

Lower Island NEWS

An Independent Democratic Socialist Newspaper Serving the Lower Island Area for 26 Years

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Victoria, BC



Canada Geese flock landing on Lost Lagoon with a new "visitor".

Spring

Poem and photos
by Peter Woods



Cackling Canada Geese arriving on Lost Lagoon

There is a Rhythm to Spring
A beat -
A chorus -
A rush.

It is both steady movement and turbulent flow,
Arrivals and departures -
Shifts in old routines.



Female Anna's Hummingbird feeding her two nestlings.



Anna's Hummingbird in the Community Garden.

Spring is -
A wild flowering.
It is the pairing of living things -

It is a new voice.
It can be felt and seen,
Breathed in, tasted, smelled, listened to, and heard.



Sanderling: A first winter bird takes time out from feeding for a quick stretch, at the entrance to First Narrows in Stanley Park

It is a season of movement and growth -
A season of unfolding -
A season of expanding -
And renewal.



Adult Bald Eagle landng, with talons ready.

Spring is a dance
With an invisible choreographer, and many dancers.

The sun and moon play their parts in the heavens.
Wind and water move magically -
Exchanging roles -
And partners.

Peter Woods lives in Vancouver and photographs the wildlife at Lost Lagoon, Beaver Lake and Stanley Park.

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Nanaimo grandmother to attend historic African gathering

Nanaimo grandmother Donna Anthony has been selected to join a delegation of more than 40 Canadian grandmothers, including Sally Gellard of Merville, and Gloria Herbert of Hornby Island, heading to Swaziland this May.

Anthony will attend the first international African Grandmothers' Gathering on African soil in order to help tackle the great challenges of raising grandchildren orphaned by AIDS. On May 8 -- the eve of Mother's Day -- she will join in a march of solidarity that is expected to attract thousands.

"I am incredibly honoured and excited to be attending this historic event," said Anthony. "The courage, determination and ingenuity of our African counterparts in the face of AIDS is awe-inspiring. These women are holding together the continent -- and this event will be powerful!"

Funded by the Stephen Lewis Foundation and hosted by an organization called Swaziland Positive Living, the African Grandmothers' Gathering will present the first significant opportunity for African grandmothers to share their experience and skills, celebrate their accomplishments and define the path forward.

The Canadian delegation will represent more than 5,000 women from across the country involved in the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign. They will participate in the event alongside African grandmothers from 40 projects supported by the Foundation in 15 countries.

The Canadians have also been invited to visit grandmothers in their own communities. Upon their return to Canada, they will share their experience in order to raise awareness of the needs of African grandmothers and the work of grassroots organizations to change their lives and those of their grandchildren.

Anthony has been active in women's equality issues for many years. She has three grandchildren, and is a founding member of the Nan Go Grannies that has been active since May, 2005. Stephen Lewis had embarked on a series of interviews in the media, and his vivid descriptions of horrific conditions suffered by women and children due to the AIDS pandemic in Africa inspired her, as it has thousands of others.

She says, "It was as if the Grandmothers themselves were speaking to us and the call to take action in solidarity with these amazing women was urgent and compelling." It moved her to call a meeting of friends and neighbours and the Nan Go Grannies was launched.

The Nan Go Grannies has a dozen active members and about 80 supporters in the Nanaimo area. They have raised more than \$55,000 to date through events such as book and yard sales, beer and burger nights, dinner parties, and direct donations.

This year, BC Grandmother groups were honoured to receive the Rosemary Brown Award for international work toward women's equality. The next fund-raising event is a wonderful collaboration between the Group and local artists who have painted Muskoka chairs and benches in brilliant designs to be sold at auction, with apples and entertainment, on May 1 at the Cavallotti Hall.

Anthony and the other delegates are urgently seeking donations of Aeroplan miles to get the delegation of Canadians to Swaziland and home again. Through its Beyond Miles program, Aeroplan facilitates the donation of miles by Aeroplan members to the Stephen Lewis Foundation year-round to offset ongoing travel costs.

Miles for the Swaziland gathering should be donated through the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign website at www.grandmotherscampaign.org.

The Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign was launched on March 7, 2006. The first international Grandmothers' Gathering took place in August of that year when, with the support of Aeroplan, the Stephen Lewis Foundation brought 100 grandmothers from sub-Saharan Africa to meet with 200 Canadian grandmothers on the eve of the XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto. Donna attended the historic Gathering of the Grandmothers in Toronto along with Ycha Gill, another Nan Go Grannie. She says it was a life-changing experience, "as the Swaziland Gathering promises to be".

Today the Campaign boasts hundreds of groups across the country and more than \$7 million has been raised.

Individuals wishing to start or join a Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign group in their community should contact Helen Silbiger at campaign@stephenlewisfoundation.org or 1-888-203-9990 ext. 230. Locally, contact Becky: 250.751-0165

The Stephen Lewis Foundation supports grassroots organizations that are turning the tide of HIV/AIDS in Africa by providing care and support to women, orphaned children, grandmothers and people living with HIV and AIDS.

"Anyone who believes exponential growth can go on forever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist."
-- Kenneth Boulding



Grandmother cares for grandchildren, orphaned by HIV.

Raging Grannies dump blood on ministry building

One hundred and fifty outraged community members took to the streets in downtown Victoria April 9 to support the "Raging Grannies" as they dumped blood in front of the Ministry of Housing and Social Development to symbolize the suffering that recent cuts to social spending are creating for this community.

The Victoria Coalition Against Poverty (VCAP) organized the rally that started in front of the Ministry of Health and marched through the streets to the Ministry of Housing and Social Development where activists heard speeches, chanted slogans, played music and shared a free meal. The event was dubbed "The Olympic Party's Over" by organizers who cite the \$6 billion Olympic spectacle as a major reason for the gutting of services.

"Now that the \$6 billion Olympic party is over, this government needs to stop ignoring the needs marginalized populations," said rally organizer Danielle Hagel. "We demand the Campbell government stop its attack on

the social welfare of our communities. We refuse to let the needs of our community be ignored."

Activists specifically criticized the provincial government for cutting \$25 million dollars from income assistance programs including a reduction in dental visits, and the cancellation of the province's minimum shelter allowance.

"Cutting social spending hurts our entire community," said Hagel. "Investing a small amount of money now into harm reduction, welfare and disability programs will save millions of dollars in health care costs and prevent many long term social problems."

Speakers at the rally included representatives from Harm Reduction Victoria, the Committee to End Homelessness, the Community Support Network and the Action Committee of People with Disabilities. All of them called on the province to make a meaningful commitment to protecting the rights of poor and working class people.



Complete with a large inflated bear, Victoria residents gather in front of the Royal Bank in downtown Victoria to protest bank's funding of the tar sands.

Royal Bank told to get out of the tar sands by protestors

VICTORIA:--Victoria residents gathered outside of Royal Bank of Canada's Victoria headquarters March 3 to tell the bank to "Get Out of the Tar Sands".

The action was one of several occurring across Canada, and coincided with RBC's annual shareholder meeting that was held earlier March 3 in Toronto.

"RBC clients and individual shareholders might be interested to know that their bank is the largest financier of Alberta's tar sands, the most destructive project on earth," says Eric Swanson, Dogwood's Corporate Campaigner. (1)

The massive tar sands projects are holding Canada back from meaningful action on climate change. Pollution from the tar sands is thought to be the cause of increased levels of certain rare types of cancer in downstream communities. Aboriginal communities in Alberta, and along tar sands related pipeline routes, are becoming increasingly aggressive in their opposition to tar sands expansion.

Concerned Citizens and First Nation representatives attended RBC's annual shareholder meeting to deliver a message that responsibility for damage caused by the tar sands doesn't stop with the oil companies; it is shared by the banks and investors that finance the industry.

"\$1 held in an RBC bank account does more to fuel climate change than the same dollar in any other Canadian bank," says Swanson. "We're encouraging RBC clients to consider switching to a credit union -- such as VanCity -- that does not invest in the tar sands."

In 2008 RBC put \$3 million into their "Blue Water Project", a charitable initiative designed to protect fresh water sources. In the same year RBC fi-

nanced an estimated minimum of \$641 million of capital used by oil and gas companies operating in the Alberta tar sands, the extraction process for which uses approximately three barrels of fresh water for every barrel of oil produced.


- An estimate of RBC's total fossil fuel financing based on public records shows over \$50 billion financed across all business lines in 2007. The participants in the March 3 events emphasized that RBC has a choice: they can finance renewable, green energy instead of the tar sands.

- RBC is also the second largest financier of Enbridge Inc., the company proposing a tar sands pipeline and tanker project to BC's coast. If that project ever made it to the financing stage, RBC would have the choice to provide financing or not. If they were to provide financing, this would directly implicate them in a project opposed by several of BC's First Nations, and 72% of British Columbians overall (Poll: Synovate 2008).

- The Rainforest Action Network, based out of San Francisco, is coordinating a campaign that seeks better financing policies from RBC. The group's past success includes improved policies from Bank of America and CitiGroup, which recognize the unique role and rights of indigenous communities.

- Unlike TD Bank, RBC has said they will not recognize the right of indigenous communities to free, prior, and informed consent with regards to activities that they finance.

(1) Research conducted by San Francisco-based Rainforest Action Network.



**Bill Bontley, MLA
Cowichan Valley**

Community Office Hours
Tuesday to Friday
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

279 Trunk Road Duncan
Phone 250-715-6127
Fax: 250-715-0139
Email bill.bontley@leg.bc.ca
www.billbontley.ca
Mailing Address:
PO Box 999 Duncan, BC V9L 2Z9

"Anyone who believes exponential growth can go on forever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist."
-- Kenneth Boulding



Carole James, MLA

**"My Community Office
is open to assist you"**

Tel: 250.952.4211
carole.james.mla@leg.bc.ca
1064 Fort Street (near Fort & Cook)

Security deposits: it’s your money

By Thea McDonagh

The tenant advocates at Together Against Poverty Society (TAPS) often speak with tenants who have not had their security deposits returned to them after moving out of a rental home. Many of these people believe there is no recourse available to them if a landlord decides not to return their money. But this is not true; there is recourse. As tenant advocates our job is to educate people on their rights and responsibilities as tenants. This article will focus on tenants’ rights and responsibilities regarding security deposits.

How much can a landlord charge for deposits?

A landlord can charge no more than one half the monthly rent as a security deposit. The landlord can also charge the same amount as a pet deposit should the tenants have pets. The landlord can only charge one pet deposit regardless of how many pets the tenant has. Note: A landlord is not obligated to accept pets and can put restrictions on the number, kind and size of any pet they do accept.

When do I have to pay my security deposit?

The security deposit is typically due when the tenancy commences. If the security deposit is not paid within 30 days of the start of tenancy, the landlord can serve the tenant with a notice to end the tenancy.

Can I use my security deposit to pay my rent?

A tenant may use all or part of their security deposit to pay their rent *only* with the written consent of the landlord.

Do I have to do a condition inspection?

The condition inspection report outlines the condition of the rental premises before the tenant moves in and after they move out. It is how a landlord can prove if any damage was done to the unit by the tenant. If the tenant does not participate in the condition inspection either at the beginning of the tenancy or at the end they may extinguish any right to have their security deposit returned to them.

What if my landlord does not do a condition inspection?

A landlord must offer the tenant at least two different opportunities to do a condition inspection *and* provide the tenant with a copy of the report within a reasonable time after the inspection is completed. If the landlord does not do either of these things, their right to keep the security deposit is extinguished. It is the landlord’s obligation to perform the condition inspection. If your landlord does not do one with you, you may want to take some pictures of the condition of the unit before you move in and after you move out in case there is a dispute in the future.

How do I get my security deposit back?

After the tenancy ends, the tenant must provide the landlord with a forwarding address in writing. After you have moved out and the landlord has received your forwarding address, the landlord has 15 days to either return your security deposit to you plus interest or make an application at the Residential Tenancy Branch to keep the security deposit. If the landlord does not do either of these things within 15 days and the tenant has not agreed in writing that the landlord can keep the security deposit, the landlord must pay the tenant double the amount of the deposit.

I had a landlord a year ago who didn’t return my security deposit to me. Can I still get it back?

A tenant has up to two years to make an application at the Residential Tenancy Branch to have their security deposit returned to them.

What if I never got a written tenancy agreement from my landlord?

It is always recommended that tenants pay their rent and deposits by cheque or money order. However, if you have paid



NDP Leader Carole James meets with members of Branch 127, Royal Canadian Legion in Victoria. The BC Liberal government notified the Legion that they would have to pay \$26,000 in annual rent, starting this summer. The government backed down!

CAAR applauds Strathcona Regional District’s denial of zoning for Grieg Seafood Gunner Point open net-cage salmon farm

CAMPBELL RIVER – Member groups of the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR) are pleased that the Strathcona Regional District (SRD) has denied zoning to Grieg Seafood for a massive new open net-cage salmon farm at Gunner Point in the northern Georgia Strait area.

“This decision is the first step in reducing the burden on wild salmon not only from this area, but all juvenile salmon that migrate through the northern Georgia Strait,” according to Michelle Young of Georgia Strait Alliance. “There is great concern that Fraser

River sockeye may be infected with lice from net-cage salmon farms in this area, so it is essential that the regional government continue to act to restrict the proliferation of open net-cages on a migration route of so many important salmon runs.”

Conditions were previously applied to the Gunner Point zoning in an attempt to leverage the industry toward closed containment. Although the remoteness of Gunner Point is not an ideal site for a closed containment facility, the SRD has sent a very strong message that closed containment is the only acceptable direction for the salmon aquaculture industry in BC.

CAAR member groups, along with hundreds of local citizens concerned about the effects of open net cage salmon farms, participated in two public hearings and made numerous written submissions expressing serious concerns about the likely impacts of expanding the open net-cage salmon farm industry.


“We commend the SRD for exercising their responsibility to protect the marine

environment from net-cage salmon farms, consistent with the expressed concerns of their constituents and their call for both Provincial and Federal governments to transition the salmon farming industry to closed containment technology,” commented Will Soltau of Living Oceans Society.

“The SRD recognizes the importance of wild salmon to BC’s economy, as well as the importance of promoting sustainable aquaculture alternatives,” adds Young. “We look forward to continuing our work with industry,

the SRD, and all levels of government, to phase out environmentally destructive net-cage farms and to foster the development of a vibrant, newly-emerging closed containment aquaculture industry in BC.”

Readers can obtain more information from Michelle Young, at Georgia Strait Alliance, by phone 250-757-8464 or email michelle@georgiastrait.org; Ruby Berry, Georgia Strait Alliance, 250-218-6818 or ruby@georgiastrait.org; Will Soltau, Living Oceans Society, 250-973-6580,



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cash and have no tenancy agreement to prove what you paid, verbal agreements are still considered binding, and there may also be other ways to prove your tenancy relationship. Come into TAPS and the tenant advocates will do their best to help you get your money back.

If you have any questions about your damage deposit or your tenancy in general, contact Thea or John at TAPS at 250-361-3521.

Note: Some excerpts taken from the Residential Tenancy Branch.

Thea McDonagh is an advocate at Together Against Poverty.

“This so called affluent society is an ugly society still. It is a vulgar society. It is a meretricious society. It is a society in which priorities have gone all wrong.”

--Aneurin Bevan, 1897-1960. British Labour

Our view:

New focus on the real issues needed

Spring! Time for renewal and looking forward -- a time of hope for a better world. We have had many such times; the end of the cold war and the breaching of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was a time for renewal -- and, through the last decade of the 20th Century it seemed as though it was happening. Apartheid ended in South Africa, Europe became one community and some politicians even began to recognize that environmental policies were like holding a gun to the head of humanity and playing Russian roulette. The 2000 Millennium gave another burst of euphoria -- but then, in 2001, it all began to unravel and the 21st Century looked bleak.

First 9/11, then Afghanistan, the invasion of Iraq and the subsequent wars of attrition. Then, the whole financial house of cards built on corporate greed and *laissez-faire* government came crashing down, burying the hopes and lives of millions of people worldwide. Not that we were all blameless -- too many people believed the siren calls of money marketeers and “wealth management advisors”, falling into the trap of believing that they could get something for nothing and the good times would roll forever.

So, here we are, at the end of a pretty dismal first decade of the 21st Century and looking hopefully at the first springtime of the second.

But, if we Canadians, and the human race in general, are going to do better, we had better smarten up. The world is approaching a tipping point and in the next decade we have to get it right -- but to do so we have to confront some issues, no matter how unpalatable, and do some serious thinking “outside the box”. Two things we have to confront and understand are the new “Realpolitik” and the effects of global poverty.

There is a new political order in the world which does not seem to have permeated the minds of many politicians and people in North America and Europe. US Presidents used to talk of an “evil empire” and “axis of evil”, but what exists now is a new axis of power and influence. That axis is a crescent from China through South Asia and India to Africa. China, India and the emerging economies of South East Asia account for about half the world’s population and are hungry for resources -- and power. Many of those resources are in Africa, and China pursues them with single-minded pragmatism, undisturbed by concerns of human rights or other moral baggage as it strikes deals for oil in the Sudan or strategic minerals in Zimbabwe. While we in the West make memorials to our young soldiers who die “fighting for the freedom of Afghanistan” as one CBC report put it, we may be assured that China will not be spilling the blood of a single soldier for the freedom of anyone.

This is not to say that Canada and other western nations should abandon moral purpose in what we do, but we need to take a good hard look at what we are doing and why.

One recent example must have left many people confused. The naval dockyard at Esquimalt just bought a new special crane. Despite federal Conservative talk of stimulus packages and that this was taxpayer-funded defence expenditure, the contract went to a Finnish company. However, the Finns bought the crane in China and it is being installed here by the Chinese workers who made it. Not a single job created in Canada or a penny of that taxpayer money spent here. We just don’t get it, do we? This is not xenophobia or protectionism but a need for plain common sense

Another dire prediction for the next decade and beyond concerns the baby boomers. Those born from 1946 onward (one of the most privileged generations ever; funded by the taxes of the previous generation) will start to swell the ranks of retirees within the next few months. We are told they will overwhelm the public healthcare and old age security system. Meanwhile financial institutions target them with lifestyle ads of sleek, happy retiring boomers enjoying ski slopes, tropical beaches and golf, while the institutions handle boomer “wealth management”. No-one has suggested that instead of ski slopes and beaches, some boomers “wealth” should support the soon to be overwhelmed public healthcare system and other tax supported structures, instead of them howling for ever more tax cuts.

Then there is global poverty. Poverty and the hopelessness it breeds is at least partly responsible for the steady stream of frustrated, uneducated unemployed young men who see in Islamic radicalism the only escape from their dismal lives.

High minded purpose or no, we in the West will not be able to bomb, rocket or shoot our way through the steady stream of new recruits to the Taliban or other jihadist causes. Exploding populations in the Middle East and beyond, allied with poverty and, rightly or wrongly, a sense of grievance and injustice, can tie down our army and others for years to come. Grieving relatives of Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan understandably call for Canada to “stay and finish the job”. But we have to be careful what we wish for. The IRA, which never amounted to more than a fraction of the conventional forces mobilized against them, tied down to the British Army in Northern Ireland for 25 years and, finally, the only solution was a negotiated settlement. Likewise, in South Africa and a dozen other places.

So is all hope lost? Not if we get a new focus on the real issues, and honestly recognize what we must do and what we are able to do, stripped of moralizing and hypocrisy yet maintaining a genuine commitment to our values. --DJO

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As others see it

Taxes: The new black?

By Bruce Campbell

Now that Canada is in the fiscal red, taxes appear to be coming back into fashion.

A surprisingly broad swath of Canadians – and not your usual suspects – are musing aloud about the need to raise taxes to tackle the deficit and to pay for the things we care most about, such as public health care.

Almost three out of five Canadian CEOs surveyed in March say higher taxes are needed to get the country back into the fiscal black.

Recently John Manley, former Liberal finance minister and now head of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, said it’s time to raise the GST.

At the end of the recent Liberal party thinkfest, Leader Michael Ignatieff showed that party is finally coming to grips with the reality of taxes. He said Canada can’t afford to rush ahead with any more corporate tax cuts.

For the first time in more than 15 years, Canadians are beginning to rethink the tax cut agenda that dwarfed all other public policy discussions.

It’s more out of sober necessity than anything. Tax cuts cost us more than we can afford. The OECD estimates that between 1995 and 2005, tax cuts reduced Canadian government revenue capacity by \$50 billion per year.

Since the Harper government came to power in 2006, its super-charged tax cut agenda reduced *federal* revenue by an additional \$34 billion in 2009-10 alone – and that price tag keeps ballooning. To put it into perspective, the federal government’s 2009-10 deficit is estimated at \$53.8 billion.

In its 2010 budget, the Harper government confirmed yet another round of corporate tax cuts that will cost the public treasury \$20 billion over the next five years. To pay for those tax cuts, the Harper government is unleashing a round of public service cuts and holding back on \$4.5 billion in aid to the poorest nations on earth.

Tax cuts are hamstringing our ability to pay for the things Canadians want and need while privileging those who are already doing very well.

Our research shows that over the past 15 years Canada’s tax system – federal, provincial, territorial and municipal – has undergone massive reconstructive surgery.

Our tax system used to be more progressive. The richest 10% – those best positioned to contribute to the well-being and quality of Canadian life – used to pay progressively more in taxes than middle- and low-income taxpayers.

Not anymore. It has become regressive at the top. And shockingly, the richest 1% of Canadians now pay less as a portion of their income than the poorest 10%.

The vast majority of Canadians have been the net losers. Tax cuts have compromised Canadian public services: whittling away our social safety net, diminishing the quality of our public education and health care systems, and eroding our basic transportation and communication infrastructure.

