

Lower Island NEWS

An independent democratic socialist newspaper serving the Lower Vancouver Island area for 31 years

Now on the web at www.lowerislandnews.com

Volume 32 Issue #5

December 2015

Victoria, BC

NDP takes 6 of 7 seats on Vancouver Island



In Victoria, reelected Members of Parliament Murray Rankin (left) and Randall Garrison enjoy the enthusiastic cheers and applause from their supporters as the results of the elections are received.

Rankin was reelected in his Victoria riding and Garrison in the re-named and reconfigured Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke riding, both with healthy majorities.

Watching from the side of the podium is Stephen Lewis, who campaigned for NDP candidates around the country. Lewis is the former leader of the Ontario NDP, and later served as Canada's Ambassador to the UN and then as the United Nations' special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa.



In her new riding of Nanaimo-Ladysmith, NDP winner Sheila Malcolmson answers questions from the press and public.

As former four-term Chair of the Islands Trust, she worked with all levels of government, championing local campaigns for fair ferry service, marine safety and oil spill prevention.

Joining Malcolmson in Ottawa will be fellow NDPers Alistair MacGregor who took the new riding of Cowichan-Malahat-Langford; Rachel Blaney who won North Island-Powell River; and Gord Johns who defeated long-time Tory John Duncan in Courtenay-Alberni.

Seasons' Greetings and Happy New Year!

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement #40008124

Return to:

Lower Island News

Box 311-2750 Quadra Street

Victoria, BC V8T 4E8

Inside this issue

4th Welfare Food Challenge.....2	Mirrors and marketing.....12
Election results are tasty food.....3	From Tory to Liberal.....13
Editorial and op/ed4	Green & Go Biofuel.....14
Letters.....5	Municipal politics report.....15
Trans Pacific Partnership.....6	Flat earth economics.....16
Climate Leadership Plan.....7	The Leap is ambitious.....17
Shadow cabinet appointments.....8	Book reviews.....18
Voters thanked.....9	Coming events calendar.....19
Horgan wins support.....10	Directory.....20
Let's get to "yes"11	

4th Welfare Food Challenge ends; people hungry for change

"It's important that we keep talking about [raising welfare rates] and get louder and louder." That is what singer Bif Naked told a well-attended news conference in Vancouver on the last day of the 4th Annual Welfare Food Challenge.

The Challenge is sponsored by Raise the Rates, a coalition that wants government to raise welfare rates to \$1,500 from \$610 a month for a single person. BC welfare rates have been frozen for over eight years. Nearly 200 Challenge takers in BC ate for a week on only what they could buy for \$21, the amount a person on welfare would have left from their \$610 for food, after paying for other essentials.

Naked talked about the stigma of being on welfare, which she saw in comments made on social media. "Stigma. It's almost like a caste system. These wonderful, amazing, loving people [on welfare] ... shouldn't have to identify as being dismissed and shunned," she said.

"So many people are suffering illness from going without food," Joanne Shaw said at the news conference. "We have to increase the rates."

BC Government Employees' Union President Stephanie Smith said she took the Challenge because "I hear from our members [who work in the welfare system] about their challenges and difficulties trying to provide supports and resources. It's time to raise the rates and the minimum wage to \$15 an hour," said Smith.

"Tomorrow is the end for me but not for the other 177,000 people," said Cherie

Devisser, one of many Vancity employees taking the Challenge. Doing the Challenge meant "living on the outskirts of a normal life," she added.

Going to sleep was the only way MP Jenny Kwan could deal with the headaches and hunger of not having enough to eat while she did the Challenge. "The smell of food made me shake. You are not a participant in life, just an observer." Kwan said the only thing that kept her going was "knowing that this is the last day. But 175,000 people [on social assistance in BC] don't see the end."

"There's a growing movement to deal with issues of social assistance," noted Harold Lavender, a man who has lived on disability. "Not having enough money is hard on people who feel isolated."

Melanie Mark, the NDP candidate in Vancouver Mount Pleasant tried the Challenge with her two daughters. Her daughters didn't complete the Challenge. "I wonder if Christy Clark would send her kids to school or bed hungry? It's a child protection and a human rights issue."

Hospital Employees Union President Victor Elkins is a foster parent. Most issues for the children "come from the poverty they live under," he said. "If we raise the rates many kids could stay with their parents." Elkins said he ran out of food the previous day.

"We need a huge increase in welfare," Bill Hopwood, the Raise the Rates organizer, told the group. Welfare should be at the poverty line, about \$1,500 a month. With



At the end of the 4th Annual Welfare Challenge, newly elected NDP Member of Parliament Jenny Kwan (right) talks about why she took the challenge, and the need to raise welfare and minimum wage rates. Listening to her are fellow challenger singer Bif Naked and organizer Bill Hopwood. Photo by Jean Swanson

a \$15 an hour minimum wage and building social housing a lot of jobs could be created. The richest 1% in BC have had tax breaks, worth on average, \$41,000 a year – more than most workers earn in a year," said Hopwood.

As Naked said, "Put pressure on the government ... This is growing. We'll be stronger next year."

For more information go to <http://welfarefoodchallenge.org> and www.raisetherates.org

BC's all-party Finance Committee recommends poverty reduction strategy for 3rd year

By Trish Garner and Adrienne Montani

Friday, November 20, the BC Legislature's Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, which is made up of six Liberal and four NDP MLAs, released their report based on extensive community consultations on the next provincial budget. The report includes a recommendation to explore the development of "a comprehensive and integrated pov-

erty reduction strategy, including legislated timelines and targets for the reduction of poverty (including child poverty) and homelessness in BC."

This is the third time that this all-party committee has unanimously agreed to make this recommendation. Perhaps this year the provincial government will listen and include this much-needed priority in Budget 2016. After all, BC has had one of the highest poverty rates in Canada for the

last 13 years and is now the very last province without a poverty reduction strategy.

Also the same week, our new Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, took the unprecedented step of publicly releasing all ministerial mandate letters. One of the top priorities noted in the letter for the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development is leading "the development of a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy that would set targets to reduce poverty and measure and publicly report on [their] progress, in collaboration with the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour."

Trudeau adds that the strategy "will align with and support existing provincial and municipal poverty reduction strategies." With this strong commitment at the federal level, the time has come for BC to initiate a strategy that can then be supported. Otherwise, we risk being further left behind.

Instead of taking a comprehensive and preventative approach to poverty, our provincial government has been running "community poverty reduction strategies" in BC for the last 3 years. Started as a pilot in 7 communities (Cranbrook, Kamloops, New Westminster, Port Hardy, Prince George, Stewart and Surrey), the September 2015 progress report states that this initiative has "provided services to 96 families" in total. Compared to the number of people living in poverty in BC – approximately 496,000 according to the most conservative measure, and the far larger number living one or two paycheques away – that really is a drop in the ocean.

Some good measures have come out of the initiative, including Cranbrook taking a leading role in providing free transit passes to low-income people, but the limited scope of the project maintains its lack of impact. Funding is merely provided for a part-time Family Consultant within the Ministry of Children and Family Development whose role is to help families access existing supports and navigate bureaucratic hurdles.

Despite the "themes and issues that are important to people living in poverty" as identified by these consultants, such as the unaffordability of child care, lack of affordable housing, low-paying jobs (including "working two jobs and still not making ends meet"), and the inadequacy of income as-

sistance rates, there is no new investment in policy changes that would address these issues and have a far greater impact.

The Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), which serves as the avenue for local governments to advocate to higher levels of government, was initially involved in these community strategies, but recently announced that it is concluding its participation. In its statement, UBCM highlights that "communities feel that only so much can be done at the local level, and that provincial and federal governments need to step in and play a greater role." In this light, the City of Prince George is also stepping away from this initiative.

The provincial government's community poverty reduction strategies were in fact started in response to a unanimous recommendation at the 2010 UBCM convention, for a provincial poverty reduction plan for BC, which was brought forward by a number of cities through an organized campaign by the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition. Now, UBCM is returning to that original call. "Moving forward, UBCM will continue to advocate for a provincial poverty plan. We feel this has the greatest potential to affect change on poverty reduction in BC, and encourage the provincial government to undertake this work."

This week, the annual report from Food Banks Canada, *HungerCount*, shows that over 100,000 people access food banks in a typical month in BC, an increase of 3% from last year. The report recognizes both the necessity and also the limitations of food banks in response to poverty and hunger, and includes a number of strong policy recommendations to tackle the root causes.

More and more voices are joining the call for a comprehensive approach to poverty. When will our provincial government start listening?

Trish Garner is the Community Organizer of the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition and Adrienne Montani is the Provincial Coordinator of First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition



Juan de Fuca New Democrats 8th Annual



Sweetheart of an Evening

Valentine's Dinner/Dance/Auction

Saturday, February 13

Olympic View Golf Course

Call for tickets

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

Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke New Democrats



Stay in touch!

You can reach your executive by mail
at Box 622, 105-1497 Admirals Road, Victoria, BC V9A 2P8
by phone at 778-676-4033

or by email to esquimaltsaanichsookendp@gmail.com

Season's Greetings to all!
Please support your local food bank.



Election results are tasty food for the Red Hens

The Red Hens is a small group of women who have been longtime New Democratic Party activists. Dale Young, editor of the *Lower Island News*, writes, "As far as I can recollect, the Red Hens started meeting in 1999 when a number of us were finishing terms on local NDP constituency executives. Most of us were from the former Victoria-Hillside constituency to start with, and included Sharon Hazelwood, Betty Muller, Doreen Burgess, Marj Martin, Leni Hoover, Georgiana Ball, Betty Stevens and her mother, and myself. We all wanted to keep our connection with each other, even if we were no longer actively working on constituency executives."

Sixteen years later, Dale continues to facilitate monthly Red Hen lunches at local restaurants where members discuss on-going political issues as well as personal experiences and concerns. The Red Hens membership has changed over the years with founding members Dale Young, Sharon Hazelwood, Doreen Burgess, and Leni Hoover still active participants. Jennifer Burgis, Carol Pickup, Heather Tufts, Sue Stroud, and Starla Anderson have joined the group in more recent years. These post-election reflections by some of the Red Hens give a glimpse of the kind of commitment and caring for New Democratic principles that the Red Hens share.

Jennifer Burgis: We stayed the course; why didn't the rest of the country? The overall result did reflect a Canadian electorate that demanded change. In choosing to stop the controlled, narrow path of the Conservatives, the possibility of a more inclusive government now exists. Most important will be a return to recognizing that Canada is a federation of provinces, each with their own agendas but requiring prominent voice at the national table.

We could speculate on leadership, charisma, who can govern, the niqab question, the middle class, the old stock, and perhaps all of that had some play in the outcome. In the words of a veteran campaigner, "Quebec turned out to be a fickle mistress", though that is also a too narrow definition of what was at play in this election campaign. There is no doubt that there was a huge undecided electorate leading into the last week and then that vote registered for the Liberals.

So here are some amazing positives: a high voter turnout; the largest cadre of novice MPs and novice MPs assigned Ministerial portfolios; an increase in NDP MPs from BC; a Liberal government that has a record of implementing the best of NDP policy; a return of NDP seats in Saskatchewan; First Nations MPs in highest numbers; equity at the Cabinet table. Let's be proud of the amazing Vancouver Island result and the second highest number of NDP MPs in Parliament. Know that we are still the champions of the ground game.

Starla Anderson: The New Democratic Party has never come closer to becoming Canada's governing party but it wasn't to be. We can be proud that our leader, Tom Mulcair, stayed true to his and NDP Party principles throughout the long campaign—we can be especially proud when he didn't take the bait of Harper's niqab challenge. Voters wanted change but in the end, particularly in the Atlantic provinces and in Ontario and Quebec, more voters chose the Liberals to be the agents of change.

Some argue that the Liberal strategy of appearing to be more left than the NDP—not fearing the promotion of a deficit budget in order to invest in infrastructure and create job opportunities—undermined the NDP's lead. My own belief is that once the economic powers saw that voters were determined to have a change in government and that the NDP actually had a chance to form government, resources were poured into Liberal campaigns. Liberals would not be a threat to capitalist enterprise.

We share a continent with the nation that is fueled by the largest capitalist economy in the world and the free trade agreements that have been signed in recent decades connect our destiny with international corporations that have their home bases in



Meeting monthly to discuss ongoing political events, six of Victoria's current Red Hens gathered recently at the Vietnam House Restaurant to analyze the recent federal election. They are (left to right) Heather Tufts, Starla Anderson, Sharon Hazelwood, Dale Young, Leni Hoover and Sue Stroud. Missing are Doreen Burgess, Jennifer Burgis and Carol Pickup.

the United States. Our social democratic platform that would bring more fairness to all citizens and hit climate change policies head on steers us away from the profits-above-all-else mentality that has been governing us and our southern neighbor since our beginnings.

Those Scandinavian countries that thrive with social democratic governments are much older nations than Canada and our political story is still in early years. The NDP has brought us some way towards having a government guided by social democratic principles but with the commitment of long-time members and the energies of new generations taking up the reins, the New Democratic Party will eventually prevail.

Leni Hoover: I agree with what you say Starla. I feel that being at the top at the beginning of a campaign can be detrimental as all other parties are attacking and everyone is closely judging all actions.

I feel it is most important to be humble, always acknowledging that it is the voters in the end who will determine the outcome of the election. The people have the power. Phrases like "if elected we will", "if I'm elected prime minister I will", "ultimately the voters will decide" acknowledge this.

I believe a big mistake was made when the language "When I'm prime minister I will ..." was used during the campaign. It doesn't acknowledge that the most important aspect in an election is that people decide the outcome and have the power and right to elect who they want.

However I don't know if the Liberal wave could have been stopped. The previous election the NDP orange crush rode the wave through Quebec and this time the Liberals rode a wave beginning in the east.

Thrilled about Vancouver Island for the clean NDP campaign plus great disappointment that we lost so many seats and great MPs. I'm glad that Harper is no longer PM and that I feel much better about being Canadian. Let's try to make this parliament work and support those directions that are our party policy and oppose those directions that aren't our policy. Thank you to our dedicated leader Tom Mulcair and all our wonderful NDP candidates. Last but not least I'm so grateful that Murray Rankin is our Victoria-Oak Bay MP.

Susan Stroud: The first two paragraphs of Starla's reflections are exactly what I feel. I also believe that saying and doing are two different things. We are watching the Liberals make a lot of promises, but these promises are not being examined by the media. Why is there only one coast guard station re-opening announcement? We need all the stations re-opened. Why have there already been signs of backing off on the veterans offices re-opening?

We needed more than what we had before the closures. Why are excuses being made for the decision to dump raw sewage into the St. Lawrence Seaway even by environmental groups? The Liberals are masters of publicity management and we will be needed to keep them accountable.

I applaud any real progressive moves the Liberals make, but I am not fooled by who stands behind Justin Trudeau. The same old corporate backrooms still control the Liberals. They are smart enough to put on a good show while still leading us down the path of greed and poverty and injustice. C51 is not to be repealed and yet it must be to make the point that we believe in human rights. The TPP must not pass; discussion isn't enough, amendment isn't enough, we need a turning away from all these harmful international trade agreements.

In Saanich-Gulf Islands we worked as hard as anyone even though we knew we were up against the Elizabeth May machine. Our results were far more successful than a simple final tally of votes reveals. We did what was needed for everyone else's benefit in that our exceptional candidate, Alicia Cormier held May accountable again and again, in innumerable all candidate's meetings, in ads, on the air and out door knocking.

We created an atmosphere that forced May to stay much more in her riding than had been planned. Alicia challenged May repeatedly regarding her attacks on Murray Rankin, on the Green's disastrous attempt to challenge sitting New Democrats and on the phony polling message they were spinning. We lacked every resource except will power and as a result we have credibility and a base on which we can build for the next four years.

I am proud of Tom and of both those NDPers who lost and those who won. I have no doubt that we will continue to be the party that leads Canada forward by creating new policies to push the human rights

and environmental rights agendas forward. Strap on your snowshoes, we have a tough slog before us, but no one cares to do it as much as we do.

Doreen Burgess: I voted for Alicia Cormier in Saanich-Gulf Islands even though I didn't think she could win but being a longtime New Democrat I couldn't vote for anyone else. And I wouldn't want to. I asked for a large sign to be put up in front of my home on Maplewood and had a couple of small ones too. I was glad that strong NDP MPs like Randall Garrison, Murray Rankin, and Nathan Cullen won their seats back but it was disappointing that so many strong NDP incumbents were defeated.

Some Vancouver Island people who are New Democrats voted for the Greens thinking they had a better chance to defeat the Conservatives but I didn't think the Conservatives had a chance here. It turned out that the New Democrats won every Vancouver Island riding except mine, Saanich-Gulf Islands, the only riding won by the Greens. (I was surprised that I didn't read about Andrew Weaver giving support to the Green candidates during the federal campaign.)

The Conservatives did well in Newfoundland and Labrador—maybe voters followed their parents' traditions. But I think that the Liberals won partly because their leader, Justin Trudeau, looks youthful and fresh. That would appeal to some people.

Prime Minister Trudeau has a lot to think about now, especially since the terrorist massacres in Paris on November 13. Also, it will be difficult to work with the Americans if a Republican president is elected a year from now.



Victoria NDP members!

Join us for the Victoria Federal NDP AGM

When: Saturday, December 12, starting at noon
Where: Cook Street Village Activity Centre (380 Cook St.)

For more information please contact James at President@victoriandp.ca or go to www.VictoriaNDP.ca

"No one can terrorize a whole nation unless we are all his accomplices."
-- Ed Murrow, American broadcaster and journalist, 1908-65

Our opinion

The challenge for Canada

Justin Trudeau has had a challenging start as prime minister. Despite some criticism for his reaction to the Paris attacks, he had the sense not to be stampeded into knee-jerk reactions such as adding more aircraft to the crowded skies over Syria, linking refugees to terrorism or indulging in "we are at war" rhetoric.

ISIL is about power and territory, and religion is just one weapon in its arsenal. Experience shows that it is almost impossible to bomb an enemy out of territory it holds. History shows there is only one answer – someone's boots on the ground.

This is where things can come unstuck and the new Canadian government is right to review the options. What is the end game of the bombing by France, the US, UK, Belgium, Canada and now Russia? It is all very well to say "to defeat ISIL" -- but how? Massive area bombing with the attendant civilian casualties, would probably make matters worse, and if the bombing to date has been such a good strategy, how is it that France has suffered two major atrocities in a year? The stark fact is that no-one has the answer, which is where the "training" strategy becomes problematic. The (Iraqi) Kurdish Peshmerga -- estimated by the BBC to number nearly 200,000, -- is the most identifiable group confronting ISIL on the ground; so, plenty of people to train.

