

NEXUS

camosun's student voice since 1990

spring 2012
nexusnewspaper.com

MISSING

disappearing aboriginal women:
british columbia's ongoing horror
page 7



the lizard of
OZ
a memoir



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everyone
has
a
secret

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Representing the student voice can be a lot of work, and volunteers go a long way towards making each issue of *Nexus* fantastic.

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These stories (except Local, Live and Loud on page 14) were originally published in *Nexus* during the fall '11 and winter '12 semesters.

Nexus Vol. 22, Issue 17 – Spring 2012

Address: 3100 Foul Bay Rd., Victoria, BC, V8P 5J2
Location: Richmond House 201, Lansdowne campus
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Publisher: Nexus Publishing Society

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PostSecret: Photo provided

The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors, not of the Nexus Publishing Society. One copy of *Nexus* spring magazine is available per issue, per person for free. *Nexus* is printed on recycled paper. Please recycle your copy when you are done. Thanks!

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Every time the spring and summer semesters roll around, we here at *Nexus* take the time to look back on the past couple of semesters and reprint some of our favourite articles in two special editions of the paper: the one you're currently reading and one that hits stands during the summer semester. One word comes to mind while reading through this collection of stories: ambition.

It was an ambitious pair of semesters for our writers, to be sure. Features writer Ali Hackett took on intense subjects such as assisted suicide, depression among students, and our province's ongoing missing-women crisis (see page 7; she did such a good job in September 2011 covering the missing-women crisis that she wrote a second feature story on it in April of this year).

Contributing writer Jean Oliver delivered an engaging memoir about her time spent in another country (see page 10) and also delivered some great profile pieces to the paper; see page 5 for her story on Camosun Charger Hilary Graham.

Ambition: contributing writer Chesley Ryder took on a story about an innocent little website and made it a story about how powerful secrets are to all of us (see page 13). Another contributing writer, Jeremy Ambers, tackled issues of culture and education (see page 6).

We pushed all of our contributors this year and they pushed us back in all the best ways. For that, we thank them, and we thank you for reading. We hope these stories move you in the same ways they moved us this past year.

Greg Pratt
editor-in-chief

Camosun's budget hits media students

DYLAN WILKS

STAFF WRITER

Between the two percent increase in tuition, cutting as many as 46 staff and faculty, the shutting down of the college's radio station and the cuts or suspensions of three programs, Camosun's recently announced budget will have long-lasting effects on students and staff at the college.

Madeline Keller-MacLeod, Camosun College Student Society's (CCSS) external affairs executive, says the increase in tuition costs could result in students unable to afford education.

"We're committed to making education a right," says Keller-MacLeod, "and with every tuition fee increase, education is becoming more of a privilege."

Camosun College faces an initial deficit of \$2.5 million, due both to the lack of an increase in provincial funding (which has been flat since 2010 when it was cut by 75 percent) and lower-than-anticipated non-governmental revenue generation.

Keller-MacLeod believes that the college is doing what it can to make sure students are impacted as little as possible, and the problem lies with the provincial government.

"The government has given postsecondary institutions a mandate to have a balanced budget every year and they have to try to make it not affect students," she says, "and that's impossible."



FILE PHOTO

CKMO station manager Brad Edwards had to watch the station be shut down in April.

Joan Yates, executive director, communications and advancement at Camosun, emphasizes how hard the college is trying to avoid having students impacted by the cuts.

"It would be great if we didn't have to increase tuition," says Yates, "but the reality is that our costs have gone up proportionately more than two percent."

The budget calls for the cuts of 6.6 administration positions, 22.5 support staff positions, and 17 Camosun College Faculty Association positions, which is 46 people on paper, but Yates believes the actual number will be lower.

"Based on what has happened in the past in this organization—while that's a huge number, no question—with actual people, it comes way down," says Yates. "We will have people absolutely who are impacted, but the [actual] number is less than half of that overall position."

Students interested in media have been

hit particularly hard by the cuts. CKMO, Camosun's radio station, is being shut down and the Applied Communication Program (ACP) is being suspended, despite high graduate employment rates.

"Because we're not integrated with any other programs, they can cut us and no other programs are affected directly," says ACP instructor Kim O'Hare. "If you cut a biology teacher you affect the nursing program and the environmental program and so on. We're a stand-alone program. It's less complicated; the effects of suspending ACP are contained."

ACP being suspended will leave a void in communications education on Vancouver Island.

"I don't think you can walk into a media outlet on the island without running into an ACP person," says O'Hare. "And that's done. It's over now. Like everything else, we'll be relying on the mainland to provide our communications now."

Apart from CKMO being shut down and the Applied Communication Program being suspended, the 2012–13 Camosun College budget is hitting the college hard.

