

RADIATION SCARE

Tokyo residents told to avoid giving tap water to infants. » B4

GIRL WITH VIOLET EYES

Goodbye, Maggie the Cat. » A4
Last of the movie goddesses. » B5

SPRING HAS SPRUNG



Cherry trees burst into blossom in the neighbourhood of 22nd and Yew Street in Vancouver on Wednesday.

WAYNE LEIDENFROST/PNG

PETAL POWER: Vancouver’s month-long cherry blossom festival opens Saturday. The celebration is a success thanks to one woman, writes gardening expert Steve Whysall. Read a guide to the festival and tips for planting your own cherry tree. » **D16-17**

DELTA-RICHMOND EAST

Newly chosen Conservative candidate has history of financial problems

Dale Saip declared personal bankruptcy in 1993 – with more than \$340,000 in debt

BY JEFF LEE
VANCOUVER SUN

Dale Saip, the newly minted Conservative candidate in the riding of Delta-Richmond East, filed a creditor proposal under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act in 2005 after owing the federal government nearly \$90,000 in back taxes. The case was resolved two years ago after a third party

agreed to pay \$50,000. But the Canada Revenue Agency continues to have two outstanding tax claims on all of Saip’s personal and business property. On Tuesday, Saip, who is vice-president of business development for the Vancouver Giants hockey team, a long-time Delta school trustee and current school board chairman, won the nomination in the riding.

He defeated lawyer Kerry-Lynne Findlay 78-66 in a snap nomination meeting called just one week after longtime Conservative MP John Cummins announced he wouldn’t run again. Saip has had other financial problems. In 1993, he declared personal bankruptcy, with more than \$340,000 in debt. According to statements in that bankruptcy proceeding, he suffered a series of financial

failures, including the cancellation of a joint Canada-China oriented strand board mill as a result of the Tiananmen Square massacre. In his efforts to cement the deal, Saip met with then-prime minister Brian Mulroney and Ontario’s then-premier David Peterson, according to the court documents.

CONTINUED ON A2

WorkSafeBC cracks down on asbestos removal in demolitions

BY LARRY PYNN
VANCOUVER SUN

WorkSafeBC has shut down 30 job sites in the Lower Mainland so far this year for violations related to the improper removal of asbestos from older homes undergoing renovation or demolition. “It’s a big issue,” said Al Johnson, regional director of construction for WorkSafeBC. “If you don’t remove hazardous materials, including asbestos, before you demolish, people can be exposed.” WorkSafeBC has a newly dedicated team of about 10 inspectors who are tackling the problem in the region, working with municipalities issuing demolition permits. “We go to those sites to make sure the asbestos is taken out first,” said Johnson, noting both workers and homeowners are potentially at risk. WorkSafeBC statistics from last year show the problem of asbestos is not exclusive to home demolition.

Corporate offenders included the Salvation Army in Mission, fined \$28,946 for infractions such as failing to investigate a worker’s suspicions that the mechanical room contained loose asbestos, and BC Ferries in Port McNeill, fined \$15,000 for failure to post signs identifying asbestos-containing materials on one of its vessels. A \$2,500 fine to Nystar Developments Corp. in Vancouver included the comment: “Ten of this firm’s workers were removing asbestos-containing materials from a demolition site without following the proper procedures and without using appropriate personal protective equipment. The firm failed to ensure that the asbestos-containing materials identified in the work site’s hazardous materials survey were safely contained and removed.” Bhupinder Chahal/BC Hazmat Inspections Ltd., in Coquitlam, was fined \$1,750.