But there are not thousands more eager volunteers in Iraq and Syria waiting to be trained by Canada or anyone else. Few people fighting in Iraq have a deep loyalty to the country -- an artificial State created after World War I to further the imperial schemes of Britain and (in the case of Syria) France. For centuries, Kurds of Iraq, Syria, Iran and Turkey have wanted an independent Kurdistan and will oppose ISIL and anyone else who gets in the way of that dream. The US has been training Peshmerga since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein but without heavier armaments and a unified structure they cannot take and hold large areas of Syria and Iraq, no matter how much training they get -- and outside Kurdish areas they would probably be opposed by non-Kurdish Shia and Sunni militias.

Saddam Hussein's Sunni-led army held Iraq together (by force) but was disbanded after the Iraq war debacle and its brains and leadership are now the core of ISIL.

Like all Middle East groups, even the doughty Kurds are cursed by fragmentation. Iraqi Peshmerga are controlled by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan or the Kurdistan Democratic Party and, theoretically, the Iraqi Government in Baghdad, which the Kurds accuse of withholding armaments from them. Meanwhile the Kurdish party in Syria is the PYD, said to have links with Bashar-al-Assad and to be allied with the Turkish PKK (regarded as terrorists by the Turkish Government).

So right now, there is no end game. Peace in the Middle East will not rise miraculously from the flames of war, so the wars in Syria and Iraq (and Yemen, Libya, Mali etc..) must stop. That means throttling the supply of people, arms and money, to the warring factions, except for legitimate self-defence of indigenous people, and forcing ISIL (and others of like mind) to wither on the vine. The problem is how; but it must be done, and "the west" and Russia cannot impose a lasting solution and peace on the Middle East. Despite the seeming improbability it has to come from within. This is the real challenge for Canada today -- to try and lead the way to make it happen. The alternative is endless war.

At year's end, there is the feeling of "we've been here before". Terrorism, refugees and the Paris climate conference dominate the news and if the world does not tackle climate change, there will be other waves of refugees, driven from their homes by drought, starvation and flooding.

The Syrian refugees are just one aspect of what may be the defining issue of the 21st Century. Migration, driven by war, fear, deprivation, oppression, hunger, climate change, organized crime, and religious and ethnic intolerance is changing the face of the world in some of the largest mass migrations in modern history. From the Rohingya of Myanmar (Burma), to people fleeing drug criminals in Central America and Mexico and climate devastation and overpopulation in the Philippines, people are abandoning hope of a better life in their own countries and migrating for something better.

It is time to remember that we all live on this one fragile planet, a tiny dot in the cosmos. There is nowhere else for us to go. We have to work together to fix things -- not just try, but actually do it -- because if we do not hang together we are going to hang separately while the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse ravage the earth.

It is easy to say "we have heard all this before", but in past times there were a lot less of us humans on this planet and we made far less demands on it. In 1800 there were 1 billion people on earth, now we are well over 7 billion and increasing.

This is the challenge for Canada; to be strong, yet a leader for real change, and to do it by example -- in immigration policy, social policy, health and education, dealing with climate change and all the things that make a country truly great. As Paul Heinbecker, former Canadian Ambassador to the UN wrote on 23 November, "our cosmopolitanism is an extraordinary strength that anchors our well-being in a global sea of instability".

-- DJO

Editor's note: With this thought provoking editorial, David Olsen ends his 10-year stint as editorial writer for the *Lower Island News*. He is not totally retiring, however, much to this editor's relief, and will write the occasional additions to his On the Home Front column, and perhaps even a guest editorial from time to time.. Over the years, we have got to know and appreciate the huge amount of research our friend and colleague has put into each editorial, informed by the knowledge he gained in a lifetime of travel and working around the world. Thank you David for sharing your knowledge with us and our readers. Enjoy your retirement, but come back to visit whenever you can.

-- Dale Young, editor, and the LIN Board

The Lower Island NEWS

The *Lower Island NEWS*, in its 32nd year of publication, is an independent news-feature tabloid newspaper, published as often as financially possible, by the Lower Island News Society, Box 311, 2750 Quadra Street, Victoria, BC V8T 4E8.

Signed articles are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the *Lower Island NEWS* or the Lower Island News Society. Articles submitted for publication are subject to editing at the discretion of the Editor.

Editorial Committee Chair: Sharon Hazelwood

Editor: Dale Young

Editorial Writer: David Olsen

Distribution:

Advertising:

Contributors to this issue: Starla Anderson, Rob Douglas, Bo Filter, Randall Garrison, Carole James, David Lowther, Alistair MacGregor, Trish Garner, Gary Holman, Seth Klein, Marc Lee, Gerry Masuda, Adrienne Montani, David Olsen, John Orett, Tim Pheotist, Dale Perkins, Murray Rankin, Jim Stanford, Diane Walsh, Barry Weisleder, Jeremy Wilson, Terry Wolfwood, and others.

**Printed at Web ExPress, Coquitlam, BC
Canadian Publications Mail Agreement #40008124**

Lower Island NEWS Privacy Statement

The Lower Island NEWS is owned by the Lower Island News Society, a non-profit society registered under the BC Societies Act. The Lower Island NEWS collects and uses your personal information for the purposes of mailing the paper to you, and may write to you from time to time to solicit donations. The Lower Island NEWS will not share this information with any other group.

As others see it

To have dominion over anyone or anything is an abomination!

By Dale Perkins

Genesis 1:28-31 - *And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."* (RSV)

Bishop John Shelby Spong wrote a book entitled *The Sins of Scripture* and while he does write about environmental degradation, he might have focused on this particular verse in the Bible and how it has permitted humankind to feel we have been granted complete licence to dominate nature and take any animal and vegetation we can capture for our eating and dietary needs or for our entertainment and use.

Of all the very important issues facing us today, there is none more urgent than this divine licence granted to humankind to dominate nature, and in line with Spong's objective we should jettison this particular verse from the Torah/Bible.

We humans not only accepted and adopted this divinely prescribed permission, we've exploited it to the utmost degree. Now we have more domesticated animals in captivity than wild ones living freely in their domains.

Until lately we never had to confront the unspeakable reality that certain species are now extinct because of our insatiable appetites or are nearing the brink of extinction. Oceans are becoming more and more acidic from pollutants we dump into them, making them less habitable for aquatic life; drinkable water is harder and harder to find, and recurrent droughts are making our arable lands less productive for vegetables and food products.

So our patterns of dominating all "fish of the sea and birds of the air and all living things" just isn't viable for much longer, living as we do on a finite planet and delicate eco system.

For the Jewish and Christian communities that licence originates out of this divinely-inspired Torah/Biblical dictum, that is to say we've been given permission to dominate nature and all living things.

It is becoming increasingly clear that this religiously-sanctioned passage is not tolerable any more, nor is it helping us "to live with respect in creation".

More than that, we've allowing this verse and attitude to give us a false sense of superiority over all living matter. If a particular plant or animal doesn't fit neatly inside our list of acceptable living things, we believe we've been given permission to get rid of them. Consequently, we classify certain plants and animals as "invasive species" and unacceptable in our environment, which then entitles us to kill them or douse them with our latest brands of poisons and deadly herbicides. We now feel perfectly justified in culling them out of our domesticated environments, forcing them to restrict their territory to areas we consider worthless or of no importance.

It appears we have even made a quasi science of establishing lists of "invasive species" which again entitles responsible adults to get rid of them ... and to be grateful they do such a fine job of that enterprise.

Few people question this so-called divine licence sanctioned in holy writs to attack all invasive and unwanted species. However, in our increasing awareness of the interdependency of all creation, we slowly comprehend our call to be co-creators and custodians of nature with a very special commission to collaborate with all living matter, and to get rid of this notion of domination.

It neither serves us nor any other member of the natural order. As wise teachers from every faith tradition have taught us -- "we are all one".

Would that it might be so.

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 likely be in late February or March. The deadline for submitting advertising and articles will be announced.

For further information and to submit articles and ads, email dale_young@telus.net.

May's explanation for loss misses the mark

Re: Rankin returns to office, Oak Bay News, October 21

It is natural for Green leader Elizabeth May to seek explanations of her party's disappointing performance in Victoria and elsewhere on Vancouver Island.

But if the explanations she offers in the October 21 issue of the *Oak Bay News* story are indicative, I'm afraid her hubris has overwhelmed her ability to think straight.

In particular, she is badly off the mark in suggesting that voters were duped into believing that an NDP vote was the only way to defeat Stephen Harper.

With the Conservative candidate so obviously a non-factor, Victoria voters knew they could choose between the Greens and the NDP without fear of helping Harper retain power.

If Ms. May wants to understand why 6,500 more voters chose the NDP, I'd suggest she start with a couple of explanations.

First, if you want to capture the green vote, run a candidate with at least moderately strong environmental credentials.

Second, do not insult voters' intelligence by making pie-in-the-sky promises, such as free tuition.

I appreciate Ms. May's contributions, and hope that she will be able to work with Vancouver Island's NDP MPs to influence the Trudeau government's positions on climate change, other environmental issues and electoral reform.

But if she wants to contribute to the construction of alliances of progressive voters, she needs to stop demeaning those who don't vote for her.

Jeremy Wilson
Oak Bay

May it be so

Getting our system of government working better is always an admirable goal, and very clearly our "first-past-the-post" system doesn't satisfy a growing number of voters in Canada now.

However, democracy at the best of times is still a rather crude way to govern. Alan Corenk writes, "Democracy consists of choosing your dictator after they've told you what you think it is you want to hear," and the wise elderly Statesman Winston Churchill said back in 1947, "Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

So making the old beast function the way we'd prefer is ever the aspiration of many theorists, political scientists and even us regular folks. No more so than the current batch of commentators. Their solution is one form or another of proportionate representation. That is, we long for a way

of having each vote cast count at election time.

And our current Prime Minister Trudeau has made another one of his many promises to set up a parliamentary committee to study and advise him and the other MPs (all chosen we might add, under our "first-past-the-post" system) some time over the next 18 months. So some change is in the wind, and we're invited to be grateful that a better way is being worked on.

Missing in the article is attention given to the likelihood of endless minority governments, just as there are in all the other jurisdictions in the world which have some form of PP. Most of us won't accept the notion of dictatorships (as we experienced under Stephen Harper these past nine years). We want something better, and therefore wish to entertain other systems of PP. However, we've not had to deal with a series of minority governments, whereby the Party with the most MPs is required to form alliances and coalitions with other Parties in order to secure a majority of the votes so that government can happen.

Coalitions and Alliances often make for strange bedfellows, and the resulting government can become completely dysfunctional and inoperative. Bureaucrats would like that, because then they could actually run the show without political interference from those irritating Party members and leaders getting in the way.

And would electors be better served when they have been able to select more than a single person offering their services in that one riding? From my university days I was told that our voting system relied on at least three factors: the Party, the Leader of the Party, and the particular candidate running in that constituency.

For anyone of us, we could make one or more of these factors the primary motivation for determining how we vote. In fact, every election involves us in "strategic voting"; it won't ever "die a good death" as some hope. For some of us, we will gauge out voting based on the Party; for others it will be the Leader of the Party, and finally for others as well it might be determined on the particular candidate running in that riding or ready for appointment by their Party. In a pluralistic society, how could it be different?

So this won't be an exact science we're developing, and as another commentator said so long ago we ought not to forget Voltaire's wise words, "Don't let the perfect become the enemy of the good." Although not perfect, is our current system good and is it working well (most of the time)?

Another quote from, another wise old sage, E.B. White, July 3, 1944, "Democracy is the recurrent suspicion that more than half of the people are right more than half the time."

May it be so.

Dale Perkins
Victoria

An open letter to the prime minister

Dear Prime Minister

Today, my wife and I were horrified to learn that the Government of Canada is going to define its refugee policy by gender discrimination by barring young single men -- this from a government that has a gender equal Cabinet.

Young single men are also members of families just like their sisters -- I know I was, 60 years ago!

We can do better than that -- this is Canada. So what are those young Syrian men to do? Live in a refugee camp forever, or join ISIS for the \$700 a day they offer to new recruits?

Whoever came up with this idiotic idea should be fired -- it will cause nothing but anger and frustration, with untold consequences. I support you and your efforts, but as Shakespeare said -- made I him King for this?

David Olsen
Sidney

US Empire and the refugee issue

The US Empire is responsible for every military operation which results in creating refugees in recent times (such as Iraq, Libya, and Syria). The best way to avoid creating refugees is to avoid civil wars which force innocent families to flee their homes to save their lives.

The US and its allies, by their military support of rebels fighting to depose President Assad in Syria, are creating tens of thousands of refugees. Europe has accepted thousands of them for humanitarian reasons. Yet in the US, which is responsible for creating the refugees, 27 US state governors refuse to accept any refugees.

It is time to hold the US Empire accountable for its actions through the UN and world opinion.

As a minimum, the US should be assessed the costs imposed on European nations to cope with the US created refugees. These expenses should be arranged now rather than waiting until hostilities end..

These costs should be submitted for payment by the US. These costs should get maximum publicity to help US citizens understand the reason for the assessed costs.

It is the US citizen who has to exert pressure on their government to stop getting involved in the political affairs in foreign countries.

These foreign interventions are not to prevent a threat to the security of the US but rather to expand the US Empire's aspirations for global hegemony.

Justice demands that US military assistance to dissidents in countries which do not pose any threat to the USA be stopped.

The time has come to confront the US Empire and its ambitions for global hegemony.

Gerry Masuda
Duncan

Political ineptitude for the history books

This federal election will stand for decades as an example of political ineptitude, and unfortunately the New Democrats have provided the example.

Every political professional knows that the second election is the hardest. This is because the first time the candidate runs against the incumbent and does not have a record to defend. Once successful every winner comes face to face with the budget and economic reality and discovers that not every promise can be instantly redeemed, so during the first attempt at re-election they are faced with the disappointment of their core constituency. This is the position our candidates faced in Quebec.

Now look at the French language debate and how the niqab was dealt with. I do not refer to the issue itself but rather how we as a party handled the aftermath. The next day there had been an obvious decision to address the public disapproval by dismissing the entire thing as "a minor

issue." Spokespeople from coast to coast used that language, and not one of these political professionals seemed to understand that to do so was to lose the great gains Jack Layton led us to.

Here is Rule One: No issue is a minor issue when a majority of the voters think otherwise. Just because it is unimportant to you does not mean it is unimportant, and dismissing it as such says clearly to those who care about it that you are not there to represent them. When I heard one after another of our candidates chanting the mantra I realized that we had blown Quebec and the best chance at forming a government that will occur in my lifetime.

This is not about the niqab itself. My intent is to question the competence of our political leadership, who seem to have forgotten that policy cannot be implemented without winning an election.

We could have simply said that our policy was to be directed by the Supreme Court decision, or that we would examine that decision once elected. We could have said that religious freedom was involved.

We could have said almost anything to defuse public dissatisfaction with our position as long as we didn't say we were right, they were wrong and it isn't an important issue anyway.

Our leadership chose to ignore Rule Two, which is NEVER FORGET RULE ONE!

When the ballots were counted Monday night we paid the price. After a lifetime of activism and dedication to our cause we as members of the New Democratic Party have a right to question the political competence of our leadership. What were they thinking?

David Lowther
Mesachie Lake

Reflections on the day after October 19

The NDP has always enjoyed modest respect from most Canadians for its public attitudes and beliefs. Canadians could always count on the NDP to name the horrible excesses of unbridled capitalism. And when certain political figures wandered dangerously close to the abyss it would name these self-centered oligarchies and stymie the aspirations of the power elites.

Consequently, a great many Canadians were grateful. Examples of this phenomenon are legion -- most notably was the late PET's draconian *War Measures Act*, when NDP leaders like Douglas and Lewis rose up in outrage against this obscene flirtation with dictatorial rule. We relied on the NDP to lead the charge of forcing our country to adopt public measures such as Pensions and Unemployment Insurances and MediCare.

Canadians expected the NDP to bring a note of civility and sanity to public life, and it performed the task admirably.

On occasion the Canadian public would permit provincial NDP regimes to surface for very particular purposes. Many examples come to mind -- Saskatchewan, Ontario, British Columbia, and now the NDP Provincial governments of Manitoba and Alberta. However, progressive regimes are never permitted to last long, because the avarice appetites of the financial corporate elites would find ways to dismantle them or replace them with obedient political servants inside other Parties, who willingly are happy to do the bidding of their corporate masters.

Caplan convincingly argues that the same process was happening here in Canada during our last federal election. When opinion polls and political commentators actually suggested that the so-called "orange wave" could sweep the land and a bona fide social democratic government could take command of the levers of power, they swiftly intervened. They required that all of their controlled media and allies do everything in their power to disparage the NDP and its leaders. Having a NDP Party actually forming government in Canada -- NEVER!!

Again they succeeded! -- the dominant culture was manipulated to think it too risky to have NDP operatives at the levers of power. So the corporate leaders did what

See Reflections on the day after, page 6

Friends of the Lower Island News

We are delighted to be able to send you a fifth issue of LIN for 2015, due in large part to the generous contributions of you, the Friends of the Lower Island News. Together you have contributed \$935 this year, enough to pay the printing cost of one issue! We continue, of course, to also rely on our advertisers and to look for new ones as well. And I have to take this opportunity to ask that if you know of anyone who might like to advertise in LIN, please let us know or ask them to contact us.

Below is the latest list of Friends of the *Lower Island News* who have given donations in the last four or five months:

Hans Edwards	\$ 50
Dick Creech	\$ 50
Mel McDonid	\$500
Manubu Masada	\$100

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

Trans Pacific Partnership – Charter of Rights for Big Business

By John Orrett

Alongside burgeoning global trade is the concentration of power in giant Trans National Corporations (TNCs) able to move production to places where labour costs are the lowest. En route, those firms bully, threaten and reduce the wages and benefits of their workers.

The Trans Pacific Partnership, like its “free trade” predecessors, is a charter of rights for the TNCs. The great secrecy surrounding its negotiation reflects the fact that, once again, the interests of working people will be sacrificed on the altar of globalization and private profit. Information issued and leaked about the TPP indicates that the deal will not help but hurt workers’ rights and standard of living.

