strongly advocate to ensure recognition of

women’s issues on Parliament Hill. We must engage women multilaterally, as we center the experiences and voices of diverse, intersectional women in our communities. We collectively have a role to enact this year’s theme for International Women’s Day – Each for Equal – by building a legacy with the next generation of parliamentarians, representational of the intersectional women we know make our communities strong. We need focused commitments to collectively engage in concrete actions to do better as we work towards gender equality.

This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the most ambitious women’s rights framework to date. To further its implementation and build on this work, the United Nation’s Generation Equality campaign is demanding action on key equity-focused areas such as pay equity, sexual harassment and gender-based violence, as well as equal participation in political life and in all decision-making processes.

Strategies to achieve these goals will be discussed in Paris this July at the Generation Equality Forum. The forum will provide an exciting opportunity for multilateral engagement on issues that affect women around the world. Members of the Canadian Association of Feminist Parliamentarians will be supporting the civil society call for inclusion and recognition of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in these advocacy spaces. We look forward to pursuing these strategies with our global counterparts. ✉

Senators WANDA THOMAS BERNARD, MARILOU MCPHEDRAN and JULIE MIVILLE-DECHÊNE are members of the Canadian Association of Feminist Parliamentarians. They represent, respectively, Nova Scotia (East Preston), Manitoba and Quebec (Inkerman) in the Senate.

Postcard

A Parisian New Year

Paris – a city that you can find close to the top of most people’s bucket list – is known for its beautiful architecture, its delicious food, and its long history. This past December, I decided it was finally time to see this dreamy city for myself. Over the holidays, I started part one of my Euro trip by falling in love with Barcelona, and part two of this adventure was spent exploring Paris!

Paris is an amazing city to visit anytime of the year; however, I wanted to make my trip a bit extra special and ring in the New Year drinking wine at Parisian restaurants and watching the fireworks at the famous Champs-Élysées.

My last day of 2019

After meeting up with a friend for a delicious lunch, I headed off to explore the city on foot. I walked for hours on end, until I found myself at the tall fences surrounding the beautiful Notre Dame. The city is in the process of repairing this historic landmark but in the meantime they have added fences all the way around Notre Dame with tons of information, not just about the cathedrals long history; but also about the recent fire that devastated the architecture and how it was being restored. I look forward to returning to Paris someday to see this cathedral in all its glory again.

One of the many cool forms of transportation that Paris has embraced: electric scooters and bikes. After hours of walking, my feet began to get sore, so I decided to test out the electric scooters while I made my way to the Eiffel tower. After testing this out, I wholeheartedly hope that Vancouver invests in this form of transportation eventually. For 4 euros I was able to feel the wind in my hair while having the time of my life zipping past all of the traffic for an amazing 20-minute ride.

By the time I made it to the Eiffel Tower, it was all lit up and

a way before. There was a mass feeling of excitement and celebration – and people as far as the eye could see. Viewing the show projected onto the Arc de Triomphe and the fireworks that proceeded at midnight were completely magical!

Experiencing Paris like a local

Part of my decision to visit this incredible city while in Europe was to visit a friend that I hadn’t seen in years. On New Year’s Day, I got to experience life like a true Parisian. My friend hosted me for a delicious homemade breakfast complete with any sauce you could possibly want on a crepe. We spent the day learning about life in Paris, from the politics, food, and even enjoyed some French movies. I also learnt that it is nearly impossible to make it home from a French bakery without eating at least part of the baguette on the way.

Of all of the adventures on my European trip, I think this quiet day spent with friends was my favourite. I think the best way to experience a city is through spending time with the people that live there.

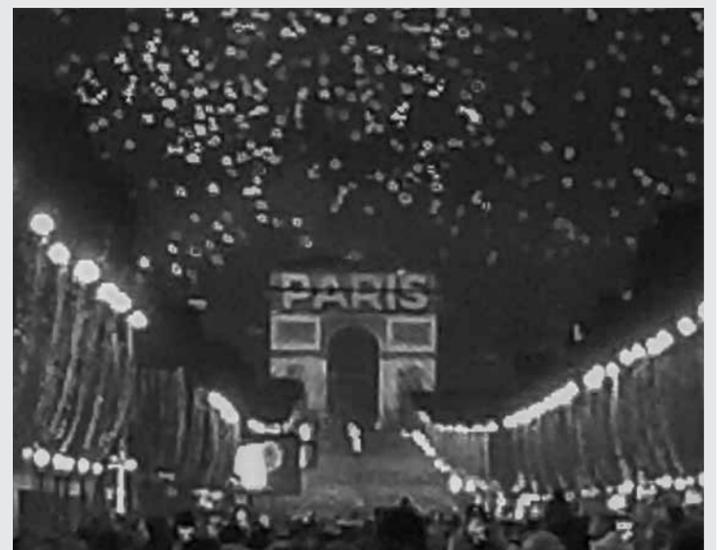
Final thoughts on my journey through the City of Lights

