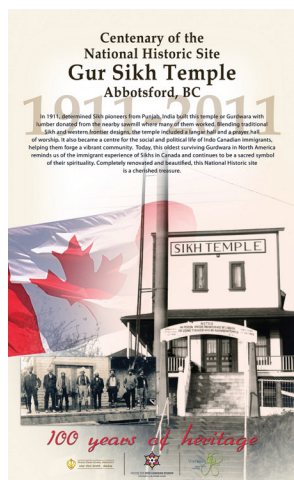




CICS REPORT

A newsletter from the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies at the University of the Fraser Valley

Abbotsford City Hall proclamation of 2011 as Year of Historic Gur Sikh Temple



The year 2011 began with high spirits and excitement as community members attended the city's first council meeting of the New Year in order to hear a very special proclamation. Abbotsford Mayor George Peary, in a very heartfelt and emotional speech, spoke of the trials and tribulations faced by the Sikh immigrants who first came and settled in the Fraser Valley in the beginning of the last century (1903). After commenting on the accomplishments of the pioneers, especially with respect to the building of the National Historic Site Gur Sikh Temple (est. 1911), Mayor Peary invited Khalsa Diwan Society president Kabal Hundal to accept the city's official proclamation of the year 2011 as the year of the National Historic Site Gur Sikh Temple. Mr. Hundal expressed his deep appreciation on behalf of the entire community in the City's recognition of this great achievement.

Global BC, CBC, and OMNI News were all on site of the National Historic Site Gur Sikh Temple interviewing community members and committee members of the Khalsa Diwan Society. CBC Radio was also on hand early at 6 am to interview SAPNA students Raji Heer and Sidrah Ahmad on the significance of the Gurdwara for local youth. All three news reports can be viewed at www.ufv.ca/cics/centennial. Events commemorating the year will be occurring throughout 2011 due to the efforts of community partners and sponsors. Please keep an eye out for all events throughout the centennial year, and we invite you to attend the many events which celebrate our national heritage. For more information on the month by month events taking place please visit: www.canadiansikhheritage.ca or www.ufv.ca/cics/centennial.



Abbotsford Mayor George Peary presenting the Proclamation of the Centennial Year of the Gur Sikh Temple to Khalsa Diwan Society Abbotsford President Kabal Singh Hundal.

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Transnational Punjabis in the 21st Century conference invitation

You are cordially invited to attend the Centennial Conference *Transnational Punjabis in the 21st Century: Beginnings, Junctures, and Departures* from May 5 – 7, 2011 at the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford, BC. This conference is an academic response to the 100 Year commemoration of the National Historic Site Gur Sikh Temple (est. 1911) in Abbotsford BC, Canada, www.canadiansikhheritage.ca. The goal of the conference is to develop a greater understanding of transnational Punjabis in the 21st century as a broad community with an ever-evolving identity, form, and ethos of communities. The conference seeks to engage local, national, and international scholars on Diaspora, migration, trans-nationalism, intergenerational and gendered processes, religion, history, language, literature, art, culture, identity, and cultural politics in relation to Punjab and its communities.

The conference will include a keynote address by Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany of the Sikh Foundation and a plenary address by Dr. Pal Singh Ahluwalia from the University of South Australia, as well as international and local scholars. For more details, please visit www.ufv.ca/cics/conference.

Opportunity for faculty meeting with Dr. Muhammad Anwar

There was an opportunity for UFV faculty and staff to meet Dr. Muhammad Anwar, Director of Research, Quality Assurance and External Linkages, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan, on April 7 in the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies. Dr. Anwar gave a short presentation and the possible opportunities for future collaborations were discussed over lunch, which was provided by the Research Office.

Dr. Anwar's interests are broadly defined as "between a scientific interest at the way natural systems work at all scales, and a creative eagerness to explore the design potential of those same natural systems, again at all scales." Dr. Anwar also visited with the Department of Agriculture to discuss potential collaborations.