Several industries in Canada will suffer. The auto industry is one. Japan’s rulers want their vehicles imported duty-free, with just 30 percent of the parts manufactured and assembled in Canada, the US, or Mexico – down from the 60 percent content presently required under the North American Free Trade Agreement. UNIFOR, Canada’s largest private sector union representing auto workers, warns that this would “kill thousands of Canadian auto jobs”.

Canada’s dairy and poultry industry and its supply managed systems will be open to more foreign competition, something that will cost heavily in lost revenue. In fact, during the latest federal election campaign, the former Conservative government promised hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation payments to soften the blow of the TPP. The millions would come from revenues that could be applied to meet human needs, rather than serving an arrangement that will mostly benefit multi-national food conglomerates.

Wikileaks revealed the chapter related to intellectual property rights and patents. *Toronto Star* technology columnist Michael Geist warns that the TPP will require significant changes to Canada’s copyright laws. TPP changes concerning internet use and on-line practices will put privacy at risk.

New rules governing corporate lawsuits would increase claims by foreign corporations against the Canadian government over national policy and court decisions.

Pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly is already suing the Canadian government for \$500 million regarding patent rules. The aim of the TPP is to extend the life of corporate patents – a policy that will cost consumers across the 12 signatory countries millions of dollars in higher prices for medical drugs indispensable to good health and well being.

Canadian authorities are now in the last stages of negotiating the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement with Europe. Many of the same problems with the TPP are evident in CETA too. The latter provides for even greater TNC powers in the area of government services and procurement policy. At risk is the preferential purchasing of costly items, such as subway cars, from local manufacturers, and it facilitates the sale of government services to the lowest bidder, even if it is a foreign service provider.

Ontario province, Canada’s industrial heartland, may lose thousands of jobs under CETA since its biggest export to Europe is low-labour-intensive gold, while its largest imports are high-labour-input pharmaceuticals, autos and auto parts.

Tom Mulcair and the NDP leadership, while opposing the TPP late in the recent election campaign, should have been mounting opposition to both deals much earlier, not just on the eve of the signing. They should know that these deals are being crafted by the international captains of industry whose main objective is to increase their power and profits at the expense of millions of workers and the environment.

Socialists are not against trade. But we do oppose trade deals that weaken the bargaining position of unions and the workers they represent. We are against trade deals that jeopardize government safety regulations and public services. We are against the export of jobs to low wage zones. To reduce carbon emissions associated with long distance transport, we favour local sources, and reluctantly accept long distance trade in goods that cannot be obtained nearby, provided that the producers are decently paid, enjoy good benefits and a safe working environment.

In other words, fair trade is inseparable from an international, ecological workers’ agenda.

Wilderness Committee Campaigner to attend UN climate summit

Torrance Coste will travel to Paris to advocate for strong climate action at COP21

VICTORIA – The Wilderness Committee’s Vancouver Island Campaigner, Torrance Coste, left for Paris November 26 to attend the highly anticipated UN climate change conference (COP21) as a civil society delegate.

“In my work with the Wilderness Committee, I see the impacts that climate change is already having here in BC, and I know just how critical it is that we act now to address this,” said Coste. “I’m in constant contact with coastal communities and First Nations working to fight off unsustainable industrial projects and create resiliency in an uncertain future, and the opportunity to share these stories and learn from other young climate activists from across the country and the planet is what motivated me to participate in COP21.”

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) recognizes climate change as a major threat and sets a goal of 2C above pre-industrial levels as a maximum global temperature increase. The objective of COP21 is to achieve an international agreement to reach that goal.

“Greenhouse gases don’t respect borders, so international cooperation is needed to tackle the climate crisis at home and abroad,” said Coste. “At COP21, world leaders have to choose whether they will

acknowledge and provide leadership on the crisis of climate change or turn their backs on a better future for young people like me.”

Coste will be part of the Canadian Youth Delegation, a team of 17 young activists from across Canada. The delegation will attend sessions at COP21 and work with other groups and individuals to demand that Canadian and world leaders commit to meaningful action on climate change by signing a legally binding deal at the conference.

The Wilderness Committee opposes the expansion of tar sands, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and coal – as well as new fossil fuel export infrastructure – on the basis that investing in these industries locks BC and Canada into an unsustainable and irresponsible economic model. Canada has a key role to play in global efforts to tackle climate change, and the actions taken here at home will have far-reaching implications on the world stage.

Coste departed for Paris on November 26. On Sunday, November 29, the day before the conference began, the Wilderness Committee participated in solidarity marches in Victoria and Vancouver to coincide with similar marches happening in over 1,600 communities around the world.

Study shows power of media to shape public response to climate change

VANCOUVER – A new study from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives looks at how the public responds to different kinds of news media stories about climate change.

“Our findings have implications for journalists and editors, as well as NGOs that are communicating about climate change,” says co-author Shane Gunster. “We saw clearly how news coverage can either increase cynicism or inspire action.”

The researchers conducted focus group interviews with people from around the Metro Vancouver region who are concerned about climate change but have relatively low levels of involvement in climate politics, causes or organizations.

Key findings include:

- People with high levels of awareness and concern are often quite cynical about what political action or engagement can achieve (“political” in this context refers broadly to climate solutions involving community engagement, activism or government policy, which go beyond consumer choices or other personal behaviour change).

- However, this same group can be inspired and excited by news stories

about “everyday heroes” who take initiative or leadership to advance political action in their local communities or in global contexts.

- Such stories of action generate more engagement than the familiar focus on political failures to address climate change, such as international negotiations, or information about actions like recycling. This is a strong argument for giving such stories a more prominent place in the mix of news about climate politics.

- People engage more strongly with highly localized information about the causes and consequences of climate change, as well as solutions.

- Information about how to engage politically, and the effects of political engagement, is just as important as information about climate change science. Those who are highly educated about climate change itself often have less information about how to take action against it.

News Media and Climate Politics: Civic engagement and political efficacy in a climate of reluctant cynicism is available at www.policyalternatives.ca/news-media-climate-politi

HAMILL INDEXING

Non-fiction writers, even in the age of ebooks, your book will need an index.

Professional indexer:
Carol Hamill - Victoria BC

hamill@island.net w.island.net/~hamill.net



Safety and Human Factors Consultant

Call David Olsen
250-655-6218
or email him at
olsendj@shaw.ca

Victoria Labour Council

219-2750 Quadra Street, Victoria, BC V8T 4E8
Ph: 250-384-8331 FAX: 250-384-8381 Email: vlcbc@telus.net

The VLC, representing affiliated unions in the Greater Victoria area, holds its regular monthly meetings the third Wednesday of each month at 7 pm, at the BCGEU Auditorium, 2994 Douglas Street.

All delegates are invited to come out and meet the Executive:
Mike Eso, President; Stan Dzbik, Treasurer; Robin Toszczak, Secretary

Reflections on the day after November 19, from page 5

they needed to do to stigmatize the NDP and make it appear unwise to allow them access to federal power.

But they also realized that Stephen Harper had burned too many bridges to cover his tracks and regain a majority of voters’ support. So they chose instead the son of a late Canadian icon – PET – to mount the throne and become the fountainhead of youthful enthusiasm for the Good Life. (Secretly in their back-rooms they knew they wouldn’t be threatened, because they had ways of “controlling the lad”.

And they knew how to stigmatize the

NDP while allowing it to play its historic role (i.e. to be the “Conscience of Canada”). That was OK, as long as the NDP wasn’t in charge of the country.

So now we have the Canadian picture appearing the way the corporate capitalist elite would have it – a youthful progeny of an old political warrior leading a Party which stands for whatever the corporate elite wishes to script for it, and a small cadre of progressive enthusiasts doing their dance over on the sidelines and not disturbing the good people very much. Ain’t life grand?

Dale Perkins
Victoria



The Global Climate March started with 60,000 beautiful people marching in Melbourne, Australia! And continued around the world prior to the opening of the global climate talks in Paris France, on Monday, November 30. A video of the around-the-world marches was played on a huge screen as Heads of State walked into the conference.

BC companies, organizations, and cities call for bold new Climate Leadership Plan

Province can't afford to delay the transition to a clean energy economy

VANCOUVER — As Premier Christy Clark prepared to attend the United Nations climate-change conference in Paris, British Columbia's government was also gearing up to release its draft Climate Leadership Plan. Following Alberta's positive announcement over the November 20 weekend, groups representing over 1,000 companies, organizations and cities are asking the BC government not to squander this opportunity to bring forward ambitious new measures to fight climate change.

Released November 24, the *Call for Action on Energy and Climate* seeks bold measures that will lead to a "province powered by clean energy" and provide "protection from a changing climate". Its 145 signatories include the cities of Vancouver and Victoria, BC Government and Service Employees' Union, Clean Energy BC, the Canadian Wind Energy Association, Concert Properties, the Pembina Institute, UBC, and National Geographic Society explorer-in-residence Wade Davis.

"We can't afford to delay. Now is the time to lead the transition to a clean energy economy," the joint declaration states.

Meanwhile, 77 companies, organizations and cities have thrown their support behind a more detailed statement urging the province to take action to reduce carbon emissions from homes and buildings.

The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, Urban Development Institute Pacific Region, and Pembina Institute spearheaded the *Call for Action on Energy and Climate in the Building Sector*. Its signatories would like to see the province set clear targets for the energy performance of new buildings. The cities of Vancouver, Victoria and Powell River have endorsed the statement. The City of North Vancouver, Richmond and Smithers are tabling resolutions to endorse it as well.

"By pursuing these opportunities, we can reduce our carbon footprint while saving money, creating local jobs, and opening export markets for BC-made components and designs. We can also ensure all British

Columbians live and work in buildings that improve community health, happiness, and productivity," the buildings statement says.

The BC government is expected to release the draft *Climate Leadership Plan* in December, followed by a 60-day public consultation. The final *Climate Leadership Plan* is slated for public release in March 2016.

"Our sector will be a leader in building the clean-energy future. Laying the groundwork for energy-efficient homes and buildings across the province presents a unique opportunity to innovate, create jobs and reduce our collective carbon footprint. We look forward to working with government on its Climate Leadership Plan," says Anne McMullin, president and CEO, Urban Development Institute Pacific Region.

Merran Smith, executive director, Clean Energy Canada, added, "We believe the government will capitalize on this opportunity to not simply pay lip service to climate action, but put out a climate plan with teeth."

Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps said, "Communities are 'ground zero' for implementing any plans to deal with climate change. Our towns and cities are where companies do business, and we want to show we're backing a clean economy, one that ensures healthy communities, clean air and water, and equality for our citizens."

Stephanie Smith, president, BCGEU, added, "The BC Government and Service Employees' Union believes in climate leadership. We need an ambitious, forward-looking provincial plan that fights climate change by developing clean energy sources and boosts the economy by creating good, green jobs. We need action on climate change now!"

"If we are to tackle the challenge of meeting our climate commitments we are going to need to decarbonize the economy. That means converting almost everything that runs on oil and gas to run on clean power—cars, factories, hot water heaters, the works. The clean energy sector has the relationships, the experience, and the track

record to play a leading role in the province's transition," said Paul Kariya, executive director, Clean Energy BC.

Pierre Gallant, BC-Yukon Regional director, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada made the point that "Architects, as the designers of buildings, are often the ones who put forward and share bold ideas. We're looking to the BC government to put forward a bold and simple vision: a vision of curbing carbon pollution from the buildings sector and other sectors, and promoting an economically and environmentally resilient province."

Elizabeth Sheehan, president, Climate smart, agreed, saying, "By doubling down and recommitting to strong climate policy leadership, British Columbia will ensure that tens of thousands of small and medium sized businesses remain competitive in the

global economy. Collectively, these companies are the province's true 'innovation engine', and as such, they'll play a leading role in the coming years, as we roll up our sleeves and begin the important work of building a prosperous low carbon economy of the future."

"The signatories to the calls for action represent those of us who are building and powering the way to a clean-energy economy in BC Companies and communities are ready to collectively take action and tackle the climate challenge," stated Karen Tam Wu, Buildings and Urban Solutions Program Director, Pembina Institute.

For further information, contact Stephen Hui, Communications Lead, Pembina Institute, at 778-987-7654 or by email to stephenh@pembina.org.



One of the pleasant jobs that comes-- with being an MLA--is attending Citizenship ceremonies. Here, Carole James, MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill, congratulates new Canadians at a recent citizenship ceremony.

New Social Care Act for Canada proposed by CASW

OTTAWA, November 26— The Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) today issued *A New Social Care Act for Canada* that provides an in-depth history of Canada's social policy trajectory and paints a picture of the Canada that might have been before it was derailed by a climate of austerity and budget-balancing-at-any-cost mentality.

Like the *Canada Health Act*, CASW proposes that a *Social Care Act for Canada* be grounded in 10 principles that would not impose restrictions or regulations on the provinces and territories, but rather serve as a catalyst for renewed federal leadership to support the delivery of equitable services to all populations across Canada.

Ten Principles of New Social Care Act for Canada

1. Public administration
6. Comprehensiveness
2. Universality
7. Portability
3. Accessibility
8. Fairness
4. Effectiveness
9. Accountability and Transparency
5. Rights and Responsibility
10. Comparability

With the commitment to a new Health Accord and renewed promise of national leadership, CASW urges the new Liberal government to boldly adopt a new *Social Care Act for Canada* to help guide the Canada Social Transfer and all new investments in social infrastructure.

"The Canadian health care system stands to save significantly by adopting a bold vision to address the social determinants of health, as the best research available clearly demonstrates that health, social and economic outcomes are inextricably linked" states CASW President, Morel Caissie.

For further information: call Fred Phelps, MSW, RSW CASW executive director, at 613-729-6668 or email him at fred.phelps@casw-acts.ca.

NDP trade critic demands an end to TPP secrecy

Following a bilateral meeting at the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) summit, United States President Barack Obama exposed Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau's true intentions to ratify the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement. The November 19 revelations fly in the face of Liberal campaign promises of open and public consultations.

"New Democrats have long been concerned by the secrecy shrouding the negotiations of this trade deal," said NDP Trade critic Tracey Ramsey (Essex). "It's disquieting that the new prime minister, who promised change and more transparency, is making substantial policy decisions without consultation and behind closed doors."

Analysis of details of the full text confirms that Canada got a worse deal on protections for our auto sector than the United States -- putting tens of thousands of jobs at risk. The TPP also makes it easier for foreign companies to take over Canadian businesses and slams the door on lower drug prices into the future.

"I can't understand why the prime minister is promising to ratify a trade deal negotiated in secret by the Conservatives regardless of the outcome of any future public hearings," added Ramsey. "The TPP is a bad deal that will kill good-paying jobs. Only New Democrats will stand up to defend those jobs, to ensure Canadian interests and values are protected."

MacGregor appointed as Critic for Seniors in NDP shadow cabinet

COWICHAN — Local NDP MP Alistair MacGregor was appointed November 12 by NDP Leader Tom Mulcair to serve as the Critic for Seniors in Canada's progressive opposition and hold the Liberal government to account. He will also serve as the NDP's deputy critic for heritage.

"I'm honoured to be appointed to the NDP shadow cabinet as the Seniors critic. Our experienced and united team is ready to get to work on behalf of Canadians as

the progressive opposition," said MacGregor. "The Liberal government made a lot of commitments this campaign. We're going to hold them to their promises."

MacGregor will be tasked with fighting for seniors' priorities including:

- Improved access to health and seniors' care
- Expanding home care for seniors, and
- Strengthening retirement security

South Island MPs appointed to prominent roles in NDP shadow cabinet

VICTORIA — Local NDP MPs Murray Rankin and Randall Garrison were appointed November 12 by NDP Leader Tom Mulcair to serve as the Critic for Justice and Critic for National Defence, respectively, in Canada's progressive opposition.

"I'm honoured to be appointed to the NDP shadow cabinet as the Critic for Justice and Attorney General. Our experienced and united team is ready to get to work on behalf of Canadians as the progressive opposition," said Rankin (Victoria). "The Liberal government made a lot of commitments this campaign. We're going to hold them to their promises."

Rankin and Garrison will also push for the NDP's priorities, like setting firm targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, standing up for public healthcare in the negotiations of the new health accords and reforming Canada's unfair electoral system.

"We have a lot of work cut out for us and we're ready to get results for Canadians," said Garrison (Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke). "The NDP team in Ottawa is strong, experienced and will work hard to ensure the new government fulfills its promises for change."

The complete list of the shadow cabinet is available at www.ndp.ca/news/mulcair-announces-progressive-oppositions-shadow-cabinet

Sheila Malcolmson appointed as Critic for Status of Women

NANAIMO-LADYSMITH — Local NDP MP Sheila Malcolmson was appointed November 12 by NDP Leader Tom Mulcair to serve as the Critic for the Status of Women in Canada's progressive opposition.

"I'm honoured to be appointed to the NDP shadow cabinet as the Critic for the Status of Women," Malcolmson said. "Our experienced and united team is ready to get to work on behalf of Canadians as the progressive opposition."

Malcolmson will push for the NDP's priorities on the Status of Women file, including affordable childcare, ending violence

against women and holding an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women.

"A lot of work has been done here in Nanaimo-Ladysmith to advance women's and girl's equality, but there remains much to be done locally and throughout Canada," Malcolmson said. "A clear priority is to take meaningful and significant action to address the violence being faced by our sisters, mothers and daughters, beginning with ensuring that no woman or child in need is turned away from a women's shelter."

MP Nathan Cullen's statement on Canfisco plant in Prince Rupert

OTTAWA -- Nathan Cullen, MP for Skeena-Bulkley Valley, issued the following statement November 16 regarding the situation at the Canadian Fish Company (Canfisco):

"It was with extreme disappointment that I learned about the Canadian Fish Company's intention to shutter its canning operations in Prince Rupert. Hundreds of jobs in the cannery appear to be in jeopardy and the ripple effect of these job losses on the city are of profound concern to myself and the entire community.

"I have already begun reviewing legislative and regulatory options for addressing systemic issues with the way fisheries are governed in British Columbia and

on the North Coast. And over the coming days, I will be reaching out to Canfisco, the UFAWU, as well as the federal fisheries minister.

"During the recent federal campaign, I pledged to work to strengthen North Coast fisheries and that is what I intend to do.

"In the immediate term, I am calling on Canfisco to put forward concrete steps to help cannery workers who will lose their jobs. I will also be working with the UFAWU to bring the concerns of Canfisco workers directly to the fisheries minister.