Paris truly is as magical as the movies would lead you to believe. It was the most expen-



▲ The majestic splendor of the Eiffel Tower.

Photo by Kristy Dockstader



▲ The Arc de Triomphe lights up during the winter holidays.

Photo by Kristy Dockstader

set on the colourful backdrop of the setting sun. The Eiffel Tower at sunset was one of the most beautiful views I’ve had the grace to witness.

After feasting our eyes on the famous Tower, it was time to head towards the celebrations at the Champs-Élysées. I have watched some large new year’s celebrations on TV, but I have never had the pleasure of being engulfed in a sea of hundreds of thousands of people in such

sive city of my trip, but I am so thankful that I was able to visit. This city has a way of feeling delicate yet strong all at the same time. Roaming down the streets you can see the delicate designs on the balcony railings that line the street but also feel the long history of the city. Thank you for a magnificent start to the year Paris. *Au revoir!* ✉

KRISTY DOCKSTADER

Women of Vancouver: Nora El Najjar tells her story of survival and hope

by ANINDITA GUPTA

How passionate are most people about telling their stories? Some become disheartened after a day or week of hard work. Others fall prey to entertaining streaming platforms instead of mustering the effort to read or write something.

Yet some are passionate enough to write their story of hope and achieve their dreams in the

like most children, teenagers or young adults. Many like her had to experience their childhood, teenage and adult lives in the middle of a war-torn country where living in an underground shelter and occasionally running from bullets was a normal part of growing up.

In an atmosphere such as this, she had to change homes and schools countless times. Amidst the utter chaos of war, she pieced together many journals and found solace in the arts by



Photo courtesy of Nora El Najjar

▲ Nora El Najjar.

midst of loss and war and family. There are those who have had to flee their homeland, an unhappy marriage and leave behind the comfort of their home for the promise of making a better home in a faraway nation for her children and herself.

One such person is Nora El Najjar, a figure of positivity and hope. El Najjar, a mother of three, recently penned and will soon self-publish her memoir, *Life of a Promise*.

"I now have four children," she jokes.

In light of COVID-19, El Najjar has words of strength to share.

"I have been through much worse in my life" she says, repeating these words multiple times throughout the interview.

Would one be more afraid of a global pandemic or war that has affected everyday life for all of fifteen years?

Early years

Born in Lebanon, El Najjar and her family moved to the Island of Cyprus and then to Canada for a brief few months. After living in the safety of Canada for nine months, her family decided to relocate back to Lebanon. Then civil war broke out once again in her homeland. The Lebanese Civil War officially lasted 15 years and six months.

Living in Lebanon, El Najjar spent 15 years of her life un-

drawing and writing a descriptive tale of war or the life around her.

Back to Canada

After completing her education in English literature and English language, she was married off and went on to have three children. However, unhappy with her married life, she separated from her husband and left to make a better life for herself and her children in Canada.

In Canada she feels safe and secure, surrounded by friends and family. She says that even when she was stuck in war, she remembered the freedom she felt in Canada, from her brief childhood stint. She always hoped to return back to the country where she felt more hopeful and knew where she could work towards achieving her dreams.

"Canada has been like a mother to me," she says.

However, her life in Canada has not been without its challenges. She had her own little gift shop, which she managed alongside taking care of her three children. She saved up, and after many years of hard work, she could not be more ecstatic to have her life's stories written and showcased to everyone. Her upcoming book, *Life of a Promise*, captures a strong message of hope and resilience even when surrounded by mayhem.