UFV Bhangra and Giddha performances

UFV's own Bhangra and Giddha teams have been busy performing at local charities and community events. Some performances have included: the NSM Bhangra competition on January 16, Mission's 9th Annual Family Literacy Fair on January 29 and a performance for the International Women's Day celebration on March 11. Both Bhangra and Giddha teams have wowed and impressed their audiences with some vibrant and enthusiastic performances.



UFV's giddha team performing (left) and UFV's Bhangra Team after a performance (right).





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BC Regional Chair facilitates Indian Wood Market's accessibility to the BC Lumber Industry

On December 28, 2010, the Indian Ministry of Agriculture approved the import of Canadian Spruce, Pine and Fir species of wood into India. The notification issued also approves the acceptance of kiln-dried heat treatment process in lieu of the Methyl Bromide treatment. This means many BC firms can now begin the process of market development to tap the lucrative Indian market for wood, which is estimated to be \$5.3 billion with an annual growth rate between 6 – 7%.

Opportunities now exist to export treated and sawn lumber, decorative veneers, ready-made doors and windows, panel products, furniture, and wood-frame housing in northern India. The boom in India's industrial and residential construction, and the general infrastructure development is creating demand for wood and wood products.



The collaboration between India and BC was made possible by the efforts of the BC Regional Innovation Chair Professor DJ Sandhu. The Chair, which is housed in the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies at the University of the Fraser Valley, is mandated to help BC businesses access opportunities in the fast-growing Indian economy. The Fraser Valley is home to one of the nation's largest Indo-Canadian populations and boasts strong Canada-India connections — both cultural and financial.

BC Regional Chair hosts UFV India international students' update

The BC Regional Chair in Canada-India Business and Economic Development, with the assistance of UFV School of Business instructors Kim Milnes and Trudy Temple, hosted a breakfast and get-together with the UFV BBA Chandigarh campus international students. The event allowed the students an opportunity to discuss their educational experiences here at UFV, as well as some of the challenges they have faced. On the whole, all the students agreed that their experiences at UFV in Canada had given them a new-found sense of independence and freedom, something they will thrive on in the years to come.

Ehsaas South Asian Readers and Writers Festival

The Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies and UFV's Department of English presented the *Ehsaas South Asian Readers and Writers Festival* on March 29. All authors were very well received as participants took part in a very exploratory evening.

At a filled-to-capacity auditorium, Anosh Irani headlined the evening by reading from his newest novel *Dahanu Road*, followed by readings by Gurjinder Basran from her second novel *Everything was Goodbye* and Tariq Malik reading from *Chanting Denied Shores*. All authors were very well received as over 100 people from within the UFV community and outside community members took part in a very memorable exploratory evening. Local authors Kusum Soni, Mandeep Wirk, and UFV student Jenny Ahuja also presented their poetry, non-fiction, and critical readings.



Presenting author at the Ehsaas South Asian Readers and Writers Festival, Gurjinder Basran, headlining presenter Anosh Irani, presenting author Tariq Malik, and participants.



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SAPNA News

The South Asian Peer Network Association (SAPNA) has a new executive team who are busy organizing campus and community events. The executive positions are held by Raji Heer as the President, Aman Dhami as Public Relations, Sheetal Deo as Executive Assistant and Sidrah Ahmad as Communications Manager.

SAPNA also has a Bhangra, Giddha, and Bollywood dance team who practice weekly and perform at community events. The teams are organized and led by UFV students who have a passion to share their cultural traditions with the wider community. For more information on SAPNA, please contact Raji, at sapna@ufv.ca.

SAPNA hosted a new dialogue series called *Chai Time* and so far all the sessions were all great successes. The first *Chai Time* session, facilitated by CICS director Satwinder Bains, discussed issues concerning mother tongue and heritage language. Though the theme "language is our gateway to culture" certainly dominated discussions, there was some very in-depth dialogue on the nature of Canada's valuing (or in some instances lack-of) multilingual speaking individuals. Students, faculty, staff and community members left with many thoughts to be discussed for the next *Chai Time*.

