

Lower Island NEWS

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Victoria, BC

The Peoples' Social Forum, Ottawa, 2014

Photostory by Heather Tufts

The University of Ottawa sprang to life in late August for a very special gathering of grassroots activists from coast to coast. After years of planning the long weekend event created a space where collective social movements converged to form a critical mass that would counter government attacks on rights, services, the environment and our future path.

Through workshops, presentations, demonstrations, assemblies, films and cultural activities the Indigenous land defenders, labour, non-governmental organizations and social justice activists revived our interconnectedness with an ardent strength to forge campaigns and actions. As participants we explored ideas for dismantling oppression in a respectful and creative environment, free of harassment and open to inclusive dialogue.

One of the highlights of the forum was the People's Unity March. This powerful march brought together three separate groups of protesters converging on Parliament Hill coming from Jacques-Cartier Park in Gatineau, Victoria Island and the Canadian War Museum. About 5,000 people gathered on the hill led by local First Nations drummers following the protocol of Algonquin territory. The sense of powerful unity was emotive and the message was strong.

Indigenous land defenders played a prominent role at the forum as they explored the many ways that land is being recolonized. Unrecognized treaties and unceded lands have given easy access to extractive industries, fracking, pipelines and other unwelcomed resource developments. Frontline communities are developing many new strategies to counter extreme conditions of encroachment.

Ben Powless of the *Indigenous Environment Network* outlined some of the strategic options, ranging from legal actions to blockades and a resurgence of Idle No More. He reminded us that media attention is rarely focused on the opinion of indigenous peoples which means a vacuum of reality and vision must be addressed. He stressed the importance of building allies, the need to link to global resistance campaigns and the use of creative tools like art and music to relay the message.

Amongst the feature speakers was well-known author and activist Naomi Klein who credited much of the success of this convergence to First Nations leadership. The revival of united movements is the only way to counter an extreme capitalist agenda that has brought a "resource extraction frenzy" into our midst. A supremacist and colonial "logic" bring unacceptable harms to our environment where life is fueled by greed and profit. Within the current economic frame, destruction is confused with creation and available alternatives are sadly trumped by lack of conviction.

"History knocked on your door," said Naomi Klein, "did you answer?"

The exciting topics covered at the forum are too numerous to mention ranging from



Three separate groups of protesters converge on Parliament Hill as the People's Unity March takes place.

international and national issues related to the earth, climate, communications, community, democracy, economy, trade, social movements, food, gender and impoverishment. The greatest challenge was therefore in the selection of which workshops to attend as the choices were so rich!

As we explored so many different themes the need to find alternative paths to the future was evident. Building a future beyond extraction is not merely an alternative though, but is both inevitable and necessary.

De-growth and post-extractive economics can offer some inspiring visions for a redefined world. A voluminous extractive industry that adds little or no added value merely feeds consumerism and the corporate capital model. It enhances privileged access to capital at a high environmental and social cost. This is the state of negative reciprocity when the obtaining of resources with impunity is coupled with offering nothing in return.

"When companies say they obey the law, this means that they obey **their** law," -- Francisco Ramirez.

Many of us participated in the Peoples' Social Forum because we see the urgency of halting attacks on democracy and to free our society of the impediments of colonialism, racism, capitalism and neo-liberalism. We want a society that is equally inclusive of all races, gender and diminishes the

structures that lead to poverty and isolation.

We shared visions, strategies and discussed frontline actions for change through the idea of self-determination for indigenous peoples, social and environmental justice with a new economic paradigm.

The forum inspired us with hope in our capacity to work towards change since together we are strong. A new vision for our society is imperative and another world is possible. When social movements and indigenous peoples converge as allies we stand together in the call for a healthy democracy which could stamp out the demons of exploitation and oppression.



Naomi Klein speaks about climate justice.



Ben Powless outlines some strategic options, from legal action to blockades, and a resurgence of Idle No More.

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Inside this issue

3rd Annual welfare challenge.....	2	Cool Aid housing initiatives.....	15
Editorial and op/ed	4	Boards of education candidates.....	16-18
Letters to the editor.....	5	Transforming global politics.....	18
Public education is governed.....	6	Seven deadly sins #3.....	19
New column, On the home front.....	7	Punishing the whistleblower.....	20
Federal news.....	8 and 9	El Salvador's struggle.....	21
MLAs at work.....	10 & 11	China leads the world.....	22
Council candidates speak out.....	12 & 13	Coming events calendar.....	23
Making sense of CETA.....	13	Directory.....	24
Regional governance.....	14		

Bif Naked launches 3rd Annual Welfare Challenge with \$21 worth of food

A bag of rice. Two cans of chick peas. Two heads of lettuce. A bag of spinach. A little box of tomatoes and some bananas and zucchinis. That's all Bif Naked could buy with the \$21 she has to eat on for the next week while she is participating in the Welfare Food Challenge.

"It's not enough to live on," Bif said at the Woodward's Atrium on October 16, World Food Day. She was speaking at a news conference held by Raise the Rates to launch the 3rd annual Welfare Food Challenge. "It humbles me just to be hanging out with this group of people."

The Challenge is "already a success," said Bif, "because it is creating some dialogue. People might be motivated to vote and advocate for others. This is a province wide issue."

The news conference also heard other challenge takers and three people who take the challenge every month because they have to depend on welfare.

Victoria Bull acknowledged the Coast Salish Territories and said that it was really important to raise the rates because people are suffering.

Fraser Stuart said he lives the challenge every day and has 20 cents left for the rest of the month. Fraser said the Tent City at Oppenheimer Park is connected to welfare rates because people on welfare only get \$375 a month for rent, which is not enough to rent even the cheapest place to live.

Irene Lanzinger, Secretary-Treasurer of the BC Federation of Labour, said she was taking the challenge because she felt empathy for the 180,000 people who do it every day. "In the labour movement we talk about using tax money to help people who are vulnerable and that means raising welfare rates," said Lanzinger.

Derek Gent said he and his family were taking the challenge. Gent represents VanCity Credit Union. "We're doing this for one week," he said, "but it is intolerable that 180,000 people have to do it every day, for months and even years." Gent said the VanCity board had endorsed the seven recommendations of the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition. "Among them is to raise the welfare rates."

Jean de Dieu Hakizimana said he is doing the challenge to be in solidarity with "my African sisters and brothers and people of African descent who live in SROs in the Downtown Eastside." He said that the amount people receive on welfare exposes them to being mentally ill or arrested. "If you see people begging in the street it's because they don't have enough food," he said.

"\$21 is deplorable for a province this rich," said Nadine Anderson, a person who receives the disability pension. "You can't heal or have a chance to look for work."

Doctor Victoria Lee stated that as a doctor she knows the damage that poverty does to people's health. People need to spend at least 3 times as much money on food as the \$21 that a person on welfare has just to have a basic healthy diet.

Raise the Rates organizer Bill Hopwood said that many people all around the province are taking the challenge, including high school students, teachers, dietitians, university students and even two people with diabetes, which might not qualify a person for the disability rate of welfare. "People do not choose welfare," said Hopwood. "They have health issues, lose a job, or are fleeing abuse. The problem now is that the low rates are actually trapping people."

Hopwood ended by calling on the media to ask the government why they insist on wasting the, at least, \$8 billion annual cost of poverty when it would only cost \$4 billion to end it.

Want to know more. Contact Bill Hopwood at 604 738-1653, 778 686-5293 (cell) or email him at bill50@vcn.bc.ca; or visit www.raisetherates.org or http://welfarefoodchallenge.org



Welfare Challengers (l to r) include Jan Murantez (journalist), Victor Elkins (Hospital Employees Union), Irene Lanzinger (BC Federation of Labour), Jean de Dieu Hakizimana, Derek Gent (VanCity Credit Union), and Dr. Victoria Lee.



Basic healthy diet for a week



Bif's \$21 of food for a week



Bif with her \$21 of food and Nadine with \$21 for 300 grams of crackers and 300 grams of cheese.

Why \$21 for a week's food?

Total welfare	\$610
Rent (realistic rent for an SRO)*	\$450
Room damage deposit	\$ 20
Book of 10 bus tickets (to look for work)	\$ 21
Cell phone (to look for work)	\$ 25
Personal hygiene/laundry	\$ 10
Total of all non-food expenditures	\$526
What's left for food	\$ 84

\$84 per month x 12 months = \$1008 a year
\$1008/a year divided by 365 days = \$2.76 a day
\$2.76 a day x 7 days = \$19.33, generously rounded up to \$21
No money for clothes, a coffee, haircuts, or any social life or treats.

Note on SRO rent:

The City of Vancouver found that the average rent of an SRO is now \$450 a month. This contrasts with the Provincial government's shelter allowance portion of welfare of \$375 a month. (Reference: City of Vancouver, Report from General Manager of Planning and Development Services, Feb 24, 2014 to Council., page 4 of Appendix I (page 312 of 320 pages)

Sources:

Cost of Eating in BC, Dietitians of Canada: http://www.dietitians.ca/Downloadable-Content/Public/CostofEatingBC2011_FINAL.asp
Cost of Poverty in BC, CCPA BC: https://www.policyalternatives.ca/costofpovertybc
Number of people in poverty, First Call: http://worstincanada.org/

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--Peg Orcherton

I am an independent Trustee with a record of standing up and speaking out on behalf of our children, their families and the neighbourhoods where we live.

I will continue to fight to ensure a healthy and a safe learning environment for all of our children, and that necessary classroom resources, supports and funding are in place in all of our public schools.

We need to re-build our education partnerships, to put aside individual agendas, and revitalize public education in a respectful and collaborative way. I am running to be a part of that process.

"Peg Orcherton has shown her leadership skills as a Trustee and in her role as Chairperson in our school district. I know that Peg is a leader with a strong voice and collaborative decision-making skills who always puts public education and the needs of students at the forefront of decision making at the Board table..."

--Carole James,

MLA Victoria Beacon Hill, Past Chairperson
School District 61, Past President BCSTA

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Authorized by Steve Orcherton, Financial
Agent, 250-382-1603

Juan de Fuca
New Democrats

Annual General Meeting

Saturday, November 29

10 AM (Registration 9:30 - 10)

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church
(small hall)

798 Goldstream Ave, Langford

Speaker: John Horgan

Contact President Sharon Wilkinson sawilkinson@shaw.ca 250-478-5907

Oak Bay-Gordon Head NDP
Christmas Brunch & Silent Auction

Join us for brunch on Sunday, December 7, at 1 p.m.,
at The Oaks on the Avenue, 206-2250 Oak Bay Avenue

Menu: Bacon, Sausages, Glazed Ham, Scrambled Eggs, Hash Browns,
Seafood Pasta, Salads, Fruits, Coffee and Tea

Tickets \$35 or \$25 for unwaged/students
Kids 5 to 12 \$10 and Kids under 5 eat for free

For tickets please contact Francisco at frandaman@hotmail.com or 250-888-9950
or Keith Todd at president@obghnewdemocts.ca Event code C047

NDP MP recalls events of October 22, says it is too early to draw any conclusions

By Randall Garrison

Clearly the events of October 22 are not something any of us will soon forget. For those present in the caucus rooms the sound of shots and the smell of gun-powder in Parliament will long be remembered.

Nor will I forget the quick action of both security and police to put an end to the threat.

The guard posted at our caucus door rushed in, locked the double doors, ordered everyone to get down, and then stood in front of the doors where the next day we learned that a bullet had pierced the first door and lodged in the second.

While we were still on the floor I urged everyone to send quick texts to their families saying that they were ok as we knew the news would spread fast.

Then we were very quickly moved to a secure location where we spent more than nine hours in lockdown, feeling isolated and eventually a little hungry, but above all safe.

In the lockdown we heard that one of the honour guards at the War Memorial had been shot and then that he had died. None of us will forget Corporal Nathan Cirillo's sacrifice. Nor will we forget Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent run down in St Jean just two days before, no less a sacrifice even if in a less prominent location.

Both were attacks on the Canadian Forces as a symbol of Canada, just as the shooting in Parliament was an attack on our democracy.



MP Randall Garrison

For NDP MPs it was important to go back into our caucus room the next morning and it felt important for Parliament to get back to work on Thursday. The display of unity in the House that morning made all of us proud.

In contrast to those who are now arguing that parliamentary security failed, I have a different view. House of Commons security forces and the RCMP responded with lightning speed. It seems that a total of perhaps eight minutes passed from the first shots at the War Memorial to the death of the shooter and less than three minutes elapsed after he entered Centre Block.

How he got into the buildings at one level has a simple answer.

Someone who is prepared to die and willing to shoot the guards at the door is hard to stop. So of course temporarily there will be heavy security on the Hill, but it will take time to figure out how to meet the challenge of keeping the House of Commons open to the public as it must be and secure at the same time.

As I write this only three days after the incident, it remains too early to draw conclusions and it may still be too early when you read this. Drawing premature conclusions risks the danger of misdirecting both our efforts and our resources.

We must also resist letting our immediate fears create division amongst us and resist letting our revulsion against the violence turn us against each other.

It is not however too early to reject the frame both Conservatives and the media are adopting that it will be necessary to trade civil liberties for greater security. The responsibility of our government is to protect both public safety and civil liberties.

New Democrats will be standing on guard in the House of Commons to make sure our response to these terrible events upholds the very Canadian values that make us who we are as a Nation.

As NDP Leader Tom Mulcair said that night "We woke up this morning in a country blessed by love, diversity and peace, and tomorrow, we will do the same."

Randall Garrison is Member of Parliament for Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca.

NDP Statement on International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

New Democrat critic for Employment and Social Development Jinny Sims (Newton-North Delta) made the following statement on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty:

"Worldwide, more than 1.2 billion people live in extreme poverty. Here at home, even though we are a rich country, 1 in 10 Canadians still lives in poverty.

Twenty-five years after the House of Commons gave unanimous consent to former NDP Leader Ed Broadbent's motion calling on the government to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000, poverty rates remain high in Canada.

There is no excuse for this kind of

inaction that leaves some of our society's most vulnerable members struggling to deal with the negative consequences of poverty – including poor health and educational outcomes.

That's why New Democrats have proposed a *National Poverty Elimination Act*, which would create a federal plan to reduce and eventually eliminate poverty. Through coordinated policies such as investment in affordable housing, providing parents with universal, affordable and available childcare, and reforming the Employment Insurance system, we can ensure that – in the words of this year's theme – we 'leave no one behind.'

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lined-paper.com

Re-Elect

Edith Loring-Kuhanga
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electedith.ca

Re-Elect

Rob Paynter
Parent of students in SD61; child and youth mental health advocate; expertise in planning, policy and budget oversight; BSc
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“Who sees with equal eye, as God of all, A hero perish, or a sparrow fall, Atoms or systems into ruin hurled, And now a bubble burst, and now a world. -- Alexander Pope. English poet. 1688-1744

Back to the Dark Ages

As 2014 draws to a close, any hope that this might be a better year have turned to ashes, as shots rang out in the Canadian Parliament and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse have ravaged the world again. Conquest, War, Famine and Death epitomized 2014 and the human race seems powerless to prevent them. It is as though we are hell-bent on slipping back into the middle or dark ages, albeit with the technological trappings of the 21st Century. We seem to be in a new hundred year’s war and Pope Francis recently described the spate of conflicts around the globe as a “piecemeal Third World War”, driven by greed, intolerance and the lust for power. The latter are not new – they have been around as long as mankind as precursors of every conflict in history.

As “western” (i.e. NATO and Australia) governments have become fixated on ISIL, media attention has shifted from Ukraine to the new war (how many is it now?) in the Middle East. But Ukraine is a dangerous flash point; in many ways just as bad as it was six months ago. The cease-fire exists in name only, while the motives and plans of the most influential player in this tragic theatre remain a mystery. Devious, ruthless and powerful, with a State security apparatus at his fingertips, Vladimir Putin holds the key to the future of the region, and his every action sends shock waves through NATO. Indeed, the Chair of the UK Parliamentary Defence Select Committee asserted on October 20 that Russia appears to be planning for a major war in 2018-19. Alarmist perhaps, but an eerie echo of Churchill in 1935/36.

The Middle East and other events probably suit Putin. He has to do little except watch, as NATO members (at least some of them) run up huge costs deploying aircraft and personnel to Eastern Europe and the Middle East while experiencing a terrorist backlash at home. In addition, the same nations are pumping money and resources into fighting Ebola. All this is being paid for by countries struggling to get out of the worst recession since World War 2. Other conflicts also keep the armaments manufacturers in business – Libya, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Israel, Gaza, Syria, Mali, Nigeria, Central Africa, and Kashmir for example.

Our problem is that we just don’t seem to get it – or at least a lot of our politicians don’t. They are good at reacting to an event and sending aircraft to bomb the perceived bad guys, but they still haven’t figured out how to prevent or de-fuse the events in the first place. Trite though it may sound, unrestrained capitalism and its sycophant politicians is probably a key part of the equation – embodying as it does the greed, lust for power and intolerance identified by Pope Francis.

There is much talk of how ISIL is a “terrorist” organization – which is how someone somewhere will describe any group that disagrees with the status quo and wants to overthrow it. The much revered Nelson Mandela was once described as a terrorist, as was Martin McGuinness, now Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland – to name but two in a long list. With an inexhaustible cadre of terrorists, we can have an endless “War on Terror”. These are useful terms for politicians, be they dictators or democrats since they can be used to describe almost anyone and justify almost anything. Atrocities are part of ISIL tactics – they are weapons of war to induce fear - but ISIL is also a political movement, born in a power vacuum, frustration with useless politicians after the disastrous Iraq War, internecine divisions going back centuries and long held grievances against foreign interventions.

The initial goals of ISIL did not seem very different to those of the Arab army and tribes led by T.E. Lawrence (of Arabia) and Emir Faisal which helped capture Damascus in 1918 and set up a (Provisional) Arab Government of what is now Syria and Iraq (the heartland of the old Caliphate of Baghdad). The British and French were having none of it however, drew some lines on a map (the Sykes-Picot Agreement), created what is now Syria and Iraq, and fuelled resentment which has lasted 100 years – with the results that we see on TV every day - including perhaps, the tragic events of October 22 in Ottawa.

Was ISIL originally a threat to Canada? Perhaps, perhaps not, but it certainly is since Stephen Harper declared it our terrorist enemy and decided to join in the bombing. The actions of ISIL are horrific but if Canada is to attack it, then it has to be with an understanding of why, and what we want the outcome to be. Bombing people because we are repelled by beheadings and other cruelties may be understandable. But in that case we had better extend our war to Saudi Arabia which has beheaded at least 125 people since January 2013, and retains stoning to death as a punishment. We have to understand **what** we are doing and **why**?

The only real answer to these conflicts, hard though it is to achieve, is comprehensive UN-mandated region wide settlements -- backed by a robust UN multi-national (not just Filipino, Nepalese and Fijian etc.) military presence. And there’s the rub. Stephen Harper holds the UN in contempt and has completely withdrawn the Canadian military from its once proud role in UN operations. Our armed forces are now seen by many as a threat rather than their salvation.

And so we go on, bombing and shouting insults across the trenches as the new hundred years war grinds on, spewing out death and destruction, constraining civil liberties and making ever bigger profits for the arms dealers. --**DJO**

The Lower Island NEWS

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As others see it

Let’s talk about Fundamentalism

By Dale Perkins

Let’s talk about Fundamentalism. Like most readers I have long ago eschewed Christian Fundamentalists. I had to acknowledge and despair of those died-in-the-wool “fundies” who “terrorized” us liberal Christians.

Nevertheless, my experience and training in Christian theology helped me locate a way to jettison those enthusiasts without purging their damaging influences. The Pat Robertsons and their Canadian counterparts still exercise their constitutional rights to spread their vitriol far and wide. I don’t want that to change or upgrade them by force or coercion –certainly not in a so-called democratic society.

Now I hear from the daily news out of the Middle East telling of the violent exploits of Muslim ISIL fundamentalists who terrorize large portions of Iraq, Syria and other regions in that part of the world. And right on cue the USA administration and its allies, including our own Prime Minsiter Harper and his obedient cronies, step up to the trough and contribute their meagre offerings to rain bombs on those religious fundamentalists over there.

Recently I purchased another Chris Hedges book – *When Atheism Becomes Religion* -- and have confronted a new reality. That is, the rise of the so-called “Secular Atheists”, who can be just as rabid as fundamentalists of the Christian or Muslim persuasions. And well-known atheists like Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, and Daniel Dennett can be equally chauvinistic, intolerant, anti-intellectual and self-righteous as the other religious fundamentalists. Example – Christopher Hitchens said publically recently – “I think the enemies of civilization should be beaten and killed and defeated, and I don’t make any apology for it. And I think it’s sickly and stupid and suicidal to say that we should

love those who hate us and try to kill us and our children and burn our libraries and destroy our society. I have no patience with this nonsense. (pg. 23) As Hedges points out, “Atheists such as Harris and Hitchens do offer, in place of religious fundamentalism a surrogate religion.” (pg. 24) just as dogmatic and intolerant as those they reject and deplore.

Without dissecting more Hedges’ analysis of this hot and current debate, I want us to consider our own forms of fundamentalism which still emerges inside the democratic Left. The word itself means – “strict adherence to the basic principles of any subject or discipline”.

