

## Legacy Statue Unveiled to Great Fanfare!



Richmond-Steveston MLA John Yap takes a closer look after the statues are unveiled.

On August 30th, MP John Cummins, MLA John Yap, Mayor Malcom Brodie, members of city council and other dignitaries visited the Gulf of Georgia Cannery for the unveiling of Steveston's Legacy. The sculpture depicts three workers from Steveston's fishing heyday in the 1930s and is a tribute to all workers whose efforts led to the development of Steveston as a fishing industry hub. The location is significant for the Greczmiel family, who has made a donation to the Steveston Legacy project in honour of Thomas Howard. The blacksmith shop where Howard made guards for gill-nets almost a century ago was located 50 meters from the site where the statue now stands.

The inspiration for the statue arose in 1960 when two students, Norm Williams and Keith Lowes, transferred to Steveston High School from other parts of the Lower Mainland. They were struck by how unique their new community was, and talked about how to express it through art. "I remember Keith saying,



L-R: Members of the Howard family, MP John Cummins, MLA John Yap, coffee gal, Mayor Malcolm Brodie, and Councillor Bill McNulty celebrate the newest addition to the cultural landscape in Richmond.

'there's a novel here', because it was such a colourful community," recalls Williams. Thirty years later, at a high school reunion in 1992, Lowes and Williams remembered these discussions, and with Williams now a professional sculptor, the two envisioned a statue that would reflect the vitality and diversity of Steveston's community. They received support from all three levels of government, numerous community organizations including the Steveston Community Society, Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society, and Steveston Alumni Association, plus individual donors.

The statue has already proven to be a real draw for the Cannery. If you haven't had a chance to drop by and have your picture taken with the statue, please do!

by Marie Fenwick, Executive Director, Gulf of Georgia Cannery. Reprinted with permission.



The Steveston Legacy is a tribute to Steveston's cannery workers. The life-size bronze statues depict an older gent relating stories of a time gone by to two young folk during a coffee break. Stop by for a listen!

## The Olympic flame is coming to Richmond February 9, 2010!

How will you celebrate? Will it come through Steveston? Who will carry the torch on its journey around Richmond? Who will Richmond's final torch bearer be at the OZone Celebration at Minoru Park? *The excitement is mounting!*

Our next newsletter will be full of everything Olympics and all the exciting events being planned in Steveston and across the city to help welcome the world!

## Paint the Town Red! Support Canada's Olympic athletes and show your Canadian pride by joining our challenge to Paint Steveston Red!

See pages 5 and 7 for all the details!

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# A Local Field of Dreams

## *A Local Field of Dreams: The Terra Nova Community Gardens*

**“Planting the seed.”** That’s the byline the Terra Nova Schoolyard Society selected for its brochure. It’s a provocative slogan. After interviewing the Society’s founder, Ian Lai, the sentiment takes an almost revolutionary connotation. What is the Society’s source of such momentum?

The kids. They’re the seeds. The Society’s school kids, guided by their ecologically-minded mentors—Ian and a group of tireless volunteers—are precisely what raises Terra Nova Gardens to a level few have paused long enough to imagine and no one, until 2006, dared realize.

Enter Ian Lai. As a professional chef turned instructor to aspiring chefs, he’d grown world-weary recognizing a disparaging disconnect between his promising culinary students and their alarming illiteracy about the source of food and the concern for food security. Ian set out to change his disappointment into a more congruous and sustainable reality. His concept was simple enough: teach the newer generations about food sources.

I asked him how his mission came into fruition. His response begins by first crediting the City of Richmond’s strong “vision” for its sixty-three contiguous acres of green space. Then he pays homage to the women who founded the first Fruit Tree Sharing Project (a non-profit organization who makes its home at Terra Nova and grows produce for food banks). Corporate interest has also found opportunities to facilitate projects at Terra Nova, including Terasen Gas, Telus, Hellmans (yes, the makers of mayonnaise) and others. He also alludes to the various awards the gardens earned. He becomes most animated when speaking of the gardens and its prodigy gardeners involved in the Schoolyard Society.