Here are some other affected programs and services:

- In Student Services, the Learning Skills program will be cut. Other options for delivering some elements of this service are being considered. In addition, a re-organization of Student Services will result in reductions.
- Computing Science as a stand-alone program will be cut. Computing classes offered to other programs will continue.
- The English Language Development program will be reduced.
- The Network Electronics program will be suspended.
- 6.6 management positions will be cut, including associate deans.
- Information Technology will have positions removed in both management and support staff.
- Continuing Education/Contract Training areas that operate below cost recovery will be suspended.
- Camosun International will lose positions due to changes in its business model.
- Non-government funded areas, such as co-op and ancillary services, will also lose positions.
- Reductions will also be made in other departments of the college.

Aboriginal education thrives at Camosun

“My hope is that we have graduation rates that are on par with the non-aboriginal rates, and beyond.”

SUZANNE WILKINSON
CAMOSUN COLLEGE

JEREMY AMBERS

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Celebrating its 20th year at Camosun College, Aboriginal Education and Community Connections (formerly First Nations Education) plays a large role in ensuring a successful future for aboriginal students at the college.

The resource centre offers support for students who are in aboriginal studies. “When I walk into this office, I feel like I’m walking into a friendly home” says Trevor Bach, a student in the indigenous studies program.

The centre, which started in 1991, has expanded from serving 100 students to accommodating the needs of over 1,000.

“We are simply growing and growing,” says student advisor Suzanne Wilkinson. “It’s in part because of our population boom and in part because, collectively, our communities are realizing how important postsecondary education is for getting what you want out of life.”

Wilkinson says that another reason aboriginal studies are growing is because



CAROL-LYNNE MICHAELS/NEXUS

Camosun student advisor Suzanne Wilkinson.

society as a whole is moving further away from the past negative experiences of education that have impacted aboriginal people.

“More and more, our people and our communities are having positive experiences with education, and they are passing that along to their families,” she says. “My hope is that we have graduation rates that are on par with the non-aboriginal rates, and beyond.”

Camosun supports aboriginal studies in its strategic plan and the college is working to build a strong foundation to strengthen the future of education for aboriginal people.

“The college over the years has been really committed to the work we’re doing,”

says Sandee Mitchell, program leader, student services. “There have been many years when our numbers have been really low in our programs, and the college hasn’t put us on the cutting block. They’ve supported us, so I give a lot of credit to Camosun.”

Aboriginal Education and Community Connections has continued to have a vision for success and growth, helping aboriginal students through their post-secondary journey.

“We have a philosophy that we all adhere to, and our philosophy is that we’re here to serve students,” says Mitchell. “We’re here to make life better for aboriginal students who are studying here, we’re here to support and hold up students who journey through the college.”

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Camosun Charger Hilary Graham plays it cool



JEAN OLIVER/NEXUS

Hilary Graham plays on Camosun's Chargers women's volleyball team.

JEAN OLIVER

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Chargers women's volleyball team were missing key players that day against the Douglas College Royals. Two powers were injured; a middle had dislocated one of her fingers. Coach Chris Dahl had considered second-year right side Hilary Graham as an outside hitter, but these depletions meant other players had to try different positions.

"We had to step up to fill those starters," says Graham, who was later named Pacific Western Athletic Association (PACWEST) Women's Volleyball Athlete of the Week for her part in that victory.

A tall and strikingly beautiful young woman with clear eyes and a friendly smile, Graham moves with grace common to many athletes who have spent a life lived on the balls of their feet. Graham was very active when she was young and spent a lot of time watching a friend's sister play volleyball. Then, when she got a bit older, she realized there was more to sports than meets the eye: there was the social value of sport.

"I was really awkward when I was younger," she says. "In grade 10 my team that year won the island finals and I clicked mentally at that point. That win gave the sport that extra 'oh, wow, this is really fun—I want to keep doing this' factor."

Graham answers questions about her own achievements by first emphasizing how important her team is to her own performance. When asked how it felt to win the PACWEST award, her humility is overwhelming.

"I felt it wasn't my doing; it was my team that lifted me up and helped me to succeed," she says. "The coach told the setter to give me more volume, the other girls on the team were passing well; it gave me the opportunity to have a one-on-one situation with the blocker."

"Hilary clearly has talent," says coach Dahl. "In the two years I've been fortunate enough to work with Hilary, she has also shown a remarkable commitment to the kinds of training behaviours I think extremely successful people exhibit."

All the accolades in the division don't mean much if no one's there watching the games, though. Graham stresses that playing a good game is important but so is having an audience to play for.

"A player has a relationship with the crowd," she says. "Hearing the cheering gives an entertaining quality to the experience. You're doing what you love and that feeling is shared."

As for the future, Graham enjoys working with kids in a sports setting.

"Watching a kid succeed at a skill they've been struggling with and seeing that satisfaction on their face, that's really rewarding."

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A DEADLY SILENCE

THE EPIDEMIC OF MISSING AND MURDERED BC ABORIGINAL WOMEN

BY ALI HACKETT, STAFF WRITER

PHOTO BY CAROL-LYNNE MICHAELS



Thousands of Canadian women have been murdered over the last four decades, and hundreds, if not thousands, more are missing. Walk4Justice, a non-profit organization committed to raising awareness of this epidemic, says the number of missing and murdered women is as high as 4,200, with a disproportionately large percentage of Aboriginal women represented.