It’s time to bring fairness back into Canada’s tax system. As conservative historian Michael Bliss recently wrote:

“Inequality of compensation has soared in our time, as the rich have become much richer and much less taxed. Higher taxes on high incomes would begin to narrow the immense chasm that has opened up between the über-rich and the ordinary North American.”

The first step is to make Corporate Canada part of the solution, instead of being part of the problem. It starts with reversing broad based cuts to Canada’s corporate income tax system. These cuts do nothing for corporations whose profits have been obliterated by the economic crisis. They benefit profitable companies, notably banks and oil companies, who are more likely to build up cash balances, take over other companies or buy back their own shares instead of making real job creating investments.

The second step is to bring fairness back into Canada’s personal income tax system, beginning with a new higher tax rate for those with incomes over \$250,000 a year.

Reversing the Harper GST cuts is also important. The additional \$12 billion a year that our federal coffers would gain from restoring the GST to 7% (with an expanded tax credit to protect low-income earners) could build a national pharmacare program and a home care program for our senior citizens. It could fund a national child-care program for the next generation of young Canadians. It could plant the seeds for a green economy.

They say timing is everything. Any move to increase taxes will need to be phased in once Canada’s fragile economic recovery takes firmer root. But that Canadians are finally starting to have an adult conversation about taxation -- instead of only seeing red -- is a healthy sign. It bodes well for Canada’s future.

Bruce Campbell is executive director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. The BC office of CCPA is located at 1400-207 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1H7, phone 604-801-5121 and fax 604-801-5122.

We welcome your letters to the editor, as well as articles and reviews, photos, and anything else you think would be of interest to our progressive readers.

Please mail them to the Editor, at Box 311-2750 Quadra Street, Victoria, BC, V8T 4E8, email them to dale_young@telus.net, or phone 250-384-7621.

The DEADLINE to submit material for the next issue is
Friday, May 28, 2010

Interest on public debt costs \$170 million a day

Canadians paid \$170 million per day in 2008/09 in unnecessary interest on federal, provincial and municipal debt. The cost for 2009/10 and subsequent years will likely be higher. These costs are reflected in taxes, fees, cut-backs in public services such as education and Medicare and deterioration of infrastructure such as roads, sewers, water lines and affordable housing.

If our government had been using its own bank, the Bank of Canada, as it should have for the past 35 years, we would not be in this situation. From 1867 to 1974 the accumulated federal debt amounted to \$18 billion, and during that time we paid for two world wars and other smaller ones, built the trans-Canada highway, contributed to construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, built housing, provided funds for our veterans to go to school, brought in the Canada Pension Plan and made Medicare a national service.

In 1974 the government, which had been borrowing from its own bank since 1938 at near zero interest, decided to borrow less from there and more from the private sector at market rates of interest. The result was a huge increase in federal debt from \$18-billion to \$588 billion in 1997, with a total debt for all levels of government of over \$900 billion.

In 2009 federal debt stood at \$464-billion, but by 2015 it will be up to \$622-billion. Federal debt charges, currently at \$31 billion, will grow accordingly and based on previous figures the total debt charges for

all levels of government will be about double the federal charges.

Economists tell us there are only three ways to reduce the deficit: grow the economy, raise taxes or **cut expenses**. We could cut back on public services such as health care, education, housing and infrastructure. That would save a bundle, but it would also make life for most Canadians much more difficult. BUT WAIT! Instead of cutting services we could cut interest paid on the public debt. The federal government can do this by borrowing from its own Bank at near zero interest, and to prevent the creation of too much money it can bring back the statutory reserves. This would lead to a reduction in the profits of the commercial banks and less income for holders of government bonds, but most Canadians would be unaffected.

Government's indebtedness to private financiers gives that sector undue influence on government policy, leading to decisions which benefit the interests of the private sector foremost rather than that of the community as a whole.

To reduce the influence of the private sector and to save taxpayers billions of dollars every year we should only elect politicians who support using the Bank of Canada for financing public debt and restoring the statutory reserves.

Richard Priestman
Committee on Moneary and Economic Reform, Kingston Chapter

Open letter to Mayor Dean Fortin about poor bashing in mainstream media

The efforts being done by your office to solve our homelessness issue are remarkable and encouraging. I support you in doing everything you can to house the homeless.

A major factor in dealing with the homeless issue is having the public on your side. I am deeply concerned that our mainstream newspaper in Victoria is using poor-bashing tactics to turn public sympathy against the poor and homeless in Victoria. An article by Dave Obee in the *Times Colonist* of December 2009, "Moving the Homeless to a More Affordable City", is a cruel attack on the character and integrity of homeless individuals. His bigotted article preaches intolerance, advocating that we just shove the homeless out of the city like lepers. This is hate-mongering, pure and simple. I am still appalled and sickened by Obee's diatribe.

Another recent *Times Colonist* editorial (probably by Obee) "End Welfare Wednesday" is a searing attack on the poor, making them out to be irresponsible slobs. It is full of odious comments about the poor and absolute lies about very vulnerable people.

This kind of newspaper content that is so prejudiced and inflammatory turns public sympathy against the homeless population. Here is the danger of the *Times Colonist's* ignorant content: It incites people's hate and anger and plays to the worst parts of human nature. Just take a look at the online comments after Obee's article to see a truly scary and vicious outflow of public comments skewering the homeless.

This should be of grave concern to you and city council. At a time when you badly need public sympathy on your side to house our homeless population, the *Times Colonist* is doing its best to turn the tide against you. You can be sure that these kinds of articles undermine people's perceptions of the homeless and erode any positive attitudes citizens may have towards the poor and vulnerable. This seriously thwarts your efforts to house our homeless population.

I believe that the biggest obstacle you face in getting homes for poor people is those ignorant public attitudes fuelled by false beliefs. This is what makes it difficult to get funding and private and public partnerships. Never underestimate the power of these pernicious stereotypes in our society and the power of the media to perpetuate and inflame them.

As a very concerned citizen about this negative media coverage, I am asking that you take my concerns seriously and relay them to your council members. I am requesting that you and your council take some steps to address this problem with the *Times Colonist* – a letter to them about the detrimental effects of their coverage about people who are poor and homeless. (For your information, I have already voiced my concerns to the TC Publisher, Editor-in-Chief, and Dave Obee himself.)

Doreen Marion Gee, BS
Professional writer, author, activist
Victoria

BC's new *Police Act* takes effect --but nothing much changes

Minor amendments to the police complaint process actually preserve a seriously biased system

March 31, the Solicitor General's department released an upbeat media release about BC's complaint process for municipal police: see www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010PSSG0019-000364.htm

The trouble is, nothing substantial has changed. Cops will continue to investigate cops. Their investigation is reviewed by people very close to the cops. This isn't just a problem for municipal police accountability. The 2012 contract to renew RCMP services in BC might put Mounties under exactly the same system.

I've been through the process. I've found Vancouver Police Professional Standards sets out in advance to find the police are 100 percent right and the complainant 100 percent wrong. Their almost unbelievably sloppy investigation gets rubber-stamped in an almost unbelievably sloppy review by the ex-cops at BC's Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner. Nothing in the new legislation will reform this seriously biased process.

These guys simply don't care how obvious they are. They're really complacent and with good reason. No one -- absolutely no one at all -- can call for a review of an OPCC decision. That's because the police complaint commissioner is one of a very few people who have been named an independent officer of the legislature. There might be sound reasons why independent officers are independent. But we should ask whether police complaint commissioner Stan Lowe and his staff are the right people to enjoy such immunity.

As a Crown attorney, Lowe took part in the decision to clear the YVR4, stating that it was "reasonable and necessary" to Taser Robert Dziekanski five times. Just one week later, Lowe was appointed police complaint commissioner.

Almost all his staff are ex-cops. Deputy police complaint commissioner Bruce M. Brown was an RCMP officer for 32 years. Rollic Woods used to head Vancouver Po-

lice Professional Standards, which conducts heavily biased internal investigations. Hiring Woods was an egregious decision even by OPCC standards, and strongly suggests cronyism and a commitment to biased work.

In a fairly recent development, police are sometimes investigated by officers from another police force. But, as Quebec ombudsperson Raymonde Saint-Germain has said, police bonds transcend municipal boundaries. BC's police community is tightly knit. Rollic Woods, for example, is a former colleague of Solicitor General Kash Heed, Victoria Police Chief Jamie Graham and many Vancouver police officers. He likely has lots of buddies scattered throughout BC police forces.

The case for civilian investigation of police has been made by a number of authorities including Vancouver lawyer Cameron Ward and Ontario ombudsman Andre Marin (the former head of Ontario's Special Investigations Unit): see www.bcpolicecomplaints.org/media.html#civilians

Not mentioned in the Solicitor General's media release, the OPCC is about to hire, or has just hired, five new people to review police internal investigations. It will be interesting to know if they're former police officers and if they come from BC's tightly knit police community.

The 2012 contract to renew RCMP services in BC might put Mounties under the OPCC's oversight. That would do nothing to improve RCMP accountability.

Finally, it's interesting to ask why two warring political parties united on the astonishing appointment of Stan Lowe, and on minor legislative amendments that preserve a seriously biased process. The explanation might be a powerful police lobby: www2.canada.com/vancouvercourier/news/opinion/story.html?id=7f5d7fe8-84c1-44b2-a6de-451342d09ae4

Read more about the police lobby here: http://www.bcpolicecomplaints.org/andre_marin2.html#lobby2

Greg Klein
Vancouver

All concerned about quality education urged to attend school board meetings

The Victoria Public Education Coalition (VPEC) is a community-based organization representing stake-holders, parents and interested community members. We are dedicated to insure there is a fully funded, high quality public education system in our region.

The provincial budget allocation for K-12 education will see the percentage of provincial government support reduced from 26.3% in 1991-92 to 15.34% this year. The government's dictum of balanced budgets forces trustees to disregard their obligation "to defend, protect and nurture the quality of public education" as sworn when taking the oath of office.

Furthermore, the current budget process is neither transparent nor accountable, underscoring VPEC's conclusion that the majority of SD 61 trustees is not prepared to fulfill their pledge of office.

VPEC also decries that the proposed budget removes funding for staff training and support to the Reconnecting Youth Project, and the Learning Initiatives will have a reduction of one teacher. \$8 million will be drawn from the reserve fund to cover the shortfall from provincial government funding. The Reserve Fund represents mostly the accumulated savings from school sales and closures in the past.

In short, the proposed SD 61 budget fails at a number of points: it accepts the accumulated \$30 million shortfall from provincial under-funding, it violates Bill 33's provision to protect children with special needs, and there is inequitable staff reductions, e.g. 14 CUPE positions eliminated and only one principal position. The proposed second week of Spring Break will save \$150,000 equaling one year's salary for an assistant superintendent. The proposed budget does not address funding for all day kindergarten

mandated by the Ministry of Education, nor teacher in-service, educational supplies and required facilities renovations.

We urge parents, community members and everyone concerned about quality public education to attend public meetings scheduled to hear concerns and demands. VPEC has continually asked that SD 61 pass a deficit budget in order to force the provincial government to stop under-funding public education.

With massive public support we believe we can be a voice for our children, and the future of public education in our region.

Deborah Nohr and Starla Anderson
VPEC, Victoria

Bright green lawns

I asked my brother the other day why he does not eat the rabbits he catches in his vegetable garden. He said because the nearby University of Victoria rabbits are feeding on the bright green lawns in the neighbourhood. Bright green lawns, he said, are an announcement that the householders are using pesticides.

Statistics tell us not to use pesticides. The children or grandchildren of such lawn owners, who play on such lawns, are four times as likely to get cancer. Their beloved dogs face six times the risk.

People who work on or play on beautiful green golf courses face even higher risks of cancer than the above children or dogs. One woman golfer told me she minimizes the threat by always using a cart.

So if you are keen on a bright green lawn or golf course start picking out your funeral plot.

Ron Macisaac
Langford
(For more letters, please turn to page 6)

Friends of the Lower Island News

Thank you to those who have donated over the past two months. We are particularly grateful for your generosity at a time of the year when there are so many other calls on your purse. Your donations help to keep the paper coming to you.

Donors during the past two months include:

Roger Smeeth	\$ 20
Red Hens (one meeting)	\$ 15

Donations may be sent to the Lower Island News Society at Box 311-2750 Quadra Street, Victoria, BC, V8T 4E8, and will be acknowledged in the paper. Please indicate if you prefer to be "anonymous". Unfortunately we can't give tax receipts.

And thank you again!

--Dale Young, Editor, for the Editorial Board

Where’s the economic recovery?

Hi great truth seekers out there!

Please get a copy of 22-year-old Dan Matthews’s film, OH CANADA, *Our bought and Sold Out Land*. This film gives the best explanation to why.

People are plugging my email box with diversionary must-read emails that give no end of this or that criminal or financial story, but people need to figure out, and ask why, we so willingly, dumbly and stupidly give away the right to the wealth we create, when we put our people to work. We give our wealth to private bankers, who lend us “promise to pay” money, debt money that must always be paid back with interest. Interest which again, must likewise be borrowed and then taken away again to pay back. Why do they (private bankers, lenders) have the right to create money and we, the people, with a legal entity like government do not? It defies logic!

We created the Bank of Canada in 1934 to print Canada’s **legitimate** and most honest “**legal tender**” money, currency “in and for the best interest of the people”. The amount printed was based directly on the potential worker product of the people. That “legal tender” was spent into existence and it put people to work to display that power. It did not have to be paid back. It was not debt money. But, if it were paid back, it still belonged to the people of Canada. It went back to the people-owned Nationalized Bank of Canada.

The Bank of Canada was nationalized in 1938. Its 100,000 belong to the people, in trust, in the hands of the elected finance minister.

The laws are still there but politicians are unaware of the laws or they complicity ignore them for personal payoff.

Only Government has the legal right to create money. Money created by any other

entity is technically counterfeit!

I am 82 years old. I saw this happen in Canada...private bank-created money was phased out over 10 years from 1935 to 1945.

World War 2 was orchestrated. In 1939, Canada dutifully declared war on Germany. We quickly spruced up all the unemployed men of the 1930s and paid them to go on a unique travel experience in Europe, all expenses paid.

The remaining workers, mostly women, flowed to the factories of Canada, where they were given good paying jobs. To accommodate them, Staff Houses were built beside the factories, complete with day care centres for those with children. Every able bodied person was put to work. As a teenager, I had three jobs on the go all the time.

So, to do this war: Canada created 28 Crown Corporations, using the Bank of Canada, for large scale production of goods...

- John Inglis Company of Toronto employed 17,000 workers and produced more machine guns than any other country in the British Empire.
- Hawker fighter planes -- more than 4000 a year, under Chief Aeronautical Engineer Elsie MacGill; 60,000 interchangeable parts per plane.
- Canada built the third largest navy in the world. Two ships a week out of North Vancouver and also ships built in Esquimalt and Halifax.
- Returning veterans -- more than 1 million -- 33,000 given land grants to start a business or buy a farm.
- More than 80,000 given

free vocational training, 54,000 were given free university tuition. Plus many other support benefits.

- New schools and universities had to be built. 370 army huts were moved onto UBC campus for classrooms and housing.
- Trans Canada Highway built. The Saint Lawrence Seaway built. Airports to serve all areas. We owned them. We owned CNR and the spur lines.
- Old age pensions were brought in + family allowances + universal Medicare + + + Plus much, much more.

CANADA SPENT \$BILLIONS! But no great National Debt was created. We created our money and paid ourselves to work and we owned and kept what we created. Except for the ships and tanks and planes and guns that were destroyed fighting a war against our Canadian “mosaic” relatives in Europe!

Our national debt in 1945 was \$11.2 billion. In 1960 it was still \$12.0 billion. Today it officially? is at \$578.2 billion.

Inflation is directly caused by businesses having to make up for the interest charged by privately created currency lenders.

Each able-bodied person working can and will create a thousand times more than they need for basic survival. We are creative, thinking, intelligent beings. We did it much better then. Why can’t we do it again? What’s gone wrong with us?

Will Abram Duncan

Something is terribly wrong with this picture--writer

“RBC recognized with 2010 GLOBE Award for Environmental Excellence

“TORONTO, March 24 /CNW/ - Royal Bank of Canada (RY on TSX and NYSE) was honoured last night with the GLOBE Foundation’s 8th annual 2010 GLOBE Corporate Award for Environmental Excellence for its outstanding achievement in environmental stewardship and corporate-wide approach to sustainability.

“This award reinforces our longstanding track record as a leader in environmental responsibility and sustainability,” said Gordon M. Nixon, RBC President and CEO. “We are proud of the scope of our environmental programs and that they have been embraced by our shareholders, clients and employees alike. RBC is committed to continuing our efforts to develop and implement programs, policies, procedures and guidelines that will benefit the communities in which we live and conduct business.”

Something is terribly wrong with this picture.

Am I to understand that the major supplier of money and a shareholder to the Alberta Tar Sands is now being rewarded as environmentally responsible rather than financially greedy?

It hardly seems relevant that the RBC is claiming to be making huge strides to cut down on its own environmental footprint if it is financing one of the major ecological disasters in the world.

How many giant holes in the ground around the world is RBC also sponsoring by their holdings in Canadian Mining Companies such as for instance Gold Corp?

Maybe Mr Gordon M. Nixon is unaware of what his bank is doing to the people and wild life of Athabasca, not to mention the destruction of the rivers which flow away from there with their toxic water, thus ensuring the continuing spread of destruction. Perhaps he is too busy counting his bonuses, added to, no doubt, by this award.

Someone -- anyone -- please make sense of this for me if you can.

Jeremy Arney
Saanichton

The fiscal farce of the South Cowichan concept

Shortly after I moved to the Cowichan Valley there was a referendum to create a municipality called South Cowichan. This choice then was soundly defeated and rightly so. Anyone who has a modicum of fiscal sense knows it takes a varied tax base (five of them) to support a municipal entity. The five essential tax bases namely are Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural and Forestry. Did the proposed entity have these then? No. Does it have them now? No.

The same group that was promulgating the concept then is at it again; this time led by Director Giles and Director Harrison. Not only are they trying to establish this needless entity but they are promoting it through the back door of a combined “Official South End Community Plan”.

An OCP is not worth the paper that it is written on. It is not a cabinet document and can be easily changed by zoning bylaws and revisions. A Growth Management Plan would serve us much better to retain our rural ambience, preserve our water resources and allow for long term population-increase planning.

Do we in this RURAL area of the Cowichan Valley really need our taxes to go up by thousands of dollars to service a mayor, a council, a planning department, an engineering department, etc, etc, when we already have these services in place within the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD)?

Once again I reiterate; there is no such entity as “South Cowichan”. It is a misrepresentative concept being pushed by the same old political hacks that got voted down 15 years back. The very same people pushed through the recent referendum for a Kerry Park pool when we had one that was defeated only six years ago! How many times do we have to run around this same track and thereby waste our tax dollars in doing so?

A prime example of fiscal responsibility would be to utilize our CVRD resources to establish a regional recreation funding agreement where all the taxpayers in the region would all pay approximately \$78/100,000 of assessed property value and thus eliminate the two- tiered payment for use of our CVRD pool; have Kerry Park repaired and/or funded adequately.

I for one am sick and tired of this misguided non-taxpayer representing concept of “South Cowichan”. If there is ever a referendum to create such an entity it will go the same way as the recently concluded Kerry Park pool referendum!

So far this misguided conceptualization has consumed approximately \$250,000 of our tax dollars and we have nothing to show for it! Wouldn’t Kerry Park be in much better shape if that money had been spent there?

I may reside in the Electoral area of Cobble Hill but I live in the Cowichan Valley. I would much rather see these misguided efforts and badly spent tax dollars directed towards empowering our CVRD (board and staff) so that they can provide us with better and more fiscally responsible services.

John Middleton
Ex Cobble Hill (Area-C) Director and member of the Friends of Saanich Inlet

For more information check us out on the web: <http://friendsofsaanichinlet.org/>

“The problems of the world cannot possibly be solved by sceptics or cynics whose horizons are limited by the obvious realities. We need (people) who can dream of things that never were.”


“There are risks and costs to action. But they are far less than the long range risks of comfortable inaction.”

-- John F. Kennedy




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We need a farmland freeze now

By G.E.Mortimore

BC's Agricultural Land Commission has a moral duty to guard and improve the food supply. So why do the commissioners shirk their duty?

The law allows removal of pieces of land from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) for well-documented reasons, but its main purpose requires commissioners to safeguard food-producing capacity and encourage farming.

Commissioners ignore that order. They let builders pave over big chunks of food-land. The loss of land has become so painfully obvious, and the need for nailing down a close-to-home food-supply system in a changing world has become so urgent, that the commissioners now have only one honourable and practical choice: To freeze all applications for removal of land from the ALR province-wide until food-growing policy is sorted out by a public enquiry and action plan. A three-year brainstorm-break seems reasonable.

Between 1975 and 2003 the commissioners approved a net decrease of 35,500 hectares, 87,720 acres, in the reserve farmland of the Okanagan, the Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island. On the Island alone, the decrease was 12,797 hectares.

In the part of BC where most of the people are concentrated, the shrinkage of foodland has continued at a fast rate since 2003, and a thick file of convoluted arguments for ALR removal, couched in planning jargon, has accumulated in Langford, Cowichan and other Island places.

It's time for commissioners to stand tall and really do their protective job, rather than just pretending to do it – a pretence that involves surrender to Premier Gordon Campbell. The Campbell government weakened the protection of foodland by splitting the commission into six regional agencies, each with the independent power to say yes or no to applications for removal.

