

citylife

Parties, Culture & Society



Aboriginal Human Resource Council's CEO Kelly Lendsay flanked by colleagues Peggy Berndt and Victoria LaBillois.



Rick Mercer was master of ceremonies at the inaugural Inclusion Works Gala.



Tamara Taggart emceed and Sarah McNeill co-chaired the second annual PURSEuasion auction and luncheon.



Goldfish Pacific Kitchen's Andrea Maglajlija and Vancouver Opera general director James Wright.

Native students step up to job networks

Purses open for opera; restos drink up



FRED LEE

Comedian **Rick Mercer** hosted the inaugural Inclusion Works Gala at Vancouver's Convention and Exhibition Centre. Presented by the Aboriginal Human Resource Council (AHRC), the glittering occasion capped Canada's biggest Aboriginal HR and employment networking event. Sponsored by Canwest, the three-day conference brought together speakers, leading employers and Aboriginal graduates from across the country to build strategies to recruit and advance Canada's Aboriginal workforce.

B.C. Lieutenant-Governor **Steven L. Point** welcomed the crowd. **David Chilton**, author of the best-seller *The Wealthy Barber*, was the keynote speaker at the dinner and auction. Guests included AHRC CEO **Kelly Lendsay**; co-chairs **Anne Noonan** and **Rob Johnston**; honorary chairs **Joseph Norton**, president and CEO, Tokwiro Enterprises ENRG, and **James Carter**, past president and COO, Syncrude Canada; Native Women's Association of Canada president **Beverly Jacobs**; Chief Commissioner of B.C.'s Treaty Commission, **Sophie Pierre**; and Hereditary Chief **Shawn Atleo** from the Ahousaht First Nation.

The program of performances by Aboriginal stars included **Susan Aglukark**; **Marion Newman**, **Murray Porter**, Métis Nation B.C. Stompers and Métis Butter Town Jiggers accompanied by guitarist **Phil Fauteux** and fiddler **Aimee Fauteux**. Proceeds will support the council's charitable foundation designed to create new opportunities in training and employment for Aboriginal people.

"Inclusion Works '09 awakened to the power of inclusion and created new connections and commitments that will transform Canada's workplaces into environments where Aboriginal people can succeed. The event delivered

jobs to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit graduates and sent a message of hope to all Canadians," Lendsay said.

Conference sponsor **Leonard Asper**, Canwest CEO, said: "It is only through heightened awareness and broader understanding of our Aboriginal communities that we can really begin to tap into the economic and human potential of these valuable cultural resources."

Vancouver Opera hosted its second annual PURSEuasion designer bag auction and luncheon recently at Goldfish Pacific Kitchen. Fronted by co-chairs **Sarah McNeill** and **Doris Gnanndt**, the event was emceed by CTV's **Tamara Taggart**.

Among those in attendance: **Yolanda Farris**, **Christie King**, **Shirley Barnett**, **Saeedeh Salem**, **Sherani Volberg** and opera boosters **Nessa Van Bergen**, **Alexis Palkowski**, **Rona Radler**, **Doris Bradstreet Daughney**, **Parviz Cordwell**, **Arlene Gladstone**, **Ina O'Brien** and **Cheryl Nakamoto**.

Following a Ports 1961 fashion show and a meal prepared by executive chef **William Tse**, Maynard's **Brad Scott** presided over the live auction of gorgeous designer bags. **Manjy Sidoo** made the top bid of \$2,000 for a black leather Christian Dior bag, contributing to the \$30,000 raised.

"Vancouver Opera looks for innovative ways to raise money ... all in the cause of our education programs, which reach about 50,000 young people across the province every year," said **James Wright**, general director of Vancouver Opera. The company will soon present *Jack Pine* to nearly 140 elementary schools.

At the second annual UrbanDiner.ca Awards, held at the Loden Hotel's Voya, several hundred of the city's culinary superstars gathered for the People's Choice of Vanhatten Food Awards. As guests sampled the offerings of executive chef **Marc-André Choquette**, UrbanDiner.ca founder **Paul Kamon** presented awards in 31 categories. Winners included **Robert Belcham**'s Fuel and Campagnolo. Uva Wine Bar picked up nods including two for sommelier **Sebastien Le Goff**. Voya won praise as did its bartender of the year, **Jay Jones**. Le Crocodile, Chambar and Araxi in Whistler were all honoured.

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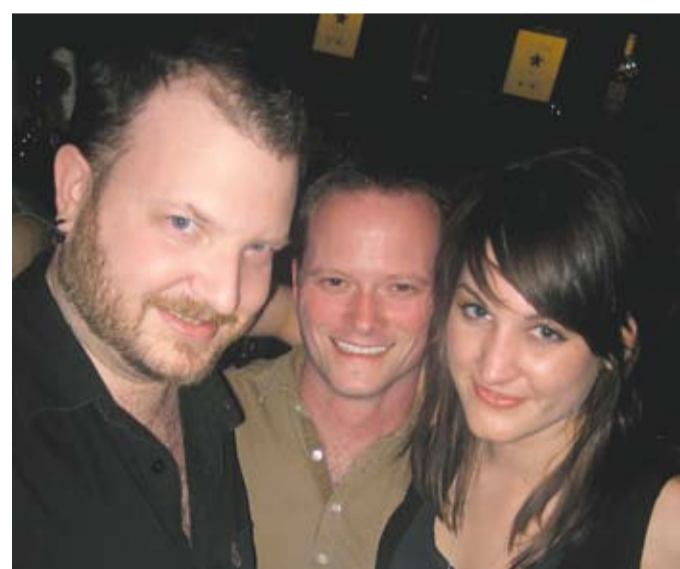
PHOTOS BY FRED LEE FOR NATIONAL POST



First Nations students Tina Kunilusie from Nunavut Arctic College, Brett Croft from Dalhousie University and Lisa deWit from the University of Victoria.



Uva crew of Taryn O'Gorman, Chris Flett and Diana Schade celebrate their wine bar's four wins.



Cobre's Tyson Reimer, Jason Kelly and Avril Tomlin-Hood won the Urban Diner award for best Americas dining.



UrbanDiner.ca founder Paul Kamon toasted Robert Belcham of Fuel, named chef of the year.



Mezzo-soprano Marion Newman, clad in an original outfit by her parents, Edith and Victor Newman; PURSEuasion attendee Sherani Volberg, principal of Pearls Auto Spa, arrived in a Ports 1961 dress and vintage Louis Vuitton bag; Morgan Reynolds and Britta Bentz modelled Ports 1961 spring frocks at the PURSEuasion party; singer-songwriter Susan Aglukark.