S'ÉPANOUIR
EN FRANÇAIS



OFFREZ À VOTRE ENFANT
UNE ÉDUCATION PUBLIQUE FRANCOPHONE

Enseignement de qualité de la maternelle à la 12^e année
Services à la petite enfance
Service de transport scolaire
Programme d'anglais langue première
Programmes de sports, musique, théâtre, plein air, etc.
Programme du Baccalauréat International

csf.bc.ca










IMPORTANT NOTICE

British Columbia has announced a public health emergency due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The International Village Mall is taking further steps to protect our customers, tenants and employees. We have introduced increased frequency of cleaning in all the common areas of the Mall.

In a further effort to combat the spread of Covid-19, the food court seating area will be temporarily closed to the public. Customers are very welcome to order take-outs and delivery from the food court merchants.

Although access to International Village Mall will remain unchanged, the Mall shall be suspending all promotional events and community programs scheduled for March and April. We will re-evaluate the situation from time to time in accordance with the policy and guidance of the relevant government departments.

Retailers and restaurants will have their discretion to operate their store hours. If you are planning on visiting specific restaurants or merchants, please ensure you give them a call first prior to coming in.

We believe that this approach will continue to meet the needs of the customers but at the same time protecting the health of the general public.

Thank you for your co-operation and understanding.

A conversation on social justice at the Central Library

by KYLIE LUNG

The Hate Speech, Freedom of Expression, and Transgender Human Rights speaking event by human rights lawyer, Adrienne Smith, was scheduled to take place at the Central library but is now postponed.

Yet, here are their words.

Working for others

Smith, a Vancouver native, is a fixture in the transgender rights community and has been involved in many important human rights cases within British Columbia. Their cases involve transgender human rights as well as drug policy. Smith settled a Supreme Court Case in BC that guaranteed opiate replacement therapy for prisoners. They also tirelessly



▲ Adrienne Smith, human rights lawyer.

argued against mandatory minimum sentences for women, Indigenous people, and drug users.

From a young age, Smith knew that they wanted to be an advocate for others, understanding the importance of this work early on.

“My parents raised me with a strong moral compass,” says Smith, “People further from justice should be supported to move closer to it. Hoarding of anything is wrong, especially wealth and power, and we are strongest when we take collective action. I owe them for instilling me with these values, and I owe the labour movement for training me to turn my principles into action.”

Smith did not choose law right away. They went to the University of Colombia (UBC), earning a English degree before going on to get a Masters in geography. Smith eventually found their way to law school and their calling as a human rights advocate soon became their life’s work.

Rights for all

Smith feels that the recognition of people in the QTIBIPOC (Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous people of colour) community has increased, but the way in which the law works for these people is still lagging behind.

“In the area of human rights, it still comes down to an adversarial system where an

aggrieved person has to take on the task of enforcing their rights against a party that is usually institutional and more powerful,” says Smith, “There is a real shortage of legal aid and affordable support for people in this area, and this means unrepresented folks have to

often dire and there is rarely someone else who can help them. I’m also really terrible at saying no, so my pro bono caseload is usually pretty full.”

Keeping an open mind

With the current pandemic situation affecting public gath-

ed in regular conversation,” says Smith.

Smith has always had a knack for the spoken word and hopes that their public speaking can help people better understand the QTIBIPOC community and the struggles they still face every day. They hope

“I want people to understand that free speech is not an unlimited right in Canada. There are some important limitations on expression which are often misrepresented in regular conversation.

Adrienne Smith, human rights lawyer

draft, file, and often appear on their own behalf.”

There is an imbalance of power for marginalized people trying to fight for their own human rights and Smith hopes to change this power balance with every case they take on. Smith tries to take on as many pro-bono cases as they can in order to make sure that everyone has a chance to seek legal counsel.

“I have the rare privilege to be able to avoid cases I don’t feel invest in,” says Smith, “And obviously I foreground cases for transgender people, people who use drugs and prisoners, because their situations are

erings, Smith’s event at the Central Library has been postponed, but they plan to provide the audience with information about laws within Canada when their talk is rescheduled. They would like the audience to keep an open mind in order to understand that Canada still has its fair share of free speech issues.

“The law can be intimidating for lots of people, especially if they didn’t grow up with a lawyer in the family. I want people to understand that free speech is not an unlimited right in Canada. There are some important limitations on expression which are often misrepresent-

to use this platform for good and leave change in their wake.