The old province-wide solid group of land judges, or quasi-judges, stemmed the loss of prime farmland, which was bleeding away at 6,000 hectares a year when the Dave Barrett NDP government created the ALR in 1973. Premier Campbell sliced open six arteries and started the bleeding again.

Governments of all colours share some guilt for this disaster. "Liberals", Socreds and NDP have all intervened at the top level, to curry favour with pave-it-over campaigners. But Premier Campbell, the present culprit, is the worst offender. His fragmented panels, which meet separately and do not consider removal applications as a united body, have shown how vulnerable they are to pressure from municipal councils and land-speculator/developer lobbyists.

Arguably the lobbyists could make more money if they waited and thought longer, resisted sprawl which causes long-term expense to taxpayers, and concentrated development in high-density mixed-use nodes where big buildings could be insulated by rooftop gardens. Developers and land speculators are impatient, but it's the job of the ALC to cool and re-direct the natural quick-money impulse. The scattered ALC tribunals should now join in a united front to support the long-term provincial interest, which takes account of great-grandchildren as well as contemporary yearners for wealth and comfort.

Might commissioners be politically punished for doing their job too well? They have little to fear. Arm's-length agencies now have power to shame governments if they commit blunders, arrogances and sneaky tricks. Auditor-General John Doyle skewered Campbell and colleagues for violating the public interest when they gifted a forest corporation with millions in taxpayers' money and trashed land-use and forest-conservation planning on a large tract of southwestern Vancouver Island. Food-land guardians who show quiet courage are unlikely to get even a slap on the wrist from a government that seems headed for lame-duck status despite the long distance to next election.

"Food security" is a great slogan. It means growing food close to home. But unless we match actions to words, mouthing the slogan is a waste of breath. We need that three-year freeze on ALR removals, so



Farmland like this should be protected, not turned into housing, says author.

we can feel our way into the evolving city-green design.

It isn't just about commercial farms. Current eco-pressures – looming hikes in the cost of oil-driven long-distance food transport, climate change, economic hard times, numbers of fat couch-potato kids -- challenge land commissioners and all of us to brainstorm varied food-production patterns.

These range from high-intensity urban organic farms to rooftop vegetable beds above shopping-mall/condo complexes, and networks of neighbourhood gardens protected within the ALR.

Healthful food for two daughters was among Michelle Obama's reasons for planting a vegetable garden on the South Lawn of the White House. This rerun of Eleanor Roosevelt's 1943 Victory Garden was partly driven by Mrs. Obama's experience as a working mother when she sought a nourishing menu for Malia and Sasha, Marian Burros reported in *The New York Times*.

"Eating out three times a week, ordering a pizza, having a sandwich for dinner all took their toll in added weight on the girls, whose pediatrician told Mrs. Obama that she needed to be thinking about nutrition." Within months the girls shed weight.

Twenty-three fifth-graders from a nearby school will cultivate the garden, alongside the Obamas. The US president will pull weeds. Sure, he has other things to do, but he needs his exercise.

Derelict car factories and abandoned houses and yards in the downsized automobile city of Detroit will be converted into mushroom sheds and urban farmland.

Hantz Farms will plant crops on 5,000 acres within Detroit's city limits. The greening of Motown is one of many true stories about today's trend toward growing food close to home.

City-green is maturing into a mainstream political force. Does this mean strong, decisive action, or gradual change in food habits, one family at a time? Both. One won't work without the other.

We need to add to the ALR, not reduce it. Soil quality is not crucial. Refugees on the Aran Islands off Ireland's west coast made soil for crops and pasture by laying sand and seaweed on solid rock. Green-houses and roof gardens must import soil. Roof gardens insulate buildings, conserve runoff rainwater, and reduce air pollution and energy costs.

Chicago has 2,500,000 square feet of green roofs, more than any other US city. The green starts with a demonstration garden on the roof of Chicago City Hall. The city makes grants of \$5,000 toward roof-gardens.

We need urban space dedicated to food-growing, from roof gardens to community garden-patches and plantations and orchards that supply food banks; and we need a political mindset that encourages such projects.

The rescue of 9.3 acres of endangered Saanich ALR food-land is a success story in the struggle to protect the food-production system from raids.

In 2001 the Capital Regional District, the

owner of the Haliburton Road land, was going to push its removal from the reserve and sell it for building 24 to 26 houses; but the Land for Food Coalition and the Cordova Bay Association for Community Affairs persuaded Saanich to buy the tract for \$400,000. and keep it green, with side-by-side commercial farms, gardening and cooking school and community organic farm staffed partly by volunteers.

A more loose-jointed but equally valid agricultural model is under threat in Happy Valley and Luxton, in the Victoria suburb of Langford, where developers have filed applications to take a number of food-land tracts out of the reserve and build hundreds of houses, hived away from a diminished array of food producers by "edge planning," the currently fashionable Plannerspeak phrase.

Luxton Fair and Luxton Market are the show-windows for growers of herbs, garlic, tomatoes, strawberries and other crops in a district of mingled cottages, old farmhouses and horse barns -- territory where a person used to be able to live in a garage while he built his dream-house.

Can this federation of small growers survive invasion by massed housing? ALC commissioners need the three-year time-out to find an honest answer.

Some people trust Langford city council to be the guardian that will purchase ALR farmland and keep it green, as Saanich municipality did for the Haliburton land. Hostile critics object that in view of Langford's pro-development record, such

a move would be equivalent to putting the fox in charge of the henhouse.

This point can be argued out. If the commissioners observe a three-year freeze on ALR withdrawals, however, the argument won't matter.

The current commissioners who will hear applications for removal of Island lands from the ALR, Lorne Seitz of the Okanagan, Jennifer Dyson of the Alberni Valley and Niels Erik Holbek of Black Creek, are all commercial farmers. Their background may incline them to judge ALR land on a narrow conventional-farm basis, and to regard municipal councils (some of whom were elected by less than 25 percent of eligible voters) as representing public consensus.

Both these ideas are outdated. The public and the commissioners would benefit if people urged the commissioners by snail-mail to reconsider their approach. Why not look them up and give direct persuasion a try? Making a pitch through the commission's office has proved itself to be mostly a waste of time.

G.E. Mortimore, PhD, is a writer and social anthropologist based in Victoria.

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MP explains why she voted against federal budget

By Jean Crowder, MP

Budgets are about choices. Governments can choose to support those in greatest need, or governments can choose to support sectors that are doing just fine. The Conservative government's 2010 budget was presented in early March after a two-month prorogation of Parliament. The Prime Minister shut down Parliament to "recalibrate" as they prepared for a Throne Speech and the 2010 budget. Instead of the expected shift in perspective or reorientation of priorities, this "recalibration" did not change the government's direction – it simply delayed it.

In fact, if you go through the Throne Speech and the budget, there is almost nothing there that hadn't either been announced or at least hinted at months before.

What were missing from this budget were meaningful changes to help people deal with the realities of this economic downturn.

Many of the forestry workers who lost their jobs when the stock markets crashed have either used up all the employment insurance (EI) available to them or will do so soon. Constituents are coming into my office to speak with me and share their fears about their families' futures. They were hoping the government would extend the length of time benefits are available until the market turns around. The government didn't make that choice.

No extensions to EI to help the 800,000 people who economists say are in danger of exhausting their benefits this year have been announced. What's more, over the next four years the EI system will take in over \$19 billion dollars more in the form of higher EI premiums. The Conservatives plan to use these premiums, paid by workers and their employers, to pay down the debt which this budget's corporate tax cuts helped create in the first place.

Many seniors tell me their pensions just are not keeping up with rising costs, especially in housing. They were hoping the government would take this opportunity to revise the pension system, either through increasing Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) payments, or by increasing the amount Canadians can contribute to our universal Canadian Pension Plan (CPP). A \$700 million investment to increase the GIS could lift the estimated quarter million seniors above the poverty line.

It is important to note that since wealthy Canadians receive a large proportion of their income in the form of stock options, equity, or dividends from profits, corporate tax cuts actually increase their incomes.

Furthermore, that income is taxed at a lower rate than the income of the average worker.

Canada has seen 10 years of consecutive tax cuts to corporations, and we now have a rate that is much lower than those in the United States and other G8

countries. The Conservatives will say that it is to stimulate the economy and improve both innovation and productivity. Evidence shows that time and again this policy has failed – OECD figures show that Canada's productivity lags behind countries such as Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, and Norway. These countries have higher corporate tax rates, far superior labour legislation, work-life balance, paid time-off and much higher rates of collective bargaining. What we need in Canada is a fair taxation policy.

Taxes are being unwisely shifted from corporations to working Canadians. Budget 2010 shows the government's intent to rely on personal income taxes for a higher share of its revenues as the contribution of corporate income tax going forward. The tax shift from businesses to working Canadians is also evident in the current push to harmonize sales taxes. The HST implementation in British Columbia this year will add 7% tax to items which were previously exempt from the Provincial Sales Tax (PST).

I cannot support the shifting of the tax burden from high-income earners to working families, and certainly not in the middle of a recession. This budget was an opportunity to introduce effective policies to get Canadians working again, to start investing in a greener economy for our future prosperity, to shore up Canada's retirement savings system, and to build our social infrastructure. Budgets are about choices, and Budget 2010 did none of these things - that is why I voted against it.

Jean Crowder is Member of Parliament for Nanaimo-Cowichan.

"If Keynes was alive today I think he might have called this theory of efficient markets a case of 'weapons of math destruction'."

-- Paul Davidson, 2009
Alternative Explanations Of The Operation Of A Capitalist Economy: Efficient Market Theory vs. Keynes's Liquidity Theory



Wallace McMorran reflects on days gone at a farewell lunch held by Saanich-Gulf Islands NDP at McMorran's Beach House Restaurant just days before it closed.

Saanich-Gulf Islands NDP bids farewell to McMorran's

Story and photos by Michele Murphy

It was the end of an era on Sunday, March 28, as Saanich-Gulf Islands New Democrats enjoyed their last scrumptious lunch buffet at McMorran's Beach House Restaurant. McMorran's closed its doors after the Easter weekend as Wallace McMorran and his family move on to their next adventure – still unknown.

On a very busy March weekend, over 50 NDP faithfuls came out to share the outstanding food and location, great conversations, presentations, live music, and of course, the ever-popular silent auction.



BC NDP candidate Gary Holman speaks passionately about the environment.

To start off the turkey buffet, McMorran, grandson of the Beach House's founder, delivered a warm farewell and good luck to the grateful group. Saanich-North and the Islands' next MLA Gary Holman was up next, speaking to the value of strong public ownership, especially around environmental issues. Nominee for candidate for SGI,

Edith Loring-Kuhanga followed Holman. She spoke passionately of her strong values and her vision for a better Canada.

After lunch the group cashed in on the silent auction, after enjoying the talents of folk musician Nedjo Rogers as he told a melodic and inspiring tale of Tambogrande, a town in Peru that fought the good battle against a large foreign mining company (Manhattan Minerals of Canada), and won.

SGI NDP sends out a big thank-you to all who came out on the 28th, and to the McMorran family for their years of service to the community. They wish them all the very best in their future endeavors. After all, that's what New Democrats wish for all Canadians, the very best.

Saanich-Gulf Islands NDP members will meet next at their nomination meeting on the afternoon of April 24, at St. Andrews Anglican Church in Sidney.



Folk musician Nedjo Rogers sings a song about Tambogrande, a Peruvian town that fought against a large, foreign mining company, and won.

NDP calls on Strahl to maintain funding for First Nations University

DUNCAN, BC – In an open letter February 11 to Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl, New Democrat Aboriginal Affairs critic Jean Crowder (Nanaimo-Cowichan) called on the Conservative government to support the First Nations University (FNU) now that steps are being taken to reform its governance.

"I decided to send an open letter to the minister to outline my concern that now is not the time to cut funding to this institution. Now is the time to work with the new Board of Governors to come up with an action plan to benefit students, the faculty and the school," said Crowder.

Strahl announced in February that he would not renew \$7.2 million in federal funding for the school in response to a similar announcement from the government of Saskatchewan. But Crowder

believes the federal government is taking this opportunity to try and download funding responsibility for aboriginal post-secondary education to the province.

"Three years ago another indigenous institution, the First Nations Technical Institute in Tyendinaga, Ontario, faced the same decision. The minister decided he wanted the province to be responsible for post-secondary education and tried to cut the funding to FNTI as well," said Crowder.

"Not just the students and faculty but supporters from across Ontario flooded his office with emails, faxes and phone calls. They were able to show him that indigenous-controlled institutions are an important part of our education system, and that those schools are worth fighting for. I hope that we can do the same for First Nations University," she said.

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MP reports on proposals to improve lives of women, children

By Denise Savoie

This winter, the prime minister declared that Canada would prioritize maternal and child health in developing countries at this summer’s G-8 and G20 meetings.

It was a welcome pronouncement on a necessary and urgent goal, although considerably lagging behind other developed countries who have focused on these issues for years now, and who collectively pledged \$5.3-billion dollars in 2007 alone. It has also become controversial as ideological debates over sexual and reproductive health have been reignited for partisan advantage and stood in the way of moving forward.

My New Democrat colleagues and I fully support prioritizing maternal and child health in our foreign aid work, as we have argued for years. But we also believe that leadership starts at home. If Canada wants to lead or lecture the world on anything, we’d better start by filling the gaping holes in our own backyard.

Even before the recession, 637,000 Canadian children and their families lived below the poverty line, despite a 20-year-old parliamentary promise to end child poverty. This winter we heard that mortality rates among Inuit babies are three times the national average.

And Canadian women still earn 71 cents for every dollar a man makes, despite two decades of commitments to pay equity; since 2004 alone Canada has dropped from 7th to 25th in the global gender equality index.

So we invited the other parties in Parliament to cooperate in 2010 to substantially improve the lives of Canadian women and children, too.

The federal government has a fundamental leadership role to play in addressing this problem, especially as our economy begins its slow and unequal recovery.

The policy proposals submitted by the New Democrat caucus include:

- fixing Employment Insurance rules that deny eligibility to six in 10 women;
- restoring pay equity to the government’s agenda;
- launching a literacy opportunity guarantee initiative for all Canadian adults;
- increasing community support for women’s groups working to prevent violence;
- establishing a national initiative to ensure every child has daily access to healthy food;
- strengthening regulation protecting Canadians – especially children – from toxic chemicals in their food, toys and other products, and on lawns in their neighbourhoods and parks;
- investing in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities to improve health services, provide adequate housing, water and infrastructure to include traditional healing, nutrition, fitness, addiction treatment and suicide prevention; and
- boosting the Guaranteed Income Supplement to end poverty among seniors (overwhelmingly women).

We must overcome the divisive politics in Ottawa for once and find common ground around a women and children’s agenda in Parliament this spring. Instead of handing out new corporate tax breaks, we should finally get our priorities straight.

It has been extremely busy in Ottawa since Parliament resumed in early March. I was disappointed but not surprised that the federal Conservative government tabled a budget that was completely out of touch with the everyday reality and priorities of Canadians and communities.

Budgets are about choices and the Conservatives clearly chose the interests of big business over Canadians citizens and their families. The compassionate, collective society that the majority of Canadians want was not reflected in the budget. It focused instead on the Conservatives’ roots of corporate tax breaks, deregulation, and cutting government services that Canadians rely on. It froze foreign aid spending at 0.35% of GDP while allowing defence spending to climb to four times higher than the aid budget. It also ended the popular Homelessness Partnering Initiative which provided \$1.25 million for affordable housing in the Victoria region last year.

The \$1.5-billion corporate tax cut flew in the face of a quarter-million Canadian seniors living in poverty, who received a special new Seniors’ Day instead of pension reform. Single parents will get a token \$3.25 a week – not even a return bus ride for one.

This federal government does not see the daily challenges of Canadians. They have downloaded responsibility to other levels of government. Meanwhile, local governments have to hike property taxes and cut services to cope with reckless federal tax policy.

The most damaging aspects of the budget are the moves to environmental deregulation in key industries like uranium mining, or the oil industry with considerable environmental and social impacts, and the opening of Canadian markets to foreign interests without commensurate moves by other countries.

This recession has been one huge warning sign against deregulation. I am especially troubled that they would slash environmental assessments from the very agency designed to conduct them, and hand that responsibility to the National Energy Board populated with oil and gas executives. It is pure madness.

On a more positive note, I would like to thank everyone who attended my annual celebration of International Women’s Day, featuring Coro Strandberg as keynote speaker. Bringing together 200 women is a formula for lots of dynamic discussion and a buzz of ideas. I was



Victoria MP Denise Savoie (R) chats with Coro Strandberg, keynote speaker at this year’s celebration of International Women’s Day.

also really pleased that 10 local women artists agreed to display their work at the event.

Coro, who helped develop the Victoria Values-Based Business Network and is a former Green Economy Policy Advisor for the BC government, engaged us in an excellent discussion about corporate social responsibility. I was inspired by the discussion but I was also reminded of how much ground we have lost in the past decade, as successive federal governments leap on the bandwagon of “voluntary regulation”, limiting our ability to govern and infringing on public safety, environmental sustainability and economic security. We have to remember that corporate social responsibility is a good concept but not a panacea and cannot replace the regulatory role of government.

In 2002, the Canadian Democracy and Corporate Accountability Commission, co-chaired by Order of Canada recipients Ed Broadbent and Avie Bennett, released its final report, stressing that companies have responsibilities that extend beyond the maximization of shareholder returns, especially now that more than half of the world’s 100 largest economies are corporations, not nation-states.

The commission’s exhaustive consultation with governments, corporate executives, and civil-society activists concluded that the vast majority of Canadians desire a broader notion of corporate responsibility, taking into account human-rights principles, core labour rights, consumer protection and environmental standards, in Canada and with our trading partners overseas.

Corporate social responsibility makes great sense. But clearly CSR will only succeed if it is backed up by political leadership that removes the incentive for corporations to give maximization of shareholder profit primacy over all other societal needs.

Denise Savoie is MP for Victoria.



Denise Savoie
Member of Parliament for Victoria

CONSTITUENCY OFFICE:
970 Blanshard Street
Victoria, BC V8W 2H3

TELEPHONE: 363-3600
E-MAIL: Savoie.d@parl.gc.ca
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Victoria MP Denise Savoie introduces panelists Kim Fowler, Coro Strandberg and Sarah Webb at her annual celebration of International Women’s Day in Victoria.

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Liberal cuts, secrecy could be putting Prince George children in danger

Dangerous levels of formaldehyde detected near playground and family neighbourhoods

VICTORIA — Deep cuts to environmental monitoring have left families in Prince George wondering whether the air their children breathe is safe, says New Democrat environment critic Rob Fleming.

“The BC Liberal government received test results from Fort George Park, a playground next to a daycare and a children’s museum, showing very high levels of formaldehyde in the air, but they did nothing to inform the people of Prince George,” said Fleming. “Worse, no follow-up tests were done in the subsequent 18 months, despite the fact that formaldehyde levels were almost 20 times the provincial maximum.”

Re-testing in Prince George would cost between \$6,000 and \$12,000, but local ministry officials say they don’t have the funds necessary to do them.

“If the government refuses to test the air quality, how can communities be assured that their air is safe?” said Fleming. “Families in Prince George have every right to ask Shirley Bond and Pat Bell what the impact is for their community of the BC Liberals’ deep cuts to environmental monitoring.”

The BC Liberals have cut funding for environmental monitoring by 34 percent since 2008, leaving the environment ministry scrambling to perform even basic tests and potentially putting the health of communities at risk.



Rob Fleming

“The BC Liberal government is playing politics with people’s health,” said Fleming. “An air quality advisory should have been issued when these results came back, and the government should have promptly double-checked the tests. What else is the BC Liberal government hiding from communities?”

Fleming says the fact that the environment minister gutted almost every department in the ministry while boosting the minister’s personal office budget shows that the BC Liberal government has the wrong priorities.

“Year after year Minister Penner budgets more for photo-ops and less for protecting children and communities from environmental toxins,” said Fleming. “The BC Liberals can’t be trusted to put families first.”

Carole James and the New Democrats are advocating for positive environmental solutions, including a Green Fund which would see \$150 million a year of carbon tax revenue directed towards climate change solutions and transit improvements in communities across the province, Fleming pointed out.

BC Liberal budget breaks environmental promises, cuts ministry budget by 40%

HST will end exemptions on green products, LiveSmart program put on life support

VICTORIA—The March 4 BC budget is clear evidence that the BC Liberals have abandoned their environmental promises, say New Democrats.

“The latest BC Liberal budget cuts programs to create green jobs by retrofitting buildings to be more energy efficient and fails to provide a roadmap for fighting climate change and reducing energy consumption,” said New Democrat environment critic Rob Fleming.

Funding for the Ministry of Environment has been cut by almost 40 percent since the BC Liberals’ so-called “Green Budget” in 2008. And while the government is claiming the budget restores LiveSmart, they have cut funding for the popular program to half what it was before the election.

“Since the so-called ‘green budget’ in 2008, most of the incentive programs for home energy efficiency and green consumer items have been slashed or eliminated,” said Fleming. “The BC Liberal government is failing to take actions to fight climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”

Fleming noted that, in 2008, BC was the only province in Canada to see increases in industrial greenhouse gas emissions.

Tax incentives for sustainable products like energy-efficient appliances, insulation, heat pumps, energy efficient vehicles, alternative energy sources, and bicycles will be eliminated when the BC Liberals bring in the Harmonized Sales Tax on July 1.

“The BC Liberals talk about transition-

ing to a low-carbon economy, but with their clumsy handling of the HST debacle, BC will now tax green products, services and renewables,” said Fleming. “Our parks system is already falling apart. Further cuts to environmental monitoring and enforcement will only make a bad situation worse.”

