Volunteer group gives hope after horror to Vancouver's survivors of torture

The story of how “Oscar” found himself at the Vancouver Association for the Survivors of Torture is “long and very sad,” he says with a gentle smile.

Oscar is a Mayan Indian from a village in the Guatemalan province of Huehuetenango. He was taken from his village and tortured by the military for two months in 1981. During the ordeal, the torture squads repeatedly asked him for information on guerrilla activities.

With his soft voice, he tells how his torture started with beatings with a machete. A chemical-soaked mask was put over his face. The bottom of his tongue was cut. He was given electric shocks, beaten and kicked in the face. His torturers tried to rip out his fingernails and toenails. They put lemon and salt in his cuts. He was put in solitary confinement and starved.

Once, he was put in the centre of a circle of fellow prisoners. A chemical soaked cloth was put over his mouth and deep brown eyes. His face was smashed repeatedly against the floor while three soldiers sat on his neck, back and legs.

“The pain was very strong. I can’t measure how much. I was screaming very loud.”

Oscar, who asked that his full name not be used, was finally released. He continued to work with community projects in his village. But when he was warned that the army was after him again, he fled. Via refugee camps in Mexico he came to Canada with his wife and children in 1985.

He is one of the estimated thousands of torture survivors in the Lower Mainland.

Oscar still suffers pain from back and stomach injuries sustained during torture. A nurse at Vancouver Community College, where he was studying English, told Oscar about VAST when he asked if there was a special place for people who have been tortured.

Torture survivors living in the Lower Mainland may find that the help they need here in their place of refuge is limited to a chance discovery of “Oscar” is one of the estimated thousands of survivors of torture living in the Lower Mainland

VAST. It is a network of about 70 members, mainly professionals working in psychology, law, psychiatry, social work, nursing, etc. They volunteer to meet the survivors' special needs.

In B.C., refugee claimants don’t qualify for medical insurance. Even if they did, VAST is the only service specifically for torture survivors.

Canadian and Danish studies have found that the main purpose of modern torture is to cripple the mind. The worst after-effects of modern torture are psychological, and treating survivors of torture “is a very brand-new area,” says Yaya de Andrade, a psychiatrist who volunteers with VAST. Volunteers meet monthly to educate themselves about how to mend the body and mind of a torture victim.

(continued on page 6)
A time for hope; a time to mourn

By Vera Radio

Those of us who have lived most of our lives in Canada can hardly imagine what it’s like to be kidnapped from our home and tortured by government authorities. In this issue of The Vancouver MOSAIC, a Mayan Indian, Oscar, shares some of his horrendous experiences with us and talks about how an organization called VAST has helped him heal some of the wounds.

On the brighter side, we have a glimpse of Tom Nakatani, an immigrant from Japan. In only six years, he and his family have become well-established and successful Canadian citizens and now employ other Canadians.

Why would anybody spend their free time volunteering to interpret for refugees and immigrants? Hundreds of people do it every year. Find out what motivates them in “Thrills and Chills.”

In this issue, we attempt to provide you with some insights and critiques of crucial legislation facing our nation: refugee determination, multiculturalism and free trade. As well, the highlights of recently announced family sponsorship regulations are covered.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dairyland Foods and Ace Novelty Company for their kind donations to our annual summer picnic, which we hold for volunteers, staff, clients and friends of MOSAIC.

As I write this, I am deeply saddened to know that long-time community activist Renate Shearer has passed away. Renate was a special friend to MOSAIC, as she was one of our early board members. She was instrumental in establishing organizational stability by quieting political wranglings and securing stable funding. Renate had vision, integrity and the determination to fight for what she believed in. The world would definitely be a better place if we had more people like Renate.

Vera Radio is executive director of MOSAIC

MOSAIC fundraiser slated to be a city-wide dining extravaganza

By Ita Margalit

MOSAIC is holding Vancouver’s first annual Night of 100 Dinners in September and we’re looking for people with appetites or aprons.

