

Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society



Storytelling Our Lives

Those who saw this performance had the opportunity to see some very talented women bring the stage to life with stories, song and dance. Six weeks of hard work by sixteen local immigrant women and five professional actors from the Puente Theatre out of Victoria produced two hours of wonderful entertainment.

Tatiana Hibon from Ladysmith and Ycha Gil from Malaspina provided stage and acting workshops. The rhythm and mask-making workshop held on Saturday April 1st was fun especially when Tracy Meyers came in and gave us a one hour drum and rhythm workshop. She had us all banging to the same beat.

These talented women had such a great experience they would like to put on more performances so watch for announcements of up and coming events.



STOL Cast form a living sculpture



Faith gets her face painted as part of the fun at the Rhythm and Maskmaking workshop

News & Updates

Celebrating March 21st

The Multicultural Society and its Action for Diversity Team hosted a **Dessert and Dialogue** to celebrate International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Jerry Brown, an elder of the Snuneymuxw Nation spoke, and Summersage, a Métis singing group, entertained fifty people including Jean Crowder, our local MP.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was proclaimed by Nanaimo's Mayor and Council.

Challenging Racism Through Early Interventions

Over the past year, the Society has conducted a series of workshops. In these interactive workshops, children ages 9 to 12 from the Sikh and Aboriginal communities participate in fun group-building games and talk about their experiences of racism with their peers in a safe environment. The aim of these workshops was to help Aboriginal and racialized children build resilience and empowerment

by supporting a positive racial identity. Opportunities were provide to a multi-racial grade 4/5 class at Bayview School to talk about diversity and culture. Students were able to practice ways to respond when they witnessed racism among their peers by using Anti-racism Response.

Practicum Students

We would like to thank our three Malaspina practicum students Shelam Rafuse, *Child & Youth Care*, Melissa Nychuk, *Criminology* and Katie Streeper, *Social Work* for all the work they have done. They have all worked with the Diversity program, Shelam worked with two Family Workshop Series and with a local family. Katie and Melissa worked extensively with the Women's Group and the theatre project

We are expanding

We are taking over the offices by the front door. We have talked about a facility upgrade for a long and it is now finally happening.

Upcoming Events

April 28th - 9:45 am
Speaker
Registered Education Savings Plan

May - Friday Mornings
(Dates to be announced)
Toastmasters Speechcraft
"Speaking With Confidence"

May 5th - 9:45 am
Women's Group
Planning the Meal

May 12th - 9:45 am
Women's Group
Cooking the Meal

June 21st - 7:00 pm
Annual General Meeting

We're on the Web
www.cvims.org

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**Notice of
THE ANNUAL
GENERAL MEETING
of
The Central Vancouver
Island
Multicultural Society**

**Wednesday June 21, 2006
7:00 PM
Maffeo Sutton Auditorium
2nd Floor, 285 Prideaux Street**

At the Annual General Meeting we will elect a new slate of Board Members. A member of the society interested in sitting on The Board of Directors may let his/her name stand for election. Board members should be prepared to attend one board meeting per month, participate in working committees such as Personnel, Policy, Finance, and Race Relations and be available for any Board development or strategic planning sessions. The commitment as a Board member is one year. For further information contact Hilde, Executive Director at 753-6911

Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society Board of Directors ...

Marg Goerzen—President



I grew up in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and began my career as an Elementary School Teacher in Northern Saskatchewan. I moved to the Island to escape the long, cold winters and have now lived here as long as I did on the prairies! I am married and have two grown children (a daughter and son) and have a 6 year old step-grandson and a 4 month old granddaughter.

Since moving to the Island I have had a variety of employment opportunities but have worked in Employment Services for the past 12 years and continue to do so for WCG International in the Triumph and Jobwave programs. Through the years I have continually updated my education and skills in career development for

Paul Armstrong—Vice-president



I was born and raised in Toronto and I lived in that city for 32 years. During that time, I was employed in sales and marketing and involved in real estate. At the age of 33 I moved to Alberta, where I attended at the University of Calgary. After obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science, I then moved to Vancouver to attend law school at the University of British Columbia. I completed my Bachelor of Laws degree in May 2003 and obtained

my articles on Vancouver Island shortly thereafter. I currently practice law in Nanaimo.