When applied to politics and politicians it becomes obvious that we of the Left can encase our principles into fundamentals which become water-marks to judge other ideologies – when the divergence can be underscored then this dualism can serve to drive wedges between people, separating the good people from the ‘bad guys’, i.e., lesser beings, who aren’t enlightened or informed as we are.

And we feel quite justified in doing this because the other camp is very disposed to do the same to us. Before long the disparity becomes walls and ideological barriers, which prevent real conversation and community from occurring. And physical walls are built (witness Israel/Palestine), and free movement between the two solitudes ends, and violent confrontations erupt and people killed and maimed. Such is the plight of people caught up in the battles over fundamentals.

There has to be a better way. Somebody has to point that out and take a leading hand in building the kind of community we so desperately need. Will it be people from the democratic left?

Dale Perkins is a retired UCC minister and social activist.

Let’s talk about indifference

By Derek Skinner

Please try and understand what I say below. I have lived in Iran (when it was Persia) and lived and worked in Turkey for years and visited many of the Arab countries including Israel.

I am desolate that these beautiful cultures and countries including Libya are being systematically destroyed. I know some of their practises are distateful to us but their histories predate us by many thousands of years and they are proud of that and do not envy us our so-called progress.

These countries have not participated in the Western European 1000 year progression away from tribal cultures and feudalism. They are locked in to the tra-

ditions of the Muslim and Jewish Faiths.

An eye for an eye is still very relevant and insults are remembered for generations.

When their homes and families are ravagedtheywilltakerevengeinanywaytheycan.

The unfairness of their treatment by “others” is a cry for help to idealistic youths so do not be surprised if we have some homegrown so-called “jihadists” who see themselves as “freedom fighters”.

The seeds being sown by the U.S and NATO in the Middle East will bear fruit for hundreds of years to come.

The current attacks in Quebec and Ottawa are quite probably the result of our interference in Afghanistan or Iraq or Syria or Libya. And I hold the war mongering clowns in the Harper government responsible.

LIN editorials on Gaza and Putin were on the wrong track, says this reader

I could not help but notice that the *LIN*'s editorial page is still pretending that there is some kind of equivalency between the pitiful attempts by the people of Gaza and their democratically elected government--the only democratically elected government representing Palestinians in the occupied territories--to defend themselves with their primitive, largely ineffective rockets against ethnic cleansing, apartheid, the deliberate mass murder of civilians, torture, incarceration, terror, the theft of land and resources from Palestinians as individuals and as a collectivity and, of course, periodic saturation bombing. No sooner did the recent conflict temporarily come to an end than the Israelis stole even more land.

I should add that the Israelis started the last two slaughters, not the Hamas-led Palestinians. (I do not believe the *LIN* has any evidence that the democratically elected Hamas government had anything to do with the murder of three Israeli teenagers, so that cannot be used to excuse the slaughter of innocents.) Moreover, the genocidal policies of the Israeli government predate the election of Hamas by many decades so trying to make Hamas equally responsible for the ongoing violence in Israel-Palestine just won't wash. The reason there cannot be peace is because Israel would rather steal more land than sacrifice land to achieve peace.

When the Holocaust was ongoing the world could be forgiven for not knowing or believing it could actually be happening. The world knows full well of the genocide and ethnic cleansing that has been taking place in Israel-Palestine since 1948 but does nothing and uses the excuse that there is some kind of equivalency between the murderers and their victims because the victims exercised their perfectly legitimate right to fight back with the only weapons available to them. (By the way the Palestinians have also employed nonviolent forms of resistance but that has also proven ineffective against such an implacable and unyielding foe especially since the world did nothing to support them.)

With regard to Putin, the editorial page suggests that he has provided humanitarian supplies to the people of the eastern Ukraine because he feels guilty for some reason or other. He could not possibly feel guilty because of his minor role in supporting the people of eastern Ukraine who voted for independence in the form of either greater autonomy or separation after the coup and who were subsequently invaded by government forces and murderous, anti-Russian and anti-Semitic Nazi thugs.

Perhaps the *LIN* is suggesting that Putin had a hand in the downing of the Malaysian passenger jet. The Americans and the Dutch have produced no such evidence so I would be surprised if the *LIN* had such evidence.

I do not think we get anywhere by making Putin out to be as bad or worse than the Nobel Peace Prize winning (?) US

president or his gutless and unprincipled western European allies as he bombs his 7th Arab nation without any idea of how this is going to contribute to ridding the region of American armed (and often trained) ISIS fighters or achieving peace.

Putin should rightfully have won the Nobel prize because he at least temporarily discouraged Obama from bombing Syria to achieve the kind of regime change Obama favours i.e. the kind of regime change that ushers in a repressive regime that takes US direction.

John Bell, Victoria

Failure of representative government

In our system of representative government, our elected representatives theoretically represent our interests. However, this system is implemented through a party system in which the party leader must sign our representative's election papers. Thus our elected representative is first responsible to the party leader and secondarily responsive to constituents.

Our party leader is compromised by election contributions which effectively makes him/her responsive to political contributors and their special interests rather than to constituents. Thus, our system of representative government is basically faulty by design. It is a clever con-job by the 1%ers over We the 99%ers.

This is a deliberate built in flaw to our system of democratic representative government.

This flaw can be overcome. One method is to determine what We the People, We the 99%ers, want, and use these wants to impose accountability on our People's Party.

This could be achieved by a multitude of small groups using Dialogue Circle and Wisdom Council techniques to develop, over time, two lists: the What We the People Want and Don't Want Lists. These Two Lists would then be used to draft the People's Party election platform which would resonate with the other 99%ers. Our party leader and elected representatives would be held responsible for implementing our Two Lists embedded in our election platform as members of the opposition or as members of the People's Government. These Two Lists, then provide a method of imposing accountability on our elected representatives. Accountability is now possible by evaluating their actions against the Two Lists.

We the People, We the 99%ers, can impose accountability on our elected representatives of our People's Party based on what We the People want. In this way, we can overcome the basic fault of the current system of representative government.

Comments?
Gerry Masuda, Duncan

Voters' guide for municipal elections receives failing grade

On Sept 24 Tom Fletcher of *Victoria News* produced a report card/voters' guide for the upcoming municipal elections in Victoria that is no such thing. That is to say, it consisted entirely of an attack on one candidate, Ben Isitt, which was so full of distortions and fabrications that it amounted to a work of fiction by an apparently bitter and disappointed individual.

Having observed Isitt's impressive performance at a half dozen community meetings, I can only conclude that Fletcher's wildly inaccurate comments and vituperative language are motivated by something akin to envy and resentment perhaps because Isitt is significantly younger (a "rookie" Council member, in Fletcher's terms), more energetic and accomplished, attractive (a "poster child" says Fletcher -- or "Hollywood handsome", as a an admiring woman at one of the meetings cited exclaimed), and very well educated (with a history PhD, a law degree and further studies ongoing).

Although Fletcher apparently does not like "professional student(s)" (as he labels Isitt), my guess is that voters would prefer to have someone representing them who is alive intellectually and still learning rather than someone who, like Fletcher, gives little evidence of having done any serious thinking or studying since way back in the Reagan/Thatcher era.

Fletcher raises the entirely irrelevant red herring of Isitt's visit(s?) to post-Soviet Russia when he says it is significant that Isitt was there when Putin was "having his way with Crimea". Fletcher provides no evidence to support the implication that Isitt had some role in the Putin-arranged democratic vote of the vast majority of Crimeans to **rejoin** Russia, which occurred after the US-supported Kiev coup that was led by some very intolerant nationalists and violent Nazis, who threatened the language rights of those of Russian descent and raised the specter of ethnic cleansing.

I am one who thinks Putin could have done more to protect the population of the eastern and southern Ukraine, especially after armed Nazi thugs in Odessa attacked unarmed protesters and either burned them alive or murdered them as they lay on the ground after leaping from a burning building where they had fled. Wherever Isitt's sympathies lie, the only time I heard him mention Putin was in connection with the effort by community groups in Victoria and elsewhere to convince Russia to free Greenpeace crew members, which Isitt supported.

Fletcher's comments re Isitt's visit amount to the "red baiting" not only of Isitt but of a post-communist government 25 years after the Soviet collapse, which is just further evidence that Fletcher is intellectually still mired in the Cold War era.

Fletcher tells us that one of Isitt's published works (his dissertation?) explores the influence of the Bolshevik revolution and its aftermath on the BC NDP, which, I need hardly remind readers only began life in 1961. Certainly, that revolution had an influence on all political parties everywhere but any social democratic party, such as the CCF or NDP, would have pointed out where it departed from the "centralizing" (to borrow Fletcher's term) legacy of Bolshevism. Did Fletcher read any of Isitt's published work or was his rant based on scant minutes of haphazard "research" on the internet?

Fletcher also claims that Isitt has instructed Ottawa to "accelerate the bankruptcy of Canada Post". The Harper government needs no such instruction. What did Fletcher misread or distort to be able to make this bogus claim?

Fletcher finally manages to quote Isitt accurately to the effect that Canada should emulate Chavez/Maduro era Venezuela in

assuring that petroleum resources benefit the population rather than (foreign?) corporations. Since most Victoria voters would readily agree, Fletcher attempts to shift the focus by attempting to convince the reader that the Chavez/Maduro government is culpable because it has not entirely eliminated the poverty that existed long before it came to power and because it has not quelled the violence still prevailing in that nation, much of which has been promoted or instigated by the reactionary right and the US. (Neither the Venezuelan right nor the US accepts the results of elections that do not go their way.) None of this raises any serious questions about the correctness of Isitt's position.

Fletcher suggests that Isitt obstructed the timely completion of the sewage treatment project. At several community meetings I attended I heard Isitt argue vigorously in favour of moving ahead with it. Of course, if there was an attempt to ram it through over the objections of Esquimalt, the municipality most affected by the project, any person who respects democracy might well seek accommodation with that municipality before proceeding.

Fletcher seems to believe that the interest of one affluent Albertan should be of such consequence that the concomitant desecration of a First Nations burial ground should not delay construction of a home on the site for a millisecond. Like Isitt, whom he criticizes, most voters would differ.

As a report card or guide re the record of local politicians in the upcoming municipal local, Tom Fletcher's *Victoria News* column must receive a failing grade if for no other reason than that it is no report card at all. It consists almost entirely of distortions and fabrications aimed at only one politician. Not being subject to peer evaluation as in an academic environment and not subject to the kinds of editorial constraints that might prevail at a genuine and reputable newspaper, Fletcher is free to write nonsense but the few readers who actually try to use his column as a guide will recognize almost immediately who deserves the failing grade.

J.R. Bell, Victoria

A letter to Tom Mulcair

Tom, I am almost with you. We do need to strengthen and defend our democratic institutions and traditions. We can shout as loud as possible about the destruction of democracy under the leadership of Harper and his goons, BUT we are shouting into a void unless the NDP is a viable alternative to the Harper Cons and the Trudeau Liberals.

You have shown a total disregard for basic democratic principles by seeking to micro manage local nomination processes in both new ridings cut from that which is well represented by Jean Crowder.

Grass roots democracy is cherished on the Island, and your attempts to manipulate the candidate selection process, eliminating strong candidates who would not easily be transformed into back bench parrots, and favouring candidates with strategic timelines, is much too transparent and contradicts your appeal.

How can traditional and loyal NDP members, some with roots going back to the CCF, support you? Right now I am on the fence as to whether I can support the party in 2015. People are talking about rebuilding the party "post-Mulcair".

Do we need to be reduced to a slim third or fourth place party before we realize that only in being true to ourselves can we address the problems faced by Canadians and present ourselves as an alternative?

Phil Little
Member. Nanaimo - Ladysmith EDA

We welcome your letters to the editor, as well as articles and reviews, photos, and anything else you think would be of interest to our progressive readers. Please mail them to the Editor, at Box 311-2750 Quadra Street, Victoria, BC, V8T 4E8, email them to dale_young@telus.net, or phone 250-384-7621.

The next issue of the Lower Island News will be in 2015. Deadline for submitting advertising and articles is tentatively set for Friday, January 30. For further information and to submit articles and ads, email dale_young@telus.net.

Friends of the Lower Island News

Thanks to the continuing generosity of our donors, and our recent fundraiser, we have been able to put this information packed issue together without worrying how the printer and the Post Office are going to be paid next month! What a relief! But please continue to think of us...

Below is the latest list of Friends of the Lower Island News who have given donations since the last issue in August:


Anonymous	\$25
Trudy Thorgerison	\$50

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

Public education is governed; you must govern it with your vote



On November 15th vote
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Working Harder. Working Smarter.

By Diane Walsh

Among other important elections, needless to say – is the Greater Victoria School District 61 election – November 15 – where parents with children in the district and activists pushing for properly funded public-education can have their voices heard.

One of the largest districts in the province, School District 61 encompasses 42 schools, according to current school catchment maps. Follow #SD61 on twitter for up-to-date information about bylaws which guide and affect public engagement.

The gridlock in SD 61 is so dire that many observers won't hesitate to say out loud: The Board of Education is being utterly controlled by deadwood.

You heard right, deadwood trustees. Clingers-on who are holding a majority and yet are lovers of gridlock – so here's to pointing the finger at multi-term trustees who've forgotten why they are even there in the first place, actively enabling our rogue BC government's ideological war on public education and worse still – sweeping under the rug the challenges brought about by years of underfunding.

This cannot be ignored, say the members of United for Fully Funded Public Education, a team slate of three incumbents – Edith Loring-Kuhanga, Diane McNally, and Deborah Nohr, joined by new candidates, Jordan Watters and Rob Paynter. This solidarity group found at <http://unitedsd61.com/> together are pushing for change.

United is thus a "vote for change" in that they are standing up as a group of five progressives, to enable the formation of a new majority to handle the brick wall currently in place on the board.

If it weren't for the efforts of the aforementioned three presently-serving progressive trustees blowing the whistle, the delivery of public education in our communities would be put at even greater risk this coming year.

Thankfully, there is an election coming; and teachers and parents are calling for a sweep of the deadwood – and instead putting their faith behind UnitedSD61 who are spearheading a stronger and more effective voting bloc on the board of education which can better serve the district's pressing needs.

In a nutshell, school planning council update information should flow to the trustees. Repeat issues which are emerging out of the 42 schools in the district need to be collated into readable form and action needs to be taken through a carefully crafted Strategic Plan.

The public must become more engaged and learn the operations of their own districts. For SD61 – how the \$200 million annual budget is allocated and how this is happening – by way of example. A long term strategic-planning process for SD61

means coming to an agreement on long-term objectives and letting this inform the setting of priority and allocation of resources.

Granted, teachers, teaching assistants, administrators, specialists and support staff, do their best. But the problems which have come about by years of underfunding are immensely complex. The BCTF also did its union best in this last round of negotiations (reaching an agreement) but it became abundantly clear – even to the legislative press gallery journalists – that more Budget money needs to be committed by the BC government for BC education. The system should not depend on and be propped up by international fees.

Public engagement is required to boost the Budget commitment; a circle of hands says the BCTF is demonstrating a commitment to a better-funded public education system. The BCTF can't do it alone; it needs the assistance of the voices of British Columbians to push for better funding for public education.

These websites are helpful to anyone wishing to become better engaged:

<http://lined-paper.com/2014/08/20/united-sd61-a-progressive-coalition-for-november-15/> - Go to this comprehensive blog to learn the voting records of your current SD61 trustees.

<https://www.sd61.bc.ca/> - Board of Education website, 'Agendas' to meetings are provided on the website, look carefully. The key Tabs are: Operations Meetings and Education Meetings

<http://www.bcpvpa.bc.ca/> BC Principals and Vice-Principals Association; it's called VPVPA in Victoria but no separate website exists, it seems.

<https://www.bctf.ca/> BC Teacher's Federation

<http://www.bcsta.org/> School Trustees association

<http://bcpsea.bc.ca/> BC Public School Employer's Association

The current enrolment numbers in SD61 are as follows: Elementary, 8372; Middle 3886; Secondary, 6030. 76 students moved over to Independent Schools; and 15 international students withdrew from the district. These statistics were provided by SD61 Superintendent, Sherri Bell, at the October 14 district Operations meeting.

VCPAC, GVTA and student rep Dezy Manuel (who has direct access to the Superintendent), along with CUPE 947, CUPE 382, and ASA are resources of information, as well – as these are representatives allowed to sit in every meeting. Due to in-camera meetings being a current characteristic feature of SD61's way of doing business, the public is not able to attend all meetings however, the public can approach representatives for info and/or speak directly to VPVPA members present at meetings.

On the horizon, it looks like SD61 will finally have a Q&A at meetings. It took three years to bring this to fruition and it is on account of the efforts of United.

Staying true to our roots

By Alistair Macgregor

The campaigning continues in the new federal riding of Cowichan-Malahat-Langford as candidates vie for the privilege of following in Jean Crowder's footsteps.

I am one of the candidates for the nomination, and a common concern I have heard from the membership is that, in our very real quest to form government, we have drifted away from the values that defined our party when it was formed. This concern has been echoed within the party in the years since the 2011 election – after decades of faithfully playing the role of "Canada's conscience," is the NDP remaining true to its original values and policies or has it evolved into a party that is targeting the political spectrum traditionally occupied by the Liberals? Is this the direction the party should be taking, and is it a necessary move if the NDP is to realistically form government?

I firmly believe that the NDP should go forward with the goal of forming government. I have spent seven years working in MP Jean Crowder's constituency office, and I am intimately acquainted with the trials of being in Opposition. Many worthwhile NDP-sponsored bills have died prematurely at their Second Reading in the House of Commons, such as legislation focussing on climate change, Employment Insurance, the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, bankruptcy and more. If we want true social democracy and forward-thinking economic, environmental, and evidence-based policy and legislation in Canada, then the NDP must be at the cabinet table.

To form government, however, I believe the answer lies not in changing our party's values and policies, but in combating the centrist and right-wing narrative that has so pervaded our political discourse. Our party is the champion of public healthcare, fair trade, a federal minimum wage, a national daycare plan, a national food strategy, and a move towards a green economy. These are policies that many Canadians can and will relate to, but only if we as a party are committed to refuting the discourse of deregulation, tax-cuts, and corporate welfare. It is telling that plans for the projected \$6 billion surplus in the next Conservative federal budget already include tax cuts before any serious discussion about what the electorate actually wants done with that money can get started.

The dominant narrative of tax-cuts is clear when you review the government's own figures. The Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer recently released a report that shows a reduction of \$17.1 billion in personal income tax revenue and a cut of \$13.3 billion in the federal portion of the GST/HST revenue per year since 2005. Other sources show that our national revenue has shrunk by \$50 billion per year since the late 1990s because of tax cuts. What investments in social programs could have been funded with that revenue? Had another narrative been championed, then perhaps the Canada of to-

Staying true to our roots, continued on page 7



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On the home front --

Canada at war

By David Olsen

Canada has been at war for a long time, as the apparently endless “War on Terror” drags on, but the events of October 22 on Parliament Hill have brought it into stark focus. So far, we have escaped things like 9/11, the London Underground and bus bombings, or the Madrid train atrocity. But now the war is here, unleashed in the iconic surroundings of the national war memorial and Parliament.

Hours after the Ottawa assassination, Conservative Minister Jason Kenney tweeted, “We will not be terrorized.” That however is precisely what had just happened! Remarkably, police spokesmen said at a news conference that the attack took them by surprise. Yet just the day before, with much fanfare, the Minister of Defence had despatched eight CF-18s and other aircraft to attack ISIL, and on October 22, the Prime Minister was to host a symbolic ceremony honouring Malala Yousafzai in Toronto (immediately cancelled).

These two events would surely have led some high-powered CSIS operatives to put two and two together and make four? But the ultimate price for whatever went wrong was paid by a young reservist from Hamilton. The reported assassin, Michael Zehaf Bibeau was not sent by ISIL from the Middle East but was a Canadian convert to Islam and had a police record.

As the Prime Minister declared war on the (would-be) Islamic State, he announced tax cuts “for hard-working Canadian families” (same old words again) as a pre-cursor to the 2015 election. In the past, going to war cost a lot of money and hardship, which we were all supposed to share. In London, during World War 2, I recall that's exactly how it was -- shortage of money, shortage of food and almost everything else, with a bit of danger thrown in.

Now our leaders tell us we can have a war and still give some chosen people tax cuts.

So – if the Government has less money, yet sends aircraft and people to war, how are they going to pay for it? Laser guided bombs commonly cost \$25,000 to \$40,000. These are not Bashar Assad’s do-it-yourself barrel bombs, but sophisticated weapons. All this adds up, so the government’s announcements are bizarre and instead of shared hardship in war, there will be tax cuts for some.

One clue as to where the money may come from may be the front cover of *Maclean’s* on September 15, with the headline “Old, Rich, Spoiled” saying that it’s time seniors (a.k.a. old people) “paid up”. The accompanying article was filled with misinformation designed to show that old people are a drain on society and should be financially penalized for being old and having been frugal during their lives! This sounded like preparing to hit old people to pay for the war while giving tax-breaks to well off families for their children’s sports programs.

While this was going on we learned of the ballooning cost of Conservative satellite Ministers offices and political staff, all funded from Canadian’s taxes. This did not stop the Conservatives (aided and abetted by the Liberals) from sanctimonious censure of the NDP for having satellite MP’s offices, and demanding that such costs be repaid.