He exudes an almost mystical tone and I begin to surmise that the Terra Nova Community Gardens are a heady elixir of past and future pulses. Even where we sit and talk is an example of that. We’re perched on a recently built bench. At our feet, a new patch of garden that in several weeks will yield a harvest of thirteen varieties of grains. Serendipitously, that same spot many years ago hosted the home of Ian’s culinary colleague, Bruno Marti (La Belle Auberge in Ladner, BC). Ian laughs as he recounts the day he phoned Bruno, declaring, “Hey, Bruno, I’m



*Terra Nova Schoolyard Society founder Ian Lai.*

sowing oats in your old bedroom!”

Falling silent for a few moments, savoring the levity, we begin to contemplate the uniquely picturesque surrounds of Terra Nova—the violet-blue ring of fired and fused, once molten mountains in the distance; verdant greenery as far as the eye can see; perhaps a half dozen types of birds in flight or song; an old barn restored and painted iconic-red with white trim; nature lovers strolling casually while gardeners more purposefully (all of whom silently signal with a smile just how lucky we all feel bearing witness to this anomalous pastoral scene set within a pulsing city).

“It’s a very spiritual place,” Ian quietly asserts. “Lots of energy,” he explains. And as if those two statements hadn’t measured the gardens with enough awe, he offers, “Everyone finds something here, finds something about their selves. This place guides peoples’ journeys in life.” Being guided into the future by something achingly timeless. Somehow, it’s tangible.

The future: the Schoolyard Society and its children morphing into ecological stewards. Consider again the grain growing at our feet. Last winter, the children harvested the fall’s yield of grain. Ian sets the scene: every kid has her or his own cup to collect the seeds. Throughout the classroom, the kids are engrossed in the task of disengaging seeds from sheaths. Ian evokes the majesty of that moment, “I could hear all those grains

dropping (and I realized the kids) were being respectful of every grain...”. This harvest season, the kids will again be involved in the entire harvest experience. They’ll process the grain. Perhaps like last season they’ll grill fresh bread made of grains they harvested. Or once again make organic omelets, using many of their vegetables and herbs they’ve nurtured. Perhaps they’ll prepare more pear butter using pears collected from fruit trees at the Terra Nova gardens.

As is said of many worthwhile movements, The Terra Nova Schoolyard Society grew from one individual’s bold dream. It’s the heroic myth: a lone, intent figure approaches an all too usual group of skeptical albeit potential partners. They grant the heroic visionary interviews, more out of curiosity than conviction. Our hero figure speaks with a rare intention akin to, “Build it and they will come.” In Ian’s case, the next part of the story would read, “and then there was light.”

The City of Richmond green-lighted the school gardening project by granting Ian space enough for five roughly 10 ft x 10 ft garden plots in 2006. The first school to sign on was Terra Nova’s Spul’u’kwuks Elementary School. The pilot project proved a success. As with so many revolutions, word of mouth has proved powerful. Today, Quilchena, Thompson and Gilmore schools are enrolled along with Spul’u’kwuks.

Always looking toward shaping the future, this year Ian spearheaded an experimental rice paddy, involving UBC’s Community Learning Initiative. (For those that are curious, you can find the rice paddy in the northeastern quadrant.) 2009 is also the inaugural year for another of Ian’s concepts: chefs of the Fairmont Hotel in Richmond are growing organic produce at Terra Nova.

Ian’s work as founder and Programme Coordinator at Terra Nova is just one of his impassioned pursuits. He also serves in that capacity for Queen Alexander School, an inner-city school located in East Vancouver. He is also a food production researcher working for the Evergreen Project, a branch of BCIT’s Centre of Architectural Ecology. As mentioned, he teaches culinary skills at the Northwest Culinary Institute in Vancouver. Last year (August 08 to March 09), Ian was a regular contributor and guest on CBC Radio One’s “On the Coast” programme. His moniker: “The Eco Chef” (a title he may again assume this fall).

# A Local Field of Dreams

In the coming weeks, if Ian isn't found operating or hosting tours through the gardens' demonstration facilities—featuring organic composting and water-wise irrigation solutions—then he'll likely be seen co-presenting (along with a colleague, Arzeena Hamir) free, City-sponsored, workshops. Or, he'll likely be found tending the various crops. Alternatively, he may be chatting with the myriad gardeners who ebb and flow in and out of the bucolic gardens.

