

EXPLAINED!
PHALLIC HEDGES

Secrets

OF THE

FOUND!
KRAZY GEORGE

City

REVEALED!
BEST ALLEYS

WHO IS OPERA MAN? WHAT ARE THOSE YELLOW PYRAMIDS IN NORTH VAN? WHY DOES CHINATOWN'S ASTROTURF GET WATERED? 21 URBAN MYSTERIES SOLVED.

PLUS: 13 PROMINENT LOCALS TELL US WHAT THEY LOVE ABOUT VANCOUVER.

By Tyee Bridge, Danielle Kasimer, Nancy Lanthier, Matt O'Grady, Rebecca Philips and Rosemary Poole

BRAMWELL TOVEY

MUSIC DIRECTOR, VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

What's the best building in the city?

The lower half of the Sheraton Wall Tower. The bureaucratic decision to insist on clear glass in the upper half was foolish. The Metropolitan Tower in New York, next door to Carnegie, shows the type of landmark this building might have been had the architect's plans gone ahead unencumbered.

What's your civic stress-inducer?

The ridiculously disorganized No Left Turn policy on Granville, south of the bridge. Having it only at certain times of day means that many drivers ignore it in the rush-hour, just when it should be heeded.

What's your favourite thing—and where do you get it?

Books. I have several thousand in my personal library collected

over the last 30 years. I love Hager Books in Kerrisdale, which is everything a small bookstore should be.

What would be your ideal day trip itinerary?

I would play a game of cricket at Brockton Oval in Stanley Park. The sun would shine all day (the game generally lasts around four to five hours). The family comes and has a picnic. I score lots of runs and then we have a beer in the pavilion. Afterwards we walk through a deserted park to the car as dusk descends. This happens all too rarely as my kids and wife dislike the game and get very bored.

Where do your friends/relatives stay when they come to visit?

At our house. They never came to visit us when we lived in Winnipeg...



THE GIANT POSTAGE STAMP

What may be the world's largest postage stamp is a peeling, mouldering mess, stuck on the rooftop of the main post office. Load up a Google satellite map of 349 West Georgia, and you'll see the massive 45-cent stamp, its Canadian flag looking a little faded but still clearly visible. Measuring 100 feet by 120 feet—or two million times the size of an actual stamp—it was unveiled on Canada Day in 1997 as part of a fundraising drive for Canuck Place. At the time,



Canada Post hoped it would become an annual initiative, whereby donors could purchase sections of the stamp's surface area to raise money for local charities. That didn't happen, in part because the roof is such a popular filming location: whenever crews roll in, the stamp has to be painted over and then repainted afterward. Interestingly, neither the World Almanac nor the Guinness Book of World Records has an entry for world's largest stamp, so consider this our official nomination.

Another bit of postal trivia: The '50s-era building also connects to the CPR station by underground tunnel. It hasn't been used for transporting mail since 1965, but like the rooftop five storeys above, it's found a new life as a film location for producers in need of a Nazi bunker or dank underworld hideout.



HEDY FRY

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT,
VANCOUVER CENTRE

Where's the best spot to see Vancouver in an entirely different light?

Downtown Eastside, Chinatown and Oppenheimer Park, where the first Japanese baseball team played. Also: along Wall Street in East Vancouver.

There are neighbourhood mini-parks that look over the industrial working waterfront and beyond to the natural beauty of the city skyline, Burrard Inlet and the North Shore. It's an unusual angle on the city that most people don't know about. It was used to great effect in Mina Shum's wonderful film *Double Happiness*.

What would be the one thing you would change about the city?

Lets bring back the 1940s-era neon signs that characterized Vancouver, and have Theatre Row and Granville Street between Burrard and the Granville bridge awash in that '40s feeling.

What's the one event you try to go to every year?

Carols in the City at Christ Church Cathedral. I have never missed this

Christmas Eve tradition since 1970. The Salvation Army band really gets me in the Christmas spirit.

Who should be the city's ambassador?

The Lab who sat outside the Waterfront Hotel in his cedar doghouse. He exemplified the Vancouver spirit: beautiful, warm and slightly offbeat. Who ever heard of a dog outside a four star hotel greeting guests? Only in Vancouver!

What's your favourite arts venue?

The Stanley Theatre. It is a beautiful and vibrant part of Vancouver's history and the local community. I worked hard with the federal government and supporters to save it from destruction and bring it back to its early glory.

It has done wonders for South Granville's growth.

What's the best building in the city?

The Pan Pacific. The Sails have become an international symbol of the city—they're more dramatic than the old Sydney harbour, and they certainly do frame the ocean and mountains.

What do you dress up for?

I always dress up, never down.

Who would you like to spy on?

Actor Bruce Greenwood. I hear he lives in Vancouver.

Who in the city would you most want to kiss?

Bruce Greenwood.

What's your civic stress-inducer?

Trying to design and build my Pride parade float.

Have you ever tried to glue-gun beaded sequins and feather boas while two drag queens are telling you how the colours don't match?



THE SEXY SHRUBS

The pointedly phallic hedges in front of 2710 Point Grey Road are a beacon for locals to photograph and midnight ramblers to gawk at. (Not quite as sexy as an evergreen hedge in Santa Cruz that propelled a neighbour to report the indecency to the cops, but notorious nonetheless.) The realtor (from Vista Realty) who represents the building has this to say about the hedges: "The current owner bought the property about five years ago with the shrubs in place. Since then, our gardener has looked after them. We always thought it would be a shame to trim them down even though they do look a bit odd. We never had anyone comment on the shrubs at all and no one has told us to maintain them this way." And let's face it: Point Grey could use a little spice.