Government also decreed that charities such as Oxfam are to be targeted by the

Canada Revenue Agency to audit their “political activities” (i.e. not agreeing with the Conservative Party); in the case of Oxfam, it dared to have the goal of “preventing poverty”.

In BC, just as the Legislature opened, we had the now familiar spectacle of Premier Christy Clarke gallivanting off to India, accompanied by more than 70 hangers-on. The mission was overshadowed by the visit to India just a short time before, by Chinese Premier Xi Jinping, who promised Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi that China would invest billions in Indian transport and infrastructure.

Despite more vaporous words about LNG and the promise of scholarships for Indian students, not much of benefit to BC seems to have come from the mission which conveniently enabled Clarke to avoid having to answer any questions in the BC Legislature.

Also overlooked was Indian Nobel Peace Prize winner Kailash Satyarthi who highlighted that millions of children are virtually slave labourers in Indian factories. Certainly no forecast of skilled manufacturing jobs for Canadians – just more imports of manufactured goods from India (using child labour?) and more flogging off those BC natural resources which have not already gone to China and to Malaysia’s Petronas

The municipal elections loom – not without some comic relief, starting with a near punch-up at a Victoria all candidates meeting and one candidate running for Mayor in all 13 municipalities. If he was actually elected in all of them, would this mean instant amalgamation and the dreams of Amalgamation Yes come true?

The issue of the dire crisis in BC primary healthcare is again high profile, spurred by a newspaper article by Dr. Chris Pengelly who again warned that the primary healthcare system is broken beyond repair.

His article prompted a flurry of letters and comment from other family physicians who share his frustration, but it was all met with a deafening silence from the provincial government. Why – because ideologically they don’t believe in a public healthcare system – hence the easy ride they have given to Dr. Brian Day and his private clinic and their timid response to his challenge to the whole public healthcare system in the Supreme Court. One doctor stated how beneficial it would be if the Government would provide nurses to work in family practices. That’s what the BC Liberals promised in 2002 and again in 2005, but they have done nothing - and they won’t. Only a change of government and a complete system overhaul will fix primary healthcare and the current shambles, which is unfair and a betrayal of Canadian democratic principles.

Editor’s note: In this last issue of 2014, we are pleased to introduce a new column, *On the home front*, which will be written by our regular Editorial writer, David Olsen, who wants to talk about more issues relevant to Lower Island residents than he has space for in the editorial page.


Please let us know if you like it!

Municipal elections are on November 15! Remember to vote



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Staying true to our roots, from page 6

day would have national programs that would greatly improve our lives – a more robust healthcare system, affordable access to universities, childcare, homecare, public transit, adequate pension benefits, and so on.

The dominant narrative of the past few decades has pulled the political spectrum to the right so much so that even the “centrist” policies of the Liberals are now firmly attached to tax cuts and deregulation. The NDP must stand firmly on the left; rather than chasing the centre, we must stay true to our roots, champion our own narrative, and bring the centre back to us.

Alistair MacGregor is a candidate for the federal NDP nomination in Cowichan-Malahat-Langford. He can be reached at 250-732-7937 or



Alistair MacGregor



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A NEW RIDING. A NEW CANDIDATE. A FRESH START.



Making childcare affordable

By Murray Rankin

Tracing your finger down a ranking of OECD countries' public investment in early childhood education, you might be disappointed by where you find Canada—dead last. As you might expect, the Nordic states top the list, spending between 1.5 and 2 percent of their GDP on early learning. Scan further down the list—past most of Western Europe, past Australia, past our American neighbours—and there we are: investing just one quarter of one percent of our GDP on educating our children during the most critical phase of their development.

That may be about to change. In Ottawa and select cities across Canada, including Victoria, New Democrats recently announced a plan to make quality childcare available and affordable nationwide. As Official Opposition, we demonstrated our commitment to this priority by pledging to boost federal investment by \$5 billion over the coming decade, to create or maintain a million childcare spaces across Canada, and to work with the provinces to deliver quality care to parents at an affordable cost of no more than \$15 a day.

Over the last two decades, Liberals and Conservatives have repeatedly promised action on childcare, and repeatedly failed to deliver. Liberals promised universal affordable childcare in their first Red Book in 1993, yet they refused to act until their government was on the brink of being thrown out over the sponsorship scandal 13 years later. Conservatives promised to create 125,000 new childcare spots yet, in their ninth year in power, they've yet to create a single space. Decades of inaction and underinvestment by successive Liberal and Conservative governments have made childcare in Canada expensive, scarce, and of uneven quality.

We feel this in Victoria. In our province, childcare is more expensive than in most other parts of Canada. We're one of only two provinces where the cost of an infant care space tops one thousand dollars a month.

Imagine a single parent with a young child. Sixty-five percent of single parents with pre-school aged children work. And yet working full-time at the median wage for a woman in Victoria, a single mother spends 55 percent of her income to get childcare.

Families with two working parents have long been commonplace in Victoria. Three

out of four parents of pre-school aged children work. And yet only one in five Canadian children has access to quality childcare. That gap means that far too many parents—women in particular—have to miss work or downgrade jobs simply because childcare is unavailable.

Think of what it would mean for our economy to unlock the potential of these parents. In Quebec, the implementation of universal childcare saw labour force participation rise by 70,000 and economic output expand by \$5.1 billion a year.

A study by two senior economists at TD Bank concluded that "compared to other industries, investment in early childhood education can provide a large return for the economy". In fact, when they looked at the employment multiplier—the number of jobs created per million dollars of increased output—they found that it was "by far the highest across all industries." In other words, as a job creation tool, investment in early childhood education sets the gold standard.

According to data from Statistics Canada, the NDP's proposed investment in childcare will help create approximately a *quarter million* jobs. At the same time, the boost to Canada's economy is estimated at \$20 billion by 2020.

Of course, affordable childcare not only lifts a burden from the shoulders of parents re-entering the workforce, it enriches the lives of their children. We know that access to high quality early childhood education programs leads to better social and economic outcomes for children. Quality care makes children more likely to graduate and find employment; less likely to be out of work, in jail, or in need of social assistance.

Taking these many varied benefits into account, most analysts not only conclude that the program pays for itself, but find that for every dollar invested we see at least two dollars in shared benefits. Clearly, this is an investment that's as good for our economy as it is for our children. It's an investment we can't afford not to make.

There is perhaps no more important investment we can make as a country than giving every young child a strong start. We know how much this will mean for young children, for their parents and grandparents, and for their employers. After decades of inaction by Liberal and Conservative governments, we're one step closer to ensuring quality, affordable care for every young Canadian.

Murray Rankin is Member of Parliament for Victoria.



Photo by Katie Fillion

Victoria MP Murray Rankin (r) joins Victoria City Council candidate Erik Kaye (centre) in talking politics to customers at a sidewalk cafe.

Bill on derelict boats to be debated in Parliament

By Jean Crowder

Derelict vessels are in the news again with the recent decision by Victoria city council to use bylaw enforcement to try and remove derelict boats in its waterways. There are very few tools that local municipalities or First Nations can use to deal with the threat of derelict vessels.

Since it is hard to determine if a boat is abandoned or just in rough shape, few municipalities can afford to take on the challenge of tracking down an owner, and forcing them to deal with their property.

That's why I'm pleased my private member's bill, C-231, will be up for debate in the House of Commons either just before Christmas or when we return to Ottawa in February.

In many Canadian coastal communities derelict and abandoned vessels have a negative impact on the natural esthetics of their harbours, and some pose a threat to the local environment, while others can obstruct navigation.

Even though major environmental dangers from derelict and abandoned vessels are dealt with swiftly by Transport Canada (through the Canadian Coast Guard), many are left to simply rot away.

If a vessel is not obviously an environmental concern and is not posing an obstacle to navigation, usually there is no action taken.

Derelict vessels range from small pedal boats that slip free and become a hazard to navigation to large ships that may pose a risk to the environment from stored fuel on board.

Our current laws are a mish-mash of responsibility – reflecting the many levels of jurisdiction and responsibility in coastal waterways. There is no obligation on a federal minister – whether transport, the environment, or fisheries and

oceans - to take action unless there is an imminent danger. That means it can take years to have a vessel removed.

Transport Canada can take a lead in instances where a vessel is the cause of an obstruction to navigation. However, vessels in the inter-tidal zone are rarely an obstruction to navigation.

Transport Canada has supported salvage claims made to the receiver of wrecks when questionable vessels appear ashore or in waters adjacent to communities. However, salvage claims are rarely made against the many smaller derelict vessels with no obvious value.

Many of our neighbours share a problem with derelict vessels. And the State of Washington has developed a fairly robust system that I used when drafting my own Bill.

There were some differences – Washington uses the term "aquatic lands" that has no comparator in Canadian law. Washington and Canada have many different agencies and governments that are responsible for navigable waters and dealing with hazards. The key is to clearly lay out which agency will deal with wrecks and derelicts.

My Bill C-231 amends the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 to ensure that regulations are made to establish measures for the removal, disposition or destruction of derelicts vessels or wrecks.

It designates the Canadian Coast Guard as a receiver of wreck and requires the Coast Guard to take reasonable steps to determine and locate the owners of the wreck.

My hope is that this legislation will give our communities more resources to deal with abandoned or derelict vessels.

You can follow the progress of my Bill at my website, www.jeancrowder.ca.

Jean Crowder is Member of Parliament for Nanaimo-Cowichan.

Cancer survivors deserve better access to EI

OTTAWA – In the wake of a study showing that cancer survivors earn less and are less likely to be employed, the NDP is calling on the federal government to stop blocking Canadians who need income supports like Employment Insurance (EI).

"EI is a safety net designed to protect workers and their families. It is cruel for the Conservatives to block Canadian workers from accessing a fund that they paid into, especially when they are suffering and need it most," said NDP Health critic Libby Davies (Vancouver East).

Under the Conservatives, Canadians diagnosed with cancer do not always have access to EI and Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits that they have earned. Just last year, the federal government went to court to avoid paying EI benefits to a new

mother who was diagnosed with cancer on maternity leave.

"What the Conservatives don't seem to understand is that workers and employers fund EI, not the government. It's the government's responsibility to fix the system so that Canadians in need can have the peace of mind they deserve," said NDP deputy Health critic Dany Morin (Chicoutimi – Le Fjord).

Victoria NDP Constituency Association
will hold a

Nomination Meeting
for the upcoming federal election,
on Saturday, November 22,
at Oaklands Community Centre

Registration at 2:00 pm
Meeting at 2:15 pm

Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke New Democrats
extend

Best Wishes of the Season
to everyone!

Please support your local food bank

*You can reach your executive
by writing to PO Box 622, 105-1497 Admirals Road,
Victoria, BC, V9A 2P8
or email your president, Jared Butcher, at jared.butcher2010@gmail.com*

Murray Rankin
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
VICTORIA

Community office
1057 Fort Street
Victoria, BC, V8V 3K5
T: (250) 363.3600

www.MurrayRankin.ca







Local MPs and MLAs gather on stage at the Victoria Labour Council's annual Labour Day Picnic held September 1 in Irving Park in James Bay. From left to right are Mike Eso, president of the VLC; Lana Popham MLA, Saanich South; Maurine Karagianis, MLA, Esquimalt-Royal Roads; Carole James, MLA, Victoria-Beacon Hill; Rob Fleming, MLA, Victoria-Swan Lake; Gary Holman, MLA, Saanich North and the Islands; Randall Garrison, MP for Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca, and Murray Rankin, MP for Victoria.

Cowichan Valley BC NDP elects MacGregor as new president

The Cowichan Valley BC NDP Constituency Association held its Annual General Meeting on Saturday, October 4, at the Duncan United Church.

Rob Douglas decided to step down as president, citing a number of other commitments. He said he enjoyed serving as president, and is proud of the work the previous executive accomplished over the past year, including hosting a number of policy workshops, working on outreach, and taking a strong stance on the BC NDP's finances.

The new executive consists of the following members: president: Alistair MacGregor; vice-president, Deb Foster;

treasurer, Trudy Thorgeirson (will stay on until Jan. 1, 2015; secretary: Beth Davies; membership secretary, Faye Griffith; Provincial Council Delegate (PCD), Rob Douglas; alternate PCDs, Tom Harkins and Nigel Hussy

Members-at-large are Hilary Abbott, Mary Annis, Harry Berbrayer, Rosemary Danaher, Ed Elliott, Joan Gillatt, Erskine Phillips, Tom Harkins, Nigel Hussey, Rhoda Taylor, Dee Shoolingin, and Laurel Walton

The Cowichan Valley BC NDP's Constitution was amended twice: the quorum for executive meetings is now the lesser of eight or one-third of the executive members, and the executive shall now use Bourinot's

Rules of Order at executive meetings except where they conflict with existing by-laws or the BC NDP Constitution.

There was also a unanimous vote by the members present to oppose the merger between Island Savings Credit Union and First West Credit Union.

In speaking to the Cowichan Valley members, MacGregor said, "As new president I wish to express my thanks to the membership for putting their trust in me and to Rob Douglas for providing such a good example to follow. I look forward to working with the new executive to meet the challenges in the months ahead."

NDP calling on government to create a national seniors strategy

OTTAWA –The NDP Seniors Critic Irene Mathysen (London-Fanshawe) introduced a motion in Parliament September 7 calling on the government to develop a National Seniors Strategy.

"The number of seniors in Canada is set to double by 2036," said Mathysen. "We need to put plans in place now to ensure that we are ready for this dramatic increase. No one should have to grow old in poverty, insecurity and isolation."

The NDP is the only party with a National Seniors Strategy. To support this much needed strategy, Mathysen also introduced a motion calling for a Seniors Advocate that will oversee and report on government policies related to seniors.

The NDP Employment and Social Development critic Jinny Sims (Newton-North

Delta) also introduced a motion requiring government programs to be accessible to marginalized and ethno-cultural groups.

"It is so important that people can access the support programs in place" said Sims. "We need to make sure that a person can access information and programs in a language they understand."

Bird waters are not criminals

OTTAWA – The NDP's National Revenue critic, Murray Rankin (Victoria), is concerned that instead of going after tax cheats, the Conservatives are using Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) resources to intimidate a law-abiding nature group.

A group of bird watchers from Southern Ontario received a letter from the CRA ordering them to refrain from undertaking partisan activities with the implicit threat that future audits were a possibility.

"The timing simply doesn't pass the smell test – the CRA letter arrived just days after this bird watching club wrote directly to two ministers, expressing their concern about the impact of government-approved chemicals on vulnerable bee colonies," said Rankin.

"The Conservatives' attack on anyone who questions their short-sighted policies is ridiculous. It is also deeply disturbing," said Rankin.

Conservatives ignore calls for action on retirement security

OTTAWA – Despite widespread calls for action on retirement security, and growing concern amongst Canadians, Conservatives continue to mismanage one of the most pressing economic issues facing Canada today.

"Canadians and provincial governments understand the urgent need for action from the federal government to address the looming retirement security crisis," said NDP Pensions critic Murray Rankin (Victoria). "While The Conservatives keep blocking progress to boost the CPP/QPP, Canadians are growing increasingly concerned about their retirement security."

A new EKOS survey found that 69 percent of Canadians believe the federal government should take a leading role to ensure Canadians can retire – either through savings programs or income supports. Fully half of Canadians surveyed said they were concerned they wouldn't have enough money for their retirement. Unfortunately Conservatives have blocked all efforts to boost retirement savings and increase the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Quebec Pension Plan (QPP) benefits.

"While the premiers meet to discuss this pending crisis, Conservatives are actually making matters worse by blocking increases to public pensions and eroding access to good quality company pensions," said Rankin.

Conservatives will miss environmental targets

OTTAWA – The Environment Commissioner confirmed October 7 what New Democrats have been warning for years: the Conservative government has failed to tackle climate change.

"We know the Conservatives have failed to regulate the oil and gas sectors, so it's no surprise that the Conservatives will fail to meet their own targets on emissions by 2020" said NDP Environment critic Megan Leslie (Halifax). "They've even blocked our attempts to study these issues in Parliament."

Despite Conservative promises that industry would bear the costs of environmental monitoring of the oil sands, the report also shows that taxpayers are paying 26% of the costs of that monitoring – an abandonment of the polluter-pays principle.

"While taxpayers are subsidizing the oil and gas sector, First Nations and Métis stakeholders and rightsholders are being ignored," said NDP deputy critic for the Environment François Choquette (Drummond). "This Conservative government is not a credible or responsible partner in resource development."

NDP calling for creation of a national seniors strategy

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Please Vote!

November 15th is election day for local and regional governments and school boards. We encourage you to exercise your franchise at the local level and make your progressive voice heard. This is how we change the world

☒ A Just Society

This is the time to make sure that the people that are making decisions about our neighbourhoods, our culture, our farms, and our children's education share our common values of equity and fairness for all.

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MLA Report

Highway of Tears still risky; shuttle bus needed

By Carole James

In its Throne Speech 10 months ago, the government promised to move towards a “violence-free BC and ensure women, including Aboriginal and vulnerable women, have the support they need”. But its actions since then do not match the intent of the words. It’s part of a troubling pattern of the premier saying what she thinks people want to hear, and then not delivering.

In the last few months, the government has cut the budget for the Highway of Tears Task Force by 84 percent. And it has utterly failed to act on even the most urgent recommendations made by Wally Oppal in the 2012 *Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry*.

One of the priorities Mr. Oppal identified is a shuttle bus along Highway 16, the infamous Highway of Tears, yet the government has failed to provide even this basic, life-saving service. Instead of taking action to solve the murders and missing persons cases along the highway, government has cut \$1.4 million from police funding. That means the loss of more than a dozen investigators.

Earlier this year, I drove the highway as Critic for Children and Family Development, along with my Opposition MLA colleagues Maurine Karagianis and Jennifer Rice. What we found was very troubling.

As we drove, we noticed there was no cell phone service for hours at a time. We talked about how isolated it was if you were hitchhiking or if you were alone and your car broke down. Along the highway, we stopped and spoke with local First Nations and civic leaders about how crucial a bus service is to their communities and how many people, especially women, have no options to buy food or see a doctor except to hitchhike, often with their children along with them.

This area is remote, with few services, and there are long distances between communities. People on limited incomes with no vehicle often have no way of getting to medical appointments, to buy groceries, go to family gatherings, and other essential services and critical supports for daily liv-

ing.

My colleagues and I created a video showing our experience and our conversations with people living along the Highway of Tears. You can watch it at: <http://bcnd-pcaucus.ca/news/video-new-democrat-mlas-tour-highway-tears/>

When we returned to the Legislature, we asked the government more than a dozen times about implementing a shuttle bus along Highway 16. To date they have taken no action.

BC has the highest number of unsolved cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in the country. It’s shameful for the government to be cutting the resources needed to solve these cases and bring closure to grieving families who have never learned what happened to their loved ones.

We live here on the South Island, but we’re all part of one big community. As British Columbians and Canadians, we must take responsibility to support each other and address a problem that needs to be fixed.

The Opposition has long supported a national inquiry to address the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. However, it’s not enough to simply have an inquiry, as the B.C. government did, then ignore the recommendations. There needs to be action and we will keep pushing this government to take that action.

As always, I appreciate hearing your views on this topic and any others of interest to you and your family. Please contact me at 1084 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K4; or phone me at: 250 952-4211.

Carole James is MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill and can be reached by email at carole.james.mla@leg.bc.ca or visit her webpage at www.carole-jamesmla.ca

Voting Day
is November 15 for
municipal and school
candidates



The opening of Marianne Alto’s civic campaign office brought three long-time New Democrats together. On the left is Elizabeth Cull, former NDP provincial Cabinet Minister and currently owner of “Dig This” garden shop, on the right is Carole James, MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill, and in the middle Victoria City Counsellor Alto.

Decision to approve Site C will short-circuit BC’s future, says Wilderness Committee

VANCOUVER – The Wilderness Committee reacted to the October 14 news that the governments of both BC and Canada have granted environmental assessment approval to the Site C dam.

“It’s a sad day today,” said Wilderness Committee National Campaign Director Joe Foy. “We will be paying for this terrible decision for a long time to come. I do not think this dam will ever be built – but the fight it’s going to take to stop it could become very damaging to our governments’ relationships with farmers, First Nations and all people who value our environment.”

The Site C dam project carries an \$8 billion price tag. It would flood over 100 kilometres of valley-bottom lands, including prime farmland in the Peace River Valley.

In its final report, the Joint Review Pan-

el assessing the project acknowledged that the dam would have “significant adverse effects” on fish habitat, agricultural land and First Nations. The panel also concluded that “the proponent has not fully demonstrated the need for the project on the timetable set forth.”

The Site C dam is strongly opposed by area farmers, ranchers and the Treaty 8 group of First Nations. Many environmental organizations in British Columbia have stood in opposition to the proposed dam as well.

“We do not need the amount of electricity that this dam would produce – and we may never need it. What we are really going to need is the goodwill and trust of First Nations, and every piece of farmland we can possibly preserve,” Foy said.



Photo by Chris Gaior

The Victoria-Beacon Hill NDP’s annual end of summer barbecue drew seventy people on a sunny Sunday, September 14, to enjoy burgers and other goodies, and to kick off the fall political season. Those at the barbecue heard brief addresses from MLA Carole James (second from left), Victoria Mayor Dean Fortin, and New Democrats who are running for council and school board seats in the November 15 municipal elections.



