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John Horgan -- Leader, BC NDP

Looking ahead and ready to fight

By Jonathan Lee

The newly acclaimed BC NDP leader, elected and re-elected Juan de Fuca MLA since 2005, is no stranger to BC's corridors of power.

The problem, as John Horgan sees it, is that his office is in the opposition corridors and not, where it should be, in the government corridors.

Horgan's frustration with his party's election losses over the past 14 years, is palpable. He likens the governance of BC, today, to Tommy Douglas's reference to Mouseland, decades ago, where the voting mice perpetually sought to elect cats which, of course, would never govern in the interest of mice.

He knows that the BC Liberals will never govern in the interest of the majority of working British Columbians.

John Horgan has the greatest respect for the population of British Columbia and understands that the consequences of BC Liberal government have not been explained clearly to the electorate.

Certainly 142,000 people, unable to find viable employment, feel the consequences of government mismanagement, but the causes of this failure of government have not been adequately explained. Horgan intends to correct that.

The BC NDP must challenge the BC Liberal positions more strongly, now. Horgan has moved past the disappointment of the 2013 election loss, has taken the lessons to heart, and is prepared for a fight to explain how much better things can be for British Columbians if the BC NDP is restored to government at the next election.

In settling into the Leader's office he's brought in only two personal effects. An executive chair that he rescued years ago -- comfortable and unpretentious -- and a framed poster from the days of the CCF, proclaiming "*Humanity First -- People before Profits*".

The poster really reflects Horgan's view of what government is about. His background and previous role as energy critic uniquely qualify him to critique and explain how Christy Clark's Liberals have mismanaged the natural energy resources of BC.

He points out that the BC Liberals led voters to believe that their energy, extraction, marketing and delivery policies would benefit British Columbians in creating new jobs and increased government revenues.

There is no sign of this happening, according to Horgan. He points out that British Columbia languishes 8th in national job creation, behind every province other than PEI and New Brunswick.

It is the job of government to assist in adding value to our resources and see that they are brought to market at the best price to the advantage of all British Columbians. Horgan says this isn't happening. Markets are being misjudged, Green hydro energy is being frittered away and benefits and jobs in BC are still lagging and lacking.

Horgan points out that the resources and potentials in BC extend much further than simply oil and gas markets. He believes in moving the focus to multi-sector plans to produce jobs, now, and expresses his disappointment that we've become consumed by the pipeline debate.

The issues and opportunities are much more complicated than narrow debates, however important. He looks to stress the importance of balance in government and that the province must understand where it fits, both locally, nationally and internationally. That there must be a focus on strategies and issues where there is a realistic opportunity of control while at the



Jon Lee photo

John Horgan, newly elected BC NDP leader, stands in the Leader's Office at the Legislature beside a poster from CCF days which reflects what he believes government is about.

same time understanding the global picture.

Horgan understands that BC must focus on issues that touch residents meaningfully. That in developing a resource economy, a longer term view must be taken than that of the current government.

The balance of the economic needs of society must be better understood -- not just the interests of private shareholders. He reminds that the BC Liberal government is very much focussed on short term shareholder profit rather than long term societal benefit.

This brings Horgan to what he sees as a failure of the BC Liberals to allow proper oversight of Crown corporations and P3s.

He looks back at the Campbell government policy of creating P3 contracts, which often simply moved public wealth and resources into private hands.

He wants to know what the public benefit is from these P3 arrangements.

He says that over the past 12 years the powers of institutions such as the Auditor General's Office, the BC Utilities Commission, and the Agricultural Land Commission, have been circumvented by the BC Liberals, while in government.

He points out that the Crown Corporation Committee hasn't met since 2008. He personally brought in a private members bill to reconstitute the committee and to begin again to ask questions of the CEOs of entities like Hydro or BC Ferries -- corporations that have increased their debt and their burden on the public purse.

Horgan reminds that Crown corporations were created to serve the public good. Now, their management control has enabled the opportunity to obtain private advantage and gain, and public oversight has been diminished and disabled.

BC NDP will restore the power of independent commissions and look at where public wealth continues to be transferred to private hands, says Horgan.

As an example of private unaccountability he cites the Alta-Gas/Forest Kerr project in north western BC. Horgan says that the project represents a 60 year contract, entirely exempted from public scrutiny.

He is adamant that while 142,000 people are available and seeking work in BC, the public message of BC NDP must draw attention to examining where P3 contracts are not working in the public interest.

But Horgan has a word of warning. He stresses that in his view the most constructive way forward must not undermine contractual obligations -- a principle that is sacrosanct in his mind. Just as the contracts that government makes with unions must be considered equally sacrosanct. He is very clear that the BC Liberal government regularly does not seek to adhere to agreements made with unions, which are regularly abrogated.

These are very early days for the BC NDP new leader. He's busy engaging his team and organizing how to effectively convey BC NDP messages that will resonate with voters.

He looks at the pattern of election results, not only in BC but internationally. He sees that voters are uncertain and unhappy with political institutions and parties.

His objective is to change perceptions about the BC NDP. It's a mainstream party that exists to bring prosperity to all British Columbians. The BC Liberal government brings benefit to a small sector of the population and austerity to the majority. That is not a sustainable balance in John Horgan's view.

Horgan knows that the BC NDP must deliver a stronger and clearer message. The party must explain its policies more effectively and say how those policies serve individual and societal needs more fairly and successfully than the present government's policies.

That it is important to return BC as a citizen's province.

John Horgan is going to be a tough leader of the BC NDP. His vision is inclusive. He sees that today's model of BC government is unfair and impoverishing for so many residents. He is going to require the party and its many factions of expertise and interest to come together with reinforced purpose if today's exclusionary government policies are to be reversed.

He reminds that he, himself, has been the beneficiary of social programs throughout his life -- public healthcare, public education, social support systems etc. -- that have enabled his career and present position. He looks, now, to fight for the continuation and sustainability of those programs for generations to come.

BC Liberals do not have a "divine right to rule", he says. His purpose is to lead his party toward government, replace the BC Liberals, and to grow the economy for the public good.

It's likely that Horgan's office in the opposition corridors will be empty much of the time. He'll be out in the province explaining and cajoling.

John Horgan exudes an energy and intelligence that will be invaluable to the BC NDP over the next three years. Not a man to dwell on past difficulties, his eyes are set clearly on the future.



For a photo report on the Lower Island News' and its editor's birthday celebrations, held May 3, please turn to page 3.

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Tour of Two Cities:

Seven years since last welfare raise! This is no joke, say advocates

After seven years of no increase in welfare rates, it is time to Raise the Rates.

On April 1, Raise the Rates organized a Tour of Two Cities, highlighting the contrast between the rich and poor in Vancouver.

The Tour was to mark seven years since the last welfare increase. The welfare rate for a single able-bodied person has been frozen at \$610 a month while the rate for a single person on disability has been frozen at \$906 a month. Inflation and soaring rents means that a person on disability welfare is at least \$114 a month worse off than seven years ago. This is No Joke!

The tour started outside the Carnegie Community Centre, the heart of the community, with a huge range of activities including seniors' programs, health advice, music, theatre, writing classes, a library, yoga and volleyball, education, conversation, friendship and good food. Lunch at Carnegie costs \$2.25.

Jean Swanson contrasted the treatment of rich and poor in BC today. Fraser Stuart explained what it is like on welfare, living on the able-bodied rate of \$610.

The Tour set off down Hastings to go to the other side of town, the area for the rich and powerful. The tour highlighted that BC has enough money to raise welfare, tackle poverty and provide good housing for all. Instead, the BC government gives hand-outs to the rich. Tackling poverty would save lives, make for a happier province and save the people of BC \$4 billion a year.

Birks, the Luxury Jeweller, at 698 Hastings, was the first stop. Clearly there is plenty of money in Vancouver and Canada; Canada wide sales in 2013 were \$158,834,000. The CEO's income is well over \$1 million a year.

The BC government's tax cuts between

2000 and 2010 made the rich even richer. The richest 1% of British Columbians received, on average, an extra \$41,000 a year from these tax cuts! This tax cut alone is more money than the income of half of the workers in BC. The median individual income, after tax, in 2011 was \$26,842.

To mark this marriage of the rich and government, Raise the Rates performed a symbolic wedding using a \$41,000 ring!

Raise the Rates next visited the Vancouver Club, 915 W. Hastings. This is where some of the rich and powerful who make the decisions in BC hang out.

Dave Diewert and Harold Lavender pointed out that, to join the Club the entrance fee alone is \$6,500 and in addition there are monthly dues of \$213 (for a resident of Vancouver over 45 years old). This doesn't even get you cheap food. One of the lowest cost items on the menu is soup or salad, a sandwich, and tea or coffee, all costing \$24 (plus tax and service charge!). This is more than a person on welfare has for a week's food.

Trish Garner, Poverty Reduction Coalition, demonstrated the inequality of wealth in BC using a rope cut into four sections, and an invisible fifth piece. The richest 20% of people in BC have 75% of all the wealth while the poorest 60% share only 8% of the wealth.

Tracey Morrison highlighted that poverty is one of the biggest causes of poor health as people cannot afford a healthy diet, have stressful lives and often have inadequate housing. Poverty costs the health system of BC over \$1.2 billion every year. But the rich can afford extra private health treatment. Medisys Corporate Health Services, 900 W Hastings, a private health company had sales of over \$50,000,000.



Raise the rates member speaks passionately about trying to live on the \$610 provided in welfare to single employable persons.



The tour took marchers from Carnegie Community Centre in Vancouver, to luxury jeweller Birks, to the other side of town to show BC has enough money to raise welfare rates, tackle poverty and provide good housing to all.

One of the hardest things do to on welfare is to find decent housing, as rents soar and affordable housing is replaced by condos. At the top of Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel, 1038 Canada Place, sits Vancouver's priciest condo, sold for \$25 million, in June 2013. The \$25 million, apparently spent for only a part-time home, could build over 100 units of good quality social housing.

Across the street is the BC Liberals' office, Waterfront Centre, 200 Burrard Street. Bill Hopwood, Raise the Rates, stated that it is a political decision to subsidize the rich, which means the BC has the worst adult and child poverty in Canada. In the last 30 years, people on welfare have had a 20% cut in income, while the premier and MLAs are 25% better off and the 10% richest are 40% better off.

Sam Snobelin pointed out that Canada is a wealthy country and the Canadian banks have plenty of money (the combined profits of the five big banks were \$29 billion in 2013). The Royal Bank of Canada, Burrard & Georgia, is the most profitable, making \$8.4 billion. The CEO received \$12.6 million in compensation at the same time as firing 1,100 workers. The Canadian and US governments found around \$140 billion to help out the banks during the financial crisis of 2008-9, yet the government will not provide a national housing strategy.

We Are Poor Because They Are Rich!

For further information, contact Bill Hopwood by phone at 604 738-1653 or 778 686-5293(cell) or email him at bill50@vcn.bc.ca; or visit Raise the Rates website at : <http://raisetherates.org/>



Outside Birks Jewellers, a street person rests on the sidewalk.

Saanich-Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca New Democrats and Friends!

Welcome to our Supporter Appreciation Barbecue

Saturday, July 19, 2-5 pm
by the sea on Parry Bay at 3837 Duke Road, Metchosin

Directions: Turn off Metchosin Road on to Duke Road - East or West access - and look for the Randall Garrison signs

Admission by donation (suggested donation \$20)

Salads or desserts welcome.

For more information and to RSVP:
Jennifer Burgis at 250-881-8280,
Fred Hiigli at 250-384-7374 or
esquimaltjdf@gmail.com

Lower Island News celebrates 30 years, honours long-time editor

By Starla Anderson

The *Lower Island News* celebrated 30 years of publication on Saturday, May 3, in the BCGEU auditorium, with 70-80 supporters enjoying the company of like-minded activists.

The afternoon celebration focused on acknowledging the 28 years of commitment that editor Dale Young has given to the voices of the Left on Vancouver Island and beyond. Dale was also given “Happy Birthday!” wishes as she approaches her 80th birthday in early July.

Jon Lee, a member of the board of the Lower Island News Society, owner of LIN, was the master of ceremonies for the afternoon, and introduced many dignitaries who came out to show their support for Young and LIN.



LIN board member Jon Lee ably acts as master of ceremonies for the event..

Victoria mayor Dean Fortin brought personal greetings as did: Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca MP Randall Garrison, Victoria MP Murray Rankin, Esquimalt-Royal Roads MLA Maurine Karagianis, Victoria Swan Lake MLA Rob Fleming, and Saanich North and the Islands MLA Gary Holman.

Victoria municipal councillors Marianne Alto and Ben Isitt came to express their support, as did North Saanich municipal councillor Elsie McMurphy. Greater Victoria school trustees Deborah Nohr, Diane McNally, and Edith Loring-Kuhanga also expressed appreciation.



LIN board chairwoman Sharon Hazelwood remembers some of LIN’s history.

During the afternoon’s program, Sharon Hazelwood, longtime LIN board president gave a history of the *Lower Island News*.

Heather Tufts, a regular contributor, called on others to read headlines from issues taken from the archive that were



Audience listens attentively to presentations and speeches following lunch.



MLA Rob Fleming (Victoria-Swan Lake) presents a special Legislature certificate to editor Dale Young, to recognize the Lower Island News’ 30 years of presenting progressive voices to lower Vancouver island readers.



MP Murray Rankin (Victoria) (talking here with LIN editor Dale Young) was one of a number of local politicians who attended the luncheon party, including MP Randall Garrison (Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca), MLAs Maurine Karagianis and Gary Holman, Victoria Mayor Dean Fortin, city councillors and school trustees.

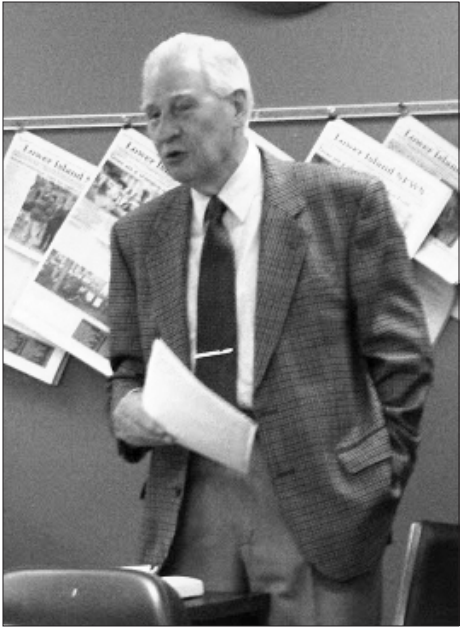


Entertaining the crowd of about 70-80 people with a musical interlude are the Rabbleberries, a quartet made up of (l-r) Ron Gilmore, Karen Gilmore, Sharon Hazelwood and Alan O’Dean.

spread about the room—this illustrated the broad range of topics covered by the paper over the years.

Current editorial writer, David Olsen, spoke highly of his working relationship with Young—how motivated he was to work with her because of her appreciation for his efforts.

Victoria-Swan Lake NDP constituency president, Trish Richards, read a greeting from BCNDP president, Craig Keating, thanking Young for her many years of work that have supported the party. And Victoria-Swan Lake MLA Rob Fleming gave a certificate to Young from the BC Legislature on the occasion of the *Lower Island News*’ 30th anniversary and in recognition of its presentation of “progressive voices to



Editorial writer David Olsen speaks of his working relationship with the editor and her appreciation for his work.

readers on Southern Vancouver Island”.

The RabbleBerries—a quartet of singers and musicians made up of Sharon Hazelwood, Karen Gilmore, Alan O’Dean, and Ron Gilmore—entertained with a musical interlude that kept up the lively pace of the afternoon program but also helped to segue the program into a more intimate tribute.

Young’s daughter, Joan, spoke of how her mother had always been a very strong role model as a feminist and social activist. And how even now living with Multiple Sclerosis (MS), her mother’s strong mind has kept her committed to working with others to attain social justice.

Hazelwood led the party in singing “Happy Birthday!” as Young was presented with her birthday cake made of layers of cherry-topped chocolate cupcakes—with lit candles signifying “80” perched atop. Young had no trouble blowing them out!

The editorial board of the Lower Island News Society hosted the celebration with the help of the Red Hens, a circle of Young’s friends who meet monthly over lunch to discuss political affairs. Members of federal and provincial NDP constituency associations helped to sell tickets and tickets were made available to independent left-leaning supporters as well.

All of this outreach, as well as donations of political books for the silent auction, resulted in a fundraising total of almost \$2,000.00 which will go towards keeping the *Lower Island News* coming to Readers’ mailboxes—and on-line—for some time yet!

A big thank-you to all who helped to make this celebration a success! Not least of whom was Carol Pickup who harvested flowers from her own garden the morning of the event and arranged them in vases to create a beautiful ambience on the linen-covered lunch tables.



Starla Anderson (r) served as chair of the fund-raising luncheon, ably helped by fellow board member Diane Walsh.

“No nation is fit to sit in judgement upon any other nation.”
--Woodrow Wilson. 1856-1924. 28th president of the US

Hectoring from the sidelines

2014 is a big year for anniversaries. 100 years since World War I began, 70 years since D-Day, 25 years since Tiananmen Square. For good measure, 75 years since the start of World War 2 and 65 years since NATO was established and the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb.

Some are potent relative to Ukraine. Political leaders tied themselves in knots over the D-Day anniversary, as CTV reported that behind closed doors, Harper and Obama were united in making it “crystal clear” that they had no intention of meeting Putin – even though the leaders of Britain, Germany, France and Ukraine did just that.

Meanwhile, Stephen Harper continued his bizarre foreign policy, intending, as Canadian Press reported, to “Shun Putin in Europe”. From the safety of Toronto, Harper “blasted Putin in a fiery speech linking him with the worst evils of 20th century communism”, which Harper described as “a ruthless and poisonous ideology”. What Harper forgot is that the D-Day anniversary was not about Putin. As the French president reminded us, Russia lost about 10 million soldiers killed in World War 2 and an estimated 10 million civilians – most of whom happened to be Ukrainians. That’s why Putin was in Normandy – because of all those dead Russians, who tied down a huge part of the German Army before, during and after D-Day. The Russian people would not take kindly to being snubbed, as they see it.

At the G7 meeting in Brussels, Barack Obama insisted “after investing so much blood and treasure to bring Europe together we refuse to allow the dark tactics of the 20th century to define the 21st“. Unfortunately no one reminded him that in the European elections just a week earlier, many Europeans seemed eager to forget that blood and treasure and voted for parties dedicated to pushing Europe apart – the Front National in France, UKIP in Britain, and so on.

Rhetoric and grandstanding achieve nothing but more tension. Vladimir Putin may not be many people’s idea of a great neighbour who is fun to be with, but nor is he some kind of pseudo-Stalin. Like many political leaders he wants what he sees to be in Russia’s interest – and like them of course, in his personal interest – staying in power.

Instead of shouting from the sidelines and “shunning”, Harper should, like the UK’s Cameron, France’s Hollande have met him in France, to recognize the suffering of the Russian people in WW2, and ask him to his face just where he is coming from over Ukraine and Crimea. Instead, following a last minute change from crystal clarity to common sense by Barack Obama, who also met Putin, Harper was left isolated – again.

We may not get the answers we want, but as Winston Churchill said, “Jaw Jaw is always better than to War War.” Instead, with NATO “responding” by sending troops and aircraft to Eastern Europe we may be marching blindly to “War War”. This is not about pseudo-bravery or phoney patriotism, but recognizing that we have only one planet to live on and we better not blow it up – a view probably shared by the several billion people outside the G7 or NATO. NATO can keep its sabre sharp and shiny without rattling it in people’s faces!

At home, when not picking fights with the Supreme Court, killing the Canada Health Accord, attacking ex-Auditor General Sheila Fraser or public servants, Harper is focused on his foreign aid initiative on maternal, new born and child health. In principle, this is praiseworthy but in its application it smacks of ideology rather than truly improving the lives of women and children in vast areas of the world where they are at risk. Why? By its refusal to confront the real problems facing women and children; poverty, lack of access to family planning and violence against women. The dire situation of sexual and physical violence against women and girls is horrifying and widespread, affecting hundreds of millions of them, and getting worse.

It is all very well to rattle on about maternal and child health, but, as the BBC has revealed, girls as young as nine years old, are being forced into marriage and are pregnant with unwanted children in their early teens. The best contribution to maternal and child health would be to protect women and girls and help them avoid unwanted pregnancy in the first place. While helping pregnant women and girls and victims of sexual violence, that’s what Médecins sans Frontières tries to do – so no doubt MSF will be excluded from receiving any of the \$3.5 billion announced by Harper for his pet program.

Meanwhile in BC, Christy Clark continues to dream of a glorious right-wing future, funded almost entirely by liquefied natural gas. Harper’s government, having now got totally off-side with Russia, while trying to stay on-side with China, has handed Clark a poisoned chalice. A lot of the gas that she and her government dreamed of exporting to China will now be supplied by Russia for the next 30 years at least – cheaply and easily by a pipeline.

Although the BC Liberal spin-doctors are hard at work to show it doesn’t matter, the fact is that the BC Liberal government has no real plan for the long term economic, or indeed social future of BC. As a result they have harnessed the old political ploy of distraction. They have picked a fight with the BCTF (again) to distract people from the fuzzy LNG future – or lack of it, a worsening public healthcare situation, the family physician shortage, lack of skills training/loss of skilled jobs, the increasing gap between rich and poor and child poverty. BC is drifting –like a broken-down LNG tanker off the BC coast. -- DJO

The Lower Island NEWS

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As others see it

Opposition propose BC Poverty Reduction and Economic Inclusion Act:

Now is the time for bi-partisan collaboration in addressing the root causes of poverty

By Bruce Smith, Seth Klein and Trish Garner

On May 6, in the BC Legislature, the Official Opposition (MLA Michelle Mungall) introduced a private member’s Bill proposing a *BC Poverty Reduction and Economic Inclusion Act*. The Act, were it to be enacted, would see the government develop a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy within one year, and legislate specific targets and timelines to reduce the breadth and depth of poverty.

British Columbia has had the highest poverty rate in Canada for the last 13 years, yet is now one of only two provinces left without a poverty reduction plan. It is about time BC caught up with the rest of Canada in tackling poverty upfront and saving lives and money through this approach.

According to a poll released last year by the BC Healthy Living Alliance, 78% of British Columbians think it is important for political leaders in BC to address poverty with a provincial poverty reduction plan with clear targets and timelines. Clearly, the public is ready for political leadership on this issue, so it is gratifying to see a proposed Act such as this.

Importantly, the proposed Act includes extensive community consultation, including with those living in poverty, and also outlines how a government should be held accountable for progress. It commits to embed targets in legislation, to appoint a lead minister, to have a cabinet committee to oversee the strategy co-chaired by the premier, to have an outside advisory committee to hold the government to account, and to annual reporting to monitor progress.

However, the process of implementing a comprehensive strategy should not serve to delay urgent first steps, as there are immediate actions needed, such as raising inadequate welfare rates that have been frozen since 2007 and continuing to raise the minimum wage.

It is significant that the guiding principles of the Act include protecting human rights, addressing the social and economic costs of poverty, and addressing the social determinants of health.

First, at the international level, Canada, in consultation with the BC government, has committed to several human rights obligations that guarantee social and economic rights to all citizens. In the *International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR, 1966)*, which Canada ratified in 1976, Article 11(1) recognizes “the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and hous-

ing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.” A comprehensive poverty reduction strategy would be a critical step in honouring this commitment.

Second, in relation to the costs of poverty, the costs of health care alone in relation to poverty are 1.2 billion dollars per year. Adding criminal justice costs and lost productivity gives a grand total of 8-9 billion dollars per year. A comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, including building affordable housing and providing universal child-care, would cost approximately half that at 3-4 billion dollars per year. The question is not can we afford to do it but can we afford not to.

Finally, the growing literature on the social determinants of health reveals that tackling poverty upfront is the single biggest factor in improving health outcomes for everyone, not just those living in poverty.

The Act was previously introduced by the Opposition in June 2011 but did not receive a second reading in the Legislature. There have been no significant changes in public policy to address poverty since that time. Rejecting this call on the grounds that the BC Jobs Plan will suffice, as the government has done, is clearly not working.

