

CSE in Vancouver: More than a Meeting

Iain Taylor
Local Arrangements Chair

Iain Taylor and others on the Local Arrangements Committee have been busy preparing for the CSE annual meeting. Some notes from Iain:

Tours

There will be two half-day local trips in conjunction with the CSE annual meeting. Each will occur both before and after the meeting.

- Trip 1: University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology (world-famous for its Pacific Coast collections) and the Botanical Gardens (major collections of Asian and alpine plants), where you will be given a behind-the-scenes look at their operations and a chance to see the public collections.
- Trip 2: The Vancouver Aquarium (with a behind-the-scenes tour of its Pacific Coast collections and the Amazon gallery) and Stanley Park (1,000 acres of forest and park beside the entrance to Vancouver Harbour).

Attractions

May is a spectacular time to be in Vancouver. The city streets, parks, and gardens are ablaze with color. Rhododendrons, dogwoods, late-flowering cherries, and other ornamentals are everywhere. The weather is usually warm and sunny, but nights may be cool. Daytime temperatures may get into the low 20s C (68-72° F).

There are so many things to do and see! The main tourist season will be just starting, so the various destinations will not be too crowded. If you have specific wishes to visit somewhere in particular (Vancouver Island, Grouse Mountain and the North Shore trails, Fraser Canyon, Wine Country, or Whistler, where high-country skiing is still operat-

ing in May) or are thinking of coming by rail or doing something really off the wall, please feel free to send an e-mail to me (iepiep@interchange.ubc.ca). I or one of our Local Arrangements Committee members, who are spread throughout British Columbia, will be able to offer a little first-hand advice or redirect you to those who can share their inside knowledge.

The Hyatt Regency Hotel is at the center of the city within a 2- to 15-min walk of dozens of restaurants, large and small galleries, shopping, and the Sea Bus, which crosses the Harbour every few minutes. The public transit system (buses, Sea Bus, and Sky Train) will get you to your chosen destination for Can\$2.00. Transfers (proof-of-payment tickets) allow you to ride anywhere within the central city region for 90 min.

A "Hookey Desk" will operate throughout the meeting. Here you will find directions and advice on where to eat, shop, explore, or just play hookey.

The Cirque du Soleil is in Vancouver during the meetings (6-30 May). It sold out months before performances in 2003, so anyone interested should go to the Web site soon to check whether tickets are available.

The whale migrations up the west coast of Vancouver Island will be at their peak, so if you are interested in seeing these big mammals you should plan a couple of extra days for your trip. You will require at least a full day (early start and late return from Vancouver), or you can arrive from Vancouver Island or travel home from there.

The season for cruise ships to Alaska is just starting in May, so those who want a cruise should find some reasonable prices. However, it is important to book your plane ticket early because flights from Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, and San Francisco are major carriers for the cruise-ship tourists.



BOB HERGER, VANCOUVER AQUARIUM

Sea Otter

Logistics

Visitors from the United States or other countries pass through customs at the airport. You will definitely need a passport and may require a visa, depending on your citizenship. Check with your travel agent.

The Airporter bus, which travels from the airport to the downtown hotels, costs Can\$12 one way and Can\$18 round trip. Taxis cost Can\$25-35 one way. If there are more than four passengers, the stretch limousines cost about Can\$114 plus gratuities.

Store and restaurant attitudes to paying cash in US dollars are quite varied. However, exchange rates are always poorer there than at the major currency-exchange centers, several of which operate in downtown Vancouver. It really is smart to bring about Can\$50-100 for the first incidentals and then use credit cards for larger expenses.