Carole James, MLA
VICTORIA-BEACON HILL

*Honoured to serve you
in our community*

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MLA Victoria-Swan Lake

Rob Fleming



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www.robflamingmla.ca



Carole James, MLA

Holiday Open House

Thursday, December 4th, 4-6pm
Victoria-Beacon Hill Community Office
1084 Fort Street

Everyone is welcome to drop by, chat with Carole,
and enjoy some holiday goodies.

Please bring a donation of non-perishable food for the
Mustard Seed Food Bank.

MLA Spencer Chandra-Herbert speaks to Victoria-Swan Lake New Democrats

By Starla Anderson

The Victoria-Swan Lake NDP Constituency Association held its 2014 AGM on September 28 at the Oaklands Community Centre with President Trish Richards presiding over the meeting.

Spencer Chandra-Herbert, MLA for Vancouver-West End and Opposition Environment Critic, was the guest speaker.

Chandra-Herbert spoke of the challenge of being in Opposition when we know that resource development has to be balanced with environmental protection but government regulations are not strong enough and accountability is lacking. He described the recent August breach of the tailings ponds at Mount Polley mine—"the sheer force of the tailings widened Hazeltime Creek hundreds of metres so that it is now like a delta with two channels. The consequences are that the Hazeltime Creek salmon runs have been wrecked and Quesnel Lake has been contaminated."

Chandra-Herbert said that a crack was found in a tailings pond dam at the Mount Polley mine in 2010 but that even with Freedom of Information laws, the government is not allowing the NDP to see the reports on this 2010 failure or any other failures that led to "this giant failure". He says that there has not been one fine given to mines in 10 years—that government investigations look for the technical reasons for breaches but industries are not held accountable.

In his closing words, Chandra-Herbert argued that while the NDP needs to win in more resource-dependent communities in order to form government, at the same time it is necessary to have policy that addresses climate change: "Emissions need to be reduced by 80% by 2050." He also said that it isn't true that we have to choose between the environment and jobs—the pine

beetle scourge is a direct result of climate change and thousands of jobs have been lost in forestry because climate change has not been addressed: "We need to be in relationship with nature rather than continuing the practice of its exploitation and domination," he concluded.

Executive reports followed Chandra-Herbert's well-received presentation.

President Trish Richards talked about the executive's work on revitalization with a Strategic Plan for fundraising, organizational capacity, and outreach—including with neighboring constituency associations. The Constituency Association now has its first Facebook page to help with more on-going communication with members.

Ed May, rep to federal ridings, read outgoing provincial council rep Murray Langdon's report—the main news being that the BCNDP has a new provincial director, Michael Gardiner.

Treasurer Bill Hawkins reported that the constituency association's finances are healthy for this time in the election cycle.

Vice-president Bruce Kilpatrick brought forward motions for two amendments to the Constituency Association by-laws—both were unanimously accepted. The first changes the way in which representatives are chosen to liaise with federal riding executives—because Victoria-Swan Lake constituency members now reside within the boundaries of three different federal ridings, one liaison person is not adequate. The amendment enables the executive to appoint up to three liaison reps from within the elected executive. The other amendment assures that gender equity will be practiced in the selection of convention delegates.

In his MLA report, Rob Fleming spoke highly of the new leader of the party,, saying "John Horgan is a man with strength, sincerity, and substance" He went on to say that, "People are counting on us to have a strong and robust opposition and we will. This will be an exciting year—John has a new vision, the staff are bringing the fight and we're rebuilding, getting stronger. Here in Victoria-Swan Lake we're mov-

ing beyond our strength to a new level of strength."

Fleming thanked outgoing executive members for their work during the past year and welcomed newly elected executive members. Those who are not continuing as executive members for the next year are: Darcy Lindberg, Jean Lawson, Marni Offman, Rick Infanti, Murray Langdon, Michele Murphy, Lindsay Walton, and Starla Anderson.

The executive for the coming year is: Trish Richards (president), Ed May (vice-president), Jordan Lowe (recording secretary), Bruce Kilpatrick (provincial council rep), Will Maartman (membership secretary), Bill Hawkins (treasurer), Elsa Mackintosh

(YND rep), and members-at-large: Liz James, Carol Judd, Amber Nash, Susan Farmer, Tom Longman, and Andrew Johnson. James Kukola was the Elections Chair.



Chandra-Herbert



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Maurine Karagianis,
MLA
Esquimalt-Royal Roads

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maurine.karagianis.mla@leg.bc.ca
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Please join
Esquimalt-Royal Roads MLA Maurine Karagianis
for her

Annual Holiday Open House

Wednesday, December 17th

from 4:00 to 6:00 pm

A5-100 Aldersmith Place

Please bring a non-perishable food item for the
Esquimalt Neighbourhood House Food Drive

Alberta First Nation in BC to challenge Federal approval of tar sands project

Vancouver, BC – The Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) were in Federal Court in Vancouver October 15 to defend a challenge of last year's federal government approval of Shell's tar sands Jackpine Mine Expansion project. The ACFN was joined by representatives of the Squamish First Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation Sacred Trust, Greenpeace and local youth activist Ta'kaiya Blaney at a rally and media event outside of the courthouse.

Speakers at the rally highlighted the connections between the Alberta First Nation's challenge of the expansion of the oil sands to the local opposition of the tar sands pipeline corridors being proposed in BC, including the notable Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline which was approved earlier this year. The rally follows on the heels of the largest climate rally in North American history that was led by Indigenous peoples held in New York City a few weeks ago.

"Our peoples' rights and our way of life are being threatened by out-of-control development in our traditional territory," stated Chief Allan Adam of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. "The Jackpine Mine Expansion approval is another example of how government is trying to push our rights out of the process. There was no meaningful consultation, there was nothing done to mitigate – let alone understand – the impacts this project has on our people and rights."

In its case filed before the Federal Court, ACFN alleges that Canada breached its duties to consult and accommodate ACFN with respect to the project and the manner in which the project will impact ACFN's constitutionally protected section 35 rights. ACFN further alleges that the process, and mitigation offered, was inconsistent with the *Species at Risk Act*, the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, as well as several international agreements and conventions to

which Canada is a signatory.

"This isn't justice. Both the provincial and federal governments are bending to the needs of the oil and gas industry while slowly eroding and destroying the rights of First Nations and the eco-systems in which we live," added Chief Adam.

The tar sands controversy is no stranger to BC residents, as earlier this year local First Nations were at the forefront of the massive opposition against the recent approval of the Northern Gateway pipeline which would carry 520,000 bpd of tar sands through the heart of BC and numerous First Nations lands along its route.

"The Squamish Nation commend the Athabaskan Chipewyan for their efforts to protect their territories for and on behalf of their future generations," said Chief Ian Campbell of the Squamish Nation. "We implore the government of Canada to act honourably in recognizing the inherent and treaty rights of the First Nations and seek reconciliation in decision making, economic, and environmental impacts."

Environmental groups and critics have been highlighting Canada's deficiency in monitoring and meeting international accords to address rising greenhouse gas emissions, as well as the protection of waterways and species at risk.

Bill Routley, MLA
Cowichan Valley

Community Office Hours
Tuesday to Friday
10:00 am - 3:00 pm
273 Trunk Road,
Duncan
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Fax: 250-715-0139
Email:
bill.routley.mla@leg.bc.ca
www.billroutley.com
Mailing Address:
PO Box 599
Duncan BC V9L 3X9

John Horgan MLA Juan de Fuca
Looking forward to seeing you at my
Annual Christmas Open House
Wednesday, December 3rd, 4:00 – 7:00 pm
122-2806 Jacklin Rd. (corner Jacklin & Goldstream)
Light snacks & refreshments will be served.
Info: 250-391-2801. Please drop by.
Food bank donations gratefully accepted.
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Gary Holman, MLA
Saanich North and the Islands

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Progressive candidates running for Victoria City



Marianne Alto

Dear friends, I'm Marianne Alto, a proud Victoria City Councillor and CDR Director.

You elected me to City Council in a 2010 by-election, and re-elected me to Council, and also to the CRD, in 2011.

Many of you have told me that you returned me to Victoria City Council because you had seen what I accomplished in that first partial term, and that gave you confidence in my ability to act on the pledges I made if elected to a full term.

Let's look back at those pledges, and see how I did.

In 2011, I pledged to create more affordable housing.

So I supported new housing developments in every neighbourhood, including an innovative co-housing project in Fernwood, and fought to protect Victoria's Housing Trust Fund.

I pledged to create a more open, accessible city government.

So I instigated a whole package of open data systems at city hall, including an on-line open data catalogue, searchable records, live and archived broadcasts of city council and committee meetings, and more resources to process Freedom of Information requests faster.

I pledged to help improve and integrate health services for vulnerable people.

So I coached service providers, Island Health, and the Victoria Police Department to overhaul and redesign those services, with new resources, services and opportunities for Victoria's most vulnerable residents.

I pledged to limit tax increases and find new revenue sources.

So I reduced 2012 tax increases to 3.25%, fought hard to get them lower, froze Council salaries, cut out free lunches for councillors, and created a sponsorship policy to get money from ads in parkades and names on some buildings.

This is what I pledged – and I kept my word.

I believe keeping true to your word is an integral part of being a city councillor. And another part is seizing opportunities.

When the chances came to make a difference, I did. I grabbed, and ran with chances to make progressive change. As a City Councillor and CRD Director, I've also

- Secured \$250,000 in matching funds for Victoria High School
- Put amalgamation on the ballot
- Initiated Victoria's Plan B – a local sewage option, should the CRD plan fail
- Increased transit service in the region
- Expedited completion of cycling, pedestrian and road improvements
- Brought the First Nations Witness Blanket to City Hall
- Persuaded the CRD to bring First Nations to tables of regional governance.

And I've also proposed, and persuaded my council colleagues to support, important public policy positions, through resolutions I brought forward on public pension reform, public ownership of water, a provincial social policy framework, increased welfare rates, \$10 a day childcare, and a national housing strategy, among others.

These actions are just some of what I've managed to accomplish in the last three years. They reflect my values, and how I act on them practically. For me, it's about social justice, equality and inclusion, and

creating a local economy strong enough to pay for it. This is my approach to governing - balanced leadership.

With your support, I can do more.

In my next term, I'll make Victoria more affordable by:

- Limiting property tax increases to annual inflation rate + 1%
- Investing to create jobs and more housing

I'll take care of infrastructure by:

- Renewing and resourcing the City's 20 year Capital Plan
- Rebuilding Tourism facilities like the Belleville Terminal, Ogden Point, and the Harbor Pathway

I'll stimulate business growth and social development by:

- Revitalizing our "Main Street" – Douglas Street
- Streamlining land use development policies
- Investing in arts and culture
- Continuing to improve health services for vulnerable Victorians

And I'll strengthen neighbourhoods by:

- Accelerating neighbourhood transportation and land use plans
- Traffic calming neighbourhood streets
- Increasing residential density downtown.

And I'll continue to work with you to find and seize every opportunity to make our city and region a better place to live.

It's an ambitious agenda. I can't do it without you. So the first step is yours.

I ask you to get out and vote on November 15.

Vote for proven, balanced leadership.

Re-elect Marianne Alto for Victoria City Council, and CRD Director.

Thank you!



Ben Isitt

Dear Fellow New Democrat,

Since I was elected to Victoria City Council and the Capital Regional District Board three years ago, I have worked hard every day standing up for what we believe in.

Together we've made real progress on important issues including:

- Advancing the rights of First Nations, members of the LGBTQ community and working people;
- Advocating for affordable housing and a fair deal for everyone;
- Expanding parks, trails and greenways for walking and cycling;
- Supporting community centres, seniors, libraries and the arts;
- Pursuing neighbourhood-appro-

priate development that respects Victoria's heritage;

- Providing cost-effective public services with open, accountable local government.

In the upcoming municipal election on Saturday November 15, I need your support to continue standing up for people and the planet.

If you think change is needed in our community and world, to build fairer relationships between people and more sustainable relationships with the land and waters that sustain us, please support my efforts for Re-Election:

- Take a lawn sign if you live in the City of Victoria (we'll drop one off and pick it up after the election);
- Donate to the campaign;
- Volunteer to help with door knocking, calling voters or other tasks;
- Vote - please sign up on the website www.BenIsitt.ca for a reminder to vote.

With your help, we can continue to place social justice, ecological responsibility and good governance at the centre of municipal decision making — standing up for people and the planet. We can also work with NDP MLAs and MPs to advocate strongly for better provincial and federal decision-making.

To get involved in the campaign or learn more about my track record and ideas for our community, please visit my website or give me a call at any time.

I appreciate your support and the involvement of all New Democrats who are working hard to make out community and world better.

Ben Isitt is a Victoria City Councillor and CRD Director. He can be reached at his website www.BenIsitt.ca, by phone at 250-882-9302 ,or by email at Ben@Isitt.ca.



Erik Kaye

Why you should vote for Erik Kaye for Victoria City Council and CRD Director

Thanks to the Lower Island News for giving me the opportunity to outline why I deserve your vote on November 15.

I am running because we need to elect a progressive mayor and council at Victoria City Hall. Municipalities are at the front lines on key issues like affordable housing, public transit, and environmental sustainability.

The next council will be elected for a 4-year term. Over that time, there will be key decisions to be made on major projects like sewage treatment, Crystal Pool, and the Bay Street Bridge, among many others. Will those key public assets remain publicly owned and operated? Will we invest in preserving and expanding our infrastructure, or will we let it deteriorate to the point where public safety is compromised and privatization is perceived as the only option? The mayor and council you elect on November 15 will be the ones charged with making those key choices.

3 key priorities

If elected, I am committed to pursuing 3 key priorities:

Developing a 20-year strategic infrastructure plan:

- Early action on planning for a new Crystal Pool, ensuring it's publicly owned and operated
- Sewage: Independent review of centralized plan vs decentralized, Dockside Green approach
- Consult citizens on priorities for the next 20 years – Fire Hall, Bay Bridge, Public Library
- Develop a plan with public input, funding strategies and accountability to taxpayers.

Creating a comprehensive affordability strategy

- Helping families and businesses reduce utility and water bills
- Consider tax breaks for landlords that improve the energy efficiency of rental units
- Support a living wage for city of Victoria staff and contractors
- Pursuing alternative revenue sources like increased development cost charges to reduce reliance on property tax to for funding city services

Making Victoria a leader in fighting climate change

- Supporting improvements to transit, bike lanes, pedestrian infrastructure
- Separated bike lanes
- Explore pedestrian mall summer pilot on Government Street
- Work towards a free bus loop in the downtown core
- Tax breaks for homeowners who upgrade heritage homes

Serving my community

I have been active on environmental and social justice issues since moving to Victoria in 1997. As a professional with the BC civil service for the past 17 years, my specialty is climate change and energy efficiency policies and programs.

In the community, I served as chair of the city of Victoria's Advisory Transportation Committee from 2005 to 2008 and successfully lobbied for an updated pedestrian master plan for the City. As a member of the Community Liaison Committee for BC Transit's Victoria Regional Rapid Transit Project from 2008 to 2010, I helped develop the business case for a light rapid transit

(LRT) network from downtown to Western Communities.

I've lived in Fernwood since 2009 and sat on the board of the Fernwood Community Association board of directors. I am also a board member of Together Against Poverty Society and the Sir James Douglas Out of School Club Society. I previously served as a Director for the North Park Neighbourhood Association and the North Jubilee Neighbourhood Association, and was part of a cross-neighbourhood process to develop common land-use consultation process guidelines for developers and neighbourhood associations.

Progressive Values, Working for You.

With right-wing governments in power federally and provincially, we have the opportunity on November 15 to send a message to senior levels of government by electing a progressive mayor and council at Victoria City Hall. We can vote for investments in public assets, for real action on homelessness and inequality in our community and for continued leadership on climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

I have the skills and experience to get results on your priorities. I will push a strong progressive agenda on City Council, and make alliances across all political perspectives to deliver on my commitments. Above all, I will work hard on your behalf and strive for open and transparent government at all times.

I ask for your support on November 15.

Erik Kaye, candidate for Victoria City Council and CRD Director.

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Council speak out on why they should be elected



John Luton

Luton aims to put Victoria back to work as he enters council race

Transportation consultant and former city councillor will contest for a seat at the table for the November 15 municipal elections in Victoria. He is also putting his name forward to represent the city at the Capital Regional District.

Luton said that he will put his experience working on council and in the community back to work on the opportunities and challenges Victoria faces in term ahead. "Victoria has a new sustainable transportation plan", said Luton, "but we need to put our plans into action".

Luton also says that the city's many other plans need to move from the table to the street. "Livability is key to our appeal as a destination for visitors and for new economy businesses increasingly attracted to the Victoria lifestyle. "

He points to new developments around the Legislature, land swaps that create new options for a people oriented waterfront and the need to "right size" parking requirements as practical challenges a new council

cil will need to address on development and transportation issues.

At the same time, Luton said that we have to get back to some fundamentals in the city and across the region on issues like homelessness. "We're seeing seniors struggling, our shelters oversubscribed. We can't solve those issues with reckless budget cuts or solve everything with barn raisings and bake sales."

Regionally, Luton says the sewage debate needs to move forward. He supports a fully public model, saying that more privatization undermines transparent, accountable management, and threatens the essential public ownership of our water resources.

Luton says that pressing infrastructure renewal has to be funded by building a more vibrant city that brings people, jobs and services downtown. "New developments we gave the green light to created more options to live and work downtown and allowed the current council to keep taxes affordable."

He says that the region needs someone at the table experienced with diverse transportation solutions that respond to changing times and addresses the fundamental challenges of climate change. "When I last served on council and the transit commission I tipped the balance to provide better services for students and our "Late Night, Great Night" strategy". He says his energy is needed to help push regional transit solutions critical to the city's new economy. "Transportation is clearly an area where an integrated regional model makes sense. We need to build a model that responds to local, regional needs as a counterweight to provincial control of strategies and priorities."

Luton has been endorsed by the Victoria Labour Council and is working to earn the support of citizens and community leaders in the weeks leading up to the November election.

For further information:
John Luton at 250-592-4753 or 250-886-4166 (cell)



Pamela Madoff

I was first elected to Victoria City Council in 1993 as part of the Victoria Civic Electors Team. We advocated for an open, caring, responsible government that protected the interests of residents, promoted economic development and provided social and environmental leadership for all the citizens of Victoria. These are the values that I continue to bring to my work on Council.

Issues have become increasingly complex but I have learned that by listening to residents and forging strong connections with each of our neighbourhoods we can work together to ensure that we live in a city where there is an opportunity for everyone to thrive.

I bring a principles-based, triple bottom line approach to decisions where social/cultural, environmental and financial impacts are given an even weighting.

Social justice and equal opportunity are extremely important to me. Having grown up in Victoria, when it was an affordable city, I am very concerned by the challenges faced by our residents when it comes to housing. Council has made progress in this area: partnering with housing providers to create affordable and non-market housing, permitting secondary suites and

garden suites and approving micro units for rental and purchase. I have been very involved in the repurposing of heritage buildings. All of these efforts must continue and we must also continue to advocate for a national housing policy.

Housing is also the most important first step in addressing issues related to mental health and addiction. A coordinated approach, involving senior levels of government and the health authority, would result in a dramatic decrease in the homeless population. A supervised consumption site would also provide an introduction to health and support services and reduce the incidence of complex health issues related to addiction.

The City's Official Community Plan is a visionary document, the result of extensive community consultation. The OCP identifies projected population increases for the city. These principles, in isolation from updated neighbourhood plans, can result in developments which increase population but diminish our sense of community. We can increase population, and enhance our city at the same time, but this will require thoughtful, principles-based, decision making that is rooted in an understanding of what neighbourhoods need in order to thrive.

During an election campaign it is very tempting to make specific promises. I think it is more important for voters to have a sense of the person they are voting for. What are the principles they will bring to each and every decision that they are faced with? An endorsement that I received from a resident in a previous election provided me with an assessment of what I bring to public service that meant a great deal to me and continues to inspire my work every day: "Councillor Pam Madoff has served us well. She listens intelligently, does her homework, sticks to principles and tries consistently to do what is best for the City and its people. Her record shines, and has earned her re-election."

I hope that you will also feel that I am deserving of your support on November 15.

Pamela Madoff, candidate for Victoria City Council



Jeremy Loveday

A New Progressive Voice for Victoria

Many *Lower Island News* readers may know me as the poet who performs at rallies, community gatherings, and NDP events. I'm thankful for this opportunity to tell you a little bit more about myself. I'll start by saying that I have a strong passion for community building and social and environmental justice.

I grew up in Victoria and studied History and Political Science at Concordia University in Montreal. I moved back here six years ago, and since I returned, I've dedicated myself to building community, amplifying voice and speaking out about important social and environmental issues. I am the founder of two successful youth outreach programs and currently I sit on the board of the Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition. This past year I made headlines

Making Sense of the CETA: First assessment of complete Canada–EU trade deal questions benefits, highlights imbalances in negotiated outcome

OTTAWA—A new analysis of the recently leaked Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), released September 25 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), demonstrates in detail how the deal is unbalanced, favouring large multinational corporations at the expense of consumers, the environment, and the greater public interest.