Despite a strong recommendation from the Budget Consultations report to “introduce a comprehensive poverty reduction plan”, the government failed to include any substantial measures to address poverty in this year’s recent budget.

This recommendation received the unanimous support from the members of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, which listen to voices from communities around BC before making their decisions. Perhaps the government needs to reconsider their position on this recommendation?

All parties need to support the Act, as has happened in other provinces across Canada. Now is the time for bi-partisan collaboration and action in addressing the root causes of poverty.

Please email the premier [link: <http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/email-the-premier>] to show your support for Bill M212.

Ted Bruce and Seth Klein are co-chairs of the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition (BCPRC), and Trish Garner is the Community Organizer. Ted Bruce is also the past president of the Public Health Association of BC and Seth Klein is the BC Director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

More information can be found at: <http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/poverty-reduction-act>

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.

Refugium: Lawful citizens no longer can choose what enters their home

What I find most disturbing about BC Hydro's forced imposition of smart meters is how readily politicians of all parties have abandoned fundamental principles of a free society in order to accommodate bureaucratic expediency. Individual freedom demands that government has boundaries. As far back as the 1600s the concept that individuals need sanctuary from government was established in British Common Law (still applicable in British Columbia), clearly stating that your home is your castle and the sovereign will not cross your threshold without following due process. Except now they have. In one stroke, the province is saying that lawful citizens no longer have a choice in what enters or leaves their homes.

Although debate has been carefully steered to encompass technical arguments and ignore principle, there are two facts about smart meters that cannot be denied: They emit radiation into your house. And, when Hydro chooses, they will gather and disseminate personal information, which previously would have required a court order. Whether the radiation is harmful or ultimately proves to be safe is not the point. What is critical to the issue is that many people believe it to be harmful, and now their sanctuary, along with their peace of mind, is denied them. Nor does it matter how little you may care what government, corporations, and hackers know about what you do in your home. What matters is that the safeguards protecting others who do care must remain in place. And forget the argument that people are free to go somewhere else. In our current

economy most people in this province who have a job and a mortgage have no choice but to stay where they are and do what BC Hydro dictates. For populated areas, supplied electricity has become more essential to life than supplied water. Urban regulations will not permit alternative sources. And those who could legally go off-the grid can rarely afford the expense. BC Hydro is a government-established monopoly, so there are no competitors to turn to for service provision. Under these circumstances the only protection an individual has are our elected representatives. Except in this case, regardless of party, they have determined that what is good for business is more important than long established individual rights. Recently, politicians of all description prominently displayed poppies and paid homage to the sacrifices made by previous generations who understood that to maintain a free system over time it is necessary for certain principles to be inviolate. Government must conform to the principle rather than change the principle to accommodate the wishes of whoever happens to be in power. It is why we have Constitutions. Unfortunately many politicians these days don't seem to think that way. They do not recognize that our jobs are not only to represent our electorate, majority and minority, but also to serve as guardians of the free system. Sadly we seem all too willing to thoughtlessly forfeit our freedom for the latest of fleeting conveniences that our run-away technology may provide.

John Ranns
Mayor, District of Metchosin

Calling all visual, musical and word artists to participate in fall event

The Mining Justice Action Committee invites interested artists – visual, musical and word -- to respond to this call for participation in an upcoming fall event. Call to Artists: Communities in Resistance and the Art of Solidarity Are you a visual or spoken word artist? Your art is needed to show solidarity with people who are in danger of intimidation and violence as they work to protect the air, land and water in their communities where there are Canadian mining operations Application Deadline: September 19,

2014
Art Show : October 16 to November 6, 2014
Little Fernwood Gallery, 1923 Fernwood Road
Spoken Word and Music Performance
October 24, 2014 at Fernwood Community Association Theatre, 1923 Fernwood Road.
See: www.mjacvictoria.ca to apply
Teresa Wolfwood
Victoria

Why is Canadian government subsidizing fossil fuel industries?

Can anyone explain why the Canadian government is subsidizing the fossil fuel industries? Why are some of the most world's most profitable companies receiving what amount to public handouts when we are supposedly living in a time of austerity? Last year the International Monetary Fund (IMF) published a report on global energy subsidies that analyzed 176 countries. It concluded that the world's developing and industrialized economies are subsidizing the energy sector at a rate of \$1.9 trillion per year, accounting for 8 percent of total government revenues. Globally, 95 percent of these subsidies were directed to oil, gas and coal. In Canada, the federal government subsidizes the fossil fuel industries to the tune of more than \$20 billion per year. Is that what the free market looks like? Not surprisingly, the bulk of these subsidies are going the oil sector. According to the IMF report, energy subsidies are hurting the economy, the environment, and regular people. Subsidies crowd out public spending on infrastructure, health, education and the social safety net, while driving up budget deficits and the public debt. They discourage private investment in the energy sector, artificially promote capital-intensive industries, encourage excessive energy consumption, and reduce incentives for investment in renewable energy. Not only that, the IMF report found energy subsidies mostly benefit wealthier households, who tend to consume more energy than poorer ones. Remember, we live in an age when wealth concentration at the top has reached levels not seen in generations. Simply phasing out subsidies to the fossil fuel industries would reduce global

CO2 emissions by 13 percent, conclude the report's authors, which would go a long way in helping Canada and other industrialized economies meet their international commitments. So what is the solution? If our political leaders are keen on picking winners and losers, then why not shift these public subsidies from the fossil fuel industries to clean energy, and give the next generation a chance in the fight against climate change? Shifting to a greener economy could even boost employment. Blue Green Canada, an alliance of trade unions and environmental organizations, estimates that redirecting \$1.3 billion in existing federal subsidies from the oil and gas sector to renewable energy and energy efficiency would create an additional 18,000 jobs. And these would predominantly be blue-collar jobs in manufacturing, construction and trades. As numerous studies have pointed out, investments in clean energy—such as wind and solar—are more effective at creating jobs than the fossil fuel industries. Whereas \$1 million invested in the oil and gas sector creates about 2 jobs, the same investment in clean energy creates about 15 jobs. Not a bad deal. It is about time our decision-makers finally showed some leadership on this issue by eliminating the public handouts to the fossil fuel industries and kick-starting the transition to a cleaner, more sustainable economy. Because the current policy does not make sense.

Rob Douglas
Constituency president for the Cowichan Valley NDP and can be reached at robert.g@gmail.com. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the NDP.

For a truly democratic reform

One can sympathize with decent Conservative backbenchers for trying to take attention away from the shameful handling of the Senate scandal by the Prime Minister and his entourage. But MP Michael Chong's proposed reform act can only be seen as a distraction from the present sorry state of affairs in Parliament. What Canadians desperately need is meaningful reform of our electoral system. The first past the post form of representation may have had its merits when there were only two major parties vying for seats in the House of Commons but now, with three recognized parties and a fringe formation not lacking in ambition, there exists a democratic deficit that needs to be addressed urgently. A solution exists: both the New Democratic Party and the Green Party support systems of proportional representation whereby every vote counts, electors can vote for the party that best corresponds to their own values and the distribution of seats in parliament reflects that diversity of opinion. This system of representation exists in a majority of advanced countries around the world. Instead of that, Green Party supporters in Brandon Souris nearly lost their democratic right to vote for a Green Party candidate when their leader MP Elizabeth May contemplated making a deal with the Liberal Party and the NDP in the hope of defeating the Conservative candidate. This affront to democracy won't be redressed by Michael Chong's reform act which Ms May supports. Realistically, only the NDP whether in power or holding the balance of power in a minority government can implement proportional representation. But if the Green Party keeps on running candidates who take votes away from the Liberals as in the Brandon Souris by-election or from the NDP in general elections, the likelihood of proportional representation becoming a reality are greatly diminished. In his *Globe and Mail* column of December 3, journalist and author Lawrence Mar-

tin writes that, after 30 years of existence in Canada, popular support hovering around 5 percent nationally and one MP, it might be time for the Green Party to "pack it in". His words will certainly not find favour with Elizabeth May's supporters but they could be what the country needs to pave the way to meaningful reform, not a smoke screen à la Michael Chong.

Hélène Narayana
Salt Spring Island

Gender equality coming to Canada... in a few hundred years

Canadian women are living longer and graduating from post-secondary education in greater numbers than men. But according to Kate McInturff, author of a study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, once they graduate, "it all goes downhill." In terms of the gender gap in Parliament, it has barely changed in 20 years, with women still under one-quarter of the politicians elected to the House of Commons and to provincial legislatures. In the private sector, just 14.5 percent of the seats on corporate boards in Canada are occupied by women. Only one of Canada's top 100 CEOs is a woman. At this rate, the gender gap will not close for another 228 years. In terms of political representation, equality is at hand.. in about 390 years. But as we can see from the example of Cuba, where women hold 40 percent of the National Assembly seats, and are a majority in many of the professions, a socialist revolution might speed things up a bit.

For more letters, please turn to page 6

Friends of the Lower Island News

As you may have read on page 3, the *Lower Island News*'s birthday party and fund raiser in May was an wonderful success, with close to \$2,000 being raised to help pay for the ever increasing cost to mail each issue to you.

Many who attended indicated that they really enjoyed the low key opportunity to get together with like minded progressives to discuss mutual interests, and we hope to do another similar event in future.

The organizers of the party chose to combine it with a celebration of my coming 80th birthday, and I was overwhelmed by the kindness of those who satended at the event. Thank you so much for all your good wishes!

Before it was over, my scooter was filled with a beautiful bouquet of flowers and decorated with a multitude of balloons, and I thought you'd all enjoy seeing how I looked as I headed home along Douglas street afterwards.

If you like this issue of the LIN , want it to continue to be published and can afford to give something, please consider becoming a supporting donor and send us a cheque, whatever amount you can afford. All donations, large and small, will be appreciated..

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 cannot take credit card donations, or give tax receipts. Thank you!

Dale Young, Editor, for the Editorial Board

“They came for the gold and stayed for the grass...”

After Bill 24 passes third reading in BC, protecting farmland will become an even bigger challenge. In Northern BC, Interior and Kootenay regions, agricultural land is in danger of be used by Big Business.

Whoever drives through Happy Valley Road and sees the destruction of once wide fields will understand the horror of people concerned.

Such concerns go far beyond NIMBY-ism: We have exploited the earth’s resources, over-harvested our forests; through over-fishing we have widely eliminated marine life and through pollution endangered life on earth.

Our situation is more challenging than ever before: According to the US National Centre for Atmospheric Research the percentage of land stricken by serious drought has more than doubled. Collapsing fisheries, melting glaciers, rising seas, more catastrophic storms, flooding, earthquakes, polluted air and ground water, as well as radioactive elements poisoning the ocean...

The more cars the more air pollution.

We do need clean air and clean water without adding pollution through even more cars. The air we are breathing, the water we are drinking, the food we are eating -- there is a danger lurking everywhere. Pollution is taking over our land and oceans.

A global ecological crisis is inevitable.

Short-lived gain will soon be seen as a loss that never can be recovered. We can’t ignore the writing on the wall any longer. Using arable land for more development inevitably leads to more problems.

We have to resist the Growth pressure

and start to reflect on the consequences. Dr. David Martin and many others are warning that a collapse of the global banking system could be imminent and that it would start with the housing crisis. Are we prepared or do we turn a blind eye and continue to stress higher density, more development? We do need farmland for future food production, how else should we feed all these people?

There are limits of growth and expansion. We cannot grow forever. If we continue to cover the countryside with cement, we are disturbing a healthy balance. We do need the city but we also need the agricultural land. We do need the busy life but also space for recreation.

We can’t live any longer in denial. There is an ecological crisis ahead of us, therefore we do need a new approach in managing what is still left. If we continue to focus on higher density without thinking ahead such a mistake would be irreversible.

Thomas Kuhn said that we do need a Paradigm Shift, a fundamental change in approach. We do need a new vision to replace the materialistic thinking.

The Lieutenant-Governor said at her Inauguration speech in Victoria: “They came for the gold, but they stayed for the grass. It is at our peril that the great cities of the world forget that civilization relies on the health of the soils upon which it rests.”

“They came for the gold and stayed for the grass. Do we now have to add:”They got the grass and turned it to houses to get the gold?

Hildegard Horie
Saanich

In support of the Canada Health Accord

By Carol Pickup

The Canada Health Accord has been an agreement between the provinces, territories and the federal government. It has provided the provinces and territories with stable, though inadequate funding and has set national standards for healthcare. The current Health Accord expired March 31, 2014 and the Harper government is refusing to negotiate it.

Contrary to the comments expressed by the Fraser Institute in the Wednesday, April 23 edition of the *Times Colonist*, I believe that a properly negotiated Canada Health Accord is essential to the future of our Canadian Medicare system and the future wellbeing of all Canadians. The failure of the Harper government to involve the provinces and territories of Canada in a meaningful negotiation process to support, improve and enhance our system is a disgrace.

The Accord has been important in promoting national standards and providing stable funding after deep cuts by a federal Liberal government in the 1990s. The First Ministers recommitted to the *Canada Health Act* and its requirements: public administration, universal access, comprehensive coverage, accessibility without extra charges or discrimination and portability across provinces and territories. The Accord also set common goals around wait times, homecare, prescription drugs and team-based primary care. Even with the Accord, the federal share of healthcare dollars has declined from the original 50-50 split with the provinces to less than a 20-80 split.

On wait times, the Accord has been successful--eight out of 10 Canadians are getting treatment within the timelines set in 2005 for five chosen procedures. More needs to be done, but progress has been made. Results in areas such as homecare, drugs and primary care have been poor because the governments set only loose goals with no financial strings attached.

In December 2011, the Harper government announced a major cut to the Canada Health Transfer of \$36 billion over 10 years beginning in 2017. As well the equalization portion of the CHT will be eliminated this year, which will reduce transfers by another \$16.5 billion over the next five years. These moves put our Medicare system in danger and should not be tolerated by the provinces or its citizens.

Other decisions by the federal Conservatives include the abandonment of the National Pharmaceutical Strategy in the 2004 Accord. This move and the extension of patent protection for brand-name drugs will increase drug costs to Canadians by between \$850 million and \$1.6 billion a year. We should have our own National Pharmacare program which could save further billions of dollars by buying drugs on a bulk basis as is done in Australia and many other countries worldwide.

Under a new Health Accord, there is a need to revisit the *Canada Health Act* which should be improved to reflect costs of many levels of care rather than just cut care and fees for doctors. Much more emphasis and funding should be directed to health promotion and the real determinants of health which include adequate liveable incomes, affordable housing and access to many other services and a clean environment.

Two years in, the BC Jobs plan is failing to deliver

By Iglika Ivanova

It’s traditional in many cultures to usher in the New Year with wishes for prosperity. But after a year of slow growth when the province actually lost jobs, fewer BC families can expect to see those wishes come true.

To see such weak job market performance four years into a post-recession recovery is unusual to say the least. It leaves British Columbians rightly wondering if the provincial government’s flagship economic initiative, the BC Jobs Plan, is failing to deliver.

A new report I’ve published with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives offers some answers. *BC Jobs Plan Reality Check* examines a number of indicators of labour market performance and compares the pace of recovery since the Jobs Plan

was announced in late September 2011 with the two years of the recovery that preceded it.

The findings reveal a largely jobless recovery, which was not significantly boosted by the BC Jobs Plan. While the jobs recovery has been disappointing across Canada, BC’s is weaker than the Canadian average. The persistently high unemployment rate, still over 2 percentage points above the pre-recession levels, is only the tip of the iceberg.

Jobs created since the Jobs Plan have been primarily temporary positions and have not kept up with BC’s growing population. The employment rate (the proportion of working age British Columbians who have jobs) is virtually unchanged since the worst of the recession. In fact, the province would need 94,000 more jobs to reach the pre-recession benchmark of 74%. That’s as

many jobs as were created in 2010, 2011 and 2012 combined.

The Jobs Plan was supposed to stimulate private sector job creation, but the private sector actually lost 12,000 jobs in the first 10 months of 2013. It’s very rare for the private sector to shed jobs outside of a recession. In the last 40 years in BC, it has happened only once, in 2001, and then only about 2,700 jobs were lost, much fewer than last year.

The resource focus of the BC Jobs Plan was supposed to breathe life into regions outside the Lower Mainland and Greater Victoria, which were hit particularly hard by the recession. But while a few towns like Prince George have seen a lot of activity over the last two years, when all the numbers are added up, only the Kootenay and Northeast economic region have experienced net job creation since the Jobs Plan was launched. Thompson-Okanagan, the Cariboo, and the North Coast and Nechako have fewer jobs than before the plan, and have yet to recover the jobs lost during the recession.

While the government touts the role of the resource sector in job creation, the reality is that just 2% of British Columbians are directly employed in mining, oil and gas extraction and forestry and logging combined. This sector remains such a small share of the job market that even a doubling or tripling of employment would not place it among top employment sectors in BC.

Besides, the majority of jobs stemming from these resource projects will be generated during their construction stage, so any lift to the local economies is likely to be short-lived. And these jobs would come at a great environmental price, threatening northern communities with air and water pollution and endangering our climate.

On top of this, there is concern that many of these new resource jobs may be filled with temporary foreign workers or skilled workers coming from other parts of the country rather than by local unemployed workers.

While temporary foreign workers take up a small share of BC jobs (just over 3% as of December 2012), the increase in temporary foreign workers since the recession represents 29% of the net new jobs created in the province. This points to serious gaps

The Father of Medicare, Tommy Douglas said it best over 32 years ago:

«Let’s not forget that the ultimate goal of Medicare must be to keep people well rather than just patching them up when they get sick. That means community clinics. That means expanding and improving Medicare by providing pharmacare and denticare programs.

«We can’t stand still. We can either go back or we can go forward. The choice we make today (1982) will decide the future of Medicare in Canada.»

Now in 2014, we must go forward and insist that the federal government negotiate a new Canada Health Accord in a spirit of partnership with the provinces and territories because to do less threatens the health of Canada and its citizens.

in our skills training programs that are putting youth and unemployed workers at a disadvantage.

One of the assumptions behind the Jobs Plan is that all governments can do is create favourable conditions for (mostly foreign) investors to step in and create jobs. This is not only false but also very limiting for our province.

The government itself can be a source of what Premier Clark calls “the first new dollar.” Whether it’s by hiring workers to enhance public services and make them more accessible, by purchasing goods and services from BC businesses or by initiating work on needed infrastructure projects, the provincial government can create jobs and leverage significant spin-off hiring and investment by the private sector.

As we enter the fifth year of a largely jobless recovery, it’s becoming clear that BC’s current economic strategy is failing to deliver. We need to shift to an economic strategy that is more diversified and less environmentally risky, and that puts more British Columbians to work in well-paying, family-supporting jobs.

Iglika Ivanova is Economist and Public Interest Researcher with the Canadians Centre for Policy Alternatives and author of *BC Jobs Plan Reality Check: The First Two Years*, available at policyalternatives.ca/bcjobsplan.

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Criminal minds and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

By Dale Perkins

Last evening I viewed an episode of *Criminal Minds*, the US drama about FBI agents solving impossible crimes committed by deranged minds in that society. It was most disturbing to watch – another dramatic portrayal of psychotic murder and mayhem a la the USA.

Nevertheless, something held me to the show, and afterwards I realized it was because I saw parallels between the plot of the show and my perspective on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission happening across Canada and most recently in Edmonton several weeks ago.

To detail the plot in its entirety takes longer than I'm allowed in this paper and to parallel it to the serious topic contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission seems almost disrespectful. Nevertheless, I want to highlight just a few components common in both scenarios.

The *Criminal Mind* story told of the past crimes committed by an elderly black-skinned man. Several skeletons were unearthed in the back yard of his home. The FBI agents pieced together the crime in their typically surgical fashion, and the elderly African American slowly revealed his complicity in the murders committed as far back as 35 years earlier.

To make the story more intriguing the interrogator uncovered the black man's story, i.e., how he was ruthlessly captured as a young man by five or six white men (an early manifestation of the KKK), and driven

out of the town to a deserted road, where his captors strung him by the hands from a huge tree and there castrated him because he was falsely accused of raping a young white girl. And in the intervening years the black man lured each white man and killed him, burying him in his back yard.

There were more gruesome details in the story, but a startling thing for me was when the black man turned on his interrogator and forced this white man to confess to his own acts of cowardly betrayal and horrible treatment of a black friend when he was a youth at his neighbourhood high school.

The point was made – there are no innocents when it comes to racism and the accompanying horrors. What further exacerbated the crime was how the elderly black man's rage became his legacy handed down to his son and wife. Even after dispatching his tormentors the black man's hatred lived on and infected family members and other people in his circle.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has unearthed many terrible memories for victims of forced residential schools in Canada. Each event grants victims leave to tell their own stories, often with tears and psychological agony as they re-lived their personal tragedy. While non-aboriginal participants are expected to listen to these stories and to feel the personal horror and agony the story-tellers shared, for the story-tellers it can be a cathartic experience, and it can signal the first steps to their full and complete healing – or so we're told.

For the listeners it can be a time of deep remorse as they feel the shame and guilt of being party to ancestors or a cultural majority who forced these young children to live apart from their families, stripped them of their cultures and subjected them to indescribable pain and suffering.

But to what end? And what would make right the pain and suffering experienced by the victims, these 25-35 years after it happened? Furthermore, what would be a logical expectation as far as restitution by the descendants of the church or school staff where the children were held? What must be done to atone for the sins of one's race, ancestors or even the school and church personnel who were intimately involved in these crimes?

That seems to me the impasse experienced by the institutional church as it plays a pivotal role in these commission hearings. An apology was offered to all indigenous aboriginals back in 1986 by the Moderator of the UCC, on behalf of all the members of the faith community. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been handed over to victims of residential schools.

There are tenacious advocates who continue to admonish the United Church of Canada and representatives of other churches and government, and loudly pronounce judgement on crimes of commission and omission against our aboriginal neighbours.

What would satisfy them that a proper restitution has been given? Would it be anything more than money? And how many

times must a victim of residential school abuse be prepared to re-tell their stories? Once the surface has been scratched in each case, who is left standing?

Rage experienced by victims of every variety of hate and discrimination lives on, and there doesn't seem to be any restitution that can wipe it out. I think of a song sung by Buffy Sainte-Marie (herself an aboriginal woman who originally came from a reserve I served for years when I ministered to the File Hills Reserve population in Saskatchewan) called *The Universal Soldier*.

The final verse stands out as a testimonial we all need to hear: "He's the Universal Soldier and he really is to blame. His orders come from far away no more. They come from here and there and you and me. And brothers can't you see, this is not the way we put the end to war."

Like war, so with racism and hatred among us. Both are abhorrent! And how many of us are prepared to live with the legacy of hatred, or would we rather find another way?

The message which everyone needs to hear is -- we only can be fully reconciled with one another if we first confront our tendency to hate and instead embrace the attitude of love.

The Rev. Dale Perkins is a retired United Church of Canada minister, and long-time Social Activist and Community Organizer living in the Greater Victoria region.

El Salvador starts long road to democracy

By Francisco Canjura

The people call the FMLN (Farbundo Marti National Liberation Front) Government, *el gobierno de el cambio*, the government of change, for good reason.

In March of this year Salvadorean's worldwide voted for the government of change, when they elected FMLN candidate Salvador Sanchez Ceren.

In 2009 El Salvador elected its first left wing president, Mauricio Funes, who ran for the FMLN. Funes' presidential victory was greeted with skepticism by some FMLN hard liners, but his election has proven to be significant.

Funes' 2009 victory played an important role in president-elect Salvador Sanchez Ceren's victory earlier this year.

Funes, with Ceren as his vice-president, has implemented social programs to help those less fortunate.

One of their greatest social programs is called *vaso de leche* (glass of milk), a program that feeds school aged children attending public schools. They've also implemented a program to give school aged students school uniforms, shoes and school supplies. These programs have



FMLN supporters celebrate election on Mauricio Funes i El Salvador.

benefited the poorest people in the country, a group that had usually voted for the right wing ARENA party.

