



CICS REPORT

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

Centennial Celebrations 2011



Left to right: PM Stephen Harper, Premier Christy Clark, Consul General of India Ashok Das, Abbotsford Mayor Georgy Peary, MP Ed Fast, KDS President Kabal Hundal, and KDS VP Bagi Brar.

Akhand Path at National Historic Site

The year 2011 marks 100 years since the building of the Gur Sikh Temple in Abbotsford. In 1911, determined pioneers from India built this temple with lumber donated from a nearby sawmill, where many of them were employed. In 2007, the Gurdwara was designated as a National Historic Site, a designation that is unique to this temple, which is the oldest Sikh temple in the Americas.

On August 26 a special three-day prayer (Akhand Path) commenced at the historic Gurdwara. This was a very important event not only for the Sikh community but for the community as a whole, as people from the entire community participated in commemorating the centennial. Volunteers worked very hard in the evening as OMNI TV went LIVE on location, presenting their newscast from the grounds of the Gurdwara. The event was a great success and the credit goes to the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies, the Indo-Canadian Business Association, OMNI TV, Khalsa Diwan Society, the City of Abbotsford, Punjabi Patrika, the Abbotsford News, the Reach Gallery and many other organizations who worked with great dedication to make this special event a memorable success. The events continued for the next two days, and on August 28, the Akhand Path concluded with Bhog at 10 am.

At this time, Prime Minister Stephen Harper joined the congregation by unveiling the Centennial Monument and congratulating the community for 100 years of heritage. He officially opened the Sikh Heritage Museum and paid obeisance in the temple. This was followed by a jore mela and Nagar Kirtan (parade) at 11 am. Thousands of people gathered to participate in the parade, which ended at the Rotary Stadium where congratulatory speeches were given by dignitaries and people of different faiths. Local businesses and community groups put up tents and gave away free food to the gathered community.

Contents

- Centennial Celebrations 2011
- Akhand Path at National Historic Site 1
- Punjabi Arts and Culture Exhibition —
Oct 27, 2011–January 8, 2012 2
- Virasat Pioneer Gala 2
- FVICBA Vaisakhi Luncheon
at National Historic Site..... 3
- Transnational Punjabis in the 21st Century
Conference at UFV — A huge success 3
- Community profile — Dalip Singh Gill 4
- Student profile — Satwinder Singh Gill..... 4
- Faculty profile — Ding Lu 5
- Amanpreet Dhama Receives
Undergraduate Research Excellence award 5
- Dr. Bikkar Singh Lalli awarded honorary degree 6
- SAPNA receives Volunteer Recognition award .. 6
- Surjeet Kalsey launches her new book,
Colours of my Heart..... 7
- Mr. Scot Slessor, Consul General for Canada
in India, visits Abbotsford..... 7
- CICS welcomes new advisory
committee members..... 7
- Vice Chancellor and Registrar of Punjabi
University, Patiala visit CICS 8
- The seventh annual Ehsaas
South Asian Film Festival..... 8
- Comments/suggestions 8
- Publisher information 8



Float carrying the Guru Granth Sahib leads the Nagar Kirtan (parade)



CICS REPORT



Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Hari Singh Nalwa and Sham Singh Atari at the battlefield.

Punjabi Arts and Culture Exhibit

Oct 27/11–Jan 8/12

Participating artists: Jeet Aulakh (Windsor, Ontario), Sarindar Dhaliwal (Toronto), Shilpa Gupta (Mumbai), Ali Kazimi (Toronto), Manu Kaur Saluja (New York,), Jarnail Singh and Baljit Kaur (Surrey) and Jiten Thukral and Sumir Tagra (New Delhi)

The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford is presenting a contemporary Punjabi/Sikh exhibition in partnership with the Gur Sikh Temple Centennial committee. The exhibition explores a variety of social, cultural, and political issues relating to contemporary aesthetics of Punjabi/Sikh artists and/or those artists who are exploring issues and concerns related to the Punjabi/Sikh community. This exhibition examines issues of Punjabi/Sikh identity as well as the experiences of being Punjabi/Sikh, discourses of identity, Punjab Diaspora, and living in multi-directional worlds; and makes cultural and historic connections to both past and present immigration experiences of the Punjabi/Sikh in Abbotsford and the Fraser Valley in British Columbia. The intention of this exhibition is to help broaden the public's understanding of the histories and stories of the Punjabi/Sikh community and provide exposure to Punjabi/Sikh contemporary visual art and history, which is largely unknown to the people of the Fraser Valley.