Fleming noted that ministry-wide cuts could force more park closures and undermine the ministry’s ability to provide core services like effective enforcement against polluters and poachers, protection programs for species at risk, and work related to adapting to climate change.

“While cutting almost every department in his ministry, Minister Penner managed to budget an increase for his own office. That’s not leadership, particularly when we’re facing program cuts and hard-working public servants are facing job losses,” said Fleming.

“This government’s backwards decision to tax environmentally friendly products doesn’t square with the BC Liberals’ rhetoric on climate change. The regressive actions contained in this budget speak louder than words.”

Fleming pointed out that NDP Leader Carole James and the New Democrats are advocating for positive environmental solutions, including a Green Fund which would see \$150 million a year of carbon tax revenue directed towards climate change solutions and transit improvements in communities across the province.

Ralston says finance minister needs to do his homework on HST

VICTORIA - BC Liberal Finance Minister Colin Hansen needs to do his homework on the HST, New Democrat finance critic Bruce Ralston said April 7. Earlier that day, Hansen insisted that the HST will have no impact on rental and condo fees despite the fact that the HST will increase costs for most landlords in BC.

“It’s disturbing that the same finance minister that announced the HST and introduced HST-enabling legislation isn’t even aware of its effects,” said Ralston. “Instead of telling British Columbians that they are wrong about the HST, perhaps he should do his homework and get his facts straight.”

Hansen said April 7 that anti-HST websites are misinformed when they claim rent and condo fees will increase because of the HST. Hansen said, “In fact that’s not true.”

However, according to the Rental Owners and Managers Society of BC, the HST will increase costs for most BC landlords above normal inflationary cost increases,

even with rebates on electricity and gas. The HST will increase most rental housing industry costs such as property management, repairs and maintenance contracts by seven percent July 1. These costs will be passed on to tenants through rent increases or to condo owners through condo fees.

“The claim by the finance minister is absurd, and particularly unnerving considering it’s his legislation,” said Ralston. “These comments are indicative of the BC Liberals’ serious lack of study put into this \$1.9 billion tax shift on to consumers.

“Before the election they said they had no plan to implement the HST, but as soon as the election was over, the BC Liberals announced the HST with no public consultation and no study to determine its affect on families and major economic sectors.”

Carole James in the New Democrats will use every tool to fight the HST-enabling legislation, and are asking BC Liberal MLAs to support their constituents and vote to stop the HST.

Disability community stunned by cuts to crucial medical goods and services

VANCOUVER -- People with disabilities who are already struggling to manage on provincial disability benefits have been told by the province it will no longer pay for some of the medically essential items and services they depend on.

Beginning April 1, the province will no longer fund a range of health items including pre-made foot orthotics, diabetic glucometers and a bottled water supplement of \$20 a month for people with conditions such as HIV/AIDS.

“We understand the government is dealing with an economic downturn, but cutting funding for medically essential items to people with disabilities who are already struggling to get by is not the way to deal with it, said Robin Loxton of the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities (BCCPD).

“This will not save money,” said the Coalition’s executive director Jane Dyson. “People’s overall health and well-being will deteriorate and they will access the health system more as a result.”

The BCCPD is also particularly concerned about the impact the government’s decision to end the \$75 shelter minimum will have on people who are homeless. “Home-

less people have shelter-related costs. This cut means these people with disabilities will receive only \$531 a month to live on, said Loxton.

The government is also restricting dental services for people with disabilities; for example, beginning April 1 the province will only pay for x-rays every two years.

“The lack of adequate dental coverage has been a long-time concern of our community. Dental health is extremely important and the amount the province pays is already inadequate at \$1,000 every two years,” said Dyson.

People who receive BC disability benefits get a maximum of \$375 a month for housing and \$531 for everything else, including food and clothing. In order for provincial benefits recipients to access health supplements from the government they must meet all the eligibility requirements under the legislation.

For more information go to www.bccpd.

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The values of being NDP

By David Olsen
With additional files and photos
from Michele Murphy

Sixty-five NDP members got together on February 21, when the Saanich-Gulf Islands NDP Riding Association organized a day of discussion, conversation, reflection and ideas-shaping on the theme “The Values of Being NDP”.

MC MaryLynn Rimer introduced the guest panel of Libby Davies, MP for Vancouver East; Peter Julian, MP for Burnaby-New Westminster; Dr. Michael Prince, Lansdowne Professor of Social Policy at the University of Victoria; and Dr. Joan Russow, former leader of the federal Green Party.

Riding association president Starla Anderson introduced the new federal candidate for nomination, Edith Loring-Kuhanga, who spoke about her background and why she became a candidate.

Past president Bill Graham spoke about values and the issue of facts. How many voters really care about facts and ideologies, he asked, and wondered, based on logic, why aren't 90% of people supporting the NDP?

“After all, facts and statistics are on our side,” he said. “Values are beliefs that we hold and are emotional and influence our behaviour.”

As Graham pointed out, many people don't vote policies, they vote beliefs and values, which express who they are -- their identity. “Many of these things,” he said, “are not conscious and people make decisions based on who they think they are -- they vote their identity.”

He noted that the NDP sometimes makes mistakes by accepting the language and values of other parties. He gave the example of MP Gary Lunn talking of “tax relief” and saying “taxes are a burden”, as well as the mythology of the “free market” and Stephen Harper talking of “reasonable access” to healthcare.

Graham spoke of the issue of the NDP in relation to the Green Party, and asked if their values are the same.

Starla Anderson described her experience on graduation from high school in Moose Jaw in 1962, during the now infamous doctors' strike against Medicare when her mother supported the CCF. She reminded participants that values held by parents seep through to their children.

Sue Stroud, a long time NDP activist from Brentwood Bay, asserted that her core value is compassion and that the NDP is the only party which has compassion as a key element of its policy.

The panel members covered a wide

range of issues and how their values developed.

Joan Russow described her early experiences in Spain during the Franco era and in Italy and how in 1959, at the University of Toronto, she was appalled to find that First Nations people at that time were not allowed to vote. She also met people whose parents had supported turning away Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany before World War II and how she joined the Green Party, believing that it was a party of the left.

Peter Julian spoke of growing up in a Liberal Party family but, at 14, decided to join the NDP because, unlike the other political parties, it had a fundamental commitment to democracy. He noted that the other key NDP value is the link between environmental responsibility and economic activity.

This is related to a third issue, namely the current proposal for a Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Colombia. However, said Julian, Colombia's right wing president, Alvaro Uribe, “has blood on his hands” due to the long running internal problems arising from corruption and drug trafficking and the NDP has held up the passage of the Bill for a year, which has an important international effect.

Michael Prince, who is also a Board member of the BC Association for the Disabled, reminded everyone that a Bill for ratification of the UN Universal Declaration of Rights of People with Disabilities will come back to Parliament in the spring. It would have passed already, except for prorogation.

Many members spoke from the floor, following which the panel summarized their reactions to the points made.

Julian pointed out that the 200 richest people in the world own 50% of the world's wealth, yet 30,000 children die needlessly every day from hunger and disease.

Russow warned that the Green Party is moving to the right and that the answer for the NDP is to move neither left nor right but further forward.

Davies stressed what differentiates the NDP from other parties -- namely that it takes a clear stand on principles, costs its programs and how critical moments often define the NDP. These have included internment of Japanese-Canadians during World War II, the *War Measures Act*, the war in Iraq and the 2008 proposed coalition.

Prince emphasized that the NDP is committed to ending many injustices that still exist in our society, such as inequalities and unfairness, fair trade, failure to properly pay for work undertaken by handicapped people and lack of fair and just institutions.

He stressed that this includes inclusiveness of education and the fact that, due to funding failures, we are sliding back to multi-tier education.

The concluding actions of the day were group discussions on key issues related to NDP values, followed by a summary of the group discussions.



Sixty-five NDP members discuss the values of being NDP, at an all-day session organized by Saanich-Gulf Islands NDP

Some comments from the participants...

“Mary Lynn was a great facilitator. Bill did an awesome job setting the foundation for values. I really appreciated his comments as it gave us a great starting point to get right into the sharing and discussions. The panel was great as well.”

On who was your favourite presenter?

“Libby reminded us the Party is us - often it's easy to forget this.”

“Peter Julian related values and principles to specifics.”

“I enjoyed the individuals who got up at the beginning to talk about their stories and values.”

“Joan Russo – understanding greens.”

“First speaker in the morning,” [Bill Graham]

And if stats are your thing, here are some results from the post-event survey:

100% of the survey responders said that:

- The conference helped them to get in touch with the values and the passion that lead them to the NDP in the first place.
- They met interesting people
- They would like to go to other events like this

95% of responders said that:

- They met new people and reconnected with old friends.
- They enjoyed the format of the day (group discussions/QA followed by table discussions)
- Their group was well facilitated and engaged
- They came away with new energy for moving social democracy forward
- They also said that the food was good, and the facilitation was great.

And most importantly: *All* said that they feel re-energized about their work as a social democratic activist as a result of the Values of Being NDP day-long conference.

If you would like to participate in more Values of Being NDP conferences in the future, tell ndpsaanichgulfislands@gmail.com



MP Libby Davies shares a laugh with Randall Garrison.

Current Topics on Orangeforum:

- 1) Discussion of core values and mission of the NDP.
 - 2) The impact of Climate Change and what to do about it--the Suzuki method critiqued.
 - 3) The Security and Prosperity Partnership Agreement (SPPA)--why it is important today if Canada wants a tomorrow.
 - 4) The TimberWest TFL boondoggle
 - 5) An Environmental Plan with a difference.
 - 6) Electoral Reform and why the NDP needs to get behind it.
 - 7) Gambling Expansion -- the BC Liberals' achilles heel.
 - 8) Health Care for seniors — The BC Liberal betrayal!
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Diary of a mad trustee

We need you in the board room to remind us why we’re there

By Eden Haythorthwaite

I never cease to be amazed by the insights I can glean from the teachers, support workers and parents when I visit schools and this is as good a reason as any to ramble the halls of our schools. If you find me sitting in your staff room or wandering though the classes with a gormless look on my face do not be fooled – I am forever being informed and listening for all I am worth. However...

I have been the trustee liaison for the various alternate program sites since I began this dark ride. As well I have been aware since its inception in May 2006 of the consequences of our Bill 33 legislation – dashed off mainly to clumsily address class size and composition issues in the shadow of their removal from the teachers’ collective agreements.

Still despite the monthly reports sent from this school district outlining our attempts to adhere to the not very lofty standards of this bill, it never occurred to me our alternate programs are specifically excluded from the class size and composition regulations. Why didn’t I notice? Why has this not been revealed before? It is as if the staff and students of the alternate program do not exist. Yet we have in our district over 300 students in those programs with complicated needs which often translate into Individual Education Plans (IEPs) as well as those challenges teachers recognize which are not officially documented. We will not be hearing about those numbers because the ministry says we don’t have to account for them in the organization of classes reports.

Because the hundreds of kids being educated in the alternate programs in our district are not included in the classroom reports, their teachers and support workers do not receive the slight benefit of legislative scrutiny– our self directed program at Kelsey must report but not the alternate.

The teachers union does not receive any consultation forms from the program. We know for instance in one alternate site there are 10 students with IEP’s (that is quite a bit over the three the legislation has settled for).The student numbers in alternate district wide have flourished but now I am forced to wonder why that is.

Has the alternate program become a spillway offsetting some of the insoluble class composition problems plaguing our schools as the staff struggle to meet the crappy standards Bill 33 imposes? It would be a spectacular place to shuffle kids off to since they disappear as far as legislation is concerned. I think it is time we included these details in our reports in this district regardless of the rubrics of the ministry.

And now for a bit of daylight – come to us by way of School District 27 in the Cariboo-Chilcotin. The message received is as follows:

CARIBOO-CHILCOTIN SCHOOL TRUSTEES SAY NO!

At the regular Board meeting last night, January 28 2010, the Trustees of School District 27 passed a motion to file a deficit budget! Trustee Mack stated that Trustees are entrusted with the obligation to defend and protect quality public education. With the projected cuts Mack held firm that the Board could not meet this responsibility therefore filing a deficit budget was the only option. Trustees Baker, VanOsh, and Mackenzie agreed. This motion instigated a motion to write a letter to all other districts encouraging those districts to follow suit and file a deficit budget.

This is the first board in recent memory to make such a pledge and my conversation with one of those trustees who supported this motion indicated the decision has been met with acclaim from their teachers and their community. This does not surprise me – we are now poised on the brink of a true watershed for our public schools. Now is the time...

As delighted as I am to be in the position of working to support this effort from the Cariboo here in Cowichan, it is bittersweet. This year our district Finance Committee has already endorsed -- with no detail to speak of -- a ministry budget model which will fortify the downward slide of our public education system. No one who voted for it even questioned its legitimacy. No figures, no documents, just a rough drawing on a white board like a nightmare version of Sesame Street. The admin placed it in front of us so it must be good. It makes perfect sense unless you actually think about it.

Boards and communities have all watched and waited as if somehow the first cuts would be the only cuts – small incremental adjustments to improve our efficiency or accommodate a global fiscal reality. We came to see the lack of dedication to public education spending as part of a swinging pendulum of social consciousness, fiscal agility and political polemic. With the old Biblical platitude “this too shall pass” we could always -- in our affliction -- continue to fantasize about a time when this period of curmudgeonly disregard for our own children would cease and be replaced as if by magic with generosity and civility.

It should be evident to us by now there has only been a passing commitment to funding our public schools (or our health care for that matter) and from day one, it was inevitable the powerful would sweep back everything gained as quickly as they could. Not just the wild expense of the Olympics nor the relentless demands of commerce nor bizarre notions about citizen choice have shaped this – if we continue to expect “this too shall pass” – the only thing which will pass is the opportunity to do something about it.

I do not believe it is too late.

Side by side with the budget process has been the finalization of our district strategic plan. It does come across as well meaning and thoughtful and indeed, I suppose it is, except for one detail – the one element which was carefully hived off from the deliberations is the lack of any prospect under the circumstances of a revenue stream which will activate it. You can view the plan on the district webpage -- it is like a dream or a story which will only serve to mock us if we do not insist our expectations are realistically funded.

In any case I am no fan of the “student success” concept -- I think we are here to nurture something much more profound. “Success” always has a competitive, self absorbed connotation to me anyway. I would have preferred to see our plan emphasize aspirations for our students like “wisdom, safety, freedom and happiness” because while success is something we seek just for ourselves, the others are goals we can only attain together.

Your attendance at board meetings and the Budget Committee are critical – you can rest assured your presence is an inspiration and a hammer. Please join us for these occasions.

We need you in the room to remind us why we are there. Please...

Hard work and conscientous effort should not be wasted

By Eden Haythornthwaite

“More than at any other time in history, humanity faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness. The other, to total extinction. Let us pray we have the wisdom to choose wisely.”

This has always been one of my favourite Woody Allen quotes. It sums up the way I often experience life both at and away from the board table. We may scrape together the sense to do what is right in the circumstances but our options get more and more unappetizing.

Tonight the board admitted it was wrong – not actually or in so many words – no one aired any regret but they did reverse an earlier urgently held position it was not mandatory to bring a motion from the Finance Committee to the board for approval. I mentioned in my last report the budget model (well the skeletal framework of a whisper of a rumour of a budget model) the Finance Committee instructed senior staff to follow when building the 2010/2011budget. This recommendation was kept off the board table through two board meetings on the curious insistence it was not necessary.

At the March 3 meeting, it made an appearance – dropped at the last minute on the agenda like a dawn raid and quickly dispatched. So we did get to briefly (with little enthusiasm for discourse from the “bare bones” advocates) discuss the wisdom of building a budget with an optional or total cuts column – the declared intention is to avoid percentage cuts to all programs and services. Any way you look at it--this fails to meet the test of providing quality learning and working conditions however, as the secretary treasurer originally stated it will give trustees a rationale for passing a budget with dramatic cuts. We can proudly say we will be supplying the legally mandated minimum service to the community while targeting entire programs and services.

Again – there is no consensus – a hollow victory for the slim majority who continue to be willing to oversee daily violations of the BC School Act rather than submit a budget which may exceed estimated revenue as section 111 of that Act commands. It should occur to us this emblematic dictat is actually in bad faith since any reasonable person would expect that if the School Act says estimated expenditure must not exceed estimated revenue, the revenue should meet the needs so we can abide by the clause and still do our duty by our kids.

To say we as a board are hopelessly polarized does not overstate the matter, but from a community stand point there is every reason to persist in advising all trustees to submit a budget which will support our schools. It is never too late to have the decisions at the table match the distraught rhetoric and handwringing. Either you believe justice is not being served by our ministry or you do and are prepared stand by your convictions. There is no middle ground however convenient it might be if there was.

We had an amended version of the school calendar placed before us – meant to replace the grand old School Calendar Bylaw #4 which actually demands approval from staff and parents for changes to instruction time. To call this an amendment would be inaccurate – it

is a full blown replacement with entirely different intentions and process (or lack thereof). The new not-so-improved version was entirely disinterested in the requirements of the school community.

Though the use of this bylaw in the past was more or less driven by relatively harmless modifications to various school schedules for the purposes of accommodating conferences for staff or other temporary matters, it now has to defend the manner in which we deliver education to the kids – it speaks much more seriously to the downward spiral of productive teaching time and the sliding income of our employees.

The under resourcing of our schools has now resulted in some districts using the days of instruction like an ATM – drop a week, add a couple of minutes a day – and no one is the wiser. And I mean no one – any educator worth the name will tell you little fiddly bits of instruction time in the real school world of distracted kids, endless sub atomic duties, curriculum and testing pressures are not worth a toss. When we lose a week it is gone in all the ways which matter.

There was a determined attempt to proceed through a 1st reading of the bylaw as massively amended, but damned if 1st reading did not pass (apparently an unprecedented occurrence matched only by getting a 30-minute audience with the Minister of Education). So the Sec/Treas. has returned to the task with direction from the board to bring something containing at least a hat tip to the parents and employees – but approval has been downgraded to consultation and generally this translates into – *We have suffered through the clumsy process of asking your opinion and we can now get on with the crucial task of disregarding your views.* But it is best to hang on to the minimum niceties until we can redress the approach in favour of genuine participation in the decision.

Finally – the material concerning the March 30 meeting recommended to the board by the District Funding Sub Committee was considered again and handed a resounding whack up the side of the head. Though the rejection of the program and indeed the entire concept was delivered with rather too much zeal, no one seemed to have any genuine or meaningful arguments against staging the meeting as decided as long ago as November 2009. Back then the board agreed to endorse the recommendation of the District Funding Sub Committee and hold a meeting or indeed meetings if necessary to:

- Inform the public about the School Districts budget challenges
- Seek support from the public for action to put pressure on the Provincial Government to increase funding for public education; and
- Ask for input from the public on additional ways to put pressure on the Provincial Government to increase funding for public education

In every way we could manage, the subcommittee thoughtfully designed an event to meet these objectives but in the end the board walked away despite having passed a further motion in January to support the specific details of this meeting. I suppose they had always assumed we were joking or might just forget we brought the suggestion but it turned out we were deadly serious and our memories are fairly intact.

Still the important thing is the show goes on – two groups of parents have taken up the role as hosts and except for a change of venue, different personnel providing the budget info and chairing of the meeting, it is alive and well. No one who had agreed to participate in the meeting originally withdrew – I suppose they felt the message and the method have merit regardless of the sponsors. And so do I. I hate to see hard work and conscientious effort wasted – and because of the Koksilah Parent Community and Friends of Cowichan Kids, it won’t be.

I suppose we should all feel a bit hurt the board did not like the program placed before them – but as far as I can tell -- no one is grieving. Too busy getting on with it and glad to be a merry band of austerity refuseniks anxious to affirm the potential of our public schools and oppose the crime of whittling away their promise. We need a cunning plan – and we may know where to look for it.



John Heaney

Heenan Blaikie LLP

514-737 Yates Street, Victoria, BC V8W 1L6
Phone: 250-381-9599
Toll Free Fax: 1-866-615-8276
Email: jheaney@heenan.ca

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A question of status: gender equity and the right to belong

By Heather Tufts

A new Canadian law could soon recognize a lost generation of matrilineal “status Indians” under a proposed amendment to the *Indian Act*, although a meaningful dialogue with Indigenous communities has been conspicuously absent for decades.

The Government of Canada, as self-appointed gatekeeper, amended the *Indian Act* in 1951 to establish a centralized register of all people registered under the Act. “Status” or “registered” Indians were generally band members, with rights to live on reserve, vote for chief and council, share in band moneys, and own or inherit property on reserve, although this was viewed by many as an apartheid or colonial-style system.

Gender inequity became the norm when Aboriginal women were stripped of their status if they married a non-Aboriginal man whereas men retained status no matter who they married. Many women felt that the right to belong to a native band was unjustly stolen from them and politically-active Aboriginal women’s groups emerged to advocate for a legislative solution to the problem.

Edith Loring-Kuhanga is from the House of Gwininitxw, the Wolf Clan in the Gitksan nation. Her mother was full Gitksan but she lost her status when she married a non-status man in spite of the fact that she belonged to the lineage of hereditary chiefs.

“As a result, we were all raised as non-status Indians and lived off reserve. Not being status Indians was difficult since the Gitksan people are a matrilineal society where everyone is born into a house, a clan, and a nation. Even though the Government of Canada did not acknowledge that my mother was an “Indian”, her community did and bestowed upon her the right to be a hereditary Chief,” said Edith.

Most of her extended family lived on the reserve and so a lot of time was spent visiting where they struggled to find a sense of belonging. “Not only did we face discrimination from the Government of Canada, but we faced discrimination from our own people and non-Aboriginal people. As a teenager, I struggled with my identity trying to figure out where I belonged,” explains Edith “but we were raised on the land and always followed Gitksan laws and culture.”