However, its not only in the social aspects of policy in which this government has succeeded, they've also clamped

down on government corruption. Currently countless government ministers, business owners and even an ex-president are under investigation for crimes ranging from embezzlement of public funds to fraud.

These are the type of changes that affect, one way or another, Salvadorians of all social spectrums and will continue to occur in the next five years under Ceren.

Despite a great five years, the FMLN's job is just beginning and it's important to mention these social programs and corruption investigations have not come easily. Those in power since El Salvador's independence have outfitted the higher echelons of the three branches of government -- executive, judiciary and legislative -- with their friends.

Their grip on these important positions makes the work of the FMLN that much more difficult and we must understand true change will take many, many more years.

These two presidential election victories are but a start to the long road El Salvador has ahead and that's why Ceren's victory is especially sweet! The people have stood up against years of corruption and government mismanagement and said enough is enough!

Bicycle share fact sheet

The prevalence of bicycles in a community is an indicator of our ability to provide affordable transportation, lower traffic congestion, reduce air pollution, increase mobility, and provide exercise to the world's growing population. Bike-sharing programs are one way to get cycles to the masses.

In early 2014, some 600 cities in 52 countries host advanced bike-sharing programs, with a combined fleet of more than 570,000 bicycles.

Spain leads the world with 132 separate bike-share programs. Italy has 104, and Germany, 43.

The world's largest bike-sharing program is in Wuhan, China's sixth largest city, with 9 million people and 90,000 shared bikes.

In 2013, China was home to 82 bike-sharing programs, with a whopping combined fleet of some 380,000 bicycles.

The United States hosts 36 modern bike-sharing programs. With a number of new programs in the works and planned expansions of existing programs, the US fleet is set to nearly double to over 37,000 publicly shared bicycles by the end of 2014.

Since the Vélib' system launched in

Paris in 2007, the number of cyclists on the streets has risen 41 percent. Nearly 24,000 bicycles can be picked up at over 1,700 stations in the city and suburbs.

London's Barclays Cycle Hire system launched in 2010 with 6,000 bikes and has grown beyond 9,000. New bike lanes and designated cycle tracks have helped ridership grow.

Bike-sharing cities are finding that promoting the bicycle as a transport option can lead to more mobility and safer streets for all.

Bike shares, lanes, and other bicycle-friendly infrastructure are a boon to local economies.

With more than half the world's population now living in cities, there is tremendous potential for municipal governments and urban planners to increase bicycle use.

With annual memberships in most cities well below \$100, bike sharing is far cheaper than the \$7,800 average cost estimated by AAA to own a car and drive it 10,000 miles a year.

During the first year that people abandon regular driving to become a bike commuter, they can lose 4.5 kg or more.

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Parliament Hill gets “fracked!”

A 14-foot-tall fracking rig spilled fracking wastewater on the front lawn of Parliament Hill May 1.

The Council of Canadians brought the fictional “Frack Corp.” rig to the Hill to raise awareness about the danger fracking poses to Canada’s water, air and health.

“We organized this action to drive home to members of Parliament why Canadian and Indigenous communities are calling for a ban on fracking,” said Emma Lui, water campaigner with the Council of Canadians. “Affected communities have been sounding the alarm on fracking for years because of the potential for water contamination, increases in greenhouse gases and health risks – but their concerns have been ignored.”

The action was timed to coincide with the release of the Council of Canadian Academies’ review on shale gas, which

was conducted at the request of the Minister of Environment. The 260-page report highlights glaring gaps in the understanding of fracking impacts. It warns of the overall lack of information surrounding the extraction process, expresses concern about fracking’s potential to contaminate water sources and generate greenhouse gas emissions, and points out that natural gas leaks from fracking wells are a “long-recognized yet unresolved problem.”

That day the Council of Canadians delivered 16,000 signed petitions calling on Members of Parliament to ban fracking in order to protect communities’ drinking water. The petition highlights Canada’s international obligation to protect the human right to water and sanitation and warns that “fracking is one of the biggest threats to water of our time.”

NDP Bill aims to protect infrastructure from theft, ensure clear penalties

OTTAWA – A Private Members’ Bill introduced by NDP Public Safety critic Randall Garrison (Esquimalt -Juan de Fuca) will amend the Criminal Code of Canada to protect critical infrastructure.

The bill will ensure that Canada’s energy and utilities, communications, health care, and other critical sectors remain protected, with clear legal penalties for those caught stealing copper wire or copper

pipes.

“Copper theft results in millions of dollars of losses every year – costs that are passed on to Canadians,” said Garrison. “This bill will ensure the safety of workers across Canada’s critical infrastructure sectors and keep our communities secure.”

According to the Canadian Electricity Association, copper theft costs the Canadian electricity sector approximately \$40 million annually. These costs are ultimately passed on to Canadian consumers in the form of higher electricity costs. By deterring copper theft, we can save Canadians money and protect our country’s critical assets which help keep our communities safe, suggests Garrison.

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Conservatives must stop ignoring science

Science-based decision-making vital for proper ocean management

OTTAWA – New Democrats have introduced a motion April 29 calling on the government to recognize the need for better integration of science in ocean management and use, to establish greater support for healthy ocean ecosystems and a sustainable marine economy in Canada.

“Oceans science is vitally important to Canada’s economy and environment, yet the Conservatives continue to undermine the importance of science,” said MP Murray Rankin (Victoria), the sponsor of the motion. “It is crucial that governments, universities and industries work together to deal with the critical challenges facing our marine ecosystems -- that is the objective of the motion I have introduced today.”

The motion reflects widespread concerns expressed by environmental organizations, university associations and scientists about the reduced role of science in managing ocean ecosystems.

“From ocean acidification due to climate change, to determining the effects of raw bitumen in a marine environment, to the protection of our wild salmon and how we best support a sustainable fishery and seafood industry, the challenges are real,” said Rankin. “We must ensure that we are

guided by the best science and research possible while we navigate these complex issues.”

Bill M-506 reads, “That, in the opinion of the House, the government should work with the scientific community and other key stakeholders to develop an overarching structure or body to provide a forum for leadership and strategic direction for the entire ocean science community in Canada that would: (a) engage in the establishment of a body to coordinate ocean science activities and data archiving, provide periodic assessments of the state of ocean science, and lead the development of a national vision for the future development of ocean science in Canada; (b) manage access to shiptime, through scientific consortia, using standardized access procedures and a central information hub for available capacity and use, to improve transparency and efficiency of research vessel management; and (c) facilitate international sharing of research infrastructure, information and scientific collaboration to address common problems and build international partnerships and an essential channel for mobilizing science to inform international collaboration and governance.”

Bill C-558: Parliamentary Science Officer NDP calls for creation of independent science watchdog

TORONTO -- On November 21, 2013, while speaking to the annual *Canadian Science Policy Conference* Opposition Science & Technology Critic Kennedy Stewart announced he would be introducing a new bill to Parliament that would give public science a stronger voice in the federal government.

Following up on that promise, on December 3, NDP MP Stewart (Burnaby-Douglas) tabled his first private member’s bill, an Act to establish the position of Parliamentary Science Officer, who will be tasked with providing Parliament with sound information and expert advice on scientific issues.

“This bill represents the strongest effort yet to protect the pursuit and use of scientific research in the federal government. It goes beyond what we had in the past and charts a bold vision for where we need to go,” said Dr. Stewart, an associate professor on leave from Simon Fraser University’s School of Public Policy. “After years of muzzling, mismanagement, and misuse of science by the Conservative government, this new office will promote real transparency and ensure decisions made in Ottawa are based on the best available scientific evidence.”

Modelled on the current Parliamentary Budget Officer, the UK’s Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology, and the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy, the Parliamentary Science Officer would be established as an independent agent of Parliament. It would have a legislated mandate to:

- * Assess the state of scientific evidence relevant to any proposal or bill before Parliament;
 - * Answer requests from Committees and individual Members for unbiased scientific information;
 - * Conduct independent analysis of federal science and technology policy;
 - * Raise awareness of scientific issues across government and among Canadians;
 - * Encourage coordination between departments and agencies conducting scientific research.
- “Beginning with the closure of the National Science Advisor to the Prime Minister, the Conservatives have used every tool at their disposal to prevent, limit, and restrict Canadian scientists from sharing their research with policy-makers and the public,” said MP Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles), Deputy Critic for Science and Technology.
- “Being independent from the government and responsible for serving the needs of the legislature, a Parliamentary Science Officer would revitalize scientific integrity in Ottawa” Dr Stewart said,
- A parliamentary science officer would be a significant improvement on the previous Office of the National Science Advisor, which lacked the institutional independence from the government of the day. As science is fundamentally a non-partisan issue, I hope this legislation will receive the support of members from all sides of the House.”

New Democrats call for urgent action on antibiotic resistance

OTTAWA –The New Democratic Party called for urgent action on antibiotic resistance, May 1, following a World Health Report earlier that week, warning that the threat is becoming critical.

“We’ve known for some time now that antibiotic resistance is a growing problem,” said NDP Health critic Libby Davies (Vancouver East). “Yet the Conservative government has been dragging its feet in response.”

Three years ago, the NDP was successful in calling for a review of antibiotics in Canada’s meat supply at the Parliamentary Health Committee. Last month, the government finally announced tighter restrictions, which will only be fully implemented in 2017. These changes address only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to the growing problem of antibiotic resistance.

“We need to see leadership from the Minister of Health on these serious health concerns,” said Davies. “Six years is too long to wait.”

MPs at work



Local MPs Randall Garrison (left), MP for Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca, and Murray Rankin, MP for Victoria, join Official Opposition Critic for Employment and Social Development Jinny Sims, MP for Newton—North Delta at a media event in support of Temporary Foreign Workers.



Randall Garrison, MP for Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca, (fourth from left) is joined by Maurine Karagianis, MLA for Esquimalt-Royal Roads (fourth from right) at the opening of the Bridges for Women Westshore office in Colwood/Langford areas.



MP Randall Garrison (Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca) poses with the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Canadian delegation at the Vimy Ridge Memorial in France spring 2014.

Properly funded Action Plan needed to protect Southern Resident Killer Wales

By Randall Garrison

For more than a year I have been working with local environmental groups, research scientists, and whale watching industry representatives to come up with an action plan to protect the remaining Southern Resident Killer Whales.

As a result of these consultations in February I introduced Motion M-460 in the House of Commons. In my motion I identified several components essential to an effective action plan. These include measures to decrease chemical pollution in the Salish Sea, to limit sonic and other disturbances in critical habitat, to increase the quality and abundance of Chinook salmon stocks, and to allocate ongoing funding for monitoring, education and outreach programs on human-orca interaction.

My motion was meant to pressure the federal government to follow their own *Species At Risk Act* which obliges them to produce and implement an Action Plan to protect endangered species. Southern Resident Killer Whales were listed as endangered under the *Species at Risk Act* in 2003, yet we still have no action plan in place. While we have been waiting for the government to act, local orca numbers have continued to drop, from 89 in the late 1990s to 81 last year, and now this month we may be down to only 80.

Only in March, following my motion and the tabling of supporting petitions from hundreds of citizens concerned about the need to get on with protecting local orcas, did the government finally produce a draft Action Plan. Unfortunately, the Conservatives' draft plan fails to address the key points outlined in M-460. It was made available on line for public comment briefly, but is now nowhere to be found.

The bottom line? The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans' action plan for Southern Resident Killers Whale contains almost no funding for programs, no timelines for adoption of the plan, and precious little real action on behalf of these orcas which are such an iconic part of local cultures and such an essential part of our local tourism economy.

As the Conservatives have failed to address any of the key challenges facing the Southern Resident Killer Whales, I am left with the conclusion that the Harper government isn't really interested in an action plan that has enough "teeth" to ensure that survival of Southern Resident Killer Whales. In fact I fear the Conservatives see an effective action plan as an obstacle to their aggressive pipeline and tanker agenda for our coast.

However, I do remain an optimist in one sense. I continue to believe that public pressure can work to force the Harper government to put more resources into the Action Plan to protect the Southern Resident Killer Whales. Local NGOs and many individuals commented on the draft plan during the brief period when it was posted on line, all of them asking for a more robust action plan. **You** can still lend your voice to help this campaign by writing or emailing the Minister responsible to urge her to do the right thing and fund programs to protect our local orcas. Write to Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Room 556, Confederation Building, Ottawa, K1A 0A6 or email her at min@dfp-mpo.gc.ca

Urge the Minister of Fisheries to amend the draft plan to add to programs to decrease chemical pollution in the Salish Sea, programs to limit sonic disturbances including restrictions on tanker traffic, and funding for programs aimed at increasing and enhancing Chinook salmon stocks. Ask her to restore funding for monitoring, education and outreach program. Ask her to do all of this before it is too late.

But also remember there are things we can all do right now to help protect the Southern Resident Killer Whales while we wait for the government to do the right thing. Go to my website, RandallGarrison.ndp.ca, for a list of things we can all do and act Now. By working together in our community and by continuing to put pressure on the Harper government we can get an effective and properly funded Action Plan, the plan we need to save the remaining 80 Southern Resident Killer Whales.

Randall Garrison is MP for Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca

Saanich-Gulf Islands NDP elects Hunt, Loring-Kuhanga as co-chairs for 2014-15

SGI NDP held its founding meeting and Annual General Meeting April 6, and elected some new faces and some riding faithfuls to its new executive.

Two popular past NDP candidates of the riding, Christine Hunt and Edith Loring-Kuhanga, were elected co-presidents for the 2014/201 year.

Also on the new executive are Chris Gainor, vice-president; Josh Easton, treasurer, Irene Wright, secretary, and Michele Murphy, past president. Members at large are Bill Graham, Carolyn Jerome, Chris Lyon, Claudia Holding, Francisco Canjura, Jack Greenwell, Richard Mills, Wendy Bergerud and Zeb King.

The energetic group also boasts a school trustee, municipal councillor, a former journalist, a renovation specialist, communications professionals, retired teachers, a professor, an astronomer, a client-services manager (and sports fishing fanatic), a graphic designer, student, one that served on the Tommy Douglas campaign team, and one that served on Jack Layton's original campaign team in Toronto.

SGI members anticipate that the experience in campaigning, organizing, communications and overall care for social justice that this team has will certainly give their opposition a run for their money.

Meet your 14/15 Saanich-Gulf Islands NDP TEAM



Introducing our 14/15 SGI NDP Co-Presidents Christine Hunt and Edith Loring-Kuhanga.

They invite you to be in touch. Join our mailing list, check our website and Like us on Facebook to be kept up-to-date on upcoming events and our Left-Wing Pub Nights.

Saanich Gulf-Islands NDP



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Randall Garrison, MP

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Seniors who have given so much deserve more respect

By Carole James

Seniors have worked hard to build a province that is a place of opportunity, safe communities and exceptional services. Their taxes, contributed over many decades, have helped to pay for our infrastructure and the social safety net that distinguishes Canada as supremely livable, progressive and fair.

Our seniors are an enormously valuable resource to our communities. The province would be in dire straits without the thousands upon thousands of hours seniors donate to community organizations each year, as well as the family and economic support that seniors quietly and diligently provide.

It's time for a grateful society to show more respect for seniors who have given so much.

As seniors age, we need to ensure supports are in place to care for them with dignity and respect. Government must be building a system that includes a range of services and care, and do it in a way that helps seniors to be independent and mobile for as long as possible.

When families and spouses take on the care of their loved ones, they sometimes need the relief provided by respite care. Without this support, caregivers can become exhausted, and it's vital that the system can respond to their needs to prevent additional illness.

There are smart ways to deliver ser-

vices. For instance, more investment in homecare is good for seniors and saves resources.

The Ombudsperson's report on seniors, released two years ago, included a blueprint for government to follow including standards for care homes, consistent care across the province and better transparency. But government has been very slow to act on the 176 specific recommendations. Many have been completely ignored.

One of the recommendations called for the establishment of a seniors advocate – something the Opposition has been pushing the government to do for years. Legislation to enable the appointment was passed before the May 2013 election, and finally the government has appointed Isobel Mackenzie to the position. She started on March 31.

Now more than ever, BC seniors need an advocate who will stand up, hold the government to account and demand better care for BC seniors.

It's essential for us to comprehensively address the serious issues facing seniors such as elder abuse, neglect, isolation, and a lack of standardized care at some residential facilities.

Unfortunately the government's legislation doesn't give the seniors advocate the kind of independent authority that the Opposition wanted. This position will be part of the Ministry of Health. But at least it's a start.

I'm concerned when I hear stories of se-

niors held in hospital beds for long periods of time, because suitable care beds in the community are not available. We can do better, and I am committed to compelling government to act. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to work with seniors, respect their voices, and learn from their wisdom and knowledge.

Carole James is MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill. She can be reached at her office at 1084 Fort Street in Victoria, or by phone at 250-952-4211 or by email to Carole.James.mla@leg.bc.ca. Visit her website at www.cx-aro lejmesmla.ca

All in a day's work for MLA Carole James



Victoria City Councillor Marianne Alto (left) and Victoria-Beacon Hill MLA Carole James take part in the Fort Street Community Scrub Up on May 27. It was part of an initiative of businesses along Fort Street (where James has her constituency office) to promote the street.



MLA Carole James (right) receives petitions from Fin Free Victoria on May 21. The petitions call for a ban on the sale and distribution of shark fins in BC. James presented the petition in the Legislature on May 29.



David Lau, executive director of the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society, is joined by MLA Carole James at VIRCS' 25th anniversary open house on April 25.

Keith Todd elected president of Oak Bay-Gordon Head NDP

The Oak Bay-Gordon Head NDP Constituency Association held its Annual General Meeting June 1 at Gordon Head Recreation Centre.


Rob Fleming, MLA for Victoria-Swan Lake, brought greetings from the party and Marianne Alto, Victoria City Councillor, spoke about regional issues.

Keith Todd was elected president, succeeding past president Mike Lloyd, who stepped down after a successful year in the position.

Members approved their first ever constituency bylaws, including a unique provision for an aboriginal representative to encourage the participation of First Nations in the organization. As the party of inclusion, members believe OBGH is the first constituency to incorporate bylaws to welcome aboriginal people on to their executive.

Members are looking forward to the year ahead with some new faces in the team, and thank all past volunteers for a job well done. They look forward to working with the new executive and meeting their goals in the year ahead.

Bill Routley, MLA
Cowichan Valley



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Sincerest thanks for your support.

I am honoured to serve as your MLA

for Victoria – Beacon Hill, and

I look forward to our work together.



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BC Liberals gutting community-based literacy programs across province

VICTORIA –The BC Liberals are gutting essential community-based literacy programs across BC, making it harder for people to get the basic literacy skills they need to succeed, say the New Democrats.

Literacy programs are vital to helping children succeed in school and helping adults find and keep jobs,” said New Democrat education critic Rob Fleming. “And yet the Liberals are cutting funding for programs that tens of thousands of British Columbians depend on in more than 400 communities across the province.”

Decoda Literacy Solutions, the network of community-based literacy providers that works throughout the province, said in a letter to the Minister of Education that their funding in the 2013/14 budget is being slashed from \$2.5 million to \$1 million, and they fear funding could be cut completely in the 2014/15 budget.

At a press conference with community literacy workers in Victoria **March 20**, Fleming noted that these cuts were made even after the bi-partisan finance committee unanimously voted to keep annual funding for community literacy work at \$2.5 million.

“Premier Clark and Minister Fassbender are ignoring the wishes of their own Liberal MLAs who travelled the province and heard about how important it is to continue funding a program that helps people across BC find work,” said Fleming.

Funding for Decoda was also slated to be cut in the 2012/2013 budget, but after strong arguments from the organization, experts and community members, then Minister of Education Don McRae reinstated it, saying “they do outstanding work in communities large and small across the province.»

“Under the BC Liberals, there is a pattern of organizations having to fight for stable funding,” said Fleming. “Gutting these programs deprives families of opportunities and is a poor economic decision,” said Fleming.

“It’s disgraceful that the Liberals spent \$15 million last year advertising their so-called “jobs plan, but are ready to cut this efficient, low-cost program that helps tens of thousands of British Columbians achieve the literacy and numeracy levels they need to get good family-supporting jobs.”

BC government urged to lower hopes for LNG-based “Prosperity Fund”

VANCOUVER -- A report released April 30 finds that the BC government’s projection of a \$100 billion “Prosperity Fund” from LNG exports is based on assumptions that are, in fact, too good to be true.

Path to Prosperity? A Closer Look at British Columbia’s Natural Gas Royalties and Proposed LNG Income Tax, authored by Marc Lee, senior economist with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, puts those assumptions to the test, and finds that the government’s promised returns to the public are little more than wishful thinking.

The report (the first of a series analyzing the economics and environmental impacts of LNG) looks at forecasts for Asian energy markets, the time and cost associated with developing BC’s LNG industry, and the province’s plan to earn royalties from LNG extraction. Path to Prosperity? also represents the first analysis of the LNG income tax, which the BC government outlined in the 2014 Budget.

Looking at these factors, it becomes clear that it would take every best-case scenario to materialize to earn the revenues promised by the government. More realistically:

- Asian demand for LNG will be undercut as Japan and Korea reopen nuclear facilities, while China has many domestic and international options for new energy supplies in addition to BC-based LNG. And five countries that account for 70% of LNG imports (India, Japan, Korea, China and Taiwan) are forming a common front on price through a “buyer’s club”, making it far less likely that they’ll continue to pay top-dollar for imported LNG.

The start-up costs for BC’s LNG industry are massive, greatly eating into the gap between Asian and North American gas prices. Meanwhile, many competitors are simply adding capacity to existing facilities, increasing supply and driving prices down.

“The danger is that BC ramps up production at a large cost—including costs of regulatory oversight, infrastructure, and additional public services, for example, as well as environmental costs—but doesn’t receive much benefit in terms of revenue,” says Lee, co-director of the Climate Justice Project. “Rather than rely on fantasy projections of LNG investment, BC should go back to the drawing board to develop a regime for LNG development that ensures public benefits.”

The report seeks to provide a more realistic range of what public returns might be, and estimates the LNG income tax revenue at between \$0.2 and \$0.6 billion per year for a fully mature industry, although creative accounting practices could greatly reduce tax payable. For comparison purposes, BC’s annual budget

is approximately \$43 billion. In this context, the incremental benefit of the LNG tax is modest.

The report also notes that the structure of the LNG tax allows the industry to incur major cost over-runs—as they have been known to do—and have taxpayers eat the difference. Because companies can fully deduct all capital costs before paying the full 7% LNG income tax, any cost over-runs will be paid for by reduced taxes.

BC has been rushing to get resources out of the ground regardless of the returns. Without a well thought out plan, the proposed LNG industry is likely to do more of the same. With market prices expected to drop and a poorly thought-out plan for public benefits, it’s time for the government to take a step back and ask themselves if we can do better.”

Spill cleanup plans do not buy consent on Gateway

Newly announced federal measures to focus on oil spill cleanup and prevention do not equate to consent from British Columbians to build the Northern Gateway Pipeline, a Dogwood Initiative spokesperson said May 15.

“For this pipeline to be built, First Nations along the route as well as a democratic majority of British Columbians would have to support the project. Neither appears likely,” said Kai Nagata, Dogwood’s energy and democracy director.

Voters in Kitimat, the community with the most to gain from Enbridge’s proposal, rejected the project last month in a municipal plebiscite.

“If a vote were held province-wide, it’s clear Enbridge would be rejected by an even stronger majority,” said Nagata. “Citizens in Kitimat and across BC have made up their minds about this proposal. That’s democracy. Our federal government sometimes appears to struggle with that concept.”

The province of British Columbia has outlined five conditions for its support of heavy oil transport to the coast. Condition four requires First Nations legal requirements be met. Condition five demands a fair economic share for BC.

“The Clark government has been clear in its rejection of the Northern Gateway pipeline, for the simple reason that our province would assume all the risks for virtually no reward,” said Nagata. “Enbridge built its business case on the assumption that First Nations and British Columbians could be bought off. That approach has failed.”

Dogwood Initiative is British Columbia’s largest nonpartisan democracy group.