We want people to host, cook or be a guest at 100 separate dinners in the Vancouver area.

On Sept. 24, join the likes of the Alma Street Cafe, The Single Gourmet Club, The Pierre Dubreil Culinary School and Canada Safeway to make this a successful ‘fun’ raising event for MOSAIC.

You can participate as a host, a guest or a chef.

If you love to cook for friends, being a host is for you. We need 100 individuals, restaurants, or organizations to host dinner parties for 5 or more guests. The host is asked to invite 5 or more people for dinner at their home or restaurant. A pool of guests will be made available if necessary. It is up to the host to supply and prepare the dinners as their donations. Food discount vouchers from Safeway are available. Alcohol is optional.

The host asks guests to contribute to MOSAIC in return for their dinners. The dinner price category is set by the host based on their perception of the disposable income level of their guests.

The dinner categories are: $10 - $20; $25 - $45, $50 - $75, and $100.

Hosts are encouraged to pick a theme (e.g. black tie, costume, ethnic food, etc). The host’s costs are tax-deductible.

Being a guest is perfect for those who love to eat out, only this time the money you spend on a meal will be donated back to MOSAIC by the hosts and/or restaurants.

For more information about either event, call me at 254-9626.

Ita Margalit is MOSAIC Financial Development Officer

Dinner prices range from $10 - $100 and will be held in private homes, restaurants and clubs. A portion of the dinner price is tax-deductible. A list of hosts will be supplied by MOSAIC.

As for those who love to cook but whose homes are too small to have dinner parties in, there is the option to be a chef.

Chefs volunteer to cook in someone else’s home, since we have people who would like to support the event by hosting friends and supplying food, but are not confident in their culinary skills.

Looking ahead to October, when the 100 Dinners are digested but the fun continues, MOSAIC will host two Casino Nights. (See our notice board on page 8 for details about time and place.)

Thanks!

to Canada Safeway, who donated $1,000 in gift certificates for our cooks.

John Stone of the Single Gourmet Club and Enrico Diano, B.C. Cultural Heritage Advisor for their promotion of the event.

The Vancouver Mosaic is a non-profit newsletter published four times a year by MOSAIC, the Multilingual Orientation Services Association for Immigrant Communities, 1720 Grant St. (at 1500 Commercial Dr.), 2nd Floor, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V5L 2Y7.

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Newsletter Editor: Ellen Sanger
Desktop Publishing consultant: Peter Lincoln
MORE THAN A YEAR ago, a so-called immigration crisis cut short the holidays of Members of Parliament called back to Ottawa to pass tough, new legislation, Bill C-55 and C-84. Now that the law is just a step away from taking effect, there is uncertainty as to the fate of future refugee claimants and the thousands in limbo in the current refugee stream.

Bill C-55 received royal assent this summer. As it awaits a federal cabinet order needed for the laws to take effect, critics are working on court challenges to the law, while within the paralysed system refugee claimant hearings are being cancelled indefinitely.

Lawyer Charles Groos, who specializes in refugee claims law, estimates the new regulations won’t take effect before December or January. Until that time, no court challenges can be launched.

Groos, who was appointed to the Immigration and Refugee Board, Refugee Division after this interview, anticipates that when the court challenges are launched, they will be based on the argument that the new regulations fail to provide fundamental justice under Chapter 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The federal government has maintained throughout the heated public debate that the new laws will deter only bogus claimants. But many lawyers and refugee serving agencies who agree that the old system didn’t work — say genuine refugees will also be jeopardized by the new regulations.

The success of the future system hangs on whether it can deal with cases quickly enough to deter abuse, while not jeopardizing genuine refugees.

New laws not likely to end refugee controversy

However, “there is a school of thought that this scheme is not intended to succeed either,” says Groos. Then, in a few years, when we face another backlog, it can be argued that it doesn’t work to give legal rights to refugees and immigrants, and that immigration legislation must be regulated outside the bounds of the charter.

“To be fair, I have never heard anyone from the department hint that’s what they want,” he says.

