

# ESL News for April 18-21, 2016

## ***Story 1: Humpback Whale Spotted in Vancouver***

The warm spring weather has brought not only cherry blossoms, it brought a rare humpback whale to the city. During the Easter weekend, residents of Vancouver saw a whale in the waters of Jericho Beach. It swam very near a group of paddle-boarders.

On April 8, there was another sighting in English Bay. When the huge whale swam very close to some boaters, it caused a lot of excitement. Whale experts don't know for sure if it is the same whale because they couldn't see the underside of the tail which is like a fingerprint in a human. Humpback whales travel from their winter destinations like Hawaii or other tropical waters back to BC and Alaska in the spring. When the weather turns cool in the autumn, they migrate back to the warmer climates. Humpback whales are a welcome sight in the city because they are not dangerous to boats or people.

## ***Story 2: First Nations Peoples Buy Jericho Lands***

Two weeks ago local aboriginal nations bought the 15.7-hectare piece of property overlooking Jericho Beach from the province of BC. The Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations paid \$480-million for the Jericho Lands. Before the urbanization of Vancouver, the land used to be a First Nations village, so the purchase felt like a homecoming for our indigenous peoples. The First Nations promised to work together with the City and their neighbours to make sure that the development of the land benefits the whole community in the future.

## ***Story 3: Honda Celebration of Light returns to English Bay***

The Vancouver Fireworks Festival Society has announced the participants and dates for the annual fireworks competition during the summer. The Honda Celebration of Light is returning for its 26th year. This year the festival begins with the Royal Fireworks of the Netherlands opening the show on July 23rd. Australia follows on July 27th. Finally, the United States returns with their

spectacular Walt Disney team on July 30<sup>th</sup>. The fireworks begin at 10:00 pm sharp and run for 20 minutes. On these nights, there is limited access to the West End for traffic control. The Vancouver Police Department will be patrolling the streets to watch for alcohol and drug violations. Last year 1.4 million people attended the 3-day event with few disturbances and arrests. Let's hope for the best this year.

#### ***Story 4: Royal Winnipeg Ballet Remembers the Residential School Legacy***

Canada's premier ballet troupe, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet was at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre last week for a production of *Going Home Star-Truth and Reconciliation*. The ballet told the story of Annie, a young, urban aboriginal girl who struggles with living in the dangers of a modern city.

In the story, Annie travels back in time through the history of the residential schools which created great damage to the spirit of Canadian indigenous peoples. It is estimated that nearly 6000 aboriginal children died in the residential schools between the 1870s and 1990s. The last residential school closed in 1996. The number of deaths could be much higher as the government stopped recording deaths around the 1920s.

Because of the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which wrapped up last year, the Government of Canada has committed to aboriginal education programs through school curriculums across the country. As the ballet *Going Home Star* showcases, there is no reconciliation without truth.

The ballet premiered in Vancouver to packed audiences on April 7, 8 and 9. After seeing the ballet, many viewers commented that it was the best and most important production the Royal Winnipeg Ballet has ever created. The ballet company faced the challenge of staging an indigenous tragedy in a white, European art form---the ballet.