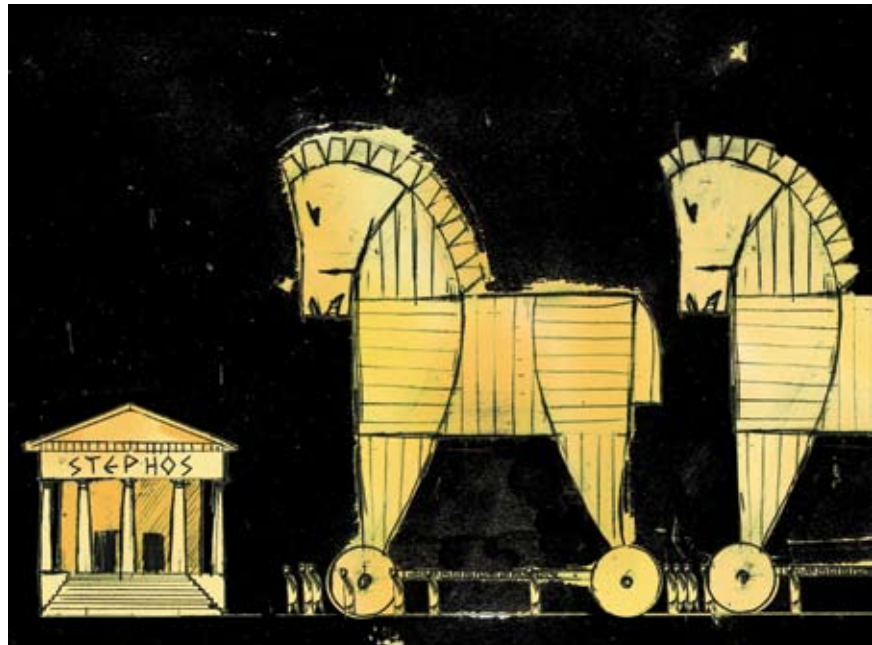


Watering the Astroturf

It's an odd sight: rotary sprinklers shooting water over an Astroturf field. Is the city trying to make the green plastic grow? No. According to Doug Taylor, the parks board's outdoor fields coordinator, the Astroturf field at Andy Livingston Park gets a good dousing before field hockey games on sunny days because dry fields are hot, slippery and full of static electricity. A spray of water mitigates all these hazards: the game is cooler, the ball rolls better and players don't get electric shocks. And while a damp field provides more traction for the ball, it also buffers a player's slide, greatly reducing rug burn.

Waiting for Stepho

The food at Stepho's on Davie Street is edible, but it's not great. It's cheap, but not that cheerful. And the house wine sits like bad whiskey in your gut. Yet people are willing, nay, they volunteer, to stand in line for upwards of an hour for the mediocre Greek food that awaits them inside. There are two types of people; those who like to work up an appetite and make new friends along the way, and those who like to brag about exactly how long, to the minute, they had to wait. Both go to Stepho's, and go often. But as Brigadier in *The Daemons* so aptly said, "I'm not going to sit here like a spare lemon waiting for the squeezer."



TOYMAC

Yes, the Bowmac/Toys R Us sign at the corner of Alder and Broadway—known to those in the neighbourhood, not affectionately, as the Toymac—is quite possibly the city's most unattractive heritage landmark. But it was not always so. Built in 1958 for Jimmy Pattison's Bowell McLean car dealership, the original Bowmac sign once sported red neon, 1,200 light bulbs and a flashing Vegas-style marquee. The 95-foot sign reigned over Vancouver's neon empire, which at the time did put Vegas to shame. It was visible from 18 miles away and was, for a little while, the largest freestanding sign in North America. In 1996 the new

owners of the site, Urbanex Development Corporation, asked the city if they could retain the size-matters/zoning-be-damned sign and replace the letters with those of their new tenants, Toys R Us. Heritage planners wanted the sign in some recognizable form, citing its value as a relic of a bygone era, and subsequent push-and-pull resulted in the current compromise: a colossal sign stripped of its lights, neon and marquee, with an alien, equally giant corporate logo grafted onto it. It's a wonder. Our only hope is that Mr. Pattison will buy his sign back and either mount it on a carol ship or give it a decent burial.

ANDREA DOBBS

MANAGER, WOMYNS' WARE

What's your favourite piece of visual art that captures the essence of the city?

I would have to say one of my favourite things to see in this city is the graffiti; we have an amazing urban gallery right under our noses. If you take the Millennium SkyTrain line you can see some amazing work along the "cut" just between Renfrew station and Commercial Drive station.

I think that this underground form of expression captures Vancouver's essence in that our socio-political and economic issues are pretty hard-core yet our physical environment is breathtaking.

What do you volunteer for?

I do volunteer work for Battered Women's Support Services. They have a great thrift store here on the Drive where I, along with another woman, Mary Anne Boyle, do two window displays a month.

What's the one event you try to go to every year?

I try to take part in all of the local street festivals, including Stone Soup, Illuminairies, Summer Movies in the Park (Grandview) and the Latin Festival.