Opposition to the gender-biased registration system gained international attention in the eighties. Sandra Lovelace, a Maliseet from New Brunswick who had lost her status through a marriage that later ended and wished to return to her reserve, took a complaint against Canada to the *United Nations Human Rights Committee*. In its 1981 ruling, the Committee found that, as she was barred from returning to her home community, her rights had been violated under Article 27 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, which guarantees that persons belonging to minorities may enjoy their own culture.



Nisga’a youth train as election workers in New Aiyansh, capital of the Nisga’a Nation.

Photo by Heather Tufts

The passage of Bill C-31 in 1985 made several significant amendments to the *Indian Act*. Status was restored to Aboriginal women who married non-status men and to the children of these unions. However the complex amendments allowed for different levels of status depending upon whether a person had one or two registered parents under the *Indian Act*. Many women were still only entitled to lesser status as a result of this bill and the disparity provoked ongoing legal disputes. Moreover the 2nd generation cut off or “double-mother” rule affected many Aboriginal children who were not entitled to status, meaning that their offspring were also ineligible.

Enfranchised First Nations who had given up their status for the right to vote were included in Bill C-31. Aboriginal

franchise granted in 1920 was conditional to relinquishing status and treaty rights. Although this condition was removed in 1960, thousands of Aboriginals remained without status.

One of the results of Bill C-31 was that some of the newly and re-registered “status Indians” returned to their family reserves and so communities were challenged to provide appropriate housing and services. However the quantum of blood remained a factor of eligibility for band membership especially regarding maternal grandchildren.

“In 1986, my mother was finally reinstated as an “Indian” by the Government of Canada through Bill C-31. I and my other siblings made application to the Government immediately and we were all given our right back to be an “Indian”. Since I married a non-status Indian, my two sons were not considered “Indian” enough to be given Indian status,” said Edith. She feels the recently proposed legislation although imperfect is long overdue but is saddened that her mother did not live to see this change.

In early March the Conservative government introduced legislation to amend the *Indian Act* to correct some of the disparity in gender-based lineage rights.

“This addresses the difference in treatment between how descendants of Aboriginal women who marry non-Aboriginal people are treated differently than Aboriginal men. So this is a gender equity issue,” claims the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Chuck Strahl who introduced the bill to the house.

Bill C-3 known in short as the *Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act* will likely become law in April 2010. The proposed legislation will grant Indian status to the grandchildren of Aboriginal women who married non-Aboriginal men. The great-grandchildren of mixed unions are excluded from status rights and some of the more complex gender-bias clauses in the registration provisions of the *Indian Act* have not been addressed. Perhaps of even greater concern is that there has been no consultation with Aboriginal peoples on this issue even though many express the right to determine their own individual, communal and national identities.

“I am aware that there are a number of broader issues related to the question of registration and membership, and important treaty realities and cultural perspectives that must be taken into account,” said the Minister. “However, these issues are complex, and broader reform on these matters cannot be done overnight or in isolation.”

Since countless Aboriginal women have been held hostage to different rules under the *Indian Act* for decades the Minister’s comments are somewhat disingenuous. The proposed changes were not a government epiphany but were directed by the BC Court of Appeal which gave the federal government a one year ultimatum in April 2009. In a unanimous decision they cited the 1985 amendments as insufficient and discriminatory towards Aboriginal women.

The ruling stemmed from the case of Sharon Mclvor of Merritt BC and her son Charles Grismer. Mclvor had lost her status when she married a non-Aboriginal man and fought for more than 20 years for the right to reinstate herself and her son.

“While the legislative schemes are complex, the complaint is essentially that Mr. Grismer’s children would have Indian status if his Indian status had been transmitted to him through his father rather than through his mother,” Justice Harvey Groberman wrote in his judgment. The court ruled that Bill C-31 violated the equality rights guaranteed by section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Shawn Atleo applauds the changes that make the rules fairer for women and their descendants. But he prefaced his support by admonishing the paternalistic and colonial nature of the *Indian Act*.

“It is fair and just that Indian status will be restored to those who lost it because of inequality in the *Indian Act*,” National Chief Atleo said. “But the real problem is the *Indian Act* itself. The Government of Canada should not be able to decide who is and who is not a First Nation citizen. It is the right of any nation to identify its citizens and First

Nations are no exception. We are calling on the federal government to work with us on a broader approach that goes beyond these narrow amendments and deals with the real issues of First Nations citizenship.”

In the spirit of First Nations self-determination the historic Nisga’a treaty resulted in the relinquishment of Indian status in order



Chief Gwininitxw, Mercy Edith Loring as Hereditary Chief in 2007.

Photo by Charlene Lattie, granddaughter to Chief Gwininitxw.

to establish a unique Nisga’a Nation. The Nisga’a Treaty was the first modern-day treaty in BC and the final steps took place on April 13, 2000, when Parliament passed the *Nisga’a Final Agreement Act*.

The Nisga’a Lisims Government now makes its own laws affecting management of its lands and assets, language, culture and citizenship. Nisga’a status cards replace the previously held Indian status cards and are issued to Nisga’a citizens who are also members of the village bands. They are currently the only First Nation in British Columbia to self-define nation citizenship and are therefore unaffected by status as defined by the *Indian Act*.

During the 2009 provincial election *Elections BC* accepted First Nations status cards as voter identification for the first time.

However this did not include the freshly issued Nisga’a Nation status card which created some identification confusion at the voting places in Nisga’a villages.

For many First Nations people their status represents an inherent birthright to belong to a community of extended families and deep-rooted traditions. Edith Loring-Kuhanga who continued to practice Gitksan culture and raised her sons with a strong sense of tradition is adamant that “they are part of my house, clan and nation - they practice our traditional ways and our laws. They have Gitksan blood flowing through their veins regardless of how the Government of Canada chooses to label them.” These stolen identities represent three generations of injustice which impacted countless displaced lives.

Currently there are about 800,000 “status Indians” in Canada and the new ruling could potentially pave the way for 45,000 more applications although these numbers are speculative. The BC Court of Appeal issued Ottawa a deadline of April 6, 2010, although a short extension could be granted. However Minister Strahl says that he hopes that parliament will expedite the passage of the bill which passed first reading on March 11.

Whereas Bill C-3 is a positive step towards diminishing the gender gap in status eligibility it is also an indicator of a much greater need; to overhaul or eliminate the race-based *Indian Act*. In the meantime assurances are needed that adequate financial provisions will be available for supportive housing, education and health services especially if more band members choose to move to their home reserve once the amendments become law.

Above all a framework of genuine consultation with Indigenous communities about self-determined nationhood is essential bearing in mind that Bill C-3 will not resolve all issues of gender discrimination in the *Indian Act*. A justice-based dialogue is long overdue.

Although the Act was initially deemed to come into force on April 5, the Court of Appeals has given the government a 3-month extension up to July 5, 2010.

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TELEPHONE 250-385-5787
FAX 250-385-4364
EMAIL rmilne@jawlbandundon.com

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Three strong women of Latin America

Stories and photos by Theresa Wolfwood

Victorians have been fortunate to meet and hear three strong Latin American women speak about their struggles; of course, they mean not their individual problems, but the struggles of women and everyone working for justice in their region. Behind every successful social and political transformation are hundreds of determined women, connected and committed to their work. And if there is anywhere in the world we can look for inspiration and example for our much needed social change, it is Latin America.

TENTS NOT GUNS



Esperanza Luzbert of Cuba

On March 8, International Women's Day, Esperanza Luzbert of Cuba was in Victoria to speak about the role of women in Haiti after the earthquake. Haitian women, angered because they wanted shelter for their families, not the military takeover of their neighbourhoods, marched on February 7 to the UN headquarters (formerly Haiti's only medical school during the Aristide government). Although many foreigners were entering, 500 Haitian women were not allowed in with their signs, "Tents, not Guns". The UN only deals with governments and worldwide it is frightened of popular movements and will not recognize them – even when, as in the case of Haiti, they were the main structure of self-government. The women demonstrated again on March 8 and called for self-determination for Haiti as well and were driven back by police. Women are the backbone of the Haitian economy; 80% of the informal market is run by women, they are the leaders in most community organizations and when camps were set up for the homeless after the earthquake, women formed the organizing committees.

Meanwhile as international agencies scrambled for a piece of the action, Cuban medical teams were already working in Haiti with 400 doctors, mainly women, and other medical personnel, along with Haitian doctors who had been trained in Cuba. Very quickly field hospitals were set up and thousands of injured Haitians were treated in the first 72 hours after the quake.

But Esperanza said that Cuban medical aid, accepted and appreciated by Haitians, was not a short term effort. She spoke about Cuban medical assistance in the treatment and prevention of infectious diseases and much needed help in sanitation. Cuba also has a special emergency medical brigade – ready to go on short notice that augmented the teams already present in Haiti. Cuba has developed special mosquito and rat control procedures (they offered them and emergency aid to the US after New Orleans flooded, but were refused). Cuban medical teams will work on long term effects, particularly on traumatized children, and Esperanza said Cuba was setting up programs for rehabilitation for children and others emotionally damaged by the earthquake's effect on family and community life.

Cuban women are not only prominent in medical professions with 55% of doctors being women. Cuba has an infant mortality rate of 4.7 per 1000 live births. Women have total freedom of choice, abortion is free and family planning is universally available for women and men. Women comprise more than half of university students and professors. 43% of Members of Parliament are women; there are seven women cabinet ministers (28% of total). Enjoying the universal access to education offered in Cuba, Esperanza studied English and has worked in the Cuban embassy in Ottawa.

She called on us to pressure the US to free the Cuban 5. These Cuban men were in the US and infiltrated an extreme rightwing anti-Cuban terrorist group. They were incarcerated and given long and harsh sentences. Known murderers and criminals who bombed a Havana hotel and killed a Canadian are walking free in Miami.

Esperanza ended her talk with a quote from Jose Marti, the Cuban independence hero: *No policy is successful without the participation of women.*

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY IN EL SALVADOR



Lourdes Palacio of El Salvador

FMLN Member of Parliament, Lourdes Palacio, was a combatant who took advantage of the opportunity to go to university at the end of El Salvador's civil war in 1992. She studied economics and joined a local NGO, working on development projects in rural areas.

Agriculture is her passion; food security is her goal. Lourdes says that, even in a small densely populated country, there is much good land which is not being used and that El Salvador imports much of its food.

That a Canadian mining company has drained the water table and caused major drought and toxicity problems for farmers during its exploratory drilling is an issue close to Lourdes' heart and her political work as a member of the Salvadorian parliament's Commissions on health and natural resources and on agriculture and economics.

On its corporate website this company says, **"Pacific Rim is an environmentally and socially responsible exploration company focused exclusively on high grade, environmentally clean gold de-**

posits in the Americas. Pacific Rim's primary asset and focus of its growth strategy is the high grade, vein-hosted El Dorado gold project in El Salvador..." But that is not the whole story; the present water scarcity and pollution, the eventual release of poisonous arsenic from the ore, and the prospect of cyanide use in processing if the mine does go into operation and the possibility of contaminating the drinking water of two million people mean even greater environmental danger; the lack of acknowledgement of these problems is hardly "environmentally and socially responsible".

Local community groups organized to oppose Pacific Rim's permit when they learned of the potential danger of gold mining even though there was no community consultation about the mining exploration; as a result the government of El Salvador cancelled this permit. Pacific Rim is now suing the Salvadorian government under CAFTA through its US subsidiary for more than \$80 million. Since Pacific Rim started its exploration in Cabañas, violence and fear have spread terror in this small farming region. Radio stations and priests voicing concern about the mining have been threatened and community activists have been murdered; the latest, in December 2009, was a pregnant woman.

A private member's bill about responsibility of Canadian companies abroad may still be heard in parliament. Write to Liberal MP Bob Rae to show your support for Bill C-300. We are asked to contact Pacific Rim and ask it to cease its Salvadorian operation and its CAFTA case: Catherine McLeod-Seltzer, chair, and Thomas C. Shrake, president and CEO, Pacific Rim Mining Corp, 410 – 625 Howe Street, Vancouver, V6C 2T6, BC.

Lourdes also asks Canadians to call on the Salvadorian Attorney-General, Romeo Benjamin Barahona Melendez, to initiate a full public enquiry into the deaths of community leaders and threats against others who oppose Pacific Rim's activities. For addresses call the El Salvador embassy in Ottawa at 613-238-2939.

Lourdes encouraged Canadians to support anti-mining community organizations in Cabañas with letters, donations and other actions. Contact: fmlnvictoria@yahoo.com for addresses and details.

Pacific Rim's property is one of many that foreign companies are eyeing greedily, a gold belt that extends through El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Honduras. The US has built a new highway across El Salvador, providing access to this gold belt. Canadian mining companies are active in the whole region; many observers believe that Canada's foreign policy in Latin America is dictated by mining companies. Canada did nothing to restore democracy and the overthrown president in Honduras – Canadian companies are busy there. The present price of gold is about \$1150/troy ounce; the production cost, particularly in the majority world is less than one-half that price; no wonder our government serves our lucrative corporate interests.

Lourdes believes the first priority of her government is to reactivate the agricultural sector and to restore food security to her country. Small farmers have benefitted from some land distribution and are now getting assistance for seeds, tools, etc. Unfortunately the last government changed the Seed Act and allowed GMO seeds to be used; this government is trying to reverse that and is working on a long term plan for agricultural development

Lourdes is one of many women who participate in public life in El Salvador; the mayor of Apopa is a physician (a large city outside San Salvador) and the last mayor of San Salvador is an ex-combatant and physician; both turned to politics to work for healthcare for Salvadorians. Women are prominent in professions and definitely conspicuous in small business and the informal economy. So many men were killed in the civil war or have left for economic reasons, that many women are sole heads of families as well.

A quiet determined woman with a mission to protect the health and environment of Salvadorians and to secure food and water for all, Lourdes reminds me of the poem by Blanca Mirna Benavides, *"...you devour distances/carrying the future/on your back"*.

FREE LILIANY OBANDO



Liliano Obando, of Colombia, in Victoria with peace poppies, 2006

Liliany Obando visited Victoria in 2004 and 2006 to meet with activists and trade unions about human rights violations in Colombia where activists and peasant leaders disappear at an alarming rate. Sometimes tortured bodies appear; other times the disappearance is permanent. She knew her name was on the list because her work involved investigating these crimes against peasant leaders of FENESGRO, the largest Colombian farmers' union.

In August 2008 she was arrested and jailed in a high security prison for women political activists. After a year she was charged with "Rebellion" and "Raising funds for terrorism". While she was in Canada; she was collecting funds for her union's work. The trial drags on with little evidence being produced.

Victorian Kevin Neish has been to Colombia several times as an observer for Obando's trial that finally began in December 2009 and as a protective witness for her children and mother.

He writes about Liliany as "a young child in Pasto, she once came upon a policeman rousting a peasant women selling fruit, off the sidewalk. Liliany ran into the street to collect and return the women's fruit, which the policeman simply threw back out. Then, to the horror of her mother and sister, Liliany gathered up the fruit and pelted the policeman with them! The little girl was roughly "arrested" and taken to the station where she was scolded, threatened and eventually released, in the hope of teaching her a lesson. The "lesson" little Liliany appeared to have learned that day was that the road to justice was through struggle."

Neish also says, "Liliany is just one of 7200 political prisoners held in horrendous prisons all across Colombia, many without charges. When I first met Liliany in Buen Pastor Prison in September 09, I immediately expressed my sadness at her situation. She rebuked me. *"Kevin this is just another front in the struggle..."* Liliany has organized the prisoners to communally resist the oppression of the prison.

Funds donated to her from Canada turn into food, cosmetics, craft supplies and clothing for other prisoners. Fiestas are organized for International Women's Day and other political celebrations. During my visits with her, other prisoners would regularly interrupt us to ask Liliany questions and take her away to impromptu meetings. It turns out she is treated as a sort of mediator among the prisoners. Like so many countries, Colombian prisoners have legal rights, but only on paper, but Liliany and her fellow prisoners have been forcing the authorities to actually respect these prisoners' "paper" rights."

Liliany has a copy of the Criminal Code of Colombia and uses it to educate all the prisoners in Buen Pastor about their legal rights. She receives many international visitors because of her work with FENESGRO and makes sure that they learn the situation of all the women in prison with her.

Because of her committed activism in the jail, Kevin reports that, "the prison authorities have deemed Liliany a 'problem prisoner' and want to transfer her to the notorious La Tramacua prison in the extremely hot dry North, beyond the reach of her family and visiting

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Victoria Labour Council

219-2750 Quadra Street, Victoria, BC V8T 4E8

Ph: 250-384-8331 FAX: 250-384-8381 Email: vlcbc@telus.net

The VLC, representing affiliated unions in the Greater Victoria area, holds its regular monthly meeting the third Wednesday of each month at 7 pm at the Burnside-Gorge Community Centre .

All delegates are invited to come out and meet the Executive: Mike Eso, President; Mike Ferguson, Treasurer; Mary Ehle, Secretary

The impact of militarism on climate change must no longer be tolerated or ignored

By Joan Russow

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) must address the contribution by militarism to greenhouse gas emissions, and that an important source of funding would be the reallocation of the military budget.

Al Gore’s documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, successfully raised the profile of climate change. After almost 50 years of unheeded warnings, the human-generated causes of climate change are finally being taken seriously.

At Gore’s presentation in Victoria, in 2008, Gore issued a series of admonitions: “It is a planetary emergency and we have to act—we are in a crisis—a crisis of danger and an opportunity,” “We have heard the alarm bell and it is time to act,” “We have to get over denial and moral cowardice,” “It is important for individuals to be part of the solution, but it requires the changing of laws and politics.”

These announcements are not new. What would be new, however, would be an announcement that he is going to produce another film, *An Even More Inconvenient Truth: Nuclear Power is Not the Answer*, and another, *The Most Inconvenient Truth: Exposition of the Full Impact of Militarism on Greenhouse Gas Emissions*.

Years of unheeded warnings and spurious solutions

Al Gore is right. Laws have to be in place to compel governments to end years of procrastination and finally implement their obligations and fulfill their commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve carbon sinks.

In 1988, scientists, politicians and non-government organizations (NGOs) at the Changing Atmosphere Conference in Toronto acknowledged the following: “*The stabilizing of the atmospheric concentrations of CO2 is an imperative goal. It is currently estimated to require reductions of more than 50 percent from present [1988] emission levels. Energy research and development budgets must be massively directed to energy options which would eliminate or greatly reduce CO2 emissions and to studies undertaken to further refine the target reductions.*”

They warned that “*humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled, globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequence could be second only to a global nuclear war and that it is imperative to act now*”.

Governments, coerced into inaction by industry, industry-front groups, industry-funded academics and industry-controlled states, have failed to address the urgency of the crisis through their reluctance to enact effective legislation.

If citizens are willing to do their part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, their governments must stop subsidizing the fossil fuel and military industries; must redirect military expenses; and must discontinue the promotion of nuclear energy—the most hazardous and expensive form of energy known—as the solution to climate change.

Corporations and policy-makers are talking openly about nuclear energy as the solution to climate change. However, in 1991, a Canadian parliamentary committee issued a report, “Out of Balance: the Risks of Irreversible Climate Change”, which affirmed the principle that a solution that is worse than the problem it is intended to solve is not a solution. Nuclear energy, with its radioactive footprint and its inextricable link to the development of nuclear arms, including depleted uranium in weapon systems, is not a solution. Gore must not be ambivalent about nuclear energy.

Impact of militarism on climate cannot be ignored

At a 2007 UN conference on climate change, several representatives of the NGO community involved in the militarism/nuclear matters and in the Peace Caucus drafted a declaration expressing concern about the failure of international bodies to address the impact of militarism on climate change.

This Declaration was presented at the end of the plenary to the Dr. Pachauri, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: If leaders are to address the “challenge of climate change” they cannot ignore the impact of militarism on climate change. The statement called for the following:

- “(i) *The IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) to end the promotion of nuclear energy as the solution to climate change;*
- “(ii) *The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to investigate and estimate the full impact on greenhouse gas emissions by the military and demand that each state release information related to the greenhouse gas emissions from the production of all weapons systems, military exercises, from war games, weapons testing, military aviation, environmental warfare, troop transfer, military operations, waste generation, reconstruction after acts of violent interventions, etc.;*
- “(iii) *NATO, whose collective activities have contributed to not only the perpetuation of the scourge of war and the violation of international peremptory norms, but also the substantial release of greenhouse gas emissions, to be disbanded;*
- “(iv) *Global military budgets to be reallocated to global social justice.*”

At COP 15 in Copenhagen, militarism was not sufficiently addressed

Prior to COP 15, I co-authored a statement that was circulated several times to the state negotiators. In the statement, which can be found at www.climatechangecopenhagen.org, we addressed the following concerns:

THAT many international NGOs are beholden to the military, fossil fuel, nuclear, biofuel, large-scale hydro, etc. industries through having corporate members on their boards and through receiving corporate funding;

THAT many politicians in developed countries “receive political donations” from the military, fossil fuel, nuclear, biofuel, large-scale hydro, etc. industries, and when no longer

Three strong women of Latin America

continued from page 14

foreigners, and this is regardless of the fact that she has yet to be convicted of anything.”

As are many Canadians, I am concerned that Canada wants to sign a Free Trade Agreement with Colombia and our politicians actually say this will improve the lack of human rights in Colombia. Canada signed a Free Trade Agreement with Israel in 1997; human rights there have worsened not improved; there is no evidence anywhere that Free Trade improves Human Rights. Colombia has the world’s high rate of assassination and disappearance of human rights and labour activists and of investigative journalists.