"In the long term, I am committed to examining ways through which fishermen and fishing communities can exert greater control over this critical public resource."

Murray Rankin

murrayrankin.ca

Here to serve you

- // Pensions (OAS, GIS, CPP)
- // Taxes
- // Employment Insurance
- // Citizenship & Immigration
- // Veterans Affairs

Community office:
1057 Fort Street
Victoria, British Columbia
250-363-3600






November 19 was the 100th Anniversary of the Execution of Labour Bard Joe Hill. To mark the occasion, Steve Harvey of Fanny Bay was found "soapboxing" in Nanaimo. The chair symbolizes the chair in which Joe Hill was sat to face the firing squad in Sugar House Prison in Salt Lake City. Art Farquharson is holding the banner, while Alan O'Dean plays the mandola. Both are from Victoria. Members of the Industrial Workers of the World marked the anniversary with similar events.



Salt Spring Island's very own Irene Wright accepted her honorary lifetime membership award from BC NDP Leader John Horgan, at the BC NDP's 2015 convention. Here Saanich North and the Islands MLA Gary Holman (2nd from right) hands a copy of the membership award to the curator of the Time Capsule. Wright has been a fighter for the environment and social justice since the days of Tommy Douglas. She's worked to elect MPs and MLAs, and can probably still canvass circles around everyone else. The NDP owes her much. Thank you Irene!

Fast Facts: Manitoba was ahead of curve on modern fiscal policy

By Jim Stanford

Economists worldwide have undergone a sea change in attitudes in the last five years regarding public deficits and debt. Deficits were once viewed as inherently negative, to be reduced and eliminated as government's first priority. However, in the wake of chronic global stagnation and the destructive after-effects of austerity in Europe (and other regions), most economists have now adopted a very different view. With rock-bottom interest rates and stubborn unemployment, economists in many international agencies now support expanded deficit-financing to inject badly-needed vitality into stagnant economies.

An especially important form of public spending is infrastructure investment. Public capital projects (like transportation, basic utilities, urban transit, and housing) help to offset weak business capital outlays. They generate both short-term and long-lasting benefits: boosting employment and incomes during construction, but also lifting long-run productivity (even in the private sector) thanks to a more efficient economic infrastructure.

Support for expanded public capital spending, funded with public borrowing, now comes from many blue-chip sources – like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, former Bank of Canada Governor David Dodge, and many others. And public attitudes toward deficit-financing are also changing, as indicated in the recent federal election. Where many voters once accepted hohol-bolus conservatives' disapproval of deficits, the Liberal proposal for modest borrowing to fund infrastructure expansion struck a chord among Canadians, tired of persistent economic underperformance.

It turns out that Manitoba has been ahead of the curve in this important shift in fiscal policy. Like all jurisdictions in Canada, Manitoba slipped into deficit during the 2008-09 financial crisis. But unlike others (including Ottawa) who then rushed to eliminate deficits as the top priority, Manitoba followed a more balanced and cautious approach.

The provincial government boosted spending (focused on infrastructure) in the years after the recession, incurring seven consecutive deficits in the process. Those deficits have been gradually shrinking since 2011, and are now scheduled to disappear completely in 2018-19. Relative to GDP (which has grown steadily in Manitoba), provincial debt grew modestly: to around 30 percent of GDP, at present (not high by historical comparison). And with real interest rates on bonds barely above zero, the

burden of carrying that debt has actually declined.

It turns out that this easy-going fiscal approach is just what the doctor ordered for the provincial economy. And Manitoba's strategy of boosting public capital spending (financed both by new debt and, in part, by a one-point rise in the provincial sales tax) is now exactly the sort of policy supported by international agencies as relief for widespread economic stagnation.

Manitoba's approach, never mind the criticisms of fiscal conservatives, has contributed to a macroeconomic record that's among the best in Canada. Provincial unemployment fell (even as Canada's overall economy entered shallow recession this year); at 5.3 percent, Manitoba's rate is now the lowest of any province. Total employment grew 3 percent over the past two years, second-fastest of any province (next to B.C.). Full-time employment grew even faster: by 4 percent in the same period – re-buffing the trend toward part-time, precarious jobs seen elsewhere. The provincial economy expanded solidly above 2 percent every year since the recession. This year it will grow by twice the national average. Manitoba's diversification (composed of strong agriculture, energy, manufacturing, transportation, and financial sectors) provides a powerful and unique economic base.

Digging beneath the aggregate numbers, one key factor jumps out as an explanation for Manitoba's strong record: robust capital investment. Both private and public capital spending have grown strongly – a refreshing contrast to other provinces where capital spending has disappointed. Capital outlays grew an impressive 25 percent in 2014 (by far the strongest in the country), and preliminary data indicates another 5 percent expansion this year.

Nothing is more important than investment in driving an economy forward, creating jobs and incomes, and laying a strong framework for future productivity. Manitoba's record in this regard is unmatched. And the provincial government's willingness to tolerate modest, manageable deficits has been a crucial ingredient in the province's success.

See more at: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/fast-facts-manitoba-was-ahead-curve-modern-fiscal-policy#sthash.We410DnN.dpuf>

First published in the Winnipeg Free Press, Monday, November 23, 2015, and made available through the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Garrison thanks voters, outlines work to be done

By Randall Garrison

I want to thank the voters of Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke once again for the strong vote of confidence they expressed in me by re-electing me with a margin of more than 5,200 votes. I also want to congratulate the voters of the riding for the impressive voter turnout of 76%. This was well above the national figure of 69% which was, in itself, the best record in more than two decades.

Thank you especially to all the candidates and volunteers who worked to keep democracy strong in this riding throughout the past several months. And yes, thank you to Canadians for voting to end 10 years of mean-spirited and divisive politics from the Harper Conservatives.

New Democrats will now have to take up the task of making sure Canadians get the change they actually voted for. I wish the Liberals well, but New Democrats will be a vigilant progressive opposition reminding the Liberals of their many promises and encouraging them to get on with the job.

Locally that means ensuring the Liberal government proceeds with appointing the Sheringham Light Station Society as the agency to work in conjunction with T'Souke Nation to be stewards of the property and facility now that Heritage designation has been granted.

It means ensuring the Liberal government fulfills its promises on electoral reform and legalization of marijuana, ensuring Bill C-51, the anti-terror act is rescinded, and ensuring a national enquiry is called into

murdered and missing Aboriginal women.

It means working to ensure the family supporting jobs at Esquimalt Naval Base and Dockyards will continue to grow as the National Ship Building Procurement plan finally leads to new ships having their systems and "finishing" being done at Dockyards in Esquimalt.

It means ensuring the government takes meaningful action to move Canada to the front in the battle against climate change and in the transition to a green economy.

It means ensuring there is no increase in tanker traffic on the south coast and a ban on tankers on the north coast.

It means ensuring infrastructure funds are allocated so we can get on with important local projects: sewage treatment, E & N commuter rail and a McKenzie Interchange which is cycle, pedestrian, and transit friendly.

It means working to assist the government in hearing from Canadians on upcoming issues like the right to die, legalization of sex work and international trade.

I look forward to working with folks from throughout the riding in the months ahead.

Once again thank you to those who supported me and I pledge to continuing listening and working hard on behalf of all the constituents of Esquimalt Saanich Sooke.

All the best for the upcoming holiday season and a happy New Year.

Randall Garrison is MP for Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke.

BC's food system relies on vulnerable migrant workers; study recommends sweeping changes

VANCOUVER -- A new study finds that citizenship status plays a key role in farm-worker safety, and recommends significant changes to immigration policies to protect this vulnerable workforce.

"Many British Columbians are probably unaware that immigrants and migrants make up nearly 100% of our farmworkers," says Gerardo Otero, lead author of the study. "About half are South Asian immigrants and the other half Mexican migrants. And these workers, especially the migrants, are very vulnerable to exploitation."

Otero and his team carried out interviews with 200 farmworkers, as well as representatives from industry, advocates and civil servants. They found that most workers are subject to hazardous conditions like unsafe transportation, substandard living conditions, long work hours and dangerous equipment. Employment standards for the agricultural sector are only loosely enforced.

In 2003, 98% of agricultural workers were South Asian immigrants, but as of 2012, fully half are Mexican migrants. These workers are even more vulnerable to exploitation, as they enter Canada with time-limited, employer-specific work permits. Employers have the power to deport workers, or to give them negative evaluations at the end of the season, making it

unlikely they will be rehired. Migrants, as opposed to immigrants who are citizens or permanent residents, are not on a path towards citizenship, which would offer some protection from employer abuses.

The study includes a number of recommendations for government and industry, including:

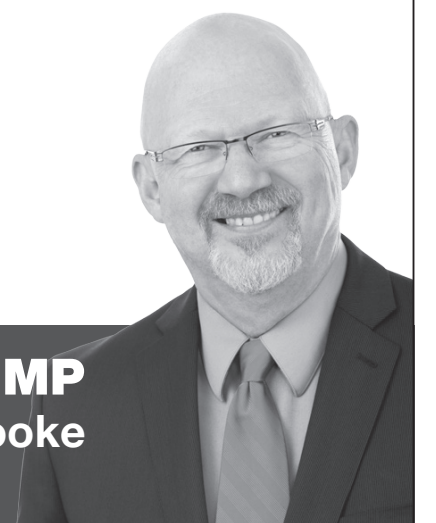
- Granting immigrant status to farmworkers on arrival; these workers would then have a path to citizenship after three years if they choose to apply.
- Establishing an employment compliance team, whose mandate would include random spot-checks at worksites to enforce employment standards. Priorities would include safe transportation and housing.
- Reforming MSP so that agricultural workers receive health coverage immediately upon arrival in Canada—this is already done in Ontario.
- Registering migrant employers and recruiters, so that they can be held accountable if they violate workers' rights, as has been done in Manitoba.

Citizenship and Precarious Labour in Canadian Agriculture, by Gerardo Otero and Kerry Preibisch, is available at www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/citizenship-and-precarious-labour-canadian-agriculture



Thank you
for your support.

Randall Garrison, MP
Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke
250-405-6550



MLA Report:

Reaching out to help

By Carole James

The festive season has arrived, and many of us will be celebrating with family and friends. But in our community and in BC, there are individuals, families and children who will be struggling this holiday season – and all year long.

Not everybody can afford a special meal or gifts for their children. Some are just barely making ends meet. One-in-five children in the province are living in poverty, and here in Victoria, one-in-three single parent families are living in poverty.

The holiday season is a reminder to think about what we can do to help those in need, not just during the holidays, but all year round. By reaching out to help those in need, we are living up to the true meaning of the holiday season and the real meaning of community.

We are fortunate in our city to have the Victoria Foundation carry out an in-depth survey with our residents each year and publish a synopsis of the strengths and challenges of our community. That report, called *Vital Signs*, is now marking its 10th year, providing a valuable tool so we can focus our efforts where the need is greatest, and build on our strengths.

Victoria's *Vital Signs* 2015 reported that our citizens worry about the high cost of living, especially the cost of housing. Housing is a top concern for many citizens, and I hear it all the time through my community office. Rental vacancy rates are going down, but costs are going up, and waitlists for subsidized units are getting longer and longer. The average vacancy rate for Greater Victoria was 1.2% in 2015, down from 2.7% in 2014.

More must be done to improve affordability and reduce homelessness. By supporting and encouraging a range of affordable housing options, including supported, co-op, and rental housing, government can do more to alleviate the crunch. By increasing the minimum wage, government can help those who need a little extra to make ends meet.

Mental illness and addictions are a concern cited by many respondents, and

we need improved mental health services, detox and recovery supports, more family physicians, and a serious effort to reduce health care wait times. In 2014, 17% of the South Island population reported that they did not have a regular medical doctor. That's nearly one-in-five.

Our community boasts great strengths that we must also protect and build on. The Victoria region benefits from a culture of health and wellness, and we're an active and engaged population with plenty of opportunities for physical activity and outdoor recreation.

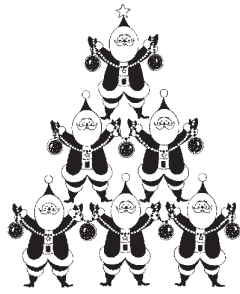
We're a safe city where people look out for each other. Our exceptional educators are dedicated and provide access to diverse educational opportunities and high quality institutions. We're a place with a vibrant arts and culture community with a wide variety of organizations and venues that nurture the arts.

I encourage each of us to do our part in supporting the many agencies, not-for-profits, faith groups, and organizations who do such amazing work to support those living in our community. Please think about volunteering or contributing, if you can. Each of us can also make a difference in our own way, which is what the holidays should truly be about. Let's keep that holiday spirit going throughout the year!

If you'd like to read more about the Victoria Foundation's 2015 *Vital Signs* report, visit their website at <http://victoriafoundation.bc.ca/vital-signs/victoria>.

Merry Christmases, Happy Hanukkah, and Happy Holidays to you and your family and best wishes for a healthy and happy New Year!

Carole James is MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill.



John Horgan wins resounding support to lead New Democrats into 2017 BC election

Vancouver – BC NDP leader John Horgan received resounding support from Convention delegates to lead the party into the 2017 election.

"I am humbled by your support and ready for 2017," Horgan told delegates.

A mandatory leadership review, part of the BCNDP Convention, resulted in a 95% vote of support for the leader.

In his speech to delegates earlier in the day, Horgan outlined an optimistic vision for the BC economy, one that fosters opportunity for everyone and is driven by innovation.

"The opportunity to learn, contribute, and fulfill your potential should be there for every British Columbian," said Horgan. "Government should make your success a priority."

But, Horgan warned the crowd, "Here's

what you need to remember about Christy Clark: your problems are only her problems when they become a political problem."

Horgan spent much of his speech looking ahead to the 2017 election.

"Our team of candidates will be the best, and most diverse, we've ever put forward," said Horgan. "We will set out a bold, ambitious agenda that will attract more voters than ever before."

"Together, New Democrats, we are on the road to victory in 2017."

Delegates from around the province gathered in Vancouver for the BC NDP annual Convention. The Convention ran from Friday, November 6 to Sunday, November 8 at the Westin Bayshore Hotel, Vancouver.

For more information about the BC NDP convention, go to www.bcndp.ca/convention.

John Horgan's PowerBC plan will create jobs and save money

BURNABY — BC New Democrat leader John Horgan launched PowerBC, a sweeping energy plan that creates jobs in every community in BC while protecting families and businesses from runaway Hydro bills.

"Our kids and grandkids deserve real leadership. With our plan we are looking forward and creating clean energy jobs throughout BC," Horgan said.

PowerBC will launch an accelerated program of energy efficiency retrofits to public buildings like schools and hospitals, as well as industrial and commercial buildings and private homes. The plan would upgrade BC Hydro's existing Revelstoke Dam and other facilities, and free BC Hydro to pursue BC's clean energy potential in wind, solar and emerging technologies in partnership with First Nations and clean energy providers. The plan will guarantee BC jobs and training opportunities through local procurement and local hiring.

"By far the most efficient way to meet BC's future energy needs is to save energy now," said Jennie Moore, Associate Dean for Building Design and Construction Technology at BCIT. "Here at BCIT we showed that it is possible to achieve a 75% reduction in energy demand with deep building retrofits."

"Clean energy and energy conservation technology will increasingly power our economy and drive the jobs of the future," says Lee Loftus, Business Manager for BC Insulators Union. "Retrofits will create meaningful skilled employment and apprenticeship opportunities for British Columbians across the province."

"There is huge potential in new clean energy technologies," said Rob Baxter of Vancouver Renewable Energy. "PowerBC will allow us to take advantage of the best of these technologies."

PowerBC is a bold, progressive plan for the future of BC energy, with a strong focus on jobs, from John Horgan and BC's New Democrat Official Opposition. Through conservation, investment and innovation, Power BC will:

- protect BC Hydro customers from runaway bills
- produce good-paying jobs close to home, in every community in British Columbia
- protect farmland and natural environment
- respect First Nations land title
- launch careers in clean energy and retrofit construction, maintenance, manufacturing, and high-tech engineering
- ensure BC has access to clean and affordable electricity for generations to come

Christy Clark plays politics with school upgrades in Vancouver

VANCOUVER— The refusal to fund school upgrades in Vancouver shows that students are being forced to pay the price for Premier Christy Clark's political whims, say the New Democrats.

"It's appalling that students in the Vancouver school district will be stuck with leaking roofs and damp classrooms because the premier is playing politics rather than looking after the needs of aging school buildings in BC," said New Democrat education spokesperson Rob Fleming.

"It's clear that Premier Clark is not there for Vancouver students, parents and staff," said Fleming. "Students in Vancouver deserve better."

Last week, the education minister revealed a list of 109 projects at schools which would receive a portion of a

\$35 million capital maintenance fund. Vancouver applied for \$5 million in projects but was completely shut out. The BC Liberal-friendly NPA school board chair expressed dismay that the Clark government could be so petty.

"Vancouver was the only district to be shut out," said Fleming, "and the Clark government didn't even have the consideration to notify them in advance. This entire exercise seems like a means of getting photo-ops for BC Liberal MLAs."

"The routine maintenance fund itself is inadequate," said Fleming. "There are schools around the province in dire need of significant upgrades, and that doesn't even include the resources needed to finally do vital seismic upgrading, remove portables and build new schools which the government has been promising for years."

"This fund doesn't meet the needs of our schools and its being unfairly allocated. This is just the latest in a long line of failing grades for Christy Clark on education."

Wishing you a joyous holiday season!

Please join me at my
Holiday Open House
Thursday, December 10, 4–6 pm at my Community Office

Everyone welcome. Light refreshments.

Non-perishable food and sock donations will be gratefully accepted for Anawim House.

Carole James MLA Victoria – Beacon Hill
Here to serve you at my Community Office
1084 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8V 3K4 Phone: 250-952-4211 Fax: 250-952-4586
carole.james.mla@leg.bc.ca www.carolejamesmla.ca

Wishing you Happy Holidays!
and best wishes for a wonderful new year!

Rob Fleming
MLA Victoria-Swan Lake

If you're in the area, please join us...