The second *Chai Time*, facilitated by SAPNA Executive Assistant and philosophy major Sheetal Deo, looked at the different forms of media and how it can often precipitate certain cultural values and misconceptions. Once again, the discussion was very well attended, and initiated some much needed dialogues and discussion amongst young students. It was certainly an eye opener in terms of how we view each other.

The third *Chai Time*, facilitated by philosophy and political science professor Rita Dhamoon, looked at dual identities, and how one is able to cope with balancing two very different identities. This talk was also very engaging and brought to the forefront some of the everyday issued South Asian youth are often forced to deal with.

CICS and the Social, Cultural and Media Studies department host Professor Yogendra Yadav



UFV Vice-Chancellor and President Mark Evered with guest lecturer Professor Yogendra Yadav and participants.

On March 21, Professor Yogendra Yadav, Senior Fellow of Delhi's Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, presented a rich and informative lecture at the CICS based on his recently published book, *Crafting State Nations: India and Other Multinational Democracies* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), co-written with Alfred Stepan and Juan Linz.

Professor Yadav argues that the dominant nation-state model, which expects political boundaries of a state to coincide with the cultural boundaries of a homogeneous community, is mistaken. India's experience suggests another model, a 'state-nation' rather than a 'nation-state'. In this new model, political unity foregrounds social diversity, and builds constitutional and legal safeguards for its diverse religious, linguistic, and caste communities. India's successes — and some instructive cases of failure — offer some general lessons for how deep diversities can be accommodated within a democracy.

Professor Yadav's research focuses on democracy theory, modern Indian political thought, and Indian socialism, and he is an expert in election studies and survey research. He is co-author of *State of Democracy in South Asia* (Oxford University Press, 2008), and, with Sandeep Shastri and KC Suri, co-editor of *Electoral Politics in Indian States* (OUP, 2009). He is a widely published scholar and columnist, a well-known political commentator, and a founding member of Lokniti, a research program on comparative democracy. In 2009 the International Political Science Association honoured Professor Yadav with the first Global South Solidarity Award in recognition of "outstanding work on the politics of the developing world".

The centre is grateful to the International Development Research Centre for funding Professor Yadav's visit to Canada.



CICS REPORT

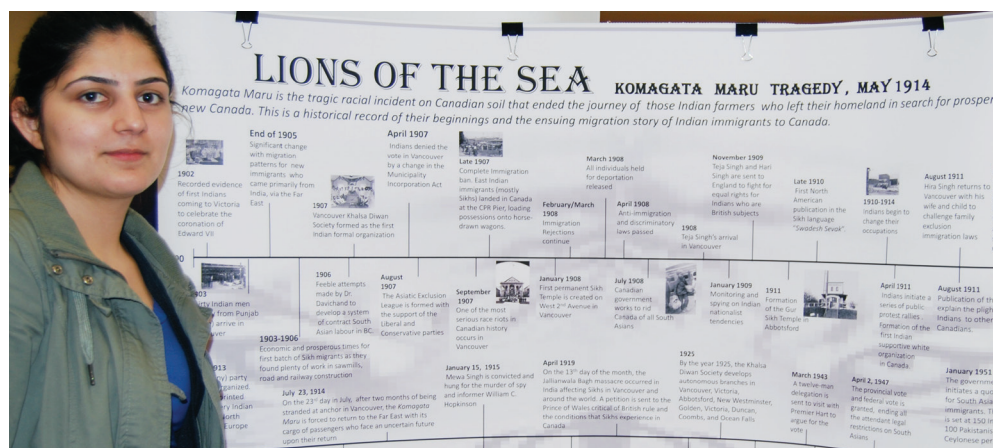


The CICS presents Bill Sundhu

Bill Sundhu, a lawyer, former judge, and a member of the Kellogg College (University of Oxford) presented a lecture *Racism the Judicial System: Does Diversity Matter?* on April 7. The talk examined the lack of diversity within the judiciary and the implications for justice, including whether that poses challenges as to the ability and capacity of the courts to properly determine questions of the guilt or innocence of terror suspects who, invariably after 9/11, are visible or religious minorities. This has profound implications for minorities and state obligations within international human rights law and for justice broadly and generally, day to day in the courts. The talk was well attended by faculty, students, and community members and evoked some great discussions and dialogues.