Although the RCMP hasn't released information about victims' ethnicity in the past, it is estimated by Walk4Justice that at least 75 percent come from First Nations, Inuit, or Métis ancestry. There have been many detailed reports, commissions, and hearings on the subject, but human rights organizations such as Amnesty International Canada say the need for action is urgent.

An interim parliamentary report released in April 2011 by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, titled *Call Into the Night: An Overview of Violence Against Aboriginal Women*, outlines the root causes of violence against Aboriginal women, in particular.

According to the report, the vulner-

ability and mistreatment of Aboriginal women is due to a history of colonization, overt racism on the part of media, law enforcement, and the justice system, and the indifference of society to the violence faced by Aboriginal women.

The increased vulnerability of women in remote areas is also apparent. A disproportionately high number of missing or murdered women have been reported around Highway 16, commonly referred to as the Highway of Tears, between Prince George and Prince Rupert.

The tragedies have hit the island, as well. On January 28, 2011, the body of 18-year-old Tyeshia Jones was found in a wooded area in Duncan, near a First Nations cemetery, six days after she disappeared. Although the RCMP has been bombarded with tips and information, they have not named a suspect.

Statistics from the Sisters in Spirit initiative, an education and research project of the Native Women's Association of Canada, show almost half of the Aboriginal women murdered in BC are killed by strangers; the rate is much lower in the non-Aboriginal population.

Stolen sisters

In October of 2004, Amnesty International Canada released a report, *Stolen Sisters: Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada*, which helped bring political awareness to the subject.

According to the report, young indigenous women in Canada are five times more likely than non-indigenous women of the same age to die as the result of violence. *Stolen Sisters* describes a pattern of racism, decades of oppressive government policy, and a lack of accountability within police forces.

The report details that although this is a political and a social issue, it is also a human-rights issue.

"Indigenous women have the right to be safe and free from violence," states the report. "When a woman is targeted for violence because of her gender or because of her indigenous identity, her fundamental rights have been abused. And when she is not offered an adequate level of protection by state authorities because of her gender or because of her Indigenous identity, those

“This country has a **dark side**. It’s

rights have been violated.”

According to RCMP corporal Annie Linteau, victims aren’t discriminated against because of their ethnicity.

“Regardless of someone’s nationality or racial background, we promptly investigate any reported missing person or instances of violence against women,” she says.

Linteau also says two major, ongoing projects in BC are dedicated to apprehending the people responsible for these crimes.

One is Project Even Handed, which was responsible for the Robert Pickton investigation, and the other is E-Pana. E-Pana is a government-funded, approximately 70-person team dedicated to investigating disappearances and murders.

“The project has a very specific mandate,” says Linteau. “It’s looking at the disappearance or homicide of women who meet specific criteria: they have to be female, they were involved in high-risk activity such as hitchhiking or the sex trade, and they were last seen or their body was found within a mile or so from Highway 16, Highway 97, or Highway 5. The purpose of E-Pana was to try and establish if a serial killer was responsible for any of the deaths.”

Currently, 18 cases are being investigated under E-Pana as homicides, although the remains of some women have not been found. Using databases, the team’s reviewers are now able to see similarities between cases, follow leads, and hopefully discover new evidence that may lead them to making arrests.

But controversy surrounds E-Pana. Some families whose loved ones aren’t on the list feel they are being neglected. Others feel that

the team isn’t doing enough, or that it’s too little, too late.

“In many cases some of the evidence that had previously been looked at forensically has been resubmitted for analysis, because of technological advances,” says Linteau. “The oldest case dates back to 1969.”

With state-of-the-art technology like DNA sampling, and seemingly limitless government-funded resources, some victims’ families have a hard time understanding why all 18 cases remain unsolved.

“In some of them we may be able to determine what happened, to provide a bit of closure to the families,” team commander RCMP staff-sergeant Bruce Hulan said in a December, 2009 article in *The Vancouver Sun*. “Is it likely that we will be able to charge on all 18 of them? I’m doubtful about that.”

Winds of change

In 2006, Gladys Radek participated in a walk along the Highway of Tears for her niece, Tamara Chipman, who went missing near Prince Rupert in 2005.

“I knew there would be no justice for Tamara, or any of these women,” says Radek.

She drew up a petition demanding a public inquiry into the disappearances, which received thousands of signatures, but didn’t draw the attention of politicians.

In early 2008, Radek made a call to Bernie Williams, who has been trying to bring attention to women missing from the downtown east side of Vancouver since the mid-’80s and asked her to walk all the way across Canada

to help raise awareness for the issue.

“It was a huge task just to get people to listen and believe in the cause,” says Radek. “All we had was our big mouths, and our hearts, but we never turned back.”

Williams and Radek created the non-profit, non-governmental organization Walk4Justice in 2008.

“Our aim is to bring awareness to the plight of murdered and missing women in BC and nationwide, which has been ignored in the past,” says Radek. “Awareness helps the families of the lost women. It incenses the public to ask questions.”

Williams has also been directly affected by the violence that persists against women in this country; her mother and two sisters were murdered in the downtown east side of Vancouver.