Holiday Open House
Friday, Dec 11 • 4 - 6pm
Victoria-Swan Lake Community Office
1020 Hillside Ave

Please bring a donation of a non-perishable food item for the UVic Student Society Food Bank

Let's get to "Yes" on a National Marine Conservation Area

By Gary Holman

This is an updated article submitted before the federal election by Gary Holman, MLA for Saanich North and the Islands, urging the establishment of a National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) in the southern gulf islands -- ed

As a Salt Spring Island resident for 25 years, I consider myself fortunate to live in the Gulf Islands, and I know how important the natural beauty and health of our local environment is to fellow gulf islanders. The waters of the Southern Strait of Georgia and Salish Sea provide critical habitat for our Southern Resident Killer Whales and thousands of other marine species. These waters are also the lifeblood of our coastal communities.

As MLA for Saanich North and the Islands, I regularly hear concerns from my constituents about increased tanker traffic and proposals for new industrial projects. The recent oil spill in Vancouver showed that our "world class" spill response is anything but! Even for a spill in the heart of downtown Vancouver and under perfect conditions, oil spread up to 12kms from the source, closing down local beaches.

However, it is important to recognize that the continuing loss of critical marine habitat such as eel grass beds, and the decline of keystone species like herring

and other vulnerable species have all occurred historically due to a cumulation of other factors. Commercial fisheries in the Gulf Islands have been largely reduced to the crabs and shrimps at the bottom of the food chain, since larger, bigger fish are now scarce.

Quite simply, our marine environment, our home, is under threat. The bulk of the channels, straits, reefs and bays that make up the Southern Strait of Georgia need to be better managed and protected, and a National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) is the best way to do this.

I hear from many of you about your support for creating a NMCA, something that our local island conservancies, along with respected organizations such as the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, have been championing for over 20 years. As a former Board member of the Salt Spring Island Conservancy, as CRD Director for Salt Spring, and as an MLA in the legislature, I've also been advocating for the establishment of the NMCA and protecting our threatened, southern resident Orca.

The idea of establishing a Conservation Area to protect these waters is not new. In 1970, world famous ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau called this area "the best temperate water diving in the world", but he also noted the urgent need to protect the southern gulf islands from considerable development threats and to save species

that were already in decline.

Some 30 years later, after a few false starts, the BC government and Parks Canada finally began work on the NMCA in 2003. However, after more than a decade, little progress has been made, despite widespread public support.

NMCAs prohibit harmful activities such as ocean dumping, oil and gas exploration and extraction and mining, but allow for carefully managed commercial and recreational fishing, other sustainable uses like tourism, and also must respect the constitutionally protected rights of First Nations. According to the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), a 2011 study for Parks Canada found that National Marine Conservation Areas generate hundreds of millions in economic activity and thousands of jobs. Local commercial, recreational and First Nations fisheries, as well as other sectors such as tourism, will all benefit from restoring and sustainably managing our marine resources. In short, NMCAs are good for business.

There is some good news about the state of our marine environment. Over the past year we have seen six new baby killer whales born to our southern resident population, great news for a population that has struggled for decades. These iconic animals face many threats, but we can reduce or even eliminate many of these problems.


Given the lack of progress by the pre-

vious Conservative federal government, it was surprising when last August, a promise was made to complete the Southern Strait of Georgia NMCA. Even more encouraging is that the mandate letter for the new federal Minister of Fisheries includes a very clear commitment to increase Canada's marine conservation areas. I know that all federal parties support a NMCA. I hope this support across the political spectrum means we'll see real progress over the next year, especially after the federal election outcome.

With widespread support there is no reason that this cannot happen. We just need to keep the spotlight on the Southern Strait of Georgia. I urge you to meet with your MP after the election and ask them to act urgently on the NMCA.

Those six baby orcas do not have a voice in Ottawa, but you do. As residents of the Gulf Islands we need to advocate for the protection of this very special place that we all call home.

Bill Routley, MLA
Cowichan Valley



Community Office Hours
Tuesday to Friday
10:00 am - 3:00 pm
273 Trunk Road,
Duncan
Phone: 250-715-0127
Fax: 250-715-0139
Email:
bill.routley.mla@leg.bc.ca
www.billroutley.com
Mailing Address:
PO Box 599
Duncan BC V9L 3X9

New Democrat statement on the Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

VICTORIA — BC New Democrat women's spokesperson Maurine Karagianis issued the following statement in recognition of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women:

"Violence against women continues to plague families and communities in British Columbia.

"Whether it's the Christy Clark government's decision to end reporting on the Missing Women's Commission recommendations, or their failure to properly consider legislative action to address sexual assaults at BC universities and colleges, the current government is not doing enough to address violence against women in our province.

"Last year we saw a record number of spousal homicides in British Columbia, yet nothing substantial changed in response to

this unprecedented violence. Supports for women fleeing violence continue to be limited, with some communities having little or nothing to offer women in need. What services exist are often funded on a year-to-year basis, with no long-term commitment from government.

"The Christy Clark government's failure to bring in a comprehensive poverty-reduction plan also disproportionately hurts women. Half of the children living in single-parent households live in poverty. Three quarters of single mothers in Metro Vancouver struggle to afford housing. We know that poverty binds women to dangerous relationships. Addressing poverty is critical to addressing violence against women.

"Even when the Christy Clark Liberals are offered a solution to immediately address violence against women, such as

bringing in a safe, affordable public transportation system for communities along the Highway of Tears, the government drags their heels instead of taking action."

"Elimination of violence against women takes more than one-off announcements, photo-ops and slogans. It requires leadership at the highest levels, leadership that is sorely lacking under the Christy Clark Liberal government."

Maurine Karagianis is MLA for Esquimalt-Royal Roads.

Proudly
Representing Esquimalt
Maurine Karagianis,
MLA
Esquimalt-Royal Roads



250 479 8326
maurine.karagianis.mla@leg.bc.ca
www.maurinekaragianis.ca

New Democrats' poverty reduction act would address BC's child poverty

VICTORIA — With three recent reports showing that British Columbia continues to have persistently high child poverty under the Christy Clark government, New Democrats are pressing for their poverty reduction legislation to finally be passed.

"New Democrats have introduced legislation for a poverty reduction plan four times, yet each time the Liberals have ignored it," said New Democrat social development spokesperson Michelle Mungall.

"One in five children live in poverty in British Columbia according to First Call's annual report card released November 24, yet we remain the only province in Canada without a poverty reduction plan because of Christy Clark's partisan politics."

Mungall noted that the recent Food Banks Canada Hunger Count shows that food bank usage is at an all-time high this year. Another recent report, the BC Non-Profit Housing Association's Rental Housing Index, shows that BC is at crisis levels of unaffordable housing.

Families being hit the hardest by poverty are single-parent families. Half of children in single parent families, mostly headed by single mothers, are living in poverty.

"Government policies can either reduce this poverty or increase it," said Mungall.

Mungall pointed to the Christy Clark government's decision to claw back ma-

ternity leave benefits from parents who receive disability assistance as an example of the kind of policies that worsen poverty and would change with a poverty reduction plan.

"If we had a poverty reduction plan in place it would quickly become obvious that taking away maternity leave benefits from new parents with disabilities is not just mean-spirited, but it increases and deepens poverty," said Mungall.

Since Christy Clark became premier the only concentrated action taken by the government to address poverty was a failed pilot project in seven communities, causing the Union of BC Municipalities to withdraw their support.

"Christy Clark has an abysmal record when it comes poverty reduction," said Mungall. "BC families deserve better."



John Horgan, MLA Juan de Fuca
Looking forward to seeing you at my
Annual Christmas Open House
Wednesday, December 16th, 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.
john.horgan.mla@leg.bc.ca | johnhorganmla.ca



Gary Holman, MLA
Saanich North and the Islands

YOUR COMMUNITY ADVOCATE
for assistance with provincial
programs and agencies



COMMUNITY OFFICE
2393 Beacon Avenue, Sidney V8L 1W9
250-655-5711 / 1-855-955-5711
gary.holman.mla@leg.bc.ca
www.GaryHolmanMLA.ca

Mirrors and marketing: Capitalism -- the most discriminating religion

By Tim Pheotist

At last some political fresh air might be blowing across Canada.

The stale stench of the Canadian Conservative movement was blown away in a clear electoral defeat for Stephen Harper and his cohorts.

There is now a window of opportunity for Canada to rebuild its reputation as a progressive and humane society.

But in this country of infinite resource and opportunity, the 2015 election must result in more than Justin Trudeau's wind of change.

Here in British Columbia the draft of fresh air remains weak. The odour of the Conservative cadavers continues to sustain Christy Clark's BC Liberal government. The simplistic, one dimensional, "fossil fuel extraction industry" economic policy has failed. It has sucked the available oxygen from our economic environment as certainly as greenhouse gases have contributed to melting the icecaps.

While the federal election result is not what Tom Mulcair, and almost 3.5 million NDP voters had hoped for, at least there are now significant cracks in the walls of the Conservative workhouse, that has, in Harper's time, become Canada.

The cracks must be widened -- more windows must be unsealed -- particularly in BC where Ms. Clark must be unseated, at the next election, by the BC NDP.

But, unfortunately -- intelligent, progressive and effective policies are not enough to win elections. Today the message must be wrapped in packaging that brings voters from the virtual screen to the reality of the polling booth.

Increasingly today's political messaging is about sophisticated and expensive Marketing. Marshall McLuhan has never been so correct -- "The Medium is the Message".

And the "medium" has never been so expensive. Winning elections today means having funds to buy time and space in the "media" that can expose the "message".

And that "media" is most likely to be owned and operated by companies and capital groupings that are mostly interested

in grabbing more capital and resources for themselves.

It is the pursuit of overwhelming capital control that is the fundamental nature of the current global economic model.

Without access to, and support of capital and its sponsored media, progressive political messages are as trees falling in the uninhabited forest -- unheard.

Of course, since the beginning of commercial time it has ever been thus. But never before as globally certain and effective.

During the pre-election coverage I watched more daytime TV than I'd ever previously endured.

The experience makes me feel that I should be in some form of rehab -- another business opportunity?

While channel surfing I began to understand the patterns of advertising that are thrown at us via the narrowing channel choices.

Within the patterns I recognized attempts by manufacturers and "service providers" to reflect their idea of how a viewer would "self identify" -- to use a horrible term.

So we see the "optimistic and bouncy" millennial generation, being encouraged to buy goods and services that will increase their material prosperity and make their "small business" successful and rich -- how's that working out?

Then we have the "croaky and sick" elderly image, targeted in a reflection of redemption, via a "newly discovered" medication or nursing home utopia.

Another image shows fit and aging couples and families, sporting on the golf and tennis courts, while being encouraged to "invest" their life savings in schemes that seem to be supported by familiar High Street bank names -- what's wrong with this picture -- seems familiar?

Then, again, we have the "modern parent" of growing youngsters who is instilled with a message of "educational fear" -- whatever will be the fate of their offspring if they can't afford college fees in the tens of thousands.

Are these images true reflections of who we are or are they the imaging of how the capital based economic model would like us to be?

Initially the answer is most likely the latter. But soon many become the manufactured image. And we buy - we buy into and believe a reflection that never was us.

That is the technique that capitalist demagogues employ -- to make a false image seem to be a true reflection. And all so easily with marketing and advertising.

People like to belong. What better way to find your favourite group and virtual club than to find your inevitable demographic -- socio/economic/age/interest group -- via the safety of TV and the internet.

Once safely admitted to this private Nirvana we become surrounded with targets to meet, dreams to achieve, fortunes to be borrowed and spent, lives to be compared etc.

And always resources to be spent -- for the profits of those who we never seem to meet.

Political allegiances are created this way. Once decided, we no longer need to think critically. We can actually stop thinking and allow the virtual image on the screen to be our perception of our true reflection. We see what we want to see via a warped mirror of reality.

But we also see, through this capitalistic distortion, what we think we don't want. What we would never wish to be.

We learn to discriminate, uncritically. At first we learn to prefer one vacuum cleaner product over another. Then one investment scheme over another. Then one pain reliever over another. Then one nursing home over another. And so on.

And then one political and social policy over another.

And then one religious choice over another. And our mirror never lies to us, for it always seems to reflect us so accurately. We no longer see the distortions. The inconsistencies.

And so the inevitability of political persuasion and discrimination is progressed. And political choices and messages become ways of life. And the carriers of those messages become electable role models and heroes.

And we learn to discriminate, unfairly and dangerously, believing our distorted reflection.

We often forget what's behind the mirror.

We see a threat from everything and everyone that doesn't reflect in our personal mirror.

Time and society get difficult. What to do? Who to blame? Who to exclude? We look to those who hold our chosen mirror -- the politicians and controllers of capital.

It's an easy deception.

We forget to "follow the money trail" -- who benefits from our virtual certainties.

Fortunately for Canada, this time the Conservative mirror has been broken, or at least cracked.

We're not quitting the distorted reflection "cold turkey", but there is hope that Canada can start thinking "critically" again. That it can look at reality through an open window and not a Conservative mirror of deception.

BC NDP Convention wraps up: Party energized and ready for 2017

Vancouver -- Following a successful Convention November 6-8 at the Westin Bayshore Hotel, 1607 Bayshore Drive, Vancouver., the BC NDP is energized and ready for the 2017 election.

"We are leaving Convention today motivated and united, with a clear path forward to victory," said BC NDP leader John Horgan. "We are focused on strengthening the middle class, creating good jobs in every corner of BC and in every economic sector, and creating opportunities so every British Columbian can succeed."

A number of key speakers addressed delegates over the weekend, including NDP Leader Tom Mulcair, former Governor of Michigan Jennifer Granholm, Alberta Minister of Economic Development

Deron Bilous, and a number of NDP MLAs and MPs.

Convention delegates debated important policy in the areas of opportunity, innovation and change. Resolutions that passed covered many topics, including increasing secondary manufacturing in BC, support for a \$10/day childcare plan, taking action on the Missing Women Commission, and holding a public inquiry into the Lake-land and Babine sawmills explosions.

"BC New Democrats are ready to defeat Christy Clark and the BC Liberals in 2017," said Horgan. "It's time to replace the corrupt, secretive, back room politics of the BC Liberals with an ambitious agenda for change."

"It's time for an NDP government that will work every day for a better BC for all."

Sleeping bags for homeless as cold weather approaches

On October 21, Rabbi Harry Brechner and members of Avodah, Congregation Emanu-El's Social Action Group, delivered 96 new sleeping bags to Rev. Allen Tysick, executive director of the Dandelion Society, to help homeless people survive the coming cold months.

"My deepest gratitude and thanks goes out to Avodah for these urgently needed sleeping bags," said Rev. Al. "Through community partnership, all is possible."

"We believe that everyone deserves a warm bed and adequate housing," said

Rabbi Brechner. "However, right now, providing sleeping bags to our most vulnerable neighbours is essential. It is one important way to show that we care and to make a meaningful difference to people who live on the streets."

This is the second year that Avodah has responded to Rev. Al's call for sleeping bags. Last year Avodah gave the Dandelion Society 75 sleeping bags and 50 mylar emergency blankets.

Avodah's donation of sleeping bags this year was made possible through the generous support of the Jewish Federation of Victoria and Vancouver Island, and the Betty Averbach Foundation.

Congregation Emanu-El created the Avodah social action group in 1993 to support poor and homeless youth, adults and families.

The Dandelion Society, founded by Rev. Al in 2011, provides compassion, hope and care daily to people living on the streets of Victoria. It advocates for the voiceless and supports the street community, one person at a time.

Rob Fleming touring Olympic Visa Apartments - Supportive Seniors Housing run by Victoria Cool Aid Society



FRASER
Plumbing & Heating Ltd.

Residential & Commercial • Service & Renos
A locally owned & operated family business
Reliable • Priced Fair • Quality workmanship

250-727-3888 | info@fraserplumbing.ca | www.fraserplumbing.ca

**Cowichan Valley
NDP Constituency Association**

Stay in Touch!

You can reach your president, Deb Foster, at 250-510-0544
or by email at deb.foster21@gmail.com
or email cowichanvalleyndp@shaw.ca

Murray J. Ellis
Chartered Accountant

Services to Small Businesses
Bookkeepers available

250-385-1011
1325 Tolmie Avenue

Election 2015:

From Tory harsh manners to Liberal sunny deception

By Barry Weisleder

It was a shift from dark, overtly reactionary ideas to a deceptively sunny version of the prevailing corporate agenda. That's what voters across Canada got on October 19. Many people were spooked by the autocratic, racist wedge politics of the Stephen Harper Conservative regime. Desperate for "change", they opted for the major party that *seemed* to offer a bigger break with the mean, fearful, bleak status quo. That was the Liberal Party, led by photogenic, 43-year old Justin Trudeau.

In the process, change-seekers demoted the labor-based New Democratic Party of Tom Mulcair from first to third place in the polls. Mulcair made it relatively easy for Trudeau to appear to outflank him on the left. The NDP chief ran a stodgy, overly cautious election campaign whose balanced-budget mantra appealed futilely to fiscal conservatives. It offered little respite for the sufferers of the war on wages, and for victims of the ravages of precarious employment. On pipeline building, Mulcair went from being an advocate to being ambiguous. His weak policy on the environment, including his feckless "cap in trade" position, hurt the party in Quebec as much as his principled defense of the right of Muslim women to wear a veil in public.

A great amount of money was spent on the 11-week campaign, the longest in modern Canadian history. Over \$40 million just by the Liberal Party. Over \$50 million by the Tories. The NDP likely a lot less. But the big spenders pumped up the Liberals from third to first place.

Which begs the question: Why did significant sectors of big business turn away from Harper, and towards Trudeau, especially over the past year? Could it be that the Conservatives' harshly confrontationalist, bullying behaviour hurt more than it helped the rulers implement the capitalist austerity agenda in Canada? Perhaps a significant section of the corporate elite would rather access the scientific data that Harper buried. Perhaps the bosses prefer not to risk shattering illusions in bourgeois democracy when Liberal deception will suffice.

It's time for Mulcair and his team to go!

In any case, the triumph of the Liberal Party was not just a condemnation of the authoritarian, manipulative rule of the Harper-led Conservatives. It was not just a rejection of their loaded omnibus bills, repeat prorogations of Parliament, and voter suppression tactics. Nor was it simply a triumph of style over substance, a la Trudeau. It was also an indictment of the overall political direction of the NDP.

The course taken by the party is not exclusively the fault of Tom Mulcair. But those responsible for it certainly include the staff he selected and the stifling political culture that he, and the iconic Jack Layton before him, fostered.