Sulphur Pyramids

Vancouverites love them, tourists are perplexed by them, and Douglas Coupland claims to have skied down them (though doing so is highly illegal). The pyramids of pale yellow have dominated the North Shore cityscape since the 1960s, yet our understanding of what they are and why they're there is as murky as the waters of Burrard Inlet. The yellow stuff is pure, elemental sulphur, the by-product of natural gas produced up the coast and in northern Alberta. It's water insoluble, so though it might resemble a massive pile of powdered chicken stock, it holds its own in the rain. Don't mistake it for hydrogen sulphide—sulphur's rotten-egg-smelling cousin—either. This stuff is virtually odourless, clean—and a hot item in China, where about 50 percent of it ends up.

Astroturf, Bowmac sign, Sulphur piles: Lucas Finlay





ALEX HENDERSON & OMER ARBEL

INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS

What's the best building in the city?

AH: The old Sugar Refinery.
OA: The old BC Hydro Building (now called the Electra).

What's your civic stress-inducer?

AH: We live in the West End, so: parking, the fireworks, the annoying music that is blaring out from some stage by English Bay on summer weekends—are those oompha bands?

Where's the best spot to see Vancouver in a different light?

AH: I like both Kingsgate Mall and Tinseltown. Going into these malls is like stepping into weird other worlds.

What is the one thing you would fight to preserve/to destroy?

OA: I would fight to preserve the fact that there are no handrails for the seawall. I would fight to destroy the requirement for a ubiquitous townhouse podium at the base of every residential tower.

What would be your ideal day trip itinerary?

AH: Betting and beer all day at Hastings racetrack.

OA: Pack a picnic on a crisp sunny day, rent a speedboat and cruise around the giant freight ships in the harbour. The contrast in scale is incredible once you get up close.

Whose work do you look out for?

AH: Omer Arbel.

OA: Alex Henderson.

Junkyard Boats

Landlubbers strolling the seawall have wondered for years about the collection of derelict hulks and rafted liveaboards mouldering in False Creek; one sailboat bobbing between Monk McQueen's and Granville Island looks like something from a *Beachcombers* episode. This bit of clutter amidst the million-dollar views is due to a tangle of overlapping bureaucracies: False Creek is a navigable Canadian waterway in a port city, which places it under the jurisdiction of three federal agencies—the Coast Guard, Transport Canada and the Port of Vancouver. After a decade of failed initiatives, amendments to the CSA last November now require permits for mooring in False Creek; enforcement is expected to begin this summer.



Opera Man

"I like to walk, and I sing because I walk," says Francesco Pepita. Known to most of the city as Opera Man, Pepita is famous for singing arias and ballads in a fortissimo tenor while strolling a wide circuit around the South Granville area. He gets plenty of compliments from passersby on his resonant pipes. Some offer money (which he refuses), others toss flowers from apartment windows. Riding the bus one day years ago, he was inspired "by the beautiful summer day" to sing a song for the passengers. The driver agreed to his request, and after belting out "Santa Lucia" he received a standing ovation. A performance at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre 15 years ago got a similar response, with even his accompanist standing up to applaud. A less positive reaction came from a man in a third-floor apartment, who ran out on his balcony and dumped half a bucket of water on Pepita's head. "Luckily it only happened one time in 25 years," he says with a laugh.

Pepita keeps a tight lid on personal details, having rebuffed many curious journalists over the years. "Adrienne Arseneault from the CBC



Junk Boat, Shoefiti: Lucas Finlay John Alleyne Portrait: Gary Fitzpatrick

said to me, 'I'm going to do a story about you that will be seen all over the country.' She phoned me 20 times, but I refused every time." He reveals that he's originally from southern Italy, is a published poet (one piece has appeared in *Shared Vision*), and is not, in fact, homeless but a landlord. Musically, he is more forthcoming: his standard tunes are Neapolitan songs like "O Sole Mio" and "Torna a Surriento" and the arias of Mascagni, Puccini and Donizetti, among others.



JOHN ALLEYNE

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, BALLET BRITISH COLUMBIA

Whose work do you look out for?

Anything by leading edge choreographer Crystal Pite—a Ballet BC alumnae. I am thrilled that Crystal will be creating a brilliant new (as yet, untitled) work for my dancers, November 16 to 18 at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre (shameless plug!). I also really watch for and never miss works by Peter Bingham of EDAM. His movement is at once beautiful and powerful, with a natural fluidity.

What's your favourite movie that captures the essence of the city?

Eve and the Firehorse by Julia Kwan. This is a thoroughly engaging movie that takes you on the emotional journey of a young girl and her sister who are growing up in a traditional Chinese immigrant family in Vancouver.

What's your favourite arts venue?

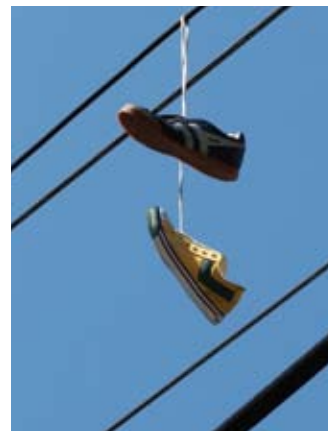
The Chan Centre because of its complete and incomparable performance experience. Upon entering the front doors the beauty of the lobby, the theatre, the gardens surrounding the building—it all continually takes my breath away. No matter where I sit I am guaranteed a wonderful experience. It truly is the way classical concerts should be enjoyed.

What's the one event you try to go to every year?

The Dancing on the Edge Festival. This is an event that offers a wide range of contemporary work from artists both in the Vancouver community and nationally.

Who should be the city's ambassador?

Arthur Erickson—because of his love and vision of what the city is, was and can be.



