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Summer of Funny
The best of the not unfunny. Nothing is more subjective than humour... - By Various readers and writers

COVER: People have told me I’m funny, some of them even laugh. Frankly all I do is take what other people have said, written or performed, repeat it and make it my own. Kind of like on that TV show, Canadian Idol. - Jon Parrots

Contradicting Opinions
Whistler under “no obligation” to rezone property to legalize asphalt plant.

World View
Seventeen-year-old Tibetan Buddhist lama visits Sea to Sky Retreat Centre.

Tough Ironman
Cool, wet weather slowed some competitors at annual Penticton race.

Exploring the Elements
Photographer Paul Bride opens a new show at his Squamish gallery.

So-Cal Sound
The Dirty Heads, one of the best new bands of 2010, take the main stage at Live At Squamish.
A world view at Daisy Lake

AN INCARNATE OF ONE OF THE HIGHEST LAMAS IN TIBETAN BUDDHISM VISITS THE SEA TO SKY RETREAT CENTRE

by Amie Barrodale

Roughly 80 people stood waiting on the hillside just above Daisy Lake on Monday, Aug. 23, some time after noon. They lined either side of the road leading up to Sea to Sky Retreat Centre, each holding a kata, a traditional, long white silk scarf. Some spoke to those nearest them in line; some stood quietly. Many wore their best clothes — blue blazers, dresses — because they were awaiting the arrival of Ugyen Tenzin Jigme Lhundrup, or the Yangsi. An incarnate of one of the highest lamas in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, he is 17 years old and about eight feet in circumference and drawn with precision.

“Supposedly I was recognized as Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, but I don’t possess any of his qualities.”

—UGYEN TENZIN JIGME LHUNDROP

making his first tour of the Western world. The tour has taken him through Europe and America and will continue on to Mexico and Asia, but for the moment he was just south of Whistler, making a day trip to Sea to Sky Retreat Centre.

It might have seemed an out-of-the-way place to visit. Sea to Sky comprises 12 structures — a main lodge, a pavilion, a variety of retreat accommodations — and functions entirely off-the-grid, with a staff of five. While it is a comfortable, pleasing modern environment, it does not outwardly appear to be the sort of place that a traveler would include on a 12-country, 10-month world tour.

On the retreat centre’s rocky road, drawn in field chalk, were the auspicious symbols — a conch, a parasel, a lotus, and the five others of the traditional set of eight. The centre’s cook, Blaire, had drawn each the day before. A beautiful 20-something with long blond hair and clear blue eyes, she has a modest demeanor. Asked if she was an artist, she said, “I’m a housekeeper.” She’s one of just a few live-in staff members at the retreat centre, which operates under the directorship of Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, a high lama in the Rime, or non-sectarian, Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

“How long did it take you to do this?” I asked Blaire, pointing to the symbols, they were about eight feet in circumference and drawn with precision.

“About an hour each symbol.”

“Had you ever done it before?”

“No, but we had a book with the outlines. I think they’re the kind of drawing where you can get it wrong and it still looks good.” I searched her drawings for imperfections and shook my head. She said, “I had done five of them on Saturday, but then it rained and washed them away, so I had to do them again.”

It was close to 2 p.m. when a small floatplane landed on Daisy Lake. The guests, having stood on the roadside for a little under an hour, had sort of begun to think the Yangsi might never arrive, and so when he appeared at the bottom of the road, many of them didn’t notice and continued to speak to each other. It was only when the Yangsi’s mentor, Rabjam Rinpoche, came chugging up the hillside, mock-winded, that everyone turned.

Rabjam Rinpoche, a tall and handsome lama just turned 40, the abbot of Shechen monastery in Nepal, pretended to be out of breath. He made sort of a comic portrait of exhaustion, panting something like a TinTin character, and said to the Yangsi, “You’re young.” Together, the two began to make their way up the road, followed by their small party, which included author and photographer Matthieu Ricard and Buddhist scholar Changling Rinpoche.

They were led to the main house, to a large-windowed, spacious living room overlooking the lake, furnished invitingly with broad couches, well-tended houseplants, cut lilies and bookshelves lined with books on philosophy, history, photography, and Buddhism. In the kitchen, divided from the main room by screens, several people prepared trays of quinoa and sautéed vegetables for the guests. After the trays were served the guests, having stood and conversed with their honoured guests.

They talked about the local wildlife; they talked about nutrition. Rabjam Rinpoche told a story of a Buddhist painting being torn off a wall by a bear. The painting, marked by handprints of the Yangsi’s predecessor, was also marked by the bear, who pressed its paws below the master’s.
Buddhist visit

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The Yangsi’s predecessor, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, is often affectionately remembered by those who met him for his extraordinary size. He was seven feet tall. His current incarnation, at something under 5 foot 6, has said, “Supposedly I was recognized as Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, but I don’t possess any of his qualities. This is not something I’m saying to impress you guys, it is just the truth. He was a giant, and I am very short. He was good looking, and I — well, you can just forget about it.”

Actually, the Yangsi is quite good-looking, with the face and demeanor of an old-world Chinese emperor, broad shoulders, and an uncommonly open and looking, with the face and demeanor of I am very short. He was good looking, and guys; it is just the truth. He was a giant, and is not something I’m saying to impress you recognized as Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, under 5 foot 6, has said, “Supposedly I was his extraordinary size. He was seven feet remembered by those who met him for Khyentse Rinpoche, is often affectionately DURANGO’S EXCEPTIONS STAND OUT DURANGO, Colo. — Numbers remain squishy, but all evidence points toward an increasingly diverse population in Durango and its hinterlands. Four-fifths of people are white non-Hispanics, which may not seem all that terribly diverse. After all, Durango was once part of Mexico and even now sits relatively close to both the Ute and Navajo tribal lands.

Still, the evidence turned up by the Durango Telegraph suggests a greater melting pot — or at least a stew. Many of those who would count as being minorities in Durango stand out in that crowd, but they don’t seem to object.

Consider Kathy Huntsinger, a native of the Dominican Republic, who arrived