“I’d like readers to know it is still unusual for transgender people to be able to be out as trans in the world if they want to be,” says Smith, “I have a huge amount of social privilege – as a documented anglophone white settler, as a lawyer. Not all trans people can do this, especially trans feminine people, and trans people of colour and those doing sex work. As a society we have a lot more work to do.”

For more information, visit vpl.bibliocommons.com/events/5e30a51bdf59234500455f56

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 St.,
Vancouver, to find
out how we can
best help you.



Recipe

Persian Kalam Polow with meatballs

You may know this type of one-pot rice dish under other spelling variations used around the Balkan and Middle East, like pilaf, polov, or pilau. Persian Polow is rice that is pre-cooked, and then mixed and steamed with vegetables, herbs, and/or

meat. In this recipe small beef meatballs are pan fried in separately and added to the rice for the final steam. Layering the ingredients in such a way and cooking it on a low heat results in a beautifully browned bottom layer of rice, called tahdig.

Creating the perfect tahdig may take some practice – take care not to burn the rice.

Ingredients (serves 6)

- 2 cups rice
- 1 large onion, sliced thin
- 1/2 green cabbage, shredded
- 1 tbsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp ground cardamom
- 1 tsp cinnamon

Ingredients (for meatballs)

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 tbsp dried parsley
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp dijon mustard
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- salt and pepper

Method

1. Wash the rice in cold water until the water runs clear. In a medium sized pot, boil the rice in ample, salted water for about 10 minutes or until almost cooked. Drain and rinse under cold water to stop from cooking further.
2. In a large heavy bottomed pot, sweat the onion in some vegetable oil until translucent. Add spices and cook until fragrant. Add shredded cabbage and cook until slightly softened. Season with salt.

3. For the meatballs: Mix all ingredients by hand and form small, golf ball-sized meatballs. Sear the meatballs in a bit of vegetable oil and butter. Set aside.

4. In a large bowl, mix rice and vegetable/spice mix. Layer the rice and the meatballs back into the heavy bottomed pot, starting with a centimetre of water and a layer of rice. When the layering is done, pour any leftover meatball grease over the rice. Use the back of a wooden spoon to poke about 5 holes in the surface of the rice, almost reaching the bottom of the pan – this is to assist in the steaming process.

5. Turn the heat down to the lowest possible setting. Cover with a lid and cook for about 15 minutes. Turn the heat off and wrap the lid in a clean and dry dishcloth. Put the lid back on the pot and leave for another 10 minutes on the stove, but with the heat turned off. Transfer to a serving platter with the tahdig on top. Serve hot.



▲ An easy one-pot dish.

SELMA VAN HALDER

Cultural Calendar

March 24–April 7, 2020

by SIMON YEE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

My friends, I hope you're staying safe amid the COVID-19 global pandemic that has been sweeping the world. This is the first Cultural Calendar that I can't recommend you "go and check out some of the festivals and events happening around town," because many events and social gatherings have been postponed or cancelled in order to avoid large crowds and mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. Instead, I would recommend practicing good hygiene, staying at home if you're unwell and passing the time checking out some of the interesting digital exhibits and websites online.

Virtual Museum of Canada
www.virtualmuseum.ca

Discover history, art, science, nature and more through virtual exhibits from Canada's museums and heritage organizations. The virtual museum links over 500 exhibits, community stories and online activities featuring a wide variety of subjects including arts & leisure, science & technologies, transportation & industry, nature and more.

Jewish Museum of Vancouver
www.jewishmuseum.ca/exhibits/online-exhibits/

The Jewish Museum and Archives of B.C. is dedicated to the collecting and sharing of community memories of Jewish life in British Columbia. The ever-growing collection includes documents, photos and oral histories that recount the history of the Jewish-Canadian community. Their online exhibits document a slice of their community's rich 150 year history. Check out the history of the Jewish community in the Oakridge neighbourhood, letters from soldiers on the frontlines of world war, stories about love across distances and more.

Existential Comics
www.existentialcomics.com

Online comic artist and Portland-based software engineer Corey Mohler created Existential Comics in 2013, one of the most popular philosophy-themed webcomics on the Internet. Mohler illustrates the deep questions history's greatest philosophers have asked in a humorous and accessible way. Find out what happens when Søren Kierkegaard creates an ad for Taco Bell, Karl Marx gives financial advice, Plato produces a play, David Hume tries to raise a child and more!