MLA Report

BC Liberals’ political games with public education put kids last

By Rob Fleming

In 2002, thousands of kids across this province started Grade 1.

In that year, then-education minister Christy Clark passed a law that would lead to larger class sizes and less support for students with special needs. Now, those same kids are getting ready to graduate, and Premier Clark and her government are still not treating teachers with respect and are putting kids and parents last by provoking conflict in BC’s public schools.

While this class of kids was in school, the BC Supreme Court struck down the government’s class size and composition legislation as unconstitutional – not just once, but twice.

The first time, in 2011, the government didn’t appeal the ruling, and the premier said she would “make sure that we get on a different footing with the teachers’ union, just as the court has suggested”. Instead, just a year later, her government introduced legislation that the BC Supreme Court later found to be “virtually identical” to the previous law.

It too was struck down. And in the court ruling the judge chastised the Liberals for bargaining in bad faith.

Far from turning a new page on its record on public education in BC, the court found that the BC Liberals had attempted to provoke a full-scale strike in BC schools for their own political gain, noting: “Their strategy was to put such pressure on the union that it would provoke a strike by the union.”

Recent attempts to provoke teachers have escalated tensions, and show the BC Liberals have not changed their tactics. At a time when leadership is needed to achieve a negotiated settlement with teachers, they continue to play political games. As a result, once again teachers will vote this week on whether to expand their labour action to a full-scale strike.

Not only have they failed to negotiate in good faith, but the BC Liberals have also added confusion for everyone involved in the school system by imposing a partial lockout that risks disruption of school activities, including academic field trips, graduation activities, exam marking and report card updates.

Despite claiming they are in favour of stability in schools, Premier Christy Clark and her

government have escalated the conflict, ramping up their rhetoric and provoking teachers.

Speaking to the media, Premier Clark publicly inferred that teachers are greedy, saying “It’s all about money, it’s never about quality of education.” At the same time, Education Minister Peter Fassbender told reporters: “The class size issue is an oxymoron as far as I’m concerned, because all the research in the world says size does not determine outcomes” – a statement that is both incorrect and wildly misleading.

A government that truly wanted stability in schools would not escalate tensions during bargaining without concern for the kids and families whose lives have been thrown into chaos by this dispute. Nor would it provoke strikes for their own political gain, using our kids as pawns.

The class of 2014 started their public education as the BC Liberals were tearing up contracts with their teachers, and today they are in the middle of another labour dispute as they prepare to graduate.

This government has already failed a generation of kids in this province. Before another year goes by, the premier must turn the page on 12 years of political games that put kids last.

We are fortunate in British Columbia to have an excellent public education system with great teachers who teach and nurture our children’s development and deserve to be treated with respect by their government. New Democrats are calling on the BC Liberal government to start acting like adults, take responsibility for the chaos they have created in education and get down to the hard work of negotiating a settlement with BC teachers.

Rob Fleming is MLA for Victoria-Swan Lake and New Democrat Environment critic.

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Plus ca change, plus c’est la meme chose - Of cats & mice

By Tim Pheotist

While sipping the most recent economic “Kool-Aid”, and with print deadlines fast approaching, your concerned commentator was finding little to quench the thirst for any sign of an “upside”.

As elections in Europe returned candidates as members of the European parliament who only seemed to be missing the means of manufacturing guillotines, a strange feeling of déjà vu flavoured the economic media.

Despite rejection of the policies of austerity and redundancy, developed countries still claim the hearts and souls of their citizens – at least if the mainstream media is to be believed.

If a successful economic model must reflect true growth then our governments have worked hard to fudge the numbers to explain how “economic growth” is exactly what they’re delivering. Of course the truth is that there is no growth. Quite the opposite. That’s why the recent European elections reflect such discontent.

The “success” of the policies of “austerity” are certainly a surprise to the tens of thousands sleeping rough on the streets of North America and Canada and the millions begging in Europe and beyond.

It’s the minority of citizens who feel the “growth”. Joseph Stiglitz’s 2011 comment on the US economy is now likely a global understatement:

“[I]n our democracy, 1% of the people take nearly a quarter of the nation’s income ... In terms of wealth rather than income, the top 1% control 40% ... [as a result] the top 1% have the best houses, the best educations, the best doctors, and the best lifestyles, but there is one thing that money doesn’t seem to have bought: an understanding that their fate is bound up with how the other 99% live. Throughout history, this is something that the top 1% eventually do learn. Too late.”

—Joseph Stiglitz, “Of the 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%”, *Vanity Fair*, May 2011¹

The overwhelming majority feel nothing but uncertainty and economic pessimism,

while at the same time enabling the very same governments and administrators to continue with the policies of massive and unequal redirection of wealth and natural resources.

Why do voters continue to vote against their own interests? It’s not a new question. Broadly the answers lie in the success of effective propaganda and manipulation of public opinion.

In “progressive” Canada we seem to be comfortable with miserable economic mismanagement – from Stephen Harper, a “top notch economist”, of all people! – and in British Columbia, amateur time prevails in election after election, with the resources of the majority of society being handed to an already wealthy minority by a cynical Christy Clark Liberal government.

There is some “concern” by our rulers that guillotine factories might soon be a good investment play!

Both Prince Charles and the new Canadian governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, have recently expressed concern that “capitalism” could be “doomed” if there is an absence of ethics.

Strong words. But remember the mouths that utter them. Charles has spent a lifetime gagging on silver spoons and Mr. Carney is not exactly an active member of the Occupy movement. The forum for their recent “concerned” remarks in London was sponsored by E.L. Rothschild and the City of London. Expressions of concern from the 1% are heartwarming but do not “butter any parsnips”.

Carney, Prince Charles, et al, appear to express populist views but are unlikely to be joining the ranks of Trade Unions and working voters. But too many working Canadians will turn out to vote for Harper Conservatives and Christy Clark Liberals.

For there to be a chance of change to fairer and more enlightened societies, voting habits must change.

There can be no better insight than Tommy Douglas’ Mouseland allegory. Delivered in 1944 the story is as pertinent today as it was 70 years ago.

Here’s the story:

The Story of Mouseland
As told by Tommy Douglas in 1944
It’s the story of a place called Mouseland. Mouseland was a place where all the little mice lived and played, were born and died. And they lived much the same as you and I do.

They even had a Parliament. And every four years they had an election. Used to walk to the polls and cast their ballots. Some of them even got a ride to the polls. And got a ride for the next four years afterwards too. Just like you and me. And every time on election day all the little mice used to go to the ballot box and they used to elect a government. A government made up of big, fat, black cats.

Now if you think it strange that mice should elect a government made up of cats, you just look at the history of Canada for last 90 years and maybe you’ll see that they weren’t any stupider than we are.

Now I’m not saying anything against the cats. They were nice fellows. They conducted their government with dignity. They passed good laws--that is, laws that were good for cats. But the laws that were good for cats weren’t very good for mice. One of the laws said that mouseholes had to be big enough so a cat could get his paw in. Another law said that mice could only travel at certain speeds--so that a cat could get his breakfast without too much effort.

All the laws were good laws. For cats. But, oh, they were hard on the mice. And life was getting harder and harder. And when the mice couldn’t put up with it any more, they decided something had to be done about it. So they went en masse to the polls. They voted the black cats out. They put in the white cats.

Now the white cats had put up a terrific campaign. They said: “All that Mouseland needs is more vision.” They said:”The trouble with Mouseland is those round mouseholes we got. If you

put us in we’ll establish square mouseholes.” And they did. And the square mouseholes were twice as big as the round mouseholes, and now the cat could get both his paws in. And life was tougher than ever.

And when they couldn’t take that anymore, they voted the white cats out and put the black ones in again. Then they went back to the white cats. Then to the black cats. They even tried half black cats and half white cats. And they called that coalition. They even got one government made up of cats with spots on them: they were cats that tried to make a noise like a mouse but ate like a cat.

You see, my friends, the trouble wasn’t with the colour of the cat. The trouble was that they were cats. And because they were cats, they naturally looked after cats instead of mice.

Presently there came along one little mouse who had an idea. My friends, watch out for the little fellow with an idea. And he said to the other mice, “Look fellows, why do we keep on electing a government made up of cats? Why don’t we elect a government made up of mice?” “Oh,” they said, “he’s a Bolshevik. Lock him up!” So they put him in jail.

But I want to remind you: that you can lock up a mouse or a man but you can’t lock up an idea.

So, back to my title, courtesy of Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr in the January 1849 issue of his journal *Les Guêpes* (“The Wasps”).

Roughly translated – *the more things change, the more they stay the same*. It seems never a truer word has been spoken if the standard is that of Canadian and western election results.

At the next Canadian and BC elections it’s time to disprove some old clichés and to put a smile on Tommy Douglas’ face.

Cowichan Green Community Kin Fest 2014

DUNCAN -- Cowichan Green Community (CGC) held its first youth and family social event Saturday, May 10; bringing together many families in an upbeat community setting. Kin Park Youth Urban Farm, one of CGC’s initial projects, has been newly recognized as a place where mem-

bers within the community can learn, play and develop.

The event was held as part of a Community Action Initiative (CAI) Cycle 5 granting opportunity, allowing CGC to gather youth and family’s feedback and ideas about Kin Farm and how it could be used to provide a family-based program.

CGC’s youth steering committee estimated nearly 300 guests attended the event; 80% of whom were believed to be newcomers to the park. “I think in the history of CGC, that was the best attended event ever!” said Judy Stafford, executive director of CGC. Many neighbours of Kin Farm, who had otherwise yet to use the park, had come out to enjoy the event; sharing their ideas and perspectives regarding the Farm’s use.

The four-hour event included everything from a free BBQ lunch, face painting, henna tattoos, Mother’s Day crafts, a hoola hoop contest, a cedar rose making work-

shop to live music and a performance by 1st Cobble Hill Scouts Canada.

Through their hard work, CGC’s volunteer’s kept the event running smoothly. In addition, CGC provided 200 free lunches to attendees. Providing families with a venue to enjoy the sun and be together certainly accredited Kin Farm as a healing space for all. Whether it was with a painted face or a contest prize, many children and their families left the event smiling.

Special performances made by 1st Cobble Hill Scouts, OPUS, and The Husband gave the event an exciting and upbeat feel. Marcel Aubin, from Cowichan Valley Regional District, MC’d the event, pleasing the crowd with his motivating voice.

CGC would like to thank these performers for their time and talents. In addition, the success of the event was made pos-

sible thanks to the generous sponsorship of the following: Starbucks, Duncan Business Improvement Association, and other community agencies for allowing the event to be advertised in a wide variety of community-used spaces. Thank you to the Community Action Initiative for providing funding support for this event.

For more information about Kin Fest, contact Brittany Lowe at 250.748.8506 or brittany@cowichangreencommunity.org.

Looking forward, CGC will be hosting a summer camp at Kin Park Youth Urban Farm for children ages 6-12. For more information about this program please contact Alyssa Loucks: Alyssa@cowichangreencommunity.org or refer to CGC’s website for further details: www.cowichangreencommunity.org.

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KinPark Kid’s Camp!

Join to for a fun-filled green summer!

Cowichan Green Community is thrilled to announce it’s first-ever children’s day camp! Located at Kinsmen Park in downtown Duncan, KinPark Kid’s Camp promises to be a new and exciting way for children to spend their summer holidays in the Cowichan Valley.

The KinPark Kid’s Camp councillors have been busy planning a summer filled with activities that focus on sustainability, the environment, teamwork, and community building. Here, kids can learn how to grow, cook and eat fresh local food, explore nature, plants and bees, make crafts, sing songs, play in the park, and make friends!

“We are so excited to be sending our daughter to the KinPark kids camp this year to get her hands dirty at the urban farm, learn how to make fun treats like kale chips,

dried fruit and jams in the CGC kitchen, and learn more about bugs and plants,” says Heather, local parent. “More importantly, she will get the opportunity to experience unique linkages in our community and meet new friends.”

This day camp for children ages 6-12 is located at Kinsmen Park (5789 Alderlea Street) and Cowichan Green Community (360 Duncan Street), in downtown Duncan. Dates are from July 7 to August 29, 2014, costing \$125 per week (with the exception of the week following August long weekend, costing \$100).

For more information on this event, visit www.cowichangreencommunity.org/content/kinpark-kids-camp or contact the Cowichan Green Community at 250-748-8506 or camp@cowichangreencommunity.org.

Interview with Maurine Karagianis

Hardworking MLA inspires respect and awe

By Starla Anderson

Maurine Karagianis is in her third term as the MLA for Esquimalt-Royal Roads, and she tells me, as we begin our conversation over lunch in the Legislative Dining Room, that being an MLA is “The most satisfying, fulfilling job I’ve ever done in my entire life.”

As a member of the NDP’s Opposition caucus, Karagianis is the critic for Women’s Issues, Childcare and Early Learning and Shipbuilding, and she is passionate about the work she does to try to bring social justice into policies whether in committee work or in the House.

Karagianis has a long personal history of political engagement and it is evident she has always had a strong work ethic. She talked about how she grew up in the 1960s when youth culture was becoming politically aware, but it was when she moved to BC from Alberta in the early 1970s when Dave Barrett was premier that she was inspired to become a party activist. “He was such a refreshing leader and spoke to the values that I believed in.”

She was a busy working mom in Powell River for 15 years, raising a family while working as an entrepreneur in the fashion industry—in both retail and wholesale (import and export). And then she went on to work in tourism publishing about the time that she bought a home in Esquimalt in the mid-1990s.

Karagianis began to attend Esquimalt Municipal Council meetings when a land use issue affected her home purchase in Esquimalt. She was taken aback to realize all of the councillors were men—pro-development men: “This struck me as fundamentally wrong and so I ran in the 1996 municipal election for councillor and I won my seat.”

Karagianis served three terms as an Esquimalt councillor and says since then there have always been women on Esquimalt Council and now a woman mayor, Barbara Desjardins, is in her second term.

Karagianis worked for three years as an assistant for the Minister of Transportation in the late 1990s and then ran for the NDP provincially in 2001 when Moe Sihota stepped down as MLA for Esquimalt-Metchosin. That was the year when only Jenny Kwan and Joy McPhail won seats for the NDP. But she successfully ran again for Esquimalt Council and carried on, becoming a consultant working with M’Akola Housing, a First Nations organization that provides Aboriginal housing in the region.

Karagianis ran for MLA again in 2005 and handily won her seat—she is now in her third term as MLA for Esquimalt-Royal Roads.

Her longtime activism recently took her beyond Vancouver Island—on April 22-23 she travelled with Carole James, MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill, and Jennifer Rice, MLA for the North Coast, along “The Highway of Tears” between Prince Rupert and Prince George. This 800 km section of Highway 16 is notorious for the numbers of Aboriginal women who have gone missing or been found murdered after hitchhiking along this highway:

“The reality is that many women in the area don’t have a choice,” said Karagianis, “they live in isolated communities with low incomes and no means of transportation. When they have to go to town for groceries or to meet with a social worker or go to a medical appointment, many have no choice but to hitchhike.”

Along their journey, Karagianis, James and Rice met with other MLAs and aboriginal leaders. In Smithers, they met with the mayor and local community leaders. The Moricetown reserve, 30 km west of Smithers, desperately needs better bus service so people there can get back and forth to work or shop for groceries. When the community asked the BC government for additional funding to expand bus service, they were denied. Even though the Liberal government plans to take billions of dollars into the BC economy from natural resources in the region, they are not willing to invest in this minimal transportation infrastructure.

First Nations communities in the region are also agitated, Karagianis says, because they know that as resource industries grow in a region, so does the danger to their communities—drugs, alcohol, vio-

lence, and (without safe means of transportation) disappearance.

In Prince George, they met with Brenda Wilson whose sister Ramona went missing at the age of 16 while hitchhiking 15 minutes from home to visit a friend. Ramona’s body was found two years later, although many missing persons have never been found. Wilson said it is important to First Nations to bury their deceased, to put their ancestors to rest. Many families cannot do that.

Mary Teegee, executive director of the Family and Child Services at Carrier Sekani Family Services, the host agency for “The Highway of Tears” initiative, met with Karagianis, James and Rice when they arrived in Prince George. Teegee reaffirmed the dire need for a shuttle bus service to run a few days a week between small communities and larger centres. Her agency believes this would be one preventative solution that would not be difficult to implement. (Learn more about The Highway of Tears initiative at: <http://openparliament.ca/committees/special-committee-on-indigenous-women/41-1/8/mary-teegee-2/only/>)

Karagianis said that Churchill NDP MP, Nikki Ashton, has introduced a motion in parliament calling for a National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Women. On May 16 the RCMP released a National Operational Overview on Missing and Murdered Women. The report revealed that aboriginal women are over-represented in cases of missing and murdered women compared with non-natives across Canada.

Both the Federal Official Opposition New Democratic Party, and the Liberal Party are supporting this motion but the Conservatives are resisting, saying that what is needed is action not another report—the RCMP do not yet have a concrete action plan and neither does the federal government.

After their recent journey on “The Highway of Tears,” Maurine Karagianis and her colleagues do have a concrete action plan—they want to see much improved transportation infrastructure along Highway 16 so individuals living in isolated communities without their own vehicles can safely travel to larger centres. They are committed to convincing the Liberal government that providing a shuttle bus for these marginalized communities is an investment in infrastructure that would address some of the dangers for individuals from these communities who are now having to hitchhike: “My determination is to push for a bus system—it would be such a small investment in the big picture,” says Karagianis.

The Esquimalt-Royal Roads MLA knows from experience that even as a member of the Opposition she, along with her colleagues, can influence policy—particularly on bi-partisan committees. She gives the example of working with Liberal Joan McIntyre who chaired the Children and Youth Committee in 2011. Through persistence and diplomacy, McIntyre was convinced that it would be worthwhile to host a two-day hearing on poverty.

Karagianis said she considers that a real victory because the Liberals do not want any talk about poverty—even though British Columbia’s child poverty rate has hovered between the highest and the second highest in Canada since the Liberals became government.

A high profile example of how policy can be influenced by the Opposition is the 2012 case of an Esquimalt woman, Jolayne Gammon, who was on income assistance and couldn’t afford the nutritional supplements she needed to become strong enough to undergo breast cancer surgery. The case became public when the media reported on Karagianis’ questions about the case during Question Period on May 7 of that year. Steven Andrews, a reporter for CTV at the time, took up the cause and caught the attention of the Canadian Legion who offered to pay for the supplements. Gammon was then told that if she accepted this help, it



Dozens of pairs of women’s shoes hang from a tree along “The Highway of Tears” to remember missing women.

Jolayne Gammon is alive and well and back at work in Esquimalt. And an unjust policy was changed because of Jolayne’s courage to go public with her story, and Karagianis’ determination to get her story to the public.

Maurine Karagianis is much respected by her colleagues as is evidenced by their electing her to be the NDP Caucus party whip. She provided a detailed description of her responsibilities in this role but laughed off what she called the mythology of the party whip as forcing votes along party lines. She said that her role is really managerial—she works in conjunction with the leader to keep Caucus members informed of when they’re needed in the House to put forward motions, debate bills, and vote.

While we were talking, Karagianis texted her assistant, Amber, and asked her to ring the bell at 5 to 1 so that MLAs would make their way to a caucus meeting before going into the House. When the bell rang, my lunchtime conversation with Maurine Karagianis in the Legislative Dining Room was over and she headed back upstairs leaving me with much food for thought, and awe for the Esquimalt-Royal Roads NDP MLA.



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Quebec Election: PQ debacle returns Liberals to power

By Robbie Mahood

The Quebec election of April 7 delivered a majority Liberal government and a severe rebuke to the Parti Quebecois (PQ). The PQ vote declined to 25 percent, the lowest since 1970, while the Liberal vote rose to 41 percent giving them a comfortable majority in the first-past-the-post system. The vote for the right wing populist Coalition Avenir Quebec (CAQ) declined to 21 percent despite the revelation of the widespread corruption that characterized the PQ, and especially the Liberals during their years in power. The small left wing party, Quebec Solidaire (QS), modestly increased its vote from 6 to 7.5 percent, electing a third member to the National Assembly, from east-end Montreal.

The PQ invested heavily in ethnic nationalism. Its proposed Charter of Quebec values would have banned the wearing of conspicuous “religious” clothing or symbols in the public service, targeting mainly Muslim women wearing the hijab. In cultivating islamophobia, the PQ was trying to undercut the CAQ which in its previous life as the Action Démocratique du Québec (ADQ) had demonstrated the potential for anti-immigrant demagoguery in the election of 2008.

The surprise recruitment of multi-millionaire media mogul, Pierre Karl Peladeau, as a star candidate was intended to cement the PQ’s good standing with the Quebec bourgeoisie. Peladeau is notorious for breaking union resistance to concessions in his media empire.

These polarising manoeuvres failed to gain traction. Instead the PQ was placed on the defensive on the perennial question of independence. The Liberals always play on the fear of “separatism”, falsely attributing to the PQ a firmness of purpose on this question which it has entirely lacked since the referendum defeat of 1995. Marois’s evasiveness on a future referendum only played into Liberal fear-mongering and disoriented the sovereignist side of the electorate.

It is tempting to pin the PQ’s disastrous showing on an inept campaign. But any mistakes expressed contradictions that have been undermining the party for some time. Nominally for a sovereign Quebec, the PQ has no perspective on how to advance that cause. It is committed to defending the profit making prerogatives of Quebec and

international capital, and the social decay and environmental destruction that follows. Thus it demoralises its working class and popular base. But because it is associated with the project of rupture with the Canadian state it cannot win the confidence of the big bourgeoisie.

The PQ did nothing to earn its narrow 2012 election victory which was the fruit of a mass revolt led by the province’s young people in the spring and summer of that year. Once elected, Marois turned her back on the students and their supporters. The government retreated on every front: increasing university tuition, abandoning its promise to rescind the supplementary health tax, raising daycare fees and ordering another round of cuts to welfare, education and health care budgets. In the wake of the Lac Megantic train disaster, the PQ administration declared an interest in exploiting oil and gas reserves in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It pursued with enthusiasm a free trade agreement with the European Union. In sum, it was a nuanced version of the policies of its Liberal predecessor.

There was rejoicing from the usual quarters whenever the Parti Quebecois goes down to defeat. For the corporate media in English-speaking Canada, as for the federal Conservative and Liberal Parties and unfortunately, the New Democratic Party leadership, there is no greater menace than Quebec “separatism”. Normally an obsessive partisan, Tory Prime Minister Stephen Harper pronounced himself satisfied with the Quebec Liberal victory.

Quebec Solidaire was the only party to clearly differentiate itself from the neo-liberal discourse of the three right wing parties. It proposed raising corporate taxes and directing public funds to social housing, the CLSC’s (community health centres) and public transport. With this program of limited reforms, QS moved into the territory vacated by the PQ after its first years in office. Especially under current leader, Francoise David, the party avoids class references in favour of “cnsensual” politics and a “values” discourse.

QS remains attentive to the mass movement even if takes no initiatives to organize protests, especially in an election campaign. For example, there was a modest QS contingent in the anti-austerity march of April 3, convened by the left wing student union ASSÉ. It mobilized over 10,000 in

the streets of Montreal. In theory, the party recognizes the politics of the ballot box and the politics of the street in equal measure. In practice, electoral considerations dominate. Party leaders were hoping for a minority government, in which an enhanced QS delegation could play the role of power broker. The party’s performance, though a modest improvement, was from this perspective, disappointing.

Quebec has a tradition of extra-parliamentary politics, periodically erupting into mass protests. Absent a politically re-armed and militant working class expressed through its unions, the impact of these often impressive mobilizations is bound to be limited. Quebec’s union leaders have allowed the movement’s radical and combative traditions to wither, immersed as they are in a framework of class conciliation. The conservatism of the union bureaucracy needs to be challenged if struggles are to win. This is a task that QS, or at least the socialist contingents, within the party need to take up.