Previous government-commissioned reports, such as Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut’s 1985 report to then-immigration minister Flora MacDonald, have pointed to the slowness of the system as its major flaw. The long waiting periods are a major hardship for refugees wanting to start their new life. At the same time, the waiting period is an invitation for abuse from those who realize that by claiming refugee status, they will be allowed to stay in the country until the government decides their case — which could be years.

The new regulations will definitely cut down some time of cases, as people can be tossed out of the country within 72 hours if officials at the port of entry consider the claim unfounded, or if the claimant came through a so-called safe third country where they had the right to make a refugee claim. So for refugees coming in under the new legislation, the first hearing at a point of entry will be vitally important.

But there is definite potential for innocent refugees to be bounced back to a dangerous place under this system, Groos says.

Some settlement workers fear that those people who are now fabricating false claims will still be able to make up their stories. Yet the genuine refugees who arrive after a traumatic experience are unlikely to immediately tell their whole story to a stranger in uniform.

A new refugee commission will replace the refugee status advisory committee that views all transcripts from examinations under oath and advises the minister of immigration to either accept or reject the claims.

The new commission, staffed by 65 permanent positions with the ability to hire unlimited part-time, temporary staff, will not likely be handed the backlog of approximately 55,000 refugee claimant cases. Instead, an administrative review will clear up the backlog, predicts Groos. Details of such an amnesty are unknown.

In an amnesty two years ago, decisions were made on the basis of whether the claimant had family here or was working or learning English, or for humanitarian reasons.

During the past year, the legislation has been bounced from the House of Commons to the Senate. A Senate committee travelled across Canada for hearings and then made various recommendations for changes to the bills. Commons did not accept many recommendations for significant changes, although Immigration Minister Barbara McDougall did implement a sunset clause of six-months on one of the controversial features of legislation that gave the Minister powers to turn away ships at sea suspected of carrying bogus refugees.

But the controversial safe-third country clause remains, giving immigration officials the power to force people who came through a safe country to get to Canada to return to that country while their claim is processed in Canada. (If refugees come overland, for example from Central America, and can prove that they came directly, perhaps they will not be considered as coming through a third country, Groos says).

Considering that Canada has few direct links to refugee-producing nations, and that it is unlikely to declare the United States an unsafe country, the flow of refugees will likely lessen. But the question remains whether it is only the bogus claimants who are being deterred, or whether Canada is closing the door on those fleeing persecution.

—By Ellen Saenger

MOSAIC past president appointed to refugee board

Stanley Knight, past president and long-time active member of MOSAIC, has been appointed Assistant Deputy Chairman of the Convention Refugee Determination Division, under the new immigration legislation.

Stanley Knight
Thrills and Chills of being a volunteer interpreter

By Kim Cholette and Ellen Saenger

After guzzling coffee at La Quena on Commercial Drive one afternoon five years ago, Harrison Townsend stuck his head in the door of the then-offices of MOSAIC.

The 66-year-old mechanical engineer had recently returned from living several years in Guatemala and Peru and "didn't have enough to keep (himself) busy."

But since 1983, Townsend has been a jack-of-all-trades volunteer interpreter for Spanish-speaking clients at medical appointments, hospitals, or legal and social services.

He is one of MOSAIC's 200 active volunteer interpreters, who are busier now than they've ever been.

Interpretation requests increased more than 20 times over the past decade. Requests for volunteer interpreters in 1979 totalled 130. By the end of 1987, records show, interpretation requests skyrocketed to 3,008.

MOSAIC volunteers fill about 250 requests for interpreters each month. The volunteers' experiences vary as much as the situations they interpret for.

Paul Przystupa, a relative newcomer to the clan of MOSAIC volunteer interpreters, says he'll take any type of assignment.

"But the most entertaining are the ones in jail . . . It's even better than Miami Vice," he says.

Przystupa brushes off criticism for helping those in trouble with the law. "Without interpreters, any case (with non-English speakers) would be a real problem for Canadian law enforcement," he says.

