



## **Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival's Haiku Invitational Contest Returns!**

Newsflash! The first cherry blossoms of the year are blooming in Stanley Park and they're harkening Vancouver's annual Cherry Blossom Haiku Contest.

**(March 10, 2014)** Every year, Vancouver's Haiku Invitational contest receives submissions from all over the world. The contest returns to Vancouver March 1st and will receive haiku submissions until June 2nd. Celebrated Canadian haiku author, Marco Fraticelli, will judge this year's contest.

The theme of this year's contest is "**Meet your neighbours**". We would like contestants to explain to us, through haiku, the many ways cherry blossoms bring them closer to their family, friends, community and co-workers.

**What is a haiku?** A haiku is a traditional type of Japanese poetry that consists of 17 syllables in 3 lines of 5-7-5.

**What's new this year?** The contest has a new Vancouver category for local competitors. Its other categories are: B.C., Canada, United States, International and Youth.

Winning poems will be celebrated in a number of ways. They will be:

- Featured in the Vancouver Courier
- Read at Cherry Jam Downtown and Sakura Days Japan Fair by Bard on the Beach Young Shakespearean participants (approx. 14,000 people attend the two events)
- Published in the Victoria-based Leaf Press hand bound chapbook
- Published online in Ripples (American magazine)
- Published in 'The Bulletin'
- Posted on the Festival website
- Read by Christopher Gaze at the VSO Tea & Trumpets Concert on March 20th

The 2013 winners are (the contact information of the winners is available to interested media outlets upon request):

**Best British Columbia Poem:** Julie Emerson, Vancouver, BC

**Best Youth Poem:** Iris Liu, age 12, Vancouver, BC

**Best Canada Haiku:** Marco Fraticelli, Pointe-Claire, Quebec

**Best International Haiku:** Leah Ann Sullivan, Nagoya, Japan

**Best United States Haiku:** Robert Michael Drouilhet, Picayune, Mississippi

**More about the judge:** Mr. Fraticelli was born in Montreal in 1945 and he has been writing haiku for almost 40 years. For most of that time he has served on the executive of Haiku

Canada. Among his books of haiku are 'Night Coach' and 'Voyeur' (Guernica Editions) and 'Drifting' (Catkin Press).

**More about the contest:** Since 2006, the Invitational has attracted some 6,000 submissions from 39 countries. Past submissions have arrived from as faraway as Australia, Bangladesh, Croatia, France, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, Malta, New Zealand, Nigeria, Poland, Romania, Russia, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The **Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival** celebrates our urban nature. VCBF is a charitable not-for-profit organization with the objective to sustain and renew Vancouver's cherry tree heritage, while educating and actively engaging diverse communities in local arts and culture to celebrate the fragile beauty of the iconic cherry blossom.

Linda Poole, VCBF Executive Director	604-767-9044	<a href="mailto:linda.poole@telus.net">linda.poole@telus.net</a>
Terry Ann Carter, Haiku Judge	250-474-0203	<a href="mailto:terryanncarter3@gmail.com">terryanncarter3@gmail.com</a>

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