Student presentation on UFV Undergraduate Research Day

Amanpreet Kaur Dhama, an avid student volunteer and research intern with the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies, presented at the annual Undergraduate Research Day on March 31. Aman's research, although a timeline of Sikh migration and diaspora to British Columbia, also focused on the Komagata Maru tragedy of 1914, where a boat full of Indians were forced to return back to their homeland after remaining at the Vancouver harbour for months. Aman's timeline explored the challenges South Asians faced over the 100 years in Canada and their contributions to Canada. The project will be a part of the CICS project commemorating the centennial year of the Komagata Maru Tragedy in 2014.



CICS Research Assistant Aman Dhama at Undergraduate Research Day.

Anti-Racism conference at UFV

The CICS was pleased to be on the organizing committee for UFV's *Building Anti-Racist Communities* conference, organized by the Student Life department at UFV. The first-ever conference of its kind at UFV included workshops facilitated by UFV students and community partners. The conference was an amazing success and evoked some in depth discussions as well as thought provoking insights into issues such as: defining racism, white privilege, and ways in which to confront and battle racism.



UFV Faculty, Staff and Students at the Anti-Racism conference.

Sikh Research Institute lecture at the University of the Fraser Valley

On January 22, with the support of Khalsa Diwan Society Gurdwara, Abbotsford, Kalgidhar Gurdwara, Banda Singh Bahadur Gurdwara, and the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies, the Sikh Research Institute presented two sessions on "Celebrating the Sikh Heritage" and "Reviving the Gurdwara" at the University of the Fraser Valley. The sessions were part of a year-long series of celebratory and educative events dedicated to the centennial of the Gur Sikh Temple. The National Historic Site Gur Sikh Temple, which took three years to complete, was built with logs donated by the local saw-mill on Mill Lake, where many of the early Sikh pioneers in western Canada were employed. The employees cleaned the lumber and carried it on their backs to the one-acre lot they had purchased as the site for the gurdwara. In this way, the structure was built for the laborers and energy of the everyday Sikh, to be a place which welcomed all Sikhs looking for a place to worship and to find community.

Both lectures of the series were designed to lead participants in reflecting on the unique spirit that built the foundation of the BC Sikh community more than a century ago, as well as working to inspire today's community to tap into this timeless spirit once again. "Reviving the Gurdwara" placed emphasis on the successful immigration of Sikhs to North America and explored the past perception of the Gurdwara as a place of learning and a venue for community activism, while pointing out that this focus has been lost of late in the same institutions. Many participants said that they left the lectures with a greater appreciation for the legacy today's BC Sikhs have inherited.





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Community profile: Dr. Ram Singh Padwal

Tell us a little about yourself:

I received my early university education and teacher training in India. I then immigrated to the United Kingdom, obtaining a Postgraduate Diploma in education from the University of London. After immigrating to Canada, I did my postgraduate studies at the University of Ottawa, the University of Regina, and a private university in California. Professionally, for 38 years I have been a teacher, school administrator, and college and university instructor. Presently, I am retired and occasionally do volunteer work within the community.

What is your affiliation with UFV and the CICS?

I consider myself an avid supporter and well-wisher of the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies. As such, I have attended lectures, forums, conferences, and other activities sponsored by the centre and UFV. I also have given tours of the National Historic Site Gurdwara to students and visitors to the CICS and have served on the steering committee for the MCFD Child Protection project. I have also served as a guest speaker at a university social work class and an Elder College class at UFV's Chilliwack campus.