He mostly interprets for refugee claims or medical appointments; one or two interpretations weekly.

The 32-year-old who came to Canada alone as a refugee in 1983, says volunteer interpreting "adds a touch of family life."

Volunteering added a touch of horror to Brian DeBou's life, when he interpreted for an eye doctor appointment. The patient, from Central America, had survived months of torture that included his torturers shoving their thumbs in his eye. The client was hopeful that sight could be restored in his damaged eye. But at the appointment the doctor not only said the eye had to be removed, he also had to inject a needle through the inflamed and infected eye.

DeBou says he was trying to keep his stomach down throughout the ordeal. "I was cursing (the coordinator of volunteers). I thought it was a check-up and I was going to be interpreting things like 'read the bottom line'," DeBou says.

Many of the interpreters can tell a story of an on-the-job frustration, like clients who do not show up or who are uncooperative. But

It's even better than 'Miami Vice',
-Paul Przystupa

Is Free Trade a threat to Canada’s refugees, immigrants and multiculturalism?

By Inessa Ormond

A major concern voiced by critics of the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States is that Canada loses control of all that makes it Canadian - such as its economy, its natural resources, its social services. Those who extol free trade as a good deal for Canada, however, deny that our sovereignty is threatened. But all Canadians must closely scrutinize the deal to decide whether Canada's future as shaped by the agreement is the future they envisioned.

Immigrants and immigrant women in particular will likely be affected almost immediately when the agreement is implemented.

Government spokespeople admit that jobs will be lost, especially in sectors that traditionally employ new immigrants and refugees, such as the garment industry, food processing, agriculture, and dairy and poultry farming. Female, non-English speaking immigrants fill the vast majority of jobs in the garment industry across Canada.

So far, there have been no new programs to deal with these job losses, and it is possible that any such program would be considered a "subsidy" and not allowed under the Free Trade Agreement.

Immigrants and refugees will also be affected as Canadian laws are changed to "harmonize" with U.S. laws. This process has already begun with Canada's drug patent legislation, which resulted in higher priced drugs to appease multi-national companies, and with the immigrant and refugee legislation, Bills C-55 and C-84.

Bills C-55 and C-84 bring Canadian immigration and refugee policies closer to U.S. policy. The new Canadian laws are a change from previous policies that won Canadians the Nansen Medal in 1986 for their support of refugees.

Bill C-55 enshrines the concept of a "safe" third country, one from which we would not accept refugees, potentially making it impossible for Latin American refugees to come through the U.S. to Canada. U.S. policy allows for deportation of Central Americans, yet if Canada declared the U.S. an "un-safe third country," we could face diplomatic hostilities and economic pressure.

And, like the U.S., where it is illegal for churches and social organizations to aid illegal immigrants (read Latin American refugees), Bill C-94 makes it illegal for Canadians to do so as well.

One of the things I most value about Canada is its multicultural fabric and the humanizing effect other cultures have on the broader culture.

Our media are already dominated by U.S. programs. The Free Trade Agreement will make it difficult for Canada's multi-culture ever to be expressed through the media as Canadian content regulations and subsidized Canadian media will be struck down. We will be under tremendous pressure to adopt the "melting pot" ideology of the U.S.

Good bye, multiculturalism!

Inessa Ormond is MOSAIC administrative assistant. She is also a member of Citizens Concerned About Free Trade, a national organization opposed to Free Trade. CCAFT's Vancouver branch can be reached at 253-4869.
frustrations are few and volunteers laugh off the minor problems or, as in Lori Nordstrom’s case, the special traits of certain sections.

Nordstrom joined MOSAIC in March in hopes of brushing up on her French and Spanish. But she had a few false starts when three consecutive clients did not show up for their appointments. Undaunted, she continues to take on several interpretations each month.

Says Harrison Townsend: "The nature of the work means you very rarely run into unpleasant situations."

He most enjoys appointments "that involve a mother with a couple of young kids. Those are always agreeable."