Try and coordinate a visit to the gardens during one of the schools' sessions, in any case. You might not find Ian, but you're sure to discern the kids' infectious enthusiasm and engaging earnestness. Maybe you'll behold a moment rivaling one of Ian's delightful anecdotes concerning those kids.

For example, perhaps you'll observe some kids embroiled in heavy negotiations involving seed trading. Yes, you read that right. Gone are the days when kids traded marbles for steelies, or a Superman comic book for an Archie issue. These days, kids are trading seeds. Keeping track of their inventory. Calculating the seeds' worth in relation to other seed varieties. It all makes sense, the way Ian tells it. "Authentic learning happens here. Even the 'category kids' dealing with ADD or ADHD, for example, excel here. They're focused, having a great time while

also learning." The Schoolyard Society teaches children "the three R's." Not so unusual, unless you consider what those R's stand for: Return, Respect, and Responsibility. It's all part of the plan, it seems. At the gardens, kids share garden tools. They're responsible for those tools and they're expected to return them when they're done for others' use. Thinking of others, reminds Ian, is a fundamental building block in developing self-esteem. Respecting others coincides with self-respect, as well. Along with using gardening tools, the children are learning social tools. Older children who've participated in the Society previously, mentor the newer and younger children. "These green leaders will be the next generation of green teams as they grow and enter high school," Ian muses. He also engineered an adoption programme allowing kids to foster Mason bees and silk worms, offering another opportunity for the kids to learn the nuances of assuming the mantle of responsibility. While social skills are honed, physical health is also improved. Every other week, as part of their regular "Daily Physical Assignment" the children walk or bike to the gardens (often with their parents in tow) and then begin gardening.

These youth are discovering they enjoy gardening, along with its attendant adventures. In fact, over thirty percent of kids return year

after year. That's a healthy number of dedicated participants for any grassroots movement. While kids experience gardening as a regular and routinized activity, those habits, skills and memorable experiences become engrained in their psyches. Gertrude Jekyll may have said it best: "The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies." (The same can be said for the seeds of self-esteem.) The Society is far from being a novelty; it's a well-conceived and sound strategy.

If you don't encounter Ian Lai at the Terra Nova Community Gardens, seek him out at the Steveston Farmers' Market, commencing its second year of operations. Yes, Ian is involved in that wildly successful fledgling project, too. He's the Market Chef. He'll be the guy demonstrating how and what to cook using only the ingredients found at the farmers' market in Steveston every Sunday this summer. Likely, many of us will find ourselves there, exploring possibilities. Maybe we'll even be inspired to plant a few seeds from our own gardens as fields of dreams.

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## Lord Byng Elementary School Serves Up Garden Feast

On Friday, September 18, blessed with a balmy late summer sun, the 351 students of Lord Byng Elementary were treated to a barbecue lunch courtesy of the school's Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The event coincided with the start of PAC's school cookbook campaign and was designed to motivate the students to submit recipes and drawings to illustrate the book.

As an added bonus the meal was prepared and cooked by Kevin Snook, a renowned international chef and uncle of Maddy in Grade 4. Kevin happened to be in Vancouver to launch his fourth cookbook, entitled 'A Boy After The Sea', and kindly agreed to share his expertise and to support the event. The mouth-watering menu consisted of honey mustard marinated chicken drumsticks, barbecued albacore tuna, baby new red & gold potatoes, organic

tomato salad, and mixed allotment greens. All ingredients were supplied by local businesses, including potatoes from the school's own garden project, itself only established since the spring.

With barely an hour within which to

serve the lunch an army of parent volunteers turned out to assist and they, too, got to enjoy the grilled delights. The event was universally regarded as a huge success and captured the imagination of all involved, even drawing comment from the younger grades that "we should do this every week".

The Lord Byng school cookbook is a fundraising initiative of the PAC and is destined to be available in time for the winter break and will sell for \$12.50 each or \$10 for 2 or more. It will promote healthy eating, celebrate diversity and aim to reflect the broad multicultural nature and ethnic background of the student body.

To purchase your copy of the Byng School Cookbook, contact Charmis De Boer at 604-816-1655 or email [charmis@shaw.ca](mailto:charmis@shaw.ca).