SHOEFITI

You've seen them, shoes dangling by their laces over hydro wires, suspended in time and place, looking like dislocated graffiti. For every tired sole out there, be it the blue and white Reeboks hovering over the Adanac bike route or the cluster of yesterday's high-tops at Nelson and Thurlow, there's a theory about what it means. The most common explanations? A murder took place below and the shoes serve as both a memorial and a warning. They're a nod to an old military tradition, where soldiers would toss their old army boots to mark various milestones, like the completion of basic training. Schoolboys fling them to mark the loss of their virginity. They mark gang turf. They alert interested parties to drugs sold nearby, crack specifically. They're emblems of completed childhoods, left behind by recent high school grads. More cerebral interpretations, like those posed by Todd Sieling, who amassed over 175 photos of shoes on wires around Vancouver before shutting down his blog last year, suggest that the abandoned footwear is a dark symbol of our age of mass consumption, where possessions are amassed and then, quite literally, tossed and left to ruin.

For the record, BC Hydro says hanging shoes are not a safety issue since the high voltage wires are out of reach of the average tosser and, of course, they're not grounded. The utility doesn't remove them either, unless they happen to be working on the line, so if you've got a particularly nasty pair hanging on your street, you'll have to wait until the laces give out.

Top Soil

The 200-foot crown of the Pin oak tree atop 1919 Beach Avenue represents the ambitious height of the old cedars and Douglas firs that once dominated the city skyline. Henriquez Partners Architects, who built Eugenia Place, incorporated historical fragments into both the interior and exterior of the building (named after the mother of developers Tom and Caleb Chan). Part of the two-storey penthouse built for Eugenia and her husband, including the tree and all the dirt, was hoisted up by a giant crane. But how does the tree survive? A cylindrical silo molded out of glass and concrete at the front of the building tapers all the way down to the main entrance on Beach Avenue. The screw-like structure acts as a planter for the tree, contains 100,000 pounds of earth and allows for the Pin oak to disperse its roots.



Siwash Rock

Siwash Rock is one of the most recognizable natural landmarks in the city. It's been the subject of countless paintings, including a much-reproduced one by native artist Roy Henry Vickers, and gets snapped by every tourist walking the seawall. The big mystery is why the precarious-looking outcropping, standing 15-metres high but just a couple of metres wide, is, indeed, still standing. Thank its volcanic foundations. Siwash was once attached to Stanley Park, and through a combination of wave erosion and weathering has separated from the mainland over the centuries. What remains is largely basalt—the exceptionally hard, solidified lava left behind by a former volcanic vent. That, at least, is the scientific explanation. But according to Coast Salish legend, Siwash represents a “transformer rock”: a young man who swam to save his village, in the waters off English Bay, and was turned into stone as a monument to selflessness. It's also long been thought to be the burial spot of acclaimed native poet Pauline Johnson, who's inextricably linked to Siwash through her writings in *Legends of Vancouver*. But that much is myth: her ashes were not, in fact, scattered at the famous rock, but, as per her will, put into an empty tin can and buried in a cedar grove, several hundred metres to the east, near the present-day Sequoia Grill.

Tree Planting: Richard Henriquez Siwash Rock: Tourism BC/Danielle Hayes





ROBERT FUNG

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER, SALIENT GROUP

What's the best building in the city?

The Sun Tower: it's a Vancouver icon, defines an era and an area, and anchors one of the best heritage blocks in the city (soon to be one of the best neighbourhoods in the city).

What's your favourite civic factoid?

I've got a couple. One is that Kennedy family patriarch, Joe, used to run bootleg booze out of Vancouver to the U.S. and stored it in the basement of the Murchies Building in Yaletown. The other is that the term "Skid Row" was coined in Vancouver, describing the logging "skid road" that ran from Main Street to Burrard Inlet.

Where's the best spot to see Vancouver in an entirely different light?

I used to jog the entire length of the alleys between Hastings and Pender Street from my old office on Seymour all the way to Main Street. It's a great way to get perspective.

What's your favourite event that captures the essence of the city?

For me, it's the Alcan Dragon Boat Festival. It's on False Creek in the heart of the city, in the early summer, with music and food from our diverse cultures; with over 5,000 participants and 100,000 attendees, it exemplifies the spirit of our city.

What would be the one thing you would change about the city?

Our omnipresent inferiority complex.

NICOLA CAVENDISH

ACTRESS

Where's the best spot to see Vancouver in an entirely different light?

There is an avenue of trees—huge old tall, very tall, trees—on East 11th, one block east of Clark Drive. In full summer, the whole block is completely enshrouded like a magical tunnel.

What's your favourite thing? And where do you go to get it?

The yeast-risen doughnuts at Nickel's Bakery on Lonsdale in North Vancouver.

What's your favourite athletic activity to watch?

Lawn bowling at the old and wonderfully atmospheric Vancouver Lawn Bowling and Tennis Club.

What's your favourite arts venue?

The old Coliseum for its excellent, internationally-known acoustics.

Who in the city do you most/least trust?

I most trust, and miss, ex-mayor Larry Campbell. I least trust Dennis Pavlich—who, along with his cronies, supported further and highly questionable development of UBC lands above Wreck Beach. "You pave paradise" and put up... another apartment building. Money talks.