But there was the time Townsend interpreted for a wealthy new Canadian charged with drunk driving. "They guy spoke English as well as you do . . . and the lawyer and I soon realized it was one vast crock," he says.

Townsend said although he was angry, he "didn't see fit to blow the whistle on the guy."

MOSAIC interpreters cannot let their personal feelings colour their work. They are required to interpret accurately what is said. Although they can be compassionate, they must never act as an advocate or take sides.

As Debou says, "I very quickly found I had to keep my politics close to my chest."

Volunteer Harrison Townsend eases a trip to the dentist

PHOTO BY ELLEN SAENGER

Without the MOSAIC interpretation service, "I wouldn't know where to go to ask for help. It would be very difficult to go to all appointments," he says.

MOSAIC clients and the legal, medical, social services and education communities rely heavily on the volunteer interpreters.

Last year, MOSAIC honored volunteer Sheila Shannon with its annual Human Rights Award for her dedicated work with the Latin American community. (Previous recipients of the award include Justice Thomas Berger, Charan Gill, and Bishop Remi De Roo.)

MOSAIC’s bank of volunteers is in a state of constant change, and new volunteers are always needed. If you speak a second or third language and Nare interested in working as a volunteer interpreter, please contact Gosia Kawecki or Kim Cholette, MOSAIC’s coordinators of volunteers at the MOSAIC office.

Gosia Kawecki and Kim Cholette, MOSAIC coordinators of volunteers.

PHOTO BY ELLEN SAENGER

That basic, yet very important rule for interpreters is an easy one to comply with, Mary Yee says.

Yee, who finds time between working part-time as a department store cashier to volunteer in the Cantonese section, says she has grown used to the stipulation and no longer finds it difficult to abide by as when she first started interpreting.

Cantonese interpreters are the second highest in demand after Spanish, with requests totalling 460 in 1987. Yee and other volunteers including Allison Chau, Watts Lee, Molly Choi and Kenneth Lam often interpret for three or four client appointments weekly.

Hong Kong-born Yee says she started out as a volunteer interpreter to get some experience to enter the field professionally.

The volunteers who bridge language gaps themselves come from diverse backgrounds, each with their own reason for giving up their time to help others.

Przystupa, who holds a degree in mechanical engineering from Poland and works as a janitor here, says interpreting forces him to learn specialized vocabulary. It also gives him the chance to "pay back the friendly Canadian government and community who let me in here," he says.

The Vietnamese section’s Tim Vu says he got the idea to be a volunteer interpreter when shortly after his arrival in Canada, he saw a pamphlet written in Vietnamese.

"I couldn't believe it was the Vietnamese language, it was so poor," he says. "At that time I decided that when my English improved, I could help."

Twenty-year-old Vu came to Canada three years ago, and holds a temporary job in a travel agency.

Interpreting improves his English and he becomes more familiar with the structure of Canadian society. "I know about legal aid, UI (unemployment insurance), welfare and how a hospital is run," he says.

Vu has done more than 50 interpretations since joining the other interpreters like the very active Anne Marie Pham in the busy Vietnamese section. Last year, MOSAIC received 232 requests for Vietnamese interpreters.

Clients often hear through family or friends about the interpretation service that widens their horizons in first months in Canada.

"When we come (to Canada) we don't speak (English)," client Noel Moya says.

Kim Cholette is a coordinator of volunteers at MOSAIC. Ellen Saenger is Vancouver MOSAIC editor.
Survivors of torture
(continued from page 1)

VAST was started in December 1985 by less than a dozen people, mainly involved in Amnesty International. Membership fees and donations provide the bulk of funding. The goal is to build a torture survivors' treatment centre in Vancouver similar to centres in Copenhagen or Toronto.

VAST tries to provide treatment for survivors of torture and their families, to research and educate about consequences of torture, to liaise with those working with survivors of torture and to let the public know the importance of preventing torture.

As a VAST volunteer, de Andrade says, she has treated 22 survivors of torture since September. She estimates the number of Lower Mainland residents who survived or witnessed torture totals "tens of thousands."