"Canadians are making a lot of sacrifices to get a deal that mainly benefits large multinational corporations," says Scott Sinclair, senior trade policy researcher with the CCPA, and co-editor of the study. "Even

more than past Canadian agreements, the CETA substantially constrains the democratic right of governments at all levels to implement public interest legislation, job-creation strategies, environmental protection policy, and new public services."

The international study, involving experts from Canada and the EU, is the first independent analysis of the completed CETA text, which was leaked in August. It analyzes some of the CETA's most controversial chapters as exposed by a series of leaks in August.

They include assessments of the agreement's impacts on intellectual property rights for pharmaceutical products; investment protection, investor-state dispute settlement and financial services regulation; infrastructure procurement and buy-local food policies; public services, and many other areas.

Findings include:

- The changes to Canadian patent protection for pharmaceuticals required by the CETA will delay the availability of cheaper, effective generic drugs, driving up health care costs for Canadians. By conservative estimates, the additional cost of extended patents will be \$850 million annually, or 7% of total annual costs for patented drugs. This extra cost far exceeds the projected savings to consumers from the total elimination of tariffs on European goods entering Canada.
- Canada has agreed to cover almost all public procurement by provincial and municipal governments, Crown corporations and other public agencies, blocking

them from using public spending to encourage local development, create jobs in innovative sectors like renewable energy, or support local farmers.

- The final text includes a controversial investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism that a large bloc of parties in the European Parliament, which has a veto over the deal, has indicated it will reject. Many of Europe's 28 member states, which will have to individually ratify the agreement, also have serious misgivings about ISDS.

"The notion that this sweeping treaty is final and nothing can be changed before citizens and elected representatives have even seen the text offends basic democratic principles," says Sinclair.

Making Sense of the CETA: An analysis of the final text of the Canada–European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, is available on the CCPA website: <http://policyalternatives.ca>

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Community and Passion



Elect

X Ruth MacIntosh

Trustee
Board of Education
School District 61 Victoria

Vote November 15

Standing up for Children,
Families and Quality Public
Education

“There is no task more important for us as parents and society than the education of our children; it is our duty and our responsibility to provide to all children the opportunity of a quality public education.”
--Ruth MacIntosh

I have been active in public education through my children and my School PAC's and District committees. I care deeply about Public Education and supporting our children, working with parents and building strong communities.

Parents are weary of education confrontation. We can build on the positives and common goals and bring together all of our partners in public education to find collaborative solutions to the challenges we face.

The importance of increasing education funding needs to be a priority for the province. I will work to ensure that our District is at the forefront in calling for proper resources, supports and funding for or children and their classrooms.

“I know Ruth MacIntosh and I know that Ruth has a deep passion for public education. Ruth knows firsthand the value of quality public education. As a Parent and as public education activist and as a community leader, Ruth has all of the skills and abilities necessary to be a quality Trustee.”

--Carole James,

MLA , Victoria Beacon Hill; Past Chairperson ,School District 61; Past President BCSTA

For more information and to help; Please call: 250-381-5567 e-mail ruthmacintosh42@gmail.com

face book – Ruth MacIntosh for SD 61

Authorized by Zena McCreary-Beniak, Financial Agent, zmccreary.beniak@gmail.com

Local CRD Director proposes First Nations’ participation in regional governance

On October 8, CRD Director Marianne Alto proposed establishing a new governance framework for First Nations' participation in regional decision-making matters, where there are common interests with local governments. This is the first step in bringing local First Nations to a regional governance table, at which First Nations' voices have rarely been heard.

The CRD Board approved the resolution, and will proceed with an exploration of how this critical shift in power sharing can unfold. Board Directors will take up this challenge after the upcoming local elections.

Here is the substance of Director Alto's resolution:

WHEREAS the Capital Regional District Board has identified, as a key priority in its 2012-2014 Strategic Plan, the desire to build better relationships with local First Nations;

AND WHEREAS many of the local First Nations are seeking modern treaty agreements and/or other self-governance models, which will result in greater interaction

and engagement at the local government level;

AND WHEREAS there is an evolving interpretation of First Nations rights and title and local government's role in accommodation;

AND WHEREAS there is a pressing need to bring First Nations into the regional decision-making process to pragmatically address emerging issues, share information, and support First Nations community development through greater understanding of their interests, aspirations and challenges;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Capital Regional District Board recommend to the incoming Board and Board Chair to consider establishing either a First Nations Relations Standing Committee or Select Committee of the Board, with First Nations representation and membership, and in the interim, direct staff to prepare a report to the incoming Board on options for bringing First Nations into the CRD governance framework.

Provinces pursuing two-tier tuition fee policies: study

OTTAWA—The average cost of tuition and compulsory fees for Canadian undergraduate students will rise by almost 13% over the next four years, from \$6,885 this fall to an estimated \$7,755 in 2017-18, says a study released today by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA).

The study looks at trends in tuition and compulsory fees in Canada since 1993, projects fees for each province for the next four years, and ranks the provinces on affordability for median- and low-income families using a Cost of Learning Index.

“As fees continue to increase, almost without exception, provincial policies have shifted to a de facto two-tiered fee structure that sees in-province students charged less than out-of-province students for the same degree. It's undercut the principle of universality, as students find themselves in very different financial situations depending on the province in which they reside and where they choose to pursue their education,” explains Education Director Erika Shaker.

Additionally, other compulsory fees—which are largely unregulated—continue to increase on top of tuition fees as universities look for other creative ways to compensate for inadequate public funding.

According to the study, Ontario is the province with the highest fees and will see its tuition and other fees climb from \$8,474 this fall to an estimated \$9,483 in 2017-18. Newfoundland and Labrador remains the province with the lowest tuition and other

compulsory fees of \$2,871 this fall, rising to an estimated \$2,888 in 2017-18.

The study's Cost of Learning Index demonstrates the role that provincial governments play in ensuring university education is more—or less—affordable for median and low-income families, particularly when household debt is at an all-time high and incomes have been stagnant for over two decades. Nationally, university education has become, on average, 20% less affordable for median families in Canada since 1993.

“Newfoundland and Labrador is the most affordable province for university education for both median- and low-income families, while New Brunswick is the least affordable for median-income families and Alberta is the least affordable for low-income families,” says David Macdonald, CCPA Senior Economist and co-author of the study. “However, if current trends continue, Saskatchewan is projected to become the least affordable province for both low-and median-income families.”

Tier for Two: Managing the Optics of Provincial Tuition Fee Policies is available on the CCPA website: <http://policyalternatives.ca>

NDP fights for a vote on hate crimes

OTTAWA – The NDP called on the Speaker of the House of Commons September 22 to allow a vote on adding gender identity to the hate crimes section of the Criminal Code.

“The House of Commons has already voted twice in favour of protecting trans Canadians from hate crimes” said NDP critic on LGBT issues Randall Garrison (Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca). “Now we are in danger of allowing five Conservatives on a committee to thwart the will of the majority.”

Adding gender identity to the hate crimes section of the Criminal Code makes up one half of the substance of Garrison's Private Members Bill C-279 which was adopted by the House of Commons March 20, 2013. Bill C-279 remains stuck in the Senate more than a year later.

“To me it offends both the spirit of the rules of the House of Commons and of democracy itself to allow a few MPs to undo a decision already approved by a majority, and in doing so, to deprive transgender Canadians of the same protections all other Canadians already enjoy,” Garrison concluded.



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One of Cool Aid’s new housing projects, this apartment building will be home to some of the 964 people who are homeless in Victoria.

Cool Aid to create new housing for over 360 homeless men and women in Victoria

Cool Aid is committed to create housing for over 360 men and women who are presently without homes in Greater Victoria. This commitment is Cool Aid’s contribution towards the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness’ Housing Procurement Action Plan, which calls for the creation of new housing for 964 people who are homeless.

Building new housing for people who are currently homeless will save lives. As well, housing the homeless makes good economic sense. According to a recent study¹, it costs \$18,000 more per year to leave a homeless person on the street than to provide appropriate housing and supports.

Since 1991, the Victoria Cool Aid Society has provided housing for thousands of people who have been homeless. In addition to its 10 supportive housing complexes, Cool Aid also operates three emergency shelters with 125 beds, the Access Health Centre which provides primary health and dental care, and the Downtown Community Centre.

Last year, Cool Aid helped over 10,000 people and in the past 10 years the Society has successfully opened nine new buildings.

Cool Aid’s plan is to build six or more new apartment buildings by 2018, most with around-the-clock support provided by professional housing support workers who will assist tenants and ensure that neighbourhood needs are met. The new buildings are:

****Cottage Grove in Saanich, with 45**

apartments for seniors. (Land has been secured.)

****Cedar Grove** is a redevelopment project on Gorge Road, in Victoria, which will be expanded from 21 apartments to accommodate 60 tenants living with a range of mental health and addiction challenges.

****A third, unnamed building** in Victoria, with 140 affordable apartments and supportive housing.

Together, these three building projects will create 66% of the 360 new apartments. Cool Aid is working to identify the additional apartment buildings needed for others who are homeless.

Cool Aid’s new housing will be well constructed, yet modest, and tenants will receive support services which include life skills, medication monitoring, crisis intervention and conflict resolution.

The total cost to provide new housing for 360 people is estimated at \$50 million, yet Cool Aid’s fundraising goal is only \$5 million. It is their expectation that every dollar donated by members of their community will be matched nine-fold by local, regional and provincial governments to reach the \$50 million total.

This is a campaign that will save lives. With the public’s help, Cool Aid will help end homelessness and improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable people in our community, and indeed for each of us.

Footnote1- Housing and Support for Adults with Severe Addictions and/or Mental Illness in British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, February 2008, p. 11

BC Liberals fail on promise to make BC schools earthquake-safe

VANCOUVER – Christy Clark and the BC Liberals have failed to seismically upgrade a number of BC schools this year contrary to their pre-election promises, say BC’s New Democrats.

“Christy Clark knew what to say before the last election, when she promised 10 schools would be seismically upgraded in the next year, but she didn’t deliver,” said New Democrat leader John Horgan.

In April 2013, Christy Clark promised 10 high-risk schools would be upgraded in 2013-14. But with the 2014-15 school year well under way, work has only been started on three of them. The BC Liberal promise included \$584 million for 45 high-risk schools over three school years.

“The premier knew exactly what people wanted to hear when she said ‘nothing is more important than keeping our kids safe,’ then she did what she wanted. You just can’t take her at her word,” said Horgan.

Horgan was joined by New Democrat education spokesperson Rob Fleming and concerned parents October 16 at Killarney Secondary in Vancouver, one of the schools waiting for an upgrade.


“Clearly, this was just another photo-

op announcement from the premier with no follow-through,” said Fleming. “Parents across BC send their children to school every morning expecting they will be kept safe. The truth is that more than a hundred schools in BC may not withstand a major earthquake and the BC Liberals are not living up to their promise to fix them.”

Fleming added that the rate of actual funding to make schools earthquake-safe has slowed considerably since Premier Clark took office.

**You can vote at an
Advance Poll
if you are unable to
vote on November 15.
Check with your
municipality for
dates and locations.**

Experience and Dedication



I am an experienced Trustee with a proven track record of supporting our children, and working with parents and the communities where we live.

Balanced and creative problem-solving with all partner groups is key to bringing peace and stability to public education in our District.

The true cost of educating our children must be recognized and funded by the province. I will strongly advocate getting necessary support and resources into each classroom for each child

Re-elect

X Bev Horsman

Trustee

Board of Education

School District 61 Victoria

Vote November 15

**Standing up for Children,
Families and Quality Public
Education**

“Choices in public education system are so important. Music, the Arts, French Immersion, Career Prep, Sport Academies, Nature based Kindergarten and our other excellent programs in our District provide students opportunity and access to excellence in our public schools.”

--Bev Horsman

“I am proud to have served with Bev on the Board of School District 61. Bev Horsman is an experienced and dedicated Trustee. Bev has integrity, never waivers from her principles and knows that a quality public education provides opportunity unlimited for our students and is the very foundation of our communities.”

--Carole James,
MLA, Victoria Beacon Hill, Past Chairperson School District 61, Past President BCSTA

For more information and to help:

Please call: 250-479-5792
e-mail bevhorsman@shaw.ca
face book Bev Horsman for SD 61.

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Progressive candidates for Boards of Education



**Bev Horsman
SD 61 (Victoria)**

Friends, I would like to ask for your support for another term as Trustee in School District 61. Public education has come through some very tough challenges in the past 3 years. I have been working hard to bring fairness and balance into the decision-making process at the School Board.

There is nothing more fundamental to the future of a free and democratic society than a strong and vibrant public education system. Access to quality education in our public schools is a basic right for every child. I am proud to have been an active participant in the building and maintenance of the choices and services we have available to our children in SD61.

I have served in a variety of ways over my 27 years on the Board. For 5 years before I first ran for the Board, I was on the executive and president (2 years) of the District Parents' group, VCPAC (formerly CPAV). I have served on the Education Policy Development committee for 27 years (16 as Chair) and have worked, throughout that time, to make sure our kids would have the choices and supports they need to be successful in their education. That's what it's all about.

In addition, I have served as a director on the BCSTA School Trustees Association and on the Provincial Council. I was made a life member in 2006. I am also a former president of the Vancouver Island School Trustees Association (VISTA) and was the

education representative on the Treaty Negotiations Advisory committee (TNAC) for 2 years. I have also served on a large number of District and community-based committees, including the Swan Lake board, Saanich Parks and Rec, Healthy Saanich, French Immersion advisory, GSA District advisory and many others. I have worked hard to ensure that all voices are fairly heard and considered in decisions that affect our communities and our children.

As we all know, public education has been under-funded for many years and the programs that we expect to be in place for our children have been threatened by the constant budget cuts. The province has not only refused to pay the true costs for educating our children, they have also used every opportunity to offload costs which should be carried by the province onto school districts. Every year, there are more examples of this reprehensible practice as school district trustees scramble to save the essence of the support services we have put in place for our children. Every year, there are more examples of the desperate efforts by teachers and trustees to cope with the underfunding and undermining of public education.

This has to stop, and it will stop if we can all commit to working together. We must focus on the kids, on their opportunities and their future: this is the sacred trust and the reason why it is so important to keep alive the public voice in public education. We cannot afford the kind of brinkmanship that could lead to the appointment by the government of a non-elected so-called Public Trustee to control decisions about what is best for the children in our District.

We the people have the right to elect our representatives to make decisions for our schools. And the people we elect have to duty to stay at the table and keep working on our behalf. We need a board that will act with respect for all the stakeholders in the sacred trust that is public education. We need a board that will not take the easy way out. We need peace and fairness in public education.

I want to offer my services on such a board. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve you in the past and I ask for your support for another term. Thank you for your support and encouragement.



**Deborah Nohr
SD 61 (Victoria)**

Trustee accountability In support of our social justice mandate

Only 10-15% of the voters will take time to select their school trustees for Greater Victoria on November 15, 2014. And I say 'their' because the proper education of every child in our community should be every citizen's concern. If we take a moment's time to reflect on the positive impact for all of us when students experience academic success and if the community had more information about what is going on in their school district they may become more interested and more likely to vote.

The BCSTA (British Columbia School Trustees Association) states that, 'Trustees engage their communities in building and maintaining a school system that reflects local priorities, values and expectations. School trustees listen to their communities;

guide the work of their school district; and set plans, policies and the annual budget. Reflecting the strength of local representation, boards report back to their communities on how students are doing: boards are directly *accountable* to the people they serve.'

To this end, I would like to provide you, the voters, with a summary of some of the most important motions from the past term.

1. Motion - (Nohr) Bill 22- To write a letter to the Minister of Education expressing concern for the unconstitutionality of this bill (taking away teachers' rights to bargain working conditions) Voted **for**-Nohr, Loring-Kuhanga, McNally, Alpha Voted **against**-Orcherton, Horsman, Leonard, Ferris

2.Motion - (District) Sundance School Re-location/closure Parents stated categorically at the first community meeting that they would not consider travelling across town for and away from their neighbourhood. Voted **for**- Orcherton, Horsman, Leonard, Ferris, McEvoy Voted **against**-Nohr, Loring-Kuhanga, McNally, Alpha

3. Motion - (McNally) To record individual trustees' voting record at each meeting (At the committee meeting trustees Orcherton, Horsman, Leonard and Ferris voted against this motion) Mike Eso wrote a very excellent opinion piece on this topic and Lindsay Kines of the *Times Colonist* informed the public about the importance of vote recording. At the Board table the motion **passed unanimously**

4. Motion - (Loring-Kuhanga) To have a Q&A at the Public Board meeting As a context, almost all other districts in the province have a Q&A at their Board meetings. Trustees Orcherton, Horsman, Leonard and Ferris voted **against** this motion at committee level. Three years later the Q&A is not yet part of the Board meeting.



**Nox Gyes, Edith Loring-Kuhanga
SD 61 (Victoria)**

What Public Education Means to Me

As a First Nations woman, I understand the importance of public education in BC and Canada. From the 1700's to the late 1950's, First Nations children were forbidden to attend public schools and were forced to attend residential schools which were jointly operated by churches and the federal government. Today, many of us continue to live with the long term inter-generational impacts of almost three hundred years of the tragedy of residential schools.

In 1948, a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons, issued a report that highlighted the serious issues facing our people. The report recommended that "whenever and wherever possible Indian children should be educated in association with other children." As a result of that report and the public outcry from our Elders and Chiefs across Canada, public schools were finally open to Indian children. Prior to that report, Indian people had to forfeit their right to being a status Indian if they wanted to participate in Canadian society such as attend public schools, vote in elections, and ride on public transportation.

My late mother, Chief Gwininitxw attended Indian Day School since she could not attend public school. Completing Grade 3 was the extent of her formal education unless she went to residential school. Since her father refused to send her to residential school, she was not able to further her education beyond Grade 3. Had she been able to attend public school, she may have pursued her education but she was not given that privilege nor the opportunity. Finally in the early 1950's, public schools opened their doors to First Nations children.

In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood released the document, "Indian Control of Indian Education" which provided the vehicle for First Nations people to establish their own schools. Within that report, parents were encouraged to get involved in their children's education; universities were encouraged to develop Native Indian Teacher Education Programs to train First Nations people as teachers; First Nations people were encouraged to participate in local elections and get elected as School Trustees on public School Boards; and governments were encouraged to revitalize and strengthen First Nation languages.

Since "Indian Control of Indian Education" was seen as a way forward for our children, I decided to focus my undergraduate work in this area. Over the next 25 years, I taught in Band operated schools and trained parents and grandparents how to operate their own schools. As more and more of our children started attending public schools, I shifted my energy and focus towards public education. Over the past 10 years, I have been actively involved in public education: trying to improve graduation rates for First Nation students, hiring more First Nation teachers, getting First Nations people voting and getting more First Nations people elected onto school boards.

Although we have come a long way since the 1950's, we still have so much to do to improve life for First Nations people in BC and Canada. The vast majority of First Nations children are still not graduating from high school; there are limited numbers of First Nations teachers in public schools; our languages continue becoming extinct as our Elders are passing away before having the opportunity to pass down their knowledge to the younger generation; and many of our public school boards still do not have First Nations trustees sitting at the board table making decisions about our future: our children.

So when I stand up and fight for more funding to support our most vulnerable population, advocate for more First Nations teachers in public schools and get more First Nations people elected to public school boards in BC, (my sister Trudy Spiller is running for School Trustee in Belmont Zone, SD62), please understand that I am not doing this for myself. I am doing this not only for our current generation, but our future generations and for all of my ancestors who have passed before me!

So I humbly ask for your support as I continue the fight that my ancestors bestowed upon me by re-electing me as a trustee on the Greater Victoria School Board, SD61! I ask that you also elect four progressive candidates: Diane McNally, Deborah Nohr, Jordan Watters and Rob Paynter who share similar values and commitment to strengthening public education in BC as I do!

www.unitedSD61.com Twitter: @EdithLK

5.Motion-(Nohr) 2012 Budget Surplus - \$350,000 directed to special education Voted **against** in committee Orcherton, Horsman, Leonard, Ferris Voted **for**-Nohr, Loring-Kuhanga, McNally, Alpha

6. Motion-(Loring-Kuhanga) Formal Budget Committee with full trustee involvement (this committee work would support equity for all employee groups and student achievement)- Voted **for**-Nohr, Loring-Kuhanga, McNally, Alpha Voted **against** - Orcherton, Horsman, Leonard, Ferris, McEvoy

7. Motion-(Loring-Kuhanga) Re-instate the development of a Strategic Plan with full trustee involvement- Voted **for**-Nohr, Loring-Kuhanga, McNally, Alpha Voted **against**- Orcherton, Horsman, Leonard, Ferris, McEvoy

8. Motion- (Nohr) Review of the 2013-2014 Class Size and Composition Report at the public Board meeting Voted **for**-Nohr, Loring-Kuhanga, McNally, Alpha Voted **against** - Orcherton, Horsman, Leonard, Ferris, McEvoy

9. Motion- (District) Hiring an Attendance Management Advisor Voted **for**- Orcherton, Horsman, Leonard, Ferris, McEvoy Voted **against**- Nohr, Loring-Kuhanga, McNally, Alpha

10. GVTA publicly denounced the dis-

trict's discriminatory practices against temporary teachers who are pregnant Trustees Nohr, Alpha, Loring-Kuhanga, McNally **spoke out** about the district recommendation to prevent pregnant temporary teachers from being offered contracts.