MILLION-DOLLAR DIRT

You're not imagining things. The lot on the southwest corner of Howe and Davie has been vacant for years—17 of them to be exact. So why the apparent lack of interest in an 18,000-square-foot property valued somewhere in the area of \$15 million? Blame the contaminated soil beneath it. The site was home to a gas station for over 60 years, levelled in 1989 by then-owner Texaco and acquired by Imperial Oil the following year. Imperial owns 15 similar brown-field sites in Vancouver and, until recently, redevelopment efforts had been stalled by a lengthy legal battle with the city over soil remediation costs (the oil giant emerged victorious). Expect long-vacant sites like 1205 Howe soon to be redeveloped as a result.

The vacant lot at Robson and Broughton is not so easily explained. Some might even call the 31-year development drought at 1401 Robson a stunning achievement, given its location on Canada's most exclusive shopping street. Archived fire insurance maps reveal the site was last occupied by The Robson Apartments, a quaint three-storey apartment building erected sometime around 1910. Nine units took up the top two floors and Broughton Grocery occupied the storefront below. The building was purchased in 1974 by Hong Kong-based Melford Estates Ltd., levelled sometime in 1975, and the lot left idle ever since. The City of Vancouver is officially stumped, the law office listed on the land title isn't talking, and the long-standing owner is M.I.A. Mysterious indeed.



Counting Crows

It's a scene straight out of *The Birds*. Most city residents have witnessed the sky darkening as hundreds of cawing crows fly eastward at dusk. If you were to track their commute, you'd arrive at a group of deciduous trees at Lougheed Highway and Willingdon Avenue, where every night upwards of 10,000 crows roost and every morning make their way back to the city. The movement of crows is dictated by the brightness of light around dusk and dawn—by day, pairs of birds have defined territories, but at dusk they gather in progressively larger groups as they make their way to the roost. "The Burnaby roost is by far the largest roost in the Lower Mainland," confirms Mike MacIntosh, a supervisor with the parks board. "There are other communal roosts, but none with the visual impact of Willingdon." Would-be Hitchcocks, take note.

ANYTIME IS TRAIN TIME

Why do we have an extra traffic light for the defunct Arbutus Corridor train line at Broadway and Arbutus? Although the CPR has not run a train on the line since 1999 and Molson shut down its cargo operation years ago, the director of engineering of the Pacific Region of Transport Canada informs us that "anytime is train time." The city says that CPR may decide, at its discretion, to use the rail line at any time, and as long as they own it, the train tracks are active. Although there is no rail service, the company "regularly monitors the corridor by using equipment capable of travelling on the rail line." So the city must run the light, and cars must stop—and then stop again.



JULIA KWAN

FILM DIRECTOR, *EVE AND THE FIREHORSE*

Whose work do you look out for?

Comedy troupe: Assaulted Fish (smart cultural humour). Designer: Melanie Talkington (she makes the most exquisite corsets). Writer: Douglas Coupland. Filmmaker: Ann Marie Fleming. Photographer: Tallulah (her *Soles Exposed* exhibit is irreverent beauty).

What is the one thing you would fight to preserve?

The Vogue Theatre on Granville Street as a theatre instead of another trendy restaurant. I still miss the Caprice Theatre with the jazzy curtains...

What's your never-fail restaurant?

Chongqing Restaurant is one of the best Szechuan restaurants in town. The spicy fried green beans are fantastic. Also, the Congee Noodle House on Broadway. It's perfect for a late night meal.

What's your favourite thing—and where do you go to get it?

Chinatown Electronic Centre on Keefer and Main for DVDs of Asian films. I bought a DVD of Wong Kar Wai's *2046* for 12 bucks!

What do you dress up for?

The Closing Gala Party at the Aquarium for the Vancouver International Film Festival. Surreal venue. There's the serenity of the whales in the deep blue water contrasted with boisterous party revellers eating sushi!



Clockwise from top left: Wesley Hit/The Image Bank/Getty Images Sandra Leung Photodisc Green/Getty Images

VAG VAN

Public art generally invokes one of two responses: indifference or irritation. *Squid Head*—the two-piece, crayon-coloured van parked at the entrance to the Vancouver Art Gallery—tends to provoke the latter. The piece is such a popular tag for graffiti artists that it's been protected with a glossy, Teflon coating. So just what is it about this piece of art that riles us so? First there's the tourist factor. Out-of-towners love to be photographed with the van, forcing local gallerygoers to wait for the flash before venturing inside. Then there's the irksome nature of the piece itself. What's the deal?

According to Bruce Grenville, the VAG's senior curator, the idea was to take something you'd see on a busy downtown street, be it a delivery van or hot dog stand, and make you see it entirely differently. "It's familiar but made slightly off-kilter," says Grenville. "It's fun to see people take that walk around it, and undergo that process of exploration." The Toronto-based artist behind the installation, Kim Adams, is also said to have been inspired by the fluid, transactional nature of Robson Square itself, which is, of course, where the sculpture now sits.



CATRIONA JEFFRIES

ART GALLERY OWNER

What's the best building in the city?

Ron Thom's "Copp House" and Erickson's "Smith House" are both inspiring sites of West Coast modernism. If only more Ron Thom buildings were still standing and had not become victims of post-Expo 86 ill-considered greed architecture.

Where's the best spot to see Vancouver in an entirely different light?

Access to the docks of the Port of Vancouver became restricted after 9/11, but there are a couple of alley views on Powell Street through the train tracks to the United Grain Growers towers and BC Sugar, foregrounding the North Shore mountains. When my children were younger I would often take them there on Sunday morning to watch the trains shunting.

What's the one thing you'd fight to destroy?