The PQ has faced crises before and we are far from hearing its death knell. It remains a mass party which profits from its association with partial advances born of past struggles. But its hegemony over the independence movement has been shaken. It scarcely seems likely that the party can reverse its right-wing trajectory, although some sort of cosmetic “left” turn cannot be ruled out. A new leader will soon be selected. Will the party faithful gamble on the scourge of the unions, Pierre-Karl Peladeau, or perhaps one of the veterans of the recent debacle, such as Jean-Francois Lisée, the “modernizer” who proposes

to liquidate the legacy of the “Quiet Revolution”, or Bernard Drainville, point man for the Values Charter?

However the crisis of the PQ unfolds, a recomposition of the movement for independence is welcome. Socialists will have greater scope to argue that not only a political break with Ottawa, but also a full anti-capitalist program that includes nationalization of the banks and main enterprises under democratic control, radical measures to reverse environmental destruction and withdrawal from imperialist alliances can bring about genuine national liberation.

Faced with tri-partite consensus on the need to deepen the austerity drive, many voters either abstained or turned to the Liberals as the most credible managers of this portfolio.

Although it lacks a specific mandate to do so, the new Liberal government under Philippe Couillard will move aggressively on its austerity and privatization agenda. The Liberals will lean on their sacrosanct majority to discredit and repress protest as they did in the student strike of 2012. But opposition there surely will be: to handing over the province’s natural wealth to the rapacious mining and fossil fuel industries, to user fees for public services, to public sector lay-offs and contracting out and to further privatization of health care. Public sector workers negotiate new contracts in 2015. Mobilizations of the labour movement and its allies will be critical in confronting this most determined of opponents.

Only mass struggle of the scope seen in 2012, which this time reaches the point of a general or ‘social’ strike, will weaken the resolve of the employer class.

Hypocrisy reigns between Canada and Ukraine

By Evan Engering

It is often said that truth is the first casualty of war. But in the dark days of late capitalism we have learned one more thing. From the tall tales about murdered “incubator babies” and alleged “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq, we know that even before a war is declared, the truth comes under withering assault.

As Canadian Prime Minister Harper sends fighter jets and troops to NATO bases in Poland, this becomes evident. After over 80 percent of the people in Crimea voted to rejoin Russia, western media and politicians went on a propaganda rampage, presenting any argument they could imagine to de-legitimize the referendum.

While Putin’s actions were heavy-handed, Russia was not alone in recognizing the validity of the vote. Many countries in the global South did. But the Western media played its usual role in trumpeting the claims that the election was held at “gunpoint”, ignoring the fact that Russian soldiers were legally stationed in the region, by treaty, as they had been for decades.

The most brazen display of Western hypocrisy came after the vote in Crimea. Prime Minister Harper flew to Ukraine in March for the purpose of expressing support for the new Ukrainian government and to shake his fist at Russia. Even after flying there and back, Canadian politicians and media were silent on the ultra-nationalist character of the new regime in Kiyiv.

Taking advantage of folks with a short memory, Harper did a double about-face. Late last year he visited Israel. Even writers at the right wing *Sun* newspapers and the *National Post* expressed their loathing of the tired old argument that criticism of Israel is anti-Semitism. Of course, the ongoing illegal and expanding Israeli settlements in the West Bank were not mentioned.

Fast forward to Harper’s recent visit to Ukraine. Suddenly his viewpoint is reversed: annexation of another country or region is instantly outrageous, whereas anti-Semitism (this time not from the dark crevices, but from the junior partner in the ruling coalition government in Kiyiv) is ignored. If Harper were a man of democratic principles, such cognitive dissonance would make him dizzy!

The Ukrainian Jewish community was shamelessly used by US Secretary of State John Kerry. A distributed leaflet, purportedly from the “pro-Russian” group, the Donetsk

People’s Republic, ordered all Jews in the area to surrender their money and register themselves. But the document was a fraud. Despite Kerry’s fast and furious condemnation of the document, nobody claimed authorship for this supposedly public edict.

Again, Kerry has no record of speaking out against the actual racism of Svoboda or any other pro-Maidan fascists. He does, however, have a history of speaking out against a foreign adventure that was started and waged under a US leader from the Democratic Party. Kerry served in the Vietnam war under President Lyndon B Johnson and, upon his return to the US, joined the anti-war movement as a member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Now that he is in a position of influence and power, like a butterfly coming out of a cocoon, he has metamorphosed from anti-war activist to imperialist war hawk.

Fortunately for Harper and Kerry, they can hold these positions and contradict them freely, for it is clear as day that their actions are not motivated by principle or respect for international law, but by crude geo-political strivings for power and profit abroad. Unfortunately for Canada, the media’s rabid focus on Putin’s wrongdoings have blown the situation out of proportion. While condemnation of his oligarchical regime is justified, it is no reason to take our own government’s sabre-rattling rhetoric at face value.

Canadians who are outraged by Russia’s actions, but were not so opposed to Canada’s presence in Afghanistan, or who don’t mind Ottawa’s role in NATO, should be mindful of the narrative they are being sold by politicians and media. Canada just happens to be on one side of the geo-political divide. Russia is on the other. Considering that this whole situation started with protests against the refusal of Yanukovich to accept a bad deal from the EU, and that the US (which is no neutral party to any conflict in the world) has picked a side, there is no reason to believe this is anything other than an inter-imperialist conflict.

We should be calling for NATO to pull back; and for the US to stop funding the ultra-nationalist, rightist regime in Kiyiv. Say no to intervention from Western forces or Russia. Let Ukraine exercise its sovereignty through democratic elections – and allow its regions more autonomy, outright independence, or if they wish, to choose merger with Russia.

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Reclaiming PKOLS: the first anniversary

Photostory by Heather Tufts

The protective and majestic golden eagle circled overhead on a warm evening in May at Mount Douglas Park. Supporters came to celebrate the one year anniversary of the reclaiming of PKOLS and hiked the windy path to the mountain summit, led proudly by Hereditary Chief Eric Pelkey and Master Carver Charles Elliott.

One year earlier on May 22, 2013, hundreds of people had participated in a day of action to return Mount Douglas to its indigenous name, PKOLS. Thus the site where the Douglas Treaty was signed with the WSANEC nations, was reclaimed in a public ceremony. PKOLS translates to white rock and this mountain summit was

traditionally an important meeting place for local First Nations. Stories of PKOLS go back to the beginning of time for WSANEC and LEKWAMMEN people.

“We want to make sure that people remember that the name PKOLS was put back on the mountain,” said Eric Pelkey of Tsawout First Nation. “We don’t want it to be forgotten. It is a very important place for our people. PKOLS is a part of our creation story within the WSANEC nation; and it’s where our treaty was first agreed to in 1852.”

James Douglas and his men met with WSANEC chiefs at the summit of PKOLS to discuss a treaty between the local indigenous peoples and the recently-arrived settlers. Outnumbered by local warriors,

Douglas offered blankets, clothing and money which led to the eventual signing of the Douglas Treaty. The WSANEC people accepted this treaty as a commitment to peace but with the understanding that traditional rights would be maintained and honoured.

The Douglas Treaties cover approximately 930 square kilometres of land on Vancouver Island. In the “agreements” indigenous peoples retained existing village lands and fields for their use, with rights to hunt and fish on the surrendered lands. (However these inherent rights are too often disputed with attempts to discredit the intention of historic treaties.)

At the original naming event, one year ago, the signing of the Douglas Treaty was re-enacted at the summit of PKOLS to remind people of its historic significance and its ongoing traditional relevance. Several local chiefs attended to place their mark to the staged treaty agreement and drummers and singers offered welcome songs to celebrate the occasion.

Master-carver Charles Elliott carved the intricately-designed PKOLS sign with a

thunderbird over a mountain. Legend states that the Thunderbird dwells in regal solitude in mystic cedar forests, where no man may enter. There, the Thunderbird rules the activity of the skies and so PKOLS is protected by a powerful and mystical guard, reminiscent of its historic legacy.

The hand-carved cedar sign was temporarily removed from PKOLS by the Saanich parks department in October last year, initially creating some confusion and distress. However a safer location was agreed upon and the beautiful sign is now permanently installed at the summit. An application for the indigenous name to be officially mapped has now been filed.

It was announced that another renaming will take place in September when the sacred mountain at Mount Newton will return to its original name of LAUWELNEW in a public ceremony. The renaming of these important sites defuses slightly some of the effects of colonization by reclaiming traditional indigenous territories and reinstating historic treaty rights.

Renaming ceremonies are therefore significant acts towards asserting indigenous sovereignty over unceded lands.



Master carver Charles Elliott (left) and Hereditary Chief Eric Pelkey stand beside the hand-carved cedar sign erected atop PKLOS a year ago.

Figures lie when liars figure

By Barry Weisleder

Does Canada have the world’s richest middle class?

The *New York Times* says so – whatever it means by “middle class”, that is.

Basing its analysis on the Luxembourg Income study database, which can be used for international comparisons, the *Times* claims median income in Canada “most likely” surpassed median income in the United States after 2010.

That was enough to excite federal Conservative Employment Minister Jason Kenney. He hastened to rub it in the faces of Canada’s parliamentary Opposition leaders who had been complaining that middle income families are losing ground, drowning in debt, and slowing down the economy.

But hold on! The stats don’t exactly show what the *NY Times* claims.

In the first place, the numbers go only up to 2010. What’s happened since then is

pure conjecture.

Secondly, the analysis excludes sales taxes, public and private health care benefits, and proceeds from capital gains. That results in a rather incomplete measure of household income.

Furthermore, the report merely affirmed that the US was hit harder by the Great Recession that started in 2008.

In Canada, Alberta oil mitigated the impact of the downturn, as did Canada’s social programs, which are more comprehensive than those in the US.

In other words, what the report really shows is what happens when a rich country (the US) permits a rich minority to grab the lion’s share of national income, to entrench poverty wages, and to make education unaffordable.

But guess what?

That is precisely the direction that big business and their governments are taking Canada.

NY Times mis-represents Canada’s “Middle Class”

Does Canada have the world’s richest middle class?

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At the original renaming event, May 22, 2013, a re-enactment of the signing of the Douglas Treaty was held at the summit of PKLOS.

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Signals & Danger: The Commercialization and Privatization of Public Education in BC

There is no end in sight to the bargaining battles taking place between the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) and the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA). Teachers across the province are engaged in rotating strikes and the government through BCPSEA has locked teachers out of their workplaces until 45 minutes before and after classes each school day—and they are not to work during recess or lunchtime.

Teachers have also been given penalties of 10% of their salaries during the time of the lockout with the rationale that they will be working less during this time.

These on-going battles are seldom discussed within a broader context of the growing disdain for public education within the power brokers of the corporate world and its allied governments across North America. How many educated citizens are really needed to maintain society's status quo?

The following report gives much to think about in terms of seeking answers to this question—hopefully it will provoke readers to care more about the teachers' battles to maintain quality public education in British Columbia.

By Starla Anderson

This past January, the Victoria Council of Canadians and the Social Justice Committee of the Greater Victoria Teachers Association (GVTA) co-hosted a forum titled *Signals & Danger, an evening to address the expanding commercialization and privatization of public education in British Columbia*.

The forum was co-sponsored by University of Victoria Social Justice Studies (SJS), the Victoria Public Education Coalition (VPEC), and The Social Environmental Alliance (SEA).

Held on January 23 from 7 to 9 pm in the UVic Henry Hickman Building, panellists included Jessica Van der Veen, founder of LANDS! Working to Protect Public Assets in BC; Donald Gutstein, retired professor in SFU's School of Communication, co-director of News Watch Canada, and author of *Not A Conspiracy Theory: How Business Propaganda Hijacks Democracy*; and Tara Ehrcke, teacher and GVTA executive member.

Van der Veen spoke about how the province forces school boards to liquidate public resources for cash to create the illusion of a balanced budget—cuts to capital funding are more concealed than cuts to operational funding.

She pointed out that the temporary dip in enrolment from 2001 to 2007 was only 7% and yet more than 200 schools have been closed in BC since 2002, a year after the Liberals came to power.

(In the Greater Victoria school district,

eight schools have been closed to help balance budgets: in 2002-2003: Blanshard, Fairburn, and Uplands; in 2003 - 2004: Richmond and Hampton; in 2005- 2006: Burnside; and in 2006 - 2007: Lampson. Fairburn was sold three years after it was closed to have funds to renovate two other elementary schools which became middle schools with the district's reconfiguration. Sundance School will also be closed at the end of June, 2014 though Board members who voted to close this school say that Sundance School is being located to Lake Hill School, 8.5 km north, not closed.)

Meanwhile, the echo-echo boom is upon us and classrooms and schools are overcrowded. Van der Veen cited a former employee of Statistics BC who was fired because he insisted that changes in population projections methods be disclosed to Statistics Canada and to the citizens of BC. Such bizarre changes as ordering that the number of new telephone land lines be counted as a valid predictor of population and that fast growing communities like Surrey be split have contributed to the BC Liberal myth of declining enrolment. Meanwhile, the children keep arriving.

The system is further put at risk by the Liberals refusing to make a plan to comply with the Supreme Court's order to restore class size and composition in the teachers' collective agreement. When class size standards are restored, the space crunch will become a Liberal-created crisis. Still, the multinationals push for lowered standards and crowded big-box schools because they are more profitable and attractive to contractors.

Gutstein described how Pearson Public Limited Company (PLC), the largest education corporation and book publisher in the world, is pushing the notion of personalized learning using technology. Headquartered in London, England, its annual billion dollar profits are coming from global markets—its primary listing is on the

London Stock Exchange with a secondary listing on the New York Stock Exchange.

Gutstein said that the goal of Pearson PLC is to replace teachers, counsellors, librarians, and administrators with software to “revolutionize how education is delivered around the world”.

Every student and teacher is seen as a customer—including those in British Columbia. Core competencies of skills and knowledge are assessed with Pearson PLC software, and strategies are given for improving scores on these assessments. Pearson PLC also provides tests that link teacher scores with their evaluations.

The BC Ministry of Education's concept of 21st Century learning reflects the personalized learning through technology that is sold by Pearson PLC. At the present time Pearson PLC is the second largest on-line learning provider in the United States, particularly in charter schools. Gutstein argued that Pearson PLC offers “the preferred method of undermining public schools”. (See the Pearson PLC website for more information.)

Ehrcke discussed the purposes of education and what it means for education to be “public”. Is the purpose of education to develop citizens or consumers? Is a “public school” simply publicly funded or must it also recognize and provide equity for all learners? What about public control of education? Children learn to be citizens by engaging with other children, not being isolated in front of a computer screen. Schools should be focused on developing democratic citizenry and the skills and knowledge needed to participate in society.

Ehrcke also spoke of the neo-Liberal ideology espoused by economists such as Milton Freedman who argue in favour of individualism over the collective and competition over cooperation.

Ehrcke referred to how charter schools in the United States encourage parents to “go shopping” for what they consider to be

the best learning option for their children rather than promoting quality education in their neighbourhood school so that all children receive the best educational opportunities. This leads to a two-tier education system.

In the Greater Victoria school district, this notion of “choice” has resulted in school closures, parents driving their children away from their own neighborhoods, or to specialty programs available only to some children: nature kindergartens, French Immersion, programs for gifted students, and sports academies (which come with a \$1,000 fee and a commitment to fundraising for travel and other expenses).

Inner city schools struggle with high numbers of children living in poverty, more English language learners, and more children with special needs. Meanwhile those with more affluent populations have no trouble raising thousands of dollars to enhance their children's education. The programs and schools of “choice” have created “have” and “have not” schools within our District.

Discussion following the panels' presentations focused mostly on how the shift to technology as the driver in education has moved the curriculum away from humanistic learning that requires discussion and debate. Several in the audience expressed concern for how dollars being spent on the new technologies should be spent on teachers and teacher assistants who are able to truly personalize learning while at the same time helping children learn to empathize with one another and create community with mutual respect for others whose family backgrounds are different than one's own.

Barbara Pollock, speaking on behalf of the sponsors of this event, thanked the speakers and participants and appealed to all in the audience, “Let's make sure education remains public.”

Starla Anderson is a member of the VPEC executive.

Temporary Foreign Workers give firms the incentive to create the wrong kind of jobs

By David Green

The recent controversy over Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) highlights that companies can be profitable with very different approaches to wages and worker turnover. On one side of the spectrum are companies such as Lee Valley Tools, which treats its employees well in terms of wages, benefits, and training, and has famously low turnover rates. On the other are firms that pay relatively low wages on jobs with little to recommend them in terms of benefits, the environment in the workplace, or chances for advancement.

This dichotomy is present even in the fast food industry, which we are used to thinking of as low-wage and high-turnover. In the US, In-N-Out Burger runs on a model with higher wages, benefits, and chances to move into management – a model that has been called “professionalizing fast food”. The result is lower worker turnover than other fast food firms. The chain competes successfully with the bigger fast food

chains in California and other western states.

How can both types of firms co-exist in the same market? The answer is that they both make profits, but in different ways. The higher wage and benefits model means the firm makes less profit on any given day a worker is on the job, but that's made up for by lower employee turnover. Essentially, the firm doesn't have to spend as much constantly looking for and training new workers. The workers who stick with the firm also become more productive and allow the firm to operate more efficiently.

In contrast, at the low wage/no benefits firm, the company earns more profits from each hour a worker is on the job but this is offset by costs associated with having workers who aren't as committed and by higher turnover. The firms pay wages and set up conditions in the workplace assuming there will be a lot of turnover, and this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

That both types of firms compete side-by-side implies that both routes to earning profits can work. The firms and their shareholders may be indifferent about which type of labour relations to implement. But that does not mean society is indifferent. The good jobs/low turnover model is clearly preferable for a well-functioning society that supports worker well-being. The question we should ask is what policies could induce firms to adopt that model.

Which brings us back to TFWs. What this policy does is allow firms to operate low wage and no/low benefit workplaces without worrying about turnover costs. Because the TFWs will be forced to leave Canada if they quit the firm that brought them in, firms can be sure they will not face high turnover problems. This is revealed in comments from fast food firm owners in the last few weeks. They argue that Canadian workers don't work hard enough and are unreliable

(that is, are prone to leaving in the face of poor wages and working conditions). The TFWs, on the other hand, are touted as committed and hard working. But this is exactly what you'd expect if a firm operates by offering bad jobs: the workers who can quit (the Canadian residents) do so, while those who cannot appear all the better in comparison.

When a firm claims it cannot find local workers, and makes an application to import TFWs, it is really saying it cannot find compliant local workers who are willing to accept low wages.

The important point from a policy perspective is that the TFW policy lets low wage firms have their cake and eat it too. The higher wage and benefits approach can't compete with the low wage/low benefits approach when the latter doesn't include the offsetting cost of higher turnover. Thus, the policy provides a clear incentive for more firms to adopt a bad jobs model.

Determining the right TFW policy is a difficult balancing act. There is likely a case for bringing in specialized higher-paid workers who are needed only for a short time. The case for bringing in low skilled TFWs is much harder to make apart from quite legitimate considerations about Canada's role in helping people from much poorer countries achieve their aspirations.

But regardless of the specific skill set of the workers, we can only avoid incentivizing a bad jobs approach to the workplace if workers have the right to quit or voice their concerns about their workplace.

The TFW program as it is currently constructed certainly fails to meet that standard.

David Green is a Professor of Economics at UBC, and a research associate with the BC office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

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Why I’m running for Victoria City Council

By Erik Kaye

We are privileged to live in Victoria – our quality of life and natural environment are unmatched in Canada. I fell in love with this city when I moved here 17 years ago, and can’t imagine living anywhere else. That’s why I have decided to run for Victoria City Council in this fall’s municipal election. I’ve worked with many of you over recent years through my involvement in NDP campaigns, riding associations and public events. I have served on the NDP Federal Council since 2007, and helped elect prominent Vancouver Island New Democrats

like Murray Rankin, Denise Savoie, Rob Fleming and Lana Popham. I also worked on Jack Layton’s leadership campaign in 2002/2003. I’m a long-standing member and supporter of the labour movement. I have been a BCGEU member for over a decade and worked as GEU steward for several years to help improve working conditions in the BC public sector. I have a strong record of community leadership in Victoria. I am currently on the board of the Together Against Poverty Society and the Fernwood Community Association, and was president of the Victoria

Car-Share Co-operative for several years. While chairing the City of Victoria’s Advisory Transportation Committee, I pushed for the creation of a Pedestrian Master Plan to ensure pedestrians and seniors with mobility issues are able to navigate our streets safely. I also advised BC Transit on the business case for a rapid transit line from downtown to the Western Communities. I see three key issues facing Victoria over the next four years. Because our public infrastructure is aging rapidly, we need to engage Victorians on their priorities for recreation facilities, arts, culture and economic development projects. If elected to Council, I will push for a 20-year strategic infrastructure plan to provide a framework for discussion on individual projects like Crystal Pool and the Belleville ferry terminal.

secure place to live. We must redouble our efforts to increase affordable housing units, while preserving and expanding the stock of purpose-built rental housing. We must also ensure that appropriate supports are in place for people dealing with addiction and mental health issues. Many of you will know that the **environment and climate change** have been at the centre of my work and volunteer activities for many years. The city of Victoria can help reduce emissions by improving cycling amenities, promoting expanded transit services and creating more walkable neighbourhoods. By providing families information and tools to help reduce their energy and water consumption, we can help them both save money and reduce their environmental footprint. My goal is to use my skills and experience to foster a more effective city council, one that is focused on the priorities of Victoria residents and businesses.

Organizing for the municipal election

By Ben Isitt

We are entering a critical time for our community, five months away from the next municipal election, happening on Saturday November 15. It may sound early, but I believe the time to act is now. In recent years, citizens and progressive elected officials in the Capital Region have made real progress on the issues that matter most — including green transportation and land use, action on housing and harm reduction, and open, cost-effective public services. These have been important steps, but there is still lots of work to be done. Challenges in implementing waste-water treatment threaten to undermine progressive gains. Council members and school trustees in all areas grapple with the constraints imposed by tight budgets. Shifting tax dollars and priorities toward social and ecological justice, and away from a “business as usual” approach at our municipal halls requires real leadership through grassroots community organization. More than ever, we need to elect strong, progressive councils and school boards throughout the Capital Region to

implement policies and programs that are consistent with our values. That is why I am calling on all of us to act together to support progressive candidates, particularly non-incumbents, as they prepare for the upcoming election. As a first step, I have prepared a Community Questionnaire 2014 to inform policy and planning for the municipal election. Please share your ideas and indicate your willingness to help, by completing the questionnaire at www.BenIsitt.ca. If you would like to volunteer on a campaign in Victoria or another municipality, please let me know or contact progressive incumbents in your area. If you can offer financial support or take a lawn sign, your contribution would make a big difference helping connect with the public. By acting together and acting now, we can ensure that Victoria and neighbouring communities get the strong, progressive councils they need and deserve. Together, we can ensure that social justice and ecological protection are at the centre of local decision-making.

Sewage treatment will be a key part of the infrastructure debate. With the McLaughlin Point proposal off the table, the CRD needs to allow for a truly open and transparent discussion of the options, both on the level of treatment and the location of the sewage treatment site(s). My position on sewage is simple: We cannot continue to dump raw sewage into our fragile marine ecosystems. The CRD must strive to maximize resource recovery in a publicly owned and operated sewage plant. I would support an independent cost-benefit comparison of a distributed model with multiple sites, as compared to a traditional centralized plant approach. The goal must be to build a region-wide consensus around the new sewage plan by engaging all member municipalities in the search for the appropriate treatment site(s). If this is not possible, however, the city of Victoria will have to consider going it alone on sewage treatment. The second key issue for our city is **affordability**. Victoria is one of the most expensive places to live in Canada, and far too many of our residents don’t have a

I ask for your support for my campaign. Here are a few ways you can help between now and Election Day on November 15:

- **Visit my website** at www.ErikKaye2014.com and sign up for regular campaign updates, register to volunteer and take a sign when the campaign begins this fall.
- **Donate** to the campaign – we need to raise money for brochures, signs, advertising and mail outs to voters. To make a donation, click on <http://tinyurl.com/erikdonate-com> or contact Ellen Godfrey at ellen@ellengodfrey.com or 250 661 1299.
- **Please give me your ideas** on how we can make Victoria an even better place to live: e-mail me at e.kaye@shaw.ca or call me at 250-885-5667

With your help, we can make a real difference in this campaign, and more importantly, to the future of the city of Victoria.