2011 marked the fourth Walk4Justice. They have walked over 3,000 kilometres through all kinds of weather, including the recent storm produced by Hurricane Irene. The walkers don’t travel in a straight line; instead, they follow a route that takes them to communities where families have lost loved ones. Some families travel from across Canada, including the Yukon and Northwest Territories, to meet the walkers.

Walk4Justice has a grassroots approach to research. Together with the families, they share stories, hold vigils, and add names to their growing list of missing and murdered women.

A core group, plus some who joined to walk partway, reached their final destination on September 17, 2011, after leaving on June 21. On September 19, Walk4Justice held a rally on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

beautiful, but there is a **dark side.**”

BERNIE WILLIAMS

WALK4JUSTICE

“When will the government do something about the lives being lost? These are hate crimes,” says Williams. “We want a national, Aboriginal taskforce that’s transparent and open to communities and families. We want health, healing, and wellness centres for Aboriginal women only.”

The group is calling for a national missing and murdered women’s symposium to be held in Vancouver.

“We need to take actions to provide better safety nets and to stop this ongoing violence against our women and children, and all women,” says Williams. “These unnecessary, heinous crimes have to stop. These are lives, they are not garbage, but this is how society looks at it.”

Strength in numbers
Walk4Justice is only part of a growing number of organizations dedicated to bringing justice to the women affected by violence in our country.

Sisters in Spirit (SIS) has researched 582 cases of missing and murdered women across the country over the last several years.

According to the SIS, cases in BC make up almost a third of the cases in their national database. Of these cases, almost half are between age 19 and 30. The SIS is concerned with the intergenerational impact these cases have.

Williams agrees. “When you kill off a nation of women, you kill off a future generation,” she says.

Relatives often struggle to care for children of the missing and murdered. Radek’s

niece had a young son who’s now growing up without his mother. Families with missing women who aren’t considered by the RCMP to have met with foul play are ineligible for legal aid and other resources such as victim services, because there’s no evidence that a crime took place. When women disappear without a trace, their families are often left to deal with the aftermath on their own.

Findings from the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry are to be submitted by June 30. Allegations have been made that law enforcement officials dismissed information about a killer on the streets from women on the downtown eastside.

One purpose of the inquiry is to uncover the conduct of the police forces doing investigations between January 23, 1997 and February 5, 2002 on women missing from the poverty-stricken area of Vancouver.

Although police officers were represented by over 30 publicly funded lawyers, the province refused to provide more than a handful of lawyers to represent victims’ families, Aboriginal interests, and advocacy groups.

In 2011, Wally Oppal, the commissioner of the inquiry, left a voicemail message for then-attorney general of BC, Barry Penner. Oppal later released the message to the public when Penner claimed Oppal was biased against the inquiry.

In the voicemail, Oppal said, in part, that “the government is now being seen as funding the people who allegedly did everything wrong and ignored the women, ignored the victims but ... will not go and fund the victims, and not fund the women, the poor Aboriginal women.”

Although the federal government claims they are doing as much as they can, pleas for a national missing person task force have been rejected.

As of July 2011, the federal government has allocated approximately \$2 million to create a missing-person database that will allow all levels of law enforcement to share information. It is not yet operating.

At this point the RCMP hasn’t released information about whether victims are aboriginal or not. This doesn’t sit well with Radek, who says they’re essentially denying that a problem exists. “It is only through awareness which people start to ask questions, and it is only through accountability that we will find justice,” she says.

None of these are new concerns.

Several commissions, investigations, and human rights groups have identified many of the issues and outlined recommendations for change, but many argue that not enough is being done.

Williams and Radek feel there’s an injustice in the inaction of law enforcement to bring the offenders to trial; they see an inequality in Canada’s standard of living.

“This country has a dark side,” says Williams. “It’s beautiful, but there is a dark side.”

Considering that the vast majority of missing and murdered women are Aboriginal, Williams says the high percentage of unsolved cases is due to systemic racism within government, law enforcement, and the judicial system.

“If it was me,” she says, “I would bring a class action law suit against the country. These are crimes against humanity.”

The lizard of Oz:

Story and images by Jean Oliver

David Hudson opened the door to his traditional Queenslander home back in 1988 and welcomed us inside. Glad to be in out of the heat, we made our way to the cool centre of the house. He told us to make ourselves comfortable in the small sitting room while he went to the kitchen; he returned, swiftly, with chamomile tea for us and sweetened black tea for himself.

We passed a few more moments in small talk, then, with something of a ceremonial flourish, he produced the reason for our visit from underneath his chair.

“She’s a solid. I reckon she’s a beauty,” he said to me as he handed “her” over.

“She” was a didgeridoo, a musical instrument cut and fashioned from trees after termites have chewed out the insides, making the trunk hollow. The one I held was about three-and-a-half-feet long and painted in traditional red ochre, black, and white colours. As I turned the beautiful, soft thing ‘round and ‘round in my hands, David gave us a cultural lesson, pointing to the images he’d painted on the sides.