This exhibition brings together regional, national, and international artists who employ a variety of artistic media, all with the common purpose of offering the public an opportunity to explore the social memories and cultural heritages of the Punjabi/Sikh communities. The artworks presented in this exhibition cut across diverse forms, themes, and contexts to explore a variety of visual and community experiences.

Virasat Pioneer Gala

The word "virasat" means what belongs to all of us, what has been handed over to us by earlier generations, and that which we have to hold on to, and pass on to the next generation. In honour of those pioneers who helped build a nation called Canada, the Centennial committee honoured nine families from the local area, at an event hosted by the Fraser Valley Indo-Canadian Business Association. Indo-Canadian pioneers — those whose families contributed to the building of the national historic site temple — as well as special guests from the federal, provincial, and municipal governments attended the Virasat Gala. As a result of the gala, members of the community gained a greater understanding and appreciation of the immense efforts undertaken by this Fraser Valley pioneering community in the last century.



Top: UFV Bhangra and Giddha team.
Bottom: Attendees at the Virasat Gala dinner.





CICS REPORT

FVICBA Vaisakhi Luncheon at National Historic Site

On April 15, the Fraser Valley Indo-Canadian Business Association (FVICBA) hosted langar, a communal luncheon in celebration of the Sikh holy event, Vaisakhi. This annual event brings together several hundred community leaders for the opportunity to share dialogue and information about current topical issues. FVICBA supports sharing the culture with community partners to enhance and enrich understanding and compassion for each other. Intercultural events such as the luncheon promote diversity in our community in a unique way, enabling us to work towards building a more inclusive society.

This year, Vaisakhi Luncheon co-chairs Jatinder Sidhu and Amar Sidhu were successful in bringing over 500 community leaders from a spectrum of backgrounds to honour the Gur Sikh Gurdwara's 100th year celebration by holding the luncheon at the Abbotsford Khalsa Diwan Society Gurdwara. Presenter Satwinder Bains provided the guests with an overview of the historic site heritage temple and then continued to provide a descriptive and informative glimpse into Sikh religion and culture. Despite the fact there were over 500 individuals seated in the temple darbar, you could hear a pin drop because the presentation was both riveting and informative, and the audience was fully engaged.

Please save the date for October 21, when FVICBA will host its annual dinner and dance, a fundraising event to raise money for aid to Somalia. The theme is *Pind da Mela: The Village Festival*, which highlights the autumn harvest. Get out your colourful Phulkaris and Kurta Pajamas and join them for this themed event.

Please note: FVICBA is an intercultural organization that organizes several events throughout the year to promote and encourage opportunities to enhance our community. Please contact them if you are interested in becoming a member, or are seeking opportunities to collaborate on a project.

Kelly Chahal MA, *Director of Public Relations for FVICBA* | www.fvicba.com



Front row: Kelly Chahal, Balbir Kambo, Rajinder Gill & Bharthi Sandhu.
Back row: Jatinder Sidhu, Amarbir Sidhu & Randy Kailey



Top: Dr Narinder S. Kapany speaking at the conference.
Bottom: Undergraduate student presenters with Dr. Doris Jakobsh (sitting left)

Transnational Punjabis in the 21st Century Conference at UFV — A huge success

The centre hosted Transnational Punjabis in the 21st Century: Beginnings, Junctures, and Departures, an international conference in honour of the centennial. The conference questioned the juncture of the transnational Punjabis in their collective realities and imagination in the 21st century and/or departure from the accepted norms. Many dignitaries, including UFV President and Vice Chancellor Mark Evered, UFV Provost and Vice President Academic Eric Davis, Abbotsford Mayor George Peary, Indian High Commissioner to Canada Shashishekar M. Gavai, Consul General of India in Vancouver Ashok Das, and Sikh Foundation Chair Narinder Singh Kapany were present. Scholars, researchers, and artists from all over the globe presented their findings and views about various aspects of Punjabi culture and history. This conference was a great success as it shed light upon not only the issues the Punjabi traditional culture is facing but also upon the richness, roots, and identity of the culture.