Ben Isitt is a Victoria City Councillor and Regional Director. He can be reached by email at Ben@Isitt.ca, by phone at 250-882-9302 and on the web at www.BenIsitt.ca.

Who’s not voting in municipal elections? Most of us!

VANCOUVER – Local government may be where the rubber hits the road, literally. But getting the majority to vote continues to be a challenge. A new report from the Columbia Institute looks at reasons why some people vote while others don’t and outlines new solutions. Research into who didn’t vote in Vancouver’s last civic election highlights a democratic deficit in participation. People who didn’t vote last time out were more likely to speak a first language other than English, be young, lack higher education, move more frequently or have a low income. They were less likely to be connected to social networks in their community. Their non-participation likely means their concerns are under-represented in civic dialogue. Report author Norman Gludovatz says there are new ways to increase turn out. “We need to stop talking at people with facts and figures about voting and start inspiring them to engage,” said Gludovatz. “A good place to start is early voter registra-

tion of youth. We know the best indicator of life-long voting is early participation. Other jurisdictions are having success in getting more people to vote—we can too.” It is not a secret that fewer people are voting. Voter turnout in elections in Canada has decreased at the federal and provincial levels to under 60% of the eligible voting population. Even more dramatically, in municipal elections voter turn-out is frequently as low as 20-30%. “The vast majority of people simply do not vote in school board or municipal elections. We need to do a better job of voter literacy,” said Charley Beresford, executive director of Columbia Institute. “Ultimately when we re-engage people in voting, they also re-engage in their communities.” The report is grounded in interviews and focus groups with non-voters from the last Vancouver municipal election. And its solutions are timely, in the lead up to municipal elections in BC, Manitoba, Ontario, PEI, and parts of Saskatchewan, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories. The full report is available online at: <http://www.civicgovernance.ca/getting-the-majority-to-vote>

IN ANTARCTICA...AN AMUNDSEN PILGRIMAGE, by J. Ruzesky, NIGHTWOOD EDITIONS

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--Ron MacIsaac




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- Establish Victoria as a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions

I have the experience and leadership skills to be effective on Victoria City Council. I ask for your support on November 15th.

www.ErikKaye2014.com
250.885.5667 e.kaye@shaw.ca

Authorized by Tony Sprackett, Financial Agent for Erik Kaye

TRANSFORMING GLOBAL POLITICS —The Time Has Come

By Bo Filter

Human thinking today is still bogged down by our primitive software program called dogma. From the dawn of human consciousness, many beliefs have been held close to our hearts without a shred of tangible evidence. From such primitive ideas and notions, superstitions were born. Fantasies about magic and how to perform miracles took root. Beliefs galvanized into collectives, forming the first dogmas of cults and early religions.

Dogmas flourished, giving early humans rules and rituals, no matter how unfitting the outcome. Eventually, a new dogma arose. It carried a prescription for war. War dogma is relatively new compared to the long lineage of cults and religion. Archeological discoveries dating from about 4500 BCE reveal the earliest signs of organized aggression.

Today's war dogma, complemented by other economic and religious dogmas, has humanity on the brink of annihilation. These primitive ideological structures are responsible for the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons. Worse, many key current US military and state department strategists are ravenous to commit nuclear war.

In dire straits, humanity is desperate to divert these warmongers from disaster. A fundamental transformation in the way we think, in the way we process information, is desperately needed. This critical juncture prompted Albert Einstein to write: "...the unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophes."

Fortunately, we do have an alternative to primitive thinking. Today, we can reprogram our supercomputer brains. As individuals we can erase our antiquated dogma software and replace it with a new program of modern science. We do this by learning scientific methodology. With science we can become much more focused on the truly dogmatic nature of warmongering and how to remove criminally minded individuals from all sectors of high office.

By transcending dogma, we trade in: beliefs for facts; delusion for disillusionment; fantasy for reality; speculation for chains of forensic evidence. As well, since war crimes are bathed in secrecy, we also trade in secrecy for truth — that hard sought

after prize in all criminal legal proceedings. The question now becomes: who are these people that keep dragging humanity into war? When this question is raised in discussion groups, the most common response given is the "Committee of 300". This group is said to be the current rulers over planet earth. Warmonger roots go deep through 6500 years of near constant war.

With the advent of modern psychology, we now understand that such individuals from ancient times think and operate without a conscience, without scruples. According to current psychiatric nomenclature, they make up over 1% of the general population. Their behaviour is described in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* of mental disorders under the category of antisocial personality type disorders. The public normally refers to them as psychopaths. This author categorizes them as being caught in a more specific syndrome related to warmongering denoted as: *Criminal Aggressor Personality Disorder*.

One of the main features of *Criminal Aggressors* is their thirst for power. These psychopaths seek to rule at any cost. Without a conscience, they care not about who gets hurt. Wars, pestilence, famine, and environmental destruction are the footprints of *Criminal Aggressors*, and they rule over the earth today from Washington, D.C.

Few people realize how extensive US aggression has become. Out of the entire 208 planet-wide states and territories, the US has, by one method or another, invaded 202 of them with a documented goal of world leadership, their euphemism for domination and enslavement. See *Project for a New American Century* and *Joint Vision 2020* as just two examples. The family survivors of millions killed by these warmongers know the difference between leadership and brutality.

Each attack against the world's nation states is presented to the world through western military propaganda as making the world a safer place to live, the opposite of their true intention. Domination and bullying does not provide a safe place to live for anyone.

With the 1% psychopaths ruling over the world in a stratified pyramid structure, a counter transformation encompasses a world turned upside down, so that, the masses are ruling over the psychopaths,

reversing ancient history.

Imagine this pyramid turning upside down, where elitism and psychopathology are on the bottom of power stratification. The symbol for global transformation would be the two images combined to form a diamond shape, an upright pyramid sharing the same base with an upside down pyramid.



Transformation does not happen instantly with one throw of a switch. It comes in increments. Insights transpire. For instance, the ancient ideas of peace through persuasion is challenged and understood for its limitations. A new dimension comes into view: unconscionable psychopaths responsible for the great miseries of war are immune to persuasion and polity. To psychopaths, politics serves as an instrument

of diversion, stalling, and all form of psychological warfare using legal instruments to block public persuasion and even to falsely frame political adversaries.

Subsequently, a transformative collective zeitgeist around the world realizes that we must now focus on legal proceedings to remove psychopaths from positions of political and economic power. The key to success rests on a major paradigm shift.

By embracing a transformation from dogma to science, we create a valid and sound platform on which to create a new forensic focus on criminal psychopathic behaviour—reversing the old paradigm of the 1% psychopaths judging and persecuting the masses to the conscionable masses taking control of the courts to prosecute the psychopaths for war crimes.

By transforming dogma to science, we leapfrog from Stone Age to modernity. Future generations depend on this radical change for survival. Nuclear weapons are made at the instruction of people with questionable sanity. The increasing use of these weapons at the command of *criminal aggressors* is a worst-case scenario, the shame for which must be born by US warmongers.

Bo Filter is a social scientist and author of *The Cause of Wars and Aggression: Book 1*. See reviews at website Global Justice Publishing.

2014 living wage calculation: Parents need two minimum wage jobs each to support a family in Metro Vancouver

Thirty-six organizations in Metro Vancouver, employing over 6,000 workers and covering many thousand more contracted service workers, have been certified as Living Wage Employers. These include SAP-Vancouver, Vancity, The Canad**VANCOUVER** -- A report released April; 29 finds that the wage needed to cover the costs of raising a family in Metro Vancouver is \$20.10 per hour. This is the 2014 Metro Vancouver living wage rate, the hourly wage that two working parents with two young children must earn to meet their basic expenses (including rent, child care, food and transportation), once government taxes, credits, deductions and subsidies have been taken into account.

The 2014 Metro Vancouver living wage rose by 48 cents from the 2013 figure of \$19.62/hour, according to *Working for a Living Wage 2014: Making Paid Work Meet Basic Family Needs in Metro Vancouver*, a report published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-BC office, First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, and the Metro Vancouver Living Wage for Families Campaign. This represents an increase of 2.4%, much higher than the general inflation rate of 0.2% for Vancouver. Living wage rates have also risen faster than inflation for the Fraser Valley and the Capital Regional District, to \$17.02 and \$18.93 respectively, where reports were also released today.

"The Metro Vancouver living wage rate has crossed an important threshold — it is now over twenty dollars — almost double the current minimum wage," says Michael McCarthy Flynn, Campaign Organizer with the Living Wage for Families Campaign. "The stark reality of this is that workers in minimum wage jobs in Metro Vancouver have to work two jobs just to make ends meet."

Child care and shelter costs are the two big drivers of the living wage increase. Child care costs rose by \$48 per month, while rent costs were up by \$50 per month. Other items in the family budget that saw increases higher than inflation were clothing and footwear (2%), MSP premiums (4%) and non-MSP healthcare expenditures (2%). MSP premiums rose in 2014 for the fifth consecutive year, and have added \$30.50 to the family's monthly expenses since the Metro Vancouver living wage was first calculated in 2008.

"Though a \$20.10 hourly living wage rate may be a surprise to some, it is important to remember that this high wage rate reflects, in part, a failure of public

policy to ensure affordability and a decent quality of life for all families," says Iglia Ivanova, CCPA economist and co-author of the report. "Investing in universal affordable childcare, more affordable rental and social housing, or better public transportation would significantly reduce the costs of raising a family and lower the living wage. For example, the \$10/Day Child Care Plan proposed by the Child Care Advocates of BC and the Early Childhood Educators of BC, would reduce the Metro Vancouver living wage by \$3.57 per hour, bringing it to \$16.53."

BC now has the highest child poverty rate in Canada, and has ranked worst in Canada for nine out of the last 10 years (we were second-worst in 2010). The story of child poverty is very much a story of low wages. In 2011 (the last year for which we have data), one out of every three poor children (32%) lived in families where at least one adult had a full-time, full-year job and a majority lived in families with some paid work (part-year or part-time).

"The living wage is one of the most powerful tools available to address BC's troubling state of child poverty and working poverty more broadly," says McCarthy Flynn. "It calls on employers to pay wages that reflect the actual costs of living in their communities."

Thirty-six organizations in Metro Vancouver, employing over 6,000 workers and covering many thousand more contracted service workers, have been certified as Living Wage Employers. These include SAP-Vancouver, Vancity, The Canadian Cancer Society — BC and Yukon Division, the City of New Westminster and Eclipse Awards, winner of Small Business BC's "Best Employer" in 2012 and "Best Green Business" in 2014. Working poverty is a Canada-wide issue. 25 communities across the country, including 11 in BC, have calculated their local living wages and are campaigning to improve quality of life for low-wage workers. Metro Vancouver's is in the unenviable position of being the first community where the Living Wage rate has broken the \$20 per hour mark.

Download *Working for a Living Wage 2014: Making Paid Work Meet Basic Family Needs in Metro Vancouver* at policyalternatives.ca/livingwage2014.

See more at: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/newsroom/news-releases/2014-living-wage-calculation-parents-need-two-minimum-wage-jobs-each-support#sthash.6Lr2Rsmadpuf>

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A Climate of Fear

By Ron Duffy

The headlines tell it all.
“Overconsumption of resources is a growing concern for humans.”
“Clean, safe drinking water is running out.”
“Air pollution is causing disease, death to humans, damage to other living organisms.”
“7 Foods So Unsafe Even Farmers Won’t Eat Them.”
“5 Popular Home Products That Can Be Surprisingly Toxic.”
“Is your sofa toxic?”
Headlines such as these multiply, making us uneasy, even afraid. Nothing is safe: the water we drink, the air we breathe, the food we eat, so many everyday items of food or drink or materials cause cancer or other diseases. Threats to our world and to our fragile environment mount by the day.

“The last six years,” Carl Sagan said in 2007, “have been one of those moments of history dominated by fear-based religion and politics.”
Terrorism, climate change, loss of habitat. This is what Nigerian playwright and poet, Wole Soyinka, refers to as “the new fabric of fear that we all seem to wear at this moment.”
Unlike the emperor’s new clothes, this fabric of fear we wear today is terribly real. We live in a climate of fear. And not for the first time. A few decades ago, the existence of collective fear had an immediately identifiable face: the atom bomb, the arsenal of the Cold War. What terrified the world then was the threat of bomb-laden states unleashing the ultimate scenario: Mutual Assured Destruction, “the incandescent glow” in which, as Tom Lehrer sang, “we would all go together.”
But it was all phoney. That Mutual Assured Destruction paradoxically served as its own mutually restraining mechanism. There was never going to be a nuclear war. The Soviet Union was never going to invade the West. The scenario was fed and fostered by the arms industry, which grew very, very rich, and the war was fought by proxy in the poor countries of the Far East.

As always, the suffering caused by the world’s most powerful states was borne by the wretched peoples of what we used to call the Third World, a term which itself derives from the era of the Cold War.
The difference between that phoney Cold War era and the present time is that now the climate of fear in which we live has multiple genuine causes, researched and reported on by Nobel-Prize-winning scientists and respected journalists (those on Fox News excepted). A typical headline from the 1980s read: “Scientists have identified four new man-made gases that are contributing to the depletion of the ozone layer.”
Two of the gases are accumulating at a rate that is causing concern among researchers. Lying in the atmosphere, between 15 and 30km above the surface of the Earth, the ozone layer plays a critical role in blocking UV rays, that cause cancers in humans and reproductive problems in animals.
Cancer. A word that strikes fear into every one of us. In February 2014 *The Guardian* carried a story under the heading: “Worldwide cancer cases expected to soar by 70% over next 20 years. New cancer cases expected to grow from 14m a year in 2012 to 25m, with biggest burden in low- and middle-income countries.”

The latest World Cancer Report says it is implausible to think we can treat our way out of the disease. Alcohol, obesity and physical inactivity are all preventable causes of cancer along with tobacco, and the “sweet calorific drinks” that cause obesity.
The World Health Organization reported in March 2013 that “Worldwide obesity has nearly doubled since 1980...Overweight and obesity are the fifth leading risk for global deaths. At least 2.8 million adults die each year as a result of being overweight or obese. In addition, 44% of the diabetes burden, 23% of the ischaemic heart disease burden and between 7% and 41% of certain cancer burdens are attributable to overweight and obesity.”
Threats to our environment intensify today’s climate of fear. Earth, air and water are all in grave danger. About 40 percent of deaths worldwide are caused by water, air and soil pollution, writes David Pimentel, Cornell University professor of ecology and agricultural sciences.
Such environmental degradation, coupled with the growth in world population, are major causes behind the rapid increase in human diseases. Both factors contribute to the malnourishment and disease susceptibility of 3.7 billion people. Air pollution from smoke and various chemicals kills 3 million people a year. Soil is contaminated by many chemicals and pathogens used in today’s industrial agriculture. They are passed on to humans through direct contact or via food and water.
Increased soil erosion worldwide not only results in more soil being blown away but in spreading disease microbes and various toxins. The result is the killing off of hundreds of living species every year. Much of this is due to the destruction and pollution of natural habitats.
“Farmageddon” is the punning word being applied to modern agriculture. Farming has seriously lost its way, and since it sits at the heart of all our lives—and the lives of all other creatures— this places the whole world in danger. For example, about 50 percent of what’s grown is wasted, and about half of the cereal that does pull through (and at least 90 percent of the world’s soya) is fed to livestock. We could easily produce all the meat that is needed to support the world’s cuisines if we simply fed cattle and sheep on grass, which is their natural fare, and fed pigs and poultry on leftovers and surpluses, as was traditional.
The collateral damage is enormous. The acreage needed to produce all the soya that’s given to cattle is equivalent to the entire land area of the EU. In Argentina and Brazil, forests are felled to make way for it; in Southeast Asia and Africa they are replaced by oil palms. The resultant deforestation, especially in the tropics, is a prime cause of global warming.
Since forests also make rain and store water when it falls, deforestation also contributes to both droughts and floods, and hence to soil erosion by wind and water. All of this, along with pollution from agrochemicals, has left 50 percent of species, at a conservative estimate, in danger of extinction.

More than 18,000 species are known to be at risk. Most are continuing to edge towards oblivion. Most of the world’s natural habitats, including fields and woodland, rainforests, mangroves, freshwater wetlands, coral reefs, the sea ice and the sea itself, are being destroyed or damaged beyond resuscitation.
All of this was contained in a report by the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Made public in March 2014, the report was described as “the mother of all climate reports”. It is so scary that one of its authors resigned from the IPCC in protest. And the worst is yet to come. Climate change poses a threat to global food stocks, to human security.
Another dire peril casts its shadow over any contemplation of the future: environmental disaster. It’s not clear that there even is an escape, though the longer we delay, the more severe the threat becomes, and not in the distant future. There can be little doubt about the centrality and severity of the environmental crisis in the present day, writes Noam Chomsky.
Driven by the mindless “grow-or-die” imperative of capitalism, humanity’s destruction of the biosphere has reached and even surpassed various critical thresholds, whether in terms of carbon emissions, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification, freshwater depletion, or chemical pollution.
Not only are species disappearing at a fearsome rate, so are the natural resources on which surviving species, including humans, depend.

A new study sponsored by NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center has highlighted the prospect that global industrial civilization could collapse in coming decades due to unsustainable resource exploitation and increasingly unequal wealth distribution. It found that according to the historical record, even advanced, complex civilizations are susceptible to collapse.
This raises questions about the sustainability of modern civilization.
In the four-billion-year history of the Earth, mass extinctions of living species have occurred five times. Now we are being warned that we are already in the midst of a sixth extinction. Up to 50 percent of all species now alive are in danger of disappearing by the end of the century.
Unlike previous extinctions, the direct cause this time is known. It is us—human beings. In her new book *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*, journalist Elizabeth Kolbert investigates and explains how human activity threatens all forms of life on Earth today.
The Sixth Extinction, in spite of its many scientific and statistical inaccuracies, is receiving wide publicity in the world’s media. It contains the latest list of threats adding to the climate of fear in which we humans have been living for at least 50 years.
Modern agricultural methods, pollution, deforestation, alcohol, tobacco, soft drinks, food additives: these killers are practised or produced and their use and consumption encouraged by the new rulers of the world, the multinational corporations.
Here we come up against the limitless financial and commercial power of Big Ag, Big Pharma, the sugar lobby, the petroleum industry, Monsanto, Cargill, and their ilk. The enemy of the world population is no longer nuclear proliferation but the proliferation of practices and products dangerous to our health and to the habitats we need to keep safe for all living organisms.
We are failing. And the most ignoble failure is of national governments and the UN to stand up to Big Business.
In an earlier article in this newspaper I argued that capitalism had won the “long war of the 20th century”, defeating its rivals, communism and fascism, and assuming world supremacy. Now ruling the world unchallenged, capitalism is far along the way to completely destroying the world, making it uninhabitable for life.
There can be little doubt about the centrality and severity of the environmental crisis at the present time. Driven by the mindless “grow-or-die” imperative of capitalism, humanity’s destruction of the biosphere has reached and even surpassed various critical thresholds, whether in terms of carbon emissions, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification, freshwater depletion, or chemical pollution.
Rather than conclude that such distressing trends follow from an “aggressive and sociopathic” human nature, reasonable observers should associate the outgrowth of these tendencies with the dominance of the capitalist system. As Oxfam noted in a January 2014 report, the richest 85 individuals in the world possess as much wealth as the 3.5 billion poorest people (the wealth of Charles and David Koch alone has surged past \$100 billion); just 90 corporations have been responsible for two-thirds of the carbon emissions generated since the onset of industrialism.

As these staggering statistics show, the ecological and climatic crises correspond to the extreme concentration of power and wealth produced by capitalism and upheld by the world’s spineless governments.

As a counter-move to these realities, the political philosophy of socialist anarchism—which sees individual freedom as being dependent upon mutual aid and emphasises community and social equality—may hold a great deal of promise for ameliorating and perhaps even overturning these trends toward destruction.

Power does not consist in striking with force or with frequency, but in striking true. -- Honore de Balzac



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The Downfall of the plastic bag: A global picture

By Janet Larsen and Savina Venkova

Worldwide, a trillion single-use plastic bags are used each year, nearly 2 million each minute. Usage varies widely among countries, from over 400 a year for many East Europeans, to just four a year for people in Denmark and Finland. Plastic bags, made of depletable natural gas or petroleum resources, are often used only for a matter of minutes. Yet they last in the environment for hundreds of years, shredding into ever-smaller pieces but never fully breaking down.

Over the last century, plastic has taken over the planet. On the one hand, plastic seems a miracle material, with beneficial uses ranging from medical devices to making vehicles lighter and more fuel-efficient. On the other hand, it is a curse, allowing for the seemingly cheap mass production of disposable materials that fill up landfills, cloud the oceans, choke wildlife, and sully vistas. Filled with additives that lack a safety record, plastics have been linked with a slew of health concerns, including certain types of cancer and infertility. While plastics can be used and recycled wisely, the majority of those produced are neither. Perhaps no other item symbolizes the problems of our throwaway culture more than the single-use plastic bag.

Given the multitude of problems associated with plastic bags, many communities around the world have attempted to free themselves from their addictions by implementing bag bans or fees. The oldest existing bag tax is in Denmark. Passed in 1993, this regulation affected plastic bag makers who paid a tax based on the bag’s weight. Stores were allowed to pass the cost on to consumers either in bag charges or absorbed into the prices of other items. The initial effect of this system was an impressive 60 percent drop in plastic bag use.

One of the most well-known bag measures is Ireland’s national bag tax, adopted in 2002. It was the first to charge consumers directly, starting at a rate of 15 euro

cents (20¢) per bag. Within five months of the measure’s introduction, bag usage fell by over 90 percent. Litter was greatly reduced as well. Over the years, bag use started to creep up, however, so in 2007 the charge was increased to 22 euro cents, and in 2011 the law was amended with the aim of keeping annual bag use at or below 21 bags per person. Frank Convery of University College Dublin calls Ireland’s plastic bag levy “the most popular tax in Europe” and believes that it would be politically damaging to remove it.

Indeed, many communities looking at plastic bag reduction measures hope to emulate the Irish success. Other European countries where consumers pay for plastic shopping bags—either through law or voluntary initiatives—include Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Latvia, and the Netherlands. Throughout the European Union, member states will soon be required to take measures to reduce plastic bag use 80 percent by 2019.

Reducing the amount of plastics in the marine environment has been a major driver of bag regulations in Europe and elsewhere. In a memo on its bag reduction proposal, the European Commission notes that “in the North Sea, the stomachs of 94 percent of all birds contain plastic. Plastic bags have been found in stomachs of several endangered marine species, such as green turtles, loggerhead turtles, leatherback turtles, black footed albatrosses, and harbour porpoises.” In sum, “at least 267 different species are known to have suffered from entanglement or ingestion of marine litter.” The desire to protect the whales that migrate off the coast of Tasmania led to Australia’s first local plastic bag ban in 2003. Now half of Australian states and territories ban plastic bags.

Beyond the seas, the reasons for taking action against plastic bags vary from malaria outbreaks associated with bags collecting water in Kenya to sewers clogged with plastic bags exacerbating flooding in Bangladesh, Cameroon, and the Philip-

pires. Cattle choking on plastic bags gave impetus for bag regulations in Texas ranch country and in Indian communities concerned about the sacred cow. In the capital of Mauritania, an estimated 70 percent of cattle and sheep deaths are from plastic bag ingestion; in the United Arab Emirates, the concern is for camels. (Additional details on anti-plastic bag initiatives around the world are at www.earth-policy.org.)

The world’s strictest anti-plastic bag implementation strategy may be in Rwanda. Since a ban went into effect in 2008, airline passengers arriving from outside the country have recounted being forced to surrender plastic bags on arrival. It is unclear, however, how successful the ban is at reducing overall bag use, particularly in less urban areas, because of an active black market for plastic bags. In South Africa, where plastic bags caught in bushes and trees had become so common that they were called the national flower, a ban on the very thin non-biodegradable bags that tear readily and easily blow away went into effect in 2003. Thicker bags are taxed. Botswana’s plastic bag fee, which began in 2007, is credited with cutting bag use in half at major retailers. All told, at least 16 African countries have announced bans on certain types of plastic bags, to varying levels of effectiveness.