Library Square.

What's your favourite book or piece of art that captures the essence of the city?

Stan Douglas' *100 Block West Hastings* large-scale photo work is now an epic metaphor of the city. Also: *Kingsway* by Michael Turner.

What's the snack you'll get in your car and drive for?

A sushi fix from Fujiya at Clark and Venables.

What's your favourite arts venue?

274 East First Avenue—my new space, which will open in June. (It would have to be, wouldn't it?)

decks & destinations



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Outside City Hall

Unlike most North American cities, Vancouver's City Hall is not in the downtown core. With a convoluted history of failed proposals and economic slumps, a grand plan for our City Hall had been in the works since the early 1900s. The first proposed location was Pender and Cambie in the 1910s but was abandoned during the post-World War One slump. In 1928 Harland Bartholemew drew up plans for a civic complex that included a City Hall, beautiful gardens rising up from the water and the Burrard Bridge. Needless to say, the bridge was the only structure built. In the 1930s, the city was offered the Marine Building for \$1 million, a Deco structure that cost builders \$2.5 million to construct, and subsequently bankrupted them.

The city declined. In 1934, the mayoral race was a tight one. Part of Gerry McGeer's platform was a push for a new City Hall. The structure we see today was planned and drawn, and was to be a make-work project during the Depression. The proposed site was just south of Victory Square at Pender and Cambie, where Vancouver Community College now resides. A few thousand protesting unemployed citizens demanding food and shelter led Mayor McGeer to proclaim the Riot Act in Victory Square in 1935, and prompted him to move City Hall outside the downtown core. So, because we were seeking to avoid conflict, our City Hall is located on the outskirts of our downtown. How very Canadian.

KEVIN NEWMAN

ANCHOR, GLOBAL NATIONAL

What's the best building in the city?

The Vancouver Central Library has the grand sweep of a significant public building. Where are the others? Vancouver needs to explore architectural styles other than green glass towers.

What's the story you tell your guests every time they visit you in Vancouver?

Many of my friends are American so I like to brag about the fact that palm trees thrive here. It blows their minds.

What's the best view/drive/walk?

Lighthouse Park on the North Shore has the ability to get you lost in an urban forest. You can follow a path without being certain which way is north until you find a cliff or beach to remind you where the water is. Moment of Zen? A sunny morning after a rainy night, when the heat of the sun is helping the dew evaporate.

What would be the one thing you would change about the city?

We need more street cafes to wander through on a mild summer's evening. And how about more street festivals? The way Vancouver comes together for the Gay Pride Parade should be an example of how to build more fun into our city.

What's your never-fail restaurant?

Gusto di Quattro on Lonsdale is always an intimate dinner. We like the round table at the back of the restaurant. Begin with the antipasto and the owner's favourite wine: Amarone.

What would you like to spy on?

The filming of a Cylon catfight at the Vancouver studio where *Battlestar Galactica* is taped. If you've seen this smart remake, you'll know why.

What's the one event you try to go to every year?

A Vancouver Giants hockey game. All heart and guts on the ice, with the NHL scouts stoically scribbling notes in the stands. It brings me back to when I had everything to prove.



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ask the Carruthers

Dr. Alastair Carruthers and Dr. Jean Carruthers answer your questions about today's cosmetic advances and issues.



Jean Carruthers, M.D., FRCPC



Alastair Carruthers, FRCPC

Q. I would like to know what is the most advanced type of laser hair removal available for facial hair. Apparently I have the "tough" hair to get rid of and will take up to 6 treatments to completely eliminate. I find the laser very painful and I have heard there are better ones available now. If I know the name of the latest ones, I could phone around looking for a salon that uses that particular one that is most advanced. Thanks a lot.

—Edn M.

A. The Light Sheer seems to still be the benchmark but other systems can probably get similar results. Light Sheer is the only laser FDA approved for "permanent hair reduction", has a patented cooling tip to protect the skin, and reduce discomfort and is safe enough to use on all skin types.

We are not sure what you mean by "tough hair". From the laser perspective it is the darker thicker hair which is easier and the fine pale hairs which are "tough". Unfortunately there is no way to get around the 6-8 treatments as we all know that hairs cycle through various growth phases and there is sufficient melanin for the laser to target only in the actively growing phase.

Discomfort should be manageable either by the use of the cooling tip or topical anesthetics although be aware that use of topical anesthetics overwide areas can be dangerous and may even cause death.

Finally be sure to do your research and find out how long the facility has been using this laser system and especially what qualifications and experience the individual who will actually do the treatment has with this laser.

—Jean Carruthers, FRCPC
—Alastair Carruthers, FRCPC

ALASTAIR CARRUTHERS
COSMETIC DERMATOLOGIST

Jean
carruthers
cosmetic dermatologist

Want your questions answered?

Send your questions to:
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For more information visit www.carruthers.net
Alastair Carruthers: 604.731.4222 | Jean Carruthers: 604.731.4221



ANDREA CARLSON

CHEF, RAINCITY GRILL

What's your favourite civic factoid?

The Lions Gate Bridge was built with financing from the Guinness family so they could have easy access to their land at the British Properties. Beer-related facts all cooks and their pilot friends should know!

What do you volunteer for?

"Growing Chefs," created by Merri Schwartz—a children's agriculture initiative bringing chefs into classrooms to familiarize children with food sources and growing/harvesting/cooking in the urban environment.

What's your favourite vice?

I have so many: Turkish coffee from Yoka's, cheese smokies from Oyama, Quinces—pretty much all food.