"The entire conference was packed with very interesting and stimulating presentations by renowned speakers. Another noticeable feature that stood out was the active participation by young people both as helpers and presenters. For this, the organizers, especially Satwinder Bains and her team, deserve congratulations. A number of young people — current and former UFV students — read excellent papers and shared their views with the audience. Their topics ranged from bullying, intergenerational issues, family conflict, identity problems, and pride in one's heritage to role of the gurdwaras in modern society."
— Balwant Sanghera (retired school psychologist and community activist)





CICS REPORT

Community profile: Dr. Dalip Singh Gill

Tell us a little about yourself:

I received my BA from Punjab in 1948 and my teacher training certification in 1950. After this I served as a teacher and a principal and also as a district education officer in various districts of Punjab. I later went on to pursue my master's in Punjabi and political science. I enrolled myself in a PhD but had to leave India because I immigrated to Canada in 1985. Upon my arrival, I realized that many languages in Canada were recognized as heritage languages but Punjabi was not. I thereby took this as a challenge and opened up Dasmesh Public School in 1986 with only 11 students, one teacher, and one room. The school followed BC curriculum with Punjabi and Sikh Studies as additional subjects. In 1994, the BC government finally accepted Punjabi as a second language in the school system. I retired in 2009 and am very proud because with more than 600 students, 40 teachers, and a new building, Dasmesh Public School is serving the community with great success.

What is your affiliation with UFV and the CICS?

I have been a resident of Abbotsford for the past 25 years and have seen UCFV become UFV. I have constantly kept in touch with any activities going on in the university related to the South Asian community. The opening of the CICS, in my opinion, has been a great achievement for the university. This is because the Indo-Canadian culture is a dominant culture in BC and in Canada. I think that this centre will strengthen the concept of multiculturalism. I am the member of the community advisory committee and look forward to being a part of the centre's success.

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

The centre has been and will continue with its endeavors to bring socio-economic success in the community. I suggest more attention be given to the development of Punjabi language. Even though Punjabi courses are being offered in the university, I feel they are meant for the beginners and those who don't understand the language. Therefore, advanced courses for those who already have secondary-level education should be offered. I also feel that the CICS should undertake some initiatives to solve the drug-related issues our South Asian community is facing. This problem is most common in youth and students and attention should be given to this by cooperating with the parents and other social groups.



Student Leader profile: Satwinder Singh Gill



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

I am a first-year general-studies student at UFV, and will be doing my degree in criminology. My future goal is to join the police force and serve the country. I believe this is a great way to pay back to the country that opened up so many opportunities for me.

What is your connection to CICS?

I started volunteering at CICS a year ago because I wanted to make new friends and learn new skills. I found volunteering with CICS was not only fun but a great learning experience as I got to meet local and international dignitaries, scholars, and other important members of the community. This summer I was lucky to get work at the CICS as a work-study student and gained valuable experience. I appreciate the professional experience I have gained at the CICS as a student researcher and the work that I do helps me stay connected to the community.

How can we get more youth involved in campus activities?

First of all it is important to make sure that if an event is happening on campus, everyone knows about it. Also to involve more youth in campus activities, we need to make the activities full of fun. If students volunteer for events, we should recognize and appreciate them for their work. Another thing we can do is bring different student clubs together, and ask them to do some programs as a unit, making the programs accessible to more people. The more interaction we have with each other the more we will learn.





CICS REPORT

Faculty profile:

Dr. Ding Lu

Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I was born in Shanghai and grew up there. In the 20 years since I obtained my PhD in economics from Northwestern University (USA), I have worked as an academic in various places, including Nebraska, Singapore, China, Japan, and finally Canada. I joined the faculty of UFV in 2008 and have taught in the Economics department since then. My research interests include economic development issues in Asian countries.

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

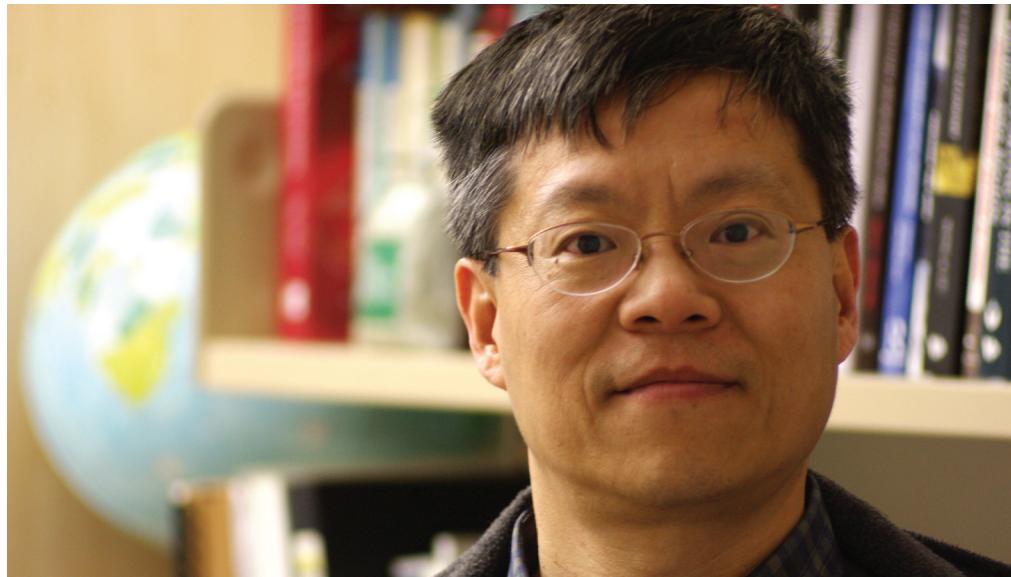
As a senior associate of the Centre, I often attend various events and have helped in several activities in the past few years. The more I am involved in the Centre's events, the more I find it an exciting place for learning new knowledge and exchanging new ideas.