"But its difficult to get figures. We just deal with them as they knock on the door."

VAST volunteers depend on word-of-mouth advertising to inform people the service is available. But not all those searching for help are told about VAST. Some who asked about a service like Oscar did were told there is no such service. De Andrade says people "tend to search (for help) in their own ways, tapping everywhere."

Other survivors of torture escape their past through drugs and alcohol and end up in other treatment programs.

VAST volunteers have access to a sparsely-furnished West Broadway office that opened in September, to use for counselling and consultation. The office is open for only a few hours weekly, but the 24-hour answering machine is checked daily.

De Andrade, a clinical psychologist from Brazil, says there are two main categories of VAST clients. There are the recently arrived and very distressed people, whose situation can quickly deteriorate making them a threat to self and community. And there are the people who have been here for any number of years and who perhaps weren't personally tortured but were exposed to torture.

The later group, she says, "are a mental health issue." But for the first group, "VAST can make an incredible impact."

For many torture victims the past is too painful to recall. So they keep it inside but may show symptoms such as depression, lethargy, paranoia, hallucinations, aggressiveness, distract, memory difficulties, lack of concentration, sexual dysfunction, and alcohol and drug abuse.

De Andrade says survivors of torture must be treated by practitioners who are aware of their past in order to properly diagnose and treat them. Doctors must ensure that treatment and the area where the room where the patient is treated does not resemble the torture experience.

One man now living in Vancouver, who says he suffered racially-motivated torture in Fiji before arriving here a few months ago, says he is plagued by bad dreams, is afraid to talk to people and must take anti-depressant drugs.

"I'm worried that this mental sickness will follow me all my life," he says.

The man requested anonymity and that the details of his story be withheld. He says he fears for his family still in Fiji and that any public statements could jeopardize his pending refugee claim.

He says when he arrived in Canada, he found the local Amnesty International office through the telephone directory.

"At that time I was in a very worried mood, worried about my family. I was drinking probably one bottle of rum a day," an Amnesty member suggested he contact VAST.

The man fills his days with volunteer work while waiting for a ruling on his refugee claim. And he continues to see a VAST doctor to help him deal with his past. Oscar also continues to receive treatment. Talking to the VAST volunteer makes him feel better, he says.

"If you are not able to talk there is a congestion in your personality."

He also finds support talking with other Guatemalans who went through similar experiences. They talk about their experiences, "sometimes just to remember," he says.

But he can't talk to just anybody, he says, because "sometimes people don't believe when I talk. Maybe they think I came here just for money or for a job." And there is the ingrained fear that not everyone can be trusted.

To escape further torture and death, he had to leave his home, his village, his culture. Oscar hopes there will be peace in his country one day, and that he can return to his life of farming. Here in Canada, he lost an infant daughter who died while she was undergoing heart surgery.

"It was very difficult for me and my wife. Sometimes I asked myself 'why?'."

Like the torture he suffered, the reasons for it are age-old colonialism; part of his personal "long story," he says. First it was the Spanish conquerors who tried to wipe out the Mayans, and now it is the non-natives in the country inflicting the genocide, he says.

As such conflicts around the world continue to churn out fresh victims, people like Oscar will have such experiences, he says.

And as the survivors like Oscar continue to seek refuge in Canada, VAST volunteer will have to try to ease the mental and physical aftershocks of torture.

-By Ellen Saenger

Profile
(continued from back page)

"The first year was very hard. Starting a new business requires a lot of work. But every year things got better," he says.

Nakatani now owns several properties and a new house in Shaughnessy. His wife opened Oak West Property Management, and employs three people.

Eighty percent of Nakatani's business comes from Japanese investors. He combines his business sense with his knowledge of two languages to develop a new market, which he thinks benefits B.C.'s economy.

Nakatani remembers how MOSAIC helped him. So in turn, he contributes to the well being of other immigrants in B.C.

He has served on the board of the Japanese New Immigrant Association, and helped create the Japanese Retired Immigrants Association, a service for elderly Japanese Canadians.

