

In Our Own Words

4th Edition



International Literacy Day 2009
International Literacy Day

Art by Shawn Richards

Deer in My Backyard

Kimi Kim

When I walk around my place I can see the lovely deer. Some of the deer are eating the grass and walking around with their families. They look peaceful and very happy. I think they have a very wonderful family relationship. Sometimes I'm curious about why when the deer find people they don't run away? Sometimes I feel they look pitiful because their habitat is destroyed. Humans build houses everywhere and the deer lose everything, so the deer are only used to concrete and living with people.



My Life

Shaun Stephan

My name is Shaun Stephan. I am 29 years old and I have a daughter named Destiny who is 4. I live in Chilliwack on the Main Land. I was incarcerated for stealing cars to support my drug habit. I was sentenced to 18 months and I am due to be released on Oct. 8, 2009.

I volunteered to enter the program at Guthrie because I realize I need to change my life because I have been on drugs so long. I expected it to be hard, which it is because I have been using for so long. I was scared to come here because I didn't know what I was walking into.

Some of the things that have changed me at Guthrie are:

1. I had to face my fears and realize that life is not all about drugs. I have been doing drugs since I was 12. This is the longest (9months) time I have been clean. Now I can focus and I actually care about people and things, care about my family and most importantly I care about myself. I finally have self-esteem.
2. My friend Andrew Phillipson helped me out. He helped me with my paperwork to get into Guthrie. I couldn't read or write. Andrew made me feel better about myself. He's always by my side. Andrew is not a druggo.
3. John Howard staff are good people. They are not like staff, they are more like family. They will do anything to help you. I'll miss them when I get out. If it wasn't for them I probably wouldn't have succeeded.

When I get out I hope to get a job and stay clean, and possibly go to school. I'm staying at the John Howard House in Nanaimo. I'll probably go to NA and hopefully come back for alumni's.



The Concert

Sara Wright

A moment means a short period of time that passes. I definitely lived in a moment when I saw the soprano Sarah Brightman, on December 13, 2008 in Victoria. As the sound of a bell toll I saw this figure come out of the dark with a veil covering figure. As soon the figure came into full view my jaw dropped into a grin because I knew it was Sarah Brightman. As the music changed to "Gothica/Fleur de Mar, she was stripped down into a red dress. Then a beam of light shone upon a diva. The holler of this angel that blast through the stero made me feel that this moment of actually seeing Brightman made me feel totally star struck. I was totally in awe and enjoyed every moment of it. Although the moment lasted about two hours, I wouldn't forget this short passing of time.



The Double Gold Medal Winner

Sara Amos

My name is Sara. I am a learner at Literacy Central Vancouver Island and am a synchronized swimmer, a member of a choir, and a member of a Dragon Boat Team, and have two part-time jobs.

In March 2009 I won trophies and gold medals for compulsory figures and also for free style routines in Synchronized Swimming. It is unusual for one person to win both the figures and the free style routines. People came from swimming clubs from many parts of Canada and the United States for the competition held here in Nanaimo. I was very pleased to represent my home club and city.

My father, step mother and grandparents were beaming with pride when I got my Medals. So was I. My coach was also very excited and pleased.

White it is hard work, and good exercise Synchronized Swimming is also a lot of fun and I have made many new friends.

Some people ask what synchronized Swimming is. I tell them it is like "ballet in the water."



A Hot Week

Lily Lee

This week was so hot. Even at night it was still hot. Usually my house is nice and cool but this week it has remained very warm. We try to cool down by turning on the fan. Even my husband is wearing short pants. It was too hot to walk outside, so I went to the gym for exercise. Also this week I went to the dollar store and bought a word search book. I enjoy finding the words in the puzzle.

ACQUAINTANCES	FAVOR	HELP
BOYFRIEND	FONDNESS	LEND
BUDDY	FRIENDLINESS	LOYALTY
CLOSENESS	FUN	PAL
COMPANIONS	GIRLFRIEND	PRANKS
CONFIDE	GOOD TIMES	SHARE

Friendship



S E S S E N E S O L C H A
N E N S B S S E N D N O F
G E C E O O F N B U D D Y
O I O N L Y Y A D N E L S
O E R I A N T F V T O N L
D D O L S T E L R O O L O
T I S D F S N S A I R A A
I F H N I R K I N Y E P A
M N A E U N I A A T O N E
E O R I A F P E H U K L D
S C E R N M U E N R Q F E
C C P F O P L P O D U C A
A N F C A P N N E D P O A

Picnic

Grace Yang

On Thursday May 27 my friend phoned and asked me if I would join a group of women, for a picnic, I said yes.

We took two cars with nine women and four kids, and drive north of Cowichan into the forested area. We walked along a narrow path with broadleaf trees and beautiful scenery. The path was barely wide enough to get through.

We could not see each other so we called each other's names. We had a lot of fun. For one day, we forgot all our worries and stress.

We looked for a nice place for lunch and found one by the water front which had a picnic table.