In China, where plastic bag pollution was widespread, a few cities and provinces tried to introduce policies to limit bag use in the 1990s, but poor enforcement led to limited success. Before Beijing hosted the 2008 Olympic Games, a national law went into effect banning extra thin bags and requiring stores to charge a fee for thicker bags. The Chinese government reported that bag use has dropped by more than two thirds, although compliance appears to be spotty. A number of cities in Southeast Asia, the source of many of the world’s plastic bag exports, have come up with legislation to reduce bag use.

In the United States, 133 city- or county-wide anti-plastic bag regulations have

been passed. Bag bans cover one of every three Californians and virtually all Hawaiians. Chicago’s city council voted for a bag ban in April 2014. Dallas and Washington, DC, are among the handful of jurisdictions that charge 5-10¢ for each plastic or paper bag; in both cities, charges were instituted to reduce the number of bags in local rivers. In Canada, much of the anti-bag action is voluntary, with a number of retailers participating. The provinces of Ontario and Quebec have each halved their plastic bag use through a variety of measures, including store incentives for using reusable bags and retailer-imposed fees. Liquor stores in Manitoba, Quebec, and Nova Scotia have tossed out the plastic bag for good.

Latin America also hosts a number of initiatives to reduce plastic bag litter and waste, including bans in the Chilean cities of Pucón and Punta Arenas and in the states of Buenos Aires and Mendoza in Argentina, to name a few. Carryout bags in a couple of Brazilian states are required to be biodegradable. São Paulo state banned free single-use plastic bags starting in January 2012, allowing heavy reusable or biodegradable bags to be sold for 10¢, but the measure was removed by an industry-supported court injunction, despite the backing of the supermarket trade association. Similarly, Mexico City banned plastic shopping bags in 2009, but, under pressure from plastics manufacturers, the measure was replaced before enforcement began with a recycling initiative—a common tactic used by industry groups around the world against stricter bans or fees.

Plastic bags clearly have a cost to society, one that is not yet fully paid. Reducing disposable bag use is one small part of the move from a throwaway economy to one based on the prudent use of resources, where materials are reused rather than designed for rapid obsolescence.

Additional information, including a timeline of the plastic bag and a collection of international plastic bag initiatives is available at www.earth-policy.org.

Palestine today and in the future: Dr. Mazin Qumsiyeh

Story and photos by Theresa Wolfwood

A self-described “troublemaker”, Dr. Mazin Qumsiyeh is professor of biology at the universities of Bethlehem and Birzeit and also a respected leader of popular resistance in Palestine. He has been arrested and beaten many times by the Israeli occupiers of Palestine for his non-violent resistance.

Victorian activists were fortunate to hear and meet this activist and writer. (*Sharing the Land of Canaan: human rights and the Israeli/Palestinian Struggle*, and *Popular Resistance in Palestine: A history of Hope and Empowerment*. For a review of the latter see: <http://bookreviews.bbc.ca/2012/10/qumsiyeh-mazin-b-popular-resistance-in-palestine-a-history-of-hope-and-empowerment-2010-pluto-press-uk-usa/> See also: www.qumsiyeh.org/)

Qumsiyeh is a biologist and he began his presentation with a historical perspective, based on biological concepts of biodiversity. In Western Asia – a term he prefers to the euro-centred Middle East -- of 15,000 years of continuous human civilization from the development of agriculture and the Aramaic alphabet, with Jericho at 12,000 years of age, the oldest city in the world, human society there has flourished with diversity. For 1% of that time, there was imposed monoculture, but every effort to perpetuate monolithic rule was a short-lived failure. As in biology, only diversity creates sustainability.

Qumsiyeh said academics should be part of society, be activists and believe in the power of resistance. “To exist is to resist”, as the art on the separation wall proclaims in a village in the West Bank. He is optimistic and hopeful that a community of resistance can overcome the present injustice.

He told listeners that Palestinians have a history of resistance that spans many years, from the first demonstration with cars in 1929, to tax revolts, to the present ongoing resistance to the apartheid wall.

Daily life under occupation (giving birth to children, going to school, enjoying friends and family) are all part of resistance. The Palestine population is growing; there are six million within Palestine and approximately seven million outside Palestine. Internationally, resistance includes the growing BDS (boycott, divest, sanction) movement against Israel – in particular the cultural and academic boycott is isolating Israel even more from the world it claims to be part of.

Zionists knew that to create a European-style nation state, they would have to use violence to achieve their aims. It had to be “Fight or Flight”. They developing military strategies and they drove out more than one million people in two Nakbas, in 1948 and 1967. They have destroyed more than 530 villages.

Our famous contribution, Canada Park, is built on the ruins of three villages. It is planted with non-native conifers that are toxic to local plants. Israel has destroyed more than 1.5 million tress in Palestine, including olive trees dated at 2,000 years old.

The violence continues daily with destruction of homes and the theft of land. East



Dr. Mazin Qumsiyeh

Jerusalem, internationally recognized as a Palestinian city, is under constant attack. Bethlehem is being eaten up by Israeli colonies.

In Gaza 1.5 million people live in an Israel-enforced “concentration camp” without any freedom or food security. In the West Bank Israel is relentlessly constructing its Apartheid Wall, which, when completed, will be 760 kilometres long, enclosing 8.3% of the original lands of Palestine where 4.5 million in the West Bank live in an area less than ¼ the size of Vancouver Island.

Qumsiyeh believes that grassroots resistance is “trickling up”. Within Israel, resistance to the occupation, from Jewish Israelis as well as from the 22% of Israelis who are Palestinian, is growing. “It is time to move on and live together.”

He says there are many options, to the two-state solution (which never addresses the question of the half million Israelis who live in the West Bank.) Solutions include one democratic state with the right of return of exiles and a loose federation of states like the EU. He believes that in 10 years, apartheid in Israel and Palestine will be over. (Who ever thought in 1981, that apartheid in South African would be finished in 1991?)

International condemnation of Israel’s war crimes is becoming more vocal; public awareness of the injustice of the occupation and the constant violation of human rights, in spite of media bias, is growing and understanding of the rights of Palestinians and the need for democratic solutions is increasing.

Qumsiyeh urged social movements, “to do more of what we are doing now and concentrate on human rights... We can build up our minority – make it larger and we will be powerful because the majority of people are apathetic.”

In answer to a question about political parties and their policies, Qumsiyeh said that political parties make policy after putting their fingers in the air to see which way the winds blows. “We must be a hurricane!”



A mural seen by the author when she was in Palestine.

The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists

By Ron Duffy

In 1988 a mini-series was shown on British television called “A Very British Coup”, based on a novel by Chris Mullin. The story, described as “a first-rate political thriller”, was set in what was then the future: 1989.

The General Election has ended with a shock result: Labour, led by former Sheffield steelworker Harry Perkins, has swept to power in a popular landslide. The result is a clear mandate for a truly radical agenda which proposes “consideration to be given” to withdrawal from NATO, an end to the nuclear deterrent and to UK membership of the then Common Market, abolition of the House of Lords, public schools and much more.

Little wonder that the Establishment reacts with alarm.

The story of “A Very British Coup” is essentially of how the security services (with US help), the media and the civil service all conspire to thwart Perkins’s agenda and ultimately subvert democracy. “You the people must decide whether you prefer to be ruled by an elected government,” Harry declares provocatively, “or by people you have never heard of, people you’ve never voted for, people who remain quietly behind the scenes.” An apt question for today’s population.

What interested me at the time, apart from the exciting story-line, was that PM Harry Perkins, played by the late, great Ray McAnally, kept quoting from *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists*. I had never heard of it, and the title intrigued me. So I investigated.

The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists is a novel by Robert Tressell, the nom-de-plume of a house painter, Robert Noonan. It was first published in 1914 after Noonan’s death from tuberculosis in 1911. He was buried in a paupers’ grave in a weed-choked field opposite Walton Jail, now HM Prison Liverpool, where a marble plaque marks his grave.

An explicitly political work, *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists* is widely regarded as a classic of working-class literature. Based on Noonan’s own experiences of poverty and exploitation, his novel is a detailed and scathing analysis of the relationship between working-class people and their employers. The “philanthropists” of the title are the workers who, in Noonan’s view, aid in their own ruthless exploitation by corrupt employers, profiteering capitalists, crooked civic councillors, and hypocritical religious authorities.

They toil in the interests of their bosses without ever questioning the inequity and iniquity of their situation. They throw themselves into back-breaking work for poverty wages in order to generate profit for their masters. The text’s solution is to “fill the House of Commons with Revolutionary Socialists”.

The original title page of the book carried the subtitle: “Being the story of twelve months in Hell, told by one of the damned, and written down by Robert Tressell.” That harrowing story stretched to 1,600 hand-written pages. His bereaved daughter, Kathleen, whom he raised on his own, sold it to the publisher, Grant Richards, for a “mess of pottage”: £25. This was scant compensation for a book whose success

was phenomenal, and one cannot miss the irony in that the cheap sale of the manuscript reflects the theme of the book: the generosity of the poor “ragged trousered philanthropists” who give away their labour and its products for a “mess of pottage”.

Richards described the book as “dam-nably subversive but it was extremely real.” The 1955 edition has never been out of print. Several editions are on sale today on Amazon whose editors describe the book as “Epic in scale, the novel charts the ruin-ous effects of the laissez-faire mercantilist ethics on the men, women, and children of the working classes, and through its emblematic characters, argues for a social-ist politics as the only hope for a civilized and humane life for all. It is a timeless work whose political message is as relevant to-day as it was in Tressell’s time.” Good for Amazon!

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists depicts a year in the life of a group of build-ing workers in a fictional English seaside town called Mugsborough, understood to be Hastings, where Tressell lived. The range of characters comprises the workers, both skilled and unskilled, their wives and children, their bosses, and local political and business personalities.

One character, Fran Owen, the hero of the book, is a skilled painter, who be-lieves that the capitalist system is the real source of the poverty he sees around him. Respected for his impressive skill as a craftsman, he uses his impeccable English in his unstoppable desire to convert his fel-low workers to socialism. As a result, much of the book consists of conversations be-tween Owen and the others, or of hectoring lectures by Owen in the face of the jeer-ing of his recalcitrant fellows. The workers are unconvinced, or unconvincedable, and favour the capitalist system over a social-ist one, but the writer’s skill for dramatic ef-fect make these scenes feel natural and as parts of a seamless whole.

Noonan’s book provides an all-embrac-ing picture of social, political, economic and cultural life in Britain at the time when so-cialism was beginning to win a following. It was then that the Labour Party was found-ed and began to win seats in the House of Commons. That would explain why the fictional PM Harry Perkins was so very fond of it. In 1946 George Orwell praised the book’s ability to convey without sensa-tionalism “the actual detail of manual work and the tiny things almost unimaginable to any comfortably situated person which make life a misery when one’s income drops below a certain level.” He considered it “a book that everyone should read” and a piece of social history that left one “with the feeling that a considerable novelist was lost in this young working-man whom society could not bother to keep alive.”

This was a book I had to have. I bought it; I read it, but not all of it. It does a good job in describing the stirrings of socialism in the early 20th century and the conditions of the working poor leading up to it. I wanted to like it much more than I did, and while parts of it are very powerful, the book is too long, over 600 pages, and treads the same ground so often, repeating the same material over and over again, that I had to force myself to keep reading until in the end I gave up on it. But I got the message.



Nanaimo film maker Paul Manly shows off some of the DVD copies of his documentary, *Voices of the River*, about the Nanaimo River watershed.

Voices of the River DVD donated to Nanaimo-Ladysmith schools

The first week of June, every school in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith school district received a free DVD copy of *Voices of the River*, a documentary film about the Nanaimo River watershed produced by Paul Manly and Manly Media.

The donation was made possible through a generous grant from the Vancouver Island Real Estate Board (VIREB) and an in-kind contribution from Manly Media.

Voices of the River was screened at a VIREB luncheon and the organization was so impressed with the educational value of the film, that they wanted to share a copy with every school in School District 68. The DVD package includes a teaching and activity guide developed by teachers to meet the prescribed learning outcomes for grades four, five and 10.

Voices of the River looks at the historic and contemporary uses and values of the Nanaimo River watershed. The film was in-spired by the Nanaimo River Stewardship

initiative of the Nanaimo Area Land Trust.

The river is important for a number of reasons. It is the main source of drinking water for the city of Nanaimo. It is culturally and spiritually significant to the Snuney-muxw First Nation. Comprised of over 800 square kilometres, it provides habitat to a wide range of wildlife including rare and en-dangered species. It has the largest estuary on Vancouver Island. It is important for the fishing, forestry and tourism industries and it provides a wide range of recreational op-portunities for local residents. The Nanaimo River is the “lifeblood” of the community”.

With a multitude of interviews and stun-ning imagery, *Voices of the River* offers an intimate and unique glimpse into the challenges facing this beautiful natural re-source.

The film is available to watch for free on the Manly Media website at [www.manlyme-dia.com/films/voices-river](http://www.manlymedia.com/films/voices-river)

British working-class readers, like the steelworker Harry Perkins, have embraced *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* and hold its author in high esteem. The book has acquired a cult-like status. A lot of research on it is currently underway: its engagement with a modern aesthetic, its gender and race politics, and its location in intellectual. history.

There is a renewed interest in Robert

Tressell and *The Ragged Trousered Phi-lanthropists* as we tackle the challenges of globalization, a post-feminist society (women receive a lesser treatment than men in the book), and the obscenely gross inequality tainting today’s society. It will be fascinating to witness the ways in which readings of the working-class writer and his long text unfold. [See excerpt below]

Poverty is not caused by men and women getting married; it’s not caused by machinery; it’s not caused by “over-production”; it’s not caused by drink or laziness; and it’s not caused by “over-population”.

It’s caused by Private Monopoly. That is the present system. They have monopolized everything that it is possible to monopolize; they have got the whole earth, the minerals in the earth and the streams that water the earth. The only reason they have not monopolized the daylight and the air is that it is not possible to do it. If it were possible to construct huge gasometers and to draw together and compress within them the whole of the atmosphere, it would have been done long ago, and we should have been compelled to work for them in order to get money to buy air to breathe.

And if that seemingly impossible thing were accomplished tomorrow, you would see thousands of people dying for want of air - or of the money to buy it - even as now thousands are dying for want of the other necessities of life. You would see people going about gasping for breath, and telling each other that the likes of them could not expect to have air to breathe unless they had the money to pay for it.

Most of you here, for instance, would think and say so. Even as you think at present that it’s right for so few people to own the Earth, the Minerals and the Water, which are all just as necessary as is the air. In exactly the same spirit as you now say: “It’s Their Land,” “It’s Their Water,” “It’s Their Coal,” “It’s Their Iron,” so you would say “It’s Their Air,” “These are their gasometers, and what right have the likes of us to expect them to allow us to breathe for nothing?”

And even while he is doing this the air monopolist will be preaching sermons on the Brotherhood of Man; he will be dispensing advice on “Christian Duty” in the Sunday magazines; he will give utterance to numerous more or less moral maxims for the guidance of the young.

And meantime, all around, people will be dying for want of some of the air that he will have bottled up in his gasometers. And when you are all dragging out a mis-erable existence, gasping for breath or dying for want of air, if one of your number suggests smashing a hole in the side of one of the gasometers, you will all fall upon him in the name of law and order, and after doing your best to tear him limb from limb, you’ll drag him, covered with blood, in triumph to the nearest Police Station and deliver him up to “justice” in the hope of being given a few half-pounds of air for your trouble.”

–Robert Tressel: *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*

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Genesis: Truman, American Jews, and the Origins of the Arab/Israeli Conflict, by John B. Judis, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014

Review by Jim Manly

In the 1840s Lord Shaftesbury, an early Christian Zionist, came up with the phrase, “A land without a people for a people without a land”. As the Zionist movement developed, calling for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, this became a popular slogan. Palestine was not and never had been “a land without a people”.

In *Genesis: Truman, American Jews, and the Origins of the Arab/Israeli Conflict*, the American journalist and historian, John B. Judis, examines the growth and development of American Zionism. Beginning with its origins in various parts of Europe, Judis next outlines its early years in Palestine, the impetus given by the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the growing Arab-Jewish conflict. He then looks at the development of Zionism in the United States and the post WW II struggles within the Truman administration, leading to the 1947 UN vote on partition, the establishment of the State of Israel and its recognition by the United States.

Although he recognizes that other justice issues in our world are equally important, Judis, a Jew with “no religious allegiance to Judaism”, has a particular concern for the United States’ one-sided relationship with Israel. No historical writing can be totally free from the bias of the historian and Judis quite frankly states his belief “that an American Jew should be as concerned about the rights of a Palestinian Arab as he is about the rights of an Israeli Jew.” (9-10)

For hundreds of years both Christians and Jews had talked about a Jewish “return” to Palestine in terms of a messianic event. As a modern movement, however, Zionism began in the 19th century along with other nationalistic movements such as German and Italian unification, and the struggle of Polish, Hungarian, Romanian and other nationalities to free themselves from the shackles of alien empires. It received a major impetus in the 1880s when Baron Rothschild began to make funds available for Jewish colonies in Palestine.

In 1896 Theodor Herzl, the best known example of early Zionist nationalism, published *The Jewish State*. In the wake of Russian pogroms following the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander II, and the French frame-up and conviction of Captain Alfred Dreyfus for treason, fear grew that no place in Europe, not even enlightened France, was safe for Jews. Herzl was not a religious Jew but a thoroughly secular 19th century rationalist who wanted to leave the Jewish tradition behind. As he understood it anti-Semitism was rooted in ethnicity not religion. (26)

Judis also tells of Ahad Ha’am who in an 1888 essay, “The Wrong Way”, opposed the idea of a Jewish state. In contrast to Herzl, he looked for the establishment of “a fixed spot to serve as a ‘national spiritual centre’, a ‘safe retreat’, not for the Jews, but for Judaism, for the spirit of our people.” (23)

In the long run the much more aggressive Zionism of Herzl prevailed. In 1897 he organized the World Zionist Congress with Jewish delegates from different parts of Europe; over time this attracted attention from the major European powers as well as the United States. Herzl urged the purchase of land from the Turkish Ottoman Empire which ruled Palestine as well as from Palestinian land holders. He saw the establishment of a Jewish state in terms of European imperialism bringing civilization to barbarians. As Max Nordau, his second-in-command said, “We will endeavor to do in the Near East what the English did in India. It is our intention to come to Palestine as the representatives of culture and to take the moral borders of Europe to the Euphrates.” (28)

Zionist immigration was opposed, first by Arab intellectuals who understood its significance but later by Palestinian peasants who were forced off land that their families had farmed for generations. At times this opposition crystallized into armed conflict.

In 1917, when the British sought help against the Central Powers which included the Ottoman Empire, Lord Balfour, a Christian Zionist, issued his famous letter saying that Britain “views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”. It also included a clause

“that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.” (58) The deliberate ambiguity of the statement left it open to various interpretations but Zionist leaders took it to mean support for a Jewish state.

The Balfour Declaration undercut Britain’s 1915 promise to support Arab independence in the area in return for support during the war and also the secret 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement by which Britain, France and Russia agreed to divide control of the different parts of the Turkish empire.

After the war, Britain, with French support, used the Balfour Declaration as a lever to secure a League of Nations mandate over Palestine where their primary concern was control over the Suez Canal. The British and French, of course, were not really concerned with either Jews or Arabs but with their own imperial machinations. These and later similar American interests have muddled the situation of Palestine ever since.

While some Zionists, following the example of Ahad Ha’am, looked for co-operation between Jews and Palestinian Arabs, others, under the leadership of Ben Gurion, took a harder line and would be satisfied with nothing less than a Jewish state. Leaders such as Jabotinsky saw the Palestinian Arabs as a people who could be equally at home in Morocco, Iraq, Syria or any other Arabic speaking country. Their historic residence in Palestine should not stand in the way of a Jewish state.

The slow pace of Jewish immigration to Palestine between the wars picked up dramatically after Hitler’s rise to power and the growth of Nazi anti-Semitism. In the earlier part of the century, the highest percentage of Jewish immigrants had gone to the United States. After 1924, however, American immigration was severely cut back. Similar restrictions on Jewish immigration were imposed in Brazil, South Africa and Italy.

Judis does not mention Canada but, as Abella and Troper point out, Jews, Orientals and Blacks had always faced the greatest difficulty in immigrating to Canada and restrictions were made more difficult in the 1920s and 1930s. (Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many*, pp. 4-5). At the very time when it was needed most, possibilities for Jewish immigration were being closed. As Judis comments, “The rise of Hitler and the restrictions on Jewish immigration to the West altered the moral balance between Zionism and Palestinian Arab nationalism. The Jewish right to rule Palestine’s Arabs was as tenuous as ever, but the right of Europe’s Jews to seek refuge in Palestine had been strengthened.” (106)

Increased Jewish immigration brought increased opposition and violence and the British did not do a good job of managing the situation. In the early 1920s conflict broke out between Zionists and Palestinians; violence erupted again in 1929 after a group of Revisionist Zionists rioted over ownership of the Wall with the result that in Jerusalem, Hebron and Safed 123 Jews and 116 Arabs were killed. In 1936 Palestinian groups launched a disorganized country-wide rebellion and general strike directed against both the British and the Zionists. As part of the agreement to end the strike the British appointed the Peel Commission which, after holding hearings, recommended a form of partition.

Tragically, opposition to Zionism led many Palestinians into the “worst of European anti-Semitism. Arab shops featured pictures of Hitler, and swastikas were commonly displayed on walls.” (123) The mufti, who came as close as any to being Palestine’s leader, sought help from the Germans and in turn spent WW II in Berlin helping Hitler. This not only deprived Palestinians of any effective post-war leadership but also resulted in widespread prejudice against them.

In the United States, Reform Judaism with its emphasis on liberal social values became prominent in the latter part of the 19th Century and, as Zionism developed, Reform Jews took three different approaches. Anti-Zionists were dominant, followed by non-Zionists who supported aid for the Jews of Eastern Europe and Palestine but opposed the idea of a Jewish state; third was a small minority of Zionists. Stephen

Wise, one of the leading Zionists, as an “ultra-liberal” young rabbi also fought for civil rights, women’s suffrage, the rights of workers, Afro-Americans and against child labour

In 1913 Louis Brandeis, the most well-known and respected Jew in America, known as the “People’s Lawyer” for his commitment to social justice, became a convert to Zionism. He believed that “Jews in Palestine were building the cooperative democracy that he wanted to create in the United States.” (147) In 1914 with the outbreak of war, Zionist headquarters in Berlin and London were closed and Brandeis agreed to head the provisional executive committee. In 1918 he helped found the Zionist Organization of America and later, with Stephen Wise, the American Jewish Congress.

Under Brandeis and Wise, with supporters like Felix Frankfurter, who, like Brandeis, was later appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court, Zionism entered the mainstream not only of American Judaism but also of American politics and diplomacy. For example, Brandeis, as an influential advisor, helped to persuade President Wilson to give advance support for the Balfour Declaration.

The failure of these liberal minded humanitarian activists to take account of the Palestinian population who had deep roots in the country, seeing them only as token who could be easily moved to another Arab country, has helped to set the stage for one of the great tragedies of our time.

Increasingly violent, state sanctioned anti-Semitism in Germany and other European countries in the 30s (not that the United States and Canada were exempt), followed by the Holocaust in WW II, led to increased interest and support for a Jewish homeland. At the end of the war, hundreds of thousands of Displaced Persons, many of them Jews, were looking to emigrate but found it difficult to find a country that would receive them. (I remember the term “DP,” for Displaced Person, as an expression of ridicule and contempt.) Shortly after V-E Day a report to President Truman described conditions these people faced.