I hope that my voting record reflects your values and vision for our school district. I hope that my voting record shows that I stayed true to my commitments.

Ultimately, trustees are their record. And thanks to the successful passing of the motion to record trustees' votes this record is here for you.

I would ask for your vote on November 15 as I will uphold the principles of fully funded public education, engagement with all partner groups and community members, transparency in all decision making, hard work, accountability to the students, employees and voters and a strong voice at the Board table and in my advocacy work at all levels.

I would also ask you to give consideration to my coalition partners: Loring-Kuhanga, McNally, Paynter and Watters

Thank you

Speak out on why they should be elected



**Diane McNally
SD 61 (Victoria)**

The past years in public education in British Columbia and in School District 61 call for frankness during this campaign period. There are nine places for Trustees on the SD61 Board of Education. You've all heard of vote plumping – meaning, you don't have to vote for nine people. You can use your vote strategically.

After first being elected in 2011 (after a 35 year career in classrooms as a member of ATA, CUPE, and BCTF) I'm standing for re-election as School Trustee for School District 61 Greater Victoria. I'm pleased and honoured to be part of a new coalition of five like-minded progressive candidates, UnitedSD61 (unitedsd61.com)

Campaigning is underway, and you'll see candidates publicizing their platforms at every opportunity. When you review these platforms, ask yourself if you know what exactly the individual will advocate for, and what actions they intend to take. Ask yourself if you are left with a vague cloud of happy talk, and little substance. **Do you understand** the specific goals and associated motivation of the candidate, and do they reflect your own hopes and expectations for process and results in the school district?

My platform is straightforward and action oriented. Here is what I am standing for and what I will do my best to achieve if given the opportunity to serve another term as Trustee:

- **Stand up for free, no fee public education. John Young remains my inspiration for that stand.
 - .**Put the brakes on niche specialty schools that hollow out neighbourhoods
 - **Resist school “branding” that fosters retail style competition for “customers”
 - **Publicize the injustice that is public tax subsidies for private schools
 - **Refuse sale of school district lands
 - **Press for fewer in camera meetings and a lot more reporting out
 - **Expect SD61 to welcome public questions from the floor at all meetings without prior vetting
 - **Support the public's right to make recordings of public meetings
 - **Support and publicize desirability of elected student councils in every secondary school and an elected student trustee at the Board table in future, as my motion to that effect did not carry in 2013
 - **Speak out for vastly increased community outreach that brings community involvement with budget decisions to deal with the ongoing, increasing and obviously unsustainable \$8.5 million structural deficit in SD61
 - **Request and expect a class size and composition report to the Board as is provided for the Vancouver School Board (and was previously provided in SD61)
 - **Take Policy action to realize Trustee reclamation of Policy review and development, and an end to Trustee exclusion from the work of the district
- Publicize the need for and take action to begin a Strategic Plan that gets SD61 out of year to year survival mode
- Yes, it's about the students. You'll read that on many websites. But unless the infrastructure is in place, and the issues in my platform – and more – are clearly addressed, we can't deliver the best for the students, as hard as front line staff try. We won't even be able to keep going as we are. Unless members of the public know what their tax dollars are used for and have many opportunities through active Trustee community outreach to become directly involved, we will lose public education to apathy.
- This is a call to support my United SD61 colleagues and to support me, by voting strategically on November 15.



**Peg Orcherton
SD 61 (Victoria)**

It is about our students and it is about leadership

Relief -- teachers, education support staff, administrators, parents, students, trustees and the public at large -- virtually all of us involved in Public Education shared that feeling upon hearing the news of a negotiated settlement between the British Columbia Teacher's Federation (BCTF) and the British Columbia Public School Employer's Association (BCPSEA). With schools now open and kids and teachers back in class, that initial feeling has dissipated. Now an eagerness and excitement along with a rekindled energy to focus on our common purpose of providing our students with quality Public Education, is now the order of the day.

It is important to recognize that while the collective agreement has been finalized, there are for some a residual feeling and sense of disappointment --“is that all”? Clearly this has been a difficult time for all of us engaged and involved in public education and it is equally clear that we still have a distance to travel to meet our collective expectations for public education in BC.

While we move forward to achieve and realize those expectations for public education -- for our students, it is key that all of us now recognize the importance of renewing our relationships, supporting each other and working together building upon the gains that have been achieved with the conclusion of this negotiated settlement. Now is the is time to heal and build upon

our common goals and our shared vision, a fully funded public education system ensuring that our students are fully supported in order that each and every one can realize their full potentials.

There is much to be proud of in our Public Education system, graduation rates are climbing, new programs that recognize different learning techniques and meet individual student needs (the hooks that spark a love of learning), music programs, coastal nature kindergartens, sport academies and choice for parents and students to name a few, none of which could have been achieved without the hard work, dedication and commitment from teachers, education support staff, administrators and parents.

This dispute was a lengthy and difficult process, but now we see the public at large with a new awareness of the value and the needs of Public Education. We now have an opportunity to collectively focus and work towards ensuring that quality Public Education remains a continuing priority of the public and high on the agenda for government. We all agree that investing in our students, our future, is extremely important and is a necessary and worthy long term investment for our society. Teachers, education support staff, parents, students, trustees, the public at large and the government, we do have a common purpose here – it is – the provision of quality public education for our students, our children.

Every student is special, each has unique strengths and weaknesses that need to be supported in a safe and healthy learning environment. We don't need political rhetoric and confrontation, we do need independent voices advocating for increased provincial funding for all students (special needs, exemplary and average); funding that gets resources and support back into classrooms.

Over the coming four years of this Board's term, I see a tremendous opportunity in public education. This is a time for leadership and a time for rebuilding our education partnerships. A time to put aside individual agendas, revitalize public education in a respectful and collaborative way and continue the push for increased education funding.

That feeling of relief we so recently felt will then be replaced by a collective pride in knowing that we have worked together to support public education, our communities and our student's futures. I am running to be a part of that process and I am asking for your support on November 15.



**Ruth MacIntosh
SD 61 (Victoria)**

Hello friends ,

Thank you for this opportunity to tell you who I am and explain why I hope to serve on the School Board of School District 61.

I grew up in this district. My earliest ideals and interests were formed in School District 61 classrooms. I can tell you the names of all my teachers. I can recall my first track meet, first visit to the principal's office, and first school play. I remember crying during the first day in my new school, and making a best friend during my second day. I have 4 daughters who have been and are students in this wonderful district.

I have been an engaged and active parent in SD61 for 19 years. In that time, I have had opportunities to collaborate at both the school and the district level. I have worked closely with other parents, teach-

ers, education assistants, administrators and students. There is a wealth of insight and vision throughout this district!

I have appreciated the mentorship of Carole James and Charley Beresford. I enjoyed working with Charley on her outstanding initiative to develop the anti-harassment policy for School District 61. This was an excellent example of what happens when all stakeholder groups come together with respect and passion for the sake of children and youth in the district. I am excited to again be a member of the Gay Straight Alliance Committee as it carries on the important work of creating school environments that celebrate diversity and of creating district policies that ensure justice and inclusion. The most successful initiatives are created and implemented when all the stakeholders have had input.

We must create a climate of collaborative problem solving in SD61. We need to elect trustees who will bring both a passion for public education and the skills to work with all the stakeholders. We must ensure that public school land stays in the public domain. Schools are the heart of our communities. We must keep schools open and thriving.

I am a student in the Community Support and Education Assistant (CSEA) Program at Camosun College. I chose that program because I believe that diversity and inclusion create vibrant learning environments. Trustees must work diligently to have the true cost of education recognized and restored, so that resources will be in place for quality learning opportunities for all students. The chronic underfunding and systematic dismantling of public education by the province must be addressed!

I bring the experience and skills necessary for successful stakeholder collabora-



**Trudy Spiller
SD 62 (Sooke)**

tion.

I bring the intelligence and critical thinking skills necessary to make decisions that will have a positive impact on students for years to come.

I bring a fierce commitment to public education necessary to advocate on behalf of all students.

Thank you for your support,

I want to run for school trustee in SD62 Belmont Zone because I have seen the cuts to our schools.

I am a young great grandmother, raising my grandson and great niece who are 8 and 9 years old. I am going into my 2nd year as a SD62 Role Model and I teach all children about our Gitxsan culture, medicine, plants, food and traditional dress because I believe all children have a right to know about our traditional ways.

I am on our Parent Advisory Committee and Safety Committee, so I am quite involved with our school.

I have seen the composition of the classroom where up to four students with assessed special needs are in one class with only one Education Assistant. I want to advocate for smaller class sizes to allow teachers to give all students the time they deserve so they can learn and thrive.

If elected, I want to visit schools and hear from the teachers what is important to them and by going out to the schools to talk with them, it would give the teachers a chance to talk about what would improve their working conditions.

I am new and have fresh ideas.

Please turn to page 18 for more Boards of Education candidates

Boards of Education candidates, continued from page 17



Jordan Watters
SD 61 (Victoria)

I have chosen to run for election as School Trustee in School District 61 because I know we can do better to support our students. My sons will be entering school in this district over the next four-year term and I want for them what I want for ALL students: I want them to thrive in inspired classroom environments with the supports in place that will allow them to achieve their highest potential.

Supporting students requires that we acknowledge schools as communities, and understand that all the people within a school are necessary for the successful delivery of public education. In order to support students, we must value the work, dedication and professionalism of their teachers. We need to recognize that the work done by support staff both inside and outside the classroom is critical to a healthy functioning school and thriving students.

Supporting students means providing quality school environments: adequately resourced classrooms; access to libraries with quality materials; safe and engaging playground equipment; exciting programming in music and the arts; safe and functioning shops and science labs; and equitable distribution of technology. Currently, all of these areas are facing unprecedented challenges due to chronic underfunding.

Fundamentally, supporting students means adhering to the principles of equity and inclusion. We need to recognize the inequities in our system and work hard to increase opportunities and support for Aboriginal students, LGBTQ students, students in care, students living in poverty, ELL students, and students dealing with mental health or physical health challenges.

Support for students means recognizing that ALL students need one-on-one time with their teachers every day in order to stay connected and engaged, and stu-

dents with special needs need curriculum adapted or modified in order for them to meet their potential and enjoy their classroom time. Class sizes and compositions matter in terms of learning conditions for students.

I want all students to shine and I am concerned that may not be happening as often and consistently as it should. In order to support the students in our district, we need to support their families. We need to push for greater respect for the inclusion of parent voices at the decision-making tables. All parent voices, not just those with the ability attend meetings and the means to contribute to fundraising. As a Trustee, I will make the inclusion of parent voices a top priority.

My vision for supporting students is intentionally aspirational. We need to know what we are striving for, and we need to be able to accurately check our progress. Whether a household, a school district, or a nation, setting clear goals is necessary to ensure our actions are taking us where we mean to go. SD61 currently has no long-term planning in place.

With a \$200 million annual budget, the lack of planning in our district is shocking. I am committed to a Strategic Planning process that will engage all stakeholder groups – parents, students, employee groups and the wider community – in order to galvanize the community towards a common vision for public education and ensure transparency and accountability in our work. My successful experience building strategic plans that work gives me the confidence to know that with rigorous planning we can achieve our goals.

Trustees are elected officials with a duty to act in the interest of democracy, fostering an open and responsive relationship with the public, and advocating for the needs of each student and the school district courageously and honestly. I will use my position as Trustee to keep the public and school communities informed about the actions of the Board and government. As a community engagement specialist, I bring a host of skills and ideas to the table to support this goal.

Education is not just about outcomes, it is about the daily experiences of children and youth. Supporting students is at base about recognizing and respecting the lives of young people in our communities and working to ensure that the public education we deliver is worthy of them.

On November 15, I hope that along with Loring-Kuhanga, McNally, Nohr, and Paynter I will be given the opportunity to serve the students of SD61 and work towards a stronger community for all.



Rob Paynter
SD 61 (Victoria)

In the Greater Victoria School District, the current Board of Education, dominated by a majority of multi-term veteran trustees, has largely abdicated its responsibility to lead the delivery of public education in our communities.

Where they should be crafting policies to set district priorities and standards, these veterans sit idly as policy direction is rendered obsolete by changing legislation or ignored by district administrators.

Where the public relies on the Board to oversee the efficient and appropriate allocation of the district's nearly \$200 Million annual budget, veteran trustees have repeatedly passed it with inadequate information and virtually without comment, all the while undermining the efforts of the progressive minority of trustees to make meaningful inquiries.

Where trustees should actively seek out the questions, suggestions and concerns of administrators, staff, students, parents and education partners, the majority has actively thwarted or delayed the adoption of policy changes meant to increase public engagement.

In essence these veteran trustees have forgotten who they work for.

For the past three years I have attended Board, subcommittee and working group meetings, observing, providing comment and making recommendations. While I have had opportunities to play a minor role in discussions, I have also concluded that many of the public engagement opportunities currently in place in the district are window dressing intended to meet obligations and expectations rather than facilitate true collaboration. It would be difficult for example, for anyone involved in last year's discussions surrounding the closure of Sundance School not to conclude that the decision to shutter the school had been made long before parents were ever consulted.

As a parent of children in elementary

and middle school in SD61, I see the learning conditions of our children on virtually a daily basis. I witness the professionalism and commitment of administrators, teachers, specialists and support staff as they work to deliver incredible learning opportunities to our children. I also see the challenges brought about by years of underfunding.

I will be a staunch advocate for a properly funded public education system.

As a seasoned planner, I understand the need for long term objectives to guide priority setting and allocation of resources for best effect. SD61 currently relies solely on the annual Achievement Contract to guide its practice. This approach places the system in a reactive posture, unable to fully appreciate the consequences of changes that occur or decisions that are made. A wealth of financial, demographic and student information is readily available, that combined with input from the educational community can guide the way forward while giving us the means to monitor our progress on key matters and improve our decision making processes.

As a trustee, I commit to the implementation of a long term strategic planning process for SD61.

As a trustee I will actively engage with administration, teachers and staff both in the schools and through their representation organizations. I will meet with students and parents, sharing information, explaining approaches and asking for comments.

I commit to using this input as an integral part of my decision making process.

I commit to creating new and meaningful channels for public engagement.

I commit to proactively providing as much information as possible regarding the financial and administrative management of the school district.

A reasonable person might question why another seemingly reasonable person would seek a role in an apparently dysfunctional system, where the province underfunds and administration limits access to information. To be honest, it's personal interest. I want to be a trustee so that our children, our nieces, nephews and grandchildren all get the best possible education. I want them to be informed, skilled and eager to take on new adventures. I want them to be able to ask questions, hold an opinion and know how to take a stand for what they believe in. I want them to have a career that satisfies their needs, spiritually and intellectually as much as financially. I want them to play their part in building a more thoughtful and compassionate society; paying taxes, supporting their families, friends and community and looking for their own opportunities to make this a better place to live.

I have the skills and the commitment. I am asking you for the opportunity.



Ravi Parmar
SD 62 (Sooke)

Dear Lower Island News Readers,

My name is Ravi Parmar and I am running as a candidate for school trustee in District 62 (Sooke), Belmont Zone, in the upcoming election. I am currently a third year Political Science student at the University of Victoria, I have lived in Langford with my family for the past 10 years, and most importantly I am proud to say that I

am a graduate of SD62, having attended Millstream Elementary, Spencer Middle School and Belmont Secondary.

I was the organizer and coordinator of the "Let's get Belmont a New School Campaign". We gathered over 3000 signatures on a petition, held a student walkout, a community rally and I attended a private, face to face meeting with then Minister of Education, the Honourable George Abbott, where I stated the case for funding the replacement of Belmont with two new high schools. I am proud of the contribution that our student movement made in finally securing this funding.

I am running for school trustee because my involvement in this district has led to a passion for the education system. I represent the voices of the future and as an SD62 grad I understand the districts gifts and challenges. I also want to bring my strong proven voice and contribute in a more significant way right at the board table.

If elected - I am committed to:

- Engaging with the public outside of board meetings by visiting partner groups, such as: parents, students, teachers and support staff in their own environments
- Advocating for increased capital funding in light of the exploding population in the district, and the need for school ex-

pansion.

- Opening the lines of communication with our teachers. Teachers are the backbone of our education system.
- Supporting educational assistants as they play a crucial role in helping to build a stronger public education system.
- Supporting the court decision and advocating for the restored limits regarding class size and composition.
- My goal as a trustee is to facilitate the creation of a positive, fully-funded local system that will keep students interested, engaged and supported every step of the way.

I look forward to engaging with all the partners in education over the next few weeks. If you want to learn more about my campaign, please visit my website at www.RaviParmar.com or give me a call at (778)-678-2335 or connect with me by email at rviparmarD62@gmail.com, on Twitter: [@rparmarSD62](https://twitter.com/rparmarSD62) or Facebook: [Ravi Parmar for SD62](https://www.facebook.com/RaviParmarforSD62)

If you live in Colwood, Highlands, Langford or Metchosin I hope I can count on your support on November 15.



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Part 3: Seven Deadly Sins

Nothing in the world is more dangerous

By Ron Duffy

“Nothing in the world is more dangerous,” said Martin Luther King, “than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity”.

Ignorance, the state of being uninformed or deliberately misinformed, is dangerous in one important case because the health of a democracy depends on educated citizens. Democracy is supposed to be rule of the people, by the people, for the people. But in order to rule effectively, the people need political knowledge. If they know little or nothing about government, it becomes difficult to hold political leaders accountable for their performance.

Unfortunately public knowledge about politics is disturbingly low and people often do a poor job of evaluating the political information they do know. This state of affairs has persisted despite rising education levels, increased availability of information thanks to modern technology, and even rising IQ scores. A country’s collective ignorance paves the way for extremist politicians to validate their positions to the public.

The prime example of this may be found in World War II when Hitler convinced Germans that they would win a war against “enemies of the Reich” and that the greatest enemies were the Jews. Hitler used the Germans’ ignorant hatred of the Jewish people and their belief in the propaganda of the right and might of the Third Reich to promote a senseless and bloody war.

Social and political oppression are caused not only by one tyrannical leader and common greed, but also by general ignorance. Overall, populations are too quick to accept the propaganda fed to them and allow governments to become the opposite of what they promised in lying election manifestos.

George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* depicts the dangers of ignorance through the treacheries that the working class animals in his farm eventually faced. Orwell teaches us to educate ourselves and others, so that the political and social oppression, seen not only in his great book but in actual colonial expansion and in tyrannies around the world, do not continue. We should pay close attention to Orwell and understand the importance of education.

Education is the key to stopping the oppression encouraged by ignorance and must be made available to as many as possible. Even more important than financial aid, education is the key to a just future. Fifteen-year-old Malala Yousafzai took a bullet in the head in defence of the right to an education for girls in benighted Afghanistan. Every child, male or female, in whatever country, has the right to a school education and every adult has the right to meet his or her basic learning needs.

Although the number of illiterate adults has dropped by 100 million worldwide since 1990, around 776 million young people and adults still cannot read or write—two thirds of them women. At least 75 million primary school-aged children have no opportunity to attend school. These figures published by UNESCO are based on official surveys carried out by individual countries—and the fear is that the actual number of children who have not been included in the statistics is much higher. For example, Nigeria is facing one of the world’s worst learning crises, with 10 million out-of-school children.

In the Millennium Declaration the international community pledged to improve education worldwide. By 2015 all children should have access to primary education, and gender disparities are to have been eliminated at all levels of education. The elimination of ignorance is a prerequisite for self-determination and participation. Education is the basis of a functioning democracy.

One of the most dangerous forms of ignorance for a democracy, or for any other form of society, is ignorance of economics, especially among those responsible for government policy. Jeremie T.A. Rostan writes for the Austrian Ludwig von Mises Institute about the “disastrous effects” of economic ignorance. He proposes an Iron Law of Economic Ignorance, namely that “the value of economic knowledge increases

with its scarcity. That is, economic knowledge gets more valuable as the economy worsens; but the economy worsens according to the level of political intervention—which is a function of economic ignorance.” Economically ignorant politicians don’t allow their ignorance of economics to stop them from making inappropriate proposals. They think they can bring about a new economic reality simply by wishing it into existence, without the slightest idea of the complexities they are dealing with, or of the unintended consequences that their proposals might bring about.

One of today’s most intelligent economists is Paul Krugman, a Professor of Economics and International Affairs and winner of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences. Krugman points out that since the fall of Lehman Brothers in 2008, “policy-makers and politicians have ignored both the textbooks and the lessons of history. And the result has been a vast economic and human catastrophe, with trillions of dollars of productive potential squandered and millions of families placed in dire straits for no good reason.”

Economics worked well when economists, who took their own textbooks seriously, quickly diagnosed the nature of our economic malaise. “We were suffering from inadequate demand. The financial crisis and the housing bust created an environment in which everyone was trying to spend less, but my spending is your income and your spending is my income, so when everyone tries to cut spending at the same time the result is an overall decline in incomes and a depressed economy.”