Liliany and her companions need our support: check: www.freeliliany.net for ideas. Locally more information is available at: www.victoriacasc.org with video interviews and news reports on her trial. Liliany speaks English, she can receive short phone calls and mail. Contact Kevin: [neish@victoria.tc\(dot\)ca](mailto:neish@victoria.tc(dot)ca) for details.

Write and demand Liliany Patricia Obando Villota be released, have all charges withdrawn, and be treated as a democratic citizen, to: His Excellency Jaime Giron Duarte, Ambassador of Colombia to Canada, 1002 – 360 Albert St. Ottawa, ON, K1R 7X7

Liliany will not give up on her dangerous journey on the road for justice. There is no danger for us in solidarity work to support freedom for Liliany and human rights for all Colombians. La Lucha continua!

Theresa Wolfwood is Director of the Barnard-Boecker Centre Foundation, see www.bbcf.ca. She is active in Latin American solidarity; in 2009 she was an international election observer in EL Salvador.

in politics sit on the boards of these industries.

In 2010 we proposed again that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) must address the contribution by militarism to greenhouse gas emissions, and that an important source of funding would be the reallocation of the military budget. At COP15, there was support from Bolivia and the ALBA group of countries for the need to address the issue of militarism. President Morales, at a press conference, called upon President Obama to spend funds on life not death. Also the Chair of the G77, representing 130 developing countries, also pointed out that President Obama has difficulty spending billions on addressing the issue of climate debt to developing countries, but not on bailing out his friends, and on supporting military invasions and occupations..

Bolivia taking the lead in organizing a conference in Cochabamba

For Copenhagen, President Morales had prepared a document, in which he called for the “renouncing of war”. The Copenhagen Accord not only does not address the contribution of militarism to greenhouse gas emissions, but also has weak targets for emissions reductions. The Accord epitomized what the Chair of the African Caucus had previously stated, “Developed countries are playing with numbers while ‘Africa is dying’.”

After the COP15 Conference, President Morales announced that he would be organizing a follow-up Conference in Cochabamba. That Conference will be held from April 18 to April 22. For this Conference, we have prepared a Post COP 15| Time to Be Bold Declaration (see it at www.timetobebold.wordpress.com).

Let them wear rubber boots and drink bottled water

The major greenhouse gas emitters must recognize the climate debt to developing states—the ones that are least responsible but most impacted by climate change. At COP 15, a delegate from Bangladesh stated that for the developed states the issue is a matter of life style but for us it is a matter of survival— the right to live.

While the global military budget soars to around 1.7 trillion dollars annually, many of the developing states are dispensed with in “Antoinettian” fashion: Let them wear rubber boots and drink bottled water.

Joan Russow, PhD, is a member of the Global Compliance Research Project.

Every Step Counts marks 1st year

Victoria – February 18 marked a year of success and the first anniversary of Every Step Counts, a unique running program founded by the Victoria Foundation and hosted at the Victoria Cool Aid Society.

Drawing on the benefits of running and team work to foster self esteem, confidence, energy and positive growth, the program is for individuals experiencing challenges with addiction, mental health, poverty, homelessness and other social issues.

“By committing to pilot Every Step Counts, our Board was confident it would be an excellent fit for Victoria,” said Sandra Richardson, Victoria Foundation CEO. “Today’s gathering not only demonstrates the support we have from our community partners but the faces around the room are proof of the positive impact we are having within our community.”

The program has provided a wide range of physical and mental health benefits to the participants, including weight loss, decreased body mass index and decreased waist size. As Dr. David Bell, a physician of several of the runners, put it:

“I have patients involved in the Every Step Counts program. Their involvement in this program has had a very positive impact on their mental and physical health. I believe this program has done more to improve self-esteem and integrate these people into society than most of my medical interventions and will result in lower costs to the medical health system in general and the mental health system in particular.”

Almost two years ago, the Victoria Foundation brought forward the idea of Every Step Counts and with the support of Front-runners, Vancity, United Way, The Jawl Foundation and the TELUS Victoria Community Board, funding was secured. Victoria Cool Aid Society was then approached to develop,

house and run this dynamic and positive health and wellness program.

Participants mark running milestones after demonstrating their commitment to keeping with the program. Upon joining, they receive gently used running shoes. After five runs, they earn a water bottle, after 10, they receive a certificate and a technical shirt. After 15 runs, they are outfitted with brand new running shoes and at the 25-run mark they earn two running hats; one to keep and one to gift to an individual who has helped to make “every step count”.

“This program draws its strength and dignity from each individual who comes out to run or walk,” explains Gillie Easdon, Every Step Counts Program Coordinator. “We are all equals in our running gear which means we can leave our histories, diagnoses and financial situations at the door.”

Total individual runs have reached 2,500 by over 120 participants as Every Step Counts enters its second year. Participation growth levels have been steady and the program seeks to add value to participants through things like monthly wellness talks.

Both refreshing and empowering, Every Step Counts continues to inspire other communities and enrich its own mandate and potential. Some runners are now unable to attend, as they are in training programs or employment.

MLA Victoria-Swan Lake

Rob Fleming



Working for you

 1020 Hillside Avenue
250 360.2023
rob.fleming.mla@leg.bc.ca
www.robflamingmla.ca



Victoria-Swan Lake New Democrats

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You can reach your executive

by emailing President Edward May at edwardomay@gmail.com

or by writing to Box 282

1681 Hillside Avenue, Victoria, BC V8T 2C1

Who does the Yellow Jacket sting?

By Tim Phoetist

There is an old Cherokee legend that speaks of the nature of a giant insect – the Yellow-Jacket. You can find the story at: www.cherokee-nc.com/index.php?page=103

Briefly, the people of a Cherokee town were being punished by a giant insect which came into their midst and carried off their children. It was quick, secret and lethal.

After many inventive attempts to nail the beast the people baited a trap for it with an entire deer. This slowed down the creature as it dragged the bait to its home for consumption.

Following the trail, the people of the town found their predator to be a killer Yellow-Jacket – a wasp of massive proportions. Needless to say, they swatted the beast into permanent hibernation! It would sting no more – or would it?

Many of its slaves survived the popular attack and it is the destruction of YJ’s nest and its offspring that occupies your mild economist today.

This economist is angry! It’s not easy for an economist to express anger – our tool bags contain delicate things like econometric models and mathematical algorithms – not Taser guns, nightsticks, steel capped boots and protest posters. We tend to do things that make others angry!

But now is a time for angry expression. On March 20, 2010, a video recording was made of a police action in sleepy Victoria. A number of drunken clubbers were arrested for fighting outside a club in the early hours. The perps. were taken away to sleep off the booze and bruises. A day in the night of club land. Nothing unique. Nobody was ultimately charged and the boys in blue moved on to the next idiocy. Seemingly an appropriate, civilized and intelligent response to an ordinary nuisance.

Except, during the main event, a bystander recorded the activities of a Yellow Jacketed member of Victoria’s finest. He was a standout by virtue of his luminous yellow incident vest – we’ll call him the ‘Yellow Policeman’.

Together with a colleague, the Yellow Policeman, seemingly sober and deliberate, crossed the road and kicked and kneed the spine of a defenceless and prone individual.

The individual appeared to present no threat or resistance to the main police action.

Boy, could that Yellow Jacket sting.

The incident was loaded into the You Tube service for the world to see. For the reader that hasn’t seen it in the news go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnwi6wO03As and form your own opinion.

Now, at time of writing all this was “new news”. At time of reading it’s likely recent history – but it’s important to us all that the story continues to breathe until some of the sting and venom has been pulled from the likes of the Yellow Policeman, and importantly, his masters.

What business is this of an economic commentator? The matter is in the trusted hands of the Victoria and Vancouver Police complaints commissions, the mayor, the police chief and other worthies. Justice will be done. Why, the chief of police himself is at the helm of the enquiry! Maybe the Yellow Policeman breached policy. Maybe he didn’t. We won’t know until the chief has spoken.

In the meantime let’s look at the damage – economic and political – beyond the bruising to the spine of the prostrate bystander.

The You Tube video has become “viral”. That is, it can be viewed all over the world. It speaks for itself. The video and audio quality is excellent. It appears to show a gratuitous and thuggish attack by a Victoria, BC, police officer on an unresisting and prone individual. The video revealed no “heat of battle”. The attack seemed calculated and cold blooded. In fact the deliberateness of the violence is cited by Chief Graham as actually a virtue that suggests that the Yellow Policeman knew exactly how to follow Victoria police policy. No sign that the Yellow Policeman was “out of control” in any way. Should we be grateful for small mercies?

Victoria is a relatively safe, mild little city. Its economy can thrive on the visits of tourists from all over the world. By today’s city standards Victoria is an oasis of peace.

The citizens and taxpayers of Victoria spend some of their hard earned dollars funding a minimal and perpetual campaign to attract tourists and conventioners. The budget for this campaign will never in a million years be able to buy the exposure that

the March 20 You Tube video has received.

In this case not all publicity is good publicity. This is Bad publicity. This is Bad economics.

The gentle reader might think the memory and cost of the Yellow Policeman will soon fade. That Victoria won’t be indelibly marked. It will be, and there are longer term and measureable negative consequences – and economists like me to measure things.

If justice is to be done, and to be seen to be done, the City will acknowledge error. Maybe it will be sued. Being sued – win or lose – is expensive. So, maybe the City will admit no error. Maybe the Yellow Policeman acted within policy. Such a policy is risky. Others may get hurt. A quick call to the City’s underwriters will likely confirm that increased risk begats increased insurance premiums.

So we have spoiled Tourism Victoria’s advertising and PR campaign. We’ve robbed some moneyed tourists of their peace of mind. We’ve robbed some Victoria businesses of some trade, we’ve become exposed to becoming a defendant in a possible assault action, and we’ve raised our insurance premiums.

We can, perhaps, assign these negative consequences to the Yellow Policeman and his apparent inability to keep his stinger safely tucked away until it was really needed. Maybe he’ll meet somebody, one day, who is actually standing upright!

Back to the Cherokee town and the giant Yellow Jacket – the thief of their children.

Maybe the Yellow Policeman descends from the giant wasp’s lineage. He certainly has done much damage to our treasure and to the peaceful futures of our children. These acts and policies have lasting and generational effects. They set a tone that cannot be quickly changed. Just look south. So the actions of the Yellow Policeman have stolen something from our children and from all of us.

As a lover of Victoria, always appreciative of its humanity and relative calmness, this writer suggests that if the policy of the City and its police force is now to train and equip police to increasingly expect violence, it will be a short step to actually find that they are provoking violent behaviour.

Of course there are many in our community who will like nothing better than a fight with the police. Often these “fighters” say they represent the “oppressed masses” as they join, like parasites, in legitimate protests about one cause or another. Police brutality is often the cry from those who actually incite trouble. We must remember, interwoven with our legitimate and peaceful protesters are often agents provocateur. There are agents of Capital on our streets, bent on inciting violence. Maybe, occasionally, they wear Yellow Jackets.

It’s worth noting that few downtown businesses have condemned the actions seen in the video. There has been no outpouring of disgust from the Chamber of Commerce or the office of Tourism Victoria. Yet tens of thousands of viewers from BC and beyond have expressed their objection to what the video revealed.

Be sure to know that business and capital in any city today thrives on clear support for police powers, however threatening and unwarranted. In this case our capital establishment remains silent or in full throated support of the indefensible. This is no coincidence. This is part of a strategy of commercial cleansing. This is not to the economic advantage of the people of Victoria, other than the small minority with big bank balances.

Joined with the Yellow Policeman, the apparently escalated confrontational policies of today’s Victoria PD, and the mercenary conscripts of capital who like a fight, we now have a recipe for an unquiet town and an economic policy based on fear.

This leaves little to distinguish Victoria from so many other cities throughout the world.

So, like the Cherokees, we’ve found our monster – our Yellow Jacket Policeman. Let’s call him for what he is – the Yellow Policeman – and disown him. And tell the world we’ll save our investment for city improvement, fair trade and help for the disadvantaged. We have no budget for the tools of violence, carefully kept by our servants at the police department.

So, to fondly borrow the words of Sgt. Phil Esterhaus: “Let’s be careful out there!”

“Seeing Cuba again...for the first time”

By Dale Perkins

“How do you make attractive that which is not?

“How do you sell emptiness, vulnerability, and nonsuccess?

“How do you talk descent when everything is about ascent?

‘How can you possibly market letting-go in a capitalist culture?

...”
--“Inherent Unmarketability”, from *Everything Belongs*, by Richard Rohr

Having just returned from two weeks in Cuba, I wonder if there is something to be learned from the 50-year Castro experiment with communism that might help me and fellow North Americans learn about letting go in a capitalistic culture?

For Richard Rohr his primary interest in writing the book, *Everything Belongs*, was to re-position the Christian community to live in the current social and cultural environment. While that’s something I can identify with, I

realize I’m in the minority. Nevertheless, I definitely believe there’s a lesson all of us can learn, (and learn quickly here in “Supernatural BC”, with Campbell and his BC Liberals in charge) if we hope to contribute to our survival as a species.

All North Americans are force-fed into adopting the success credo and expected to “own the podium” on everything from the Winter Olympics to economic progress. We’re constantly told that the momentary lapses we’ve experienced with recession and economic downturn won’t last long and that the essentials are still intact and can help us make the necessary adjustments so we can enjoy the fruits of an unfettered, deregulated capitalistic marketplace.

For those with eyes that can see, what really is offered with these platitudes and reassurances are phony solutions to fabricated realities. Corporate capitalism is destroying the entire planet and the human community with it. There is simply no way the current economic orthodoxy can rescue us by having all of us “keep on keeping on” with the same old credos. The longer we try and massage the corpse of conspicuous consumption as the paragon of the good life, the deeper we drop into a destructive mythical world with disastrous consequences.

What can we learn from the Castro years and the Cuban experience, which has marched consistently to a different drummer? A main feature that struck me was, for the Cubans, consumption is NOT the purpose of life. Cubans still consume, to be sure, but it hasn’t become their primary reason for getting up in the morning and working. Consequently, Cuba isn’t as neat and pretty as we’re used to, and has buildings that need attention and a coat of paint.

For those Cubans who couldn’t stand living on a “level playing field”, they have had the option of escaping to Florida or they’ve found alternative sources of money

(usually from tourists like us) or the black market. And quite frankly, there are examples of some nasty totalitarian practices and a system that requires permission for many things backed by the very real threat of imprisonment if you deviated too far.

But after 50 years of one party/man rule, cronyism and corruption are inevitable. (I only had to imagine what it would have been like in Canada had a young P.E. Trudeau taken totalitarian power 50 years ago and was still alive, only recently handing the reins of absolute power to a younger Jean Chretien. I’m certain we would have even more cronyism and abuse than we have now in this country.)

Democracy, although a rough and crude instrument, does have its pluses and would help Cubans even as it has and can help us.

What became crystal clear was that the Castro experience has provided that society with many realities that we, in North America, can only fantasize about: education for anyone motivated to search it out, without personal cost, and health care available to everyone in need. Imperfection – certainly – but as Michael Moore’s movie *Sicko* reveals, light-years ahead of the US experience.

In the background I hear the popular refrain, “but Cubans aren’t free!” I fully understand that in the West freedom is a religious term that has taken on gigantic proportions. Here it means “freedom to choose between options and preferences”. But as an insightful ethicist points out, that is not primal freedom; that’s secondary or even tertiary freedom.

Primary freedom is the freedom to be the self, the freedom to live in the truth despite the circumstances. To put it bluntly, in that regard Cubans are freer than we are! Despite horrendous circumstances, the Cubans have found a way to live resilient lives, where they want to do what they must do to be in human community.

Throughout those two weeks I never saw an obese Cuban – not like in “Supersize me” Canada or the US. They are healthier; they walk everywhere, ride their bicycles, they make do – putting in Hyundai parts in their Desoto relics for fun more than transportation. They can sing, play music and dance – everywhere, at the slightest excuse. And they look out for one another – even confused “gringos” struggling with their “pigeon Spanish”.

As the late Janis Joplin wrote, “Freedom’s just another word for ‘nothing left to lose.’” The freedom of many Cubans is accepting “emptiness, vulnerability and nonsuccess”.

Our two weeks there were a strange mixture of being typical ugly Canadians out for a good time of “sex, drugs and rock ‘n roll”. I very much hope we were modest and not too blatant in our one week at the resorts, ocean beaches and “all-inclusive” indulgences. The other week was more local in economy, travel, music, dance and pleasure.

Then I came to appreciate how it really is possible for a people to be resilient in the face of huge challenges to live fairly with one another and the earth. I left richer for the experience, having learned some valuable lessons and particularly, on the matter of “inherent unmarketability”, I learned the most.

Dale Perkins is moderator of Orangeforum, and retired cleric with the United Church of Canada, community organizer and volunteer.

Ron reviews

HISTORY HUNTING IN THE YUKON, by M. Gates, HARBOUR PUBLISHING

This is the best Yukon story since the world-popular verses of Robert Service.

There was much left out in earlier stories of life in the frozen Klondike. It will be hard to put down this historical romp.

--Ron MacIsaac

Sue Stroud



Meet me at JJ's Coffeeshouse in Brentwood Bay Fridays at 7 p.m. for a discussion of current issues.

A step toward democracy: fire Campbell’s MLAs

By G.E. Mortimore

Mark November 15 on the calendar. That could be startup day for a campaign to fire several Gordon Campbell “Liberal” MLAs by recall petition. Nobody has achieved recall so far, but public anger could make it happen.

Anger boils up from a bill of wrongs. Among them are such betrayals as the trashing of the public interest by the deforestation of a big chunk of southwestern Vancouver Island to benefit a forest company, the continued paving over of farmland, privatization of health-care and hydro, fumbling half-privatization of ferries, broken promises about sales tax merging and about the sale of BC’s public railway, paralysis of planned action for transit, land use, environmental protection and economic development, and mean-spirited petty budget-cutting at the expense of the poor and sick.

When angry discontent reaches action level, critics in closely-fought ridings might knock Lib MLAs off their perches.

The recall idea is part of a trend toward giving voters – in consultation with experts and visionaries – greater direct control over policy-making, and moving the political system closer to the ideal of democracy, which Abraham Lincoln defined as “government by the people”.

What is happening, why is it happening, and what can we do about it?

We are challenged to identify some of the forces that propel the ongoing transformation, connect up the switches and wheels of an emerging new political dynamic, and look for ways to help the machinery run smoothly.

Mike Harcourt showed that his heart was in the right place when his NDP government passed the *Recall and Initiative Act, 1995*. That pioneering law, the first in Canada, allowed citizens to remove an MLA and trigger a by-election.

Eighteen months must pass from election-day to petition startup. The rigorous demands on petitioners make recall nearly impossible; yet the dream (or nightmare, for office-holders) could come true.

Too-easy recall could destabilize government. If voters could discard MLAs like used paper towels, the process could get governing politicians so nervous that they would bungle their tasks even more crassly than Premier Campbell and colleagues are doing now.

Safeguards against too-easy recall must be built into the system, but the present law carries caution to a self-defeating extreme. Only red-hot anger plus excellent leadership plus money could enable petitioners to meet the law’s requirement: valid signatures from 40 percent of registered voters within 60 days.

Will it happen in any BC ridings from November 15 onward? Maybe, but it will be heavy going.

Only half the registered voters cast ballots in the May 12, 2009 election.

Recall-petition organizers must persuade ballot-refusers who were turned off the “democratic” process. Arguably they were soured by sleazy electioneering and awareness of government betrayals.

Some voters die or move. Campaigners must sign up 40 percent of an obsolete and partly false voters’ list. Population wastage has helped defeat all recall campaigns.

Yet determined, tough-minded organizers might succeed. Libs have whispered that they might make recall easier, but don’t hold your breath waiting.

Real recall would darken the hopes of the unpopular Libs. An Angus Reid poll in November 2009 showed Gordon Campbell has the highest disapproval rate among Canada’s premiers, 66 percent. Campbellites have annoyed a wide range of voters with inept, ham-fisted actions.

It’s no surprise that there are glitches in BC’s first attempt to give voters power to recall their elected delegates. Inventions – political, mechanical, electronic – routinely undergo improvement.

Early-stage faults can be fixed; then another necessary task comes into view, equal in importance to fine-tuning. That task is to join the recall process into the people-power trend.

Signs of the push towards increased popular control over policy are in plain sight. The attempt to build recall into the BC system is one sign. BC’s failed run at electoral reform is another.

The NDP recall measure and the Libs’ gesture toward changing the method of representation in the legislature are two different stories. The NDP approached recall with caution; but the Libs went beyond caution. Deliberately or subconsciously, they programmed electoral reform to fail.

The explanation of the difference lies in the contrast between New Zealand’s smart electoral reform project, which succeeded, and its dumb counterpart in BC, which fizzled out. New Zealanders obtained voters’ consent for change in principle. Then offered them a choice among particular methods. They chose Mixed Member Proportional Representation, MMPR, which deserves future discussion. BC insisted that voters say “Yes” or “No” to a particular, complicated-seeming system. This so irritated and confused them that they rejected it.

Because of built-in flaws in the electoral design, our present voting system, first-past-the-post (FPTP), sometimes elects a party with a majority of legislative seats although the opposing party has won a majority in the total count of popular votes, or the system allows one party to gain a crushing legislative majority from a disproportionately smaller popular-vote total.

In 1996, Libs received 41.8 percent of the popular vote, but won only 33 of the 75 legislative seats. NDP received 39.5 percent of the popular vote, but won 39 seats and formed government. In 2001, Libs received 57 per cent of the popular vote, yet won 97 per cent of the seats

FPTP also leaves thousands of minority-party voters without a legislative voice. In 2001 Greens, with 12 percent of the popular vote, received no seats.