As a *Globe and Mail* column argued on election day, "The most unpardonable mistake, however, was to think the NDP could move blandly to the centre without the Liberal Party filling not only the progressive vacuum left behind but also seizing the 'change' mantle that allowed it to claim its legitimacy as the true alternative to the Tories."

Certainly, Canada's "first past the post" electoral system grossly exaggerated the parliamentary outcome in favour of the Liberals. With only 39.5 percent of the popular vote, the Liberal Party captured 55 percent of the seats in the House of Commons (184 of 338 MPs). The Conservatives' 31.9 percent share of the votes translated into 99 seats, or 29 percent of the Commons. The NDP's 44 elected MPs, a precipitous drop from 103 seats in 2011, represents only 13 percent of the seats, despite garnering nearly 20 percent of the votes cast in 2015. Also underrepresented are the Bloc Quebecois, which picked up 10 seats, and the Green Party one.

But there is no denying the massive move to the Liberals. Millions of ballots were transferred from past NDP supporters, as well as from new and occasional voters. The overall turnout rose from 61 to 68 percent of the eligible electorate. The

union-linked NDP, which campaigned like a fiscally conservative big business party, failed to win the hearts and minds of people looking for action to lift the country out of economic stagnation, and to reverse deepening social inequality.

In the wake of "the NDP's disastrous move to the mushy middle", as described by Desmond Cole in the *Toronto Star* on October 15, the NDP Socialist Caucus called on Tom Mulcair to resign as federal leader. It asked the party's federal executive to set in motion a process to select a new leader and adopt a new political course that will advance the interests of working people, youths, seniors, women and the victims of bigotry, racism and militarism.

The NDP "brain trust", including Brad Lavigne, George Smith, Ann McGrath and Karl Belanger, ought to go too. They vanished the party's adopted policy resolutions from the NDP web site. They blocked or removed pro-Palestine New Democrats from being party candidates. They silenced Linda McQuaig for stating the obvious -- that oil and gas resources must be left in the ground if Canada is to meet its carbon emission goals and curb catastrophic climate change.

Clearly, the problem is not just the Leader and a small group of party officials. It is a large, super-centralized apparatus; it is a lack of internal democracy and debate; and it is a general political direction that subordinates the needs and aspirations of millions to the survival of an outmoded and environmentally toxic economic system.

Lasting change must be generated from the bottom-up. But surely, that must include seeking the removal of the Leader and officials who do not listen to the membership.

Enter the Ly'in Liberals

Folks, get ready. Be prepared to be disappointed by the past-masters of deceit and deception -- by the party that held the reins of government in Ottawa longer than any other in the 148 years since Confederation.

Trudeau and the Liberals promised a tax break for middle income earners. It will amount to peanuts. Slightly higher taxes on upper incomes will not put a dent in the banks and giant corporations that are raking in billions, often hiding their riches in offshore accounts. In fact, the politically well-connected super-rich in the construction sector will be the prime beneficiaries of new expenditures slated for infrastructure repairs.

Law C-51, which boosts police powers, will not be repealed, only amended to insert an "oversight" mechanism. Will that be anything like the "oversight" exercised by judges, acting in secret, concerning Muslims and Arabs detained in Canada for many years without formal charges or trial?

In addition to voting for C-51, the Liberal Party backed Harper's law against "Barbaric Cultural Practices", objecting mainly to the name. Perhaps they will rescind the "snitch line". Perhaps they'll repeal the law to strip the Canadian citizenship of dual citizens convicted of "terrorism" in thought or deed. But curb police powers? Just ask newly minted Liberal MP Bill Blair, the former Toronto police chief who was in charge when over 1,000 G20 protesters were detained without charge in 2010.

Justin Trudeau said he wants to examine the still-secret details of the Trans Pacific Partnership agreement. He hastened to add that the Liberal Party is pro-trade. That really means it favours corporate property rights over the needs of the vast majority of the population. Expect to see the TPP ratified in Parliament, and CETA likewise, regardless the cost in auto and farm jobs, higher medical drug prices, and the loss of environmental and social protections that will be even more subject to corporate challenge before trade dispute tribunals.

Will the promised public enquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women produce another hollow "apology", or will it lead to punishment of negligent police officials? Will it issue a set of recommendations destined to gather dust, or cause a real transfer of corporate wealth to indigenous communities to foster good jobs,

quality health and education services, and end the super-vulnerability of young women to drugs and sexual abuse?

Trudeau pledged electoral reform. But you can bet your bottom dollar it won't be proportional representation. If anything, it will be "ranked balloting", a mechanism which is designed to distribute second and third preferences to establishment parties. The discredited Senate, with or without the fig leaf of "non-partisan" appointments, will continue to squander money and oxygen.

The Liberals said they'd halt the termination of home mail delivery, but not reverse it -- much less restore lost mail services and maintain letter carrier jobs.

Legalization of marijuana will be welcomed by consumers. At the same time, it will primarily mean huge profits for politically well-connected growers and marketers.

Trudeau will go the COP21 conference in Paris in December. He will talk a good game on climate change. But his commitment to the oil patch, to tar sands development, to "cap and trade" (i.e. the sale of permits to burn carbon), will show where he really stands on climate justice and indigenous people's rights.

Trudeau pledged to end Canada's combat mission in Iraq and Syria, but not to end Canadian Forces' involvement in NATO, and in so-called training operations in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Congo, Darfur, Sudan, the West Bank, and Haiti -- all in support of right wing regimes. Ottawa's backing for the Zionist apartheid state of Israel will be undiminished.

Canada should accept many more Syrian refugees. Even if Trudeau's goal of 25,000 by the end of 2015 is met (extremely unlikely), the causes behind the displacement of millions -- war and climate change -- can be addressed only by halting western military intervention into the resource-rich countries of the South and East. Pious Liberal promises to re-settle hordes of refugees cannot ameliorate the profit-lust and dire humanitarian consequences of imperialism.

Instead of taking a wait-and-see attitude, labour and social justice activists need to hit the streets now to demand positive action from the Trudeau government on all these fronts.

Good jobs for all. Tax the rich. Repeal C-51 and anti-labour laws C-377 and C-525. No to the TPP and CETA. Fully restore home mail delivery. No new pipelines. Nationalize Big Oil and Gas and the giant banks, and invest heavily in public green energy systems. Justice for indigenous peoples. Canada out of NATO. Bring the troops home. For public ownership of the commanding heights of the economy under workers' and community democratic con-

trol. Those should be the demands of every union, of every working class and popular organization, and of the NDP.

Sadly, for decades, the party and labour brass have been veering to the right. The result has been more and more concessions to Capital, and less democracy in the workers' organizations.

Electorally, it has been a time of weak, short-lived electoral gains, followed by setbacks and disasters for the NDP. Between 2011 and today, the party blew a provincial election in British Columbia, lost government in Nova Scotia after only one term, failed to advance in Ontario (where provincial Leader Andrea Horwath pledged no new taxes and a balanced budget - sound familiar?), and the NDP government in Manitoba plunged in popularity. The jury is still out on Rachel Notley's crew in Alberta, whose first provincial budget took a direction opposite to Mulcair's.

But the verdict on Mulcair and company is clear. The NDP brain trust masterminded the biggest loss of seats in party history. Many good MPs, like Megan Leslie and Andrew Cash, went down to defeat. They will be missed. Pro-military Peter Stoffer, and the profane anti-socialist Pat Martin, not so much. The party was shut out in Atlantic Canada and Toronto. It was severely cut down in Quebec. Sadly, star social justice advocate Linda McQuaig failed in her second bid in Toronto Centre. Happily, leftist MP Niki Ashton, who ran for federal Leader in 2012, was re-elected in Churchill, Manitoba. She is joined in Parliament by left economist Erin Weir from Regina-Lewvan. So, there is hope. But hope must be accompanied by political clarity, unity in action, and relentless struggle from the bottom up.

The NDP, the only mass, labour-based political party in North America remains viable as a potential challenger to capitalist austerity, climate injustice, social inequality, racism, sexism and war. Jeremy Corbyn's stunning leadership victory in the British Labour Party, ongoing grassroots opposition across Europe to the EU bankers' agenda, the Bernie Sanders phenomenon in the USA, and even the ouster of the hated Stephen Harper regime in Ottawa all show a growing appetite for fundamental change.

That is the agenda the NDP Socialist Caucus vigorously advances. We will discover Canada's Jeremy Corbyn as we take up the struggle against the ruling rich, their state, and the misleaders of the working class.

Barry Weisleder is president of the Socialist Caucus of the New Democratic Party of Canada.



Happy Holidays

*Thank you all very much for your support
and generosity this past year!
We hope 2016 is filled with love, family and prosperity!*

*From the Volunteer Board and staff
of Lower Island News*



Jim Jaarsma
Contracting
250-360-1905

Quality Carpentry
General Contracting

**Your ad could be
here!**

**For information about
advertising rates,
please email the editor
at dale_young@telus.net**

Vancouver Island's first "Green & Go" Biofuel Station holds grand opening November 19

Cowichan Energy Alternatives (CEA), the Cowichan Bio-Diesel Co-op (Co-op) and the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) held its official public opening of Vancouver Island's first "Green & Go" Bio-fuel Station at 2pm on Thursday, November 19.

The station, located at the CVRD Bings Creek Recycling Centre, at 3900 Drinkwater Road, North Cowichan, provides a full range of GHG-reducing biodiesel blends for use in any diesel car, truck, bus or machinery.

The new biodiesel blending pump and Point of Sale (PoS) technology will provide drivers with an easy and secure way to access clean, renewable biodiesel after they create a user account at www.biopay.org.

Biodiesel is a proven fossil-fuel-alternative that reduces harmful pollution while increasing a vehicle's engine life. The pump's PoS will provide each member with a transaction record that shows greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions with every fill up.

Representatives from CEA, CVRD and

the Co-op were available to answer questions about this local sustainable biodiesel solution. Guests and media were able to see first-hand how easy it is to use the new biofuel pump and how anyone can become a member of the Co-op to gain access to this carbon neutral fuel.

A Sustainable Solution in Action, the Cowichan Biofuel Facility is a homegrown centre for recycling commercial and residential waste cooking oil into environmentally-friendly biodiesel for local use as a petroleum diesel substitute.

This demonstration facility is the first of its kind in North America and a model for communities seeking sustainable solutions that support the development of a local, low-carbon economy. It is the result of a unique partnership between the Cowichan Valley Regional District, Cowichan Bio-Diesel Co-op and Cowichan Energy Alternatives, and is part of the growing BC Biofuel Network. Financial support was provided in part by Vancity.

Biodiesel in its pure form (B100) can be



Biodiesel blending pump and Point of Sale technology will be safe and easy for drivers to access clean, renewable biodiesel for their vehicles.

used as a complete substitute for petroleum diesel fuel or it can be blended with regular diesel at the new Green & Go biofuel station to whatever blend is required (B5, B20 and B50). This makes biodiesel an important renewable energy solution that can be used now with available diesel engine technology to immediately reduce GHG emissions and other harmful pollutants.

In North Cowichan where the pump is located, 73% of the community's GHG emissions are produced by transportation.

The sustainable fuel alternative offered at the Cowichan Biofuel Facility, now made even more accessible through the Green & Go Biofuel Station, will enable the community to address one of its biggest environmental challenges.

For more information, contact M. Hassaan Rahim, at 250-597-1491n or email him at hassaan@cowichanenergy.org. You can also visit Cowichan Energy's website at www.cowichanenergy.org



For the third year in a row CGC and VIU partner on work experience at KinPark Youth Urban Fa FzrFarm for WEST

Duncan, BC -- Shovels, rakes, soil, and compost have started flying again with students from Vancouver Island University's (VIU) WEST (Workplace Essential Skills Training) program at the KinPark Youth Urban Farm, located at Kinsmen Park on Alderlea Street in downtown Duncan.

For the past three academic years at VIU, between 12 and 14 first and second year students in the WEST program have been walking over to Cowichan Green Community's (CGC) KinPark Youth Urban Farm on Thursday mornings to assist with the maintenance, growing, harvest, and beautification of the small-scale market gardens, greenhouse, and food forest located in the urban park.

The WEST program offers employment training and skill-building to young adults in the region facing barriers to education and employment due to various disabilities. But the program is so much more than that. "Our students discover their potential, know that they can contribute to the community they live in and leave each class believing in their own vision of themselves, feeling that possibility is around the corner," explains Deborah Provencher, instructor of the WEST Program. "Our relationship with CGC is truly priceless as our students would not achieve as much as they do without this beautiful environment to learn in."

By hosting the work experience portion of the program at KinPark, students are provided with a safe and inclusive workplace training experience. "Our expectations are the same as any employer might have," explains farm supervisor Heather Kaye. "We expect students to show up on time, be dressed appropriately for the farm work, be prepared for team-work, and to have a positive attitude no matter what the job or weather."

The partnership is truly a win-win scenario for both organizations. "Not only do



the students gain valuable employment skills at the park," says Kaye, "but we get an enormous amount of work done for the space allowing us to grow, tend and harvest a large amount of produce that is then used in CGC's programming including our family cooking classes and youth canning enterprise."

Several of the WEST students have gone on to seek employment and volunteer opportunities in the region after graduating from the two-year program. "We have witnessed many amazing transformations in the students as a result of this program," adds Kaye. "Many come to us at the beginning of the year with an 'I can't' attitude and by the end of the season head out to the gardens to happily pull weeds, plant seeds, and turn the compost!"

For more information on Cowichan Green Community and the KinPark Youth Urban Farm, contact heather@cowichangreencommunity.org. For more info on the VIU WEST program, contact Deborah Provencher at Provencher@viu.ca.

Are you a CGC member yet? For only \$20 per year, not only do you receive discounts on workshops and purchases at our store, but you also support the continuation of our amazing programming like FruitSave, now in its 8th year. And do you get our bi-weekly newsletter? If not, email info@cowichangreencommunity.org so you can stay up to date on all of CGC's news!

Esquimalt-Royal Roads New Democrats!

**B.C. Families Need a Break!
Want to help stop Christy Clark?**

**Contact your executive:
esquimaltroyalroads@gmail.com**

**P.O. Box 231, 110-174 Wilson Street
Victoria, B.C. V9A 7N7**

**Season's Greetings to all!
Please support your local food bank.**

**Saanich South
New Democrats**

**YOU CAN CONTACT YOUR EXECUTIVE
BY WRITING TO US
AT PO BOX 30041
RPO REYNOLDS, VICTORIA, BC V8X 5E1
OR BY PHONING US AT 250-479-1100.**

Municipal politics in the Cowichan region: Year in review

By Rob Douglas

Last November I ran for North Cowichan Council, and to my surprise topped the polls. I owed my success to a dedicated group of volunteers who knocked on doors, hosted coffee parties, worked the phones and mobilized voters on Election Day.

I was part of a wave of progressive candidates elected in the Cowichan region during last year's civic elections, who overnight dramatically reconfigured the local political scene and opened all kinds of new possibilities.

While this past year has at times been frustrating and the decision-making process slow, we are nevertheless moving in the right direction. Despite its limitations, local government has the power and resources to improve our quality of life, empower regular people and create a fairer and more just society.

At North Cowichan, Mayor Jon Lefebure appointed me to the Environmental Committee, where we have begun implementing the award-winning Climate Action and Energy Plan.

The municipality recently established "BETTER OFF North Cowichan", a program in partnership with BC Hydro that encourages greater household energy efficiency through various incentives. We are also investing in significant energy efficiency upgrades at municipal facilities such as the Cowichan Aquatic Centre and the Fuller Lake Arena that will reduce both our greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs.

One of my top priorities when I ran for office was to increase the supply of affordable housing in the Cowichan region. Earlier this year Council supported my pro-

posal to identify municipally owned land that could be made available for affordable housing projects, and we have since narrowed our focus to three suitable sites in Chemainus and the South End.

We have also begun discussions with the City of Vancouver, the Co-op Housing Federation of BC and the Community Land Trust Foundation of BC on possible affordable housing models that would include social housing. In the New Year I will be bringing a motion to Council to establish a community task force on housing affordability that would continue this work.

At North Cowichan, we are also experimenting with ideas to involve regular citizens in the budgeting process. Last fall I campaigned to introduce "participatory budgeting" in the municipality, a grassroots model pioneered in South America where residents are given an opportunity to identify spending priorities and vote on these democratically. Council has expressed an interest in pursuing this model, and earlier this year supported my resolution directing staff to prepare a report on introducing participatory budgeting.

I am currently in the process of developing my own follow-up proposal on implementing this model for the next budgeting cycle.

For the 2016 budget, however, we will be hosting a series of town hall meetings in Chemainus, Crofton, Maple Bay and Mount Prevost in late January to solicit input from the community on our draft budget and strategic priorities. Details on the dates of and locations of these town hall meetings are forthcoming.

Following last year's civic elections, I was appointed to the Cowichan Valley



N. Cowichan Councillor Rob Douglas

Regional District (CVRD) Board as one of North Cowichan's three representatives, where we have spent much of our time developing a new strategic plan to guide our actions over the coming years.

A large part of our discussion has focused on exploring new approaches to regional economic development. Last year the CVRD initiated a review of Economic Development Cowichan, a function with a \$600,000 annual budget that is involved in a range of activities from supporting the agricultural and tourism sectors to attracting and retaining investment.

As part of this discussion, I presented a series in the Cowichan Valley Citizen with local activist Roger Hart suggesting "Five Big Ideas" that could transform the regional economy. These Five Big Ideas—all based on successful models already in place across North America and Europe—included supporting co-operatives, leveraging our anchor institutions, promoting community investment funds, providing small business supports and encouraging local ownership of the economy.

Related to the economic development discussion, the CVRD Board has expressed a strong interest working in partnership with First Nations to rejuvenate the Cowichan forestry sector, and recently participated in

series of discussions with a team of forestry experts that includes former NDP Cabinet Minister Bob Williams. They have outlined an exciting vision for greater local involvement in managing our forests and lands that could improve employment, wealth generation and environmental outcomes. Much of this could overlap with the CVRD's recent efforts to secure greater local involvement in managing the Cowichan watershed.

We have also begun lobbying the provincial government for alternative revenue sources to offset continued property tax increases. Earlier this year the CVRD supported my "One Percent Tax Resolution" that called on the provincial government to increase the income tax rate on large corporations by one percent and direct all additional funds to local government, distributed on a per capita basis. The One Percent Tax Resolution was subsequently adopted at the annual convention of the Union of BC Municipalities that includes hundreds of delegates from local governments across BC.