I am very happily married. I met my wife, Ximena, in 1996 while I was living in Calgary. Ximena was born in Quito, Ecuador. She was visiting

Betty Smith—Secretary



My trail to Nanoose Bay began on a small farm in central Saskatchewan, continued on through Manitoba, Alberta, B.C., Ontario, France, back to Saskatchewan, then Brazil and finally back to B.C. again. The best place on earth to live and work.

Although it was not a life threatening ordeal, growing up with eight brothers cannot be described as a life enhancing experience. Fortunately it left only superficial scars.

After a short career in psychiatric nursing I married, had one son and eventually resettled in Saskatchewan on my own to raise my son. During this period I enjoyed a satisfying career in the electronics industry working in inventory control and finally as a purchasing agent.

Upon meeting my current husband we decided to head west. I returned to University at Simon Fraser to earn a B.A. in Linguistics. When my husband's projects began to go overseas I thought teaching English would be an interesting and rewarding thing to do while living in other countries. I headed back to Simon Fraser for two more years to obtain a TESL certifi

Chanda Eap—Treasurer



I was born and raised in Cambodia. I have one sister and one brother. In Cambodia, I worked as an Administrative Assistant for a Non-Profit Organization for about two years. I taught kindergarten in a private school for two years and worked for a family small business for a number of years.

I immigrated to Canada in July 2001. Two months after I arrived in Nanaimo, I went to Malaspina University-College to study English as my Second Language (ESL). One year later, I started my first year diploma in Business Management. Two years later, I received a Diploma in Business Management majoring in Accounting. Three years went by very fast, I met many people at school and we all became friends. In addition to that, I found that I really like studying ac-

clients with multi barriers.

My connection to the CVIMS began when I was hired to work in a Job Training Program as a Work Experience Liaison and Job Search Workshop Facilitator. The program lasted for 5 years and was a wonderful experience. I met people from around the world and learned about their many different cultures and customs. So, when approached to sit on the board of directors, it was an easy decision. I have enjoyed my time on the board witnessing the development of more and more services for clients and the important role the society is playing in educating Nanaimo and surrounding area to become an inclusive community where incidents of racism and hate no longer exist.

Canada on a cultural exchange program when we met. We were married in Quito in 1998. Ximena and I now have two young children.

Our greatest joy is spending time together as a family and watching our two sons grow. We also enjoy traveling and meeting new people and discovering new places. As Ximena is originally from Ecuador, we have spent considerable time in that country. We have also traveled throughout South America.

I am a strong believer in multiculturalism and I value the strength and wisdom and diversity that those from distant lands bring to my life and to our society.

cate. The overseas projects were short lived yielding only one overseas teaching position in Libya. We decided that it was time to move to "the island". After one session of teaching basic literacy and math in a First Nations Village in Northern B.C., I began teaching ESL at CVIMS.

As luck would have it, overseas employment once again became available to my husband and a long term contract in Holland was offered. Leaving CVIMS to accompany him to Holland was a very difficult decision for me. I knew how much I would miss the satisfaction of watching a new language blossom in a newcomer to our country. I knew I would miss the connection with the students and other staff. However my family is growing and gives me no time to mourn the past. My three stepdaughters have provided three lovely grandchildren, and my son a new granddaughter, so life is full of activity and holds many great memories.

counting and finance. My dream or my goal is to become a professional accountant in the future. I decided to continue studying and pursue a Bachelor of Business Administration major in Accounting and hopefully, I can reach my goal in the future. Currently, I am a fourth year student at Malaspina University-College. In my second year, during summer, I volunteered at the Central Vancouver Island Multi-Cultural Society to do office work for about three months. I also do contract work as an interpreter and translator from English to Cambodian and Cambodia to English for CVIMS. I participate in many activities organized by CVIMS. Now, I am a Board Member, and my position is Treasurer. In my spare time, I enjoy walking, bike riding, and playing badminton.

Marina McLeod—Past President



I have been an active member of the CVIMS for over 20 years. My two daughters Tanya and Jennifer grew up surrounded by cultures from all over the world as they too helped their mom volunteer. Later I became an English Second Language instructor with the society. I held this position for over eight years before moving to West Africa to work. Upon my return I have held various positions on

the Board of Directors including President.

I am a free lance-writer. My food column "Comfort Food Corner" appears each Wednesday in the Harbour City Star newspaper. I also work full time for the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

I have travelled to more than fifty countries and thus hold a deep respect and appreciation for all nations.