Is there any current research you are working on related to South Asia?

What courses do you currently teach?

Are there any future courses you are planning on teaching?

India has always been one of the Asian countries I am interested in researching. In particular, I am interested in comparative studies on India and China, the two most populous nations, and fast-growing giants in the world economy. In some of my recent



publications, I have compared the demographic transitions in the two countries and assessed the impact on their growth prospects. I have also done empirical studies on the effects of immigration on the trade links between Canada and the immigrant-source countries. The Indian immigrant community is one of the interesting cases in the research.

As for teaching, apart from the Principles of Economics courses, I teach macroeconomics and financial markets, managerial microeconomics, technological progress and economic growth, as well as development economics. In future, I may add a course on cost-benefit analysis to my teaching portfolio in this university.

What attracted you to research specifically on South Asia?

I worked and lived for a dozen of years in the Southeast Asian city-state Singapore, a multi-racial society consisting of Chinese, Malays, Indians, and Eurasians. Many of my friends and former colleagues in Singapore have South Asian origins. Some years ago, I visited India for the first time when I worked as a consultant-lecturer for the World Bank. I was struck by the vitality of the crowded streets and the colorful culture. Knowing and learning about South Asia is indispensable to my research on Asian economic development.

Amanpreet Dhani receives Undergraduate Research Excellence award

Amanpreet Kaur Dhani, an enthusiastic student volunteer and research intern with the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies, received the Undergraduate Research Excellence award at the annual Undergraduate Research Day on May 30. Amanpreet's research involved interviewing the pioneers (or their descendants) to record oral histories that had not previously been recorded. She created a timeline of historical moments in the history of Indian immigrants. Her timeline, *Lions of the Sea*, mainly focused on the Komagata Maru tragedy, in which a ship full of Indians was forced to return back to India after harbouring at Vancouver port for 2 months in 1914. Amanpreet's project also explored the challenges South Asians faced in Canada for more than 100 years and their contributions to Canada. This project was groundbreaking for the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies as the historical documentation created helped build a much-needed archival record for our community.



Amanpreet Dhani receiving the award from Dr. Jacqueline Nolte, Dean of Arts



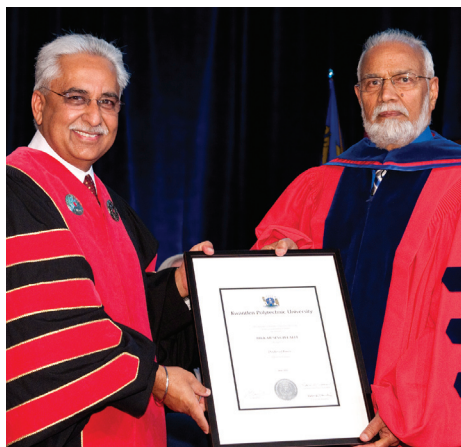


CICS REPORT

Dr. Bikkar Singh Lalli receives honorary degree

Dr. Lalli made the South Asian community proud when the Senate of Kwantlen Polytechnic University awarded him the Doctor of Law degree on the basis of his outstanding social work done for society and especially within the South Asian community. Dr. Lalli received his MA in mathematics from Punjab University and while his family was still in India he completed his PhD in mathematics from UBC. He worked as a professor at the University of Saskatchewan for 29 years and was the head of the Mathematics department before retiring in 1996. He visited many countries like India, Australia, China, Hungary, Japan, and Ukraine as a part of his research and collaborative work. Apart from a distinguished 40-year career in the academic field including research and publications in more than 150 national and international journals, Dr. Lalli is a strong supporter of health and education causes. He has dedicated 15 years of his life working to raise awareness about health-related issues amongst seniors and the importance of education for the youth and children. Now 83 years old, Dr Lalli's work is an inspiration not only for the South Asian community but for the community as a whole.