Despite numerous bumps along the road, this past year has been a tremendous learning experience, and has reinforced my belief that local government can play a major role in confronting the biggest issues facing the Cowichan region.

I look forward to continuing to serve my fellow citizens over the coming years, and working with my colleagues at North Cowichan and the CVRD to build a more prosperous but sustainable community where all citizens can benefit, rich and poor.

Rob Douglas is a Councillor for the Municipality of North Cowichan and Director for the Cowichan Valley Regional District. The views expressed here are his own and do not necessarily reflect those of North Cowichan or the CVRD. He can be reached at Rob.Douglas@northcowichan.ca. For more information please visit www.robdouglas.ca

EPA pulls registration for Dow's Enlist Duo herbicide citing high toxicity levels

Toxic pesticide banned on genetically engineered crops

Washington DC — The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), responding to litigation, has announced it is revoking the registration of "Enlist Duo". Approved by the agency just over a year ago, Enlist Duo is a toxic combination of glyphosate and 2,4-D that Dow AgroSciences created for use on the next generation of genetically engineered crops, designed to withstand being drenched with this potent herbicide cocktail. In its court filing, EPA stated it is taking this action after realizing that the combination of these chemicals is likely significantly more harmful than it had initially believed.

This action resolves a year-long legal challenge filed by a coalition of conservation groups seeking to rescind the approval of the dangerous herbicide blend. EPA had approved use of Enlist Duo in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and North Dakota, and had intended to approve it in additional areas in the near future.

Earthjustice and Center for Food Safety, on behalf of Center for Food Safety, Beyond Pesticides, Center for Biological Diversity, Environmental Working Group, the National Family Farm Coalition, and Pesticide Action Network North America, had challenged EPA's failure to consider the impacts of Enlist Duo on threatened and endangered plants and animals protected under the Endangered Species Act. The Act requires that every federal agency consider the impacts of its actions on the US's most imperiled plants and animals and seek input from the expert wildlife agencies before plunging ahead, which EPA had refused to do.

"The decision by EPA to withdraw the illegally approved Enlist Duo crops is a huge victory for the environment and the future of our food," said George Kimbrell, Center for Food Safety's senior attorney. "We will remain vigilant to ensure industry does not pressure the agency into making the same mistake in the future."

"With this action, EPA confirms the toxic nature of this lethal cocktail of chemicals,

and has stepped back from the brink," said Earthjustice Managing Attorney Paul Achitoff. "Glyphosate is a probable carcinogen and is wiping out the monarch butterfly, 2,4-D also causes serious human health effects, and the combination also threatens endangered wildlife. This must not, and will not, be how we grow our food."

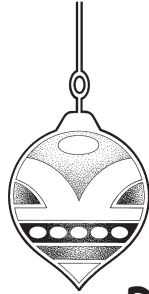
Dow created Enlist crops as a quick fix for the problem created by "Roundup Ready" crops, the previous generation of genetically engineered crops designed to resist the effects of glyphosate, the active ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup herbicide.

Just as overuse of antibiotics has left resistant strains of bacteria to thrive, repeated use of Roundup on those crops allowed glyphosate-resistant "superweeds" to proliferate, and those weeds now infest tens of millions of acres of US farmland. Enlist crops allow farmers to spray both glyphosate and 2,4-D without killing their crops, which they hope will kill weeds resistant to glyphosate alone.

But some weeds have already developed 2,4-D resistance, and the escalating cycle of more toxic pesticides in the environment will continue unless EPA stops approving these chemicals, and USDA stops rubber-stamping new genetically engineered crops.

"This Thanksgiving, I am thankful for EPA taking this important action to protect people, rare plants, and animals from Enlist Duo," said Lori Ann Burd, Environmental Health director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "As we gather with our families for the holiday feast, we can all breathe a little bit easier knowing that EPA has protected our food from being drenched with this poisonous pesticide cocktail."


Judy Hatcher, executive director of Pesticide Action Network, commented: "EPA is taking a step in the right direction, but Enlist Duo shouldn't have been given the green light in the first place. Too often, GE seeds and the herbicides designed to accompany them are rushed to market without thorough evaluation of their real-world impacts on community health and farmer livelihoods."



"All the Best of the Season!"

from the

BCNDP Victoria-Swan Lake Constituency Association



Stay in touch! You can reach your executive at

victoriaswanlakendp@gmail.com

802 Lawndale Avenue, Victoria, BC V8S 4C7

SIHOTA & STARKEY

LAWYERS & NOTARIES

PERSONAL INJURY * ICBC CLAIMS

Family * Real Estate * Wills * Estates

FREE 1st Consultation * Standard Fees for Many Services

250-381-5111

1248 Esquimalt Road, Victoria

Robert G. Milne

Jawl & Bundon

Lawyers

FOURTH FLOOR

1007 FORT STREET

VICTORIA, BC

V8V 3K5

TELEPHONE 250-385-5787

FAX 250-385-4364

EMAIL rmilne@jawlbandundon.com

Flat earth economics evoke resource pillage

By Bo Filter

Long before Ferdinand Magellan circumnavigated the world and proved that the earth is round, people speculated that the earth was flat. Much was written to *prove* that the world was a flat ever-expanded terrain with an infinite supply of resources. Beliefs that supported this conclusion created a flat earth dogma.

Adherents to any dogma become highly invested emotionally and will not let go no matter how much scientific fact is presented. Alas, the flat earth dogma lived on from its inception right into modern times. Today, the Flat Earth Society boasts a membership of over 500.¹

A flat Earth model depicting Antarctica as an ice wall surrounding a disk-shaped Earth

Unfortunately, ancient dogmas drag their feet into modern times and block the evolution of progress. Conjointly, they create enormous stress on the planet and its inhabitants.

The flat earth dogma, for instance, deeply affects the basic tenets of modern economic thinking. The core beliefs involve the unlimited concept of a flat earth.

In order for a flat earth economy to work, planet earth would need to supply infinite amounts of resources. The current corporate mandate of "increasing the rate of profits at any cost" requires infinite resources to maintain never-ending profits.

"More is never enough" fits a flat earth economic stratagem. With *infinite* resources, corporatists naturally are never satisfied. But on a limited planet, their insatiability seems so out of synchronism with reality as to be seen as lunacy. The ongoing damage and destruction to natural habitats around the world, which we all rely on for our survival, is inconsequential to corporations.

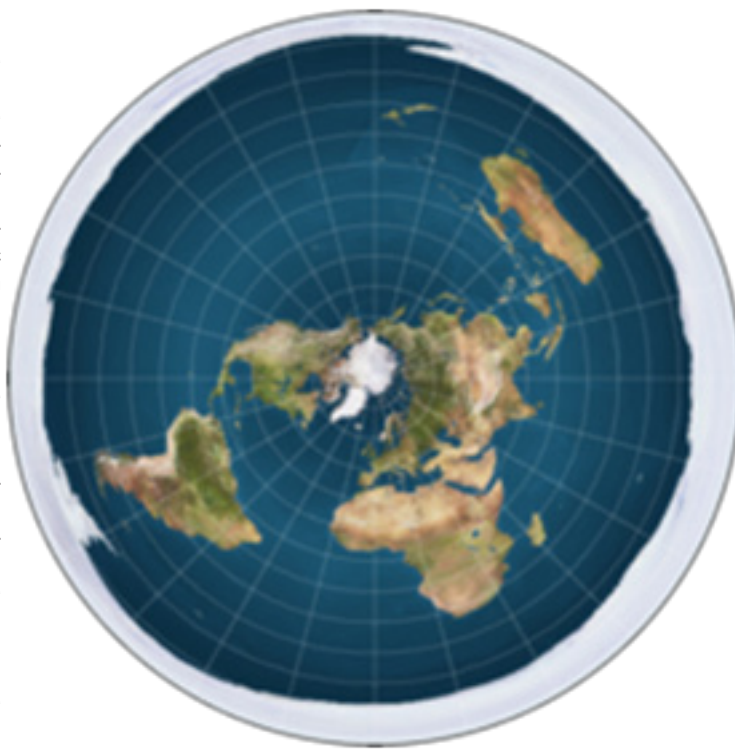
Unsurprisingly, greed is another feature and welcome partner in the flat earth paradigm. Greed does not truck limitation; it cannot abide by "a little more is finally enough". Global corporatists a.k.a. Rockefeller internationalists envision capturing profit from every micro-mineral on planet earth. If every country surrendered every ounce of their natural wealth to the internationalists, these same globalists would remain desperate to exploit some other form of resource.

Corporatists, like demagogues, are tethered to their dogma, and dogmas, in general, tend to cluster and overlap when beliefs ideologically support and serve more than one dogma. In this manner, the flat earth dogma bolsters the conservative dogma.

Conservative dogma, in part, adheres to unlimited self-industrialism. Follow their beliefs. The sky is the limit. Anyone failing to create their own fortune is weak and deserves to be kicked to the side. "Why should I work hard and be taxed to pay for these welfare freeloaders." If the poor work many jobs but fail to become rich, then they are believed to have done something wrong.

Conservatives chastise the poor for not picking up their pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Why? — Because the poor are purportedly lazy and indolent. Therefore, ignore the poor. Suffering is a creature of their own making—end of story.

One complementary belief is that the poor have weak genes, whereas, the rich have superior genes. These tenets are not open to criticism. If wealth is acquired by crimi-



nal means, the dogma, the idealized image of the conservative, must not be smeared. Any discussion of criminal acquisition is forbidden, taboo in dogma lingo. Such dogma-driven censorship creates a safe haven or refuge for organized crime. Under this cloak of darkness, global corporations are free to collude in extorting natural resources from 3rd world countries. If you believe that predatory capitalism does not exist then read John Perkin's book, *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*.

The power of dogmas and their disciples' willingness to censor truth must be understood from a bigger long-term picture. Dogmas such as the flat earth cult grew up with the great apes and evolved from an increasing human brain size, which eventually bore the offspring of a fruitful imagination.

Some early hominids that heard voices were thought to be listening to deities. Superstition was born. Magic was born and so was religion. Dogmas of many stripes evolved 10s, 100s, perhaps 1000s of millennia before the birth of reason. Logic and early science was accredited to the Greeks around 650 B.C.E. with the critical thinking of a man named Socrates.

The machinations of dogmas have been with us since the beginning of consciousness. So dogmas have been able to imbue themselves into the entire mental matrix; whereas, the age of reason is only

a recent development. The ubiquitous nature of dogma is ascendant, willing to battle all threats to its power and privilege, including reason.² The new kid on the block seems to have little chance arrayed against ancient interlocking armies of dogma. Our predicament seems grim.

Flat earth economists cannot live a balanced life with other creatures of this planet. How can internationalists live in harmony if they demand the impossible—that our tiny finite earth provide them with infinite resources and infinite wealth? Globalists are trapped in their own dogma. They are psychologically out of control; they cannot stop themselves.

So how can we heal such life-threatening woes? Survival now hinges on cogent individuals correcting the most fundamental stumbling blocks that corrupt the foundation of a healthy future.

Dogmas have to go. Unfounded beliefs have to be replaced with facts. We have to move away from the subjectivity of dogmas to the objectivity of science, away from parroting dogmatists and demagogues to sharing well-reasoned research.

Reprogram the brain. Delete the age-old harmful software of dogmas. Install the new software of critical analysis. It's not that hard to learn. Without this revolution in consciousness, flat earth economics will continue to evoke resource pillage.

Endnotes:

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_flat_Earth_societies
2. For a comprehensive review of dogma, read author's book: *The Cause of Wars and Aggression*.

Bo Filter is a veteran social scientist, geopolitical analyst and author of: *The Cause of Wars and Aggression: Book 1*. See reviews and availability at GlobalJusticePublishing.com

Steelworkers Humanity Fund contributes \$166,000 to 73 food banks across Canada

TORONTO, 18 November 2015 – United Steelworkers' (USW) Canadian National Director Ken Neumann announced November 18 that the Steelworkers Humanity Fund is contributing \$166,000 to 73 different food banks and community food centres in communities across Canada where USW members live and work.

"In communities as diverse as Cranbrook, BC, Brandon, Man., Sherbrooke, Que., and Pictou, NS, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund is contributing to food banks because poor and vulnerable mem-

bers in our communities continue to rely on them to make ends meet," said Neumann. "The fact is that 850,000 Canadians, one-third of them children, turn to food banks every month.

"Food banks can't address the underlying causes of poverty – that is why the Steelworkers continue to call for a national anti-poverty strategy that sees the elimination of poverty as an issue of human rights, and supports federal and provincial campaigns on fair minimum wages."

In BC, food banks supported by USW

are located in Burnaby, Castlegar, Comox/Courtenay, Cranbrook, Duncan, Elkford, Kamloops, Ladysmith, Langley, Masett/Haida Gwai, North Island, Port Alberni, Powell River, Prince George, Sandspit/Haida Gwai, Sparwood, Surrey, Terrace, Trail, Tumbler Ridge, Vancouver and Williams Lake.

For a full list of food banks and community food centres receiving 2015 contributions from the steelworkers Humanity Fund go to www.usw.ca/news/media-centre/releases/2015/document/food-bank-contributions-2015-public-list.pdf

[butions-2015-public-list.pdf](http://www.usw.ca/news/media-centre/releases/2015/document/food-bank-contributions-2015-public-list.pdf)

Founded in 1985, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund is a registered charitable organization which focuses primarily on development projects and emergency aid in developing countries, but is also supports Canadian communities in crisis. USW members contribute to the fund through clauses negotiated into collective agreements. In some cases matching contributions come from employers.

Food Banks Canada has released its Hunger Count 2015 Report, available at www.foodbanksCanada.ca.

Vancouver Island anti-coal mine champion honoured with environmental award

VANCOUVER – The Wilderness Committee has announced that the 2015 Eugene Rogers Environmental Award is being granted to John Snyder, a Comox Valley resident and president of CoalWatch Comox Valley Society.

Under Snyder's leadership, CoalWatch has worked with local citizens, business owners, municipal government leaders and environmental groups like the Wilderness Committee to successfully fight off the proposed Raven Underground Coal Mine.

"Working with people like John has been the best part about the fight to stop this short-sighted mine," said Torrance Coste, Vancouver Island campaigner with the Wilderness Committee. "I've learned a great deal from John's steady leadership and constant humour, and will always look up to him as a mentor."

The Raven Coal Mine would see the extraction of 30 million tonnes of coal and rock from a site just five kilometres uphill from Fanny Bay in the Comox Valley. Earlier this year, in the face of widespread public opposition, the proponent abruptly withdrew its application.

CoalWatch and the Wilderness Committee have worked together to host public meetings and other events to raise awareness about the mine since the proposal first surfaced six years ago.

For 23 years, the Wilderness Committee has presented the Eugene Rogers Award to citizens who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to protect the environment and advocate for a better society.

"Local campaigns need a strong local champion, and in the case of Raven Coal,

John has gone above and beyond," Coste said. "We've been lucky to work with him to stop this mine, and now we're honoured to present him with this award."

The application for the Raven Coal mine hasn't yet been terminated by the BC Environmental Assessment Office, but both the Wilderness Committee and CoalWatch are monitoring the situation and have vowed to keep up the pressure until the project is taken off the table for good.

"I'd like to thank the Wilderness Committee for its steadfast support on the Raven Coal Mine issue over the past six years," Snyder said. "The actions of thousands of concerned citizens have prevented this mine from becoming a reality, and on behalf of all of those who have raised their voices, I'm greatly honoured to receive this award." Snyder was presented with the Eugene

Rogers Award November 28 at the Wilderness Committee's Annual General Meeting, along with a \$1000 prize.



The Leap is ambitious, but it's not the end of capitalism

By Seth Klein

The Leap Manifesto: A Call for Canada Based on Caring for the Earth and One Another was launched by a group of prominent Canadians on September 15. So far, over 25,000 Canadians have added their names to the declaration. In the face of the ho-hum party platforms on offer, many see the manifesto as a way to give expression to their desire for bold climate action and social justice.

Many mainstream media commentators, however, promptly set their hair on fire.

The Globe and Mail claimed the document calls for “upending of [the] capitalist system”. An editorial appearing in the *Vancouver Sun* asserted the manifesto was released by “some of this country’s most left-wing and radical forces”, and alarmingly described it as “a chilling document that suggests pushing Canada farther to the left than has ever been imagined for this country. It is ultimately a plan to completely reject capitalism for something kinder and gentler”. In the *National Post*, the Leap prompted none other than Conrad Black to write an entire op-ed of extended albeit

very creative insults.

You get the gist.

But it's all nonsense.

For the most part, the Leap is merely a pronouncement that policy and politics should align with climate science (heck, even former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney is saying that), that we should honour the treaties signed with First Nations, and that we should seek to seriously address inequality – hardly far-left field propositions.

True, the Leap is ambitious, but it only seems radical in comparison to the platforms of the major parties. And that's only because the bandwidth of what is deemed politically acceptable has become so narrow. (Even the Green Party, whose climate plan is mildly more ambitious than the three main parties, has a platform that I'd call more of a hop than a leap.)

But that shouldn't surprise us. As the Pope writes of the climate crisis in his recent Encyclical:

It is remarkable how weak international political responses have been... There are too many special interests, and economic interests easily end up trumping the common good and manipulating information so

that their own plans will not be affected... Consequently the most one can expect is superficial rhetoric, sporadic acts of philanthropy and perfunctory expressions of concern for the environment, whereas any genuine attempt by groups within society to introduce change is viewed as a nuisance based on romantic illusions or an obstacle to be circumvented.

Nailed it.

In fact, what the Leap calls for is reasonable, affordable, and doable.

Much of what the Leap envisions is a bold infrastructure plan (transit, high speed rail, renewable energy, zero-carbon buildings, etc.). Infrastructure is rightly understood as an investment, and thus it makes sense to amortize the cost over many years.

Moreover, it is already the case that our governments spend billions of dollars a year on infrastructure, but these dollars go towards traditional projects (roads, bridges, and port and energy infrastructure) with the aim of accommodating cars and facilitating the extraction and export of fossil fuels. BC, for example, is slated to spend billions replacing the Massey Tunnel with a new bridge, in part to accommodate more vehicle traffic, but the biggest beneficiaries will likely be industrial users wanting ocean-going ships to be able to get further up the Fraser River to export US thermal coal. What is needed instead is to shift these expenditures from old-economy infrastructure to the green infrastructure we now need.

