

## ESL News for October 17, 2016

### Story #1 Diwali

Diwali is the biggest, brightest and most popular event in the Indian calendar and is celebrated world-wide by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains. The Lower Mainland's Diwali Fest started Oct. 11 and runs until Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>

The word *diwali* means "row of lighted lamps", with light symbolizing the triumph of good over evil, wealth over poverty and knowledge over ignorance. It's a time for lighting *diyas*, oil lamps made of clay and laying out colorful *rangolis*, traditional Indian art patterns using such materials as rice and flour. The purpose of rangoli is decoration, and it is thought to bring good luck. Design depictions may also vary as they reflect traditions, folklore and practices that are unique to each area of India. It is traditionally done by women. Other highlights of the festival include setting off fireworks, exchanging gifts of sweets and celebrating with dance, music and storytelling.

Diwali Downtown at the Roundhouse Community Centre is the festival's main event bringing together thousands of attendees from all over the Lower Mainland. With dance performances, music, an Indian style bazaar (marketplace), various entertainment and food, this is definitely the place to get your Diwali on. This event takes place on Saturday, October 29 from 3 pm to 8 pm. You can find a calendar of events at: <http://diwalifest.ca/>

### Story # 2 Stanley Park's ghost train

Every year, Stanley Park's miniature train gets a spooky makeover just in time for Halloween. This year's theme is the Day of the Dead which is a Mexican holiday focused on praying for and remembering the spirits of loved ones that have passed on. Be serenaded by a mariachi band, ride the train through the illuminated tunnel of flames to meet the Aztec Lord, and in a supernatural graveyard where friendly souls return to dance. Colourful costumes and props often include sugar skulls, bright flowers, butterflies and even shrines to those that have passed on.

The ghost train runs from October 8 to October 31. Ticket prices vary from \$11 for adults to \$7 for young children. Popular dates are sold out in advance so book tickets online early. Same day tickets can also be bought, but are limited. <http://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/ghost-train.aspx>

**Now let's turn to the weather...**

### Story # 3 Storms hit the wet coast

The weather turned stormy this weekend as three separate systems hit the B.C. coast. Wind gusts of over 100km per hour were recorded off the coast of Vancouver Island at Tofino while heavy rain caused flooding in Mission. The storms were strengthened by tropical moisture from the remnants of Super Typhoon Songda which spun up over the western Pacific on Oct. 8 and intensified into a super typhoon before weakening.

Worst hit were Oregon and Washington state. In addition to the high winds and heavy rains, they suffered mountain snows, and isolated tornadoes.

The City of Vancouver says it got more than 250 calls about fallen trees over the weekend. Several Translink buses were detoured due to storm debris, including a downed tree on trolley lines affecting service to the Cambie Bridge. Several houses and cars were crushed under collapsed trees and a high school student in Surrey was killed by a falling tree.

The storm also brought down power lines. BC Hydro crews worked throughout the night to restore power to customers. At one time, more than 190,000 B.C. Hydro customers had no power. Over the entire three-day period more than 290,000 customers endured power outages.

BC Ferries canceled its sailings from 3pm Saturday in order to protect docks, vessels and customers. Several parks including Stanley Park and VanDusen Gardens also shut entrances as a precaution. To keep up with inclement weather you can visit the Environment Canada website and CKNW storm watch at [www.cknw.com/bc-storms/](http://www.cknw.com/bc-storms/)

#### **Story #4** Pet food theft

The theft of thousands of dollars in donated pet food has left the Victoria Pet Food Bank charity wondering who could have committed such a heartless act. Dozens of bags of food and other supplies collected for homeless people and their pets were stolen from a storage shed. Losses are estimated at \$6,000.

“When I opened the door, it was completely empty. I started crying, I was completely shaking and said this is not possible,” said food bank founder Margarita Dominguez. “This is our supplies for the next two months and without this, they’re going to starve because we don’t have food. To remove all these bags, even from the shelves, they needed time,” she said. In all, the thief or thieves made off with 50 dog food bags weighing 33 pounds each, 10 bags of cat food, winter coats for pets, toys and treats.

Anyone wanting to donate food to the pet food bank can visit the organization’s [website](#) or contact their nearest Salvation Army. “The need of food is increasing,” said Dominguez. “The people that did this, they are just targeting the ones that have nothing, and that is really very low.” Anyone with information on the theft is asked to contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

## **Story #5** Guildford Mall scare

There were scary moments for people at Surrey's Guildford Mall Saturday evening. Police swarmed the underground parking lot near the Wal-Mart shortly after 8:30 PM after receiving reports of a group of men in clown masks with guns. Witnesses called 911 before 9 p.m. to report the suspicious activity.

Surrey RCMP immediately located the group of males, some of them still wearing masks and with what appeared to be pistols in their hands. The five males were detained at gunpoint, and it was determined the handguns that they had were actually imitation firearms." Police say the group was 'just playing around' and couldn't give a good reason for what they were doing.

Police are reminding everyone about the dangers of playing with fake guns, saying even the most highly-trained officers can have a difficult time distinguishing between real weapons and replicas. No charges have been laid.