What does the CICS offer to the community in your opinion?

Since its inception, the centre has become an integral part of the community; it is an invaluable resource centre for students, faculty and the community. Furthermore, it affords opportunities for faculty, community, scholars from India and other countries, and students to interact with each other, exchange views and discuss research findings and their implications. These exchanges and discussions have been very fruitful. The centre is a place where students, faculty and community get together to celebrate important cultural events, it is a place where young entrepreneurs obtain information about economic opportunities in India and it encourages and supports Indo-Canadian studies and research.

What role do you see the CICS having in the future?

The centre will continue to provide educational, cultural, and economic benefits in the future. In addition, I would like to see it play a role in addressing some of the social ills that have plagued our community such as: domestic violence, infanticide, drug problems, gang violence, outdated parental practices, etc. I hope that our students (South Asian and others) engage in research to investigate why our community is disproportionately adversely affected by these problems and through their research findings suggest ways to better deal with these problems. I would also like to encourage greater community participation; perhaps the centre staff could occasionally go to the community — Gurdwaras, community centres, etc., in order to discuss important issues relevant to the community.



Student Leader profile: Tajinder Kaur Sandhu



What are you studying at UFV? What are some of your future goals/aspirations?

I am currently in the third year of the Bachelors of Business Administration degree, with a major in human resources. My goal in the future is to become a human resources manager with a well known firm.

How do you see your role here as an international student?

My role as an international student is no different than any other student. However, being an international student, I have personally experienced the feeling of being away from home and exploring my way through different avenues. It's been a great opportunity for me to be part of UFV, and to learn more about myself, and to connect spiritually with who I am. Being an international student leader and international student ambassador helps me to connect with new students from all over the world, and help them in whichever way possible. This feeling of being able to assist others, who were once in the same situation as me, cannot be described through words.

What is your connection to the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies?

I connected with Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies in September 2010 when I was hired as a research assistant. I have been working here for over six months. It's been an amazing experience for me because I have not only improved my skills, including research and writing, but I have also connected with my roots and culture here. Working at the centre gave me many positive opportunities that have helped me personally. Listening to the interview tapes of stories of the first Sikh pioneers who came to Canada for example, helped me develop a long-lost connection with them.





CICS REPORT

Faculty profile:

Dr. Rajnish Dhawan, *Department of English*

Tell us a little about yourself.

I have been working as a sessional instructor with the UFV English department since September, 2009. I started my teaching career in 1997 as a lecturer in English at D.A.V. College, Amritsar, Punjab. As a part-time vocation along with my regular teaching job, I started working as a freelance journalist in 1998 and contributed articles to *The Indian Express* for two years. In 2000 I won second position in an all-India thriller-writing competition organized by Sony Entertainment television. This marked the beginning of a new career as a creative writer and in the next five years I wrote three sitcoms (two in Punjabi and one in Hindi) and five documentaries (in Hindi). Despite my success as a television writer, I have always been a theatre person. I have acted in a number of skits, one-act plays and a few full-length plays. I have written three full-length plays (one in Hindi and two in English) and directed three plays. My latest play, *That Time of the Year*, is set in Canada and talks about the issues of inter-racial dialogue in a contemporary multicultural society. A staged reading of this play was performed at the Reach Gallery in Abbotsford. This play was directed by UFV English department Head John Carroll.

What attracted you to research specifically on India?

In 2005, I enrolled for a PhD with the Department of English, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. My research looks at the comparative aspects of ancient Greek and Indian dramatic theory and

practice. Intercultural literary exchange has always interested me and I was particularly intrigued by the geographical proximity of the Greek and Indian society in the classical age and the wealth of dramatic literature produced during that time. In the post-colonial scenario I think it is important for scholars to look beyond the established English canon and work in the areas that were sidelined during the era of colonization.

What is your affiliation with the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies?