When Libs made a show of correcting those faults, they botched the job so badly that certain observers think they have put a curse on electoral reform for 20 years; and yet some hopes do emerge from the mess. It’s encouraging to know that a stodgy, uninspired bunch of conservatives – a government vaguely driven by crony allegiances and faith in the imaginary “free market” -- felt pressure to create a citizen jury, an instrument of emerging people-power with ancestry in classical Athens, to examine the electoral-reform options.

The Citizens’ Assembly was a promising device for reform. It was composed of people randomly chosen across BC without built-in loyalties to interest groups or political parties. Unfortunately, government mismanaged the assembly’s terms of reference and its link to public opinion.

There is much more to say about the democratization trend, but I must wait for another day to offer opinions about the way Campbell and colleagues messed up electoral reform, and talk about a possible new run at the job the Campbellites only pretended to do.

Citizen initiatives – made binding on government to varying degrees – are another democratization topic that deserves careful future thought.

For example, people probably have not yet received enough information about new, fairer revenue sources to justify a referendum on that subject. Government could show leadership and launch its own exploration.

A financial transactions tax, a levy of, say, one fifth of one percent on stock-market and currency gambling, plus elimination of global tax-avoidance havens, could provide tens of billions a year for local needs and relief of global poverty.

Ask the BC and Canadian Liberal-Conservatives why they are not pushing to create these relatively painless revenue sources. Ask Campbell and colleagues why they are butchering public services instead. Could it be because they are shy about offending the privileged money-running elite who are their main sponsors?

G.E. Mortimore, PhD, is a writer and social anthropologist based in Victoria.

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Ron reviews:

WITH THE BOYS, on being a guy, by J. MacDonald, GREYSTONE BOOKS

This is all about what guys do when they fish, hunt, camp without the girls. A highlight is the duck hunts. Those old pals who did the outdoor thing will love this nostalgic book.

KIM CATTRALL...SEXUAL INTELLIGENCE, GREYSTONE BOOKS.

The author has produced a handbook for women as they explore the world of their sexual relationships. The highlights are the photos of Erosian sculpture and paintings. Contains various helpfull ideas.

NORTH OF ISKUT, Grizzlies, Bannock & Adventure, by Tor Forsberg, CAITLIN PRESS

This is the rollicking story of Ms. Forsberg’s off and on life in the wilderness near Watson Lake.

She was 23 in 1971 when she staked her place in the bush. I was 17 when I helped cut the Alaska highway through that fascinating country with its hotsprings and newly discovered First Nations residents.

I could not put her book down. One highlight is her outspoken coverage of her love life.

A HUNTER’S CONFESSION, by D. Carpenter, GREYSTONE BOOKS

This book traces the history of one hunter. I, like many former sports hunters, shared his experiences. He describes how vital he felt while in the woods with his gun. He compares the situation of the aboriginal and other subsistence hunters. In the end he felt most comfortable with a full cessation of his sport.

--Ron MacIsaac



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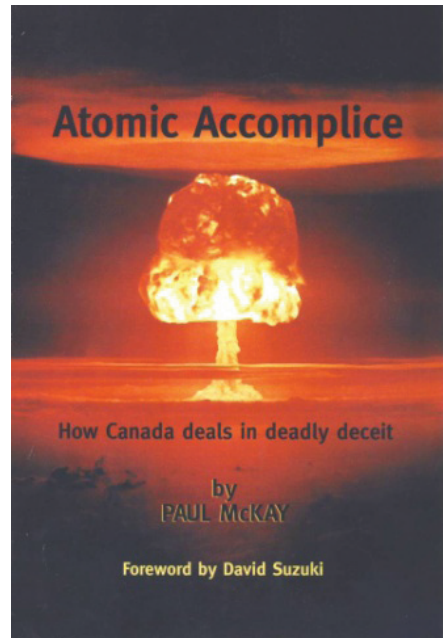
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Atomic Accomplice: How Canada deals in deadly deceit,

by Paul McKay, 2009, Canada., www.paulmckay.com



Review by Theresa Wolfwood

“Follow the money’ is an axiom at the heart of investigative journalism...This book follows the atoms. Or more precisely, it audits the trail of Canadian fissile elements, sensitive materials, reactor sales and laboratory secrets which have abetted the global proliferation of atomic and hydrogen bombs.”

Journalist Paul McKay has done his homework and reveals all in this comprehensive but easy to read exposé of our nuclear history. Add another bag of nails to the coffin of Canada’s image as “a nice peace loving country”. (Yves Engler in his recent work, *The Black Book of Canadian Foreign Policy*, fills us in on what else Canada has been up to over the last many decades and now.)

Every prime minister from Mackenzie King unto today’s Harper, including the Nobel Peace Prize winner, Lester Pearson, has enthusiastically embraced our participation in the nuclear club. In fact I remember that

when Pearson won his election, one of his first acts was to allow Bowmarc missiles to be secretly trucked into Canada from the US; a homecoming for Canada’s uranium. They were placed at at least three bases in Canada and were supposedly removed when more advanced delivery systems were developed.

It started in 1942 when we joined (ever the willing junior partner) the Manhattan Project and supplied the uranium for the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It did not end there and Canada is today the world’s #1 exporter of uranium, providing material for the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

McKay explains that the “peaceful atom” is a lie; nuclear (once called “too cheap to meter”) power has always been the expensive, subsidized and nasty form of energy which is the source of weapon-grade uranium and plutonium. Every year we export enough uranium to eventually produce enough uranium and plutonium to make 5000 bombs. Plutonium is manmade by fission – it is the world’s deadliest element. Only a plum-sized piece is needed to make a bomb.

“Plutonium=forever.” Even if bombs are not made, plutonium goes on and on emitting deadly radiation for centuries.

“...‘following the atoms’ proves that we are a boy-scout nation with a very dirty secret. It has been underwritten by \$30 billion taxpayer dollars, greased with secret bribes to win export deals, and buried in decades of deceit by official Ottawa.”

Our uranium and nuclear technology launched the UK and US stockpiles, then the Indian nuclear arsenal, followed by Pakistan and others. We continued to sell our CANDU reactor for “peaceful energy use” which was secretly described as a “military plutonium production reactor” by the insiders ever since the Manhattan Project.

Uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan are at present the world’s richest

source of uranium. The major mining companies operating there are French. France has the bomb as we all know, tested on the occupied land of the people of the South Pacific. In 1948 the new government of Israel went after nuclear technology and found a willing partner in France. Although Israel promised it was for peaceful use, it built the bomb; whistle-blower Mordechai Vanunu (he spent 18 years in prison and is in and out of prison all the time) says Israel has 200 nuclear bombs.

McKay writes: “Goldschmidt would later recall the Israeli nuclear appeal from Bergmann and Peres: They came and said they’d like to buy a heavy water research reactor similar to the one Canadians were building in India. They said when the Americans realize we have the nuclear (weapons) capacity, they will give us the guarantee of survival.” Goldschmidt was a plutonium scientist who worked in Montreal during the war and later married into the Rothschild dynasty. Bergmann was a scientist who worked for the UK defence department and at that time Peres was Ben-Gurion’s young protégé.

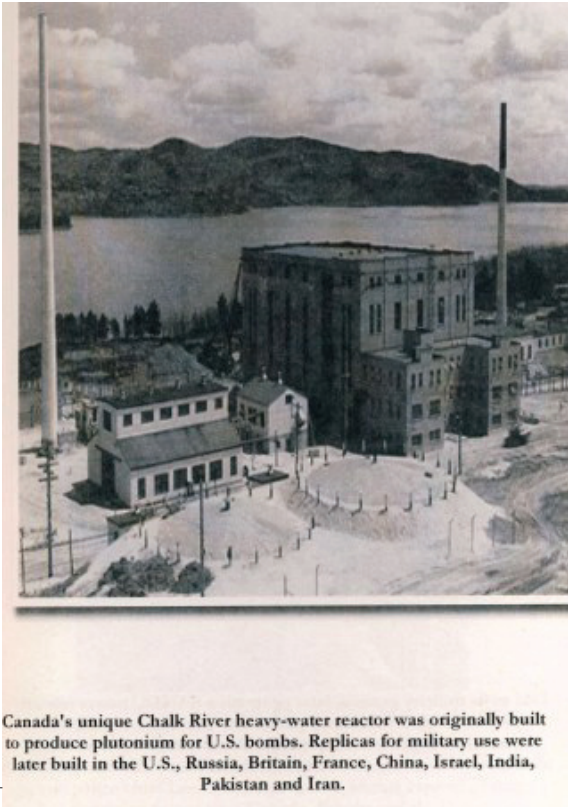
So -- on we go – Canada, instead of spreading peace and cooperation around the world, continues to profit from deadly war preparations. This is without even getting into the toxic results of mining, transport, storage and the unsolved problem of radioactive waste containment.

It is true that the US and Russia have agreed to reduce their nuclear weapons stockpile; they still have enough to destroy life on earth. And after decades when no new nuclear reactors were built, there is a new slogan and new pressure to provide a technological fix for global warming– that

nuclear power is clean, has a low carbon footprint and can replace petroleum-based energy. McKay does the research and the math and shows that this is impossible and nuclear is just as toxic as burning petroleum.

So what is the solution? McKay devotes the last and most important part of his book to showing that capturing the constant reliable power of the sun can resolve many of our problems – along with political will, real peace making and genuine conservation and cooperation. Maybe our children and grandchildren will have a better world than we can possibly foresee – but we must dream and work for this better future for all.

When you have read this review do check out BC’s only environmental magazine *Watershed Sentinel* at www.watershedsentinel.ca. See the March-April 2010 issue’s article: “Radioactive Waste in Canada”.



Wind power soared past 150,000 megawatts in 2009

By J. Matthew Roney

Even in the face of a worldwide economic downturn, the global wind industry posted another record year in 2009 as cumulative installed wind power capacity grew to 158,000 megawatts. With this 31 percent jump, the global wind fleet is now large enough to satisfy the residential electricity needs of 250 million people. Wind provides electricity in over 70 countries, 17 of which now have at least 1,000 megawatts installed.

World cumulative installed wind power capacity, 1980-2009

China led the way in 2009 with an astonishing 13,000 megawatts of new wind capacity, the first time any country has built more than 10,000 megawatts in a single year. With 25,000 megawatts overall, China has doubled its total installed wind capacity in each of the last five years, bringing it into third place behind the United States and Germany. And considering the ambitious projects already in its development pipeline, it is not likely to stay in third place for long.

China’s unprecedented Wind Base program helps explain why. Six wind-rich provinces across the country’s northern half--from northwestern Xinjiang to eastern Jiangsu--have been selected to host seven wind mega-complexes of between 10,000 and 37,000 megawatts each. When complete, these “wind bases” will boast close to 130,000 megawatts of generating capacity, which is more than the entire world had at the end of 2008. Amendments to China’s landmark *Renewable Energy Law* of 2006, due to take effect in April 2010, aim to support this ambitious wind growth. Government agencies have been directed to determine and enforce the share of total electricity generation that must come from renewable sources, not unlike the renewable portfolio standards adopted by 29 US states. The amendments will also provide for badly needed transmission lines and grid upgrades.

The United States passed longtime leader Germany in installed capacity in 2008 and then widened its lead in 2009, expanding its wind fleet by nearly 10,000 megawatts to reach a cumulative 35,000 megawatts. Texas remained the leading state in both annual and total wind installations, reaching 9,400 megawatts overall. And while Iowa is a distant second, with 3,700 megawatts of total wind capacity, at least 17 percent of its electricity generation comes from wind.

As the financial crisis tightened credit and suppressed investment in early 2009, the US wind industry was bracing for a steep drop in installations from 2008’s record 8,400 megawatts. But due in large part to wind-friendly provisions in the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* of 2009, more than 100 new wind farms came online in 28 states, in what was the strongest year yet for US wind construction. (See data at www.earthpolicy.org/index.php?/indicators/C49).

In the European Union (EU), Spain added the most new wind in 2009. But with 26,000 total megawatts installed, Germany still commands Europe’s largest wind capacity. Two states in northern Germany that have a combined population of 4 million, Sachsen-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, routinely meet some 40 percent of their electricity needs with wind energy.

Cumulative Installed Wind Power Capacity in Leading Countries, 1980-2009

While no other European countries have as extensive a wind infrastructure as Germany and Spain do, several rapidly growing markets in the region have great potential. In Italy, France, and the United Kingdom, total installed capacity has at least doubled since 2006, with all three crossing the 4,000 megawatt mark in 2009. Another country quickly expanding its wind generation is Portugal, which by reaching just over 3,500 megawatts

in 2009 edged past wind veteran Denmark into ninth place in the world rankings. Still, with one fifth of its electricity coming from wind Denmark leads all countries in that category.

Such large wind electricity shares may become more common across Europe as EU member countries work to meet their targets under the 2009 Renewable Energy Directive, which sets an overall goal of 20 percent renewable energy by 2020. Indeed, as the European Union actually saw net reductions in coal and nuclear generating capacity in 2009, wind accounted for close to 40 percent of all newly installed capacity, making it the region’s number one new power source for the second straight year.

Europe, China, and the United States tend to dominate the wind headlines, but many other countries are also harnessing this abundant energy source. India, for example, installed 1,300 megawatts in 2009, which was 30 percent less than in 2008 but enough to make it the fifth country to surpass 10,000 megawatts of installed wind capacity. India’s wind industry expects the market to start to rebound in 2010 with the help of several government initiatives introduced in late 2009.

Canada installed 950 megawatts of wind capacity in 2009, coming just shy of entering the top 10 list for total capacity. Ontario’s new feed-in tariff, a policy tool used for years in Europe under which utilities pay a premium to purchase electricity generated from renewables, should encourage more projects to enter Canada’s wind development pipeline, which already has some 4,600 megawatts due for completion by 2015.

Latin America and Africa, both rich in wind but with only modest developments to date, are two more regions where activity is accelerating. Latin America’s overall wind capacity more than doubled to 1,200 megawatts in 2009. With 600 megawatts installed, Brazil now claims half the region’s wind development. Mexico’s wind capacity grew some 140 percent to 200 megawatts, while Chile climbed from a mere 20 megawatts to nearly 170 megawatts.

By the end of 2009, just 760 megawatts were installed on the African continent, 90 percent of which was in Egypt and Morocco. But commercial-scale projects are under way in several sub-Saharan countries, including Ethiopia, South Africa, and Kenya. When complete in mid-2012, the 300-megawatt Lake Turkana wind farm in northwest Kenya will be Africa’s largest, capable of generating 17 percent of that country’s electricity.

Most of the world’s wind turbines are found on land, but offshore wind capacity is poised to grow rapidly from its current 2,100 megawatts. Nearly 600 megawatts were brought online in 2009, including the world’s largest offshore project: Denmark’s 209-megawatt Horns Rev 2 wind farm in the North Sea. The United Kingdom leads the offshore category, with 40 percent of global capacity, and appears intent on keeping its position. In January 2010, The Crown Estate announced exclusive wind development agreements for 32,000 megawatts in nine zones within U.K. waters, intended to provide 25 percent of the United Kingdom’s electricity by 2020. Overall, more than 100,000 megawatts of offshore wind are proposed or in development in Europe.

Having increased ninefold in total capacity since the start of the twenty-first century, wind power is quickly solidifying its position as an important part of the global energy mix. As governments look to reduce dependence on price-volatile fossil fuels and to cut carbon emissions, wind-a widespread, abundant, and inexhaustible resource with zero fuel cost-is becoming an increasingly attractive option. In a 2009 study of world wind resources, Harvard University scientists concluded that the top 10 carbon dioxide-emitting countries could satisfy all of their electricity needs using wind alone. The world will of course use a variety of technologies to meet future energy demand, but these findings leave no doubt: the potential for wind power to replace fossil fuels and take a leading role in stabilizing climate is huge.

Calendar of coming events

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT Board Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of every month, at 1:30 p.m., at the CRD offices at 625 Fisgard street in Victoria.

CENTRAL SAANICH RESIDENTS ARE invited to attend regular neighbourhood gatherings, held every Thursday at 7 pm at the Fresh Cup Cafe, at 1931 Mt. Newton X Road. Share stories, books, talk politics and enjoy hot coffee in Saanichton. Nothing is taboo... No pretentiousness, no meeting agenda... just a chance to chat with neighbours and build community. Call 250-652-8228 for further information.

WOMEN IN BLACK, a worldwide movement of women for peace and non-violence, has been meeting in silent vigil once a month for 11 years. All those who support our aims are welcome to join us for all or part of the hour. Men too! We meet beside Victoria City Hall at Centennial Squaret, from noon to 1 pm. For information about the vigils to Create a World without Violence, call

THE VICTORIA LABOUR COUNCIL, representing affiliated unions in the Greater Victoria Area, holds its regular monthly meeting at 7 pm, on the third Wednesday each month, at the Burnside -Gorge Community Cenre All delegates are welcome to come to meet your executive, president Mike Eso, treasurer Mike Ferguson and secretary Mary Ehle.

VICTORIA'S EARTH WALK will take place Saturday, April 24. This is the 29th year of celebrating our Grassroot community with a walk, a concert and and an environmental fair. This is a fun family event,so bring your children. The event starts at 12 noon at the Legislature, with a parade up Government Street at 12:30 pm, arriving at Centennial Square at 1:15 pm for a concert and environmental fair. Meet with the organizations that are involved in the struggle for justice and pledge to assist them.Oliver Swain and Friend and The Ecclestons will be performing! Hear Vicky husband and others! Invite

your fmily and friends; invite the members of the groups you are involved with. For more information, go to www.EarthWalkVictoria.ca or contact SteveFilipovic@hotmail.com.

SAANICH-GULF ISLANDS NDP will hold a Nominating Convention on Saturday, April 24, at 2:00 pm in St. Andrew's Anglican Church Hall, 9691 4th Street,Sideny. Come meet the candidate for nomination,Edith Loring-Kuhanga.Specil guest speaker will be FinDonnelly, MP for New Westminster-Coquitlam and Fort Moody. Refreshments will be served. Membership renewals will be accepted from 1:30-2:00 pm. For more information, call Starla Anderson at 250-744-2791 or email her at starla_anderson@shaw.ca.

A GARAGE SALE will be held on Saturday, April 24, from from 9 am till 3 pm, at 2867 Rockwell Avenue (near Gorge bridge, just off Admirals), with proceeds going to the Esqimalt-Juan de Fuca New Democrats. For more information, or to make donations, call 250-381-2166 (riding phone number) or Judy Johnson at 250-474-6709, or Jock Bates at 250-474-9735.

THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA will host an all-day Symposium on Thursday, April 29 on the theme "Canada--Europe Transatlantic Dialogue (CETD): Democracy and Participation: What can Canada and the European Union learn from each other?" The format of the symposium will encourage an active participation by academics, students, members of the policy community, the media and the general public. Participation is free, but advance registration is requested. More details and registration signup details can be found at http://web.uvic.ca/jmc/sym_about.php.

PASTA 'N POLITICS 2010, the annual dinner and auction held by Saanich North and the Islands New Democrats, will take place on Saturday, May 1, at St. Andrew's Anglican Church Hall, 9691 Fourth Street, Sidney. Doors open at 5 pm.

Guest speaker will be MLA Lana Popham. Tickets \$45 per person. To reserve your tickets, call Ruth Howland at 250-656-6555 or Linda Black at 250-656-6992.

NAN GO GRANNIES present a Chair Affair on Saturday, May 1, at 7:30 pm at Cavalotti Lodge, 2060 East Wellington, in Nanaimo. The Chair Affair will feature an auction of chairs painted by local artists in aid of the Stephen Lewis Foundation. There will also be wine, appies and music. Tickets are \$15 and may be bought at the nanaimo Museum or the Quilted Duck.For more information, call 250-390-2023, 250-751-0165, or visit www.nangogrannies.org.

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY, a movie and discussion, will take place on Sunday, May 2,from 1:00-3:30 pm, at the Central-Saanich Library,1209 Clarke Road, Brentwood Bay. In the early '90s,Cuba's food system was just like Canada's--completely dependent on industrial farming and transport. Then it suddenly collapsed. How did they turn it around? What can we do to prepare for changing times? Sponsored by LEAD (Local Environment Action Divas) aand Transition Victoria, the afternoonsession will feature coffee by Fresh Cup, and popcorn by Gheecom Vending. Cost to attend is by donation.

TOGETHER AGAINST POVERTY SOCIETY will hold a fundraiser with Carole James and friends on Thursday, May 20, at 5:30 pm, at the James Bay New Horizons. Please show your support for TAPS and join us for a delicious meal,entertainment and conversation with Carole James. Cost: \$40 . No host bar. For tickets, please call TAPS at 250-361-3521

VANCOUVER ISLAND WATER WATCH COALITION will host a two-day public Forum in Nanaimo on Saturday, May 29, and Sunday, May 30. The entire event is FREE for all attendees. **Saturday, May 29 -- 9:00 am** -- Bowen Park will see bus tours leaving for the City of Nan-

aimo water facilities and a bus tour into a watershed. Each tour will operate twice so all attendees will be able to go to both. It is estimated that the city tour will take two hours and the watershed tour will take three hours. Lunch will be provided following each tour. **Sunday, May 30 -- 9:00 am** -- Beban Park. We have amazing speakers including Maude Barlow, Rafe Mair, Corky Evans and Arthur Caldicott. The day will also include four workshops by four great "teachers": Andrew Gage, environmental lawyer with West Coast Environmental law, on "Legal Options for Source Protection"; Ingmar Lee, community activist, on "The Industrial Logging of Nanaimo's Drinking Watershed"; Trevor Wicks, on "Looking at the Source: A Well Protected Drinking Water Supply";and Robin Mathews, on "Privatization: Local, National, and International Theft". The intent is to enable all attendees to get to all workshops by keeping the workshops limited in time. A full lunch will be provided on this day as well. **Registration is required** to enable VIWWC to hire buses for the "Water" tours as well as to adequately prepare for the meals. To register, email islandwatershedprotection@g.mail.com.