“There, the black dots?” he said. “For the people of the land, my people.”

His people on his father’s side are the Ewamian; the Yalanji are on his mother’s. Both areas are prolific in Aboriginal rock art. David’s love for that is clearly expressed in his voice whenever he speaks about it. Ewamian is also volcanic with many underground lava tunnels, tunnels formed 180,000 years ago.

He continued on, explaining the didge symbols:

“This, the red ochre,” and he got very quiet, “this is for the blood that was shed, the blood of my people’s suffering—and of the

political struggle that we still face.”

And so it went, each image significant to him, given new meaning for us:

“This, the white paint that surrounds each image, this is the air we breathe.”

“This, this is Goriialla, the mother rainbow serpent who created the world.”

“And the goanna, that is ‘Gunyal,’ a true lizard of Oz.”

Finally, he pointed to the two feet he’d added along one side and said, “That is for you fellas, on walkabout.”

This startled me, his acknowledgement of us that way. Walkabout dreaming had kept me alive, kept me fighting to recover from a near-fatal illness. When told by doctors I could never trust my health again, that was it. It was time to go, before it was too late.

We quit our jobs, sold our house, and left Canada to explore this amazing culture for six whole months. The term walkabout has its origins in the indigenous Australians of old, who would leave their homes to wander and visit new places.

I’ve always loved to wander. My father says it’s because we have gypsy blood on his side of the family. My mother scoffs and explains it’s the moors on her side that gives me my itchy feet. Whatever the source, I regard this trait as coming from the deepest spiritual part of me.

We had only just met David Hudson the day before, travelling from Cairns to see his troupe perform in Kuranda. In those days, Kuranda was reached by road or by a picturesque, heritage train. David says there’s a modern gondola that goes up over the rain forest to Kuranda now, as well.

In 1988, we took the little train through the exotic countryside and arrived to a lan-

guid town, sleepy, in spite of the crowds of tourists. At a busy market we bought our lunch and sat on the theatre steps in the warm shade, munching on shellfish and waiting for the show to start. Somewhere, someone was broadcasting Australian bush ballads over a loudspeaker. In my notes I was silenced, reduced to describing that indelible morning in a cliché: I thought I’d died and gone to heaven.

Shortly after that, sated from a lunch of prawns, I innocently took my seat in the cool, darkened room of the tiny theatre. I left the building an hour later, bemused. It would be many years before I would feel the kiss my sleeping unconscious mind received that day. Years before I would begin to awaken from the duty-induced stupor I was in.

I remember I had looked at the stage as the theatre darkened and felt time become a kind of spacious present. It was a deeply sensual and disturbing 45 minutes.

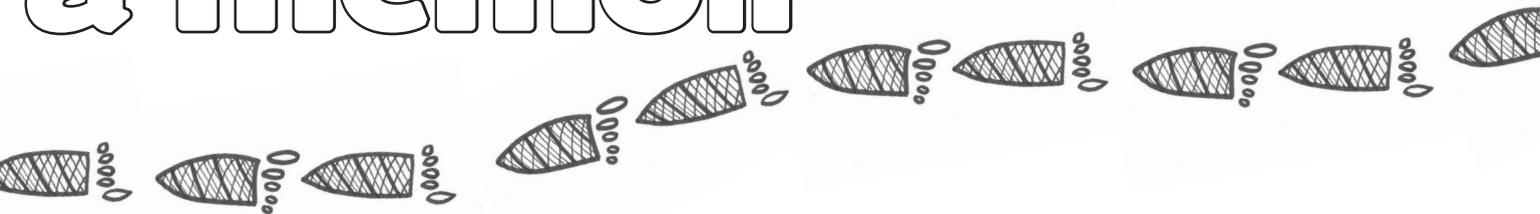
David was one of the performers who danced, sang, told stories, and made us all laugh. Never once insulting the perpetrators of the issues they’d endured, the storytellers focused on building understanding of our cultural differences.

I wept more than once, moved by forces of longing, and a sensation of guilt I didn’t understand.

After the show I insisted we try to speak to these astonishing people and planted myself beside the stage. We spoke to the group of male dancers, who cheerfully answered all my touristy questions.

My journals mention my insatiable need to hear pronunciations, which at the time I tried to write as many down as possible. At one point, when one man was telling

a memoir



me how my beloved didges were made, he paused, looked at me and grinning, joked, “The didgeridoo—oi! That’s ‘didgeradoo’ in Australian!”

The experience made me long to explore the indigenous culture around Cairns and Kakadu, but I was constrained by time. While on this trip (and not obedient to true walk-about law) our schedule was often dictated by our daily mileage.

So, when David asked if we could hang around for a couple of days, I crossed my fingers behind my back and lied. “Sure we can,” I said. “We’re fairly open.” I was hoping we could recoup the lost time somewhere down the road.

“Give me a couple days? I can make a great didge for you and for half the price of what you’ll pay in the tourist shops,” he said.

We agreed to meet him in two days at a place called The Gallery Upstairs in Cairns.

We passed the time exploring the region.