What's your favourite arts venue? And why?

W.I.S.E. hall. It is a small community-spirited place that works equally for Quebec hurdy-gurdy playing musicians, burlesque performers and organic growing groups. Vancouver East Cultural Centre as a close second.

Where are you on Sundays at 10 a.m.?

Eating brunch, if all has gone well.

WASSERMAN'S BEAT

At the northwest corner of Georgia and Hornby a yellow street sign reads "Wasserman's Beat," showing an image of a man in a tweed sportsjacket, bow tie and glasses. A non sequitur to 95 percent of the secretaries and briefcases passing beneath it, the sign pays homage to a society reporter for the *Vancouver Sun*, Jack Wasserman, whose columns were the talk of the town in the '50s and '60s. His most famous celebrity scoop was the death of 50-year old Errol Flynn, who had a heart attack in a West End apartment in 1959 while travelling with his 15-year-old girlfriend. Wasserman himself died of a heart attack in 1977 while speaking at a roast at the nearby Hotel Vancouver, and the plaque was erected in his honour a few months later. His "beat" refers to the nearby night-spots in the area at the time, specifically The Cave, a club that was Wasserman's favourite haunt and the site of many juicy indiscretions.



Krazy George

In the late-'70s and early-'80s, attending a BC Lions game was akin to sitting on a YVR runway; credit the ear-splitting cheers, at least in part, to one George Henderson—a.k.a. Krazy George, "the world's sexiest

professional cheerleader." The wild-haired George began cheerleading while a student at San Jose State University in 1968, but didn't make a paying gig of it until 1975 when Lions coach Cal Murphy—a former San Jose assistant coach—lured him northward. "He called and said, My whole job and career is on the line if you don't come up and get these fans cheering," recalls George from his home on Long Island, New York. It worked—and George remained a Lions fixture for 11 years, rousing the fans with his trademark Pearl drum and AC/DC-esque scream, first at Empire Stadium and then BC Place. He went on to become a "cheerleader for hire" with other teams, including the Houston Oilers, Colorado Rockies and Oakland A's. Today, at 62, George has slowed down somewhat—recent hip surgery has him sidelined until July—with his preferred cheerleading venue in the 3,000- to 10,000- seat range: "I don't even approach major league football and hockey teams." As for the Lions, who launch their season June 2, he offers this advice: "Keep on plugging away—and get those crowds built up!"

Cole Haan



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Casa Mia

Built in the '30s, the 18,000-square-foot Casa Mia mansion was financed by brewery and liquor money and built by Harry Riefel for his brother George (namesake of the Ladner bird sanctuary). Marble bathrooms, gold ceilings—such an ostentatious residence has had its share of colourful owners, including Dr. J. Ross MacLean, medical director of the infamous Hollywood Hospital, and Hani Lamman, VP of Cressy Developments and king of leaky condos.

Despite popular myth (and its former owners) there are no underground booze-running tunnels connecting the home to the Fraser River. Mir Huslak, who lived in the mansion in the late '80s, spent a good deal of time and money searching for them—to no avail (“Believe me,” he says, “there are no secret tunnels”). But the home has its oddities. Despite its monstrous size, there are only four bedrooms in the entire house—the master being the equivalent of a single-family home, at 2,000 square feet. Most of the top floor is devoted to a Disney-themed children’s nursery and playroom, and the basement to a 20-by-20-foot old-fashioned steam furnace used to heat the home. Popular with film crews, the home has also been the set for a number of splashy *Playboy* magazine layouts.



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TERRY DAVID MULLIGAN

ENTERTAINMENT JOURNALIST, STAR! TELEVISION

What's the best building in the city?

There is this space ship on a pedestal at the south end of the Cambie Bridge. When they opened up the old South Terminal at the airport after World War Two, they got designers to put together their concept of future flight. This thing looks like an old Buck Rogers space cartoon and just goes to show you how tough it is to predict what lies ahead.

What's your favourite piece of visual art that captures the essence of the city?

Vancouver artist Tiko Kerr and his wavy line painting of the Burrard Street Bridge. Rather than just paint it normally, he's done it through a prism, a disjointed look—but you just see it perfectly. There is a “something” about the Burrard Bridge.

What's the snack you'll get in your car and drive for?

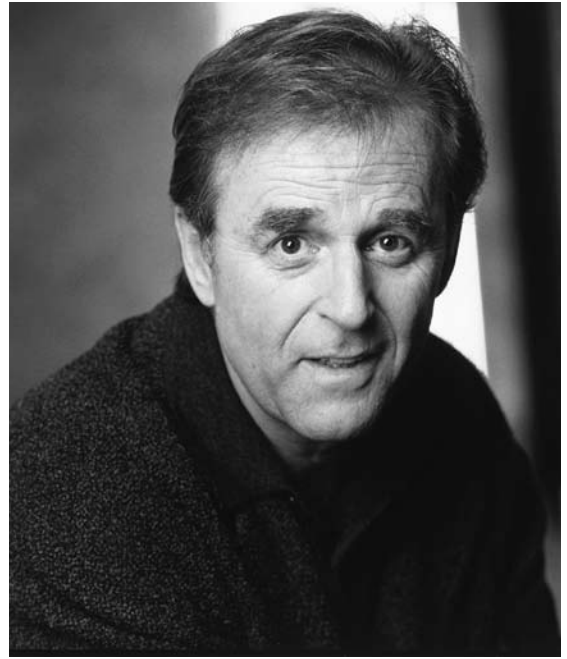
Gelato from L'Arte di Gelato di Gianni at 1441 Marine Drive in West Vancouver.