I am proud of the growth and accomplishments of CVIMS.

Wanda Brown



I grew up in sunny Southern California and also lived in Northern California and Arizona. In 1980, I moved to Toronto, Ontario with my Canadian husband, Keith. After twenty-five years in Canada, I finally became a citizen this year.

Keith and I moved from Toronto to beautiful Nanaimo in 1996. We enjoy gardening, taking our dog for walks at local parks, and meeting friends for coffee at my favourite

Canadian institution, Tim Horton's.

In my early adult years, I worked in a variety of jobs before going back to school to earn a diploma in Rehabilitation Work. I later completed a BA in History and have also taken courses in LifeSkills, Mental Health,

and Career Development.

Since 1983, I have worked in Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services. I am currently self-employed part-time and work part-time for the Canadian Mental Health Association. In both my jobs, I assist people who have disabilities prepare for and find employment.

Shortly after moving to Nanaimo, I worked for CVIMS in two programs delivering Employment Services. Although I went on to other jobs, I stayed in touch with many of the staff and volunteers and have been pleased to have been able to serve on the Society's board.

Elsiena Pel



My husband Fred and I have three adult children and a four year old granddaughter. We moved to Cranbrook for work in 1977 and transferred to Nanaimo in 2001. I completed my degree in social work in 2003 and began working with the outreach team with Mental Health & Addictions in July 2005. Previously I was working at Columbian House, a transitional home for people suffering with mental illness.

I became involved with the Multicultural Society in 2002 as a volunteer with the Action for Diversity Team, a team organized and led by Terre Flower. I received training on cultural competency, the causes and types of discrimination, and, how to respond to incidents of hate and discrimi-

nation in a supportive manner.

I joined the Board in June of 2005 and it has been a most rewarding experience. Unfortunately, too many commitments prevent me from running for another term. My involvement with the Multicultural Society has enriched my life both personally and professionally. I have gained increased understanding and insight into the dynamics of the overt and covert forms of discrimination, learned the need to stand against discrimination, the inherent beauty and richness of cultural differences and the need to encourage and support all people toward a sense of their own intrinsic value. Thank you to all the Board members and Terre Flower for their kindness and tutorage.

Carolynne Sacht



I was born in Campbell River, on northern Vancouver Island, and have lived on the Island (from Port Hardy to Victoria) most of my life. I moved to Nanaimo eleven years ago.

I graduated from the University of Victoria with a Bachelor of Arts. I have worked for Island Timberlands (originally MacMillan Bloedel, then Weyerhaeuser) for over eighteen years. I worked in accounting, as salary paymaster, as administrative assistant and in community relations, donations.

One of my passions is family history research. I am in the process of learning about and connecting to my own family history, including my Kwakwaka'wakw and Native Hawaiian heritage. I enjoy travelling, most

recently to Italy, Greece, Turkey with my nephew, Spencer, and to Maui last year with my family. We are going to Hawaii again in just a few weeks and will visit family we have recently connected with. This is one of the great rewards of genealogy – the opportunity to connect with relations all over the world, as well as in your own backyard

My interest in the CVIMS began when I went to a celebration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, where I first met Terre and Cecilia. I believe anti-racism work is very necessary in our society, that is why I decided to support the CVIMS by volunteering for a one-year term on the Board of Directors. I have enjoyed getting to know the staff, the Society and the rest of the Board.

Michael Wu



In 1974, I got an MBA degree in Taiwan. I kept challenging the summit in my daily business, as a result I was like a lucky guy: always got a good job, good promotion, and became an executive VP of a well-known international real estate company in Taiwan.

In pursuit of a better life for our children, my family immigrated to Canada in 2002. It is always a dramatic challenge for an immigrant family. My family had no friends or relatives in Nanaimo; nevertheless, we moved here because we love the beautiful scenery and the way of living in this small community. We were lucky enough to make many new friends at

the CVI Multicultural Society. They all helped us a lot in any circumstances, so we settled down and adapted to new environment very soon. I became a realtor and started my own business within 19 months of immigrating to this community. I couldn't make this happen without taking full advantage of the services from the CVI Multicultural Society.

While enjoying my new life here, I'm looking forward not only to helping more people to settle down into their new dream homes, but also to provide more service to the community by volunteering as a director on the board at CVI Multicultural Society.