CONTINUED ON A8

FEDERAL FRICTION

- Did Tories dupe the opposition into an early election? » B1
- Parties prep for campaign. » B2



50% off Lunch or Dinner at Mr. Mike's Steakhouse & Bar in Langley

Find Today's Deal » swarmjam.com

INSIDE TODAY'S PAPER

Business	C1	Issues/Ideas	A15
Classified	E6	Movie Listings	D29
Comics	B9	Obituaries	E9
Crosswords	C8, D31	Sports	E1
Editorials/Letters	A14	Sudoku	B9
Ferry Schedule	C8	TV	E10
Horoscope	D31	Westcoast Life	D1

COLUMNISTS

Don Cayo	C2
Stephen Hume	A15
Craig McInnes	A5
Pete McMartin	A4
Vaughn Palmer	A3
Malcolm Parry	C4
Barbara Yaffe	B1

24 DAYS TO GO
40,129 runners so far registered

WEATHER

SOME CLOUDS.
FULL REPORT, C8

\$1.12 PLUS HST

\$1.64 MINIMUM IN OUTLYING AREAS

0 57040 10035 1

canada.com

VACATION PRIZES

Deadline Midnight March 28

BONUS 3 DELUXE

ONLY FOR EARLY TICKET BUYERS!

4 DAYS LEFT

604-697-8946 • 1-877-969-8946

BUY ONLINE details & rules of play: **VARIETYLLOTTERY • CA**

BUY AT:

BC Gaming Event Licence #30331.

19+ to play!

Chances are 1 in 201,000 (total tickets for sale) to win a grand prize.

Problem Gambling Help Line 1-888-795-6111
www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca

Know your limit, play within it.

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2011

BREAKING NEWS AT VANCOUVERSUN.COM

Petal power

The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival celebrates a city in full flower
» D16-17



THU 24
WED 30

Life WESTCOAST

JUNO AWARDS

Rising singer-songwriter Hannah Georgas is in the running at this weekend's ceremony.

MUSIC » D8



INTO THE PAST

Unique photos from the 1960s capture totem poles being reclaimed by the forest.

VISUAL ARTS » D13



UNDER SURVEILLANCE

New adaptation of Orwell's 1984 draws on modern technology to create the right oppressive mood.

STAGE » D15



TRUE EAST

Authentic South Indian cuisine beckons at Dakshin Family Restaurant.

BUDGET DINING » D18





Linda Poole, director of the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival, admires some of the first of the season.

IAN SMITH/VANCOUVER SUN

CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Think pink: A celebration of beauty

‘There is no stranger under the cherry tree,’ says festival motto borrowed from Japanese poet

BY STEVE WHYSALL
VANCOUVER SUN

It’s been six years since Linda Poole first got the idea to organize a cherry blossom festival for Vancouver. It’s been an uphill struggle over those years to keep it going.

Working with the most shoestring of shoestring budgets and relying heavily on volunteer support, Poole has been a relentless campaigner to make the month-long festival a success.

The economy has been against her; funding from potential sponsors quickly disappeared when the recession left them cash-strapped.

And the weather didn’t cooperate, producing lashing rains that knocked blossoms to the ground one year, or freezing temperatures that kept trees bereft of blooms the next. The one year the weather was perfect — in 2010 — there was no festival due to the Winter Olympics.

Nevertheless, Poole has never given up on her dream that took shape when she returned to Vancouver after living out of the country for 13 years with her husband, Christopher, as part of the Canadian Foreign Service.

Linda credits Japanese diplomat Nobu-san, for inspiring her to start the festival by telling her about the sakura cherry blossom celebrations in Japan.

She was also aware that the first cherry trees to be planted on Vancouver streets were gifts from the cities of Kobe and Yokohama in the early 1930s to honour the Japanese Canadians who served in the First World War.

“It struck me that a festival would be

the perfect way to express our gratitude for this generous gift and to celebrate the beauty and joy cherry blossoms bring to our city,” she says.

Today, the festival, which gets underway for the sixth year on Saturday and continues to April 22, has blossomed into a multi-faceted event, designed not only to promote visual awareness and an appreciation for the beauty of cherry blossoms, but also to engage and enhance the community.

It has adopted as a defining expression the words of Japanese poet Kobayashi Issa: “There is no stranger under the cherry tree.”

The message is one that Poole hopes Vancouverites will take to heart and make a reality by gathering together under the cherry blossoms to celebrate not just the beauty of the blooms of a specific tree but the power of spring’s return and the beauty of nature everywhere as it bursts back to life after winter.

As well as an interactive website where people can find a detailed map locating all key cultivars of cherry trees and daily reports on new blossom sightings, the festival also offers outdoor (plein-air) painting sessions, an invitation to write haiku poems in praise of cherry blooms and a two-day Sakura Days celebration at VanDusen Botanical Garden where many Japanese traditions in arts, crafts and music will be displayed and demonstrated.

As part of Sakura Days, there will be sake tasting as well as various Japanese cultural performances, including geisha dances and taiko drumming in addition to demonstrations of origami, haiku, calligraphy and martial arts.

It struck me that a festival would be the perfect way to express our gratitude for this generous gift and to celebrate the beauty and joy cherry blossoms bring to our city.

LINDA POOLE
DIRECTOR OF VANCOUVER’S CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

To mark Vancouver’s 125th anniversary on April 2, the festival has also offered 3,000 “birthday blossoms” cherry trees at a special discount price of \$40 to encourage people to plant the new trees on private property throughout the city.

Funding for the project was provided by the David and Dorothy Lam Foundation.

Three popular varieties of ornamental cherry trees are being offered: 2,400 ‘Akebono,’ 400 ‘Kanzan’ and 200 ‘Yae-beni-shidare.’ About 1,500 have already been sold.

People can order one of the trees from the festival’s website at www.vcbf.ca and pick them up at the end of the month from one of five locations listed on the website.

Poole says David Lam, the former B.C. lieutenant-governor who died last November, was a big fan of ornamental

cherry trees. “He always wanted to pink up the city with more flowering cherries,” says Poole.

“I once told him about the philanthropist William F. Fickling who fell in love with cherry blossoms when he saw them in Washington. D.C., and decided to do something similar in Macon, Ga.

“I told David that because of Fickling, Macon is now a city with more than 300,000 cherry trees. There is not an inch of the city that doesn’t have cherry blossoms in spring.”

Poole says Lam was impressed by this story and said, “If he can do it, I can do it for Vancouver. But I am not interested in giving out seedlings; I want to see real trees planted.”

At one point, Lam did offer the Vancouver park board \$1 million to buy cherry trees, but for various reasons it was unable to accept his offer. But when the opportunity came to do the Birthday Blossoms project, the Lam Foundation was quick to offer its financial support.

Last year, Poole went to Japan to see the sakura festivals for herself and was amazed to find that even in the pouring rain, people still made an effort to sit under trees, with their umbrellas up, and have lunch and drink some sake.

She is hoping that Vancouverites will show similar spirit this spring and there will be more neighbourhood block parties to celebrate the blooming of the cherry trees.

“We think this festival will grow and grow and eventually we will have parties all over the city to celebrate the beauty of these glorious spring-flowering trees.”

swhysall@vancouver.sun.com

At a glance

VANCOUVER CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

When: Starts Saturday, runs to April 22

HIGHLIGHTS

Cherry Jam: Guitar and sitar music and traditional Japanese taiko drumming at Burrard Street SkyTrain station. March 31 from noon to 1:30 p.m.

Sakura Days: Japan Fair at VanDusen Botanical Garden. Highlights will include traditional Japanese tea ceremony, sake tasting, music, dance and demonstrations of origami, ikebana and martial arts. April 2-3, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Haiku banners: As a part of Sakura Days, Jane Durante, landscaper designer and festival board member, has organized a special Haiku installation. The best five poems of the festival’s haiku invitation have been transferred to 20 no-bori panels (traditional Japanese communication banners) to be hung along the path leading to the grove of cherry trees.

Each poem has been written by masters of calligraphy in both English and Japanese. The banners, measuring five feet long by 15 inches wide, will be mounted on bamboo and will provide inspiring thoughts about cherry blossoms.

Plein-air Blossom Painting: Classes in painting cherry blossom trees will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Saturday from April 2 to 23.

More information: vcfb.ca

NEIGHBOURHOODS IN BLOOM

Tracing first blush of spring

BY STEVE WHYSALL
VANCOUVER SUN

The great pink wave of cherry blossoms that sweeps across Vancouver every year starts on the west side of town in February, sometimes as early as January. There are about 37,000 cherry trees, covering more than 40 varieties, planted on streets throughout the city’s 23 neighbourhoods. This creates a span of flowering that stretches over five months. The cascade of pink blossoms starts with a light splattering of flowers on the twiggy branches of two super-hardy, late-winter flowering trees, *Prunus subhirtella* ‘Autumnalis’ and ‘Autumnalis Rosea.’

From Kerrisdale to Stanley Park and dotted here and there throughout the West End, these trees invariably fool people into thinking spring has sprung, even though there are several weeks of winter left. Next, two even more impressive cherry trees, ‘Whitcomb’ and ‘Accolade,’ pop their blossoms, bringing umbrella-like canopies of pink deeper into Kerrisdale and reaching into Oakridge, Mount Pleasant and Grandview-Woodlands.

By March, the pace quickens and other top performers among the ornamental cherry trees burst into flower from the grounds of the University of B.C. to the soccer fields of Killarney — ‘Okame,’ ‘Spire,’ ‘Somei-yoshino’ and everybody’s favourite, ‘Akebono,’ the ‘daybreak cherry’ with its exquisite shell-pink blossoms and graceful beach-umbrella canopy. At this point, as we move into April and then May, it becomes a cherry blossom free-for-all with dozens of cultivars conspiring together to tickle the city pink with the occasional splash of white.

‘Umineko’ with its delicate vase-shape does its best impression of a seagull in flight.

‘Shirotae’ tries to pass itself off as a dazzling white tablecloth.

But the overwhelming wave of pink is sustained through ‘Pandora,’ ‘Shirotae,’ ‘Takasago,’ ‘Pink Perfection’ and the Oshima cherry. The procession of blossoms reaches a crescendo from the end of April into May when thousands of ‘Kanzan’ trees are joined by star performers such as ‘Shirofugen,’ ‘Kiku-shidare-zakura’ and ‘Amanogawa’ to transform streets into billowing clouds of candy-floss pink.

For a complete guide to all 43 cultivars, pick up a copy of Ornamental Cherries in Vancouver, the booklet produced by the Cherry Blossom Festival. It contains a two-page profile of each tree plus a Chinese index to names.

swhysall@vancouver.sun.com

BEST CHERRY TREES FOR YOUR GARDEN

What’s the best ornamental cherry tree to plant in your garden? Well, if you really like cherry trees, you need more than one to create a sequence of colour from March to May. Here are six of the best that will give you maximum flower power:

By Steve Whysall, Vancouver Sun



WHITCOMB: This is the most reliable ornamental cherry for early flowering in February, regardless of weather. If the weather is mild, it can even bloom profusely and impressively in late January.



ACCOLADE: Another great tree for producing blooms in early spring. It is a medium-sized, umbrella-shaped tree with fine branching. The small flowers are semi-double and coloured an intense light pink.



SHIROTAE (MOUNT FUJI CHERRY): Best of the early-April flowering cherries, this is loved for the purity of its white flowers. One of Japan’s oldest trees dating back to the 1850s, its name means “white cloth,” which is what the canopy resembles when the large, multi-petalled, slightly fragrant blooms appear.



AKEBONO: Hugely popular ever since it first appeared in California in the 1920s, this is the best tree for March flowers. It is a familiar sight on many streets and parks as well as a favourite of home gardeners. It has an umbrella-shaped canopy and shell pink flowers that slowly fade to white.



KANZAN: The most commonly planted of all flowering cherries in Vancouver, producing double pink flowers from the end of April into May. Super-hardy and disease resistant, it is sometimes called ‘Kwanzan’ or ‘Sekiyama.’



SHIROFUGEN: One of the oldest ornamental cherries, this tree dates back to 15th-century Japan and is valued for its reliability and disease resistance. It is the last cherry tree to bloom in Vancouver and produces abundant densely petalled flowers.