Meanwhile, powerful Conservative factions discovered that bad economic analysis served their objectives. Most obviously, people whose real goal is dismantling the social safety net have found that promoting deficit panic among an economically ignorant populace is an effective way to push their agenda. Such people have been aided and abetted by what Krugman has come to think of as the *trahison des nerds*—the willingness of some economists to come up with analyses that tell powerful people what they want to hear. “Whatever the reasons basic economics got tossed aside,” says Krugman, “the result has been tragic. Most of the waste and suffering that have afflicted Western economies these past five years was unnecessary. We have, all along, had the knowledge and the tools to restore full employment. But policymakers just keep finding reasons not to do the right thing.”

In order to counteract economic ignorance the International Student Initiative for Pluralism in Economics, a collaboration of 37 student associations from 19 countries, wants a more open, diverse, and pluralistic teaching of economics. In May this year they demanded an end to an economics curriculum that blocks progress on everything from food security to climate change. It is not only the world economy that is in crisis. The teaching of economics is in crisis too, and this crisis has consequences far beyond the university walls. What is taught shapes the minds of the next generation of policymakers, and therefore shapes the societies we live in.

The students “are dissatisfied with the dramatic narrowing of the curriculum that has taken place over the last couple of decades. This lack of intellectual diversity does not only restrain education and research, it limits our ability to contend with the multidimensional challenges of the 21st century—from financial stability to food security and climate change. The world should be brought back into the classroom, as well as debate and a pluralism of theories and methods. This will help renew the discipline and ultimately create a space in which solutions to society’s problems can be generated.”

That the right-wing Conservative movement is built on misinformation, strange fantasies and outright lies has been the subject of thorough documentation. A prime suspect, Fox News—or Faux News—well known to be premised on misconstruing facts and telling lies, is creating in a large segment of the population—between a fifth

and a quarter of it—beliefs that are detrimental to our well-being. An example is their scare tactics about vaccination, as a result of which a re-emergence of measles is spreading through the US and into Canada. In Cameroon, Syria and Pakistan the Taliban’s violent campaign against vaccination as an anti-Islamic plot has posed the greatest risk of spreading polio.

That only 28 percent of the far right trust scientists on the subject of climate change is in part due to Fox News and to the Taliban-like propaganda of the industrial conglomerates behind it. Critiques of climate science argue that science is corrupt, and this belief spills over to other kinds of science. This is borne out by a

Continued on page 20, Seven Deadly

Cowichan Valley New Democrats

Stay in touch!

You can reach your new president,
Alistair MacGregor,
by phone 250-732-7937 and
by email at almacgreg@hotmail.com.



Victoria-Swan Lake New Democrats

Stay in Touch!

You can reach your executive at:
president@vslndp.ca or
Box 282 1581 Hillside Ave.
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or visit our new website at <http://victoriabeaconhill.theorem.ca>

Saanich South
New Democrats

You can contact your executive
by writing to us
at PO Box 30041
Saanich Postal Outlet, Victoria, BC V8X 5E1
or by phoning us at 250-479-1100.

Punishing the whistleblower--a teachable moment

By Tim Pheotist

Election season brings so many opportunities to “choose”. This should be a good thing. However, there are many candidates in our communities, who have the ambition to lead us, who have difficulty with the idea that “mere voters” aren’t really qualified to make choices.

So much in our system of government denies choice, now. As we elect candidates in our province it seems increasingly unlikely that our choices can make positive changes. At best we can only hope to slow or redirect some of the more egregious destructive policies.

Why is this? Elections are frequent and candidates ubiquitous. If frequent elections and willing candidates are the answer to a more perfect land then we should now be living in paradise, or at least trending in that direction. We’re not.

Actually we’re trending in the opposite direction. Our elections seem to be nothing but a mirage of choice. Just as the desert traveller craves water and believes that the next oasis is something other than another trick of the light, so we imagine that the next election – the next candidate’s pledge – will bring rational solutions to our communities.

I’ve been struck by two examples, recently, which seem to suggest that some changes of attitude might be appropriate.

Watching a report of a recent candidate’s meeting for Victoria mayor <http://vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=470453> an agitated and angry candidate for change described the awful circumstances in which people without homes and resources, herself included, must exist. She had a lesson to teach. She was living today’s economic reality for so many. What could ever be more relevant?

Few were willing to listen to her. Aggressive candidates abused and protested. She caused them either amusement or frustration. Not a few of her fellow candidates were openly contemptuous. Those candidates, in failing to give this lady space and understanding, demonstrate their own contempt for the electoral system that enables their own messages to be heard. These candidates, deaf and blind to today’s economic realities, deny choice.

Next anecdote. School District 61 trustees. Our province has only recently seen a clear demonstration of dysfunction in our school systems, province-wide. The problem has much to do with provincial government policies and political philosophies which have reduced public education budgets in favour of private profit making.

Throughout the long process of the distortion of the BC education system, some SD 61 trustees have occupied their chairs for multiple terms – in some cases, exceeding 20 years.

Can it be that some incumbents are unable to imagine their lives without their “bully pulpit”? In this example they have watched decades of disintegration in the BC public school system and particularly in SD 61.

Many “long tenured” trustees have increasingly resorted to “in camera” pub-

lic meetings – **secret public meetings**!! Some trustees have proposed there be fewer secret meetings. The proposals have been repeatedly resisted and opposed by long tenured trustees in bids to hide discussion from public scrutiny. This is certainly not a demonstration of trust in the voters who “chose” these advocates of public education.

It is not a “choice”, after two decades, to once again see these same names on a ballot. Many of these individuals are long past their “sell by dates if measured by their time seated as SD 61 trustees.

The anger and contempt that so many municipal and council candidates and incumbents display toward those who would question them, both while they retain office and during election processes, certainly displays an unhealthy frustration with those who might elect them – the voter – the whistleblower.

Moving on. Elections have a beginning, middle and end. We participate in the theatre and produce winners to take the curtain call. And we walk out of the theatre understanding the reality that little will change in the short term. We made a “choice” and used our ticket.

But were we really given a “choice” to vote for and against the true agents administering our lives?

Our elected representatives must stage a show every three or four years but the administrators of their policies can hide in the wings, rarely publicly accountable for their actions.

In British Columbia we have come to know these stage managers as P3s.

Unaccountable to the public, or its purse, via elections, they conduct, often for private profit, the business of public administration. Rarely are today’s P3s subject to effective public scrutiny and almost always these private “experts”, managers and corporations find safety in lengthy contracts that outlive multiple election cycles.

Their only electoral pressure comes from private shareholders forever pressing for further maximization of private profit.

So, at national and provincial levels, choosing a candidate from one of three viable parties is unlikely to change much in the day to day administration of government.

But our next elections are more local. Maybe we can choose candidates who will make choices that will positively improve our immediate communities, services and environments. After all, the mayors, councillors and trustees live on our streets, among us, and there is so much room for improvement. Surely these are people ready and capable of making constructive change. These are people close to, and in touch with their communities – at least they should be.

Apparently not. As an economist this writer tends to look at “big pictures” – macro scenarios – as we grandly describe our focus. We eschew the anecdote which all too often tells the truth about the effects of economic policies.

But there does seem to be something looking like an oasis in the desert of austerity. Leading economists are suggesting that

there are “choices” beyond austerity. Take a look.

In the US: (courtesy The Guardian)

Janet Yellen, the chair of the US Federal Reserve and the most powerful woman in American finance, has taken a strong stance suggesting that the growing rift between the rich and the poor in the US is a cause for great concern.

In a speech pointedly titled “[Perspectives on Inequality and Opportunity from the Survey of Consumer Finances](#)”, Yellen spoke in the strongest terms about the rise in economic inequality and chided the US for falling behind on its economic standards. Yellen delivered her remarks to an audience of economists at a conference about inequality at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

“The extent of and continuing increase in inequality in the United States greatly concern me,” Yellen said. She noted that “the distribution of income and wealth in the United States has been widening more or less steadily for several decades, to a greater extent than in most advanced countries.” ‘

In the UK: (courtesy The Guardian)

British workers are suffering the longest and severest decline in real earnings since the mid-Victorian era, according to new analysis.

Research carried out by the TUC suggests that the UK would have to go back to the 1860s for a pay squeeze as deep and as long as the current one. This year is the seventh consecutive year of falling real earnings for UK workers, the TUC claims, a situation, it says, that has no historical precedent. The body, which represents 6 million workers, calculates that there has been an 8% fall in real earnings between 2007 and 2014.

The findings come as tens of thousands of people from across the UK prepare to march in London next Saturday as part of Britain Needs a Pay Rise, a TUC-organized rally. Unions complain that the lowest paid and the “squeezed middle” are bearing the brunt of the economic recovery. “Living standards today might have improved dramatically since the late 19th century, but workers in 2014 are now into the seventh year of falling real wages and their financial pain is real, with no end to overstretched household budgets in sight,” said the TUC general secretary, Frances O’Grady.

Historians claim that not since 1865-67 has there been a comparable squeeze on earnings for British workers. Back then, falling wages were triggered by financial liberalization that saw the failure of the largest joint stock bank and led to public protests, resulting in the extension of the vote to more than a million working people and the TUC’s founding.

Other notable declines in real wages include the global depression of 1874-78, the austerity years of 1921-23 that prefigured the UK’s disastrous return to the gold standard in 1925, and 1976-77, as the economy came out of recession. However, the declines in each of these crises lasted only

two to four years, compared with seven years this time. The TUC analysis shows the current pay squeeze is twice as deep as the worst of these episodes, at 8.2%, compared with 4% in the 1920s. The TUC has been quick to draw parallels between the past and the present day. “The huge squeeze on pay being felt by families up and down the country is the longest and deepest experienced since records began in the 1850s,” O’Grady said. “Back then most people didn’t have the vote, small boys were still being sent up chimneys, and the poor lived in fear of ending their days in the dreaded workhouse.”

Anger over falling wages, which unions blame on a recession triggered by the banking crisis of 2008, will see an estimated half a million NHS workers across England and Northern Ireland take strike action tomorrow. NHS members of unions including Unison, Unite, the Royal College of Midwives and the GMB will strike between 7am and 11 am. They are protesting at the government’s decision to ignore the recommendation to award them a 1% pay rise made by the independent pay review body.

“In 1865 the UK economy had taken a nosedive following reckless financial speculation in the City and the collapse of a major bank, not dissimilar from the events of 2008,” O’Grady said. “But although pay fell in real terms in that slump of almost 150 years ago, the squeeze on pay that hit Victorian workers only lasted two years.” ‘

This writer has railed against the policies of austerity in *LIN* pages for years. It is ironic that it is the managers of international economies rather than their elected paymasters, who now identify austerity policies as an abuse of public funds and a poverty-creating fraud.

It’s time to suggest to our local candidates that they need shape up, stop blaming the whistleblowers and start publicly calling the private administrators, managers and P3s to explain how our public funds are being processed. Enquiring minds want to know what is going on!

All voters and candidates can and should be whistleblowers. If leading economists and treasury secretaries can blow the whistle on austerity politics then so can our city councillors and local officials.

Cast votes for councils of scepticism and individuals who will require transparent and public explanations from appointed managers, administrators and P3s.

Today, and for this election cycle, there is no room to continue the failed policies of austerity and discrimination that have closed our schools, endangered our public clinics and hospitals and landed so many, housed in cold cars and cardboard boxes, on the streets of our cities.

There are progressive and imaginative candidates who have shown a willingness to challenge the excesses of private profit. Vote to move these constructive candidates into majority positions and discover how quickly today’s mirage of “choice” becomes a reality.

Seven Deadly Sins, Part 3, continued from page 19

study that found that regular watching of Fox News in particular leads to a declining trust in climate scientists. A paper published in the journal *Public Understanding of Science* states, “Conservative media use decreased trust in scientists which, in turn, decreases certainty that global warming is happening.” The authors of the paper propose that the “public’s low level of knowledge and the media’s conflicting, often value-laden messages, about global warming lead people to use heuristics—mental shortcuts—to make sense of this complex issue.” Meanwhile global warming continues, and only lip service is paid to it by governments brow-beaten or funded by multinational corporations. With climate change happening now, and its ramifications spelled out clearly by both the recent White House and UN’s Intergovernmental Climate Change studies, the

National Academy of Sciences delivered what may be the scariest study on global warming yet: “The globe’s great ice sheets contain enough frozen water to raise sea levels worldwide by more than 60 meters (200 feet),” and according to NASA, “the collapse of these major glaciers now appears unstoppable.”

In some cases a supposedly democratic government will rely on ignorance for its own ends. The lies about the presence of WMDs in Iraq is only one example. Edward Snowden’s revealing details of classified US government surveillance programmes, of which the people were kept in ignorance, is another.

In the past some have argued that the US cannot be transparent about targeted killings in countries like Pakistan and Yemen because their governments approved of American use of lethal force within their

borders on condition that the US did not admit to doing so. The morality of such an agreement is itself questionable. Presumably the plausible deniability is demanded because no government could admit to its people that it had given another state the green light to kill by remote control inside its own borders. But the deniability is no longer plausible. International law acknowledges that killing is not always illegal or wrong, and that a government has the authority to do so as a last resort in genuine self-defence. But if the US government’s targeted killings are lawful, it should have no hesitation in making them public. Surely the least the US can do is to count and report on the lives taken. Yet even that, for “the most transparent administration in history,” is apparently too much.

“Living is easy with eyes closed,” as John Lennon enigmatically declared.

NDP promotes clean energy

OTTAWA –New Democrats gathered with clean energy experts October 3 at the National Forum on Clean Energy and Industry to discuss Canada’s participation in the global clean energy sector.

“Canada must commit to an approach based on sustainable development. Not only is it the right thing to do but it will also help ensure our long-term prosperity as a nation in a competitive modern global economy. We must start working with the world and stop working against the planet,” said NDP leader Tom Mulcair in his speech to kick off the forum.

The Forum, organized by NDP MP Peter Julian (Burnaby – New Westminster), involved discussions on how renewable energies and clean technologies will stimulate economic growth, protect the environment and promoting sustainable growth.

“The NDP knows that developing Canada’s clean energy sector will create jobs, stimulate the economy and reduce greenhouse gasses,” said Julian. “Canadians can count on the NDP to be a leader in the clean energy sector.”

El Salvador’s struggle for democratic authority

By Paul Manly

I spent 10 days in El Salvador this September representing the Council of Canadians on an international delegation examining metallic mining and how it affects communities. During the trip several events highlighted El Salvador’s struggle to remain a truly democratic and independent nation. On September 15, which marked almost 200 years of independence for El Salvador, people were in the streets of cities and towns across the country to celebrate the occasion. September 15 was also the first day of the final hearings for the OceanaGold verses El Salvador investor state lawsuit at the ICSID in Washington DC, a suit that is a direct assault on the democratic independence of El Salvador. On September 17 people took to the streets in front of the headquarters of the World Bank in San Salvador to protest against the suit.



Photo by Omar Navarro

Protest over investor state lawsuit is held at World Bank headquarters in San Salvador.

The ICSID or the International Center for the Settlements of Investor Disputes is a secretive tribunal housed at the headquarters of the World Bank in Washington DC. The ICSID arbitrates these investor state disputes based on rules embedded in trade agreements and does not consider the environmental or social reasons for the disputes or their ramifications. OceanaGold, a Canadian-Australian mining company, is suing El Salvador for \$301 million for not issuing a mining licence for a project called El Dorado. The project has the potential to contaminate the Lempa River, which provides water for two thirds of the population of El Salvador. Another Canadian company, Pacific Rim, launched the original investor state lawsuit for \$77 million over the El Dorado mine in 2009 after the company failed to meet the environmental requirements of the El Salvador government and the mining permit was not granted. OceanaGold purchased Pacific Rim for \$10.2 million in 2013 and has continued the investor state lawsuit, increasing it to \$301 million. People in El Salvador are understandably angry and want the suit dismissed. They question how OceanaGold could continue suing for \$301 million when Pacific Rim, in reality, was worth only \$10.2 million. If El Salvador loses the case the World Bank can enforce the payment of the settlement by seizing the country’s assets, including aid, development or disaster relief funds destined for the country and use those funds to pay OceanaGold. The international delegation toured several different regions of the country where mining has taken a toll environmentally and socially. In San Sebastian, La Union we witnessed the environmental degradation and contamination from an open pit mine owned by Commerce Group of the USA. Because the gold is found in small particles in volcanic rock, the rock needs to be crushed and soaked with chemicals including cyanide to extract it. The company had dumped the tailings from the mine on a hillside, leaving them exposed, creating acid drainage and the leaching of arsenic, cyanide, iron and other heavy metals into the river below. This has left a legacy of health and social problems for the communities downstream. Gustavo Blanco, a local anti-mining activist, who gave us a tour of the contaminated site, told the delegation about the exceptionally high rates of death due to kidney failure in the communities. Commerce Group had launched their own \$100 million suit against El Salvador after the government revoked their operating license. That suit was based on the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), which has a clause protecting investors from “indirect expropriation” and

“discrimination” which can be interpreted to be any law, measure or policy that constrains a company and affects it’s potential profitability. That case was dismissed on a technicality and has been closed after the company was unable to pay the fee needed for the appeal. We also visited several communities in Cabañas, the region where the El Dorado mine was proposed; here we heard about the threats, intimidation and violence against out-spoken anti-mining activists. In 2009 Marcelo Rivera, a well-known environmentalist and community organizer, was kidnapped, tortured and murdered and Dora Sorto, an eight months pregnant mother and anti-mining activist, was killed with a high power rifle while getting water from a community well. Her two-year-old son was injured in the attack. In April 2013 the Court of Sensuntepeque determined that the deaths of five environmentalists could be attributed to the presence of Pacific Rim and the struggle against the El Dorado mine. “El Salvador should be suing the mining companies for the problems they have created here,” explains Cristhain Alvarangu of the organization MUFRAS 32. “We invite the people who invest in these transnational companies to come here to where their money is being invested and live together and share the experiences with the families that are here...live the poverty, live the contamination, live the environmental destruction.” On September 19, we attended a community forum where anti-mining activists from Canada, the USA, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala discussed struggles with mining companies in their respective communities. In all of the situations they discussed, the national governments had sided with the corporations against the wishes of affected communities. In El Salvador the situation is different and the communities have convinced the national government to side with them against the mining companies -- at least for now. On September 20, the delegation attended a training session in election monitoring. The following day, September 21, the delegates volunteered as international observers of the consulta popular or popular consultation vote in the community of San Jose Las Flores. The question on the ballot, “Do you support the establishment of metals mining, exploration, and exploitation in San Jose Las Flores?” was decided with a resounding 99% voting ‘No’. This historic vote utilized a provision in the El Salvador municipal code that allows municipalities to pass ordinances on issues of concern to the community. How this vote and ordinance is treated and whether it is upheld and respected or challenged and ignored is of interest to communities struggling against mining companies around the world. Ultimately, the anti-mining organizations and activists in El Salvador want a permanent ban on metallic mining in the country. El Salvador is small and densely populated; its main watershed, the Lempa River, is very susceptible to contamination, which would lead to a large exodus of environmental refugees. Mining for gold is simply not an acceptable option for the people of El Salvador. Canadians should be paying close attention to the OceanaGold vs El Salvador case, not only because it’s a Canadian company bullying a developing country but because Canada faces it’s own barrage of investor state lawsuits. There are currently \$2.5 billion in suits against Canada under NAFTA and with the Harper Conservative government in a free trade agreement signing frenzy, Canadian taxpayers could soon be on the hook for billions in payouts unless we’re prepared to surrender our democratic authority to foreign corporations. Paul Manly is a Nanaimo BC based filmmaker, activist and community organizer. He is the BC – Yukon region chapter representative on the national board of the Council of Canadians. His films include *You, Me and the SPP*, an expose on the Security and Prosperity Partnership between Canada, the United States and Mexico. He is currently developing a project that examines the impact of investor state dispute settlement mechanisms embedded in trade agree-



Photo by Pedro Cabezas

International delegation examining metallic mining in El Salvador inspects part of a mine tailings dump in San Sebastian, La Union. Runoff is causing pollution .



Photo by Pedro Cabezas

Water contaminated from acid drainage in San Sebastian, La Union has left a legacy of health and social problems for the communities downstream.



Photo by Pedro Cabezas.

Gustavo Blanco, a local anti-mining activist, gave the delegation a tour of the contaminated site, and told them about the exceptionally high rates of death due to kidney failure in the communities.



Photo by Chris Hufstader/Oxfam America

The delegates acted as monitors in the El Salvador elections.

Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life, by James Daschuk (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013)

Book review by Jim Manly

Many Canadians continue to enjoy the comfortable myth that Canada’s treatment of indigenous peoples was much less violent than that of the United States; we did not have huge military massacres like those of Sand Creek or Wounded Knee. James Daschuk, however, shows how Canadian colonialism was, in its own way, every bit as violent and ugly as that of our American neighbours.

Clearing the Plains is not a pleasant book to read as it details the history of disease and hunger which destroyed First Nations populations across the Canadian prairies. Although we have become accustomed to stories and statistics about First Nations poor health, we need to realize that generally speaking indigenous peoples were strong and healthy at the time of first contact with European colonists.