Climbing to the Atherton Tablelands I saw my first fig trees, the parasite long ago killing its host, and touched a massive Kauri pine. We took in an art gallery in rambling Yungaburra and drove through a lot of farmland. When both people and car began to overheat, we turned our faithful Ford Falcon’s nose back to Cairns. The guidebook recommended a beautiful swimming hole at Davies Creek. At the end of about five kilometres of washed out, washboard road, wine in hand, I sank, thankfully, into the Eden-like pools.

Promptly 48 hours later, we presented ourselves at the gallery (now no longer

there); we were told neither Hudson nor the didgeridoo were there. We were sent on to his home in a suburb of Edge Hill. That day his face was clear of the ribbons of white grease paint but that only seemed to increase the smoky depths of his eyes, under thick black brows. His smile was the same intense show of both sets of teeth and still with that strange mixture of friendly caution. The lower half of his face was covered in a thick beard; so black it shone blue, as did the long, heavy coils of shoulder-length curls.

And, oh! The colour of his skin. It ranged through an entire spectrum of richly highlighted plains of sepia smudged by burnt umber. Trying not to stare, I sized up the man.

David is my height, 5’7,” with a lithe, softly muscular form. In current photos, I was unreasonably pleased to see he’d kept himself in good shape all these years. I knew from the revealing costume he’d worn the day of the performance, his chest was adorned with just enough hair, and formed a black plate that arched down to a tightly packed torso. I looked up into his eyes. They twinkled with good humour as he noticed my assessment of him. He grinned good-naturedly, and winked. I looked away, unsettled by this charismatic man.

He asked us if we’d like him to play something. “Please,” I breathed, like some awestruck groupie. Clearing my throat, I tried again. “That’d be great, thanks.”

He stood up and stepped towards me, laying the didge in the dip near my shoulder. He leaned back, angling the tunnel, and with puffed cheeks, blew into the opening.

A didgeradoo player breathes in a circular fashion, in through the nose and out

through the mouth in an unending stream. The vibrating wind sounds filled the tiny room, and I was enthralled. I stood, afraid to move, lest I break the spell. The didge was communicating with me! The room suddenly seemed as big as the universe.

The player moved us from a sense of mourning, to a happy kangaroo hopping by, and ended with the joy of lovers—an extended moment in which a lifetime could be lived. How did it come to be that I was standing here in a stranger’s living room while he played didge with my clavicle? My hands went up to my face, to cover my warm cheeks.

It is impossible to describe David Hudson without referring to his music and his art. When he plays his guitar, or haunts us on the didge, the man disappears into the background and the music comes through—like a conduit connecting the past to the future.

His singing voice is as melodic and as sound as the stories he tells. His didge playing reminds me of the vibrations that tie us all together, while his guitar strums the framework.

He is an artist whose work includes his paintings, which explore the dreams and symbols of his people.

He hunts for his own wood to make his didges with. I find his creative energy infectious, prompting me to get out my own paints and try my hand at a dream sequence of my own.

His Aussie name, Dahwurr, means “black palm,” which he tells me is “a strong hardwood, tall and straight and good for spears.” This stately tree also has a beautiful wood grain. Details which, in part, lay an apt description of the man himself.

FEATURE



He was Dwura when I knew him, but he said he changed it to Dahwurr because too many people had trouble pronouncing Dwura. Again, he works to communicate: if his name is a barrier, he selflessly modifies it to make things easier for others.

David's English sounds pretty much the way an English Canadian speaks—if you don't count the colourful substitutes for just about every noun, not to mention the distinctly irreverent goofing around with the King's English. Australians in general speak in a kind of clever shorthand: "beauty" is "beaut," "good day" is "g'day," and, as near as I can figure it, to "believe, think or concur" is summed up simply as "I reckon." And, of course, "didgeradoo" is the delectable "didge."

My toes curled with pleasure in anticipation of a dropped "h" or a deliciously elongated "e." And as far as his transitions go, he doesn't waste breath with tiresome verbal phrases and prepositions.

Hudson had roamed far since I sat in his living room drinking tea. His life expanded into acting, television documentaries, and travelling extensively for his music, even performing with Yanni at one point. I enjoyed catching up on his work via the internet, and to see his smile was the same grin beneath those intense eyes.

But why, back in 1988, had he gone to such ambassadorial lengths for two wandering strangers? Strangers, who, like others before them, hadn't asked for permission to stray through his ancestral backyard. Hudson will say it's because he works to bridge cultures, using creative expression as tools for teaching peaceful coexistence.