News from the office of the Executive Director

It is with considerable regret that we announce the departure of a valued and dedicated staff member **Joy Andrews**, who has been with the CVIMS since May 1998. As The Employment Services Coordinator and Counsellor many of you have had the pleasure of working with Joy over the years as she

has assisted hundred of individuals in their job search and action plans. Joy also fulfilled many other roles within the society: as our representative to government and community consultations on employment for immigrants, as a leader with the BCITP Net group, and as an integral member of our staff pro-

gram coordinating team which advises me on a regular basis. Joy has set a high standard which has become a hallmark for our society. We thank Joy for her many years of service to CVIMS and wish her all the best in her new position as Skills Connect for Immigrants Project Manager and Coordinator.

BCITP Net News A Celebration of Success

By Angelika Valchar
Volunteer & job seeker

On April 6th CVIMS hosted a Celebration of Success for BC Internationally Trained Professionals. About 25 professional immigrants from all over the world including panel speakers attended this memorable event.

CVIMS welcomed guest Barbara McDougall from the Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce and Marilyn Hutchinson from the City of Nanaimo who briefly talked about their roles in the community. (they are great network contacts so keep their names in your job search list!)

Joy Andrews then presented exciting news for all immigrants and informed everyone about a new pilot project '**BC Skills Connect for Immigrants Program**' that has been awarded to CVIMS and should be running in June of this year. **Congratulations to CVIMS on receiving this exciting project!**

What a special and successful night! Speakers on the panel have touched me the most. Looking at the panel couldn't be a better representation of multiculturalism. Five people representing Europe, India, Korea, Japan and China. Five amazing people, imi-

grants full of courage, energy, confidence and appreciation sharing their life stories. Stories of real life that is not always an easy one. I could visualize their struggles while they were talking about beginnings of a new life in Canada.

According to all presenters English speaking was a biggest obstacle besides lacking local professional experience. It was hard to believe as their presentations spoke for them. They were standing strong and prepared! Communication was not an obstacle at all! Energy they have presented has given me a shivering in a good sense. Their encouragement, words of wisdom and mostly actions is given a hope. Hope for new immigrants to come. We know and understand how difficult is the decision to leave family, friends, professional career and culture behind to come to a new country and start from all over again. Nobody says it's going to be an easy journey! But once you made that decision, it's in your hands.

One of the presenters Xian Min (Lily) Qiu has said and I believe nobody could say any better way: "Have a vision, have a goal and follow up! Don't give up and don't let anybody discourage you. You and only you can do it! And don't forget to learn from your own mistakes! Utilize services that are around you and you'll make it!"

In my eyes, I've seen heroes who won their

own battle! Congratulations on job well done! Yes, there were words of frustration in regards to dealing with the system! The Executive Director Hilde Schlosar has commented on government initiatives and legislation and we recognized the fact that changes are coming in a slow pace. BCITP Network gives us an opportunity to reunite to voice our difficulties, frustration and hope for a better solution!

One more point I would like to comment is the appreciation of each presenter to CVIMS particularly to Joy Andrews and Nanette Longo for the support, encouragement and help they have received. It's a great recognition of hard working staff! Everyone working at CVIMS deserves heartfelt thank you from not only immigrants themselves but from the community for an excellent services they provide!

For the other professional immigrants in the community I would like to say come in and join the BCITP Network. Share your story, encourage and support new immigrants who are at the beginning of their new journey in Canada! Take it as great opportunity to voice your opinions, vent the frustrations and come up with better solutions. Life seems easier and nicer when you know there are people out there who care!

At the end I would like express my gratitude to CVIMS for letting me volunteer and being a part of this special event.

Assistance with Job Searching and Career Planning

Employment Services Centre

就业服务中心

Trung-tâm Dịch vụ Tìm kiếm việc làm

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Centro de Servicios de Empleo

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109 - 285 Prideaux St. Nanaimo
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The Government of Canada has contributed funding to this initiative

Canada

Drop-in Centre

- Help with resumes
- Use of computers and Internet
- Job Postings Board
- Photocopy, fax & message service

Employment Counselling

- Action Plan Development
- Contact with Employers
- Job Interview preparation
- Access to English language school
- Access to training and education
- Assistance with foreign credentials
- BC Internationally Trained Professionals Network (BCITP Net)

Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm