

Portfolio | **Sarah Ferguson**



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Medicine Hat's Bocelli

By Sarah Ferguson

When Edmund Camphor warms up to sing, everyone stops to listen, even those standing outside his studio door.

Camphor's rich falsetto voice drew many admirers to his performances at Medicine Hat's Rotary Music Festival this year.

"Edmund's version of 'Ave Maria' brought tears to everyone's eyes it was just beautiful," said Anne Carrier, executive director

of the festival.

The singer has often been referred to as "Medicine Hat's Andrea Bocelli."

Camphor, who enjoys Bocelli's music, and takes inspiration from the vocal performances of Josh Groban, also appreciates the occasional country tune.

The 18-year-old had an incredibly successful week at the festival, singing 11 songs in nine classes, and

taking home an impressive seven first-place awards.

Camphor began singing when he was 11 years old.

"I credit my teacher, Susan Supeene (of Medicine Hat College's Conservatory of Music and Dance) and the voice academy at the (Medicine Hat) college with helping to make me who I am today," Camphor says.

The young singer is blind, and was a top-five fi-

nalist in the "CNIB ifactor star search" in August 2009, and flew to Toronto to take part in the contest.

"He did very, very well," says Camphor's father Michael.

Michael, who has been by his son's side through his entire musical journey, is always in the audience, cheering him on.

The singer has also received support from the Medicine Hat Symphonic

Society, and recently received a scholarship from the organization.

"We are always very grateful for the support," Michael said. "Medicine Hat has a lot of talented people in it, and it means a lot to us."

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Guitar heroes find chemistry

By Sarah Ferguson

When it comes to enjoying guitar in Medicine Hat, it's best to learn from a PRO.

The P.R.O. trio — "Greek God of Guitar" Pavlo, former Triumph lead guitarist Rik (Emmett) and Two-time Juno Award-winning Latin guitarist Oscar (Lopez) are three long-time music veterans, whose talents are coming together on The Esplanade stage on March 26. The performance promises to be a one of a kind show, born out of the love of making great music.

Lopez says the work P.R.O. has produced since its conception just over two years ago is a celebration of the beauty of the guitar, combined with the power of the musical spirit.

"It is all about the elements — Pavlo is the earth, Rik is the wind, and I am the Latin Fire," he says mischievously.

"We have incredible chemistry as a group, and when we play together, we are 10 times better, because

we challenge one another, and the energy is 'bigger' — we want to share it with the audience," Pavlo says.

"We are old fashioned — we believe in real music, not just the manufactured kind," he adds.

The group says the performance will cover each of the veteran guitarists' musical journeys, and the spectrum of material will range from playful melodies to passionate ones. P.R.O.'s music also features diverse musical rhythms ranging from bossa nova to blues and rock 'n' roll.

"A guitarist is 'married to rhythm' — how it moves through the music, how it changes, because it (rhythm) truly is the heart of all music," Emmett says, who adds that his experience and range of rhythmic style was an asset when the trio recently recorded their first album, "Trifecta."

The title of the album translates to "a successful phenomenon that comes in threes," and the album is

just that — it was nominated for a Juno in the "Best Instrumental Album" category. The album was recorded in a house in Scarborough, Ont.

"It took a week (to record the album) — we would jam, come up with

songs and then go down to the basement and record them — we got back together a year later, and the album was finished," Pavlo says.

Emmett says there is a sense of respect among the three veteran musicians.

"It's like we're blood brothers in this thing, and we're coming together to celebrate the guitar as an instrument," he says.

Tickets, \$35 plus tax and service charge, are available at tixx.ca or by calling 403-502-8777.



The P.R.O. trio on stage at The Esplanade, March 26. /SARAH FERGUSON

MHC makes international push

By Sarah Ferguson

The Chinese student population at Medicine Hat College could be in for a big increase.

The manager of International Education for the college, Russel Boris, says the college has recently completed arrangements to increase its affiliation with Chinese colleges from three to five. The new affiliations are likely to increase the number of Chinese students deciding to attend college in Medicine Hat.

Boris said the local college has had official affiliations with Chinese institutions for about the past 15 years.

The two new college affiliates are to become official in March. Currently, Medicine Hat College offers a business degree, visual communications, an information technologies certificate, and an ecotourism certificate to its Chinese student population associated with the international studies project.

Boris spent last weekend in Toronto speaking to a "Being Global" conference, which he attended to talk about his successful endeavours in China and his role in establishing partnerships between MHC and Chinese universities. MHC currently has three

partnerships with colleges in two Chinese provinces: E&A College, in Qing Huan Dao, in Hebei Province offers a business program; XFU in Xiang Fan is in the Hubei Province, and offers Ecotourism to its students; and Central China Normal University in Wuhan, also located in the Hubei Province, offers an Information Technologies program.

Boris says that the college is also integrated with Medicine Hat's Chinese community, and receives a great deal of support.

The College's program combines learning in the

students' native China, with a Canadian educational environment. Students in the project are allowed to become part of MHC's program after they have passed English language aptitude tests, Boris said. The process for learning English and passing the tests can take up to two years, he added. Learning English is an important skill for the students, says Boris.

"More people are studying English in China than the entire population of England," he said. "A Canadian education is viewed as an asset to these students."

Last year, the college, which has a total enrolment of more than 3,000, did not reach its goal of a five-percent international student body, and had an enrolment of approximately 170 international students, but this year is a different story. According to Boris, 200 international students are now studying at Medicine Hat College and it now has an international student population of seven per cent.

"It's been a better year for us," he said.

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Students help Puerto Vallarta school

By Sarah Ferguson

It may take a village to raise a child, but according to the students of Medicine Hat High, a school can raise a village.

On Friday, Medicine Hat High School's graduating class of 2011 donated \$5,000 to the Mexican Schools Project. The money will be used to rebuild a school located south of the Mexican city of Puerto Vallarta, says project founder Bob Johnson of Vancouver.

"The project will donate half of the costs to build the school, and the Mexican government provides the other half," he said.

Johnson says \$5,000 is a lot of money in Mexico.

"For the price of a Coke and a bag of chips, a child in Mexico can have school supplies for a year, and for the price of two CDs, a teacher can have a year's worth of school supplies," he said.

The Mexican Schools Project aims to assist Mexican rural communities in addressing their educational priorities, Johnson said.

Johnson says Mexico's education system is "sorely neglected," and overcrowded.

"In one school we rebuilt, they had 127 kids crammed into three rooms," he said.

"In some of the (Mexican rural) areas where we have restored schools, and rebuilt them, up to two children were dying per year as a result of being stung in scorpion-infested schools," he said.

Teachers in Mexico are often unable to meet the needs of their students as a result of poor education, he said.

"Many Mexican teachers start teaching when they are 18, and get a minimal education themselves, and so the students in rural Mexico are not properly educated," he said.

Student executive secretary Maeghan Jerry says Hat High is glad to help.

"We had some extra money in our legacy fund, from past grad fundraisers, and thought the donation was a good idea," she said.

Hat High's connection to the Mexican Schools Project is rooted in Johnson's connection to the teaching staff at the school, and his friendship with Roger Wiedemann, the school's social studies teacher.

Wiedemann got the students started with the project, and the students were more than happy to oblige, says student executive member Schwaib Jogiati.

The donation is the second one Hat High has made to the project in a two-year span, he said.

"The last donation rebuilt a school, and we figured why not rebuild another one," said Jogiati.

"I'm originally from South Africa, and it's a very impoverished country too, so I relate to this project," Jogiati said.

Johnson says Medicine Hat is "a very special place." Eight years ago, when his project was in its infancy, he was approached by the Medicine Hat Sunrise Rotary club, who wanted to help out. Today, Johnson says they remain devoted

to helping his cause. "Medicine Hat was one of the first communities to approach our project, and everyone here has a huge heart," he said.

The Sunrise Rotary Club will be holding a fundraiser for the Mexican Schools Project at the Medicine Hat Lodge. The event starts at 6 p.m. today.

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Tortured cat in need of costly surgery

By Sarah Ferguson



/SARAH FERGUSON

Sheri Pister is putting out a call to humanity to balance the scales of justice, and hopes that Medicine Hat area residents will step forward to help save a poor kitten from being euthanized.

“Ravage” is an orange tabby manx cat, who lives up to his name. The 16-month-old cat was picked up outside the Taber area by Pister’s animal rescue organization, Persian Dreams and Canine Themes. The cat was showing signs of obvious distress.

“There were burn marks above his tail, and clumps of missing fur on his body, which upon veterinary examination, were the result of firecrackers being attached to him,” Pister said.

And that was not the worst part.

Ravage could barely breathe.

Further X-rays revealed a diaphragmatic hernia, a potentially fatal condition which was caused by severe blows to the cat’s body.

“Essentially, what it (diaphragmatic hernia) means is that his intestines have been shoved inside his breathing cavity,” she said.

“Ravage needs life-saving surgery, or he will die, and we need Medicine Hat’s help,” she said.

Pister is hoping to raise \$2,000 to cover the cost of the surgery which could have unforeseen complica-

tions because of the extensive damage. An area veterinary clinic has stepped forward and has offered to take care of the surgery, and Pister is hoping that the compassion of the community will save the cat’s life.

“Human beings put Ravage in this situation, and they can help him out of it,” she said.

Ravage is currently residing at the clinic, and is in pre-operative care awaiting surgery.

Those interested in contributing to the expense of Ravage’s surgery can help out by contacting Persian Dreams and Canine Themes Rescue at 403-529-0707, or by sending their donations to Persian Dreams and Canine Themes, 127 First Street S.W., Medicine Hat, Alberta, T1A-3Z1.

The rescue organization can also be contacted through email, persian-dreams@hotmail.com

“We are a registered charity, so any donation over \$10 can be claimed through income tax,” Pister said. “Without the surgery, there is no hope for Ravage.”

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/SARAH FERGUSON

Finalists sent to national science fair

By Sarah Ferguson

Equipped with five senses, man explores the universe, and calls the adventure Science — or in Medicine Hat’s case, a science fair.

Kiwanis’s Regional Science Fair was held at Medicine Hat College on Saturday, and featured projects from over 100 students from the surrounding area. Five winners were announced, and will travel to Toronto to take part in the Canadian National Science Fair Competition.

Katie Van Der Sloot and Rachel Brown are two Grade 11 students from Monseigneur McCoy High School. The pair won the “best project overall” title in the fair’s Grade 11–12 category. This will be the second time they have made it to the national competition in two years.

Their project, “Triclosan: Double Danger” addresses the issue of antibacterial agents from soaps leaching into the environment- and our bodies.

“Antibacterial soaps aren’t what they seem — and by killing all the bacteria in our environment, we are actually making them resistant to antibiotics — our experiment proves that,” Katie says.

Rachel says she hopes the results of their project will be publicized, and feels a trip to the nationals would be a great help in “getting the message out”.

Other winners included Kathy Szemethy who won the Grade 4–6 category for her project “Snow Looks White, But Is It Actually Clean?”; Connor Dep- tuck’s computer science project “Detecting Narrative Authors” won the Grade 7–8 category, while Kate Berger and Jasveen Brar took home the prize for the Grade 9–10 category with their “Leaky Landfills” project.

Peter Wallis, Dean of Science at MHC was pleased with the turnout- which included double the amount of participants



Katie Van Der Sloot and Rachel Brown won best project overall at the Regional Kiwanis Science fair, Medicine Hat College. /SARAH FERGUSON

compared to last year.

“Our numbers were down in 2010 — we only had 68 projects for the region in last year’s (science) fair- this year, we have 112 participants — and more projects than students,” Wallis said.

The Kiwanis Regional Science Fair features an

annual “Science Olympics” where participants construct a project in a 30 minute timeframe, using only newspaper and masking tape. This year’s challenge had teams of students building large, free standing “Geodesic domes” — and was a great success.

Fair organizers Susan Rowsell and Michelle Russell, from DRDC Suffield say it takes roughly six months to organize the judging for the regional fair.

“It takes a lot of hard work (to put the fair together) but it’s a lot of fun too,” Russell said.

Home and garden show a ray of Sunshine

By Sarah Ferguson

It may have been snowing outside this weekend, but weather at the annual Sunshine Home and Garden Show was perfect.

The Medicine Hat & District Chamber of Commerce’s annual Sunshine Home and Garden Show was held at the Cypress Centre this past weekend.

Icy winds and blizzard-like conditions did not phase the crowd of over 12,000 people who came out to take in the best of what 190 area vendors had to offer, said Chamber chair Milvia Bauman.

Lisa Kowalchuk, Executive Di-

rector for the Chamber, was pleased with the high number of people who braved the bad weather to attend.

“We added a second entrance to the show this year, to deal with the (anticipated) high amount of traffic, and it was definitely a good decision,” she said.

“There was a steady stream of people all weekend long-1000 more than last year- and a Calgary- style traffic jam in the parking lot, which means business is good,” Bauman said.

Lennard Nicholson owns Moose

Jaw’s Chocolate Moose Fudge Factory, and has had a booth at the Home and Garden show for the past 11 years.

“We had a pretty big line up on Saturday,” he said.

Jim Osborne, owner of The Scottish Shoppe, bases his business out of Calgary, and made the drive to Medicine Hat in spite of less than ideal weather conditions.

“Business was pretty steady this year,” he said.

Kowalchuk says that the show’s Men’s Den, which featured a sitting area with 3D big screen televi-

sions, was a huge success.

“The children’s area was a big hit too, and so was the garden centre,” she said.

Shirley Schrenk has been coming to the show for as long as she can remember.

“My husband and I come every year, and senior’s day was awesome,” Schrenk said.