The women opened their lunches and everybody shared, so we all ate different food. They laughed, they told their life stories, and had a nice time.

We will plan to have a picnic again next year.



The Story of How I Travelled to Canada

Sue Bui

I left Vietnam in 1988. I went to Hong Kong by boat. It is a very hard boat ride for those leaving South Vietnam to go to Hong Kong due to the weather and ocean fishes who could eat you if you fall overboard from overcrowding on the ships. The ratio of people who make the journey is only about 50/50 versus the time travel of about a month to arrive. Plus the people who leave from North Vietnam have a short distance to travel, and it usually only takes 1 week to 10 days so chances are the survival rate is 80% of the ratio of people able to arrive in Hong Kong. So I feel very lucky to have made it to Hong Kong. It was a big ship that held 137 people so we had bunk beds to sleep on, but it was very crowded. It took one week to travel by boat to get to Hong Kong. Then I stayed for 2 years working to save enough money to come to Canada. When I was in Hong Kong I worked sewing jeans. First I arrived in Kitchener, Ontario and stayed with one of my brothers who came to Canada before me. I come from a family of 8 people who live in North Vietnam. Most of my family is still in Vietnam, and my one brother is in Ontario and I am now on Vancouver Island. Presently I have 2 teenage sons who enjoy learning about the English lifestyle.



Dreaming with My Eyes Open

Evelyne Gomes

I find myself dreaming with my eyes open at the kitchen table, thinking about the kiss we shared and all the special moments he had offered me.

I feel myself so connected with the universe since that kiss happened in my life without control.

I have been dreaming and feeling his soul around me each and every day.

It seems like lightning entered deep in my soul and doesn't want to go away.

It seems since that first kiss, that my body is on fire and I cannot put it out.

I have his scent in my soul which makes me dream of him every day and I

get the inspiration of love. I felt my body was so light that I was flying

It was feeling so complete and full of joy.

I just need to close my eyes to feel his love and I feel connected with the universe.

We went for a walk and a musician was playing the cello. It was so romantic, I was feeling him so close to me, we were looking to the sea and birds were flying and people were walking by but the only thing I could feel around me was him and I could not do anything else but kiss him.

His energy made me feel good and happy bringing passion to my soul.

We sat down and he brought out a book and read a few poems to me but I wasn't listening.

My eyes were glued to him, staring and recording in my mind that moment of love, wishing that this moment would never end, that we could remain together, suspended in time and space.



My Field Trip to Chemainus

Learner Event 2009

Crystal Carson

On Wednesday morning we boarded the bus to Chemainus to go sight seeing of the town. It was a cold, rainy miserable day. We decided to split up in different groups to go on a scavenger hunt on the different murals of the town. We also went to the museum to see different exhibits on different things that happened long ago in the town.

There were two different murals I liked best. One was of the train going over the sunset as it reminded me of growing up in the small town of Rosetown in southern Saskatchewan with both my parents and brother Maurice. I remember seeing the freight diesel trains come by our town every day, blowing their horns, carrying box cars of grain, automobiles, coal, potash, and wheat. I miss seeing the caboose (when I got older they cut out the caboose).

I liked seeing the Emily Carr paintings, and the one about the hermit. My other favorites were animals belonging to settlers and First Nation's peoples long ago.

I enjoyed going for lunch at the Dancing Bean. Plus I really enjoyed the play at the Chemainus Theatre of *Mr. Pim Passes By*. It was such a funny play I laughed out loud. I enjoyed myself a lot, and made several new friends from Iris's class and Literacy Nanaimo. After coming home on the bus from Chemainus and after going on a new adventure exploring new things, I was happy to be home to see my cat Cuddles.



Bathtub Race Day

Shawn E. Richards

It was a hot Bathtub Race Day in Nanaimo B.C. I was at Departure Bay Road Beach with my daughter Corrina, her boy friend and also some of my friends. It was an hour and a half before race time so we went for a walk and then I went for a swim.

To my amazement over by the floats where they corral the incoming bathtub racers I saw a seals head pop-up from the water about five feet from me. I didn't think that much of this until the seal swam close to my legs. Looking down I thought he was going to bite me so I nudged it away quickly with my right hand.

I didn't realize until my friend Nathan said It looks like a baby seal. I can see the umbilical cord still hanging from its round stomach. Over the next few minutes I described the experience to another swimmer who was in the area, and a couple of people on shore. I could tell the seal was looking for its mother because it swam with no hesitation to the people on shore, who were fascinated to see a wild sea animal. I believe that it was barking at the people calling for its mother. Within a few minutes the seal had turned around, gone under water and disappeared, only to reappear in front of me.

There was a lady on shore who told me to leave it alone. She told me somewhat snarly I know more about it than you. She said to me, You probably killed it. I left and as I drove away I had an uneasy feeling in my stomach, and I didn't know why.

Then the next day while hiking along the beach I found a dead adult seal that had definitely been hit by something. There had been hundreds of boats rushing around the harbour the day before, fighting for position to watch the Bathtub Race.