Dr. Bikkar Singh Lalli (right) receiving an honorary degree from Arvinder S. Bubber, Kwantlen Chancellor



SAPNA receives Volunteer Recognition award



SAPNA members Sidrah, Raji, Sheetal, and Amanpreet with CICS Director Satwinder Bains.

The South Asian Peer Networking Association (SAPNA) was recognized at UFV's Volunteer Recognition award ceremony this year. Executive members Raji Heer, Sheetal Deo, Aman Dhami, and Sidrah Ahmad represented the association at this ceremony and were awarded with certificates for SAPNA's contribution to the UFV community. SAPNA members have been busy since September 2010 with a variety of activities including assisting in the formation of three new dance groups in the Bhangra, Giddha, and Bollywood styles.

SAPNA members Sheetal Deo, Sidrah Ahmad, Jenny Ahuja, and Raji Heer took part in an undergraduate panel at the Transnational Punjabis in the 21st Century conference in collaboration with CICS. Their papers focused on issues of identity within the younger generation and what it means to be Punjabi or of South Asian descent in a modern western world. The discussions initiated further dialogue among the audience that consisted of community members and international scholars. Themes such as language, religion, identity crisis, and volunteering were among the topics discussed.

In addition, SAPNA organised Diwali and Holi festivals on campus, both of which attracted large crowds and included a community dinner. Finally, SAPNA organized three Chai Time evenings. Chai Time is open to students, faculty, staff, and community members with a focus on topics such as issues of identity and culture and a goal of furthering the understanding of integration issues that South Asians face within the Canadian mosaic. The idea is to broaden our understanding and hear from students about various perceptions. For instance, one of the discussions led by Dr. Rita Dhamoon, a UFV political science instructor, dealt with perceptions of what it means to be a woman. Another discussion led by Sheetal Deo questioned where certain perceptions first arise, and took a look at various media, notably, Being Indie and the comedian Russell Peters. Going forward, SAPNA will be organizing more Chai Time discussions, which will be facilitated by students and academics in the Fall semester.

SAPNA is looking forward to the upcoming year and always welcomes new members. The executive team thanks everyone for their contributions this past year. For more information on our events and/or how to get involved with SAPNA, email sapna@ufv.ca





CICS REPORT

Surjeet Kalsey launches her new book, *Colours Of My Heart*

Born in Amritsar India, Surjeet Kalsey is a Canadian poet, dramatist, short-story writer, and translator who lives in British Columbia. An epitome of academic success, Surjeet Kalsey has a master's degree in English and Punjabi literature from Punjab University Chandigarh, as well as a master's in creative writing and a master's in counselling psychology from the University of British Columbia. She has worked as a writer and interpreter, a family therapist and as a bilingual instructor at Vancouver Community College. The UFV Centre for the Indo-Canadian Studies hosted the Fraser Valley launch (including a poetry reading) of Ms. Kalsey's book *Colours Of My Heart* on May 15. Some of the local sponsors present at the event were Punjabi Literary Society of Abbotsford, Matsqui-Sumas-Abbotsford Poets Potpourri Society, the Apni-Awaaz program from the CIVL 101.7 FM radio station, and other community members.



Surjeet Kalsey (sitting second from left) with members of Punjabi Literary Society of Abbotsford.

Mr. Scot Slessor, Consul General for Canada in India visits Abbotsford

The Fraser Valley Indo-Canadian Business Association (FVICBA) hosted a lunch with Mr. Scot Slessor, Consul General in Chandigarh, upon his visit to Abbotsford in June. This was a great opportunity for Abbotsford to showcase the economic success for both Canada and India. Addressing a group of about 50 people, he briefed community leaders and businesses about his offices in Chandigarh while discussing with them various business opportunities in India. The fact that about 250 Canadian businesses are currently trading with India is an example of how India has risen in the past and is very close to China in terms of economic growth. His vision is to see this number rise dramatically in the coming few years. Mr. Slessor also announced that the Chandigarh office will start issuing passports as of September 2011.