“This year’s show was such a positive experience,” she said.

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Student shovellers busy this year

By Sarah Ferguson

Notre Dame Academy is “clearing snow away to make an easy day.”

“One of our students came up with the slogan, and I think it fits,” says Grade 7 teacher Lon Bosch.

Notre Dame Academy has cleared snow from sidewalks and driveways in Medicine Hat’s Southridge area for the past two years as part of a community project, he said.

This year, they got a big boost from Big Eagle Services, whose regional manager, Tyler Hauber, supplied the school with 15

shovels to help out with the increased demand.

“We deal with construction and the oil patch, so we have a lot of shovels around here,” he said.

The high amount of snow in Medicine Hat this winter has meant that students are shovelling more often, Bosch said.

Big Eagle Services is a small, grassroots company that Hauber says believes in corporate social responsibility, and helping the school is part of that.

Hauber said a personal connection led to his company’s contribution.

“Lon and I are both involved in hockey, and I coach his son, so when he mentioned the project and how the kids were involved, I figured our company could lend a hand,” he said.

“It feels good to help the community out,” he said.

Bosch said he usually has up to 60 kids helping out, between the Grade 7–8 classes.

“On Wednesday, we cleared 20 houses or so,” he said. “One woman even came outside and called us her ‘snow angels,’ “ he said.

Bosch says his students became interested in the idea of clearing snow for Southridge neighborhoods as a way of discussing energy conservation.

“The students figured out that snow blowers are pretty inefficient compared to shovelling,” said Bosch.

“It’s a different way of learning, and it gets everyone outside,” Bosch said.

Bosch says snow shovelling was originally part of an exercise in his environmental science class.

“It started as a service project, and now it’s turning into a legacy,” he said.

“I hope to carry the project on in future Grade 7 classes that I teach,” he said.

Bosch says Notre Dame’s snow shovelling project is also supported by Communities Coming Together, an initiative that provides social and recreational opportunities for youth in Medicine Hat and the surrounding area.

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MH-0021911 -student-shovel

Taking stained glass to new levels

By Sarah Ferguson

When it comes to home decor, Mystic Custom Glass has an art-vantage.

Mystic Custom Glass designers Fiona and Sarah Cahill are taking the artistic tradition of stained glass to new heights.

The Cahills are pioneering the concept of decorative glass-making from their Medicine Hat studio, with the help of modern technology.

“Right now, we are working on finishing a six-piece project for The Saamis Memorial Chapel, and we are getting more offers all the time,” Sarah said.

Thanks to leading edge software, Mystic Custom Glass can produce stunning stained glass projects which can be customized to fit home decor needs, including cabinets, doors, ceilings and even mirrors, she said.

“Doing the work by hand would take forever, but thanks to technology, a traditional four-week project can be finished in two days,” Fiona said.

The Cahills use an innovative adhesive overlay system called Regalede, based out of Manchester, England, which combines glass bevels, lead strip and coloured film to create a “traditional stained glass look” that can add colour and life to any living space.

“The colour added to the glasswork is UV protected, so it doesn’t fade,” said Fiona.

In the past, limitations on traditional stained glass construction meant that stained glass enthusiasts were restricted to geometric designs in their homes, but because of the sturdy lightweight design offered by the system, anything is possible,” Sarah said.

“Leaded stain glass is normally made using several pieces, which means that it warps over time, but this method uses one solid piece of glass, so it’s more stable, and it lasts,” she said.

“We are also open to suggestion when it comes to working

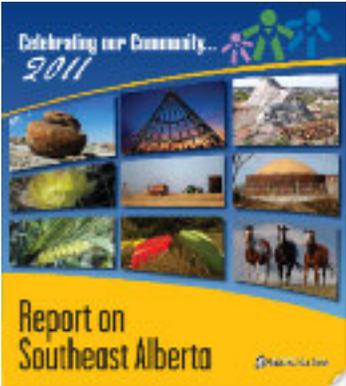
on different types of surfaces, including plexiglass,” she said.

The Cahills are also adding more innovation to their glass decor technique this coming year, with a new product called Cadram Colorspray glass. The glass can be fitted to any wall and will add even more depth, space and light to their projects.

The two sisters are being trained by a Colorspray specialist from England, beginning next week, and hope to have some of the product up for spring display in Beryl’s Bloomers Flower Shop, owned by their father, Dermitt Cahill.

“It’s an inexpensive way to add value to a home,” Sarah Cahill said.

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Primary writer, 2011 Medicine Hat News Report on Southeast Alberta. Over 70 articles written, highlighting communities and people in southeast Alberta.

<http://content.yudu.com/Library/Alrmti/Report2011>