-By Ita Margalit
First-ever Multiculturalism Act; an important symbolic gesture

Canada’s first multiculturalism act is criticized for being a nice - but toothless - gesture. Yet the unique law, passed this summer, has tremendous symbolic importance. And that symbolism, says a Vancouver social scientist, can be translated into fact through education and political action.

Bernardo Berdichewsky says the Act is not a leader, but a follower that reflects Canada’s multicultural society.

“It’s not that we want to be a multicultural society (in the future). We are a multicultural society,” says Berdichewsky, an anthropology professor at Capilano College and Simon Fraser University.

The Act can be used to educate Canadians against fear of the unknown, of being taken over by visible minorities, he says.

“The Act is a good tool to fight negative myths,” such as those that brand immigration as a threat rather than a necessity for Canada, he says, because the law recognizes Canadians of every origin as full and equal participants in Canadian society. It affirms in law the constitutional freedom of all.

Family reunification made easier

To ease family reunification, Immigration Minister Barbara MacDougall announced in early August a change to family sponsorship regulations, adding to two previous changes announced this summer.

Lawyers and opposition politicians have praised the package of changes, which the ministry estimates could help several thousand people a year immigrate to Canada as members of the Family Class or as Assisted Relatives.

B.C. lawyer Fiona Begg says the changes are significant because they “facilitate bringing in older dependants and facilitates reunification.”

The change announced in August to family class regulations allows permanent residents living in Canada for more than three years to sponsor parents of any age.

The minister did not specify when the change will take effect, and a Vancouver immigration spokesman says the new regulation is unlikely to kick in before late October. So the current regulation, which allows only Canadian citizens to sponsor parents under age 60, is still law.

But since July 8, Canadian citizens and permanent residents have been able to sponsor never-married children of any age.

Under previous law, the never-married son or daughter who was sponsored had to be under 21.

In the assisted relative category, applicants now need 55 points - five fewer points than before July 8 - to successfully apply for residency. (In the immigration point system, applicants are awarded points for their level of education, knowledge of English or French, personal suitability, job offers etc. Details of the point system are available from immigration offices.)

Family class and assisted relative are the two categories under which a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant over 18 years can sponsor a family member to live here. But sponsoring a family member doesn’t guarantee they will be accepted into Canada. The applicant must be accepted on their own merit.

Details of sponsorship laws are available at immigration centres and MOSAIC.

Did you know...?

That Iranian and Afghani are the only two nations in the world that celebrate their new year on March 21, the first day of Spring, and call the first day of their year Nowrouz/Nawrooz, which means New Day.
Profile

Immigrant finds MOSAIC in Japan

When Tom Nakatani arrived in Vancouver from Japan, he says, the first telephone call he made was to MOSAIC.

He had learned about MOSAIC and Mr. Kage, the MOSAIC community worker, in an orientation course in Japan, sponsored by the Japanese government.

In Japan, Nakatani had a successful electrical appliance store. But he was unhappy with the stressful lifestyle he had to lead, working seven days a week, 8 a.m. to midnight. He had developed ulcers and other health problems.

"I knew I had to do something. My wife was about to have our second child. I had my family's future to think about." Nakatani remembered being impressed by Vancouver during a trip he took to Canada and the USA when he was 21 years old. So in January 1982, he applied to immigrate as a self-employed person. Six months later, he and his family arrived at Vancouver International Airport.

"MOSAIC and Mr. Kage helped me and my family get settled. My biggest obstacle was language," Nakatani says.

But Kage was able to help the new Canadian jump that hurdle by enrolling him in English classes. He also helped Nakatani fill out the appropriate forms to get health care and other necessary services, and he explained what he needed to know to get by day to day.

"What I liked most about Mr. Kage was that he was not opinionated. He always told me all the options and let me make my own choices," Nakatani says.

One of the choices Nakatani made was not to open an electrical appliance store as planned. He felt the population required to support this type of business was lacking.