Let us imagine, however, an ambitious infrastructure and social program plan that sought to boost federal government spending by \$50-60 billion a year. That sounds like a lot of money, and indeed it would allow for an exciting set of initiatives that, by any measure, would constitute a “leap” into a new and more caring economy.

But to put that into perspective: in an economy such as Canada's, with an annual GDP of over \$2 trillion, a bold spending and investment plan of \$50-60 billion represents about 2.5 percent of GDP. Put another way, it would mean increasing federal spending from 12.8 per cent of GDP today to about 15.5 per cent. Hardly sounds like,

“pushing Canada farther to the left than has ever been imagined,” as the *Vancouver Sun* opines. Exciting, but not a revolution.

And consider this: if one tallies up federal tax cuts over the last 15 years (disproportionately benefiting the wealthy), one finds that these have coincidentally depleted the federal treasury's capacity to spend and invest by, you guessed it, about \$50 billion a year; meaning, if the federal government collected taxes at the same rates that existed in the year 2000, we would have \$50 billion more per year to spend on programs to meet our most pressing social and environmental needs.

Not only is a bold green infrastructure plan reasonable, there are compelling economic reasons why now would be a very good time to undertake such a program. If \$50-60 billion a year were newly raised and then spent on a Leap program, it would undoubtedly represent a net boost to the economy and employment.

As economist and Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz notes: “There is a long-standing, strong argument for what is called a balanced budget multiplier—if the government increases taxes at the very top and increases spending on infrastructure, education, technology [by the same amount], it stimulates the economy.”

How could new revenues be raised? The options are many. In a background document prepared for the Leap's release, I and some CCPA colleagues listed a few, including resource royalties, financial transaction taxes, higher upper-income and corporate taxes, and perhaps most advisedly, a national escalating carbon tax. (You can find our paper here: leapmanifesto.org/en/resources/.)

But whatever options we choose, the simple truth is that in a country as wealthy as Canada, we can afford to leap.

Seth Klein is the BC Director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Those wishing to add their names to the Leap Manifesto can do so here: leapmanifesto.org
See more at: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/leap-ambitious-it%E2%80%99s-not-end-capitalism#sthash.EH1-RhuR5.dpuf>

Five LNG whoppers

By Marc Lee

British Columbians have heard many “too good to be true” claims about the benefits of launching a liquefied natural gas (LNG) export industry. Our research has uncovered a pattern of misinformation about LNG – coming primarily from the BC government, which should be looking out for the public interest instead of blindly championing the industry.

Let's take a look:

1. 100,000 jobs!

Regulatory filings made by LNG proponents show that job creation from new LNG terminals would be very small, around 100-300 permanent jobs per facility. There would be a few thousand more jobs during the construction phase, but these are only temporary. There would also be gains to the upstream gas sector, but adding it all up we don't come anywhere close to 100,000 jobs.

The claim of 100,000 jobs is based on a consultant's report commissioned by the BC government in the lead-up to the 2013 (pre-election) Throne Speech. So it's no surprise this was an exercise in exaggerating job prospects at every turn.

2. Debt-free BC (aka \$100 billion Prosperity Fund)!

This claim is based on a fantasy world where (a) BC launches a massive LNG industry that is equivalent to one-third of all current world LNG exports; (b) those exports fetch top dollar in Asia; and (c) BC puts in place a tax and royalty regime that captures a fair share of those gains.

None of this is happening. Market prices for LNG in Asia have crashed – at prevailing prices, a company exporting LNG from BC would lose money on every tanker load.

Even if we assume prices for LNG in Asia go back up to profitable levels, BC government revenues will only inch upwards. The much-heralded Petronas deal would add about \$0.2 billion per year, and possibly much less. Compare that to the BC budget's \$46 billion in revenues and total provincial debt of \$43 billion.

3. Over 150 years of gas supply!

BC's Natural Gas minister Rich Coleman claims BC has 2,933 trillion cubic feet of gas in reserve. While there may be this much gas in the ground, most of it will never be profitable to extract. Typically no more than 10-20% of what is called “in-place resources” can be recovered from shale gas deposits.

More realistic estimates come from the province's own Oil and Gas Commission, which says proven gas reserves are only 42 trillion cubic feet, and the total “market-

able resource” 416 trillion cubic feet. The latter is one-seventh the claim made by the minister.

Based on numbers from the National Energy Board, a successful BC push for LNG would make Canada a net importer of gas, undermining our energy security.

4. Minimal impact on BC's water!

All of this new supply will come from fracking, where sand, water and chemicals are forced into wells, cracking open the shale beds containing the gas. Water used in fracking operations is so contaminated it must be kept in tailings ponds. Another risk is that drinking water supplies in northeast BC aquifers could also be contaminated by fracking, as they have been in other parts of North America.

The government argues water impacts from hydraulic fracturing will be minimal by averaging out withdrawals across all of northeast BC. In reality, impacts are highly localized. Peak water consumption for an LNG industry could be as much as 22,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools per year.

5. Reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions!

Lower emissions from burning gas instead of coal only apply at the point of combustion. Methane, the principal component of natural gas, is 86 times more heat-trapping than carbon dioxide, so small leaks at points along the supply chain can wipe out any emissions advantage. In addition, LNG is very energy-intensive, requiring some 20% of gas to be consumed in the liquefaction, transport and regasification processes.

Climate change is principally caused by extracting carbon from below ground and putting it into the atmosphere. When we add it all up, BC's plans for LNG are equivalent to adding 24 million cars to the roads of the world (and not hybrid or electric ones).

So why would the BC government tell such tall tales about the benefits of LNG?

Because it's a heist.

The BC government's plan will essentially privatize a finite, public resource worth hundreds of billions of dollars – the shale gas below ground – and lock up that supply for foreign corporations for decades into the future.

Marc Lee is a senior economist with the BC office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and co-director of the Climate Justice Project.

CCPA BC Office is located at 1400-207 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1H7; telephone 604-801-5121; fax 604-801-5122

Victoria-Beacon Hill New Democrats

Stay in Touch!

You can reach your president Marilyn Callahan
by mail to PO Box 8523, Victoria, BC V8W 3S1
or visit our new website at
<http://victoriabeaconhill.theorem.ca>

To all our members and friends,

Season's Greetings

and heartfelt wishes for
a happy and healthy holiday!



Saanich North and the Islands
New Democrats



\

.

Canada: A New Tax Haven, How the Country That Shaped Caribbean Tax Havens Is Becoming One Itself, by Alain Deneault, translated by Catherine Browne, 2015, Talonbooks, Vancouver, BC, ISBN 13: 9780889228368

Review and photo of the author by Theresa Wolfwood

“Everything was arranged to suit the interests of the powerful to facilitate the operations of the largest firms...”

Alain Deneault, author of *Imperial Canada Inc. Legal Haven of Choice for the World's Mining Industries*, published in 2012, has expanded his intense research into Canada's



Alain Deneault

tax laws in his latest book. Nothing has changed since then, in fact our benefits for the rich and powerful continue unabated.

Economics and tax law seem like dry, technical stuff, hard for most of us to understand but Deneault makes it clear in his latest book that Canada is complicit in supporting large corporations and helping them pay little or no tax. Something that we need to know.

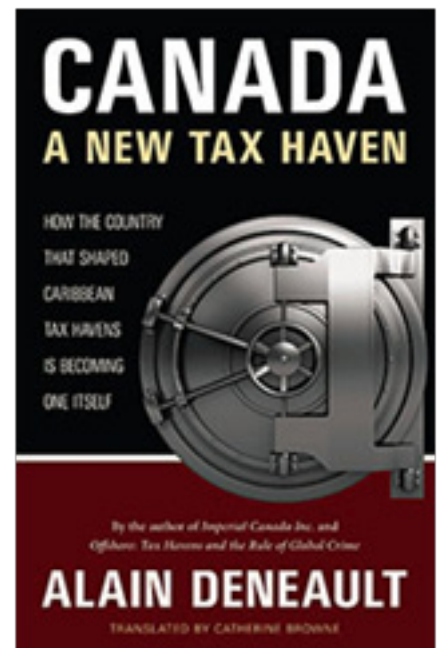
In *Canada: A New Tax Haven*, Deneault gives us a concise and understandable history of Canada's involvement in creating tax havens for the rich in former British colonies in the Caribbean for many decades. Now we appear to have gone one step further and are making Canada itself a tax haven, not only for mining companies but other industries as well. Many politicians have had intimate connections with

this corporate bonanza over the years.

We learn that Canada has a free-trade agreement with Panama and now wants similar agreements with countries in the Caribbean. We share our place at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund with a group of Caribbean tax havens.

The author writes that Canada has become one of the most attractive tax havens to foreign interests and that not only does Canada offer one of the lowest corporate tax rates in the world, but a number of loopholes encourage companies to relocate to Canada as if it were Barbados or Bermuda. These are serious revelations that politicians should be addressing in this election and when parliament opens again.

Deneault not only gives us a clear history but he also gives us direction, for those who possess the political will, to disassemble this affront to Canadians who carry the tax burden of the rich.



CANADA in AFRICA: 300 years of aid and exploitation, by Yves Engler, 2015, RED publishing/ Fernwood Publishing Canada. ISBN 978-1-55266762-0

Review and photo of the author by Theresa Wolfwood

“Canadian policy provides a unique window into Western exploitation of Africa and this book can hopefully contribute to overcoming widespread ignorance of African affairs.”

Engler has done it again; written another carefully documented, well-crafted history and analysis, this time about Canada's involvement in past centuries and today in Africa. And once again he reveals the myth behind our idea that Canada and we Canadians are “good guys” in a bad world. With few exceptions we are right up there with other colonial



Yves Engler

and imperial powers. Centuries ago we helped suppress African slave rebellions in the Caribbean while profiting from selling boatloads of cod to keep slaves working.

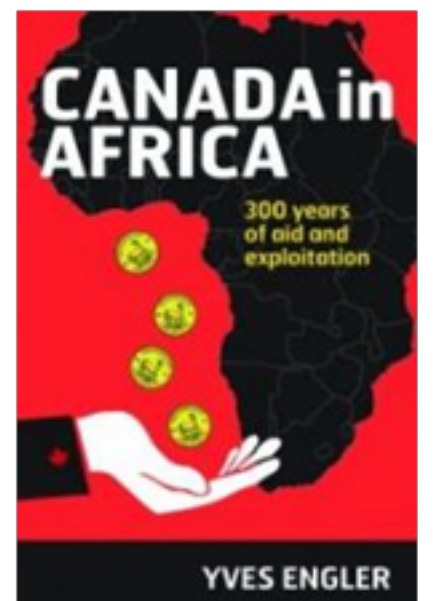
“Throughout the various stages of the colonial project, Canada provided political, military, economic support.”

Canada helped Britain and Belgium to crush independence movements and in the last century we assisted in the overthrow and death of independence leaders from Patrice Lumumba and Kwame Nkrumah; in recent years we supported the invasion of Somalia by the USA and our military committed terrible acts of cruelty and torture there. We provided rulers – governors – for British colonies and did our part in supporting Christian missionaries who worked closely with government officials giving rise to the often quoted saying: *When they came we had the land, soon they had the land and we had the bible.*

In recent decades Canada has moved into serious exploitation of African's resources with little regard for human rights, sustainable development or the welfare of communities living near desired riches – mainly minerals. Canada is home to 75% of the world's mining companies and they are in the vanguard everywhere, including Africa, of plunder and pillage. From PotashCorp's lucrative deal with the Moroccan government in its phosphate purchases from occupied Western Sahara, to Barrick Gold's tax dodges in Tanzania, to supporting oil companies profiting from deals with the brutal Sudan government and much more, it is all documented.

Canada has refused to support or fund initiatives on climate change which is affecting Africa more severely than anywhere globally – if this is a priority of our new government, this book should be on every minister's reading list. Anyone committed to changing Canada's foreign policy to a policy based on justice, universal equality and self-determination can read this book as a starting place for understanding and creating real change.

Engle's closing words are a clear direction for action, “...it is possible to convince Canadians of the importance of paying attention to what the government is doing in their name in Africa and other parts of the world. ...We must call on a collective sense of solidarity and understand that acting on it is in our self-interest. We must work towards making this understanding the basis of our foreign policy in Africa and elsewhere.”



Victoria's award-winning popular historian launches new book with special event

Join award-winning Victoria author Mark Zuehlke as he celebrates the release of his new book, *Through Blood and Sweat: A Remembrance Trek across Sicily's World War II Battlegrounds* (Douglas & McIntyre, \$36.95), with a free Victoria event:

- Saturday, December 12: Book signing at Bolen Books (1644 Hillside Ave #111, Victoria) at 1:30pm.

Through Blood and Sweat takes readers on Operation Husky 2013, a memorable, thought-provoking trek in the footsteps of the soldiers of 1st Canadian Infantry Division in 1943. A group of Canadians walked this 300-kilometre march to honour the memory of the nation's soldiers who fought in Sicily 70 years earlier and whose sacrifice has been largely forgotten

Mark Zuehlke, author of the award-winning Canadian Battle Series, was one of these marchers, and he uses this arduous and poignant task as a focal point for a contemplative look at the culture of remembrance and the experience of war.

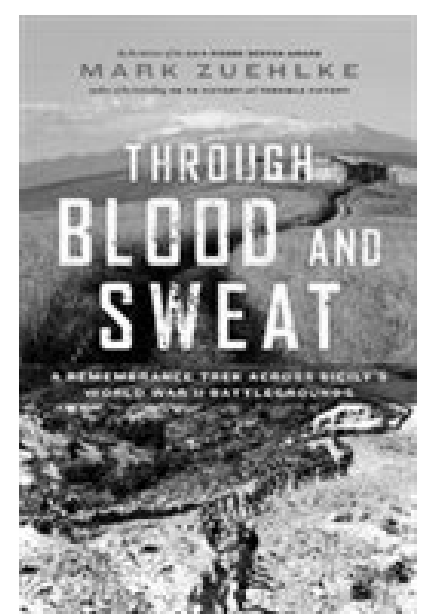
Under a searing sun, with Mount Etna's soaring heights always in the distance, the small contingent of marchers trekked between 15 and 35 kilometres each day along winding country roads to reach the outskirts of a small town or village. There they were joined by a pipe band, which led them with a skirl of bagpipes in a parade into the community's heart, where they were met by hundreds of cheering and applauding Sicilians.

Before each community's war memorial, a service of remembrance for both the Canadian and Sicilian war dead followed.

Each day also brought the marchers closer to their final destination—Agira Canadian

War Cemetery, where 490 of the 562 Canadian soldiers who fell during the course of Operation Husky in 1943 are buried. After 20 gruelling days, the marchers were joined there by almost a thousand Canadians and Italians to conduct a profoundly emotional ceremony of remembrance.

Mark Zuehlke is the winner of the 2014 Pierre Berton Award: the Governor General's History Award for Popular Media. In 2006, his Canadian Battle Series book *Holding Juno* won the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize. He has also written six historical works outside of the series, including *For Honour's Sake* (Knopf Canada), which won the 2007 Canadian Authors Association Lela Common Award for Canadian History. He lives in Victoria,



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 Auditorium, 2994 Douglas Street, Victoria. All delegates 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 Hiroshima

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 bbcfc@bbcfc.ca.

GARY HOLMAN, MLA, invites you to his Annual Holiday Open House, on Tuesday, December 8, from 3:30-6 pm, at the Saanich North and the Islands Community Office, 2393 Beacon Avenue, in Sidney. Join him for a celebration of the holidays with food and light refreshments. Sidney Lions Food Bank donations will be gratefully accepted.

CAROLE JAMES, MLA, invites you to join her at her Holiday Open House, on Thursday, December 10, from 4-6 pm, at her Community Office, 1004 Fort Street. Everyone is welcome. Light refreshments. Non-perishable food and sock donations will be

gratefully accepted for Anawin House.

ROB FLEMING, MLA, invites you to join him at his Holiday Open House, on Friday, December 11, from 4-6 pm, at the Victoria-Swan Lake Community Office, 1020 Hillside Avenue. Please bring a donation of a non-perishable food item for the UVic Student Society Food Bank.

VICTORIA FEDERAL NDP will hold its Annual General Meeting on Saturday, December 12, starting at noon, at the Cook Street Activity Centre, 380 Cook Street. For more information, please contact James at President@victoriandp.ca or go to www.Victoriandp.ca.

CELEBRATE THE SEASON! The Sidney Concert band will be giving a Christmas Concert, with Roy Bannister conducting, on Monday, December 14, at 7 pm at Peace

Lutheran Church, 2295 Weiler Avenue, Sidney, BC. Tickets available at the door, \$10 suggested donation

JOHN HORGAN, MLA, is looking forward to seeing you at his Annual Christmas Open House, on Wednesday, December 16, from 4-7 pm, at the Juan de Fuca Community Office, 122-2606 Jacklin Road (corner of Jacklin and Goldstream). Light snacks and refreshments will be served. For more information, call 250-391-2801. Please drop by. Food bank donations will be gratefully received.

JUAN DE FUCA NEW DEMOCRATS invite you to their 8th Annual Sweetheart of an Evening, a Valentine's Dinner/Dance/Auction on Saturday, February 13, at the Olympic View Golf Course. For tickets or more information, call President Sharon Wilkinson at 250-478-5907 or email her at

LIN attends a book launch at the Guardian



Author and sociologist Hilary Burrage was recently honoured by the *Guardian's* Maggie O'Kane at a moving book launch. The cover of her book, *Eradicating Female Genital Mutilation, a UK Perspective*, is visible at the right. Speaking of the book, Dr. Toby Levin, of Lady Margaret Hall, said that not since "Efua Dorkenoo's *Cutting the Rose* (1994)" has a monograph on female genital mutilation shone like Hilary Burrage's. Above, Burrage (centre) and her mother are welcomed by O'Kane.



Arifa Nasim, a Youth for Change UN delegate, and a DFID volunteer, works to 'Educate to Eradicate' in London schools giving educational workshops. Her area of specialty is forced marriages, VAW, and feminine genital mutilation. She and Walsh met at the entrance to the Guardian building as they both arrived to attend the book launch.



Diane Walsh, a frequent contributor to Lower Island News, is currently in Scotland at St. Andrews University, where she is studying for her PhD. With the subject she is concentrating on being the very matter of the eradication of female genital mutilation, she naturally found time to attend the book launch. Here she waits in the lobby of the Guardian for the event to start.