Mr. Slessor also visited the centre and met with UFV Provost and VP Academic Eric Davis, UFV BC Regional Innovation Chair on Canada-India Business and Economic Development DJ Sandhu, CICS director Satwinder Bains, and members of the CICS advisory committee, including Andy Sidhu, Kelly Chahal, and Dr. Malwinder Dhami. DJ Sandhu discussed various issues with the Consul General and updated him on some of the successful initiatives undertaken in India. Mr. Slessor has worked for the Canadian Development Agency in China and then joined the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in 1996. As Counsel General, he is responsible for the States of Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh.



Mr. Slessor (sixth from left) at the lunch hosted by the Fraser Valley Indo-Canadian Business Association.

CICS welcomes new advisory committee members

UFV president Dr. Mark Evered recently appointed new members to the Indo-Canadian Community Advisory Committee (ICCAC). The role of the ICCAC is to provide general advice to the university on the ongoing activities of the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies, the Canada-India Studies program, and the work of the BC Regional Innovation Chair on Canada-India Business and Economic Development.



Members of the CICS advisory committee with UFV staff





CICS REPORT



Dr. Jaspal Singh & Prof. Chawla (8th and 9th from left) with members of the community and UFV staff

Vice Chancellor and Registrar of Punjabi University, Patiala, visit CICS

The Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies was honoured to hold a meeting with the Vice Chancellor Jaspal Singh and Registrar Prof. A.S. Chawla of Punjabi University Patiala on August 11. This meeting was attended by UFV senior administration, faculty members, community members, and members of the CICS advisory committee. UFV president Dr. Mark Evered was pleased to announce that his meeting with Dr. Jaspal Singh had been quite productive and he had discussed with Dr. Jaspal Singh involvement in the initiative of opening up a Centre for Indo-North American Studies in Patiala. Dr. Jaspal Singh also suggested that collaboration for a Centre for Diaspora Studies and other initiatives like student exchange programs and offering online courses could be looked into in the near future. He envisioned that such initiatives would help promote Punjabi culture, language, history with the Indian diaspora in Canada and in the Fraser Valley in particular.

Dr. Jaspal Singh said that Punjabi University is a hub of academic and research activities and the university's contribution to Punjabi language and culture has been outstanding. This is obvious from the fact that the university has 10 departments specifically dedicated to accomplishing this task. For instance, the Punjabi Development department focuses on translating the original works of international scholars, philosophers, writers, poets etc. The Vice Chancellor was keen to work with UFV and to identify newer areas of cooperation for promoting education.

The seventh annual Ehsaas South Asian Film Festival

The seventh annual Ehsaas Film Festival will be taking place on November 15 at UFV. This film festival is unique as festival goers will get a chance to meet the directors of some of the films and see many films in one night. An opening reception is planned with the community so that they can meet the directors.

This year's theme will be based on Sikh documentaries in honour of the Centennial of the National Historic Sikh Temple in Abbotsford (1911–2011). Some of the films that will be shown include *Sikhs of Tod Inlet*, *Khanabadosh*, *Holy Kitchens* — *The True Business*, *Musafar* and *Kitte Mil Ve Mahi*. Each film will present an insight into the Sikh Diaspora, Sikhism, Sikh-related issues and Sikh history. The festival admission is free and all are welcome to attend. The films will be shown at the Abbotsford campus from 5 to 11 pm. For updated information visit the Centennial website at UFV at: www.ufv.ca/cics/centennial or you may contact us at **604-851-6325**.

Upcoming Events

- Oct 26:** Diwali Celebrations
 - Oct 27:** CICS and Reach Gallery Book Launch — *Undesirables* by Ali Kazimi
 - Oct 27:** The Reach Gallery Museum, *Celebration of Punjabi Art and Culture Exhibition* Opening Reception
 - Oct 27–Jan 8:** The Reach Gallery Museum, *Celebration of Punjabi Art and Culture Exhibition*
 - Nov 5–6:** Sikhism Conference at the National Historic Site Gur Sikh Temple
 - Nov 15:** Ehsaas South Asian Film Festival — Sikh Documentaries
 - Dec 17:** Official opening of the Sikh Heritage Museum at National Historic Site Gur Sikh Temple with Lieutenant Governor of BC, the Honourable Steven Point
- Please check our website www.ufv.ca/cics for current and updated information.**

CICS REPORT

The newsletter for the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies

Publisher:

Satwinder Bains, *CICS Director*
Satwinder.Bains@ufv.ca
 604-854-4547

UFV Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies

UFV Abbotsford campus
 33844 King Road
 Abbotsford, BC, V2S 7MB

www.ufv.ca/cics

Comments/Suggestions:

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