But what he did observe was that land was relatively inexpensive and that the real estate business seemed less risky.

With his improved English, Nakatani enrolled in a 5 month correspondence course from UBC and a 2 month course at BCIT. By July 1983, a year after he arrived in B.C., Nakatani got his real estate licence.

(continued on page 6)

Take notice!

- **MOSAIC Annual General Meeting**, Sept. 29, 7 p.m. at the Vancouver Indian Centre, 1607 East Hastings. Everyone welcome!
- **MOSAIC's first annual Night of 100 Dinners**, Sept 24, (See article page 2).
- **MOSAIC's fundraising Casino Night**, Oct. 1 & 2, 6 p.m. to 2 a.m., Holiday Inn, 711 West Broadway. For more information call Ita Margalit, 254-9626.
- **MOSAIC Employment Program Graduation, for Job Corps group #17 and Women's Training group**, Oct. 3, 7:30 p.m. at MOSAIC Employment Programs. Keynote speaker is John Jansen, Minister of International Business and Immigration.
- **Speak! Human Rights lecture series**, to mark the 40th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 7:30 p.m., Robson Square Media Centre, Sept. 19, Oct. 3, Oct. 17, Nov. 7, Dec. 5. $25 for the series or $5 per lecture. Speakers include: MP Svend Robinson; Stephen Lewis, former Canadian Ambassador to the UN; Chief George Manuel, founder of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples; Francine Fournier, Secretary General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

Sponsored by the B.C. Human Rights Coalition and the UN Association in Canada. For further information, call 736-8965 or 736-8963.

- **Canadian Council for Refugees conference in Toronto**, Nov. 24-26. Themes of the conference will be refugee sponsorship, resettlement and refugee protection. The Minister of Immigration has been invited to open the conference. (NOTE: Next year's national conference will be held for the first time in Vancouver, June 1-3, 1989, and will be hosted by the Vancouver Refugee Council.) Anyone interested in CCR or in attending a conference, contact Vera Radio, 254-9626

- **Upcoming programs for the Latin American Community**, co-sponsored by MOSAIC and the Vancouver Health Department.
  - **Sept. 15**: Mother's Group, film in Spanish, about caring for sick children.
  - **Sept. 22**: Parenting skills classes given by family counsellor Esther Frid.
  - **Oct. 17**: Prenatal Classes Registration on Sept. 17, 1 p.m. at the Vancouver Health Department, 2nd Floor 1651 Commercial Drive. All sessions will be Thursdays, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. For more information contact Miriam, Roxana or Roger at MOSAIC, 254-9626.
  - **Nov. 20**: Vancouver Refugee Council general meeting, Sept. 20 at MOSAIC. 7:30 p.m. For further information call Karen McKellin at 224-3787.
  - **Dec. 27**: Inland Refugee Society annual general meeting, Sept. 27, at MOSAIC 1522 Commercial Drive, 7:30 p.m. For more information call 251-3360.
  - **Refugee Services Day**, Og, 7:00 p.m., at the Polish Community Hall, 4015 Fraser St. A Community Service Award ceremony to acknowledge services by individuals and organization to refugees and other new Canadians in Greater Vancouver. Presented by the Vancouver Refugee Council.

- **Headlines Theatre Co. presents POWER PLAY with local refugees**, Sept. 14 & 15 at 12:45 p.m. and Sept. 16, 17, 18 at 7:00 p.m. at Mt. Pleasant Community Centre, 3161 Ontario Street. On Sept. 24 at 8 p.m. at 6715 Westminster Highway. Tickets at the door only, $5 employed or $4 unemployed. Part of the Fringe Festival '88. The play is developed and performed by members of various local refugee communities. For more information, David Diamond or Sherri-Lee Guilbert, 738-2283.

In Memoriam

*Renate Shearer*

Renate was a community worker, social planner, university lecturer and human rights activist. She held firm convictions and fought for what she believed in. She passed away after a courageous battle with cancer.

Renate will be deeply missed by all who knew her.