What's your favourite arts venue?

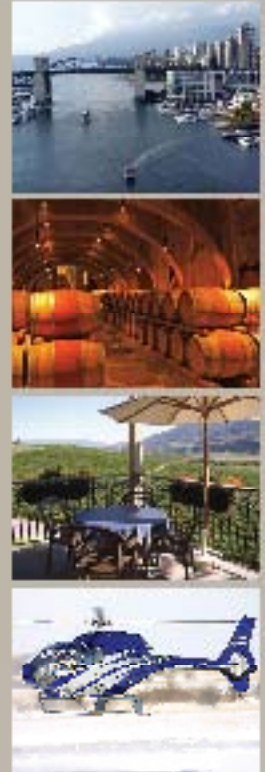
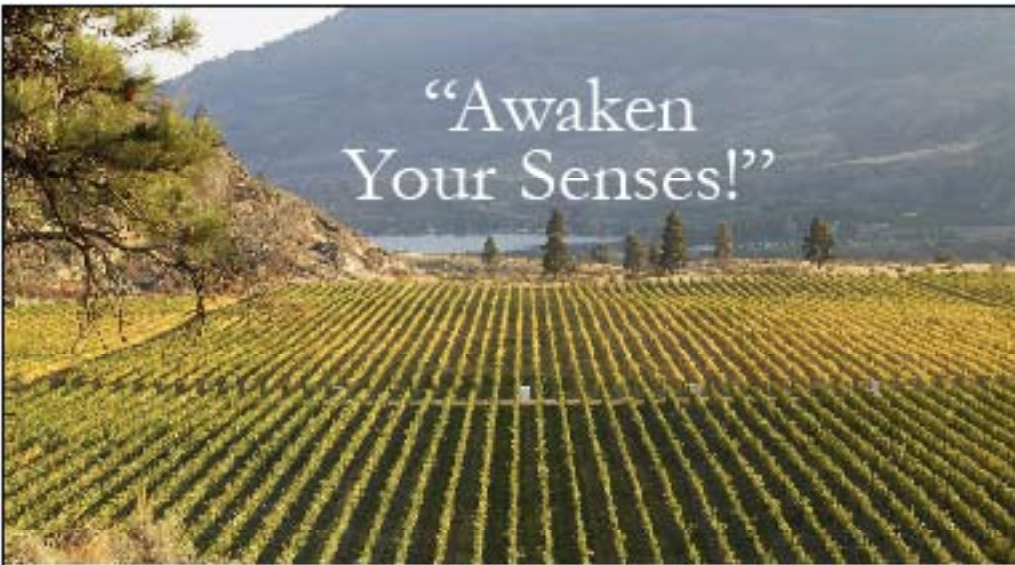
The Commodore—cause it's the Commodore. It has space to move, the best dance floor, great acoustics and a rich history. A close second is the Railway Club. If you sit at one of the three barstools facing the stage, you have hit Nirvana.

Who in the city do you most want to kiss?

Babz Chula: One of the best actresses working in the city, a Gemini winner and the queen of independent film. She signs her name up and the film gets made. Babz has a lot of friends in this town.



Courtesy Terry David Mulligan



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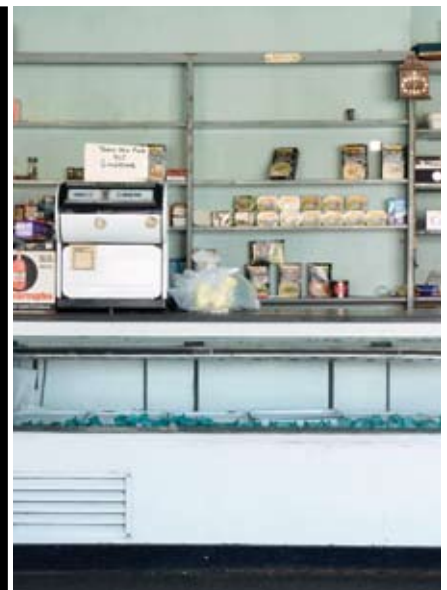
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Closed Shop

The Lido is a dry-goods grocery at 518 E. Broadway near Fraser that never opens. Display shelves through the plate-glass windows are neatly stocked with fading yellow cans of generic peas, tomato paste and cream-style corn, and packets of Oetker fruit glaze wait patiently on a formica table. The only thing that changes is the Canadian Wildlife Federation calendar in the front window. Is it an art installation? A front for a thriving heroin trade out the back? According to a neighbouring businessman, the store was operated by an elderly couple—who, even 20 years ago, opened it only on Saturdays—until about 2003, when the husband, “old Gus,” became ill. The neighbourhood theory is that Gus passed away, and that the store is kept in this condition by his widow as a memorial.

EASTSIDE NAME GAME

Early city planners tried to make it simple to navigate the streets of Vancouver. But there are some curveballs on the east side, where major roads suddenly get a name change. Clark bends into Knight; Commercial turns into Victoria; and Rupert becomes Kerr. Then there's Renfrew/Nootka/Earles—three names for one road. The City's Mike Thomson says that while each name change has its own story, “the crux of the issue” is that expanded east/south ‘hoods—particularly after South Vancouver joined the city in 1929—led to a misaligned grid. Ergo, a bend and a name change to deal with all the crooked streets. ♣



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