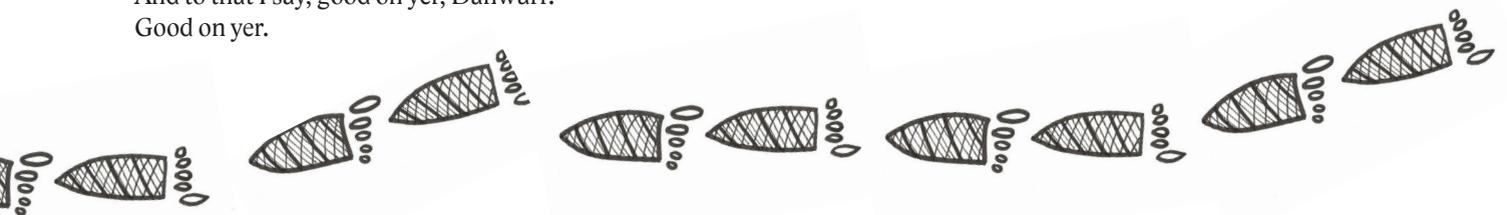
Today, I paused in my writing to reach across my desk and take hold of my didgeradoo beauty, my little "beaut." I love the feel of softness as my fingers lightly trace the familiar images. I always knew she was a work of art, but I hadn't appreciated that she is also a bridge, a bridge to other cultures, to the past, and into the future. Hudson says what he does is "cultural edutaining," explaining that he is an entertainer dedicated to educating people from all walks of life on the proud, indigenous Aussie.

They are a strongly independent people from an ancient culture, who want to tell their stories through their music, art, their dances, and their politics.

Hudson once said that cultural tourism means expressing his living culture every day to guests from everywhere around the world, and it's a responsibility he takes seriously.

And to that I say, good on yer, Dahwurr.

Good on yer.



Why PostSecret loves posting secrets

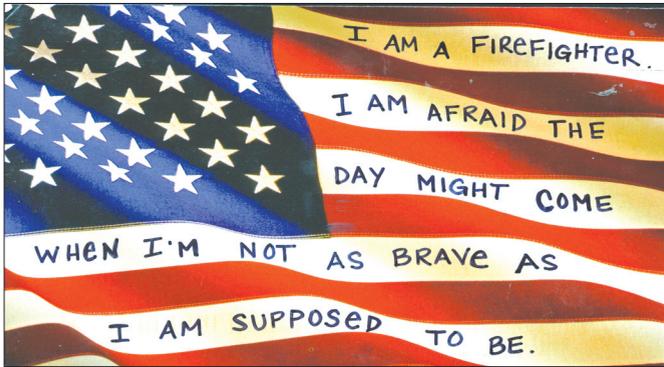


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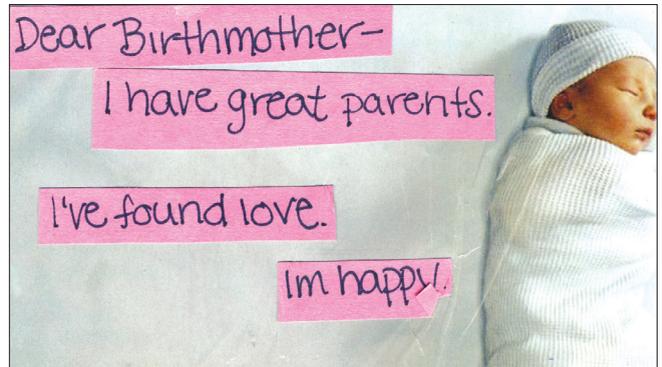
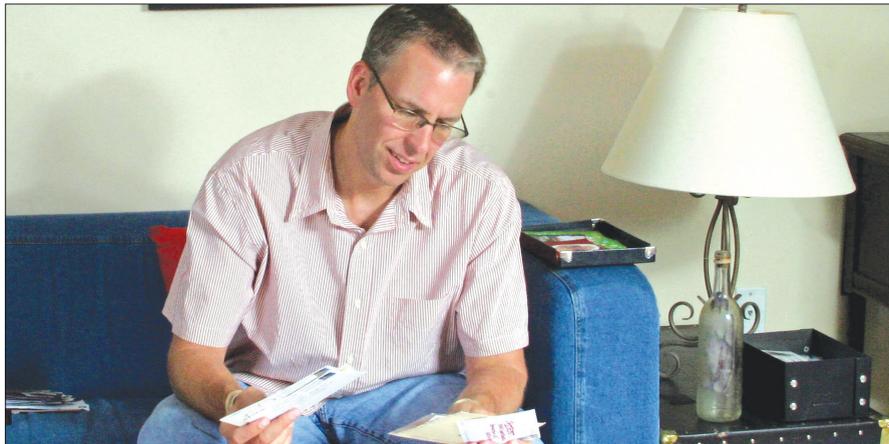


PHOTO PROVIDED



FRANK MORISSEAU, JR.

PostSecret founder Frank Warren and some secrets that have been sent to the site.

CHESLEY RYDER CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It started out as a community art project in Washington, DC, seven years ago. Four *New York Times* bestselling books, a successful blog site, and half a million anonymous secrets later, PostSecret has shown the world the power of secret sharing.

But despite all the progress, the basic idea behind it all remains the same.

“Secrets can be the currency of who we are,” says Frank Warren, founder and curator of PostSecret. “By sharing them, we can find new ways to not just connect with other people on an intimate level, but also discover the deepest parts of humanity.”

PostSecret started when Warren asked strangers at Metro stations, art galleries, and bookshops to send anonymous secrets to him via postcard, which he then collected

and posted over on postsecret.com.