OAK BAY-GORDON HEAD NEW DEMOCRATS are invited to their President's Open House from 2-5 pm, Saturday, May 30, at 3236 Carmen Street. For more information, email president@obghnewdemocrats.ca.

CAROLE JAMES AND THE VICTORIA-Beacon Hill NDP invites you to join them at a "friends and family spaghetti supper", on Monday, May 31, at 7 pm, in the Garry Oak Room of the Fairfield Community Centre, 1335 Thurlow Street. Tickets: \$25, \$20 for seniors, students and unwaged, kids under 12 free for this all-ages event. Join Carole and special guests for some wonderful food and frolic! This is a limited seating event, so reserve early by emailing azimuth@telus.net or calling 250-386-8497. Doors open and limited no-host bar at 6 pm.

So the corporations want a civic vote?

By Dee Shoolingin

There will be some that will reflexively respond to that notion, as it were the foot in the door to fascism. I can see that. I can also see through the in-business-guise provocationor claim that the current situation is a case of taxation without a voice representing them. Only the simple minded can buy into that. Just what self interest group is beating that dullard drum?

Why do they need the further boon of business citizenship? Why are the owners, managers, and employees insufficient to express the selective interests of business

against the interests of the human community? That must be explained with a credible thesis.

In the current social contract between business and community, the enterprises use the public commons including a larger share of the market economy in which to grow and prosper for the benefit of all the community members. That is the theory.

There are some community members that, by virtue of their panhandling life, also have no vote or no effective vote and even a lesser share of the public commons. It is easy to argue that they are even less repre-

sented in civic decisions than any business. I do not propose to argue at this point for any larger share of democracy for them, but just to point out that imbalance.

But looking into the present corporatists' campaign offers some interesting chances to explore some opportunities. If they want more voice in the community, why not consider trading for a vote in their affairs. What I propose is to join the lobby with a civic cause. Ask that every business, corporate or not, to have imposed on them a community vote in their proprietary affairs.

Let all citizens have a voice and vote in

the running and management of all private businesses. That would be a fair exchange; we get to meddle in their affairs in exchange for their meddling in civics. It may even make good citizens of them.

No need for proxies. Just let any number of citizens come to any place of business and dictate the affairs of that day as they see fit. There could be some unfortunate disruptions but eventually it would balance out and it could be nice for all concerned.

Imagine a citizens' lobby demanding that!

Four Donner Prize finalists announced

TORONTO - The four finalists competing for the 2009/2010 Donner Prize, the award for best book on Canadian public policy, were announced April 6 by Allan Gotlieb, chairman of the Donner Canadian Foundation.

"The Donner Prize annually rewards excellence and innovation in Canadian public policy writing. Last year's shortlisted books generated a great deal of discussion on a number of topical, provocative and controversial subjects. We hope that the 2009/2010 selection resonates with Canadians and facilitates another informed, open exchange of ideas. In bestowing this award, the Donner Canadian Foundation seeks to broaden policy debates, increase general awareness of the importance of policy decision making, and make an original and meaningful contribution to policy discourse," said Gotlieb.

The Donner Prize was established in 1998 to recognize and reward the best public policy thinking, writing and research in Canada. The 2009/2010 Shortlist books were chosen from 71 submissions. The winner of this year's Donner Prize will be announced at an awards ceremony in Toronto on Wednesday, April 28, 2010. The winner will receive \$35,000, with \$5,000 awarded to the other finalists.

The 2009/2010 Donner Prize Finalists are:

The Politics of Linkage: Power, Interdependence and Ideas in Canada-US Relations, by Brian Bow (UBC Press)

Do Canada and the United States share a special relationship, or is this just a face-saving myth? Offering detailed accounts of four major bilateral disputes, *The Politics of Linkage* traces a history of US/Canadian relations and the post-war diplomatic culture.

"A well organized and accessible analysis based on the bargaining theory of the history of the Canada-US relationship. The underlying research is sound, exhaustive and of exceptional quality." - Donner Jury

Brian Bow is an associate professor of political science at Dalhousie University and co-editor of *An Independent Foreign Policy for Canada? Challenges and Choices for the Future*.

Who Owns the Arctic?: Understanding Sovereignty Disputes in the North, by Michael Byers (Douglas & McIntyre)

In *Who Owns the Arctic?*, a leading Arctic expert and international lawyer explains the sometimes contradictory rules governing the Arctic and the disputes that still need to be resolved.

"An excellent contribution to our under-

standing of the so-called sovereignty issues of Canada's Arctic. Byers gives us a rich historical context, a keen policy analysis and boldly articulates a policy stance for consideration." - Donner Jury

Michael Byers holds the Canada Research Chair in Global Politics and International Law at the University of British Columbia. He has led two projects for Arcticnet, a Canadian government-funded research consortium.

A Thousand Dreams: Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and the Fight for Its Future, by Larry Campbell, Neil Boyd and Lori Culbert (Greystone Books)

A Thousand Dreams raises provocative questions about the challenges confronting not only Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, but most of North America's major cities and offers concrete, albeit controversial solutions that are needed urgently.

"In a clear and compelling fashion, a case for governments and communities to work together, to think 'outside the box' and to achieve longer lasting solutions for complex social problems. Reflects the passion of the major actors in the evolution of policy towards Vancouver's Eastside" - Donner Jury

Larry Campbell was mayor of Vancouver from 2002 to 2005 and oversaw the

establishment of North America's first legal injection site. He was appointed a Canadian Senator in 2005.

Neil Boyd is a professor and associate director of the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University. Lori Culbert is an award-winning journalist with the *Vancouver Sun*.

Branding Canada: Projecting Canada's Soft Power through Public Diplomacy, by Evan H. Potter (McGill-Queen's University Press)

In offering the first comprehensive overview of the origins, development and implementation of the country's public diplomacy, Branding Canada offers policy advice on Canada's approach, and advances the thinking on public diplomacy.

"A useful reference to Canada's historic use of 'public diplomacy' to support our foreign policy objectives and a compelling case that the strategic exercise of these tools of diplomacy can influence other players in the game of international politics. Clearly written, and thoroughly researched". - Donner Jury

Evan H. Potter is assistant professor in the Department of Communication, University of Ottawa.

Information: www.donnerbookprize.com

Directory of locations, organizations, publications of interest

MLA COMMUNITY OFFICES

Cowichan Valley Community Office, Bill Routley, MLA: 273 Trunk Road, Duncan, BC or PO Box 599, Duncan, BC, V9L 3X9, phone 250-715-0127, toll free 1-877-715-0127, fax 250-715-0139, MLA email bill.routley.mla@leg.bc.ca

Esquimalt-Royal Roads Community Office, Maurine Karagianis, MLA: A5-100 Aldersmith Place, View Royal, BC V9A 7M8, phone 250-479-8326, email maurine.karagianis.mla@leg.bc.ca or visit her website at www.maurinekaragianis.ca

Juan de Fuca Community Office, John Horgan , MLA: Victoria office: 800 Goldstream Avenue, Victoria, BC, V9B 2X7, and South Cowichan office: 17-Valley View Centre, 1400 Cowichan Bay Road, phone 733-2521, email john.horgan.mla@leg.bc.ca

Saanich South Community Office, Lana Popham, MLA: 4085 Quadra Street, Victoria BC V8X 1K5, email lana.popham.mla@leg.bc.ca, www.saanichsouth.ca

Victoria-Beacon Hill Community Office, Carole James, MLA: 1084 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 3K4, phone 250-952-4211, fax 250-952-4586, email carole.james.mla@leg.bc.ca

Victoria-Swan Lake Community Office, Rob Fleming, MLA: 1020 Hillside Avenue, Victoria, BC, V8T 2A2, email rob.fleming.mla@leg.bc.ca

MPs and COMMUNITY OFFICES

Denise Savoie, MP, House of Commons, Room 518, Confederation Building, Ottawa, ON, A1A 0A6.

Victoria Community Office, Denise Savoie, MP, 970 Blanshard Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 2H3, phone 250-363-8421, fax 250-363-8422, open Tuesday-Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; visit www.denis-savoie.ca or email her at savoie.d@parl.gc.ca

Jean Crowder, MP, House of Commons, Confederation Building, Ottawa, ON, A1A 0A6. Email her at crowdj1A@parl.gc.ca

Nanaimo-Cowichan Community Office: Jean Crowder, MP: 101- 126 Ingram Street, Duncan, BC V9L 1P1, www.jeancrowder.ca or email her at jean@jeancrowder.ca

PROVINCIAL NDP CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATIONS

Cowichan Valley New Democrats: Write PO Box 102, Duncan, BC V9L 1P0; or contact president Ellen Oxman at 250-701-4781or email her at CowichanValley.NDP@shaw.ca.

Esquimalt-Royal Roads New Democrats: Write Box 231 110-174 Wilson Street Victoria, BC V9A 7N7 or email esquimaltroyalroads@gmail.com..

Juan de Fuca New Democrats: Email president Heather Gropp at goliard86@shaw.ca.

Oak Bay-Gordon Head New Democrats: Write PO Box 5539, LCD 9, Victoria, BC, V8R 6S4,or contact president Keith Todd at 250-598-8039 or by email at president@obghnewdemocrats.ca

Saanich North and the Islands New Democrats: Email president Gary Holman at gholman@ssisland.com or phone him at 250-653-2042.

Saanich South New Democrats: Write PO Box 30041, Saanich Centre Postal Outlet, Victoria, BC, V8X 5E1, phone 250-479-1100, or email simon@rasmussesen.ca.

Victoria-Beacon Hill New Democrats: Write PO Box 8523, Victoria, BC, V8W 3S1, phone 250-386-8497or email president Marianne Alto at azimuth@telus.net.

Victoria-Swan Lake New Democrats: Contact president Edward May at edwardomay@gmail.com, or write to PO Box 282, 1681 Hillside Avenue, Victoria, BC, V8T 2C1.

FEDERAL NDP RIDING ASSOCIATIONS

Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca New Democrats: Contact president Jock Bates at wanzbates@shaw.caor write to PO Box 622, 105-1497 Admirals Road, Victoria, BC, V9A 2P8.

Nanaimo-Cowichan New Democrats:Contact president Sue Creba at 250-753-3371or email her at suecreba@aquariusd.com.

Saanich-Gulf Islands New Democrats: Contact president Starla Anderson by email at starlaanderson@shaw.ca orlrène Wright (Gulf Islands), by phone/fax 1-250-537-5347, or email at aiwright@telus.net.

Victoria New Democrats: Contact president Marianne Alto at 250-370-9199, write to Box

5380, LCD9, Victoria, BC, V8R 6S4.or visit their website:www.victoriandp.ca.

PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL NDP OFFICES

BC New Democrats: 5367 Kingsway, Burnaby BC, V5H 2G1, phone 604-430-8600, fax 604-432-9517, toll free 1-888-868-3637.

Canada's New Democrats: 300 - 279 Laurier West, Ottawa, ON, K1P 5J9, phone 613-236-3613, toll free: 1-866-525-2555, fax 613-230-9950, TTY: 1-866-776-7742.

OTHER GROUPS YOU MAY WANT TO REACH

Amnesty International--Canadian Section: www.amnesty.org.

BC Council of Senior Citizens Organization: phone 604-438-3221.

BC Latin American Congress: 4184 Brant Street, Vancouver, BC, V5N 5B4, phone 604-879-3246, fax 604-872-6776, email bclac@vcn.bc.ca.

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives: 410-75 Albert Street, Ottawa, ON, K1P 5E7, phone 613-563-1341, fax 613-233-1458, email ccpa@policyalternatives.ca, website: www.policyalternatives.ca.

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives--BC Office: 1400-207 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 1H7, phone 604-801-5121, fax 604-801-5122, website: www.policyalternatives.ca.

Canadian Health Coalition: phone 613-233-1018.

Canadian Labour Congress (Pacific Region): 201-5118 Joyce Street, Vancouver, BC, V5R 4H1, Regional Representative Iris Taylor, phone 604-430-6766, extension 267, fax 604-430-6762.

Council of Canadians, Victoria Chapter: PO Box 5515, 1625 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, phone 250-360-8448, email victoriacouncilofcanadians@shaw.ca or visit www.victoriacouncilofcanadians.ca

Canadian Wildlife Federation: 350 Michael Cowpland Drive, Kanata, ON, K2M 2W1, phone 1-800-563-9453, or visit www.cwf-fcf.org.

CubaTours: for information about nonprofit educational tours of Cuba and books, phone 604-874-9048 or go to www.cubatours.ca.

Ecojustice (formerly Sierra Legal): 214-131 Water Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 4M3, phone 1-800-926-7444

Government of Canada: www.gc.ca.

Government of BC: www.gov.bc.ca.

Greater Victoria Water Watch Coalition: visit www.greatervictoriawaterwatchcoalition.ca or phone 250-595-1701 or 250- 380-1197.

Human Rights Internet: www.hri.ca.

Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria: phone 250-388-4728, fax 250-386-4395.

NAPO (National Anti-Poverty Organization) News: influential national organization which advocates for the poor in local communities, courts and political area. Join at www.napo-onap.ca.

Parliamentary website lists all federal cabinet ministers, parliamentary secretaries and opposition spokespersons. Visit www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/people/key/critic.asp?language=E

Ploughshares: University of Waterloo, Ontario, phone 519-888-6541, see www.ploughshares.ca, or email plough@ploughshares.ca.

Seniors' Advocacy Services, sponsored by the Greater Victoria Seniors (OAPO) organization, are available on Mondays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to noon and 1-4 p.m., at the Blanshard Community Centre, 901 Kings Road (King and Dowler Streets), close to the #4 and #6 buses on Quadra Street. Service is free, and provided by trained volunteers. For further information phone 250-388-7696.

Seniors Serving Seniors: 109-1022 Pandora Avenue, Victoria, BC V8V 3P5, phone 250-382-4331.

Sierra Club of Canada: 412-1 Nicholas Street, Ottawa, ON, K1N 9Z9, email sierra@web.net.

South Island Health Coalition, an affiliate of the BC Health Coalition. If you're concerned about access, affordability and quality of health care in our community, get involved by calling co-chairs Phil Lyons at 381-0033 or Carol Pickup at 475-0454.

Together Against Poverty Society: 415-620 View Street, Victoria, BC, phone 250-361-3521.

Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society: Third floor, 535 Yates Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 2Z6, phone 250-361-9433, fax 250-361-1914, website www.vircs.bc.ca.

Victoria Labour Council: 219-275 Quadra Street, Victoria, BC, V8T 4E8, phone 250-384-8331, fax: 250-384-8381, email vlcbc@telus.net; Mike Eso, president; Mary Ehl, secretary; Mike Ferguson, treasurer.

Victoria Peace Centre: Box 8307, Victoria, BC, V8W 3R9, phone/fax 250-592-8307, email centre@vicpeace.ca or website www.vicpeace.ca.

World Wildlife Federation: 410-245 Eglinton Avenue East, Toronto, ON, M4P 3J1, phone 1-800-26-PANDA, fax 416-489-8055, website: www.wwf.ca

United Nations Association in Canada (UNAC) - Victoria Branch: 202-3293 Douglas Street, Victoria, BC, V8Z 3K9, phone 250-475-2868, fax 250-475-5898, email unavic@coastnet.com or website www.unac.org.

ALTERNATIVE PUBLICATIONS

Briarpatch Magazine: a progressive Canadian magazine, published 10 times a year, subscriptions \$24.61, 2138 McIntyre Street, Regina, SK, S4P 2R7, email briarpatchmag@sasktel.com.

Canadian Dimension Magazine: an independent socialist magazine, begun in 1963, and run by a cooperative, published 6 times a year, subscription \$24.50, students and unemployed \$18.50, 2B-91 Albert Street, Winnipeg, MN, R3B 1G5, subscription hotline 1-800-737-7051.

COMER (Committee on Monetary and Economic Reform): reform-minded focus on monetary issues and how they affect our society, email comerpub@comer.org, website www.comer.org.

Global Outlook: Ian Woods, editor; \$25 Canadian, PO Box 222, Oro, ON L0L 2X0.

The CCPA Monitor: published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 410-75 Albert Street, Ottawa, ON, K1P 5E7, \$110 supporting membership with \$75 tax0 receipt, or \$25 low income membership receives the Monitor monthly.

The Democrat: published by the BC NDP, 3110 Boundary Road, Burnaby, BC, V5M 4A2, subscription \$10 per year.

The Straight: a weekly publication with features, articles, news and reviews from Vancouver, subscription \$117/52 issues in Canada, 2nd floor, 1770 Burrard Street, Vancouver, BC, V6J 3G7, phone 604-730-7000, email info@straight.com.

New Internationalist: a communications co-operative based in Oxford, it exists to report on issues of world poverty and inequality; to focus attention on the unjust relationship between the powerful and the powerless in both rich and poor nations; to debate and campaign for the radical changes necessary f the basic material and spiritual needs of all are to be met, subscriptions, \$38.50 including GST ,PO Box 706, Markham, ON, L6B 1A7, phone 905-946-0407, fax: 905-946-0410, email: magazines@indas.on.ca.

Our Times: Canada's independent labour magazine and read by mostl about organizations and other supporters of working pwople. Check its website at www.ourtimes.ca.

The Island Tides: local news, features and commentary with an environmental focus, free to islanders, \$37.45 per year for off island Canadian subscriptions, Box 55, Pender Island, BC, V0N 2M0, phone 250-629-3660, email islandtides@gulfislands.com.

The Left Coast Events list is a free weekly email compilationn of peace, earth and justice events. Send an email to eternity@islandnet.com to subscribe, or check http://relativenewz.ca for current event listings.

The Record: news and views from Canada's west coast, published every other Wednesday in Gold River, BC, subscriptions \$32.10 per year, Box 279, Gold River, BC, V0P 1G0, email record@island.net, website www.island.net/~record.

The Republic: Vancouver-based socialist paper, subscriptions, two issues per month, \$25 per year; free at local news stands, PO Bo 56072, Vancouver, BC, V5L 5E2; email mag pie@lynx.bc.ca.

Victoria Street Newz: provides information from and about poverty and homelessness. It's sold by low or no income vendors on the streets of Victoria, and archives are available at http://relativenewz.ca

ALTERNATIVE WEBSITES

www.alternet.org --A US website featuring alternative articles on US and world politics, an online magazine and information source.

www.counterpunch.org--an American website with a left-wing viewpoint.

www.criticalthinking.org

http://dominionpaper.ca--a Canadian ezine covering national and international stores that mainstream sources may not cover. Updated daily.

www.globalproblematique.net/bcpolicyprobe -- Run by BC Policy Probe, this website features information and research about suh things as privatization of BC Hydro.

www.avaaz.org/en/global --Global warming is a global threat. By c onfronting it together, we can build a more just, tolerant, and vibrant world.

www.indymedia.org -- A collective of independent media organizations and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, non-corporate coverage of events as they happen around the world.

www.informationclearinghouse.info --World news daily--news you won't find on CNN or Foxnews.

http://Newsdaily.ca--CanadaNewsdaily.ca is a good (and bad) news service with a refreshingly non-corporate view of the news, from local to global stories, with features, opinion, analysis -- all for free, including free classified ads. Newsdaily covers Canadian and world news, plus a focused look at British Columbia, Victoria and the Islands.

mai-not@globalproblematique.net-- Originally set up to discuss the implications of the Multi-lateral Agreement on Investments, this website and related email list now discuss world-wide developments of concern to left-wing readers.

http://ndp.4webs.ca -- A new NDP list serve and bulletin board. Check it out.

http://pej.org--PEJ News, a free service, serves up daily news, opinion and analysis of peace, environment and justice issues. Stay informed with web and email stories often days, weeks and months ahead of the mainstream media. The Peace, Earth & Justice News is produced entirely by volunteers and is a project of the non-profit Prometheus Institute based in Victoria, BC.

www.policyalternatives.ca -- The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' web page offers research reports, books and opinion pieces done on issues of social and economic justice.

www.rabble.ca-- A cheeky site offering original stories, feature articles and columns from some of the progressive voices in Canada.

www.saveourrivers.ca--Site includes new film on the Ashlu and Upper Pitt Rivers Hydro projects.

www.sevenoaksmag.com--It's new, it's progressive, and it's online.

www.strategicthoughts.ca--You'll find David Schreck's columns and more here.

www.straightgoods.com -- A watchdog working for Canadian consumers and citizens.

www.thetyee.ca--BC news and views from a non-corporate perspective.

www.truthout.org--US website with Real news.

www.vancouverislandwaterwatchcoalition.ca/

www.victoriacarshare.ca--If you don't want to own a car but still need to drive one sometimes, this welbsite may be for you.

www.vivelecanada.ca--website by noted activist Mel Hurtig about the corporate threat to Canadian sovereignty, includes a whole range of features from online polls and petitions to editorials and information updates.

www.wsws.org --The World Socialist Web Site is the Internet centre of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI). It provides analysis of majorworld events, comments on political, cultural, historical and philosophical issues, and valuable documents and studies from the heritage of the socialistmovement.

COMMUNITY RADIO

Commercial free communjnity radio, CFUV is located at 101.9 FM and 104.3 Cable, or visit http://www.cfuv.uvic.ca