This Vancouver
thisvancouver.vpl.ca

Every community is the sum of its stories and memories. The Vancouver Public Library created the "This Vancouver" online exhibit to share the stories of Vancouverites and the history of Vancouver communities through images, audio clips, and videos. Many of the collections are the result of VPL collaborating with community members on community-based digital projects.



▲ Mir Zingen: The Vancouver Jewish Folk Choir Turns 40 is one of the virtual exhibits at the Jewish Museum of Vancouver.

Photo courtesy of Jewish Museum of Vancouver

Maptia
www.maptia.com

Maptia is a collaborative project with a diverse group of photographers, writers, adventurers and conservationists. Together they bring readers a world of inspiring and thought-provoking stories. From spending months living with and learning from Indigenous peoples, to raising awareness about the effects of climate change in vulnerable island communities, the contributors who chose to self-publish on Maptia are some of the world's most dedicated visual storytellers.

Information is Beautiful
www.informationisbeautiful.net

The Information is Beautiful website is dedicated to helping its visitors make clearer and more informed decisions about the world. All their visualizations are based on facts & data: constantly updated, revised & revisioned. Explore infographics on topics such as how to

reduce carbon footprints, what Islamic Golden Age thinkers discovered, calculating the chances of extraterrestrial life and the most commonly given relationship advice.

Humble Bundle
www.humblebundle.com

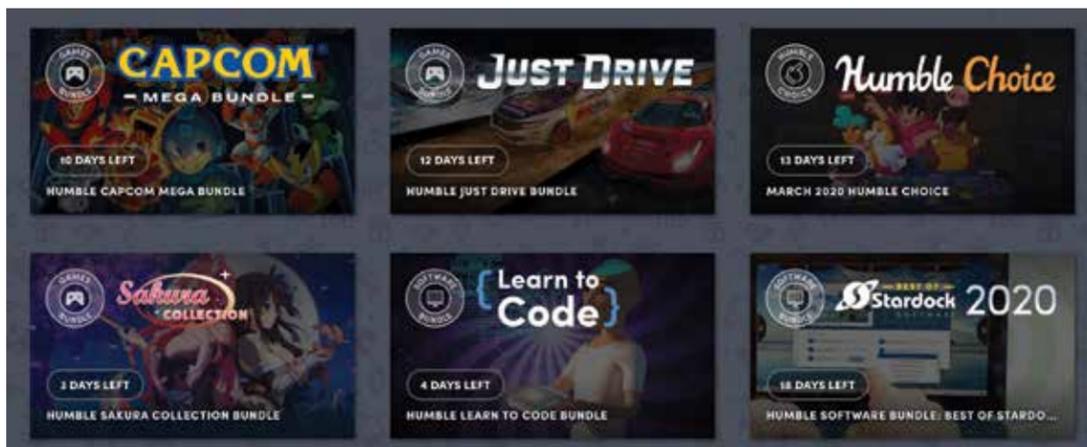
Humble Bundle sells games, ebooks, software, comics and other digital content in a software bundle. Pay as little as \$1.50 to get a bundle of digital content.

When you buy a bundle, you can choose the price you want to pay and choose how your money is divided. Every type of product they sell contributes a portion of proceeds to charity. On many products, buyers can allocate a part or all of their purchase to a charity of their choice.

Google Arts & Culture
www.artsandculture.google.com

You might visit Google's website everyday to search, read your

email or write some documents, but did you know the search engine company has also partnered with some of the world's most renowned museums and uses the web's cutting edge technologies – maps, 3D virtual reality rendering, street view and video streaming – to present some of the world's finest arts and culture in amazing online exhibits? Learn more about Kenyan superheroes, going to the washroom in space, how our human ancestors painted before paint existed and much more!



▲ Some of the bundles currently available at Humble Bundle.

Coursera
www.coursera.org

Just because in-person classes have been suspended doesn't mean you don't have to keep learning. Why not take a course online? Coursera is one of the many online sites you can learn from and obtain university level credits for your study. Every course on Coursera is taught by top instructors from world-class universities and companies, so you can learn something new anytime, anywhere. Hundreds of free courses give you access to on-demand video lectures, homework exercises and community discussion forums. Paid courses provide additional quizzes and projects as well as a shareable Course Certificate upon completion.



▲ Hundreds of stories are shared through images, audio clips, and videos at This Vancouver.