In September, Warren launched the PostSecret app; it only lasted a few months before being taken off the market due to malicious content being uploaded. Still, like every new technology, it was a good opportunity to redefine PostSecret and keep the project alive.

“What makes it so compelling and keeps it interesting is the courage, honesty, and vulnerability that everyday people are revealing through extraordinary works of art, whether that be a postcard or a secret they create with their mobile device,” he says.

Warren adds that reading secrets that others have sent in has helped him to reconcile secrets he has been keeping himself, and he hopes that the project continues to do the same for others.

“When you have the courage to share

a secret it can allow you to find a sense of healing for yourself, but it also offers some connection to our community,” he says.

The website takes this connection to the next level: PostSecret has been credited to raising awareness and funds for suicide prevention.

And even though the app’s potential met a premature demise, viewers and secret-sharers are still able to make direct connections with one another through the always-popular PostSecret site. Warren says that the secrets found on the site can really be a key component to helping out others.

“If we can get through those difficult times in our lives, at the other end we come out with a beautiful story we can share with the world,” says Warren, “and share with others who are struggling with those problems at this very moment.”

local, live, and loud

by marielle moodley

THURSDAY, MAY 10

Felix Cartal, Clockwork

Upstairs Cabaret, \$12, 10 pm

You might recognize Felix Cartal from his hit single, "Don't Turn on the Lights." Cartal's high-energy electronic beats make for one fist-pumping, booty-shaking, cardio party!

FRIDAY, MAY 11

Michael Jerome Browne

Orange Hall (1620 Fernwood Rd.), \$12, 7:30 pm

Montreal native Michael Jerome Browne is having a CD release party for his new album, *The Road Is Dark*, which is described as an acoustic blues road trip with destination: love, death, and drinking. Expect to hear a mash-up of gospel, blues, old-time, country, soul, and Cajun from this American roots/folk artist.

THURSDAY, MAY 17

George Thorogood and the Destroyers, Gordie Johnson

Royal Theatre, \$46+, 7:30 pm

George Thorogood is an American blues-rock legend who's been rocking the airwaves since 1974. His greatest hit, "Bad to the Bone," as well as his many tributes to Chess Records' immortal artists, such as Bo Diddley and Elmore James, will make for one legendary performance.

FRIDAY, MAY 18

Dale Tumbao, guests

Victoria Events Centre, \$15, 8:30 pm

Dale Tumbao, along with other special guest Cuban musicians, will fill the Victoria Events Centre with Cuban flavor.

THURSDAY, MAY 24

Lyme Aid

Victoria Events Centre, \$14, 8 pm

Jessica Benini brings an acoustic/folky/indie flavor, Chris Neal brings pop/rock/soul fusion, and Lola Parks brings soul folk to Lyme Aid, along with a few other surprises. This annual fundraiser is put on to spread awareness about Lyme disease.

CAFÉ VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Café at the BC Cancer Agency is looking for energetic, outgoing folks who can commit to 3-6 hours per week for a 2-3 month period. Call Alan @ 250 519 5668.

SATURDAY, MAY 26

Isobel Trigger, Versa, Mercy Years, Germany

Logan's Pub, \$10, 9 pm

Consider this: since 2008, Isobel Trigger has been delivering dynamic, high-energy performances filled with pounding beats and catchy, expressive melodies. Fusing alternative rock, folk, and pop with spell-binding sonic textures, their energetic style will leave your ears longing for more.

SATURDAY, JUNE 16

Vancouver Island Cultural Festival

St. Ann's Academy, \$40

Local heavyweights Current Swell, Vince Vaccaro, Mindil Beach Markets, Rococode, Rocky Mountain Rebel Music, Kymati, Ashleigh Eymeann, Cheesecake Burlesque, DJ's Nigel, Murge, D-Whiz, and many others will rock the beautiful gardens of St. Ann's Academy.

SUNDAY, JUNE 24

George Benson

Royal Theatre, \$69+, 7:30 pm

If you like guitar, jazz, and live music (and surely you do!), then this 10-time Grammy winner is someone you'll want to see live. Benson fuses jazz, pop, R&B, and many other styles together, which creates unique instrumentals to accompany his jazz-styled singing.

TUESDAY, JULY 10

Victoria Ska Fest's kickoff party

Ship Point Inner Harbour, \$36.50+, 4:30 pm

Ska Fest is always a summer highlight here in Victoria. This year, Toots and the Maytals, Los Rastrillos, and Bananafish D.Orch are stirring things up as they bring in waves of ska, reggae, and tropical tunes, which will bring bright and beachy vibes to this waterfront setting. Come help kick off the good times at this kickoff party on July 10. See you there!

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COMICS

Nomadic Mindset By Ken Mackenzie



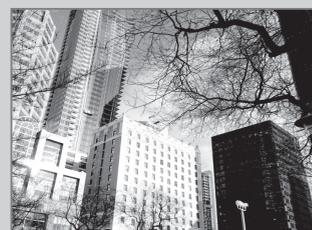
Noble Sloth Manifesto By Libby Hopkinson



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