Plains people who depended on hunting, particularly bison before the introduction of horses, had been strong, fast and agile. Physical anthropologists have concluded that they were the tallest people in the world. (p. 8, cf, n. 45) Over time they had also developed methods of hunting which enabled them to have regular supplies of meat but did not disturb the long-term stability of the herds.

The arrival of European colonists and traders brought many radical changes including diseases for which the existing population had no immunity. “Microbes cannot be isolated from commerce” (181) and, as a result of local and regional trading, infectious diseases spread and reached almost every part of the continent long before any traders or settlers.

Of course First Nations had not been totally isolated from infectious epidemics which occasionally swept through their communities but, apart from TB which sometimes left scarring on bones, there is little hard evidence of which diseases were prevalent.

New diseases, such as smallpox, swept through previously healthy and prosperous communities in what specialists call, “virgin soil epidemics” (11); through a combination of factors these sometimes killed as many as 90-95% of the population. The death of community leaders, hunters, food-gatherers, and women of child bearing age multiplied the death toll and “had a fundamental impact on the social networks, institutions and collective memories of entire First Nations” (12). Some moved to new territory; others disappeared from history as they were absorbed by surviving neighbours. In the same way, some other Nations, which had survived the initial epidemic, developed immunity and became stronger vis-à-vis their neighbours.

As the fur trade spread onto the northern plains and American settlers moved west, diseases, including measles, whooping cough and venereal disease, increased. Among different groups mortality rates from

these epidemics ranged from 20 to 65%. Unscrupulous traders, particularly from the North West and XY companies, who used violence and the indiscriminate sale of rum to encourage trade, multiplied the disaster.

Traditionally, since beaver dams protected scarce water supplies in lakes and rivers, some First Nations had abstained from hunting these animals. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, however, the European market for beaver hats meant that beaver were now being hunted to extinction. “The beaver were gone a generation after traders set up shop along the Saskatchewan River.... [This] marked the end of an ecological relationship between humans and the environment that was thousands of years old” (42).

Conditions for First Nations on the Canadian plains deteriorated even more rapidly after Confederation in 1867, the transfer of the Hudson’s Bay Company lands to Canada in 1869, the building of the CPR and the arrival of settlers.

Of even greater significance, in the 1870s the huge herds of bison disappeared quite suddenly due to a loss of habitat and overhunting for food to be traded and hides to be used for machinery belts. Bison had not only provided the staple food for plains people but had also been the basis of their culture; their disappearance left many First Nations people facing starvation as well as breakdown of personal and community life.

The Conservative government of John A. MacDonald saw indigenous people as an obstacle to settlement; now that the disappearance of the bison had removed the foundation of their economic self-sufficiency, this became an ever more expensive obstacle.

The government attempted to solve this problem by presenting First Nations with treaties by which vast tracts of land were ceded to the Crown in exchange for small reserves, small payments of money, promises of medicine and education, and food. In many situations food became the driving factor. Hungry and sometimes starving people signed treaties in exchange for promises of food; these same promises were used to force them onto reserves. “Once on reserve, First Nation people were at the mercy of officials with little patience for protest.” (114)

To ensure the success of his policy John A. MacDonald became Superintendent General of Indian Affairs and appointed his friend, Edgar Dewdney, as commissioner.¹ Dewdney developed a personally lucrative relationship with the I.G. Baker Company in Montana which became the chief supplier of beef, taking the place of the vanished bison for Canadian First Nations.

Although bovine tuberculosis had been present to some degree in bison, it was much more common in the cattle which replaced them. Tragically, much of the beef supplied to First Nations was infected with this disease which spread easily to humans.² Two primary factors in the spread

of tuberculosis are malnutrition and overcrowding; the herding of people onto reserves with inadequate housing and near starvation diets led almost inevitably to an explosion of tuberculosis on the prairies during the 1880s so that it became the number one killer disease among them.

Government officials denied responsibility by claiming that tuberculosis was hereditary and, as Dewdney claimed, “had its origin at a time prior to that [in] which our responsibility began”. He attributed the high incidence of the disease to “improved reporting of sickness which in former times, would have gone unnoticed”(176).

After forcing them onto reserves and making them dependent upon government largess, the good folks in Ottawa became concerned about the moral effects of indolence and introduced an ill-conceived, short-lived policy of work for rations. Although, as Dewdney reported, many were willing to work, the policy failed because, apart from cutting firewood, the government simply had no work for them to do.

Disappearance of the bison and harsh climatic conditions combined with the government’s mean-spirited fiscal restraint meant that many communities were pushed to starvation. Different reports mentioned people eating their dogs, grass, poisoned wolves, the diseased carcasses of horses, buffalo skins and moccasins.

The *Saskatchewan Herald*, in December, 1879, claimed that more than 25 Blackfoot had starved to death; another report told of 20 members of the Okanese Band starving to death near Fort Qu’Appelle. Dewdney, however, stood firm. “Food be issued when it was found that the Indians who were really starving, to those who would work & to the sick & infirm who had no friends & who could not work” (p. 111).

When the North-West Mounted Police were formed in 1874 they saw an important part of their mandate as the protection of fragile First Nations communities; thus they opposed the government’s 1882 plan to close Fort Walsh because they feared that this would make famine conditions worse. Government responded by bringing the police under control of Indian Affairs; this marked an important turning point. “Once regarded as the saviours of the indigenous population of the west, the police became the ambivalent agents of their subjugation” (p. 127).

While some agents and government employees attempted to mitigate harsh government directives, others took sadistic delight in pushing them to the extreme. Daschuk cites other historians to suggest that Cree participation in the North-West Rebellion of 1885 was not an organized resistance, but rather isolated acts of revenge against such sadistic individuals.

The following quotation from the *Saskatchewan Herald* of July 1881 illustrates the nasty callousness of some settlers towards the suffering and starvation caused by their own arrival on aboriginal land:

“The natives of this land are fully up to the buzzards of the south. Few deceased animals escape their rapacious maws. A horse died a few nights ago on the street opposite to our office, and at early dawn we beheld a posse of native beauties cutting up the dead animal a la buffalo mode of past days, and conveying it to camp, where a grand gorge was being prepared.” (p. 122).

The late 19th century development of Indian Residential Schools with overcrowded dormitories and seriously inadequate nutrition became a central feature of life for First Nations children, families and communities right up to the 1960s.

The insensitive attitude of the government towards the nutrition of First Nations people can be seen in the experiments conducted, without any informed consent, in six Residential Schools (including Alberni) and several communities during the 1940s and 50s. Residential School students, because of their severely inadequate diets, provided a readymade laboratory for nutritional experiments.² With the current Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Canadian society is slowly beginning to come to terms with this ugly legacy from our past.

As I said earlier, *Clearing the Plains* is not a pleasant book to read with its repetitive accounts of death by disease and hunger in one community after another. Daschuk gives no good news, no happy ending.

Most First Nations communities continue to suffer from inadequate food, polluted water, poor housing and a lack of economic opportunities. Individuals who leave these communities with the hope of finding a better life often face a life of poverty, discrimination and violence in the rundown sections of our cities.

On the other hand many of their leaders continue to work for a better life for their people through education and business opportunities and the struggle for civil rights free from prejudice and discrimination. Leaders and ordinary citizens of the larger community can support but not control these efforts.

In the meantime it is important that we know the history behind this struggle. Daschuk’s book is an important and helpful contribution.

(Endnotes)

1 Dewdney had been a pioneer surveyor of southern British Columbia in gold rush days (the Dewdney Trail) and later was elected to Parliament and became Minister of the Interior and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs; still later he became BC’s Lieutenant Governor.

2 Ian Mosby, “Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experiments in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952”. (*Histoire sociale/Social history*, Vol. 46, No. 91, May 2013, pp. 145-172; University of Toronto Press.)

SLOUGHING TOWARDS SIRTE: NATO’s War on Libya and Africa, by Maxmillian Forte, 2012, Baraka Books, Montreal, Canada

Book review by Theresa Wolfwood

“NATO’s war in Libya was advertised as a humanitarian intervention- bombing in the name of ‘saving lives’.”

As Canada goes to war again in Western Asia, it is important to remember our humanitarian (read: military) intervention into Libya a few years ago. Forte’s book is valuable history of our unflagging enthusiasm for killing people somewhere else at the slightest nod from our occupiers, the USA; but it is important reading now as rumors spread that we may go to war in Libya (again) soon.

Many of us thought the assault was about resources and local power, but Forte sees further than that. His detailed research leads us through the human rights sham, the almost instantaneous recognition of rebels we normally label as “terrorists” the money grab of Libya’s assets, the complete lack of diplomatic or political ne-

gotiations, and the speedy official legitimization of the “winners” of the war we fought for them. Since that time we have seen Libya become a constant war scene with people desperately fleeing the chaos and conflict as more people are killed daily than ever before.

Forte teaches at Concordia University in Montreal. His book documents the background to our war on Libya, a country with oil resources that generated great wealth for its government under Gadhafi’s leadership who invested in and gave outright aid to other countries in Africa, building on a policy of pan-Africanism. This independence of action was a constant irritant to NATO leaders who saw Africa, as it sees the rest of the world, as a storehouse of resources for our use. The result to this perceived threat was “military humanism” which was marketed to us as “Responsibility to Protect”. Indeed we were protecting imperialism and its expansionism. The

destruction of Sirte, once called the most beautiful city in Libya and the home of Gadhafi, is the symbol of our humanitarian.

Forte reveals all the sordid details of our war on Libya as a prelude to our new colonialism of Africa. THE USA’s military Africa Command, ARICOM was created by George Bush (but even earlier, remember our war on Somalia) and continues under the present government with the pledge to invoke a “global response” if Africa posed a threat to American interests.

As Forte puts it, “They construct Africa as a zone that needs to be patrolled, laws enforced, in other words tamed and civilized.” He quotes Vice Admiral Robert Moeller as saying, “Let there be no mistake, AFRICOM’s job is to protect American lives and promote American interests.”

An eager supporter of the war of Libya, French President of the day, Nicolas Sarkozy said, “...It is the world order, the style of international relations for the coming de-

CADES that we are in the process of defining.”

He was saying what Canada did not need to say, we were also eager to support the destruction of another nation which challenged “our interests”.

We need to reflect on Forte’s analyses and to have a national public debate on our foreign policies and our constant military response to conflict elsewhere, to examine who really profits and who really suffers, to examine our own capacity for self-delusion and the long term neglect of Canadian social and domestic needs.

Forte ends by saying, “Once foreign military intervention occurs, it scorches the earth in a way that unleashes new forces, and creates new deadly consequences that can be exploited for the purposes of further intervention.”

His final warning, more a plea, is, “The next time that empire comes calling in the name of human rights, please be found standing idly by.”

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 executive, 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.

VICTORIA NDP CONSTITUENCY ASSO-ciation will hold a Nomination Meeting for the ucoming federal election, on saturday, November 22, at Oaklands community Centre. Registration at 2:00 pm. Meetig at 2:15 pm.

JUAN DE FUCA NEW DEMOCRATS will hold their Annual General Meeting on Saturday, November 29, at 10 am (registration from 9:30-10), at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Churh (small hall), 798 Goldstream Avenue Langford. Guest speaker will be John Horgan. For further information contact president Sharon Wilkinson at sawilkinson@shaw.ca or 250-478-5007.

JOHN HORGAN, MLA FOR JUAN DE Fuca, is looking forward to seeing you at his Annual Christmas Open House, on Wednesday, December 3, from 4-7 pm, at 122-2808 Jacklin Road (corner Jacklin and Goldstream). Light snacks and refreshments will be served. For further information, call 250-391-2801. Please drop by. Food bank donations gratefully accepted.

CAROLE JAMES, MLA FOR VICTORIA-Beacon Hill, invites you to her annual Holiday Open House. on Thursday, December 4, from 4-6 pm, at the Victoria-BeaconHill Community Office, 1084 Fort Street. Everyone is welcome to drop by, chat with Carole, and enjoy some holiday goodies.

OAK BAY-GORDON HEAD NDP will hold a Christsmas Bruch and Silent Auction on Sunday, December 7, at 1 pm, at the Oaks

on the Avenue, 206-2250 Oak Bay Avenue.Menu: bacon, sausages, glazed ham, scrambled eggs, hash browns, seafood pasta, salads, fruits, coffee nd tea. Tickets \$35 or \$25 for unwaged and students. Kids 5-12 \$10 and kids under 5 eat for free. For tickets please contact Francisco at frandaman@hotmail.com or 250-888-9950 or Keith Todd at president@obghnewdemocrats.ca.

PLEASE JOIN ESQUIMALT-ROYAL Roads MLA Maurine Karagianis for her Annual Holiday Open House, on Wednesday, December 17 from 4:00 to 6:00 pm, at A5-100 Aldersmith Place. Please bring a non-perishable food item for the Esquimalt Neighbourhood House Food Drive

This Changes Everything: Capitalism Versus the Climate, by Naomi Klein, Simon & Schuster, September 2014, 576 pages

Book review by Judy Gaylord

The thesis of Naomi Klein’s latest book is well encapsulated by the subtitle. As many will remember from her previous book, *Shock Doctrine*, she has a good track record of exposing the nefarious dealings of large corporations. Once she started looking into climate change, which she admits to “looking away” from for a number of years, it became obvious to her that we are in very immediate danger if we do not take drastic steps to control our greenhouse gas emissions. Most of the problem arises from unfettered “extractivism” practiced by large corporations and governments heavily under their influence. Prime Minister Harper’s obsessive promotion of the tar sands is an obvious example, and Klein points out that

natural gas fracking as promoted by Christy Clark may be as damaging to the climate as coal. It was confirmed by a study released in mid October that fracking releases large quantities of methane, which is a 20 times more powerful green house gas than carbon dioxide. This might be a good time for the BC NDP to clarify its stance on fossil fuel extraction. Klein makes the case that switching to renewable resources such as wind and solar creates many more jobs than the short term construction jobs in pipeline construction, etc. In Germany much of this is being done at the local level as cities reclaim previously privatized utilities. Klein sees a rapidly growing resistance movement to extractivism, which she terms “Blockadia”. It is a worldwide movement,

frequently spearheaded by aboriginal peoples who have the most to lose from climate change. Close to Victoria, the Lummi Nation in Washington state have stalled a proposed major coal export facility on one of their ancestral burial grounds and other mining and transportation projects have been blocked further east. Here, our best chance of ensuring that the Enbridge Northern Gateway project does not go ahead is to support the current First Nations legal challenges (see www.pull-together.ca for details). Klein sees the effort needed to transform our economy away from extractivism to sustainable development as being comparable to what has been done in wartime. To help turn this into a political reality she envisages a campaign comparable to that for the abolition of slavery, which had simi-

lar economic consequences in its time. The strength of that campaign was its basis of social justice and morality. The economic transformation proposed by Klein would not only tackle carbon emissions but in the process, by breaking the corporate stranglehold, but would also address poverty and inequality both within and between nations and the accompanying problems . The book is extremely wide ranging and very well referenced. I would recommend that all our MLAs read it and as many *LIN* readers as possible. It raises serious questions about what we as New Democrats might be doing to address climate change, and especially how hard we should be challenging the Clark government’s focus on LNG. Maybe some constituencies might want to host a book club or study group?

Provinces pursuing two-tier tuition fee policies: study

OTTAWA—The average cost of tuition and compulsory fees for Canadian undergraduate students will rise by almost 13% over the next four years, from \$6,885 this fall to an estimated \$7,755 in 2017-18, says a study released September 10 by by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA). The study looks at trends in tuition and compulsory fees in Canada since 1993, projects fees for each province for the next four years, and ranks the provinces on affordability for median- and low-income families using a Cost of Learning Index. “As fees continue to increase, almost without exception, provincial policies have shifted to a de facto two-tiered fee structure that sees in-province students charged less than out-of-province students for the same degree. It’s undercut the principle of universality, as students find themselves in very different financial situations depending on the province in which they reside and where they choose to pursue their education,” explains Education Director Erika Shaker.

Additionally, other compulsory fees—which are largely unregulated—continue to increase on top of tuition fees as universities look for other creative ways to compensate for inadequate public funding. According to the study, Ontario is the province with the highest fees and will see its tuition and other fees climb from \$8,474 this fall to an estimated \$9,483 in 2017-18. Newfoundland and Labrador remains the province with the lowest tuition and other compulsory fees of \$2,871 this fall, rising to an estimated \$2,888 in 2017-18. The study’s Cost of Learning Index demonstrates the role that provincial governments play in ensuring university education is more—or less—affordable for median and low-income families, particularly when household debt is at an all-time high and incomes have been stagnant for over

two decades. Nationally, university education has become, on average, 20% less affordable for median families in Canada since 1993. “Newfoundland and Labrador is the most affordable province for university education for both median- and low-income families, while New Brunswick is the least affordable for median-income families and Alberta is the least affordable for low-income families,” says David Macdonald, CCPA Senior Economist and co-author of the study. “However, if current trends continue, Saskatchewan is projected to become the least affordable province for both low-and median-income families.” *Tier for Two: Managing the Optics of Provincial Tuition Fee Policies* is available on the CCPA website: <http://policyalternatives.ca> - See more at: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/newsroom/news-releases/provinces-pursuing-two-tier-tuition-fee-policies-study#sthash.JJU-VmxpL.dpuf>

ChewOnThis! Canadians agree, we need a plan to eliminate poverty

Vancouver -- October 17 marked the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. People passionate about ending poverty used lunchtime to draw attention to the nearly 900,000 Canadians who have to rely on food banks each month to put food on their tables. As part of *Dignity for All: The Campaign for a Poverty Free Canada*, volunteers at ChewOnThis! events asked people across Canada to join the strong call for a federal plan to address poverty by simply going online to www.ChewOnThis.ca. ChewOnThis! volunteers handed out lunch bags in more than 25 cities – from Halifax to Abbotsford - from noon until 1 pm (local time)—including sites at downtown Vancouver, Parliament Hill, and Toronto’s downtown core. They called for the federal government to take a proactive approach to eliminating poverty and hunger for the millions struggling to make ends meet. The **BC Poverty Reduction Coalition** hosted the Vancouver event at Georgia and Granville from 12-1pm, and members also

took part in Richmond and Victoria. “Almost 500,000 people in British Columbia are living in poverty and facing food insecurity on a daily basis, and many of them are children. Food banks are necessary for the crisis we face but they are not a long-term solution. We are one of the most generous provinces in the country yet we have had the highest poverty rate for the last 13 years. We need governments to step in and share the weight at the provincial and federal level. We need a provincial and federal poverty reduction strategy,” says Trish Garner, Community Organizer of the BCPRC. Campaign co-organizers *Citizens for Public Justice* issued, “The Burden of Poverty: A snapshot of poverty across Canada” in 2014 which recommends the adoption of a national poverty action plan. Executive director of Citizens for Public Justice, Joe Gunn, states, “Statistics show that when the federal government makes it a priority, poverty can be reduced. We need a comprehensive poverty plan. The House of Commons has called for one, the Senate has called for one, and the United Nations has called for one, but we haven’t seen any action.”

Leilani Farha, executive director of *Canada Without Poverty* and recently appointed United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to housing, says that charity cannot replace justice. “Hunger in Canada is more than just a food issue. It’s about social and economic arrangements in this country – the result of a series of government decisions,” she says. “When people are going hungry in a land of plenty, you have a human rights problem on your hands. All levels of government have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure the right to an adequate standard of living for the most vulnerable populations in Canada. It’s time we had a plan.” For more information visit www.ChewOnThis.ca

Green business celebrates new location and launches Eco-Hero Contest #awardrobe

On October 23,, Hemp & Company (H&C) celebrated the Grand Opening of the greenest retail store on Vancouver Island. The new location at 1312 Government Street in Victoria. was renovated with sustainability in mind and their efforts are being recognized by the Vancouver Island Green Business Certification (VIGBC). H&C owners, Bill Finley and Lorna Knowles wanted to find a fun way to celebrate other leaders in the sustainability movement in Victoria and have developed the Eco-Hero Contest. “We want to recognize the amazing people in Victoria whose businesses, causes and organizations are driving real change,” said Finley The Eco-Hero Contest will celebrate local entrepreneurs, volunteers and community leaders whose organizations or businesses have a positive impact on the natural environment on Vancouver Island. Each nominee will get a professional photo and poster promoting their organization. explained Sorochan. H&C scored 31 on their assessment – the highest of any retail business on Vancouver Island. Hemp & Company has been providing eco-savvy customers with comfortable, natural clothing that doesn’t cost the earth since 1999. Hemp & Company’s mandate is to expand awareness about organic and eco-friendly clothing, nutrition and body

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, 122-2806 Jacklin Road, Victoria, BC V9B 5A4, phone 250-391-2801, fax 250-391-2804, 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 Alistair MacGregor, at 250-732-7937 or by email at almacgreg@hotmail.com., or email 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 Wilkinsn 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.policypalternatives.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.

Cool Aid Society: www.CoolAid.org; phone 250-383-1977: Building homes, lives and community. Cool Aid creates opportunities for people who are homeless or living in poverty. We make a difference through housing, health care, support and emergency shelters. Founded in 1968, Cool Aid helps over 9,000 people in the Capital Region every year, at 14 locations in Langford, Victoria and Saanich. The Society's major new campaign is "Help End Homelessness", to build an additional 360 apartments for people in the community who have no home.

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

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

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.