When I joined the UFV, the Centre for Indo-Canadian studies welcomed me with open arms. I never for once felt like an outsider and have tried to be a part of as many activities of the centre as possible be it conferences, lectures, or Diwali celebrations. Without the active support of the centre, the staged reading of *That Time of the Year* would not have been possible since a number of Indo-Canadian students played an active role in it.

Is there any current research you are working on related to South Asia? What courses do you currently teach? Are there any other future courses you are planning on teaching?

Currently, I am working on the satirical elements in Pakistani television drama during the regime of general Zia-ul Haq. I presented a paper *Countering Dictatorial Absolutism through Satire: A Socio-Political Study of Pakistani Television Drama, Aangan Teda* at the conference of the South Asian Literary



Dr. Rajnish Dhawan, Department of English

Association (SALA) in Los Angeles in January of 2011. I am also working on the importance of youth festivals in India in keeping the tradition of folk theatre alive. And then of course, there is the Indian film industry and I am due to present a paper on the representation of Sikh characters in Indian films.

Immigrant Older Adults Care Accessibility Research Empowerment (ICARE) forum:

As a community partner with ICARE—Immigrant Older Adults and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), the centre facilitated a Seniors' Wellness Coalition forum. This project was funded by Community Action Initiative. This forum allowed service providers in Abbotsford and Punjabi seniors to come together and respond to the increasing needs for mental health supports for Punjabi-speaking South Asian senior immigrants and their families. The forum was held on April 6th from 10 am – 2 pm. It helped to identify the challenges/obstacles Punjabi seniors are facing which in turn is affecting their mental health. The forum also helped service providers to plan for future programs and funding to meet the unique needs of South Asian seniors.





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UFV faculty, staff and students after a rousing game of HOLI.

Upcoming Events

- April 14:** The Reach Gallery Museum
Abbotsford National Historic Site Exhibition
Opening Reception
 - April 14 – May 29:** The Reach Gallery Museum
Abbotsford National Historic Site Exhibition
and Tours
 - April 14:** SAPNA hosts community Vaisakhi
dinner for foodbank
 - April 15:** Fraser Valley Indo Canadian Business
Association Vaisakhi Luncheon at National
Historic Site Gur Sikh Temple
 - April 29:** Volunteer Appreciation day for CICS
Volunteers
 - May 5 – 7:** Transnational Punjabis in the 21st
Century Conference at UFV
 - May 7:** Virasat Pioneer Gala
 - May 13:** UFV Bhangra Teams Performing at
VIBC's Downtown Robson Square
 - August 26 – 28:** Sri Akhand Path Sahib at
National Historic Site, Cultural Events, Nagar
Kirtan, and Jore Mela hosted by Khalsa Diwan
Society, Abbotsford
 - October:** Centre for Indo Canadian Studies
Open House
 - October 26:** Diwali Celebrations
 - October 27 – January 8:** The Reach Gallery
Museum Abbotsford Celebration of Punjabi
Art and Culture Exhibition
 - November 15 – 16:** Seventh Annual Ehsaas
South Asian Film Festival
- Please check our website www.ufv.ca/cics
for current and updated information.**

SAPNA Celebrates Holi

Once again, the South Asian Peer Network Association hosted a vibrant and colorful Holi on March 25. With the event growing larger as each year goes by, this year's event included: bhangra, giddha and bollywood performances, mehndi, delicious food, and of course, a joyful grand finale of coloured water paint fights. Holi is socially significant because it embodies unity, unity of faiths, unity of castes, creeds, and today, cultures. Holi is celebrated without discrimination against any persons. This is the day that the caste system, status, class, etc. are all disregarded, there are no inhibitions, it is simply a celebration of humanity, of life, and of course, of colour.

CICS REPORT

*The newsletter for the Centre
for Indo-Canadian Studies*

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Comments/Suggestions:

We would appreciate any comments, suggestions, or enquiries about the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies. Please feel free to email sharanjit.sandhra@ufv.ca or call 604-851-6325.