“Many Jewish displaced persons... are living under guard behind barbed wire fences, in camps of various descriptions... including some of the most notorious concentration camps, amidst crowded, frequently unsanitary and generally grim conditions, in complete idleness, with no opportunity, except surreptitiously, to communicate with the outside world, waiting, hoping for some word of encouragement and action on their behalf.... As matters now stand, we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them except that we do not exterminate them.” (203)

The report, endorsed by Truman, called for the British to allow 100,000 of these Jews to immigrate to Palestine. In the meantime, the British, who had always badly managed the Mandate, were losing control to the increased Zionist and Pales-

tinian opposition and violence to one another as well as to the British. On July 22, 1946, Irgun, the Revisionist para-military blew up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem killing 91 people—British, Arabs and Jews.

In the late 1930s, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver representing a more militant approach, with no compromises, came to the fore in American Zionism. Traditionally the majority of Zionists like other Jewish people had supported the Democratic party but, as early as the 1944 Presidential election Silver reached out to the Republicans as a way of putting pressure on the Democrats. In 1946 when a British American plan (Morrison—Grady) included the admission of 100,000 refugees with the call for a federated Palestine to solve the crisis, Silver bitterly denounced it as the “ghettoization of the Jews in their own homeland.” (225) 1946 was a mid-term election year and the Democrats were in danger of losing control of Congress; the Zionists mustered widespread opposition, particularly in the all-important state of New York. Truman had originally supported the Morrison—Grady plan but the day before he, along with Prime Minister Attlee, planned to announce acceptance of the plan, he buckled under the pressure and withdrew his support.

Like Britain, the United States had divergent interests which prevented it from reaching neutral decisions about Palestine. While the Zionist lobby, the Jewish vote and election financing pulled the government to one way of thinking, the developing Cold War and the need for a steady supply of oil pulled it to the opposite direction. This pattern repeated itself in the UN debate over the partition of Palestine, the establishment of the State of Israel and American recognition of Israel. In all of these situations Truman was buffeted by divergent interests and conflicting advice from within as well as without his administration.

In a concluding chapter, Judis points to examples of other presidents, down to and including Obama, who had hopes of mediating the Israeli-Palestinian dispute in a fair and balanced way only to be knocked off course by Zionist pressure.

For readers who are not US citizens or specialists in American history, the early parts of the book are probably more important than the multitudinous details of insider American politics during the Truman years.

Judis helps us to understand the way in which the Zionist lobby in the United States has grown; he shows how it recruits Jews who are otherwise progressive to blind loyalty to Israel in spite of that nation’s discriminatory treatment of Palestinians and its subversion of all attempts at peace by constantly trying to create “new facts on the ground”.

But perhaps the growing BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) and the coming of age of a new generation of Jews in Israel as well as North America will help to create a different set of “new facts on the ground”.

Building ferries in BC will benefit province

VANCOUVER. – A new study shows significant economic benefits for building BC ferries at home.

These benefits include seeing the BC economy grow by over \$378 Million with almost 1100 manufacturing and construction jobs staying in the province. Additionally, government debt, both provincially and federally, would be reduced by almost \$100 Million.

The report, completed by the Columbia Institute, sets out the benefits to shipbuilding and manufacturing industries in BC.

“The economics are clear -- building BC’s ferries in the province would create local jobs, bring in increased tax revenue, strengthen the Canadian ship building industry, and leverage investments already made by the federal and provincial government,” says Charley Beresford, executive director of the Columbia Institute. “The numbers add up, with big dollars staying home to benefit our economy and employment.”

BC Ferries is currently wrapping up an open bid process to build three new Intermediate class vessels. The corporation’s

long term “New Build” program could see as many as 26 vessels replaced over the next 15 years, with predicted expenditures of \$2.5 billion or more.

«Offshoring this massive program benefits other countries while leaving British Columbia, Canada and BC Ferries customers shouldering ongoing debt and costs,» says Beresford. «We can meet the need of BC ferries while benefiting our local economy.»

Economic modelling for this report from Stokes Economic Consulting shows the advantage of building these ferries in BC:

- For every 100 jobs created in a BC shipyard or repair industry, there would be an additional 135 jobs created in the province.
- The average increase in employment over three years would be 1,063 workers annually.
- Building the ferries in BC would increase government tax revenues by \$66 million federally and \$36 million provincially.

The full report is available online at: <http://www.civicrogovernance.ca/made-in-bc-ferries>

Calendar of coming events

CENTRAL SAANICH RESIDENTS ARE invited to attend regular neighbourhood gatherings, held every Friday night at 7 pm at Spelt’s Coffee Shop, 7586 East Saanich Road, in Saanichton. Share stories, books, talk politics and enjoy hot coffee. 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.

THE VICTORIA LABOUR COUNCIL representing affiliated unions in the Greater Victoria area, holds its regular monthly meetings at 7 pm on the 3rd Wednesday each month at the BCGEU Auditoriam, 2994 Douglas Street, Victoria. All delgates are welcome to come to meet their execu-

tive, president Mike Eso, treasurer, Stan Dzbik, and secretary Michael Maloney.

WOMEN IN BLACK invite you to join them in their monthly vigil to remember Hiroshina and Nagasaki and call on all Canadians and people globally to work for peace and disarmament. All those who support our goals are welcome. For further information, contact bbcf@bbcf.ca.

PRIDE 2014 is only a few weeks away, and we want to make sure you are all in the know on those annual events we all love so very much, community produced events, and some new tiddily-buts being introduced to the community, including Pride Parade, Pride Festival, Big Gay Dog Walk, Sunset

Boat Cruise, Drag Ball Game and other events. For more information go to <http://victoriapridesociety.org/>

PRIDE FESTIVAL will take place Sunday, July 6. Victoria Pride week celebrates with the annual festival and parade. Start your day marching in solidarity, with local businesses, non-profit organizations, the LGBTQ community and allies. Ending at Macdonald Park the festival brings to its community over 150 vendors, main stage performers, kid, child and teen catered fun, and the always-popular beer garden antics. Family is about loving and embracing those we care for. We are all family.

SAANICH-ESQUIMALT-JUAN DE FUCA New Democrats and Friends are welcome to our Supporter Appreciation Barbecue, to be held on Saturday, July 19, from 2-5 pm, by the sea on Parry Bay at 3837 Duke Road, Metchosin. Directions: Turn off Metchosin Road on to Duke Road, east or west access, and look for the Randall Garrison signs. Admission by donation (suggested \$20 donation). Salads or desserts welcome. For more information and to RSVP, call Jennifer Burgis at 250-881-8280 or Fred Hiigli at 250-384-7374 or email es3quimaltjdf@gmail.com.

Captivity RealityTV

CAPTIVITY – Produced by Raul Julia-Levy and Richard Grieco – new reality series to set whales free

By Diane Walsh

LOS ANGELES—Raul Julia-Levy, of Julia Productions, is the Hollywood producer behind this bold concept of a *Reality Show on Whales in Captivity*, and, to no surprise to many of his supporters, by all accounts *Captivity* is attracting several offers for advancement to screening, starting with a four-episode series launch.

Due to the controversial, sensitive nature of the subject as a social issue, the preliminaries are being handled carefully through the law office of Brian G. Raymond in Los Angeles. Julia-Levy is conducting the project in business partnership with co-actor Richard Grieco. They are in the midst of negotiations and are looking forward to planning filming. Still yet to be finalized is an agreement for production with a significant US network. To date, Julia-Levy and Grieco report they have received more than one offer.

The executive producers say they have received interest from Relativity Media LCC, one of the major players in the industry, in both November 2013 and February 2014. Relativity produces avant-garde programming to TV.

The strategy of soliciting offers from other companies is on-going.

“We are looking to enhance visibility of whale captivity as a social issue worldwide,” says Julia-Levy. The timing of the series is prescient. A petition is circulating in the State of California seeking “to enact the Orca Welfare and Safety Act to make it illegal to hold orcas in captivity for performance and entertainment purposes.”

Aquariums claim, as a fundamental motivation, that the captivity of orcas serves valid scientific and research purposes. A reality show that seeks to verify these claims is of enormous value and will examine nuances in the law and the complexities of the issues surrounding the captivity industry.

One of the central issues is the size of the tanks where orcas live. Reports indicate that there are 54 known orcas in captivity worldwide but this number may not include the

“soon to be born in captivity” orcas. Current number of facilities with orcas in captivity is believed to be 13. There may be more. Captive orcas exist in Argentina, China, Japan, and Russia. Note this is not to say [other] closely related cetacean mammals such as dolphins, or Beluga Whales (e.g. White Whale living at Vancouver Aquarium in Canada) don’t count and aren’t also a subject of concern.

The three SeaWorld locations in California/Florida/Texas combined, have a total of 24 orcas. Miami Seaquarium has 1, and Marineland in Canada has 1. Julia-Levy and Grieco’s Captivity RealityTV series will focus on each of these American locations as well as as Loro Parque in Spain and Marineland in Antibes, Cote D’Azur in France.

Freedom of information and freedom to gather information and photographs is what enables the series. With a team of experts already geared up, the project will team together prestigious marine biologists and researchers, in addition to learning from former trainers who have since joined the anti-captivity movement.

With the help of social media, activists from Britain, Spain, Canada and the US as well as in Mexico and Argentina, are proliferating information with intensity and are watching developments.

The cameras literally go in to record the raw truth about the conditions under which the orcas live.

The series will attempt to demonstrate the need for the public to become more engaged in pushing for the release of captive cetaceans into whale sanctuaries as suggested by the acclaimed documentary *Blackfish*.

Captivity RealityTV follows the themes developed in *Blackfish*. Doubtless the show will further galvanize members of the movement against whale captivity.

Julia-Levy says “I am moving it with a renowned marine biologist along with leaders and activists. This movement is for the people who have been fighting and never lost the hope of seeing this creature free.”

For more information: mediageode@gmail.com Follow #Captivity on twitter <http://indydianewalsh.com/captivity-realitytv/>

Banning bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides is the best way to celebrate BC’s “Day of the Honey Bee”

VANCOUVER – As the British Columbia government celebrated the “Day of the Honey Bee” May 29,the Wilderness Committee called on the provincial government to ban a dangerous class of pesticides called neonicotinoids. Neonicotinoids are widely used in BC and across Canada on a variety of fruit and vegetable crops, including blueberries and corn. These pesticides have been directly implicated in the deaths of tens of millions of honey bees across the country.

“The best way BC could honour our hard-working honey bees is to ban this extremely dangerous class of pesticides,” said Gwen Barlee, policy director with the Wilderness Committee. “Bees are responsible for one out of every three bites of food we eat, and we simply can’t play Russian roulette with these and other wild pollinators.”

The Europe Union heavily restricted the use of neonicotinoid pesticides in December, 2013, after finding that the systemic pesticide could not only directly kill honey bees but also causes very serious sub-lethal impacts. These impacts include impaired memory and learning, disorientation, reduced resistance to disease and reduced efficiency in foraging.

In the past couple of years, overwintering losses for honey bees in BC have ranged from 18 percent to 27 percent – well above normal winter mortality rates of 10 to 15 percent. According to the BC Honey Producers Association, many producers in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley reported major losses in 2013, some reaching as high as 80 percent.

In Ontario, where neonicotinoids are heavily used on corn and soy crops, honey bee losses in the winter of 2012/13 reached 37.9 percent. After a massive bee kill in Ontario, which occurred after neonicotinoid-treated corn seeds were planted, research conducted by Health Canada found neonicotinoid residue in 80 percent of the bee kill locations and on 75 percent of the dead bees that were tested.

“Honey bees are not the only pollinators that are vulnerable to this profoundly toxic pesticide,” said Barlee, “Bumble bees, hairy-belly bees, mining bees, sweat bees and hundreds of other wild bees in BC are also threatened by this poison, which is why we are asking Agriculture Minister Norm Letnick to not only to celebrate but actually protect our bees.”

The regulation of pesticides in Canada falls under both provincial and federal jurisdiction. Provinces are responsible for pesticide permits, compliance and enforcement, transportation, sale and use, among other responsibilities.

THE LEFT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA: A history of struggle, by Gordon Hak, 2013, Ronsdale Press, Vancouver, BC, ISBN978-1-55380-256-3

Review by Theresa Wolfwood

“...the left includes diverse values, ideas, strategies and institutions. Social democracy and communism, reformers and revolutionaries, unions and radical women’s groups have all found their home on the left.”

Author Gordon Hak has given us a readable well-documented view of these many forces in BC over the last 100 year or so...and no end in sight. even though as he says, here as elsewhere in the world, “the left has been under serious attack since the 1970s.”

The left can be defined broadly as incorporating values of democracy, dignity, physical, social and economic security and, more recently, peace and anti-war mobilization, gender and racial equality.

The left has come to realize that the environment with its related issues of climate change, resource extraction, water depletion, air pollution and conservation are part of the present left agenda.

Hak has organized his work chronologically starting in the 1880s and the rise of working class consciousness and mobilization, including building unions. He continues his history through war years and between the wars and the effect of Cold War politics on the left.

“The BC LEFT was energetic in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.” The CCF became the NDP and was successful in electoral politics while having its own internal conflicts. Unions flourished and new social movements with agendas of social justice emerged; students, women, peace activists, 1st Nations and environmentalists became part of public activism, often, and still, resulting in uncomfortable bedfellows.

In Chapter 6: *A New Reality: 1976-1990*, Hak writes that for some left elements this was “a period of distress in a failing economy”. It was also a time of economic uncertainty with high unemployment, high interest rates and a great opportunity for the right to consolidate its power.

BC was part of growing globalization and although nationalism was a strong sentiment in the left and liberal-left, Canada entered into trade agreements that altered the

reality of Canadian rights to self-determination. The environment and 1st Nations’ struggles became part of this “new reality”.

The end of the USSR and the “Cold War” saw capitalism emerge as the only major global force and after 1991 the results of global change were obvious in BC, as in the entire in world. Social movements responded and environmental and 1st Nations issues gained greater support.

Hak writes, “For leftists, incorporating Aboriginal people and their particular interests into a vision that is shaped by a search for social and economic justice, as well as environmental health and sustainability is an important part of the project to develop an alternative society.”

The author has not written about one of the results of globalization, the awareness of what Canadian policies and Canadian companies contribute to the growing injustice and repression in many places in the world.

Solidarity groups and some unions bring home the links to pension plans and investment policies of churches and other institutions – publicizing Canadian government policies that no political party has much interest in opposing.

In his concluding chapter Hak has acknowledged that although BC’s leftists have made much progress in the last 120 years, they still have not articulated a clear vision of a society beyond capitalism. Nor has the left created an inclusive home for the working poor and “lower middle class” who are sometimes attracted by rightwing populism.

Today we see Canadian workers once again pitted against Asian workers – now entering Canada under an employer-driven federal policy to work for low wages and with no rights.

Hak believes that the left must. “continue to organize...and put forward a vision of a society that celebrates equality, human dignity, community, environmental security and cooperation”.

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, email bill.routley.mla@leg.bc.ca.

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

Juan de Fuca Community Office, John Horgan, MLA, 800 Goldstream Avenue, Victoria, BC V9B 2X7, phone 250-391-2801, email john.horgan.mla@leg.bc.ca.

Saanich South Community Office, Lana Popham, MLA: 4085 Quadr Street, Victoria, BC, v8 1K5, email lana.popham.mla@leg.bc.ca, or visit website at www.saanichsouth.ca.

Saanich North and the Islands Community Office, Gary Holman, MLA., 2393 Beacon Avenue, Sidney, BC , phone: 250 655-5711, toll-free: 1-855 955-5711, fax: 250 655-7398, email gary.holman.mla.leg.bc.ca.

Victoria-Beacon Hill Community Office, Carole James, MLA: 1084 Forst 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

Jean Crowder, MP, House of Commons, Confederation Building, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6., email crowder1A@@parl.gc.ca.

Nanaimo-Cowichan Community Office, Jean Crowder, MP, 101-128 Ingram Street,. Duncan, BC, V9L 1P1, email jean@jeancrowder.ca or visit her website at www.jeancrowder.ca.

Randall Garrison, MP, House of Commons, Confederation Building, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6, email randall.garrison@parl.gc.ca.

Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca Community Office, Randall Garrison, MP, A2-1000 Aldersmith Place, Victoria, BC, V9A 7M8, open 10 am-4 pm, Monday-Thursday or by appointment. Phone 250-405-4550; fax 250-405-4568.

Murray Rankin, MP, House of Commons, Confederation Building,Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6. email murray.rankin@parl.gc.ca, or visit his website at www.murrayrankin.ca/

Victoria Community Office, Murray Rankin, MP, 1057 Fort Street, Victoria, V8V 3K5, phone 250-363-3600, fax 250-363-8422, email him at murray.rankin@parl.gc.ca

PROVINCIAL NDP CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATIONS

Cowichan Valley New Democrats: Write PO Box 102, Duncan, BC, V9L 1P0, or contact president Robert Douglas at 250 709-0750.or by email 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: Phone president Sharon Wilkins at 250-478-5907 or email her at sawilkinson@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 keith.todd@shaw.bc.ca.

Saanich North and the Islands New Democrats: Email president Allan Collier at silcol@telus.net.

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

Victoria-Beacon Hill New Democrats: Write PO Box 8523, Victoria, BC, V8W 3S1 attention President Marilyn Callahan.

Victoria-Swan Lake New Democrats: Contact the president at President@vslndp.ca or write PO Box 282, 1681 Hillside Avenue, Victoria, BC, V8T 2C1.

FEDERAL NDP RIDING ASSOCIATIONS

Saanich-Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca New Democrats: Contact president Jared Butcher at 250-896 3414 or email him at jared.butcher2010@gmail.com or write to PO Box 622, 105-1497 Admirals Road, Victoria, BC, V9A 2P8.

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

Saanich-Gulf Islands New Democrats: Contact president Michele Murphy at 250-727-9990 or by email to ndpsaanichgulfislands@gmail.com or Irene Wright (Gulf Islands) by phone/fax at 250-537-5347, or email to aiwright@telus.net.

Victoria New Democrats: To contact president Kelly Newhook, write to PO Box 8383, Victoria, BC V8W 3R9 or visit their website at 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 Laurie 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 Organizations: 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: ww.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, ext 267, fax 604-430-6762.

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, Victoria Chapter: Victoria, BC, phone 778-679-2943 or email frances.everett@cjpme.org. Enquiries, new members, guests welcome. CJPME's website can be found at www.cjpme.org.

Council of Canadians, Victoria Chapter: 203-391 Tyee Road, Victoria, BC V9A 0A9. Info@victoriacouncilofcanadians.ca and 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.

Ecojustice: 214-131 Water Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 4M3, phone 1-800-926-7444.

Human Rights Internet: www.hri.ca.

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

Mining Justice Action Committee (MJAC): contact Heather Tufts at htufts@shaw.ca or Sharlene Patterson at daveandshar@shaw.ca.

NAPO (National Anti-Poverty Organization) News: advocates for the poor in communities, courts and poliltical arenas, www.napo-onap.ca.

NDP Socialist Caucus: www.ndpsocialists.ca. "Our aim and ongoing struggle as New Democrats must be to establish a Socialist Canada."

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

Seniors' Advocacy Services (Seniors Entitlement Service), sponsored by the Greater Victoria Seniors (OAPO) organization and located at the Blanshard Community Centre, 901 Kings

Rd, (Kings and Dowler Streets), close to the #4 and #6 buses on Quadra St. Service is free to seniors 55+ in Greater Victoria. Normally open on Mondays & Thursdays from 9-3 pm and Wednesdays from 9-12 noon. We will be closed for summer break from July 15 to August 19. For more information please phone 250-388-7696.

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

South Island Health Coalition, an affiliate of the BC Health Coalition. If you are concerned about access affordability and quality of health care in our community, get involved by calling co-chairs Dale Perkins at 250-592-5487 or Wendy Strong at 250-592-1222.

Together Against Poverty Society (TAPS): 302-895 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 1H7, phone 250-361-3521; fax 250-361-3541.

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

Victoria Labour Council: 219-2750 Quadra street, Victoria, BC, V8T 4E8, phone 250-384-8331, fax 250-384-8381, email vlcbc@telsu.net.; Mike Eso, president, Stan Dzbik, treasurer, Kim Manotn, secretary

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

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

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

ALTERNATIVE PUBLICATIONS

Canadian Dimension Magazine: An independent forum for Left-wing political thought and discussion — including just about the entire range of what passes for the Left in Canada. A few years ago we adopted the banner "a magazine for people who want to change the world". That's still a good summary of who we are. Subscriptions from \$29.99. See http://canadiandimension.com for more information.Or contact them by mail at Canadian Dimension, 2E-91 Albert Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 1G5, or by phone at 204-957-1519 or oll-ree: 1-800-737-7051.

COMER (Committee on Monetary and Economic Reform): Reform-minded focus fcus on monetary issues and how they affect our society. Membership: \$50; journal only \$30. Contact them at 27 Sherbourne Street North, Suite 1, Toronto, ON M4W 2T3; tel: 416-924-3964; fax: 416-466-5827; email: comerpub [at] comer.org.

CCPA Monitor: a monthly journal sent free to all members, and published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Canada's leading organization for articulating progressive, positive social policy reform. Ever constructive and independent. Contact them at CCPA National Office, Suite 500, 251 Bank Street, Ottawa ON, K2P 1X3; tel: 613-563-1341; fax: 613-233-1458; email: ccpa@policyalternatives.ca.

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

The Dominion: a monthly paper published by an incipient network of independent journalists in Canada. It aims to provide accurate, critical coverage that is accountable to its readers and the subjects it tackles. Taking its name from Canada's official status as both a colony and a colonial force, the Dominion examines politics, culture and daily life with a view to understanding the exercise of power. It can be purchased at Bolen Books, Victoria, Camas Books & Infoshop, Victoria, Dark Horse Books, Victoria, and Munro's Bookstore Ltd, Victoria.Or suscribe and Receive an email notice when a new issue is online: Visit http://www.dominionpaper.ca/ to view the paper and to subscribe.

Turn Left: Official magazine of the NDP socialist caucus, is published for each federal and Ontario provincial convention. It is written and edited and by SC supporters but also includes articles by and interviews with progressive activists from outside the NDP as well. Download the paper at www.ndpsocialists.ca/Issues.html

Victoria Street Newz: An independent media Dproject, working to end poverty and homelessness, sold by low income individuals on the

Lower Island NEWS

streets of Victoria BC Canada, unceded Coast Salish Indigenous territory. *Street Newz* offers a reliable alternative to corporate or government controlled media. It provides a dignified way for low and/or no income people to earn a few extra bucks and participate in the local economy. It publishes research and opinions and photos and art from you, the people. View it also 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.avaaz.org/en/global--By confronting such threats as global warming together, Avaaz hopes to build a more just, tolelrant and vibrant world.

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

http://dominionpaper.ca--A Canadian ezine covering national and international stories that mainstream sources maynot cover.

www.globalproblematique.net--is an invitation to participate in a carefully conceived sustainability-oriented process. The story is organized as a linear flow. First it explains why and how we address the World Problematique in this fashion. Then, it branches out into four distinct, interactive threads. For more information go to the website.

www.lowerislandnews.com is a democratic socialist tabloid newspaper published in Victoria, BC, four or five times a year.

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 classified ads. Newsdaily covers Canadian and world news, plus a focused look at British Columbia, Victoria, and the Islands.

www.ndpsocialists.ca/Issues.html

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

http://pacificfreepress.com

www.pejnews.com--Peace, Earth & Justice News, a free email and web service, provides news, opinion and analysis of peace, environment (earth) and justice issues. Stay informed with postings often days, weeks and months ahead of the mainstream media, and often never covered in the mass market. PEJ News is produced entirely by volunteers, and is a project of the non-profit Prometheus Institute based in Victoria, Canada.

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

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

http://socialcoast.org

http://socialenvironmentalalliance.word-press.com

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

www.vivelecanada.ca--The mission of Vive le Canada is to protect and improve Canadian sovereignties and democracy through education, dialogue, and advocacy, especially using existing and emerging communications tools. We believe that the direction of this country should be set by its citizens, rather than by corporations or corporate trade bodies/trade agreements, the United States, or a small number of Canadian corporate elites.

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 major world events, comments on political, cultural, historical and philosophical issues, and valuable documents and studies from the heritage of the socialist movement.